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THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE AND TURKISH LANGUAGE

AVRUPA DİLLERİ ÖĞRETİMİ ORTAK ÇERÇEVE PROGRAMI VE TÜRKÇE

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Abstract

The Common European Framework (CEF) is a reference document for curriculum and syllabus development, textbook writing, teacher training, and for assessment, and it has gained importance for discussions of AA curricula, and L2 teaching and learning in Europe. However, the CEF may not provide sufficient theoretical and practical guidance to enable test specifications to be drawn up for each level of the CEF. Although it is widely referred to all languages, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) remains relatively insufficient for teaching vocabulary. There have been several studies on CEFR on different languages; nevertheless, there has been no single survey carried out in Turkish Language in this field. Therefore, this article tries to find answers by exploring questions of whether the CEFR can help foreign learners of Turkish language to construct vocabulary based on CEFR levels or not; whether the CEFR scales are sufficient to communicate at various levels; and then to what extent the most common words in Turkish should be included. The findings of this study indicate that application of CEFR, especially in

teaching vocabulary, seems to be complicated to build or acquire for some languages which have different characteristics when compared to common European languages.

Key Words: Teaching Turkish as a foreign language, Turkish vocabulary, Common European Framework

Öz

Avrupa Dilleri Öğretimi Ortak Çerçeve Programı (ADÖÇ), müfredat ve izlençe gelişimi, ders kitabı yazımı, öğretmen yetiştirme ve değerlendirme açısından başvurulmuş önemli bir referans belgedir. Bu program AA müfredat tartışmaları ile Avrupa'da yabancı dil öğretimi ve öğrenilmesi açısından önem kazanmıştır. Ancak Avrupa dilleriyle ilgili yapılan birçok çalışmada, ADÖÇ teori ve uygulamalarının tüm dil seviyelerini karşılayabilecek değerlendirme özelliklerini sağlamada yetersiz kaldığı vurgulanmaktadır. Birçok dil için uygulanabilen yaygın bir referans olarak gösterilse de yabancı dilin öğrenilmesinde büyük önem taşıyan kelime öğretiminde yeterli ölçüde verimli olmadığı bazı çalışmalarda dile getirilmektedir. Şimdiye kadar yapılan incelemelerde Avrupa Dilleri Öğretimi Ortak Çerçeve Programı ile ilgili Türkçe dışında birçok dilde araştırma yapılmış olmasına rağmen, Türkçe ve Avrupa Dilleri Öğretimi Ortak Çerçeve Programı ile ilgili bir çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Avrupa Dilleri Öğretimi Ortak Çerçeve Programı'nın Türkçeyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilere yardımcı olup olmadığını araştırmak; değişik dil düzeylerinde öğrencilerin sağlıklı ve akıcı iletişim kurmada yeterli olup olmadığını tespit etmek; ayrıca Türkçe öğretiminde ne dereceye kadar ya da yaygın olarak hangi sözcüklerin AA düzeyinde kullanılması gerektiğinin ortaya çıkarılmasına katkıda bulunmaktır. Çalışmanın sonuçları farklı özellikler içeren bazı dillerin özellikle de başlangıç düzeyinde kelime öğretiminde Avrupa Dilleri Öğretimi Ortak Çerçeve Programını uygulamanın büyük zorluk yarattığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı dil Türkçe öğretimi, Türkçe sözvarlığı, Avrupa Dilleri Öğretimi Ortak Çerçeve Programı

Introduction

Approximately 2500 languages active in the world have similar or different structures as they belong to different language families. Therefore, the process of learning a foreign language has always been considered difficult by learners whose native languages have linguistic dissimilarities from their target language. Especially, when there is a limited linguistic overlap at the lexical and semantic levels between these languages, it is hard for learners to grasp structural hints while

producing target language(s). Over the last 3 decades, much research has been conducted on vocabulary acquisition in many ways but how lexical knowledge is represented in the learner's mind, what is involved in the form-meaning mapping process, and what stages a word goes through before it becomes an integrated part of the learner's lexicon have received less salience (Jiang, 2004: 416). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate vocabulary knowledge, growth, and size considering what makes it difficult to learn words. Daller, Milton and Treffers-Daller (2007: 6) define a word as it is known if the learner can attach a meaning, such as an explanation or a translation, to a foreign language word. Upon consideration of words, Nation (2001: 27) draws attention to three distinctions: form, meaning, and use, as a fact that the words can be handled in the context, a part of speech, and storage in mind to call when necessary to use in speech or writing. When learners are exposed to a new language, they encounter some words they are familiar with or they have never encountered before. In this respect, they grasp the frequent and familiar words more easily than infrequent or unfamiliar words.

