QUALITATIVE EVALUATION FOR THE REASONS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract. The process of learning a foreign language is considered in the scope of lifelong learning. The motivation of learning a foreign language is one of the factors affecting this process. Before learning a foreign language, determining the justifications of learning this language is considered as important within the context of "autonomous learning" via metadiscourse. The needs analysis is a contemporary approach at the stage of foreign language learning. The aim of this study is to find out the needs of the people who learn foreign language. Seeking answer for the meaning of what the motivation of foreign language learning, the types of motivation, the causes of motivation. The sample group (n=51) of the study consist of the students in state high schools who learned German as a second foreign language after learning English, private high school students and freshman students registered in the department of German language teaching (2016-2017). Data are obtained via a standardized scale consisting of 6 open-ended questions and 1 Y/N question created by the researcher herself. Obtained data are interpreted by a descriptive analysis which is one of the qualitative research methods. The main emphasis was on the frequency in content analysis and analyzed data. It is found that the factors affecting to motivate learning German are; lecturer/teacher, economic reasons, travelling, necessity and culture. Through this process, the data were analyzed in accordance with the autonomous learning approach in foreign language learning.
Keywords: autonomous learning; motivation; German as a foreign language

1. Introduction

The motivation theme in education is a subject that excite researchers' interest. That's why, motivation concept is frequently discussed particularly in the field of education. According to Scope Theories, motivation concept can be defined as follows: "Scope theories are concerned with defining the motives of humans and their relative strengths as well as the goals that humans pursue to satisfy these motives. In other words, scope theories attach importance to the nature of people's needs and what motivates people." (Mullins, 2002: 426; cited Süral Özer and Topaloğlu 2008: 1).

In a study in line with scope theories, opinions of the prospective teachers regarding academic motivation level was discussed. The following statement is in the recommendation chapter of this study: "The factors influencing the motivation levels of prospective teachers should be assessed and intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting motivation should be revealed" (Gömleksiz & Serhatlıoğlu, 2013: 123).

Motivation concept is highly important in foreign language education and is evaluated together with new approaches. According to new approaches of foreign language teaching, the person is responsible for his/her own learning. The fact that the person is responsible for his/her own learning means that he/she knows what subject he/she interested in and reaching the goal by exerting an individual effort in the direction of this interest. However, when this self-consciousness is not engraved, some problems can be occurred in learning: "The fact that most of the students are not aware of their own characteristics and they do not know the reason for learning and proper motivation sources cannot get into work adversely affect the student's success" (Akbaba, 2010: 360). This and similar expressions that can be heard frequently in educational circles emphasize the importance of motivation especially in foreign language education.

Kaikkonen (2005) emphasizes that it should go beyond traditional foreign language learning through postmodern point of view. According to him, paradigm shifts in foreign language education. While a collective understanding prevails in modernity, individual is considered in the postmodern world. In fact, understanding which one language and one culture dominated prevails in modernity, while in postmodern world the presence of multi-lingual and multi-cultural societies is now regarded as important. Also in modernity, people prefer to live with a less active life dependent on anywhere, while in postmodern world people is mobile and can benefit from virtual possibilities. Thanks to technology, people can be anywhere at any time regardless of time and place (Kaikkonen, 2005: 298). When we look at the case of foreign language learning in accordance with this postmodern understanding, it can be seen that individuality is emphasized, individual differences are considered important as well as giving an opportunity for individual self-evaluation processes are significant. Starting foreign language lectures with a need analysis can make a world of differences to all stakeholders in the foreign language learning process. The need analysis in learning a foreign language can provide a meaningful communication cycle between the receiver and the transmitter. In this case in a foreign language lecture, making students aware of their own characteristics, raising awareness about the reasons for learning, and using appropriate sources of motivation can have a positive influence on student success. "Motivation, as in many other areas, is the most important driving forces researchers put emphasis on that leads to success in foreign language learning as well……. in general, to enable motivation in foreign language education..….., it can be said that it should be firstly started from the needs and existing interest of students in selection of topic." (Akpınar, 2011).

When the motivation of university students with regard to learning foreign language is investigated, it can be seen that the motivation is positioned in a very important place in the education steps: "When the factors that improved motivation analysed entirely; it seems that categories of activity-based course processing, interest/desire and individual effort are appeared with a highest frequency under the individually effective theme of application and situation" (Mehddyev & Uğurlu, 2016: 369). A striking proposal is given a place in a survey related to the motivation levels of students in education.". It must be ensured that the student is in a continuous search to reveal the preliminary knowledge and understanding of the argument and to enable that the student is aware of his own thinking" (Gürdoğan, 2012: 161).

