Analysis of the Mistakes Done by the Foreign Students in the Written Language While Learning Turkey Turkish

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was twofold. The first was to detect the wrong transition mistakes of the Turkic originated foreign students in written expression while studying Anatolian Turkish, within the frame of European Language Development File Criteria, and the second was to determine their reasons regarding doing these mistakes. Based primarily on the European Language Development File Criteria, “Personal Information Form” was prepared in order to analyze the “Language Passport, Language Biography, and Language File” of the students. The form was prepared in four main parts consisting of Personal Records (I.D. and Education Records, Family Members), Language Learning Past (Different Languages s/he Learned and the Language Courses s/he Attends, Which Way / Channel s/he Learned Anatolian Turkish, Turkish Course Completion Level), a multiple choice test prepared in order to measure the Turkish knowledge level and planned sample scripts that the students were made to write in Anatolian Turkish. The prepared form was applied on 30 foreign students that study in different faculties and departments in Atatürk University and most of whom are Azerbaijanis from Iran and Azerbaijan and Turkmen. The personal records and the language learning past in the first two parts were classified as per the objectives of the study, and graphically expressed by means of Excel 0.6 program. The Anatolian Turkish sufficiency levels of the students were detected as per the multiple choice questions in the third part. Finally, the planned sample scripts that the students were made to write were examined through “document examination” method and were applied to “conceptual analysis.” In the conceptual analysis, the wrong transition mistakes were examined under four topics of “phonetic level,” “morphologic level,” “vocabulary level,” and “syntactic level”. The results showed that the foreign Turkic originated students of mostly tended to make mistakes in phonetic level, and that they made frequent wrong transitions due to their mother tongues. According to the results of this study, in preparing “Turkish writing curriculum or courses”, it’s necessary to pay attention to the related wrong transitions and the related features of the mother tongues of the target groups.

1. Introduction
The communication need that occurs in various reasons throughout the history has always required the necessity of a common communication language between the individuals, the larger societies or the states. This led the formation and development of “learning and teaching of foreign language” as a scientific activity area. When dealing with the teaching / learning of foreign language, whatever the similarity or difference level might be, it is an accepted fact that, with the encounter of two separate structures (one’s own language /mother tongue – the language one started to learn / target language) some difficulties occurred and this case causes the language learner to make many mistakes.

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Even though such mistakes might be a result of not knowing the target language, sometimes especially when the languages are of the same language family or similar - it might be a result of the mother tongue. Besides, it’s been established by the researchers that the second and/or the third languages learned have influences on this case.

In the process of learning foreign language, it’s observed that after the one started to learn the target language and noticed that the conceptualization systems are different, one makes some comparisons between the mother tongue and the target language. Persons, in their usages of the target language, are tended to compare the rules and the concepts of the two languages and make mutual transitions (Soral, 2009, 19).

Comparative linguistics that includes the studies aiming to find out the similarities and differences between the two or more languages have offered several proposals regarding the related transitions, since it was started to be used in the language learning (Dede, 1983, 123). Among them, Lado’s theory of “the simplicity and the difficulty in learning a foreign language is to figured out by a regular comparison between the mother tongue and the foreign language” that he mentioned in his work Linguistics Across Cultures has gained common popularity. According to Lado (1957) “people transfer the patterns, meanings and their distributions in the mother tongues and cultures into the foreign languages and cultures. They make this transfer while both actively speaking the foreign language and act according to its culture and passively trying to comprehend that language and the culture through the speeches and behaviors of its owners” (İşler, 2006, 126).

After Lado, different opinions were proposed regarding the comparative linguistics and its application to the foreign language learning, as well as the mutual analysis that are produced. The “weak version (Newmark, 1966)” that offers that the difficulties may be pre-determined claiming that the difficulties in the language learning may be explained in a better way as well as the moderate version (Oller and Ziahosseniy, 1970) which try to compromise the previous two opinions have taken their places among the others (Dede, 1983, 123-125; İşler, 2006, 124-127). Examine the opinions regarding the mutual analysis in this concept, it is seen that the analysis is based on transfer. Hence, the term transfer needs to be explained.