Considering familiarity and frequency, Jiang (2004) states that second language adult learners have a well established conceptual and lexical system and most L2 words have a correspondent concept and translation in the learner's native language. Thus, there seems to be little need for them to learn new concepts and meanings while learning L2 words, at least in the initial stages of L2 learning. Nevertheless, even though learners might be familiar with a second or third foreign language, and they are aware of patterns in any language or they have talents towards the foreign language facilities, they may feel insufficient for full communication. Jiang (2004) concludes that the lack of contextualized input and the presence of an existing conceptual and L1 system make learners' L2 vocabulary acquisition fundamentally different from vocabulary acquisition in the L1 (p.417). Additionally, vocabulary learning depends on the context surrounding each word, the redundancy or richness of information in a given context which enables a reader to guess unknown words successfully (Nation and Coady, cited in Huckin and Coady, 1999: 183). Thus, in order to guess the meaning of unknown words in context, the learner should be familiar with or recognize most of the surrounding words. According to Huckin and Coady, this ratio changes from researcher to researcher, ranging from 84% to 95% of the words in a text.

Common European Framework of reference is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages. In other words, CEFR is expected to provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications as plurilingualism is seen in the context of pluriculturalism. Thus, the Common European Framework takes into account the achievements by dividing learners into three broad divisions (A-Basic User, B-Independent User, and C-Proficient User)

which are also divided into six levels, two of which are A1 (breakthrough or beginner) and A2 (waystage or elementary), that are the focus of this study. Throughout these levels grading an individual's language proficiency, the CEFR describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing at each level and the vocabulary level is also likely to be guessed out of the information given in the table below:

level	description
A1	Can understand and use <i>familiar everyday expressions</i> and <i>very basic phrases</i> aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
A2	Can understand <i>sentences and frequently used expressions</i> related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. <i>very basic personal and family information</i> , shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on <i>familiar and routine matters</i> . Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Council of Europe, 2001	

In the nature of the CEF, language teachers are expected to feel confident of being able to offer learners language learning opportunities that address their needs, and that are transparent in terms of what is expected of them to achieve set objectives, and the outcomes that will reflect such achievements. According to Milton (2006) the nature of CEFR, and the nature of language itself generally make comparison between languages extremely hard (p. 2). Also, Hulstijn (2007) explains the notion of language proficiency in the CEFR as it praises two important issues: quantity (what the learner is able to do) and quality (how well the learner is able to do this). No doubt, in this interwoven action, original work from this framework includes wordlists about what vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary size, and coverage are strongly connected to give a general indicator for language. For several researchers, vocabulary size or word count is determined by excluding number, proper nouns and names, and false starts in statements and mistakes unconsciously written in texts to have reference to 1,000-lemma frequency bands (Daller, Milton and Treffers-Daller, 2007: 2-3). All the word forms are taken as tokens, lemmas, and word families: *tokens*, total number of words, *lemmas*, a collection of words such as "work, works, working and worked, or orange and oranges", *word families*, a base form of words and all of its derived and inflected forms that are semantically regular such as "worker, workmanship and workable" (Daller, Milton and Treffers-Daller, 2007: 4; Huckin and Coady, 1999: 184). In the studies by Huckin and Coady, a minimal threshold is given in size from 3,000 most frequent word families to 10,000 word families. Jones (1995; cited in Huckin and Coady, 1999: 185) states that languages coming from different families might have

few borrowings from neighboring Indo-European languages; therefore, lexical acquisition could be effectively learnt after reaching threshold level. The word size targeted to teach to the learners is expected to have already been determined according to the level of education and graded in the texts accordingly (Çiftçi and Çeçen, 2010: 123). In the study carried out by Milton (2006), the vocabulary growth figure also gives wordlist size as 1000 in English, 850 in French, and 2000 in Greek for A2 level, except for A1 level. For Turkish, unfortunately, the word size for elementary level is given neither in surveys carried out or articles published so far, except the word size listed as 1120 at Princeton University, USA. Also, in several studies, it is clarified that Nation's Levels Test and Meara and Milton's X-Lex give advantage to learners and teachers about the most frequent words of overall vocabulary knowledge (Daller, Milton and Treffers-Daller, 2007: 10).

