

A Descriptive Study on the Use of Turkish by Foreigners Living in Türkiye in the Context of Bilingualism

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Abstract

In recent years, Türkiye has received significant number of immigrants from various countries for different reasons. One of the most fundamental factors in the adaptation of foreigners or immigrants to the country they settle in is language. In this respect, this study focuses on the use of Turkish by foreigners settling in Türkiye and the linguistic difficulties they face. The study's descriptive survey model sample includes 251 participants from various nationalities who have settled in Antalya. The opinions of the participants on their use of Turkish in daily life and the difficulties they encounter while using Turkish were collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS 25 program. In the study, frequencies and percentages were used for the distribution of descriptive characteristics of foreigners' use of Turkish and the difficulties they face; Pearson correlation test was used to show the relationship between them; Independent samples t-test, ANOVA and Kruskal-Wallis test were used to show the comparison of these according to age, gender, length of stay in Türkiye, place of residence, mother tongue and educational background variables. The study's findings indicate that the level of Turkish usage among foreigners residing in Türkiye is moderate. Native speakers of Russian use Turkish more than native speakers of English, those living in the city center use Turkish more than those living in villages, and women use Turkish more than men. In addition, native speakers of English have more difficulty learning and using Turkish than participants from the Turkic Republics. Morphological and syntactic features of Turkish, alphabet differences, and differences between standard and colloquial Turkish are the main difficulties experienced by foreigners.

Keywords: Teaching second language, teaching Turkish, bilingualism, language skills.

Türkiye’de Yaşayan Yabancıların İki Dillilik Bağlamında Türkçe Kullanma Durumları Üzerine Betimsel Bir Çalışma

Öz

Türkiye, son yıllarda çeşitli ülkelerden farklı nedenlerle önemli sayıda göç almıştır. Yabancıların veya göçmenlerin yerleştikleri ülkeye uyum sağlamalarındaki en temel etkenlerden biri dildir. Bu açıdan bu araştırmada Türkiye’ye yerleşen yabancıların Türkçeyi kullanma durumları ve karşılaştıkları dilsel zorluklar üzerinde durulmuştur. Betimsel tarama modelinde yürütülen araştırmanın örneklemini Antalya’ya yerleşen, farklı milletten 251 katılımcı oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcıların günlük hayatta Türkçeyi kullanma durumları ve Türkçe kullanırken karşılaştıkları güçlüklerle ilişkin görüşleri anket vasıtasıyla toplanmış ve SPSS 25 programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmada yabancıların Türkçe kullanma durumları ve karşılaştıkları zorluklara ilişkin betimsel özelliklerin dağılımı için frekans ve yüzde; bunlar arasındaki ilişkiyi göstermek için Pearson korelasyon testi; bunların yaş, cinsiyet, Türkiye’de bulunma süresi, yerleşim yeri, ana dili ve eğitim durumu değişkenlerine göre karşılaştırılmasını göstermek için de Bağımsız örneklem t-testi, ANOVA ve Kruskal Wallis testi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma bulgularına göre Türkiye’de yerleşik olarak yaşayan yabancıların Türkçeyi kullanma durumları orta düzeydedir. Ana dili Rusça olanlar İngilizce olanlardan, şehir merkezinde yaşayanlar köyde yaşayanlardan, kadınlar erkeklerden daha fazla Türkçe kullanmaktadır. Ayrıca ana dili İngilizce olanlar, Türk Cumhuriyetlerinden gelen katılımcılardan Türkçe öğrenme ve kullanmada daha fazla zorluk yaşamaktadır. Türkçenin morfolojik ve sözdizimsel özellikleri, alfabe farklılıkları ve standart Türkçe ile günlük konuşma dili arasındaki farklar yabancıların yaşadığı temel zorluklardır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İkinci dil öğretimi, Türkçe öğretimi, iki dillilik, dil becerileri.

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INTRODUCTION

In the globalizing world, with the developments in transportation and communication technologies, the number of people migrating from one place to another country is dramatically high. The situation of leaving one's own country and cultural region for various reasons is migration, it has reached the highest level. As a result of migration, people meet people from different nationalities and live together temporarily or permanently. Türkiye's favorable climate, natural and historic beauties, rising living standards, and increasing social, political, and cultural effects in the international area have led people to come and settle here for business, education, and tourist purposes. In parallel with this development, the number of bilingual individuals with Turkish on one side is increasing.

The concept of bilingualism can be evaluated from a number of different perspectives. It also encompasses the use of a language by speakers of other languages in their own geographical area. According to Cenoz and Genesee (1998), the majority of people use more than one language on a daily basis. Additionally, Baker (2001) posits that approximately two-thirds of the world's population is bilingual.

A review of the literature revealed a multitude of definitions of bilingualism. In some definitions, experts concentrate on the rationale behind bilingualism, whereas in others, the emphasis is on the level of language proficiency and the abilities associated with it. In other words, there is no consensus on the definition of bilingualism (as cited in Stern 1992, Baker, 2001). The definition of bilingualism is dependent on a number of variables, including age, acquisition style, acquisition conditions, exposure to the mother tongue and proficiency level in both languages. In 1933, Bloomfield defined bilingualism as "the ability to use both languages effectively like a native speaker." In 1982, Grosjean defined bilingualism as "using both languages in daily life." Cook and Bassetti (2010) defined bilingualism as "using two languages in daily life to meet one's needs" (cited in Dewaele, 2015).

Mohanty (1994) defined bilingualism as "speaking in two or more languages with speakers of any or all of the two or more languages to meet individual and social communication needs," thereby emphasising the communicative aspect of bilingualism. Haugen (1953) proposed an alternative perspective, defining bilingualism as the ability to construct meaningful sentences in a second language. In a similar vein to Haugen, Diebold (1964) defined bilingualism as the ability to speak at a basic level. However, Baker (2001) offered a critique of this situation. In this context, he asserts that a tourist or businessman who is able to greet in a second language is also bilingual. Jessner (1997) also adopts a holistic approach to bilingualism, arguing that bilingualism has a dynamic structure and that language proficiency may change depending on the subsystems of linguistics in order to meet the communication needs of the individual (as cited in Cenoz & Genesee, 1998). Upon examination of the definitions, it becomes evident that each definition of bilingualism is distinct from the others. However, there is a convergence of opinion on the fundamental aspect of bilingualism, namely that a person who is bilingual knows more than one language and uses these languages in their daily life.