The researchers, within the frame of the mistake analysis works that include mutual analysis, usually have divided the student mistakes in two categories: 1. Wrong transition mistakes due to the mother tongue (Interlingual/Transfer errors): The habits of the student in her/his mother tongue (grammar, language system, etc.) prevents or causes a confusion while learning the rules in the target language. Wrong transition is the negative effect of the mother tongue on the target language. 2. Development mistakes within the language (Intralingual/Developmental errors): These are the mistakes that are done independently from the mother tongue, while learning a target language (Bölükbaş, 2011; Corder, 1971; Lado, 1964, 2).

In the acquisition of the second language, the structure of the new language is positioned on the mother tongue, in a similar fashion to the formation of the mother tongue in the memory of the person while learning the mother tongue; hence the learning of the new language is formed in the frame of the mother tongue’s knowledge. The reason of the mistakes, that are determined between languages, is accepted as that the student considers the foreign language as a simile to her/ his mother tongue while the learning of the similar or even considerably similar languages form the same language family may increase the probability of making mistakes, in parallel to the increase of similarity level.

There are languages, whose development and changes in the historical process are not fully independent, and that display common features in terms of either roots or structures in the world, while there are languages that are of totally different roots and with different structures. It is a well known fact that there exist some differences such as phonetic, morphologic, syntactic, etc. In fact, we’d better add the differences of the writing system used as well as the differences in emphasis and pronunciation, too.

When we consider the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language, the degree of similarity or distance of the culture that the students bring along with themselves to the Turkish culture, and the language to the Turkish language, makes up one of the most important factors that affect the learning process. In the recent years, in parallel to the level of economical and cultural relations of Turkey, the demand for the Anatolian Turkish increases especially in the Asian countries. Therefore, an important portion of those who demanded to learn in the last twenty years is formed by Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Turkmen, Azerbaijani, and Tatar ethnicities, which are of the Turkish origin.
The common and the similar features of the mother tongues of these people, each of which makes up a different branch of Turkish, with the Anatolian Turkish usually affects the learning process in a positive way, while the feature that are different between the Anatolian Turkish and these languages affect the learning process in a negative way. Therefore, in order these difficulties to be taken down to a minimum; it is necessary to describe and analyze the mistakes of the aforementioned students while learning Turkish, and thence to prepare teaching programs accordingly.

Examining the domestic and foreign studies in this matter, it is observed that the studies took place in the form of general evaluation of the written expression mistakes. But the studies that classify these mistakes according to their types, and comparatively explaining the reasons for such mistakes are very rare if not none. Yet, it is a fact that in the learning a foreign language, the language of the target group, the culture that language belongs to, and the language development processes of those learning the language are supposed to be paid attention to, and is necessary to elucidate the mistakes done in this frame. It was also detected that the present studies were done on the persons or groups from the languages that are not related with Turkish rather than the students of Turkic origin and that limited number of studies were carried out on the students from the Turkic origin.

In his work “Teaching of Anatolian Turkish to the Groups Speaking in Turkish Grammar (1998)”, which is one of the rare theses prepared in the matter, Barın was focused on the Anatolian Turkish learning process of Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Turkmen students. In this work, the mistakes the students do in their written expressions regarding the phonetic, morphologic features, suffix and stem, syntax, phrase, meaning, and shifts in meaning were detected.

Bölükbaş (2011), in his work titled “Evaluating the Turkish Writing Skills of Arab Students,” evaluated Turkish expression skills of Arab students learning Turkish, in terms of the mistake analysis method. This study was carried out on 20 Arab students studying Turkish as a foreign language at the Istanbul University. The data of the study was collected through the 250-300 words compositions of the students with the theme “What have you thought about Turkey before coming to Turkey?” the obtained data was at first classified as: Grammar mistakes, syntactic mistakes, vocabulary mistakes, and spelling-punctuation mistakes. These mistakes, then, were grouped and evaluated, according to the mistake analysis method, as wrong transition mistakes and language development mistakes. Referring to the mentioned case, the purpose of this study was to investigate the wrong transition mistakes in written expressions done by foreign Turkic originat students attended in a public university in Turkey, while studying Anatolian Turkish, within the frame of ‘European Language Development File Criteria’.