The purposes of learning foreign language are different from those of acquiring foreign language. This difference shows diversity while describing the concept of motivation. The first acquired language is described as 'mother tongue' (L1), afterwards first foreign language usually learned in school environment is described as "first foreign language' (L2), learned second foreign language is described as 'second foreign language' (L3). Second foreign language acquired in a natural environment is 'second language' and explaining with hypothesis of acquiring second language (Akay, 2007; Apeltauer, 2001). Nowadays, according to contemporary foreign language approaches, new paradigm is tried to acquire foreign language just like mother tongue and new quests are continue on this matter. For those living in bilingual or multilingual societies and cultural environments, the language acquired after or along with the mother tongue is often perceived as an obligation for economic, psychological, and sociological reasons as well as accommodating society. It is known that mother tongue and second language acquired by subconscious processes while the foreign language is learned by conscious one. At this case, learning foreign language requires "intrinsic reasons" namely motivation. Ballweg and others (2013) have studied the acquisition and learning processes of German as a foreign language thoroughly by evaluating theories of general learning, language learning theories and language acquisition theories.

For a community starting to learn German as a first foreign language or a second foreign language, it is argued that it is a right approach to start language learning primarily with need analysis. Lecturers should ask to students why they want to learn German, whether or not they are ready to learn it and how they want to use this language in future. This type of discourses, which are among the contemporary foreign language approaches, can determine the status of students' motivation towards to course.

2. Research

The aim of this study is to reveal the reasons of learning German for the students who learn German as a second foreign language. By pursuing a contemporary foreign language approach, answer to the question of whether the students have

never thought about the reasons for learning German were sought. We have acted on the fact that we do not think too much about this very natural, well-known and usual question. In this respect, phenomenology design from qualitative research designs was used. "Phenomenology design focuses on the phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding. In our world, phenomena can emerge in a different form such as events, experiences, perceptions, tendencies, concepts and situations" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008: 72). To collect more unbiased and detailed answers about a certain topic in the research, a scale developed by Bimmel and Rampillon (2005), consisting of 6 open-ended interpretation questions, was used. The title of the reliable and valid scale is "Reasons of learning German". This scale was formed for German lecturers to ask their students with a view to contribute to the pre-lesson need analysis. The scale is also hold a learning strategy qualification. "In open-ended questions, also known as unstructured questions, the respondent freely answers the question. The advantage of such questions is that the researcher can also receive unexpected and unplanned answers and thereby he/she can possess a wider and more detailed knowledge on this subject" (Büyüköztürk, 2014: 127). The data obtained from the scale translated by researcher into Turkish was analysed through content analysis from the qualitative data analysis approaches. In addition to researcher, two different researchers were enabled to process and the key words from common answers given to the open-ended questions were selected and coded, then they were expressed in percentiles through counting. The validity of the content analysis is ensured via this common practice. The most frequently output codes were thematically classified and one table was opened during the analysis. In the survey applied in May 2017, a closed-ended question, which could be responded 'yes', 'no' and 'partially' to the scale, was added.

As a sample, three different institutions from Edirne province (private high school, state high school, university) were selected and participants with common features L1 (Turkish), L2 (English) and L3 (German) were randomly added to the study. A total of 51 participants were reached out within the framework of voluntary basis.

3. Findings and Discussion

Table 1. Percentage distribution of who and what encourage me to learn German

	Teacher	Acquaintances	Obligation
Private School (n=13)	11	2	-
	82%	18%	0%
High School (14)	5	1	8
	35%	7%	58%
University (24)	11	3	10
	46%	13%	41%

According to the students in the private school, the incentive factor for learning German is teacher with 82% and acquaintances with 18%. In a private school, encouraging to learn foreign language is also considered among the duties of teacher as much as teaching foreign language. The fact that private school students do not think learning German as an obligation means that these students have an awareness about the foreign language which they learned. High school students emphasized that encouraging factors of learning German are teacher with 35%, acquaintances with 7% and obligatory with 58%. The participant who expressed "Foreign language always draws my attention. When I was in high school, my teacher's care and his/her lecture were well. Therefore, I head for foreign language" supported this result. The fact that 58% of German learners in high school state that they learn this language as an obligation is a matter to be considered. For students, gaining awareness on learning German is as much important as learning it. On the other hand, teachers are also expected to raise awareness about the learning processes as much as the learning process. According to the university students, teacher (46%) is in the first place, obligatory is (41%) second and acquaintances (13%) is third for the encouraging factors of learning German. It is noteworthy that percentage of the obligation factor is almost as valuable as the teacher factor. When the data are evaluated in general, the fact that teacher comes to the forefront as learning factors of German is also an issue concerning teacher qualifications. In this case, among the duties of a German teacher, there should be responsibilities such as teaching German with contemporary approaches, creating a sensitivity for the learned language and building a language consciousness.

