

Full Length Research Paper

Preferences of Turkish language teachers for the assessment - evaluation tools and methods

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The aim of this study is to determine the rate of teachers' use of assessment and evaluation tools given in 2005 curriculum of Turkish language teaching. To this end; we presented a list of assessment and evaluation tools on the basis of random sampling to 216 teachers of Turkish who work in Ordu, Samsun, Ankara, Trabzon and Istanbul provinces. The obtained data were analyzed via SPSS 15.0. We observed that self-evaluation, portfolio, peer evaluation, rubric, control list and observation forms were not used properly. Although these methods are included in both teacher's copies and student workbooks, it is observed that they were not given enough credit by the teachers.

Key words: Turkish language, assessment and evaluation, preferences.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is the expression of the results of the observation of a quality with numbers or symbols, and evaluation can be defined as a process of commenting on the results of a survey based on a defined criterion. Determining whether the process of education has been successfully completed requires a qualified measurement and evaluation process. Teachers are therefore supposed to master these two phases. That teachers need to be qualified with respect to assessment and evaluation is considered as a crucial property (Daniel and King, 1998; Gullikson, 1985; Mertler, 1999; Zhang and Burry-Stock, 2003; The Board of Education and Morality of the Ministry of National Education, 2008). Turkish language teacher's special field proficiency related headings of measurement and assessment (Güney et al., 2010) organized by Ministry of Education (2008) states that;

- being able to determine the purpose of the assessment and evaluation in Turkish language teaching;
- being able to use the tools / methods of assessment and evaluation in Turkish language teaching;
- being able to evaluate the results of the assessment done for language development of students and being

able provide feedback after evaluation; and
- being able to use the results of the assessment and evaluation for language development in practice (Güney et al., 2010).

Education planning is the organization of a student's acquisition at the end of the process; the method, technique, and means that will be used; how they will be applied; and the processes of evaluation. The evaluation is the last phase. It means propounding the effectiveness of components and learning outcomes in the process. The aim of assessment and evaluation is to check student's level of understanding to give him/her suitable tasks, to lead him/her to efficiently and finally, to apply the necessary methods in his/her learning process. In this respect, assessment and evaluation should be a source of information flow for the learning environment in class, but not a control mechanism (Karadüz, 2009).

The aim of this study is to determine the means and methods Turkish Language teachers working at primary schools under the Ministry of Education use and prefer for measurement and evaluation in the Ordu, Samsun, Istanbul, Ankara and Trabzon.

DATA AND METHOD

The aim of this descriptive study is to determine the rate of teachers' use of assessment and evaluation methods given in 2005 curriculum of Turkish language teaching. The scope of the research is the Turkish language teachers in primary education. The data were collected from a sample of 216 Turkish language teachers who were randomly selected. These teachers work in the schools in Ordu, İstanbul, Trabzon, Ankara and Samsun provinces of Turkey.

Data collection tool

As the data collection tool, questions which are formed according to the three-scale and which include the assessment and evaluation tools were used. The data collection tool was presented to Turkish language teachers and comments were made in accordance with their answers.

Collection of data and analysis

The data have been directly conveyed by researchers to 252 randomly chosen Turkish Language teachers, who work at primary schools under the Ministry of Education in the provinces of Ordu, İstanbul, Trabzon, and Samsun. At the end of the preliminary examination, those which bear deficiency in data have been excluded; and data from 216 Turkish Language teachers constitute the exemplification of the research. The data was analyzed using SPSS 15.0. Moreover, that the researchers have previous teaching experience helped in evaluating the results in a more detailed fashion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was conducted on 86 male, 130 female total 216 Turkish language teachers who work in Ordu, Trabzon, İstanbul, Samsun and Ankara provinces of Turkey. The youngest of the teachers in the sampling is 22, and the oldest one is 53 years old. Eighty-six percent of the teachers have 10 year teaching experience. This rate can be considered as a factor on teachers' ability to keep up with innovations in educational methods. Eighty-eight percent of the teachers had B.A in education degree and 9% of them had M.A in education degree. Seventy-four percent of the teachers are graduates of department of Turkish language teaching while 21% of them are graduates of Department of Turkish language and Literature teaching. Majority of the teachers being the graduates of the Faculty of Education may be considered as a factor increasing the reliability of the research.