2. Method

2.1. The Model of the Research

This study is qualitative in type, and is the product of a research done in definitive way, which is one of the most suitable methods for the works that aim to determine a present situation (Kaptan, 1995: 59-72). A survey model was used, that aims to describe a situation that happened in the past or that still exists as it is, and that seeks to define the case, individuals or substances that are subject to the research as they appear in their own conditions (Karasar, 2006: 77). Besides, document analysis was done in order to get to the mistakes in writings of participants. Document analysis enabled the researchers to obtain written expressions in the materials of the participants and to analyze them thoroughly (Yıldırım and Simsek, 2008).

2.2. Participants

In this work, the foreign students who study at the Atatürk University were the participants but they were limited due to the facts such as the difficulty in reaching all students and the need to select the target group according to some criteria. The process was carried out on a total of 30 Turkic foreign students, 11 of which are Azerbaijani (6 from Azerbaijan and 5 from Iran), 9 Turkmens, 7 Kyrgyzes, and 3 Kazakhs, who were still studying in different faculties and departments at the Atatürk University, Turkey.
2.3. Data Collection

In order to reach any and every information that might influence the language learning processes of the students covered in the research, “Personal Information Form” was prepared, based on the European Language Development Criteria. This form was prepared in four main parts which are Personal Information (Identity and Education Information, Information Regarding Their Family Members), Language Learning Past (Different Languages S/he Learned and the Language Courses S/he Attends, Which Way / Means S/he Learns Anatolian Turkish, Turkish Course Completion Level), a test of 45 open ended questions that were prepared in order to measure the Turkish level, and planned sample script in Anatolian Turkish to the students.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained through the Personal Information Form which was prepared in four levels was examined by the “document analysis” technique. First, the personal information given in the first two parts and the language learning past were classified in parallel to the objections of the work, and graphically expressed by means of Excel 2010 program. According to the test results of the multiple choice questions in the third part, the Anatolian Turkish efficiency levels of the students who didn’t know their level or didn’t have a certificate in that regard, were determined.

Finally, the planned sample written scripts, which the students were made to write on different matters, were evaluated in the “content analysis”. In the content analysis, the researchers first scanned the literature in the related field, referring to the opinions and the works of the related researchers, the planned sample scripts of the students were examined under four topics such as the wrong transition mistakes done “in the phonological level”, “in the suffix level”, “in the vocabulary level” and “in the syntactic level”. During this analysis, the potential mistake types regarding these mentioned topics were coded, besides the previously coded mistake types were added to the work, where noticed. Then, statistics of the decoded mistake types were determined and evaluated in terms of grammar.

3. Results

In this part, in order to determine the wrong transition mistakes done by the Turkic foreign citizen students who study at the Atatürk University, in the written language, while learning the Anatolian Turkish, the data obtained from the Personal Information Form, which was prepared according to the European Language Development File, were taken into consideration.

The answers given regarding the personal information and the language learning past that make up the first two parts of the form that was prepared in four levels, were evaluated. As a result, any factor has a role in the process of learning a foreign language, from the personal features of the individual to the official or second and third language(s) spoken in the society / country where they live; from their levels to use their language skills to the language learning devices / channels. In this concept, the personal information of the students as determined in terms of the aforementioned file is as follows:

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2 The Language Development File, which was prepared within a project that aims to provide a language passport for each citizen and thus providing them an opportunity to be multilingual and to encourage them to learn languages, is a document that records the successes a student achieved in learning foreign language and that displays the sufficiency regarding the language development (Demirel, 2010: 23).
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The ratio of the students in the working group regarding the nationalities may be seen in the graphic below:

![Students as per Their Nationalities](image)

In the part named “Language Learning Past” given in the Personal Information Form, it was aimed to determine the language learning processes of the students (different languages s/he learned and the language courses s/he attends, which way / channel s/he learned Anatolian Turkish, Turkish Language Course completion level), and the obtained data is given below, thinking that it might be useful to explain the reasons of the determined mistakes:

![The Ratio of the Foreign Languages that the Student Know Other Than the Turkey's Turkish](image)

It was detected that the foreign languages the students learned other than the Anatolian Turkish are mainly Russian and English. One of the factors effective on this is that the second language spoken in the lands where the students live is Russian. Besides, as preferred across the entire world countries, Turkic students who studied Anatolian Turkish prefer learning English, too. Other than these, it was detected that the Azerbaijani students from Iran have learned Farsi (Persian language), due to that the official and education language in the country is Farsi. However, some of them study in the foreign languages or theology departments, hence speak Arabic or French.

The process of learning Anatolian Turkish of the students covered in the research is among the factors that affect the mistake ratio. In the graphics below, the languages the students learned and the language courses they attend, which way / channel they learned Anatolian Turkish, and their completion levels of the Turkish language courses are presented to your attentions:

![Language Learning Channels of the Students that Learned Turkish in Their Own Land](image)
60% of the Turkic students (18 persons) who studied Anatolian Turkish came learning Anatolian Turkish in their countries. 40% of them (12 persons) started to learn Anatolian Turkish in Turkey. Only 2 of the students started to study in their countries first, then received course support after coming to Turkey. A test of 45 questions was given to those who didn’t receive a course support, hence didn’t know of their language level, by the researchers, and their levels were determined according to the answers given. The Anatolian Turkish sufficiency level of the students is as follows:

After analyzing the written documents of the students, the results yielded four different thematic mistakes done by the students: phonetic, morphological, semantic and syntactic level mistakes. Following section presents the findings regarding these mistakes. Examining the data of the written expression works taken from the students, a sum of 149 related mistakes were detected in the 30 works. It was detected that 61 (40.93%) of these were in phonetic, 45 (30.20%) were in morphologic, 35 (23.48%) were in semantic, and 8 (5.36%) were in syntactic levels.

### 3.1. Phonetic wrong transition

Examining the written expression works of the Turkic students, it was detected that the wrong transition mistakes in the phonetic level were affected by the mother tongue; no samples were met with the effect of the second or third languages.
Wrong transition samples in the phonetic level are 61 in total, and their ratio is highest among the general mistakes by 40.93%.

Examining the mistakes generally done in the phonetic level, it was detected that the students, by the influence of their mother tongue, even though they know the little vocal differences, they make wrong transitions in the words that exist both in their own language and in the Anatolian Turkish. In other words, students prefer to write the words not as they are used in the Anatolian Turkish, but as the versions of the same words that are used with slight differences in the own languages.

The wrong transition mistakes, in terms of consonants, found in the written expressions of the students who made mistakes in consonants rather than vowels might be classified as:

- **k < g / q < k**
  - Azerbaijani / 13: keç- < geç-
  - Daha başarı için okumak kerek.
  - Kyrrgyz /24: kerek < gerek
  - Ötken kün okula baralmaryn.
  - Kazakh /42: kün < gün
  - Novruzda yumurtalara kırmızı yeşil ve başqa renglerle hoyüyorlar.
  - Azerbaijani / 17: başqa < başka

- **Wrong transition mistakes such as the changes of y < ğ:**
  - Erzurumda havalan soyuk. [Azerbaijani / 15: soyuk < soğuk]
  - Ders çalışmakla belimi iyidi.
  - Kyrrgyz /21: iy-< eğ-
  - Atatürk Üniversitet bize çok şey oyetir.
  - Kazakh /40: oyret-<öyret-