Table 2. Percentage distribution of what are the factors attracting me while learning German

	Speaking	Travel	Entertainment	Culture	N/A
Private School (13)	2	-	3	3	5
	15%	0%	23%	23%	39%
High School (14)	2	-	3	2	7
	14%	0%	22%	14%	50%
University (24)	6	3	-	10	5
	25%	12%	0%	42%	21%

Among the attractive factors while learning German in private schools, %15 of participants mentioned speaking and %23 of participants mentioned entertainment and culture topics. %39 of participants didn't find any alluring side in learning German. 15% of the participants find German pronunciation and speaking as interesting, 23% of the participants said that they see German as an attractive due to the factors they can use in the cinema, internet, games, and 23% of the participants

expressed that it is interesting to be able to contact with different cultures and learn these cultures. One participant answered this question like "absolutely its pronunciation and writing". Similar results can be seen in young learning German in high school. Speaking at the rate of %14, entertainment at the rate of %22 and culture at the rate of %14 are seemed to be interesting for them, while %50 of the students expressed that there is not any factor attracting learning German. This last data, which is similar to the result in the Chart 1, indicates that some problems in German education in high school. The factors that attracted students taking German course in university were categorized as speaking (25%), travel (12%) and culture (42%). %21 of participants in this category found that there is not any factor attracting learning German. The fact that the cultural factor come to the forefront can be attributed to the increased social relations and awareness of the university-level individuals. When look at the data holistically, it can be seen that the human factor of the learned language is also determinant. It is natural that these elements are culture, entertainment, but it is highly meaningful that the learned foreign language does not encounter anybody under no circumstance. In this study, holistic view is suggested for foreign language. Each learned foreign language gives individual a different identity and a different pattern.

Table 3. Percentage distribution of which areas I have faced difficulties in while learning German

	Grammar	Speaking	N/A
Private School (13)	7	4	2
	55%	30%	15%
High School (14)	12	2	-
	86%	14%	0%
University (24)	17	7	-
	71%	29%	0%

When looked at which topics a high school student in private school faced the most difficulties in while learning German, it can be seen that at the rate of 55% refers to grammar and 30% refers to speaking. A participant in this category responded this question as "I had difficulty in speaking, still so. It is highly challenging for me to pay attention to the grammar rules and to speak fluently at the same time and to do them together". Only 15% of the students stated that they have no difficulties in learning German. 86% of the high school students expressed that they have difficulties in grammar while 14% of students said that they have difficulties in speaking. These percentages are also same in university students. 71% of the university students stated that they have difficulties in grammar while 29% of the university students stated that they have difficulties in speaking. Due to the fact that Turkish is a mother tongue of

the all high school and university students and German belongs to a different language family, the increase of difficulty level is regarded naturally. Ballweg and others (2013) also mentioned an approach called 'Kontrastivhypothese' in their studies in which they described foreign language learning and foreign language acquisition processes. According to this, if the language families of the learning language and the mother tongue are different, foreign language learning process may be more difficult and possibility of the making mistakes in learning language may be more likely. "Article" in language is given as an example for this. Article is not a matter in Turkish, while it is determinant grammar usage in German. Also, the difference in the syntax of both languages is given as an example. It may be utilized from the sources which describes the comparative basic grammar structure of the both Turkish and German (Uslu, 2008). Participant's uneasiness in speaking ability should be considered as normal, since speaking is a productive skill and it is among the difficult subject in all phase of the foreign language learning.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of where can I use my German knowledge now

	Entertainment	School	N/A
Private School (13)	4	5	4
	30%	40%	30%
High School (14)	2	10	2
	15%	70%	15%
University (24)	11	13	-
	48%	52%	0%

In private school, the students learning German express that they are using their German knowledge mainly in entertainment sector (30%) and school environment (40%). The high school students state that they are using German in entertainment purposes at the rate of 15% and 70% of these students says that they are using it in school environment. The university students state that they are using German in entertainment at the rate of 48% and in the university (school) at the rate 52%. When all obtained data evaluated, it can be said that participants are limited to using their German knowledge mainly in school and lectures, and that a small proportion of them utilize it in entertainment platforms such as social media, series, games. The expression of this theme is as follows: "I use German when talking to my cousins, in games, in phone applications, in listening to music and in watching TV series." It is regarded as normal due to the fact that German is not a communication language in our country. Active using of learned language as communication language improves the people's foreign language competency. In this situation, it is necessary to constitute usage areas in terms of permanence and expansion of learned foreign language. Creating German virtual classroom environments, information sharing platforms, increasing

quotas in ERASMUS and MEVLANA programs, and increasing the communication facilities via the consolidation of relations by organizing various trips to the countries where the language is spoken can be considered as some suggestions.