The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 60% and partially 40% for short answer questions. Short answer questions were used in order to test the knowledge of students in the scale of very knowledge on a particular topic. Students can be asked to provide short answers for the questions such as "Who is?", "What is?", "When?", "What are?" (MEB, 2006: 216).

Short answer questions in Turkish language teaching are usually used to learn the plot or other components of a text during or after the text analysis. Sixty percent of the

teachers expressed that they always use short answer questions and 40% of them expressed that they sometimes use them. Thus, we can say that short answer questions were one of the most frequently used assessment and evaluation methods. Çakan's (2004) research is a study that supports this result. Short answer questions take place in the second rank percentage of 46.1 among the assessment instruments that teachers most frequently use.

Turkish Education consists of listening, speaking, reading and writing sections. Students are at the center of education system. For this reason measurement and assessment tools and methods must be appropriate to develop these skills. But multiple choice questions don't appropriate for these aims. The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 84% and partially 16% for multiple choice questions. Eighty-four percent of the teachers in the data make use of multiple choice questions. The most effective factor behind this is placement tests. That the questions are of multiple choice in these tests lead teachers to use the same question type. Accordingly, multiple choice questions occur in written examinations. Moreover, students can be provided extra multiple choice tests for SBS examination.¹ The use of multiple choice tests shows variation among teachers. All of the teachers responded "yes" or "partially". This can be considered as resulting from the SBS effect on teaching. Frequency of using multiple choice questions is higher when compared to other questions. The fact that central exams are given as multiple choice questions is the main factor of this result. The researches of Güven (2002), Adıyaman (2005), Belet (2010), Acar (2008), Çakan (2004), Göçer (2005) are the studies in which multiple choice questions were used the most frequently. Despite the advancing years, multiple choice questions have kept their frequency of use. The reason of this is the exam-based learning system and the use of multiple choice questions in this system.

The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 60%, partially 54% and no 16% for matching questions. Thirty percent of the teachers expressed that they use matching questions. Sixteen percent of them expressed that they do not use them while 54% of them said they partially use the matching questions. It is thought that the use of matching questions increased with the new curriculum on Turkish language teaching. The reason behind this can be the fact that there are exercises with matching questions in student workbooks and teacher's copies. Especially, there are many exercises with matching questions in grammar drills. Moreover, teachers prefer matching questions for the sake of providing question variations in written exams.

The findings show that teachers who are in research

¹SBS is the abbreviation for the central examination for the placement of primary school graduates to high schools. In Turkey it is conducted by the government office of The Center for the Student Selection and Placement¹.

scope say yes as 49%, partially 46% and no 5% for true-false questions. Forty nine percent of the teachers expressed that they use True-False questions while 46% of them expressed that they partially use them. Only five percent of the teachers expressed that they do not use True-False questions at all. As in the case of matching questions, True-False questions are among the drills in student workbooks and teacher's copies. These types of questions are used especially in the works for text comprehension and grammar drills. Moreover, teachers can use True-False questions in written examinations.

That the rate of "No" case is low can be considered as resulting from the reasons discussed above.

The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 89% and partially 11% for open ended questions. The aim of the Turkish teaching curriculum is to educate individuals who are able to express their feelings, thoughts and wishes -oral and written- in a complete way. To this effect, students have to be provided opportunities to express themselves. Reading, speaking and listening activities in which the students are the real subjects have to be included in the curriculums. Narrative skills (reading and writing) have an important role in developing the ability of expression. Due to this, it is thought that the use of open ended questions is the correct method to take. Open ended questions provide students to express themselves in a detailed way. Eighty-nine percent of the teachers in the data expressed that they use open ended questions and 11% of them responded 'partially'. Teachers who responded as 'partially' might considered the frequency that they use open ended questions and answered as 'partially'.