There is a robust correlation between language and immigration. Language plays a significant role in the process of immigrant integration, facilitating the transition and integration of migrants into their new environment. As Esser (2006) asserts, language is the primary factor influencing the integration of immigrants into the society to which they have migrated. Language has the effect of fostering a sense of belonging and integration within society, whether at the individual or social level. Language enables individuals to meet their communication needs in daily life. Consequently, all other needs are met through language. However, recent years have seen an irrelevant relationship between migration and learning a language. The existence of a common language in which individuals with different mother tongues can communicate, and its spread on a daily basis, has a negative effect on learning the language spoken in the society to which they have migrated. Marci (2015) highlights this situation in his study of English people living in China.

The number of foreign migrants to Türkiye has fluctuated over time. The number of foreigners in possession of residence permits reached its peak in 2022, with 1,343,701 individuals holding such permits. Following this, there has been a decline in the number of foreign residents, with the most recent figures from the Prime Ministry (PMM) indicating a total of 1,086,596 foreign residents (PMM, 07 September 2024a). Similarly, the number of immigrants under temporary protection (Syrians) decreased from 3,636,698 in 2022 to 3,095,039 (PMM, 7 September 2024b). Despite these decreases, Türkiye continues to be a favourable destination for foreigners due to a number of factors, including its geopolitical position, pleasant climate, historical and natural beauties, international influence, progress in health and education, and other factors. Many factors affect language learning.

Learners' attitudes, age, mother tongue, the purpose of learning the language, and living in the country where the target language is spoken are some of these factors. Dialects of the locals, learners' attitudes towards locals and Turkish culture, learners' goals and objectives of learning Turkish, and Turkish people's desire to speak in English to improve their language skills negatively affect foreigners learning process of learning and using Turkish. In addition, the fact that Turkish language's structure, dropping/ adding vowels or consonants, and suffixes cause difficulties in learning or using Turkish. Learners have some difficulties in terms of what some expressions mean or how they are used by native speakers due to the social use of the language. The target of teaching a new language is not only to enable the learner to learn the structure of the language but also to provide them with the ability to meet their needs and deal with linguistic difficulties. Foreigners living in Türkiye have to use Turkish to integrate with the community and meet their needs in daily life. Their needs urge them to learn Turkish and therefore bilingualism. In this context, describing the learning and use of Turkish as a second language by foreigners living in Türkiye will provide precious information to the literature about bilingualism.

There are few studies in the literature that examine the Turkish usage and the difficulties encountered by foreigners living in Türkiye. In Antonova-Ünlü, Sağın-Şimşek and Kavanoz's (2016) study, it was found that the British prefer to use English more than Turkish in their daily lives. Another important result of this study is that British immigrants want to integrate with Turkish society, but they cannot achieve this because of their low level of Turkish language skills. Şahbaz (2018a) investigated the difficulties experienced by British immigrants who settled in Fethiye due to marriage or retirement in the process of learning Turkish. In the study, it was stated that the morphology of Turkish and pronouncing sounds that do not exist in English were found difficult by the British. The fact that Turkish words have multiple meanings and Turks' insistence on speaking English with them were identified as another important problem. In another study conducted by Şahbaz (2018b), the attitudes of British people living in Fethiye towards learning and using Turkish were evaluated. Here, too, Turkish was generally characterized as a language that is difficult to structure and learn. In Yıldız and Sertoğlu's (2019a) study, it was stated that parents whose mother tongue/second language is Russian see themselves as "beginners" and their children as "intermediate". Parents and their children prefer to use their mother tongue/second language at home and Turkish more frequently in daily life. In another study conducted by Yıldız and Sertoğlu (2019b) with Russian native/second language participants, it was similarly stated that parents generally learned Turkish to meet their daily needs, while their children's main reason for learning Turkish was to receive education in Türkiye. Bayram and Eryılmaz (2025) examined the acculturation strategies of Russian immigrants and Syrian refugees living in Türkiye and its impact on second language learning and stated that refugees need more support for cultural adaptation and second language acquisition. In their study on the difficulties encountered in the language acquisition of Russian and Ukrainian immigrant children living in Türkiye, Bayat, Hazar Deniz, and Şekercioğlu (2025) stated that immigrant children make basic mistakes in various language aspects from phonetics to syntax, and that there are many obstacles to second language learning for them, stemming from the children themselves, their parents, teachers, preschool education and politics.

The aim of this paper is to reveal the use of Turkish by foreigners living in Türkiye and the difficulties they face while learning or using Turkish in the context of bilingualism. Within the framework of this purpose, answers to the following problems are sought:

1. What is the level of Turkish language skills of foreigners living in Türkiye?
2. To what extent do foreigners living in Türkiye use Turkish in their daily lives?
3. What are the difficulties that foreigners living in Türkiye face while learning/using Turkish?
4. Is there a relationship between the use of Turkish by foreigners living in Türkiye and their Turkish language skills?
5. To what extent do the difficulties faced by foreigners living in Türkiye differ in relation to their a) hometown, b) mother tongue, c) length of stay in Türkiye, d) residence, e) gender, f) age, and g) marital status?

METHOD

Research Design

This study is descriptive research in descriptive survey model design. In this context, it intends to determine the use of Turkish by foreigners living in Türkiye. The survey model aims to investigate the past or present as it is. The event, situation, or object that is the subject of the research is tried to be described in its own conditions (Karasar, 2017, p.109).

The Population of the Research

The participants of the research are foreigners living in Türkiye whose mother tongue is not Turkish. The accessible universe is the concrete universe that the researcher can reach and has a realistic choice (Büyüköztürk et al. 2021). The accessible universe of the research is foreign people residing in Antalya. Since it was thought that it would not be possible to reach these people in terms of time and cost, a sample was taken and a sample of 251 volunteers residing in Gazipasa, Alanya, Konyaaltı, Kemer, and Kas districts of Antalya was formed. Some demographic characteristics of the participants are as follows:

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

Variables	Categories	N	%
Gender	Female	192	76.5
	Male	59	23.5
Age	18-30	28	11.2
	31-40	51	20.3
	41-50	46	18.3
	51-60	53	21.1
	61-70	47	18.7
	71 or over	26	10.4
Education	Middle/High School	61	24.4
	Academy	27	10.8
	University	109	43.6
	Masters/PhD	53	21.2
Country	United Kingdom	106	42
	Russia	22	8.8
	Ukraine	21	8.4
	Germany	17	6.8
	European Countries	37	15
	Turkic Republics	18	7.2
	Middle East and African Countries	16	6.4
	Other Countries	14	5.6
Marital Status	Married	145	57.8
	Single	106	42.2
Duration of Stay in Türkiye	1 year or less	33	13.2
	2-5 years	76	30.4
	6-10 years	45	18.0
	11-15 years	44	17.6
	16-20 years	27	10.8
	21 years or over	25	10.0
Residential Area	City center	101	40.2
	Town	85	33.9
	Village	64	25.5
Mother Tongue	English	106	42.2
	Russian	48	19.1
	Other	46	18.3
	German	19	7.6
	Persian or Arabic	15	6
	Turkish Languages	14	5.6

192 (76.5 %) of the participants in this research are female and 59 (23.5 %) are male. 28 (11.2 %) participants are 18-30 years old, 51 (20.3%) 31-40 years old, 46 (18.3 %) 41-50 years old, 53 (21.1%) 51-60 years old, 47 (18.7%) 61-70 years old, 26 (10.4%) participants are 71 years old or over. 61 (24.4%) of the participants are secondary or high school graduates, 27 (10.8%) academy graduates, 109 (43.6%) undergraduate, and 53 (21.2%) master's or PhD graduates.

When the hometowns of the participants are examined, it is seen that the participants are mostly from The United Kingdom (N:106, 37%); there are participants from European countries, Russia and Ukraine. Of the participants, 145 (57.8%) are married and 106 (42.2%) are single. The spouses 43.8% of those who are married are Turkish; 16.1% are European; 31.4% are British; 8.8% are from other countries. When the duration of stay in

Türkiye is analyzed, 33 (13.2%) of the participants are 1 year or less; 2-5 years of 76 (30.4%); 6-10 years of 45 (18.0%); 11-15 years of 44 (17.6%); 16-20 years of 27 (10.8%); 21 years or over of 25 (10.0%) have been living in Türkiye. 25.5% of the participants live in a village; 33.9% live in a town; 40.2% live in the city center. The Mother tongue of the participants is as follows: “English” 106 (42.2%), “Russian” 48 (19.1%), “other languages” 46 (18.3%), “German” 19 (7.6%), “Persian or Arabic” 15 (6.0%), “Turkish languages” 14 (5.6%).

Data Collection Tools

A questionnaire, which is one of the quantitative data collection methods, was used to collect the data. The questionnaire is made up of two parts. The first part is a scale consisting of demographic information of the participants, the second part is a 5-point Likert scale consisting of 37 items. The scale which is called “Scale of Turkish Learning/Using of Foreigners Living in Türkiye consists of three subdimensions. These subdimensions are (1) Purpose of Learning Turkish, (2) Using Turkish, (3) Challenges Faced While Learning Turkish. To develop the scale, an item pool based on literature review was created. The items in the item pool were written in a draft to get the opinions of the experts. The draft was reviewed by field experts and an assessment expert. During this process, the number of items in the draft was reduced and changes were made. Finally, a preliminary application was made with 10 participants from the research universe, and it was checked if there was a problem with the item’s clarity of the questions. Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients and item-total correlation coefficients were calculated.

It was observed that the item-total correlation coefficients of the items in the first dimension of the scale ranged from .75 to .39, and the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient (α) was .86. The item-total correlation coefficients of the items in the second dimension of the scale were between .74 and .42, and the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient (α) was .85. The item-total correlation coefficient of the third dimension of the scale were calculated between .76 and .37, and Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated as .80. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient (α) for the whole scale was .84. The results of the validity and reliability analysis reveal that it is a scale with high validity and reliability. Within the scope of this study, the entire scale is not used, and analyses are made regarding the second and third dimensions of the scale.

Data Collection

Before applying the data collection tool of the study, permissions were obtained from the Akdeniz University Ethics Committee. Within the permissions, the data were collected from the participants living in the Gazipasa, Alanya, Konyaaltı, Kemer, and Kas districts of Antalya. Nearly 70% of the data were applied face to face, and the rest were applied online due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Analysis of the Data

The data collected within the scope of the research were analyzed using the SPSS 25.0 package program. Before the data were analyzed, some demographic information was checked, and the data that were not suitable for statistical analysis were grouped and made suitable for the analysis. For example, in the category where the participants stated their hometown Kazakhstan (N=9), Uzbekistan (N=3), Turkmenistan (3), Kyrgyzstan (N=2), and Azerbaijan (N=1) were combined as “Turkic Republics”. A similar combination was made in the participants’ mother tongue, other languages he/she knows, and languages spoken at home.

Before analysing the data, assumption tests were applied to determine whether the data were suitable for the analyses planned. Firstly, it was examined whether the data of the variables within the scope of the research show normal distribution. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed for each variable in the research model. The significance levels obtained as a result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test were found to be above 0.05 ($p>.05$). This showed that the data conformed to normal distribution and parametric tests could be used for the analyses of the research data. In addition, histograms and scatter plots of the variables were analysed to determine whether the data were normally distributed or not, and these plots also showed that the data were normally distributed. On the other hand, due to the high number of subcategories of the independent variables in the study and the significant differences in the number of participants in some subcategories, it was determined that the distributions of some variables were not suitable for normal distribution, or the groups were not equivalent for parametric analyses. Instead of ANOVA, the Kruskal Wallis test, which is the nonparametric equivalent of this analysis, was used in the comparisons related to the variables in which this situation occurred (for example: duration of stay in Türkiye, where the spouse is from, mother tongue).

In the analysis phase of the data, assumption tests were carried out first. Independent Samples t-test, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) technique, Kruskal Wallis test, Scheffe test, and Dunnet’s C test were used according to the peculiarities of the groups and categories.

Research Ethics

The approval of the Akdeniz University Social and Behavioral Sciences Ethics Committee was obtained for ethical compliance with the research procedures.

FINDINGS

This section contains descriptive and comparative findings according to different variables regarding the use of Turkish by foreigners living in Türkiye in the context of bilingualism.