- **Wrong transition mistakes such as the changes of t < d:**
  - Atladınız zaman “ağırlığım uğurluğum bu odun üstüne tıkaldınsı” söyleyorsun.
  - Azerbaijani / 17: tıkul- < dökül-
  - Bu sene ders notlarını tüşük.
  - Kazakh /43: tüşük < düşük
  - Şimdi tört sınıf var.
  - Kyrgyz /24: tört < dört

- **Wrong transition mistakes such as the changes of b < p:**
  - Ev sahibleri papagın içerisinde seker yumurta olan doldurab kapının önüne bırakıyolar.
  - Azerbaijani / 17: ev sahibleri < ev sahipleri
  - Savolsun abim sayesiyle bu düşüncem genişti.
  - Türkmen /3: savol- < saqol-
  - Burasi güzel ve biraz sovuk ama bu sovukla burasi güzel.
  - Türkmen /4: sovuk < soğuk
  - Wrong transition mistakes such as the changes of g < k:
  - Dagları deryaları gölleri ormanları çeşmeleri gibi çok güzel bir dogaya sahipdir.
  - Azerbaijani / 17: daga < dağ
  - Aşgerlikde olan arkadaşim Sahibe mektup yazıyorum.
  - Azeri /15: aşgerlik < askerlik

- **Wrong transition mistakes such as the changes of a < e:**
  - Dostum herkese salam soyle.
  - Türkmen /4: salam< selam
  - Ayn 13 başlıyor ve 21 kadar davam eder.
  - Azerbaijani / 17: davam< devam
  - Annem kardaşım ve ben.
  - Türkmen /9: kardaš < kardes
  - Novruzda yumurtalari kirmizi yeşil ve basqa renklerle hoyyorlar.
  - Azerbaijani / 17: novruzda < nevruzda o < e

- **Wrong transition mistakes such as the changes of o < a:**
  - Havanın nimdiği pek te hoşumo gitmedi.
  - Kyrrgyz /24: hoşumo < hoşuma
  - Wrong transition mistakes such as the changes of ö < e:
  - Benim söygli okulun.
  - Turkmence /1: söygli < sevgili
  - Wrong transition mistakes such as the changes of a < u:
  - O kalabaliktta okamak ne kadar güzel.
  - Türkmen /6: oka- < oku-
3.2. Wrong transitions in morphological level

Examining the written expressions of the Turkic students, it was detected that the 45 of the mistakes done were in the morphological level. All of them were the wrong transitions from the mother tongue. The majority of the mistakes in the morphological level that occupied a 30.20\% ratio among all of the mistakes done are made up of the usages of the Standard Anatolian Turkish tonal / atonal versions of the sounds that make up the members in the mother tongues of the students. Samples were encountered in which Azerbaijani, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Kazakh students used the suffixes such as /+dA/, /+dTɭ/, /+dAn/, /+Ib/, /+cA/, /+nçI/ … etc., as per the features in their own mother tongues, and they didn’t follow the rule to use them tonal / atonal according to be suffixed to related words as in the Standard Anatolian Turkish. Hence, these particles are as /+TA/, /+TIr/, /+TAn/, /+Ip/, /+CA/, /+nçI/ in the Standard Anatolian Turkish.

- /+dA/ < /+TA/
  1993-de Türkmenistanda doğdum.  
  Turkmen /3  
  Azerbaijani /16

- /+dTɭ/ < /+TIr/
  Gördüğünüz gibi en çok zorlandığım beceri Türkçe yazmakdır.  
  Türkmen /3  
  yazmak> yazmak'tır

- /+dAn/ < /+TAn/
  Yabancı uyuştu öğretici yardımı için esas da 
  Türkmen /3  
  dersden< dersden

- /+Ib/ < /+Ip/
  Benim doğub büyüdüm ilinse asırlarca yaşar.  
  Azerbaycan /13  
  doğub< doğup

- /+cA/ < /+CA/
  Dolaysıyla türkçe quce olsa yarısı türkçe yarısı Türkmençe eve 
  Türkmen /4  
  Türkmençe< Türkmen