The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 19%, partially 49% and no 32% for interviews. Interviews are one-to-one and intimate talks with students. Interviews can be used to make the students participate to the class, to provide solutions to their problems, to help them having self-confidence and to make the classes more content. Nineteen percent of the teachers expressed that they use interviews. Forty nine percent of them said that they used interviews partially and 32% of the teachers expressed that they do not use interviews. That the teachers do not use interviews often is a challenging situation. The reason of using the interview system less frequently is that teachers prefer using conventional methods. Gelbal and Keleçoğlu (2007) stated according to their researches that teachers prefer conventional methods in getting to know their students and determining the level of their success. Partial use of interviews is also among the research results.

The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 9%, partially 74% and no 16% for attitude scales. Attitude is an emotional condition or tendency which is observed as accepting or denying an individual, an organization or a thought (MEB, 2006: 220). Attitude scales are tools developed in order to assess individuals' attitude towards organizations or

thoughts. Within the 2005 curriculum of Turkish language teaching, an attitude scale for the class of Turkish language teaching has been developed. Nine percent of the teachers expressed that they use this scale and 74% of them expressed that they partially use the scale. Sixteen percent of teachers responded that they do not use the scale at all. The use of the scale can help improving the quality of the class and preparing activities which draw students' attention. For this reason, the teachers should use the scale efficiently. The research of Yıldırım et al. (2009) is parallel to this work. Attitude scales in the study of Yıldırım et al. (2009) are the least used tools for assessment and evaluation.

The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 30%, partially 56% and no 14% for self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is evaluating one's own practices. Self-evaluation practices given in 2005 curriculum on Turkish language teaching is aim at making students able to evaluate their own learning. This activity enables student to see his/her mistakes and correct them. Thirty of the teachers expressed that they use self-evaluation tool and 56% of them responded that they partially use it. The rate of the teachers who do not use self-evaluation at all is 14%. Self-evaluation is applied especially in reading, writing, speaking and listening activities in text books. However, the 16% rate of 'no' case can be considered as indicating that teachers skipped this evaluation tool. Gelbal and Keleçoğlu (2007) and Sağlam's (2011) studies support the data of this research. In Gelbal and Keleçoğlu's studies (2007), the methods for students to assess themselves take the first place among the methods teachers have never used. Sağlam (2011) attributed the reason of disuse of self-assessment methods to students' failing to act objectively.

The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 44%, partially 28% and no 28% for peer evaluation. Peer evaluation as a tool of assessment and evaluation is based on students' evaluation of each other's works. This activity makes students acquire objectivity and have detailed knowledge on a particular topic. Forty-four percent of the teachers responded that they use peer evaluation and 28% of them responded that they partially use it. Twenty-eight percent of teachers expressed that they do not use peer evaluation at all. As self-evaluation, peer evaluation is present in exercises in workbooks. Thus, we can conclude that teachers skip this evaluation tool during exercises. The studies of Sağlam (2011) and Yıldırım et al. (2009) supported the results of this study. In the study of Yıldırım et al., the use rate of peer evaluation forms is the least. However, Sağlam

(2011) associated underutilization of self assessment forms by teachers to students' failing to be objective.

According to 2005 curriculum of Turkish language teaching, the observation is made based on observation forms, control lists and rubric (Table 1). For this reason, these three units are discussed separately. Thirty-two percent of the teachers responded positive for

Table 1. The rate of the use of observation forms, control lists and rubric.

	Yes	Partially	No
Observation forms	32%	41%	27%
Control lists	9%	13%	78%
Rubric	26%	46%	28%

observation forms and 27% of them responded negative. Forty-one percent of the teachers used observation forms partially. Although observation forms which are prepared for reading, listening, writing and speaking separately are given in student workbooks and teacher's copies, teachers do not apply this tool as in the case of self-evaluation and peer evaluation tools.

Control lists are marking a performance with signs. It is the least used tool by the teachers in the sampling of current study, with a percentage of 9. The rate of the teachers who partially use this show that 13% and 78% of the teachers responded that they do not use control lists at all. And since the rate of the control list used is low, this is worth discussing.

