

Cultural Components Used by Learners of Turkish as a Foreign Language for Reading Comprehension

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ABSTRACT Turkey has been in intensive communication with the outside world since 2000s and has increased its relations with the people living in different regions and countries as well as kin and relatives communities having common cultural and historical heritage. As a reflection of this, all of the scholarships have been combined under the name of Turkey Scholarships. By giving importance to Turkish teaching to foreigners abroad and in the country, Turkey provides teaching Turkish language and culture from the right source. Turkish language institutions named as *TOMER* and established under universities allow teaching Turkish academically. The most striking point in teaching Turkish to foreigners is the students' perception process of Turkish culture items during learning Turkish as a second language. It is a value to determine how the students, coming from Turkic Republics closed to the Turkish culture, from African and Middle East countries having common religious values of Islam religion and from other countries having different religious values learn items of Turkish culture while learning Turkish and how they use their cultures while giving senses to these items. In this study it has been tried to determine the cultural items used in reading comprehension process of foreign students who are students at Eskisehir Osmangazi University and take Turkish preparation for a year. To do so, which cultural items used by six undergraduate students learning Turkish at B1 level at *ESOGU TOMER* during comprehending a 1419-word text written about *Kurban Bayrami* have been determined by a case study. Religious perception and beliefs and prior knowledge about religious festivals in Turkish culture of students have been identified via document analysis. The findings were interpreted under heading of religious and cultural items. According to the findings, students coming from countries which are related communities have comprehended religious and cultural items of the text better than the other students. One of these students whose religious is different has comprehended the religious item less. One of the students having different religious has comprehended cultural items of the text well because she has better knowledge about Turkish culture, but she comprehended religious items less. Students who have different religious and do not have enough knowledge about Turkish culture have not comprehended both religious and cultural items.