

Using Films to Teach Proverbs and Idioms for Lifelong Learning*

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this study is to measure the efficiency of teaching learners of Turkish as a foreign language, through television series, the proverbs and idioms which can be considered important socio-cultural instruments in terms of the lifelong learning approach. An experimental pattern with pre-test and post-test experiment-control groups are used in this study. The research data were obtained from 137 foreign students at B2 level who study at Fatih University TOMER and Gazi University TOMER. Using the responses of the students to the pre-test and post-test questions, their competence of using proverbs and idioms was examined. It was observed that while the level of success of the experiment group and control group was equal before watching the films, the experiment group's level of success increased after watching them. These findings suggest that this practice is more successful than the classical method of teaching proverbs and idioms.

INTRODUCTION

Turkish is a great and strong language with roots dating back to very old times. Throughout history, people of many different nations wanted to learn Turkish due to political, economic, religious and cultural reasons. The demand for teaching of Turkish as a foreign language has considerably increased again in today's world. As a result of this trend, many people from a variety of nations learn Turkish in institutions founded both in Turkey and all around the world.

The role of proverbs and idioms as socio-cultural language tools in teaching Turkish as a foreign language cannot be ignored. "Proverbs and idioms contain a nation's culture, thoughts, life experiences, traditions, morals and world perspective. Proverbs are the best indications of nations' keen intelligence, broad imagination and sensitive emotions. Each proverb is marked by its own nation" (Aksoy 1988). Idioms, as much as proverbs, include traces of a nation's culture. They are like a nation's fingerprints. The importance of teaching proverbs and idioms stems from this very deep meaning that they have.

Poyraz and Titrek (2013) also claim that there are lots of barriers to develop lifelong education and language is one of them. Developing lifelong skills teaching a language is an important tool and also teaching a language also conveys a culture. Teaching proverbs and idioms is a process of acquisition of the language together with the culture. "As the researchers of culture transfer state, teaching foreign learners of Turkish our culture will help them learn our lan-

guage more efficiently" (Arslan and Durukan 2014) for lifelong learning. Via films, these cultural elements can be conveyed to people who want to learn Turkish as a foreign language. Many proverbs used in daily language and idioms can be encountered in films. The film as an audio-visual art form truly reflects a society's cultural and aesthetic images by shape to express certain thoughts and feelings, reflecting the national spirit. Film is a mirror that reflects real life, popular culture and art (Iscan 2011). Using natural language in the classroom plays a vital role in teaching Turkish truly, effectively and in a communicative way. Teachers and course books used to be the core of multimedia learning for a long time. Today, however, thanks to the use of modern technology in education, different resources help the teacher-course book combination in maintaining multimedia learning in the classroom (Barin 2007). Although a huge variety of video materials are used in the teaching of English and German as a foreign language, unfortunately using videos in teaching Turkish is far behind the times. That is why there is a huge need for the development of audio-visual materials to be used in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Films are of the greatest importance among these materials (Gur 1997).

In some publications on teaching Turkish as a foreign language, there is a misuse of terms like "film, series and video" as audio-visual materials because of their wrong interchangeable usage. The online dictionary of the Turkish Language Association (2015) provides the following definitions: "film: a piece of art shown on

movies”; “series: film, series or TV series broadcasted in episodes with mostly a continuing story”; and “video: a series of motion pictures, digitally compiled or placed on magnetic tapes, a videotape”. Besides these definitions, a video can also be defined as a short film prepared for a special purpose. As there is no other significant difference between films and series but length and unity of story, “film” as a comprehensive term is used for both. Short films, series with episodes and cinema films with unity of story are all of great help in teaching languages.

In the teaching of languages through films, learners have the chance to learn the living language. Their listening skills improve. Films enhance success in learning as they enforce the use of more senses in lessons. “The more senses are included in lessons, the easier the learning will take place and the harder the forgetting will happen. Teaching a subject by seeing it and examining it via observation and experiments is making learning possible with the activation of perceptions and knowledge from experience. Since students’ emotions accompany their senses in such studies, their learning will be exact, firm and true. This kind of knowledge will not only be permanent and long-lasting but also easy to apply” (Kucukahmet 1999; Barin 2010).

Communication images of the language to be taught can be shown to students as concrete and live via video films. In a video, a student can easily see people in a dialogue; their gender, clothes, relationships, social status, what they do and how they feel. Furthermore, students can observe those people’s gestures, hand movements, intonations, all of their behavior and understand the context much better. That is why videos have recently become one of the most commonly-used tools in teaching foreign languages and the video teaching has become one of the most important techniques (Demirel 1999). Each student may have a different type of strong intelligence, which is why their ways of learning will be different too. Since films can refer to both the visual and auditory senses, students with different types of intelligence can be reached through films. As they include entertaining elements, films enhance students’ motivation during lessons. As the students’ motivation rises, they can easily learn difficult structures like proverbs and idioms with the help of films without any boredom, but through fun. Many other studies have already revealed that films and videos increase students’ motivation and those students with higher motivation experience easier

learning (Stoller 1990; Wang 2014; Woottipong 2014).