Table 2. Turkish Language Skills Level of the Participants

Proficiency: Skills	Very poor		Poor		Moderate		Good		Very good		Total		\bar{X}	S
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Speaking	19	7.8	50	20.5	79	32.4	66	27	30	12.3	244	100	3.16	1.12
Reading	24	9.8	48	19.7	77	31.6	64	26.2	31	12.7	244	100	3.12	1.16
Listening	21	8.7	47	19.5	77	32	62	25.7	34	14.1	241	100	3.17	1.16
Writing	27	11.2	55	22.7	71	29.3	63	26	26	10.7	242	100	3.02	1.17

Table 2 presents the findings regarding the Turkish language skills of the participants. The participants' self-assessment of their speaking, reading, listening and writing skills is as follows: 32,4% consider their speaking skills to be "moderate", while 27% view them as "good". Similarly, 31,6% regard their reading skills as "moderate" and 26,2% as "good". In addition, 32% consider their listening skills to be "moderate" and 25,7% view them as "good". Finally, 29,3% of the participants consider their writing skills to be "moderate" and 26% as "good". Furthermore, the arithmetic averages for all language skills fall between 3,02 and 3,17, indicating that the participants perceive their language proficiency to be at a moderate level.

Table 3. Using Turkish

Statements	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		\bar{X}	S
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. To follow scientific studies.	41	16.6	63	25.5	48	19.4	51	20.6	44	17.8	2.97	1.35
2.I speak Turkish at home.	82	32.9	59	23.7	61	24.5	25	10	22	8.8	2.38	1.27
3.I speak Turkish with my Turkish friends.	21	8.5	31	12.5	74	29.8	47	19	75	30.2	3.5	1.27
4.For my further studies.	54	22	53	21.6	38	15.5	53	21.6	47	19.2	2.94	1.44
5.To get/ increase a job opportunity.	54	22	43	17.6	33	13.5	47	19.2	68	27.8	3.13	1.53
6. I speak Turkish with my foreign friends who live in Türkiye.	82	32.9	73	29.3	64	25.7	18	7.2	12	4.8	2.21	1.12
7. I speak Turkish in my daily life: at the market, hospital, restaurant etc.	8	3.2	26	10.4	59	23.6	68	27.2	89	35.6	3.81	1.12
8. I converse with my husband/partner's family in Turkish.	77	32.1	36	15	24	10	39	16.3	64	26.7	2.9	1.63
9.I watch TV programs and series in Turkish.	22	8.8	40	16.1	36	14.5	71	28.5	80	32.1	3.59	1.32
10. It is easy for me to learn Turkish, as I'm bilingual/multilingual.	45	18.2	71	28.7	49	19.8	50	20.2	32	13	2.8	1.30
Average:											3.02	

Table 3 presents a series of expressions that elucidate the manner in which Turkish is utilized by the participants in their daily lives. The overall mean value of the expressions is 3.02. The aforementioned average indicates that the participants exhibit a moderate degree of agreement with the statements presented, and on occasion, engage in actions that align with the statements' tenets. However, there are also statements that reveal that the actions are carried out more clearly with a slightly higher participation than the average. "I speak Turkish in my daily life: at market, hospital, restaurant, etc." (\bar{x} =3.81); "I watch TV programs and series in Turkish" (\bar{x} =3.59); "I speak Turkish with my Turkish friends" (\bar{x} =3.50) is among these phrases. On the contrary, the below-average level of agreement with the statements 'It is easy for me to learn Turkish, as I'm bilingual/multilingual' (

$\bar{x}=2.80$); 'I speak Turkish at home' ($\bar{x}=2.38$) and 'I speak Turkish with my foreigner friends who live in Türkiye' ($\bar{x}=2.21$) indicates that the participants perform the actions in the statements less frequently.

Table 4. Challenges

Statements	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		\bar{X}	S
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Sound changes/adding/dropping vowels or consonants make it difficult to learn/use Turkish.	17	6.8	50	19.9	63	25.1	92	36.7	29	11.6	3.26	1.11
2. It is hard to learn Turkish because there are lots of suffixes that are added to verbs or nouns.	13	5.2	45	18.1	47	18.9	101	40.6	43	17.3	3.46	1.12
3. Differences between colloquial language and standard language make it difficult to learn Turkish.	13	5.2	41	16.5	68	27.3	93	37.3	34	13.7	3.37	1.07
4. It is hard to speak Turkish, as Turkish syntax is different from my mother tongue's syntax.	14	5.6	56	22.4	45	18.0	86	34.4	49	19.6	3.4	1.19
5. I have problems speaking Turkish as it is difficult to pronounce vowels and consonants in Turkish.	40	16.0	90	36.0	34	13.6	61	24.4	25	10.0	2.76	1.26
6. I think it is hard to learn Turkish.	21	8.5	41	16.6	32	13.0	82	33.2	71	28.7	3.57	1.29
7. As I live in an area where people use dialects of Turkish, it is hard to understand Turkish.	18	7.2	58	23.2	82	32.8	64	25.6	28	11.2	3.1	1.10
8. Differences between the Turkish alphabet and my mother tongue's alphabet make it hard to learn Turkish.	64	25.6	95	38.0	25	10.0	47	18.8	19	7.6	2.44	1.26
9. I can't learn Turkish because there aren't any institutes I can attend to learn Turkish.	75	30.1	93	37.3	43	17.3	28	11.2	10	4.0	2.21	1.11
10. As I'm very busy, it is hard for me to learn Turkish.	43	17.3	98	39.4	42	16.9	51	20.5	15	6.0	2.58	1.16
11. I don't need to speak Turkish because I carry my tasks out via an interpreter.	145	58.2	39	15.7	44	17.7	9	3.6	12	4.8	1.81	1.14
Average:											2.91	

The mean rating for the statements describing the difficulties experienced by the participants while using Turkish was 2.91 (Table 4). This indicates that the participants' performance was at a level that is close to the mean or at a moderate level. When the table is examined in terms of expression, it is evident that there are expressions that are above the general mean and are expressed with greater clarity. For example, "I think it is hard to learn" ($\bar{x}=3.57$), "It is hard to learn Turkish because there lots of suffixes that are added to verbs or nouns" ($\bar{x}=3.46$), "It is hard to speak Turkish, as Turkish syntax is different from my mother tongue's syntax" ($\bar{x}=3.4$), "Sound changes/adding/dropping vowel or consonants makes it difficult to learn/use Turkish" ($\bar{x}=3.26$), "Differences between colloquial language and standard language make it difficult to learn Turkish" ($\bar{x}=3.37$) and "As I live in an area where people use dialects of Turkish, it is hard to understand Turkish" ($\bar{x}=3.1$) had above-average participation. When the expressions are examined, it is understood that the participants have difficulties due to the grammatical characteristics of Turkish. "I have problems to speak Turkish as it is difficult to pronounce vowels and consonant in Turkish" ($\bar{x}=2.76$); "As I'm very busy, it is hard for me to learn Turkish" ($\bar{x}=2.58$); "Differences between Turkish alphabet and my mother tongue's alphabet make it hard to learn Turkish" ($\bar{x}=2.44$); "I can't learn Turkish because there aren't any institutes I can attend to learn Turkish" ($\bar{x}=2.21$) and "I don't need to speak Turkish because I carry my tasks out via an interpreter" ($\bar{x}=1.81$) were below average. The distribution demonstrates that the participants were less exposed to the situations expressed, which consequently resulted in a reduction in difficulty.