- /+nçI/ < /+nçI/
  Şu an ikinçi sınıfta okuyorum.  
  Kyrgyz /24  
  ikinçi< ikinçi

One of the wrong transition mistakes the students of Turkic origin learning Anatolian Turkish in the morphological level due to their mother tongues is that they prefer the vocals of their own mother tongue, in the intermediate vocals in the suffixes added to the meaningful members. The most characteristic sample detected in the study is the n < y change in the junction of the meaningful member and the suffix. The reason for this is that the accusative case marker /+I/ after a vowel in the Standard Anatolian Turkish is different in Turkmen, Azerbaijani and Kyrgyz Turkish languages. In the Standard Anatolian Turkish, a word ending in a vowel takes and intermediate “y” when a suffix beginning with a vowel is added. One of the functions of the member /+I/ is to point the accusative form. But in Turkmen, Azerbaijani and Kyrgyz Turkish languages, this function is accomplished by the suffix /+nI/ (Ministry of Culture, 1991: 1102, 1050, 1028). Therefore in the Anatolian Turkish the intermediate vocal is “y” while it is “n” in the other Turkish languages, which is present in the form of the suffix already.

Senin elinden yemek yemeni özledim anne.  
Turkmen /1  

Türkçeni biraz öğrendim.  
Turkmen /4  

Türkiyeni hep lider görmek bizzitme hayalimizin 
Azerbaijani /16  

bir parçasıdır.  

Bu dünyayı ülkeni çok sevdim.  
Kazakh /40  

Bu dünyayı ülkeni çok sevdim.  
Kazakh /40
The wrong transition examples seen in the negative form of the ability modal verb are:

- Dolaylıyla yarısı Türkçe yarısı Turkmençe eve geldikten son kendi yazanlarımı kendim okuyabilmiyordum.
- Ötken kün okula baralmayın.

The wrong transition mistake in the /suffix+ postposition/ form was met in the written expression of just one student. In the Turkmen Turkish, one of the postpositions forming the last /suffix+postposition/ form with several members is “soň” (Buran and Alkaya, 2010: 148). It was detected that the Turkmen students studying Anatolian Turkish preferred the form /-TIKtan soň/ from their mother tongues instead of the form /-TIKtan sonra/ in the Standard Anatolian Turkish.

3.3. Wrong transition mistakes in the semantic level

Examining the written expression works of the Turkic students, it was detected that the 35 (23.48 %) of the wrong transition mistakes done were in the semantic level. All of these are the wrong transitions done from the mother tongue. Examples were given below, regarding the wrong transitions mistakes in this topic:

- Önce onunla alay ettim sonra çok fikirleştim.
- Havanın nimdigi pek te hoşuma gitmedi.
- Arkadaş bu benim okadık üniversitem harika.
- Türkiye bilim kültür medeniyet konukperven insaniyet bakımından çok iyi devlet.
- Annem ve babam kardeşim daha doğulmadan boşandalar.

3.4. Wrong transitions in the syntactic level

The written expression works of the Turkic students were examined; no mistakes were seen in the phrasal level, but 8 (5.36 %) syntactic mistakes were detected in the word cluster level.

In the Standard Anatolian Turkish, “belirtisiz isim tamamları (indefinite noun phrases) that lead among the expressive permanent concept marking methods formed by more than one meaning member make up a characterization group in the “determining noun with its adjectives + ø + determined noun + determining suffix” formation” (Gemalmaz, 2010, 251). Even though the same case is valid for other Turkic languages, the samples in which the students used “determining noun with its adjectives + ø + determined noun + ø” formation, due to the influences of the second, or third languages were observed.
One of the mistakes done in the word clusters level is in the marking the plural /+lAr/ suffix of students of Turkic origin studying Turkish in the adjective phrases formed in “undetermined adjective + noun + plural suffix” form.

/adjective+noun+lAr/ > /adjective+noun+ø /
Azerbaijanda her bölgelerin kendine özen şiveleri yemekleri oyun havaları vardır.
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