Especially, when considering Turkish and English which differ markedly in their phonological and orthographic structure, foreign learners of Turkish are observed to struggle with learning linguistic features and lack successful acquisition in Turkish language. As stated by Cotukesen (1983), foreign learners of Turkish encounter difficulty with not only orthography, punctuation but also intonation, pronunciation, pitch, and juncture. No doubt, contextualizing items will give the learners a richer sense of using the target language and this will result in an integral outcome both in acquisition of the mother tongue and learning a foreign language as the process continues for learners' understanding and cognition of the way the language functions (Rivoluncri, 1998). If this is a natural outcome, then to what extent is it correct for English speaking learners to follow the CEFR while producing Turkish words and phrases?

Upon consideration of words, one of the differences between Turkish and English is the *syllable structure*. According to Durgunoğlu and Öney (1999: 285), Turkish has fewer syllable types than English, and ninety-eight percent of all Turkish syllables belong to one of the four simple syllable forms (V, VC, CV, and CVC) while the most frequent syllable form being the CV structure, which makes up fifty percent of all Turkish syllables. In other words, Turkish words have very clear syllable boundaries and are very easy to break into syllables. Göksel and Kerlake, (2005: 12) also state that roots are predominantly monosyllabic and they contain a single vowel. Thus, phonemes within the syllable are easier to identify than in English. However, the unfamiliarity of Turkish words makes it difficult for learners to recognize the difference between the stem of the word and the suffix attached to it. Even for learners taking the first steps of learning Turkish, words would seem completely different from their native language, even the very common phrases such as "Thank you" or "Thanks" in English are taken into account. For instance, these words would also appear in their mother tongue or in languages they are learning as a foreign

language as “Danke”, “Dank u” “Takk”, “Tak”, “Děkuji”, or “Dziękuję”, providing facilities to recall easily, but in Turkish it is likely to be impossible because of the forms of words as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. “Teşekkür ederim”, | “Thank you.” |
| “Teşekkürler”, | “Thanks.” |
| “Sağ ol”, | Thanking warmly in a informal way. |
| “Sağ olun”, | Thanking warmly in a formal way. |
| “Sağ olunuz”. | Thanking warmly in a formal way. |

Within syllable structure, several *affixes and flections* are explicit in one word in English. For instance, the same flectional suffix -s might express several different grammatical categories such as the indicator of plurality (e.g., book, *books*), the sign of third person singular in the simple present tense (e.g., go, *goes*; work, *works*), the possession (e.g., have, *has* in She’s a brother) or the reduction of auxiliary verbs of *is*, *has*, or *was* (e.g., She’s ...). Also, different flections might express the same grammatical category (postman, dentist, actor, driver, and/or technician etc.) unlike Turkish, which is an agglutinating language where grammatical elements are joined to the words as suffixes that mark voice, aspect, modality, mood, person and number in nouns while they mark derivation, negation, tense, person, etc. Thus, it would be said that Turkish suffixes have an extremely variable nature (Durgunoğlu and Öney, 1999). Besides being unfamiliar when compared to words in their native language, forming of words of Turkish origin is generally euphonic and there is a vowel harmony rule [front vowels (e, i, ö, ü) and back vowels (a, ı, o, u)]; in other words, the attached suffixes to the roots could be confusing for foreign learners *gözlükçüler+de*, “at the opticians”, *satıcılar+da* “at the sellers”). The other problem here would be the suffixes attached to the root in the inflectional and derivational form as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| a. göz means “eye”, | |
| gözlük | “eye-glasses”, |
| gözlükler | “eye+glass+es”, (the suffix -ler, makes nouns plural) |
| gözlükçü, | “optician”, (the suffix -çi indicates occupation) |
| b. gözlükçülerde | “at the opticians” (the suffix -de is locative case). |

Another difference foreign that learners find difficult is noun compounds, word-like units which are made up of two nouns or an adjective and a noun. It is difficult in Turkish as there are two types of noun compound: bare compounds and –(s)I compounds. Göksel and Kerlake, (2005: 102-103) explain bare compound as they consists simply of two juxtaposed nouns without suffixation to mark a relation between them. In this respect, it might seem easy for foreign learners of Turkish. (i.e.,

kağıt bardak means “paper cup”, or *kadın doktor* means “woman doctor”). However, the latter is by far the more common type of compounding in Turkish as these compounds consist minimally of two juxtaposed nouns, the first of which has no suffix while the second is marked with the 3rd person possessive suffix *-(s)I* and this means that it has variations considering not only the vowel harmony and the ending letter of the second word in a consonant or vowel but also the plural form of the second noun as in the examples given below:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------|
| a. | <i>otobüs bilet-i</i> | “bus ticket”, |
| | <i>Türkçe kitab-ı</i> | “Turkish book”, |
| | <i>diş doktor-u</i> | “dentist”, |
| | <i>otobüs şoför-ü</i> | “bus driver”. |

