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AWARENESS LEVEL OF TEACHER CANDIDATES IN TERMS OF THEIR TURKISH LANGUAGE SUFFICIENCY: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the comments of teacher candidates from education faculties about their Turkish Language sufficiency levels. Descriptive model has been used in the study. Qualitative research method has been used for the data from the research, analyse and commenting. The study group of the study includes 40 teacher candidates who study in 4th class of the departments of Physical Education and Sports Teaching, Science Teaching, Turkish Language Teaching and Primary School Teaching in Kırıkkale University Education Faculty in 2011-2012 school year spring term. Semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers and composed of four questions has been used for gathering the research data. The semi-structured interviews for the research were recorded with the approval of the teacher candidate. The data from semi-structured interview were analysed by the technique of "descriptive analyse". It has been observed that teacher candidates have mostly difficulty in "speaking" language skill. Also it has been seen that "reading" is the language skill that they feel most comfortable in terms of Turkish language sufficiency. It has been determined that 14 of 40 teacher candidates in the study think that they don't use Turkish properly. There are some suggestions relying on the findings taken from the research.

Key words: Physical Education and Sports, Science, Turkish Language and Primary School Teaching Candidates, Turkish Language Sufficiency, Awareness, Level

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of education is to make the individual a member of the society and the contemporary world and to equip him with the skill and information needed for era. So it is necessary to educate them somehow to keep up with the developments and changes in society and in the world and also to attribute these changes.

Today, developments in science and technology have been affecting the education world, too. The aim of education is to grow the individual aware of new developments and knowledge as suitable to the era. To reach this aim, new education programs, methods and techniques have been developed. As the appliers of these programmes, methods and techniques are teachers, it can be concluded that the most important item of success is teachers [5, 21]. Education as one of the basic social institutions is the most important problem of societies. The main subject of this basic problem is teachers [15]. Teachers are the people who form the life styles of students, increase the responsibility of them by directing individual and social developments, develop research and creative skills and suggest humanity and country love [4].

To bring up students suitable to the aim of educational system is related to the teachers who are professional. According to Özden, for an efficient education, it is necessary to educate teachers qualified in terms of profession and equipped at all points [20]. Efficient communication skills of teacher have an important place because learning process is a communication process in general. In this process, the meaningful message exchange is related to the qualifications of the teacher. The quality of in-class communication is an important point effecting the character and success of students. The basic element providing the communication is language. So, every nation struggles to give a good language and communication skill for the young people and children who are the assurance of the future [11].

Language which is the basic element of individual and social life determines the quality of the product acquired on the process of education. The person directs his own thoughts depending on his language skills and so makes several mental activities. Finally this situation affects individual's sufficiency in educational field. The factors and individual differences in social life have an important effect on the development of language skills [13]. In this respect, it is important to reveal the multi-dimensional effects and personal differences, and to develop the

language usage of the individual on requested direction. The Turkish sufficiency levels of teachers who are teaching in the institutions are very important. It is reported that intelligence, quality, learning styles, personality and motivation of the learners are important beside the success of language teachers [16, 18].

There are very few things known about how the teachers teach the target language or in other saying whether they are aware of their own sufficiency levels in terms of the target language. As a result of literature study, a research done for the Turkish sufficiency levels of the teachers hasn't been come across. There are some researches done on teacher candidates but the branch difference draws attention on these researches [1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 17] and it has been understood that these studies are quantitative.

Language usage is very important for all the teachers. Also, awareness on this subject is very important because the person who is aware of the deficiency on any language skill can do studies to remove this deficiency. By considering these points remarked above, in this study, it is aimed to determine the thoughts of teacher candidates, who are educated in education faculties, about their Turkish language sufficiency levels.

2. METHOD

2.1. The Model of Research

Descriptive model has been used in this study which aims to determine the comments of teacher candidates for their Turkish sufficiency levels. Qualitative research method has been used for data gathering, analysing and interpretation. Qualitative research is a type of research in which data gathering tools such as observation, interview and document analyse have been used and a process has been followed for identifying the perceptions and events in a real and natural environment [2].

2.2. Study Group

The study group of the study includes 40 teacher candidates who study in 4th class of the departments of Physical Education and Sports Teaching, Science Teaching, Turkish Language Teaching and Primary School Teaching in Kırıkkale University Education Faculty in 2011-12 school year spring term. When determining the study group, the teacher candidates were attend to the research on a volunteer basis. The departments and genders of these candidates were given in Table 1. When giving the demographic information, the abbreviations "PEST" for Physical Education and Sport Teaching, "ST" for Science Teaching, "PST" for Primary School Teaching and "TLT" for Turkish Language Teaching were used.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the study group

	PEST	ST	PST	TLT	Total
Gender					
Male	6	5	4	5	20
Female	4	5	6	5	20
Total	10	10	10	10	40

2.3. Data Gathering and Analysing

Semi-structured interview technique was used for data gathering. First, a draft interview form including six questions was prepared for the interviews. Four experts' comments were taken for the interview questions. As a result of these comments, some questions were edited and two of them removed from the form. After that, a test was made with two teacher candidates. Data taken from the test interview was evaluated with the experts and the form with four questions took its final situation.