There are criteria in choosing films for the purpose of teaching proverbs and idioms. First of all, the films must have an adequate content regarding the use of proverbs and idioms. Another point to be kept in mind is that the films to be shown should not be too long. Films longer than 30-35 minutes will make students’ motivation decrease. Instead of foreign films with Turkish dubbing, Turkish films with Turkish subtitles should be preferred. Teaching Turkish language with series or films created by Turkish culture will be more effective. “Before presenting a film with rapid foreign speech, the teacher should arrange for each student in the class to be provided with a script of the documentary. As a class exercise, the students could read the script in the foreign language” (Lottman 1961). Teachers should not consider films as a way of killing time; instead they should pause the films when needed and provide the necessary explanations. A film watched non-stop from beginning to end will be of no help in educational terms. Repeating the proverbs and idioms of the day at the end of the lesson and discussing similarities and differences will increase their permanence.

In the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language, numerous techniques are employed to teach proverbs and idioms along with the cultural traces of the very nation where they flourish. Yet, there are no sufficient concrete data showing how successful these techniques are. The success of these techniques should be measured; techniques that enhance learning should be identified and these techniques should be given priority in instruction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to measure the efficiency of teaching learners of Turkish as a foreign language, through television series, the proverbs and idioms which can be considered important socio-cultural instruments in terms of the lifelong learning approach.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research is designed in an experimental pattern. An experimental pattern with pre-test and post-test experiment-control groups are used in this study. Experimental patterns are research

patterns used to identify the cause-effect relations between variables (Buyukozturk 2007). An experimental pattern is usually based on two groups such as experiment and control groups. The experiment group goes through some specified training and later this is evaluated. On the other hand, the control group continues with their regular training. At the end of the application of the experimental pattern, the variation of success rates in the experiment group before and after the training is statistically compared with that of the control group. In addition to this, pre-test and post-test success variations between the groups are statistically evaluated. The findings reveal the success of the training program used. If the success variation of the experiment group is higher than that of the control group proves that the educational program is successful.

Participants

The research data were obtained from 137 foreign students at B2 level who study at Fatih University TOMER and Gazi University TOMER. Two different work groups were identified. The experiment and control groups were chosen randomly. 81 students were included in the experiment group and 56 students in the control group.

No significant relationship was found between gender and group ($\chi^2=0.318$; $p=0.350>0.05$). The experiment group consisted of 28 (34.6 %) females and 53 (65.4 %) males; the control group consisted of 22 (39.3 %) females and 34 (60.7%) males. No significant relationship was found between nationality and group ($\chi^2=0.875$; $p=0.928>0.05$). The experiment group consisted of 9 (11.1 %) people from Europe, 19 (23.5 %) from Africa, 6 (7.4 %) from Middle Asia, 37 (45.7 %) from the Middle East, and 10 (12.3 %) from the Far East; the control group consisted of 6 (10.7 %) people from Europe, 10 (17.9 %) from

Africa, 4 (7.1 %) from Middle Asia, 27 (48.2 %) from the Middle East, and 9 (16.1 %) from the Far East (Table 1).

Data Gathering Tools

The research data were obtained from 137 foreign students at B2 level who studied at Fatih University TOMER and Gazi University TOMER. The experiment and control groups were chosen randomly. 81 students were included in the experiment group, and 56 students in the control group. Using the responses of 137 foreign students at B2 level who study at Fatih University TOMER and Gazi University TOMER to pre-test and post-test questions, their competence of using proverbs and idioms was examined. During the preparation phase of the pre-test and post-test questions, each proverb and idiom appearing in the series was used a minimum of twice, once in the question itself and once in the choices. No proverb or idiom that does not appear in films was used in the tests. The pre-test and post-test questions were composed of 24 questions, where each proverb and idiom was examined twice. Although the pre-test and post-test questions were the same, they were presented in a different order. The first question in the pre-test, for example, was the 24th in the post-test. The reliability coefficient for the film application success test was calculated. The KR21 coefficient was found to be high as 0.877, and the KR20 coefficient was found to be high as 0.886.