The last observation tool is the rubric and is especially used for evaluating the performance and project assignments. Twenty-six percent of the teachers expressed that they use this tool while 28% of them expressed that they do not use it. Forty-six percent of the teachers responded that they partially use the rubric. Keeping in mind that there is at least one performance assignment per class in a semester, it is clear that teachers skipped this tool similar to the peer evaluation, self-evaluation and observation forms. Sağlam (2011) explained the reason of disuse of grade rubrics as the difficulty in forming the criteria.

The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 37%, partially 35% and no 28% for portfolios. Portfolios include student products that are prepared during the semester. With this respect, they are helpful for the development of the students and observation of this development by teachers. Thirty-seven percent of the teachers expressed that they make the students prepare their portfolios for the class. Thirty-five percent of them partially applied this tool while 28% of the teachers expressed that they do not make students prepare portfolios. Although student portfolios are obligatory applications in Turkish language teaching classes, this tool is skipped by the teachers too. Sağlam (2011) expressed the reason of disuse of product files by teachers as their taking long time.

The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 77% and partially 23 for performance assignments. Performance assignments are used to assess the high level cognitive skills of the students. These assignments are prepared to evaluate how successful students are in putting what they learnt in class into the practice in their daily lives. It shows how students

will solve the problems in his/her life and how he/she will make use of what he/she learned in class (MEB, 2006). While seventy-seven percent of the teachers make use of this tool, twenty-three percent of them use it partially. The absence of a teacher who does not use this tool can be considered as resulting from the fact that every student has to prepare at least one performance assignments per class in a semester. Acar (2008) in his study specified how frequent were teachers' use of product files, performance evaluations and grade rubrics. According to the result of this study, performance evaluation is the most frequently used assessment tool. Gömleksiz et al. (2010), in their study, emphasized the importance of project and performance assignments for education.

The findings show that teachers who are in research scope say yes as 74% and partially 26 for performance project assignments. Seventy-four percent of the teachers in the data expressed that they make use of project assignments while 36% of them responded that they partially use it. Project assignments are among the innovations coming with the 2005 curriculum in Turkish language teaching. Project assignments can be defined as intensive experiences formed as a result of students' involvement in an activity which he/she is interested in. They are quite crucial in terms of education (Fleming, 2000: 1). Also, project assignments are independent activities and researches done by the students for the aim of having an original product about the real life (MEB, 2006: 224). They make the students do necessary research on a topic, make them acquire some discipline for studying alone and help them in their personal development. Students are required to prepare at least one project assignment per semester. He/she decides for which class he/she will prepare his/her project. Turkish class has a high rate of choice among students for project area. In the data, 26% of the teachers responded that they partially apply project assignments. This seems to result from the frequency of Turkish class for being chosen as the project area. In the studies of Belet (2010) and Yıldırım et al. (2009) as well, Project assignments are the most frequently used assessment and evaluation tools. Kart (2010) stated that performance tasks make learning entertaining, enjoyable and form a non-monotonic learning environment. Gömleksiz et al. (2010) emphasized in their study the importance of project and performance tasks for education.

Conclusion and suggestions

This study aimed at determining the frequency of assessment and evaluation methods used by Turkish language teachers in Turkish language teaching classes. We conclude that open ended and multiple choice questions are the most preferred evaluation tools among others. It is thought that the reason behind this is that teachers give tests with multiple choice questions in order to prepare students for SBS exam. Recall that SBS exam

includes multiple choice questions. Preparation for this exam via multiple choice questions is what occurs in schools. However, at the same time, these exams are the most important obstacle for the exact application of Turkish language teaching curriculum and realization of its various aims. Güven's (2001) work supports this conclusion. Open ended questions are among the most suitable evaluation tools for the aims of Turkish language teaching and for the development of students. In this respect, high frequency of their use can be considered as a positive situation.

Short answer questions, true-false questions, performance and project assignments, matching questions are used often in Turkish language teaching. That the project assignments are obligatory, and the reliability of true-false and short answer questions are considered as increasing the use these evaluation tools. As for the attitude scales and self-evaluation tools, their use has the highest value of 'sometimes (partially)' in the data.