The semi-structured interviews were recorded by approve of the teacher candidates. After the interviews, the records were printed by the researchers. The comparison of the records and the printouts were made by two experts for the reliability of the research. As a result of this examination, it has been identified that there is no difference between the records and printouts. After this stage, analyse process started.

The data taken from semi-structured interviews was analysed by "descriptive analyse" technique. According to this approach, data is summarized and commented according to the predetermined subjects. Data can be presented by considering the questions and dimensions used in the processes of interview and observation. Direct citations are used for reflecting the comments of individuals in descriptive analyse [2: 224]. In the process of data analyse, a coding key was formed for the research questions. To increase the reliability of the research, coding was made separately and carefully by the researchers and an expert. After that, the consistency of the data coded was compared and it was observed that there wasn't data coded differently. The data processed according to the coding key was presented as frequency tables according to the interview questions and the aim of the research. The teacher candidates were numbered as PEST-1, ST-2, PST-3… according to the departments. During the presentation of the findings, direct citations were used for supporting these findings.

3. FINDINGS

The data taken from the interviews was presented under the titles of the problems arising from programme, students, teaching-learning process and equipment as suitable to the themes identified in descriptive analyse process.

3.1. The Comments of Teacher Candidates on the Field in Which They Have Difficulty in Using Turkish Language

The teacher candidates were asked the question *"What is the field in which you have difficulty in using Turkish language? Why are you thinking like this?"* The findings taken from the answers of the teacher candidates were given in Table 2.

Table 2. The Fields in which Teacher Candidates Have Difficulty in Using Turkish

Field	PEST	ST	PST	TLT
Listening	1	1	2	4
Speaking	5	7	4	3
Reading	-	-	1	-
Writing	1	1	1	3
Grammar	3	1	2	-
Total	10	10	10	10

It is observed that physical education and sport teaching candidates have mostly difficulty in the fields of speaking (5 people), grammar (3 people), listening (1 person) and writing (1 person) according to Table 2. Some comments of physical education and sport teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"I have difficulty in speaking. Especially when I recognize a new person or I have to tell something in front of the class, I am shy. I forget what I know. I can't speak. I am not interested in reading. That is why I have problems." (PEST-3)

"I have difficulty in grammar because I know little about the subject. There are a lot of grammar rules. I am preparing for KPSS exam now. I can't do the grammar questions in this exam, too. I think I don't love grammar." (PEST-10)

"It can be "listening". I am relaxed when speaking, but I am bored when listening. So I can't understand what I listen. I lose attention when listening." (PEST-1)

It is observed that science teaching candidates have mostly difficulty in the fields of speaking (7 people), listening (1 person), grammar (1 person) and writing (1 person) according to Table 2. Some comments of science teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"Speaking is difficult for me… when speaking, I am worried about "Will I use the words in wrong places?" Especially when I present my homework in the class, I am afraid of saying something wrong and my friends make fun of me." (ST-6)

(FBÖ-4) "I have difficulty in speaking because I can't pronounce some words correctly. Istanbul Turkish dialect… I can't do that. For example, I sometimes say "g" instead of "k". I know that I must speak properly as a teacher candidate. I think it is because I live in a small town." (ST-4)

"I have difficulty in writing. I am comfortable when speaking but when writing it is difficult. I have difficulty in writing my thoughts. For example I can't write composition. I can't persist on writing as I don't like." (ST-10)

It is observed that primary school teaching candidates have mostly difficulty in the fields of speaking (4 people), listening (2 people), grammar (2 people), reading (1 person) and writing (1 person) according to Table 2. Some comments of primary school teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"I can say reading… I can't easily understand what I read. I read for twice or three times for understanding what I read. It is like this in general. So I don't love reading, too." (PST-1)

"I always have difficulty in grammar. There are a lot of rules. I can't always keep these rules in mind. In fact they are all used every time, but I don't know exactly. So I don't love Turkish lessons from of old." (PST-4)

"I have difficulty in speaking. As I speak quickly, I swallow some of the words. In the schools where I go for application, some of the students say that they don't understand what I say. I force myself to speak clearly, but I can't do it." (PST-8)

It is observed that Turkish language teaching candidates have mostly difficulty in the fields of listening (4 people), speaking (3 people) and writing (3 people) according to Table 2. Some comments of Turkish language teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"Listening isn't a simple subject as seen. I think I have difficulty in listening because I have distractibility and I can't put together when I experience distractibility." (TLT-5)

"As my diction isn't proper, I avoid speaking in front of people. My heart sinks." (TLT-2)

"When writing according to my thoughts, there become some disunities rather than obeying the writing rules. So, writing isn't for me." (TLT-7)

3.2. The Skills That Teacher Candidates Feel Themselves More Comfortable When Using Turkish Language

"On which skill field you feel comfortable when using Turkish language? Why?" question was asked to the teacher candidates. The findings taken from the answers of the teacher candidates were given in Table 3.