This rule changes when the noun compounds are made for words ending in a vowel as follows:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-------------------|
| a. | <i>Türk kahve-si</i> | “Turkish coffee”, |
| b. | <i>kadın çanta-sı</i> | “woman bag”, |
| c. | <i>masa örtü-sü</i> | “table cloth” and |
| d. | <i>erkek palto-su</i> | “man coat”. |

This rule changes again when the noun compounds are made for plural words as in the following:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | <i>okul sınıf-lar-ı</i> | “school classrooms” and |
| b. | <i>park yer-ler-i</i> | “parking lots”. |

As seen in the examples, suffixes are rather confusing for foreign learners of Turkish, especially, in the case of *-(s)I* compounds that are rarely written as one word.

The other difference or important characteristic between two languages is that of Turkish phonology. Even though the Turkish alphabet seems to be easy because each letter is pronounced in a single sound which never changes with the preceding or following letter and is uttered as it is written, learners coming from different language families are likely to be unsuccessful in phonetics even though they have similar letters but different sounds such as *c* in car, cell, chair, and ocean (e.g., car is pronounced as /'kär or ka:(r)/, cell like /sel/, chair /'cher\ and ocean /'õ-shän/, *i* in middle \ 'mi-dəl\, in falsity /'fõl-sə-tē/, in family /'fam-lē, or 'fa-mə-/, in girl /'gär(-ə)l/, in conversation /,kän-vär-'sā-shän/, and lastly *e* in elder /'el-där/, in ear /'ir/, in each /'ēch/, in dye /'dī/, in earn /'ærn/, in element /'e-lə-mənt/. Thus, vowel harmony becomes a very problematic feature in word formation when Turkish morphology is

considered (Durgunoğlu and Öney, 1999: 286). As mentioned earlier about the Turkish vowel system (a, e, i, ı, o, ö, u, ü) where they are divided into two categories as front and back vowels, they also have distinctive features as high/low, and rounded/unrounded. Any of the eight vowels may appear in the first syllable of a word but each is followed by a vowel immediately preceding it (Underhill 1976). Hence, the vowels are assimilated within the word in frontness and rounding. Nevertheless, it is hard to pronounce the new symbols/sounds of language for these learners; for instance, “ç, ı, g, ğ, ö, ü,”. When learners see different symbols (e.g., ç or ö), they probably get help from their native language to make it easy for them to produce. For instance, regarding the letters *ch* in *chair* in English or *ea* in *learn* /'lɜ:n/ to produce *ö*, there appears to be no problem as they can find equivalence in both languages but *ı* is rather difficult for them to produce. As recommended in CEF Framework (2001: 153), learners should be expected to develop their ability to pronounce a language by exposure to authentic spoken utterances, by imitation of the teacher or native speaker, by reading aloud phonetically textual texts or by learning orthoepic conventions might be failure to master for learners because the other languages learnt before would be dominant on the language with different phonetically system. However, it should be remembered that morphology deals with not only vowel harmony, roots, or stems, affixes as morphemes, but word-formation such as simple, complex, and compound words and also modifying word forms such as vowel alteration, consonant modification, irregular forms, suppletion and zero forms.

For learners learning Turkish as a foreign language, it is very common to utter the basic question of “How are you?” “Nasılsınız? /na':səlsənəz/” in the pronunciation of /na':silsini:z/ even though it is the most frequently used word in daily greetings. This results from the fact that L2 vocabulary acquisition is accompanied by little conceptual or semantic development. However, when speaking in L1, the retrieval of lexical forms is usually spontaneous and effortless (Jiang, 2004: 417). Among Turkish consonants, the so-called silent or soft “ğ” causes the greatest difficulty in utterance because in pronouncing the letter “ğ”, known as *g-breve* in English, in such words *ağaç*—[tree]/'aa:ch/, *soğuk*—[cold]/'so:uk/, *değil*—[not/negation in nonverbal statements] /'de:il/, *öğretmen*—[teacher] /'ə:retmen/. Hildreht (1972) comments on the Turkish orthography stating that “ğ” has no sound at all between certain vowels or may have the sound of “y” between certain vowels. However, it would be wrong to say that “ğ” has no sound at all between certain vowels, as this letter has a specific function each time it is used. When learners grasp that this letter is produced by extending the preceding vowel in the word, the problem would be solved. Otherwise, if they apply the phonological rules according to their native language or a foreign language, it will result in an inappropriate pronunciation such as *aç*—[hungry or open, imperative form of the verb to open] /'ach/, instead of *ağaç*—[tree] /'aa:ch/, These examples could be