Peer evaluation, interviews, observation, control list, rubric and portfolio are less used evaluation tools although they are given in the Turkish language teaching curriculum. It is interesting to note that the frequency of using project assignment tool is high while the frequency of the evaluation tool, rubric, that is specifically used to evaluate project assignment is low. Student portfolios include the selected works that the students prepared during the class. They can give reliable information about the development of students. Portfolios are prepared with the guidance of teachers and it is the teacher's responsibility to evaluate them. In spite of all of these, the frequency of the use of portfolios is low. As for the peer evaluation, although it is present in student workbooks and teacher's copies, its frequency is low according to this study. Control list is the least used assessment and evaluation tool according to the results of this study. That the frequency of peer evaluation, control list, rubric and portfolios is low can be considered as resulting from the fact that teachers do not use these tools or they do not have enough information about how to use the tools. Metin and Demiryürek (2009) observed that Turkish language teachers have positive attitudes towards the new curriculum in Turkish language teaching. However, since teachers do not have enough information about the new evaluation tools, and that they do not have enough time and financial resource to improve themselves, they are not able to apply evaluation activities in class. As another reason, Metin and Demiryürek, (2009), Gelbal and Keleçoğlu (2007), Karadüz (2009) and Yıldırım and Öztürk (2009) state that the classes are too crowded to apply all of the evaluation tools. Gök and Erdoğan (2009) state that half of the teachers in their data do not consider themselves as qualified for applying all of assessment and evaluation tools. Moreover, Güven (2001), Çakan (2004), Gözütok et al. (2005); Yaşar et al. (2005), Birgin (2006), Güven and Eskinürk (2007) and Erdal (2007) point out those teachers are not qualified for using the assessment and evaluation methods. All of these previous

studies and the disproportional use of the assessment and evaluation tools support our conclusion in that teachers are not qualified enough to make use of the assessment and evaluation tools. In this respect, we can claim that teachers have to participate in the seminars lead by specialist with the aim of having full grasp of knowledge on the use of assessment and evaluation tools such as observation forms, control lists, rubric and portfolios. Çakan (2004), Pilten (2001) and Güven's (2002) studies are the studies that prove teachers' lack of knowledge about some subjects of assessment and evaluation area. Ministry of National Education was aware of this. In 2008, Department of Educational Research and Development determined that eighty-four percent of teachers need help about assessment techniques. In line with this requirement, it brought field proficiency of Turkish teachers into force with Turkish Education Board's article, dated 06.05.2008 and numbered 00360 (Güney et al., 2010, 286). Assessment and evaluation in special field proficiencies are scheduled as a different skill field, bottom line level of proficiencies are determined.

Another reason of teachers' not being able to use assessment and evaluation tools at a sufficient level is the wide variety of them and being time consuming. Sağlam (2011), Gelbal and Keleçoğlu (2007), Şahin (2007), Akata (2009), Arda (2009), Kuran and Kanatlı (2009) and Acat and Demir's (2010) studies are consistent with this thought.

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PREFERENCES OF TURKISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS FOR THE ASSESSMENT-EVALUATION TOOLS AND METHODS

Dear colleagues,

This survey is designed for the purposes of a scientific study whose aim is to determine which assessment and evaluation tools are preferred by teachers most. Your sincere answers to the questions will help us in a great deal.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Nail GÜNEY

Gender: Male Female:

Year of employment

1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years 20 years or above

Degree:

Institute of Education High School of Education B.A in Education M.A in Education Ph.D. in Education Education

Graduate of:

Department of Turkish Language Teaching Department of Turkish Language and Literature Teaching Department of Turkish Language and Literature

Other

	Yes	Partially	No
Short Answer Questions			
Multiple Choice Questions			
Matching Questions			
True-False Questions			
Open ended Questions			
Interviews			
Attitude Scales			
Self Evaluations			
Peer Evaluations			
Observations			
• Observation Forms			
• Control Lists			
• Rubric			
Portfolios			
Performance Assignment			
Project Assignment			