Table 5. Distribution of the Relationship between the Use of Turkish according to the Participants and Their Language Skills

		1	2	3	4	5	6
Skills	1. Speaking	1	,887**	,922**	,846**	,572**	-,363**
	2. Reading		1	,863**	,923**	,578**	-,376**
	3. Listening			1	,832**	,550**	-,408**
	4. Writing				1	,528**	-,425**
Language Use	5. Language Use					1	-,176**
	6. Challenges						1

The results of the correlation analysis regarding the relationship between the use of Turkish by the participants and their Turkish language skills are given in Table 5. As seen in Table 5, there is a significant relationship between the participants' attitudes toward learning Turkish and their Turkish language skills. When we look at the relationship between language skills, it is realized that all language skills are highly and positively related to each other. Especially, the relationship between speaking and listening ($r=.92$, $p<.05$) and reading and writing ($r=.92$, $p<.05$) is the highest.

When we look at the relationship between the use of Turkish and language skills, it is remarkable that the subdimension of using Turkish is moderately and positively related to all language skills. Using Turkish was compared with reading skill ($r=.58$, $p<.05$), speaking skill ($r=.57$, $p<.05$), listening skill ($r=.55$, $p<.05$) and writing skill ($r=.53$, $p<.05$) are positively and moderately correlated. Difficulties in using and learning Turkish are negatively related to all language skills. This is an important finding of the research that draws attention. Based on this, it can be said that whether the language learned is difficult or easy has no impact on the learner's language learning purpose.

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis Test Results on the Comparison of the Participants' Turkish Use and Difficulties Faced According to Hometown Variable

Variables	Country	N	Rank Average	Kruskal Wallis H	p
Language Use	European Countries	37	120,42	57,931	,000
	United Kingdom	106	92,07		
	Russia	22	165,80		
	Germany	17	114,94		
	Ukraine	21	192,55		
	Turkish Republics	18	161,50		
	Middle East or Africa	16	157,19		
	Other	14	153,58		
Challenges	European Countries	37	142,08	27,377	,000
	United Kingdom	106	142,33		
	Russia	22	101,91		
	Germany	17	106,21		
	Ukraine	21	114,79		
	Turkish Republics	18	59,78		
	Middle East or Africa	16	118,78		
	Other	14	112,17		

To determine whether the use of Turkish and the difficulties faced differed according to the hometown variable, the Kruskal Wallis Test was conducted. As is seen in Table 6, the use of Turkish differs significantly according to the hometown of the participants [$KW(7)=57.931$, $p<0.001$]. Considering the mean rank, the opinions of the participants from Ukraine (Avg. = 192.55) and Russia (Av. Rank= 165.80) are more positive than the other groups. The opinions of the participants from the United Kingdom (Avg.= 92.07) and Germany (Avg.= 114.94) were more negative than the other groups. The difficulties faced differed significantly according to the hometown of the participants [$KW(7)=27.377$, $p<0.001$]. We can say that since the mother tongue of the participants from the Turkic Republics (Rank Avg.=59.78) is one of the branches or dialects of Turkish, they have less difficulty than the other participants. The scores of the participants from Europe, the United Kingdom, Russia, Germany, Ukraine, the Middle East, and African countries, and other countries are close to each other.

Table 7. The Kruskal Wallis Test Results on the Comparison of the Participants' Using Turkish and the Difficulties They Faced According to their Mother Tongue Variable

Variables	Mother Tongue	N	Rank Average	Kruskal Wallis H	p
Language Use	German	19	112,32	58,236	,000
	English	106	91,54		
	Russia	48	177,83		
	Turkish Languages	14	164,18		
	Persian and Arabic	15	163,50		
	Other	46	125,04		
Challenges	German	19	117,11	20,354	,001
	English	106	143,38		
	Russia	48	104,82		
	Turkish Languages	14	66,82		
	Persian and Arabic	15	118,53		
	Other	46	124,08		

Kruskal Wallis Test analysis was conducted to determine whether the use of Turkish and the difficulties faced differed according to the mother tongue variables. The results are given in Table 7. Looking at Table 7, the use of Turkish differed significantly according to the mother tongue of the participants [KW(5)= 58.236, $p<0.001$]. Speakers of Russian (Rank Avg=177.83), with the highest rank average, had the most positive opinions in terms of using Turkish; speakers of English (Rank Mean=91.54) with the lowest rank had the most negative opinions. Using Turkish and difficulties faced differed significantly to the mother tongue of the participants [KW(7)= 20.354, $p<0.001$]. Participants speaking the Turkic language (Rank Avg=66.82) with the lowest rank were the group with the least difficulty, while the participants speaking English (Rank Avg=143.38) had the highest rank average, which indicates they have difficulties.

Table 8. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results on the Comparison of the Participants Using Turkish and Difficulties Faced According to the Variable of Length of Stay in Türkiye

Variables	Duration of Stay in Türkiye	N	\bar{X}	S	F	p	Difference (Scheffe)
Language Use	1) 1 year or less	33	2,60	,65	4,488	,001	
	2) 2-5 years	76	3,22	,85			
	3) 6-10 years	45	3,05	,96			1-2
	4) 11-15 years	44	2,83	,77			1-6
	5) 16-20 years	27	3,21	,88			4-6
	6) 21 years or over	25	3,43	,77			
Challenges	1) 1 year or less	33	3,13	,58	6,727	,000	
	2) 2-5 years	76	3,01	,64			
	3) 6-10 years	45	2,97	,64			1-6
	4) 11-15 years	44	2,95	,66			2-6
	5) 16-20 years	27	2,81	,75			3-6
	6) 21 years or over	25	2,23	,65			

The results of a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which was conducted to determine whether the participants' use of Turkish and the difficulties they faced differed according to the Variable of Length of Stay in Türkiye. Using Turkish differs significantly according to the variable of duration of stay in Türkiye [F(5-244)= 4.488, $p>0.001$]. It is seen that for the participants who have been in Türkiye for 1 year or less, the mean score (\bar{X} =2,.60) is the lowest; those who have been in Türkiye for 21 years or over have the highest average score (\bar{X} =3,43). This reveals that the more participants stay in Türkiye the more they use Turkish in their daily life.