Table 3. The Skills That Teacher Candidates Feel Themselves More Comfortable When Using Turkish Language

Field	PEST	ST	PST	TLT
Listening	5	3	4	-
Speaking	1	1	1	2
Reading	2	2	2	8
Writing	2	4	3	-
Total	10	10	10	10

It is observed that physical education and sport teaching candidates feel more comfortable in the fields of listening (5 people), reading (2 people), writing (2 people) and speaking (1 person) according to Table 3. Some comments of physical education and sport teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"I am more comfortable when listening. I love to listen to the people on daily life. If the sayings are logical, I continue to listen. I dislike to listen to drivellers."(PEST-10)

"I feel more comfortable when speaking. I love to talk. I make the people listen to me… For example if you give me a subject, I can talk about it for hours." (PEST-7)

"I am more comfortable when writing because I am not in a hurry. I can write by thinking, or I can edit my writings. I think this is the best thing for writing. I have no fear of making wrong."(PEST-5)

The skills that Science teaching candidates feel more comfortable are writing (4 people), listening (3 people), reading (2 people) and speaking (1 person) according to Table 3. Some comments of science teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"I feel more comfortable when reading. I love to read. I don't leave a book easily until I finish it. I love to read newspaper, too." (ST-1)

"I can say "writing". When writing, I have more time for thinking. I usually think that I express myself better when I re-read my writings. I sometimes write poems, too." (ST-6)

"I am more comfortable when listening. I think that I am a good listener. For example, let me both listen and read the same thing, I understand my listening better."(ST-3)

The skills that primary school teaching candidates feel more comfortable are listening (4 people), reading (2 people), writing (3 people) and speaking (1 person) according to Table 3. Some comments of primary school teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"I am more comfortable when listening because I love to listen. I think I understand more easily by listening." (PST-8)

"As I love to read, I can say "reading" because I think reading is the easiest learning type. I love to read different kinds of books." (PST-10)

"Certainly writing because I love to write. I write my memories in my free times. I can say that I express myself better by writing."(PST-9)

The skills that Turkish language teaching candidates feel more comfortable are reading (8 people) and speaking (2 people) according to Table 3. Some comments of Turkish language teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"Reading is a life style for me and it is the most pleasurable thing I have experienced. I feel myself very comfortable when reading." (TLT-9)

"The best one is speaking for me. As I say everything in my mind at once, it is easier and more practical for me." (TLT-8)

3.3. The Comments of Teacher Candidates on Whether They Use Turkish Language Properly or Not

"Do you think that you use Turkish language properly? Why do you think like that?" questions were asked to the teacher candidates interviewed. 7 of physical education teaching candidates answered as "no" and 3 of them as "yes". The comments of these candidates are as follows:

"No, I can't use. There is no rule especially on the circle of friends. However, we don't think the rules everywhere!" (PEST-9)

"I can't say that I use it properly. For example, I don't pay attention to the rules when speaking in daily life and writing on the internet." (PEST-3)

"Yes, I pay attention to the rules. I try to use the words properly when speaking and writing. I may do some mistakes, too." (PEST-2)

It is determined that 6 of science teaching candidates interviewed think that they use the language properly and 4 of them think that they don't obey the rules. Some comments of science teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"Yes. I think that I use Turkish properly. I am good at grammar. I take care of punctuation when in exams and writing something else. When speaking, I don't pay attention to the rules, but if it is a serious conversation, I carry out the rules."(ST-10)

"Yes, I pay attention to use the language properly. I sometimes make mistakes, but I think I obey these rules." (ST-7)

"No, I don't think so. I don't pay attention to them when writing on the internet and somewhere else. I can say that I don't pay attention when speaking. However I wonder who thinks about the rules when speaking." (ST-9)

In the study, 7 of primary school teaching candidates interviewed think that they use the language properly and 3 of them think that they don't obey the rules. Some comments of primary school teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"Yes. I pay attention to obey the rules. It is important for me to use the words and grammar properly when writing and speaking."(PST-9)

"I think that I use the language properly. For example when I hesitate on the words, I look for it in the spelling dictionary at once. I try to use Turkish words." (PST-7)

"I can't say that I carry out the rules properly. As I said before, I have no enough knowledge about grammar. I dislike the grammar rules. It is difficult for me." (PST-4)

All Turkish language teachers interviewed within the scope of the study state that they use the language properly:

"I think that I use it properly because I am educated on this way. So it will be very comic to make mistake on this field." (TLT-1)

"Certainly I think. I will be a Turkish teacher. How can I teach something that I don't apply?" (TLT-7)

3.4. The Comments of Teacher Candidates about the Effects of Verbal and Written Narration

"Do you think that verbal and written narration lessons at university affected the skill of using Turkish language? Explain it?" questions were asked to the teacher candidates interviewed. 4 of physical education teaching candidates answered as "yes" and 6 of them as "no". The comments of these candidates are as follows:

"Yes. It affected. I learned what I would pay attention on verbal and written narration by the studies in these lessons." (PEST-8)

"No. It didn't affect. I don't know why but I think so." (PEST-1)

"I think it didn't affect. Perhaps, we didn't do enough writing and speaking studies."(PEST-4)

It is determined that 7 of Science teaching candidates answered "yes, it affected", 2 of them "no, it didn't affect" and 1 of them "I'm neutral." Some comments of science teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"Yes, I think it affected. I think I controlled my excitement and I spoke better by the speaking studies." (ST-3)

"In my opinion, it didn't affect. Perhaps, it isn't easy to change a principle from past." (ST-4)

"I am not sure. I can't say anything about "yes, it affected or didn't affect." (ST-7)

It is determined that 5 of primary school teaching candidates answered "yes, it affected", 3 of them "no, it didn't affect" and 2 of them "I'm neutral." Some comments of primary school teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"Yes, in my opinion, it affected. I noticed that I used the words wrongly in verbal narration lesson. I corrected my faults."(PST-3)

"I don't think it affected. Because the class was very crowded. In my opinion, there mustn't be many students in verbal narration class." (PST-5)

"I don't know. Perhaps, it affected. I am neutral on this subject." (PST-10)

Turkish language teaching candidates stated that there were some courses resembling to these lessons and said that these lessons were useful. Some comments of Turkish Language teaching candidates about the subject are as follows:

"It is certainly useful as these lessons are our branch lessons."(TLT-2)

"I think that not only these lessons but also all the lessons are useful for using Turkish effectively." (TLT-5)

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the study, it has been concluded that teacher candidates have mostly difficulty on speaking. It can be said that this situation is related to the teacher candidates as participants and their necessities of speaking in front of communities. It is clear that the second field they have difficulty is listening. Listening is a skill to be able to understand speaker's or reader's message clearly [12]. As listening includes a process resulting with interpretation, it causes some problems on the process and lack of communication. 8 of participants who experience this situation stated that they had difficulty in listening. Only 1 of 40 participants stated that he had difficulty in reading. The number of participants who had difficulty in writing and grammar are equal to each other. The number of teacher candidates who stated that that they had difficulty in both fields is 6.

It is obvious that the field which teacher candidates feel themselves comfortable in terms of Turkish sufficiency is reading. In the studies on the reading habits of teacher candidates, there has been data supporting this finding [6, 7, 8, 14, 19]. Especially Turkish language teaching candidates stated that they feel comfortable on reading skill. In the study made by Özlük, it has been revealed that this situation is valid for all of the learning fields for Turkish Language teachers [21]. Physical education and sport teaching candidates stated that they are good at listening skill, and science teaching candidates said that they are good at writing skill.

From the comments of 40 teacher candidates' viewpoints evaluated in the study, 14 teacher candidates have been revealed not to use Turkish rules properly. Generally, it has been thought that this ratio is high for teacher candidates.

When the curriculum of the departments except for Turkish teaching has been examined, it is obvious that there are curriculums for using Turkish. It can be generally said that these lessons are verbal and written narration lessons in the first class. Whether these lessons contribute to Turkish usage skill has been asked to teacher candidates and it has been understood that the candidates mostly think that there is a contribution. When the reason of teacher candidates who state that there is no contribution has been asked, it has been understood that the reason is originated from teacher. It can be concluded that the awareness of teacher candidates for the level of their Turkish sufficiency is high. It is observed that the data of the study matches up with the study by Arslan and Kılıç [1]. In the study done with primary school candidates by Acar, it has been concluded that the candidates feel themselves sufficient on Turkish and the findings support our study [4]. We can make the following suggestions in the light of data taken from this study:

- The quality of Turkish language education for teacher candidates can be re-organized in accordance with the thoughts of the teacher candidates.
- Academicians who give lectures on Turkish language education in education faculties can be provided to act more consciously about the deficiencies of teacher candidates.
- An awareness can be provided for the teacher candidates that being Turkish isn't enough for them to use the language skills effectively in terms of the lessons given in graduate education.
- Teacher candidates can be provided to give the opportunity of application for listening, reading, writing and grammar fields and to develop themselves.
- In the studies done with teacher candidates, emphasis on the dimension of Turkish sufficiency can be made.

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