Table 5. Percentage distribution of what I would like
to do in the future through my sufficient German knowledge

	Job	Travel	N/A
Private School (13)	2	10	1
	15%	78%	7%
High School (14)	3	10	1
	21%	72%	7%
University (24)	21	3	-
	88%	12%	0%

The students in private schools want to use their German knowledge in job at the rate of 15% and in travel at the rate of 78%. The high school students also state that they want to use their German knowledge in job at the rate of 21% and in travel at the rate of 72%. The university students express that they want to use their German knowledge in job at the rate of 88% and in travel at the rate of 12%. When looked at all three data, both private and high school students want to use German with a view to communicate with people while travelling to German spoken countries. When the ages of students advance and they come to university age, it seems that feeling of finding job and responsibility have been at forefront and travel desire stays in the background and career plan is seriously come into prominence. If speaking a foreign language is a key factor for finding a job in our country, this motivation factor should also be referred in German lectures. For instance, job postings may be examined as a text type for students who don't think the justification of the learning German too much and these students have asked to read and evaluate that English and German speakers have preference among the required qualifications. This learning approach may be a positive motivation source for students.

Table 6. Percentage distribution of why learning German is important

	Job	Travel
Private School (13)	7	6
	54%	46%
High School (14)	5	9
	35%	65%
University (24)	24	-
	100%	0%

According to students in private school, the importance of the learning German is defined as business at the rate of 54% and travel at the rate of 46%. According to high school students, the importance of the learning German is defined as business at the rate of 35% and travel at the rate of 65%; as for the university students, it is defined as business at the rate of 100%. In Table 5, while German language is considered for travel purpose in both private school and high school, as for university students it is entirely perceived for business. A participant responded to the question of "Why is learning German important for you?" as follows: "Because you can communicate with whole world and the job opportunity increases. Employers, especially in the recent times, search employee who speaks foreign language and if you speak any one you can pass the other candidates. It is also beneficial for culture, I believe that more languages mean more people and more cultures." The fact that the results in Tables 5 and 6 verify each other strengthens the study.

Table 7. Percentage distribution of whether or not you have you thought why you learn German

	Yes	No	Partially
Private School (13)	5 40%	4 30%	4 30%
High School (14)	- 0%	10 72%	4 28%
University (24)	12 50%	6 25%	6 25%

The students in private schools have thought the reason of learning German at the rate of 40%, 30% of them only partially has thought and 30% of them has never thought. The high school students have partially thought the reason of learning German at the rate of 28% and have never thought at the rate of 72%. The university students have thought the reason of learning German at the rate of 50%, 25% of them has thought partially and 25% of them has never thought. Actually, Table 6 proves the necessity of this study. Only 17 participants over 51 have an idea on why they are learning German. 34 participants are trying to learn this language unconsciously. Today's understanding of foreign language education brings with lifelong learning and autonomous learning processes. German lecture which discuss the foreign language learning necessities may have effective impact on German learning process.

Conclusion

German lecture is seen as compulsory in state high school and students have not widely thought on reason, purpose and usage areas of learning German. Compare to state schools, in private schools there is a more conscious approach concerning the reasons of learning German in German lecture. In the university, half of the

students learned German have not developed any idea about why they take this language lecture. Whereas like all thing, desire lies behind the foreign language education. Acat and Demiral (2002) detected three sources (intrinsic, instrumental, and integrative reasons) that motivate students to learn a foreign language. As for 'intrinsic reasons', some meanings are attributed to such as people's care in learning a foreign language, people's enjoyment from this and people's use of foreign language he/she has learned. Here, the encouragement constitutes a very important place in defining these 'intrinsic causes' in the foreign language education. The most coded contents in the analysis of the need for learning German have been having a job, travel, media, social environments, cultural texture, entertainment, and communication.

Suggestion

The process of learning German as a foreign language should be considered from a 'postmodern' perspective: Subject takes the object's place, it must be known that the individual's motivation to learn a foreign language changes depend on time and space, the need analysis should be done and the results obtained from this should be transferred to practice. Similarly, it should be created as much awareness as possible about the necessities of learning German: to give using areas to people who will learn German, to put forward an idea on what German brings them, to evaluate German learning processes, to determine German learning strategies and to give knowledge that German cannot be learned by pressure.

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