increased tremendously. As seen in the examples given, a foreign learner of Turkish should constantly monitor and manipulate subword linguistic units considering the phonological characteristics of suffixes based on the criteria.

Besides having problems with phonetics, the *syntax*, which is difficult for learners whose native language is quite different from Turkish, learners of Turkish have difficulty with not only word order, but also with many other factors, such as the agglutination system, nominalizations, subject-verb agreement, adjective phrases, complex sentences, relative clauses, nominal cases, and derivational suffixes (Çotukesen, 1983 and Tüm, 2012). All these features cause learners not to be able to elaborate the word meaning and fail at formulating the structure in their minds (Huckin and Coady, 1999). For example, *Dinle+dim* "I (have) listened" (indicating imperative, the first person singular), *Dinlen+dim* "I (have) rested or taken a rest" (indicating imperative, the first person singular), or *Dinle+y+ebilir+im*, "I might listen" *Dinle+y+ebilir+dim*, "I might have listened" (implying that an action envisaged as having been possible at some time in the past was not actualized for the first person singular and consider the buffer -y to attach the suffix) or *Dinlen+ebilir+im*, "I might take a rest" (Göksel and Kerslake, 2005: 346). As seen in the examples, the main word formation process in Turkish is suffixation, the formation of a new word by attaching an affix to the right of a root. Each flexion has only one function and the number of suffixes might range from one to ten. To them, processes of word formation create words that can be very long and sometimes correspond to whole sentences in English (p. 43). Therefore, the essence of differentiating aspects is unusual, namely the presence of the subject during the action in Turkish (Cip, 2008). In the example of *Dinle+y+ebilirim*, **or** *Dinle+y+ebilir+dim*, there is a buffer attached to the root of the verb *Dinle* since the verb ends in a vowel and the suffix begins in a vowel. In this manner, two vowels can never come together in a word in Turkish, and in this case the suffix is attached by a buffer considering the feature of each suffix. However, there are also cases where the last vowel in the root of the verb may drop in the suffix. For example, *Dinle+yorum* "I am listening" in the form *Dinli+yorum* with replacement of e to i and this affix attached is considered according to the vowel harmony, which means i changes to -ı, -u, -ü regarding the stem of the verb. Also, in the Genitive case, the vowel dropping in the suffix is very common. For instance, the suffix meaning 'my' is formulated as -im in *Ev-im* "my house" but -m in *Çanta-m* "my bag" because Turkish is an inflected language and the last letter (consonant or vowel) is continuously rearranged when each new inflection is added. Even sometimes, the last letter -k changes into another letter *Sözlük-üm* but in the form *Sözlüğ-üm* "my dictionary" as -k is softened with the attached suffix (this exceptional rule is applied to few words ending in consonants -p, -t, -ç) (Durgunoğlu and Öney, 1999: 286). Consequently, as seen in the examples, it is not only

phonological characteristics, but also syntax and its feature about ordering of the inflectional and derivational suffixes to attach the words might become overwhelming for foreign learners of Turkish. In order to show the difficulty of ordering, the sentence *Çağdaşlaştıramadıklarımızdan mısınız?* "Aren't you the one whom we could not have contemporized?" would be a good example to give as evidence about recognizing the hints and the difficulties of lexicology and the number of words in a sentence in Turkish and English.

(8). a. *Çağdaşlaştıramadıklarımızdan mısınız?*

Aren't you the one whom we could not have contemporized?