The use of Turkish and the difficulties faced do not differ significantly according to the duration of stay in the Türkiye variable [F(5-244)= 6.727, $p>0.000$].

Table 9. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results of the Comparison of the Participants' Using Turkish and Difficulty Faced According to the Variable of Residence

Using Turkish	Age	N	\bar{X}	S	F	p	Difference (Scheffe)
Language Use	1. Village	64	2,73	,68	22,727	,000	1-3 2-3
	2. Town	85	2,82	,83			
	3. City center	101	3,47	,81			
Challenges	1. Village	64	3,18	,64	8,046	,000	1-3
	2. Town	85	2,91	,65			
	3. City center	101	2,75	,71			

The results of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), which was conducted to determine whether the participants' use of Turkish and the difficulties they face differ according to the variable of residence. Participants using Turkish differ significantly according to the variable of the place of residence [$F(2-244)=4.488$, $p>0.001$]. The average score of those living in the city centre ($\bar{X}=3,47$) is higher than those living in other places. Based on this, it can be stated that the participants living in the city center are more likely to use Turkish.

The participants using Turkish and the difficulties they faced did not differ significantly according to the variable of residence [$F(2-244)=6.727$, $p>0.000$]. In other words, there is no relationship between the place of residence and the difficulties faced while learning or using Turkish.

Table 10. T-Test Results for the Comparison of the Participants' Using Turkish and Difficulties Faced According to Gender Variable

Variables	Gender	N	\bar{X}	S	t	p
Language Use	Female	192	3,17	,83	3,812	,000
	Male	59	2,70	,84		
Challenges	Female	192	2,90	,69	,479	,632
	Male	59	2,95	,70		

Using Turkish and the difficulties faced by gender were predicted by independent samples t-test. As seen in Table 10, there is a significant difference [$t(249)=3,812$, $p<0.001$] between the participants' use of Turkish and their gender. The opinions of female participants on this dimension ($\bar{X}=3,17$) are significantly higher than male participants ($\bar{X}=2,70$). This points out that female participants' opinions are more positive and more eager to use the language functionally and pragmatically than male participants. There is no significant difference between the difficulties in learning/using Turkish according to the gender variable [$t(249)=,479$, $p>0.05$]. This finding shows that the difficulties faced while learning or using Turkish are similar both for men and women.

Table 11. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results on the Comparison of the Participants' Using Turkish and Difficulties Faced According to Age Variable

Variables	Age range	N	\bar{X}	S	F	p	Difference (Scheffe)
Language Use	1) 18-30	28	3,38	,71	12,387	,000	1-5, 1-6, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 3-5, 3-6
	2) 31-40	51	3,58	,71			
	3) 41-50	46	3,23	,84			
	4) 51-60	53	2,93	,77			
	5) 61-70	47	2,60	,76			
	6) 71 or over	26	2,50	,86			
Challenges	1) 18-30	28	2,90	,67	1,260	,282	-
	2) 31-40	51	2,81	,64			
	3) 41-50	46	2,80	,74			
	4) 51-60	53	2,90	,68			
	5) 61-70	47	3,09	,74			
	6) 71 or over	26	3,07	,57			

The results of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to determine whether the participants' Turkish learning/using differs according to the age variable. As seen in Table 11, there is a significant difference in terms of the participants' use of Turkish according to the age variable [$F(5-245)=12.387$, $p<0.001$]. In other words, the participants' use of Turkish varies according to their age. According to the Scheffe multiple comparison test, which was conducted to determine between which groups the significant difference was, the opinions of the participants in the age group of 71 or over differed significantly from the participants that are in

the age group of 18-30; 31-40; 41-50; 51-60 and 61-70. This finding shows that in the age group of 71 and over language learning and using it in daily life is lower than in other age groups. Based on this, it can be said that the participants in the age group of 71 or over are less eager to learn and use a new language. Difficulties in learning/using Turkish do not vary significantly according to the age variable [$F(5-245)=1.260$, $p>0.05$]. In other words, perception of the difficulties faced in language learning does not show a significant difference according to age. However, although the differences are not significant, those in the age group of 61-70 ($\bar{x}=3,09$) and 71 and over ($\bar{x}=3,07$) have prejudiced against difficulties faced while learning Turkish.

Table 12. The T-test results of the Comparison of the Participants' Using Turkish and the Difficulties They Faced According to the Marital Status Variable

Variables	Marital Status	N	\bar{X}	S	t	p
Language Use	Married	145	3,06	,86	,073	.942
	Single	106	3,07	,86		
Challenges	Married	145	2,97	,62	1,479	.141
	Single	106	2,83	,77		

Independent Samples t-test was conducted to test whether using Turkish and difficulties faced varying according to the marital status variable. There is no significant difference between the participants' use of Turkish and the difficulties they face, and the variables of marital status [$t(249)=,073$, $p>0.05$], [$t(249)= 1,479$, $p>0.05$]. Based on this, we can say that the use of Turkish in daily life and the difficulties the participants face do not differ according to marital status.

Table 13. One-Way Analysis of Variances (ANOVA) Results on the Comparison of the Participants' Turkish Use and Difficulties They Face According to the Variable of Educational Background

Variables	Education	N	\bar{X}	S	F	p
Language Use	Middle/High School	61	2,95	,90	,582	,627
	Academy	27	3,02	,79		
	University	109	3,10	,85		
	Masters/PhD	53	3,14	,87		
Challenges	Middle/High School	61	3,05	,77	1,091	,353
	Academy	27	2,93	,55		
	University	109	2,86	,72		
	Masters/PhD	53	2,87	,59		

The results of one-way analysis of variances (ANOVA) performed to determine whether the use of Turkish and the difficulties faced differ according to the variable of educational background are given in Table 13. As seen in Table 13, there is no significant difference between the participants' use of Turkish and the difficulties they face, and the level of education variable [$F(3-246)= .582$, $p>0.05$], [$F(3-246)= 1.091$, $p>0.05$]. Based on this, we can say that the use of Turkish in daily life and the difficulties faced do not change according to the educational background.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

There has been a serious wave of migration to Türkiye from Europe, America, Russia, the Middle East, and other Turkish Republics in recent years. Learning a new language might become a necessity to satisfy certain needs and adapt to the new living environment. Speaking Turkish is especially crucial for foreigners living in Türkiye. These migrants require the use of language to participate in society, social and cultural life and to communicate with people. Within the framework of this importance, in this study, the Turkish usage status of foreigners living in Türkiye and the difficulties they face were described and compared according to different variables.