Çağ	era
Çağdaş	contemporary
Çağdaşlaş	become contemporary
Çağdaşlaştır	make someone contemporary/contemporized
Çağdaşlaştıra	ability to make someone contemporary
Çağdaşlaştırama	negation
Çağdaşlaştıramadı	past tense
Çağdaşlaştıramadık	1st person plural
Çağdaşlaştıramadıklar	plural
Çağdaşlaştıramadıklarım	1st person possession
Çağdaşlaştıramadıklarımız	plural
Çağdaşlaştıramadıklarımızdan	ablative form
Çağdaşlaştıramadıklarımızdan mı?	question
Çağdaşlaştıramadıklarımızdan mısın?	2nd person singular (informal)
Çağdaşlaştıramadıklarımızdan mısınız?	2nd person plural (formal)

As seen in the example above, syntax deals with the organization of words into sentences in terms of the categories, elements, lasses, structures, processes and relations presented in the form of a set of rules. While ten words in English are coming together to form a statement, it is two words in Turkish. Even though the syntax of the language of a native speaker is highly complex and unconscious, the ability to organize sentences to convey meaning in a communicative competence

might be hard for any foreign learner when considering the words forming the sentence in the example given above.

Lastly, it is also possible to state that word order is flexible in Turkish; in other words, the direct word order is different in both languages: *S-O-P* in Turkish versus *S-P-O* in English. The primary emphasis tends to be initial in Turkish, with a slightly weaker emphasis in the end. In other words, in Turkish the headword always precedes the related word (except attributive adjectives) while in English there is the headword following the related one; verbs conjugate according to the person, number, tense, voice and mood, 3 tenses (Past, Present, and Future) and 3 moods (Indicative, Subjunctive and Imperative); prepositions in English are single words but in the form of suffixes or postpositions in Turkish; except a few usages there is no prefixation in Turkish, but English is a language that uses prefixes extensively; and lastly in Turkish all postpositions require the headword in the nominative or genitive cases. Walter (1993) also emphasizes that gerunds and infinitives are the other difficult issues for students since it is difficult to change the verbs into gerund and infinitive forms by adding necessary suffixes in Turkish.

Thus, the main focus of this study is to find out the answer to the questions of what the main problems of foreign learners of Turkish are while producing Turkish words and statements; whether the CEFR can help language learners to construct vocabulary based on CEFR levels or not; if the CEFR scales are sufficient to communicate at various levels; and finally, the reasons or sources that learners have difficulties while learning or formulating Turkish words.

Methodology

Participants

The participants are 38 Erasmus students attending Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey, to study in different departments corresponding to their fields. During their stay in Turkey, they also take *Turkish course for foreigners* either as a required course in their learning agreement or a selection course to survive during their stay in Turkey. They come from different European countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Slovenia) and they all know English as a foreign language to a certain level. They take their major courses in English and their Turkish level is beginners (A1). Therefore, at the initial stages in Turkish lessons Turkish teacher gives details related to Turkish language and its structure in English.

Findings

Data Collection

Considering that vocabulary knowledge is complex and multi-faceted, the Erasmus students who attended Turkish lessons in the beginner level were asked to write the ten most frequently used English words for their needs. In order to tackle the problem more deeply, they were given a questionnaire including three different sections such as a) what they think about Turkish as a foreign language, b) what makes Turkish words difficult to learn, and c) what the most important ten words they need in their educational and personal life in Turkey are. The poll was aimed at investigating the items regarding learners' lexis and needs. The Erasmus students were interviewed to realize word choice for how much vocabulary they feel familiar or unfamiliar with based on the CEFR.

Data Analysis

Each Erasmus student wrote his ideas about Turkish language, his experiences about learning the other languages in his educational or personal life, and a list of the ten most frequently used words in English in his daily life. All English words written by 38 Erasmus students (excluding two students who left this section blank) on the questionnaire sheets were collected and translated into Turkish (N. 364). The identical words written in the list are evaluated as a single token (lemma or word family), and the list totally including 105 tokens were analyzed on how frequently these words appear by utilizing Concordance 3.3 program that constitutes the vocabulary list. Thus, the most frequently needed words could be provided and to make a correlation with the 1120 Turkish words prepared for the elementary level at Princeton University (<http://www.princeton.edu/~turkish/aatt/vocablist.htm>) since there is no *1000 most frequent word band* for the beginner level A1 in Turkish.

In order to make a frame about the amount of word size in Turkish as a foreign language at A1 and A2 level, three word lists provided by three different groups or institutions are taken into account: 1) the wordlist by Erasmus students (N.105), 2) the wordlist by Princeton University, USA (N.1120), and 3) the wordlist by TOMER, Ankara University, Turkey (N.1685) (Yeni Hitit 1, a Turkish course book: for foreigners used at TOMER, Ankara University, Turkey). Also, a word list from an English course book entitled *Success*, which is utilized at the Foreign Language Vocational School at Çukurova University as an English course book for Turkish students to learn English. These two groups of word lists (Turkish and English), are taken into account in order to see which and how frequently both Turkish and English words are used in teaching a foreign language at a basic level.