The language proficiencies of the participants were average overall. In the studies conducted by Yıldız and Sertoğlu (2019a, 2019b) with Russian participants, it was stated that parents saw themselves at the beginning level and their children at the intermediate level. Participants scored highest in the listening section, followed by speaking, reading, and writing. Participants' self-reports showed that they rated themselves lowest in the writing section. This supports Karababa's (2009) finding that writing is one of the most challenging aspects of language for foreigners learning Turkish.

Results show that the participants rate themselves as lowest in their writing abilities when productive language skills are tested, and rate themselves the lowest in their reading abilities when language comprehension

skills are tested. Antonova-Ünlü, Sağın-Şimşek and Kavanoz (2016) reached similar results from their research. Basic language scores of participants in Antonova-Ünlü, Sağın-Şimşek and Kavanoz's (2016) research are, respectively, as such: listening ability (2.77/5.00), speaking ability (2.53/5.00), reading ability (2.18/5.00) and writing ability (2.08/5.00). Like our findings, this research shows that the participants' proficiencies are lowest in the writing section. Boylu's (2014) findings on students learning Turkish in Iran also show that the students were unsuccessful in the writing section, which parallels our research findings.

Turkish usage of foreigners living in Türkiye is average. Immigrants commonly prefer to use Turkish in their daily lives (market, hospital, restaurants), while communicating with their spouse's relatives and when watching TV programs. However, it was emphasized in Bayat et al.'s (2025) study that the quality rather than the quantity of these linguistic inputs was insufficient, and that Russian and Ukrainian immigrant children were not exposed to quality linguistic input. Therefore, it can be said that linguistic input is sufficient in quality but insufficient in quantity.

There are two important situations where participants do not prefer to use Turkish. The first one is when they communicate with their foreign friends in Türkiye, and the second one is in their domestic lives. Participants prefer to use Turkish with their Turkish friends and other languages when communicating with their foreign friends. Our findings support Şahbaz's (2018b) finding that British people living in Fethiye generally prefer to speak Turkish with Turks and English with the British. Similarly, Antonova-Ünlü, Sağın-Şimşek and Kavanoz's (2016) research shows that British people living in Türkiye mostly prefer to use English when communicating with their friends but tend to use Turkish when communicating with their neighbours. As can be seen, both findings are in line with the results of our research.

Immigrants were found to face difficulties when learning/using Turkish. Our findings show that the participants in our research faced mild difficulties when learning/using Turkish. Participants who have a native language belonging to one of Turkish's branches or dialects face fewer difficulties. Kulamshaeva (2018) assessed the difficulties Kyrgyz students face when learning Türkiye's Turkish, from the aspects of pronunciation, morphology and writing. Her results showed that these students had fewer syntactic problems compared to others, which she connected to the ease of similar sentence structure of the languages provided. When viewed from the perspective of morphonology, similar sound changes, and adding suffixes aid in learning the subject. However, the difference in the alphabet creates difficulties. Bayat et al. (2025) also reported that Russian and Ukrainian children had difficulties with the phonological features of Turkish. These observations parallel our findings. The difficulties generally faced by foreigners living in Türkiye are sound changes, suffixes verbs and nouns gain, differences between standard and daily language, the local dialect, sentence structure, pronunciation, alphabet differences and the perception that Turkish is a difficult language to learn.

The fact that participants especially face structural difficulties in learning Turkish is noteworthy. Considering that most participants are native English speakers, structural differences between the two languages were naturally observed to provide difficulties during the learning process. Şahbaz (2018a, 2018b) also similarly found that participants faced difficulties with suffixes, pronunciation, and syntax. Since Turkish is a suffixed language, it is normal to observe difficulties with suffixes during the learning process. Tuzlukaya's (2019) findings parallel the results of our research.

A person's perceived difficulty with a language (Richards and Schmidt, 2010: 314) determines attitudes about the language which is crucial for the learning process. In this context, our results showed that Turkish was perceived as a difficult language. Şahbaz's (2018a, 2018b) findings also state that foreigners view Turkish as a difficult language.

Dialect differences are found to cause difficulties for foreigners during the learning process. Şahbaz's (2018a) finding about the fact that foreigners living in the villages of Fethiye face more difficulties and confusion regarding dialect supports our findings.

There is a high positive correlation between Turkish usage and the Turkish proficiency of foreigners living in Türkiye. Results show that there is also a highly positive correlation between different language abilities. Specifically, speaking was correlated the highest with listening and writing was correlated highest with reading. Furthermore, there was a negative correlation between language skills and difficulties faced while learning/using the language. So, as the usage of Turkish increases, the difficulties faced decrease. This relationship shows that as everyday use of Turkish increases, proficiency increases as well.

Turkish usage behaviors of foreigners vary depending on their nationality. Our results show that participants from Ukraine and Russia prefer to use Turkish more often than participants from other nationalities.

Sevindi's (2012) research with 9 Asian people consisting of 7 people from Russia, 1 from Taiwan and 1 from Azerbaijan, revealed that people with Asian nationalities score on average better than people from other nationalities regarding their Turkish proficiency. Balkır and Kırkulak's (2009) research on European immigrants living in Antalya shows that these immigrants know little or no Turkish. Similarly, USAK's (2008) report reveals that European immigrants have only basic language skills when compared to immigrants from former Soviet Union countries.

Difficulties faced while learning/using Turkish show meaningful differences depending on nationalities. Participants with a native language from a branch or dialect of Turkish like Native Azerbaijani, Kyrgyz and Kazakh Turkish speakers face very few or no difficulties while learning Turkish.

Native language has an important impact on Turkish usage and the difficulties faced. Native English speakers tend to use Turkish less often than native Russian speakers. There are two likely reasons for the relatively low use of Turkish by native English speakers. The first one is because since the research is conducted in a tourist location, English proficiency is higher and is used commonly to communicate with foreigners. The second one is because native English speakers are seen as an opportunity by the Turks to practice their English skills. Marci (2015) states that the situation is similar in China. When she investigated the reasons why British people learned Mandarin at a basic level, or not at all, she found out that the main reason was that the natives viewed them as a way to practice their English. Therefore, these findings done in two different countries support each other. The primary cause for this situation is that Turkish people know and can use English to communicate with foreigners.

Native English-speaking participants face difficulties when using and learning Turkish, however, participants proficient in any of Turkish's branches or dialects face far fewer difficulties. Alyılmaz (2018) points out the importance of the native language when learning a new language. Proximity and similarity of the languages provide advantages for the student. Emphasizing the importance of native language as well, Kulamshaeva (2018) states that the language learning process and perception of students from the same language family differ when compared to students coming from a different language family with a different structure. Students learning Turkish who have Turkish descent, face different difficulties than other students. It is necessary to divide the target groups based on their native language and the reason for learning when teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

Length of stay in Türkiye is another important factor that affects Turkish usage, and the difficulties faced while using it. There is a positive correlation between length of stay in Türkiye and Turkish usage. This finding supports the thesis that the longer a person stays in an environment where a language is spoken the better, they would learn it. In other words, being exposed to the targeted language and being required to use it in daily activities speeds up the learning process. According to Bayram and Eryılmaz (2025), who evaluate this situation in the context of integration or assimilation, immigrants who engage in deeper and more meaningful cultural interactions with the host society tend to develop a more resilient identity while learning Turkish. Sevindi's (2012) research findings on foreign faculty members working in İzmir universities revealed that members who lived 12 years or longer in Türkiye had high proficiency scores, which also shows that environment and length of stay in this environment affects language learning. A language learning environment where the targeted language is the spoken native language facilitates the learning process (Mete, 2012). Teaching Turkish as a foreign language in Türkiye provides a different learning environment as opposed to teaching it in another country (2012). A language is mastered by effectively using it and living in the environment it is used (2012). By being exposed to the language students can gain context. A language reflects the way of life, thinking and culture of the society it originates from. Idioms and sayings are better understood and contextualized through exposure by living and participating in society. However, Kurt and Çakmakçı (2018) reveal that foreign students living in Türkiye are mostly exposed to Turkish in their school and do not participate often in social events where Turkish is spoken. Krashen et al.'s (1978) findings also show that students learning English as a foreign language in New York were not exposed to the language aside from the classroom. If the learner does show efforts to use the language in their daily life or be exposed to it despite living in an environment where the targeted language is spoken commonly, the effect of environment on learning language is nullified.

Length of stay in Türkiye does not seem to provide significant differences in terms of the difficulties faced while learning Turkish. Students' perception of the morphological and phonetic characteristics of the targeted language does not change much. Since the language's structure and rules do not change, initial perceptions about the language's difficulty remain unchanged as well.

The residence location of participants affected their Turkish usage. Since people living in the city center are more active in social life, increasing exposure to the language, they must use Turkish more often for

communication. Furthermore, rural participants in this research are elderly seniors and seniors do not prefer to use the language as much as other demographics.

Location of residence does not affect the difficulties faced while learning or using Turkish, which supports the thesis that perceptions about the structural characteristics of a language are independent of residence.

Another factor that causes differences in Turkish usage is gender. Women tend to use Turkish more often when compared to men. Women participants seem to be more eager than men to use language practically and pragmatically. Sevindi's (2012) research shows that female instructors were on average more successful in teaching compared to their male counterparts, which is in line with our research.

While the age of immigrants affects their Turkish usage, it does not affect the difficulties they face. Participants aged 71 or higher showed lower motivation to learn and use the language compared to other age groups. Based on this finding it can be said that participants aged 71 or higher are more unwilling to learn a new language when compared to other groups. Sevindi (2012) separated her sample into 5 age groups, which are, respectively, 28-35; 36-45; 46-55; 56-65; 65 and above. Her results show that instructors from the first age group were on average more successful compared to other age groups, which is also in line with our research. Similarly, Şahbaz (2018a) states that the age factor provides difficulties for British people in learning Turkish.

The marital status of foreigners living in Türkiye does not affect their Turkish usage. One of Özbek's (2010) female participants, who was married to a Turk, had been living in Türkiye for 18 years but still could not speak Turkish and was communicating in English. Şahbaz's (2018a, 2018b) findings provide support for our research as well. The researcher found out that Turk spouses generally spoke English in the house, did not correct the mistakes their spouses made and that they did not encourage and motivate them.

The education levels of foreigners living in Türkiye had no effect on Turkish usage and the difficulties faced.

To recap, this study examined the status of Turkish usage and the difficulties faced by foreigners living in Türkiye according to various variables. The results showed that the Turkish proficiency of foreigners is generally at an intermediate level. While participants scored higher in listening and speaking skills, they reported lower levels in writing and reading abilities. Furthermore, despite a high rate of active Turkish usage in daily life, it was observed that language input was insufficient in quantitative terms. Behaviours in using Turkish reveal significant differences based on nationality, mother tongue, gender, age, length of residence, and place of residence. In particular, individuals with a mother tongue from the Turkic languages experienced fewer difficulties. Additionally, the structural features of Turkish, especially its agglutinative structure and sound changes, posed significant challenges for participants. Although the effect of exposure time and environmental factors on language learning is evident, perceptions of the language's structural difficulties do not change much over time. Thus, it is crucial to consider factors such as individuals' mother tongue, learning motivation, and the social environment to enhance the effectiveness of teaching Turkish to foreigners.

Limitations

The sample of this study is limited to 251 foreigners of different nationalities living in Kaş, Kemer, Konyaaltı, Alanya and Gazipaşa districts of Antalya. Although this sample size is very important, it may not reflect the situation of foreigners' use of Turkish and the difficulties they face in different regions of Türkiye. Therefore, similar studies should be conducted in different regions of Türkiye.

In the study, bilingualism of foreigners was conveyed in relation to their use of Turkish and the difficulties they face. Bilingualism can also be examined in terms of bilingualism types.

Statements of Publication Ethics

Ethical permission for the research was approved by Akdeniz University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee. (Date: 23.12.2020, Document number: 21/273).

Researchers' Contribution Rate

The first author contributed at every stage of the study and the second author contributed at all stages except data collection. Author contributions are shown in the table below.

Authors	Literature review	Method	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Results	Conclusion	(Other)
Author #1	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐
Author #2	☒	☒	☐	☒	☒	☒	☐

Conflict of Interest

We confirm that there are no conflicts of interest associated with this research.

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