All the Turkish words were analyzed by Concordance 3.3 Software for text analysis for languages to list tokens, lemmas, and word families. All the Erasmus students were sent all three word lists via e-mails to make clarifications about familiar

words for them (for original/non-original words in their native language or foreign language(s) they know). They were asked to make a list of the ten most frequently used words in English in their daily life; to highlight/distinguish the familiar words; and finally send them back to their Turkish teacher via e-mail in a word file form. The data regarding their vocabulary acquisition of Turkish and their word lists as reference manual were analyzed and presented in the following tables.

Views of Erasmus Students about Turkish Language

Table 1. Views of Erasmus Students about Turkish Language

		F	%
1	It is difficult to remember Turkish words.	15	39
2	Turkish is difficult because many words sound unfamiliar.	13	34
3	Turkish words are completely different compared to the other languages I speak.	11	29
4	Turkish is a difficult language.	12	32
5	Letters <i>ö, ü, ğ, ı</i> are difficult to pronounce.	10	26
6	Grammar rules are more difficult than words.	8	21
7	Pronunciation is similar to my native language so it is not difficult (Hungarian).	4	10
8	Turkish words are very difficult to remember and sometimes I forget what I have learnt	4	10
9	Turkish is very rich, interesting and funny.	2	5
10	Verbs are very hard to learn as they often have too many meanings.	1	3
11	I make up some similar words in my native language.	1	3
12	Sometimes it is possible to find some connections between new Turkish words and words I already know in my native or foreign language.	1	3
13	Turkish words are based on phonetics instead of spelling.	1	3

As seen in Table 1, most of the foreign language learners of Turkish have difficulties about both Turkish lexis, morphology, phonology, and its syntax. They explain their obstacles in threefold: a) the unfamiliarity of Turkish to the other languages, b) the agglutinative system and also c) pronunciation of some of the letters differently or inexistent words in Turkish. The reasons for not successfully acquiring Turkish words seem to appear due to vagueness in remembering the right word during conversation, lack of knowledge about the language they are learning, the complexity of Turkish language, either transferring words from the native language or failure transferring because of mismatch of words between two languages. These findings indicate a similarity with the statement of Milton (2006) that comparison across languages may not always be possible to carry out more language functions with fewer vocabulary resources in some languages than in others as vocabulary in both languages is structured differently. Structuring of the words according to the

two levels in CEFR also indicate that the basic words even at the beginner level require awareness for foreign learners while attaching inflectional and derivational suffixes.

Vocabulary Size

Table 2. Vocabulary Size

	tokens	lemmas	word families	total
Wordlist by Erasmus Students (A1)	105	3	9	105
Wordlist by Princeton University (A2)	1120	2	16	1120
Wordlist of Yeni Hitit 1 (A1 and A2)	1685	2027	1171	1685
Wordlist of Success (A1 and A2)	1034	277	178	1034

In Table 2, the wordlist prepared by Erasmus students to fulfill their vital needs for emergency usage is taken into account considering tokens, lemmas and word families. The reason for this is that researchers use word lists to investigate if learners can reach the targeted aim. The targeted word lists are compared to lemmatized word lists or 1000-lemma frequency bands as they would give an idea about the structure of language that constitutes a learner's knowledge of words. When considering the table above, the word list by Erasmus students namely, tokens, lemmas and word families are seen very limited since students wanted to learn survival words and phrases rather than to build up an effective conversation. Nevertheless, when considered that Turkish is an agglutinative language, all the derivational and inflectional suffixes are attached to the roots of the words, this outcome seems natural. In the list of Princeton University, it is seen that tokens are made as a list considering the classification (it is expected that inflectional and derivational ones are excluded in the list); therefore, the number of lemmas and word families are restricted. In the wordlist of TOMER, Yeni Hitit 1, more tokens are observed but this list is not categorized according to the first 1000 frequently word bands considering all the words at A1 and A2. It is observed that comparison of cross-languages sometimes is impossible because of differences in the structure of languages that belong to different language families. For instance, as seen as token, lemmas, and word families in Success, lemmas appears very limited when compared with Turkish words as Turkish is an agglutinative language. This could be explained that more language functions are carried out with fewer vocabulary resources in some languages than in others. They may inflect and derive words rather differently as seen in the table above. Even though vocabulary size and coverage appears to work very similarly in English and French (Milton, 2006: 4), in Turkish vocabulary sizes in the CEFR are not absolute and there might be differences because of the structuring of words in Turkish. Especially, the number of lemmas and word families in the table might give a clear idea about the suffixation of Turkish.

In this study the questionnaire was considered as an opportunity to acquire data concerning the discovery of the views of the participants about the Turkish vocabulary learning and the difficulties that they have had during learning process. Below is the note of one randomly chosen Erasmus students' views on this matter.

Erasmus S-07: "It's difficult because of the endings, I am often confused about them because there are so many of them. In my opinion Turkish language is all about the endings and that's the most difficult thing: to learn how to transmit the meaning by using correct ending."

Familiarity of Words

Table 3. Familiarity of Words

	tokens	familiarity		unfamiliarity	
		f	%	f	%
Wordlist by Erasmus Students (A1)	105/348	7	2.01	341	97.98
Wordlist by Princeton University (A2)	1120	50	4.46	1070	95.53
Wordlist of Yeni Hitit 1 (A1 and A2)	1685	182	10.80	1503	89.19

Vocabulary is a lively and vital part of the language as long as learners can reasonably use, attach a meaning to or find a correct collocation for something they recognize as a word. However, the ability to recognize or use the spoken form of a word is based on how words are constituted by suffixes. In several studies, productive vocabulary size is given as about 50% of receptive vocabulary size and it is emphasized that word knowledge includes knowledge at the level of the morpheme. Thus in learning Turkish, learners might feel lost as there are large vocabularies and recalling words might be hard. Learners are more likely to learn the frequent and familiar words than unfamiliar or infrequent words. As seen in the table above, the familiarity seems to be less than expected in learning a foreign language. It is expected that learners must be able to recognize on sight most of the surrounding words. For instance, in a study, a sight-recognition knowledge of the 2000 most-frequent word families of English enables learners to recognize and use is given approximately as 84% of the words in texts (Huckin and Coady, 1999: 184). When considered the table given above, the unfamiliarity of words seem to be around 90%. Probably, the statement in an Erasmus student's note below gives an idea about the difficulty with constituting or remembering words:

Erasmus S-14: "Turkish words are difficult to learn. I guess it's the fact that they sound quite exotic to me and mostly I have nothing in my mind which I can connect them with their meanings. I mean, in comparison with central and western European languages where I almost always have some connections in one way or another."

Knowledge, awareness and understanding of the language and its society are based on the relation between the 'world of origin' and the 'world of the target community', two of which produce an intercultural awareness. This can be enriched by awareness of a wider range of cultures than those carried by the learner's L1 and L2. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the cultures are transferred through the cultural richness in the languages. Thus, sensitivity to language and language use enables new experience to be assimilated into an ordered framework and welcomed as enrichment as it involves knowledge and understanding of how languages are organized and used (Council of Europe, 2001: 107).

Conclusion

Many theorists argue that foreign language learning requires attention to both meaning and form and CEFR focuses on the communicative proficiency from the perspectives of communication themes, communicative tasks and purposes, communicative language activities and strategies, communicative language processes, all of which are based on vocabulary size. However, language-policy makers and educational professionals seem to ignore the need to conduct research for improving some scales for other target languages. As some grammatical properties are unlikely to be concerned with meaning, languages such as Turkish and English differ considerably which results in failure or insufficiency for learners in formulating Turkish language. Thus, institutions should urgently conduct studies on a wide variety of oral and written discourses and corpuses in the levels A1 and A2 if CEFR aims at rising performance quality to provide enough awareness and knowledge for teachers teaching different languages as a foreign language. The foreign language teachers need to know their linguistic objectives not only the language they teach as a foreign language but also the others to some extent in order that they could make comparisons while teaching. Otherwise, the vagueness of explanation about the target language lacks motivations for learners. Consequently, the institutions should overview their curriculum in order to provide the needs of would-be teachers and in-service trainings. Also, corpus based on vocabulary in Turkish should be determined in accordance with agreed national and international standards. Especially, the broadening of borders of the European Union requires broadening the number of available languages and having standards. While CEFR scales seem multidimensional and perfectly prepared according to some languages spoken in Europe, it might fail for the others coming from different language families having the characteristics of unidimensional scales.

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