Application of the Experimental Pattern

For the research, a series with adequate content with regard to proverbs and idioms was chosen. During the whole educational process, a series was preferred so as to maintain the unity of the story. In order to finish the whole applica-

Table 1: Descriptive features of the film application students

		<i>Experiment</i>		<i>Control</i>		<i>p</i>
		<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	
<i>Gender</i>	Female	28	34.6	22	39.3	$\chi^2=0.318$ $p=0.350$
	Male	53	65.4	34	60.7	
<i>Nationality</i>	Europe	9	11.1	6	10.7	$\chi^2=0.875$ $p=0.928$
	Africa	19	23.5	10	17.9	
	Middle Asia	6	7.4	4	7.1	
	Middle East	37	45.7	27	48.2	
	Far East	10	12.3	9	16.1	

tion in one lesson hour, the episodes of the series were shortened in a way that would not destroy the unity of the story. The plot of the series that was shortened to 30-35 minutes was disclosed and the proverbs and idioms in it were located. With the help of the disclosed text, Turkish subtitles were prepared and these subtitles were uploaded to the episodes. Students of Turkish at B2 level were chosen randomly to represent the experiment and control groups. A pre-test was used to measure the students' competence in the target proverbs and idioms before the learning process. After the pre-test, the experiment and control groups went through different processes. After the pre-test, the experiment group was given an eight-week training course via series to teach them the proverbs and idioms. During this process, the experiment group was taught 40 different proverbs and idioms. Each week before the film session, instructional documents on the proverbs and idioms to be taught in that lesson were handed out to the students. These documents included explanations of the proverbs and idioms in the film, the time of their appearance in the film, and example sentences. The students were asked to read aloud the target proverbs and idioms together with their meanings from the distributed documents. The scenes where the proverbs and idioms appeared were paused and necessary explanations were provided. After this application, presentations including screen shots of the proverbs and idioms in the series were given as repetition. For the control group, on the other hand, the regular curriculum was followed and no extra effort to teach the proverbs and idioms was made. The control group was given lists including the target proverbs and idioms. At the end of the course, the experiment and control groups were given the post-test, and variations in their pre-education and post-education success rates were observed.

Statistical Analysis of the Data

The data derived from the study were analyzed using the SPSS software (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows 22.0. Num-

bers, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used as descriptive statistical methods in the assessment of the data. As the research variables showed a normal distribution, parametric statistical methods were used in the research. A coupled group t-test was used for the comparing quantitative continuous data between two dependent groups (repeated measurement). A t-test was used for comparing the quantitative continuous data between the two independent groups, and a one-way Anova test was used for comparing the quantitative continuous data between more than two independent groups. A Scheffe test was used as supplementary post-hoc analysis to identify the differences after the Anova test. The findings were assessed in a 95 percent confidence range and on a 5 percent significance level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings concerning the film application are covered in this part. The difference between the group means was not found to be statistically significant after the t-test that was conducted to identify whether the pre-test points of the students participating in the study showed any significant difference from the group variable ($t_{(1-135)} = -0.347$; $p = 0.729 > 0.05$). The students in both the experiment and control groups had similar results from the pre-test questions, and thus they had a similar level of knowledge and competence prior to their application (Table 2).

However, the difference between the group averages was found to be statistically significant according to the t-test that was conducted to find out whether the latest test means showed any significant difference compared to the group variable ($t_{(1-135)} = 6.718$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The final test scores of the experiment group ($\bar{x} = 18.230$) was higher than the final test scores of the control group ($\bar{x} = 12.500$). These data prove that the training which the experiment group went through improved their success rates. No significant progress was observed in the control group (Table 3).

Table 2: Averages of the pre-test points in groups

	Group	N	Av	Sd	t	p
Total Pre-test Points	Experiment	81	11.120	4.802	-0.347	0.729
	Control	56	11.410	4.717		

Table 3: Averages of the post-test points in groups

	Group	N	Av	Sd	t	p
Total Post-test Points	Experiment	81	18.230	4.902	6.718	0.000
	Control	56	12.500	4.925		

The differences between the group averages found by the t-test conducted to identify whether the average score variation among the students participating in the study differed significantly from the group variable was found to be statistically significant ($t_{(1-135)} = 10.659$; $p=0.000<0.05$). The score variation of the experiment group ($\bar{x}=7.111$) was found to be higher than that of the control group ($\bar{x}=1.089$) (Table 4). The level of success of the experiment group and control group was equal before watching the films. However, the experiment group's level of success increased at the end of the training period. A rise was also observed in the level of success of the control group. The variation of success was higher in the experiment group than that of the control group. These findings suggest that the practice applied to the experiment group for teaching proverbs and idioms is more successful than the classical method.

The differences between the group averages that were found by the one-way variance analysis (Anova) which was conducted to find out whether the average pre-test scores of the stu-

dents participating in the study showed a significant difference on the basis of nationality was found to be statistically significant ($F_{(1-135)}=4.620$; $p=0.002<0.05$). A supplementary post-hoc analysis was carried out to identify the origins of these variations. The pre-test scores of African students (14.030 ± 5.609) were higher than European students (10.670 ± 6.411), Middle East students (10.970 ± 3.821), and Far East students (8.530 ± 3.272). The highest pre-test scores were those of African students, while students from the Far East had the lowest pre-test score averages (Table 5).

The differences between the group averages found by the one-way variance analysis (Anova) which was conducted to find out whether the average post-test scores of the students participating in the study showed a significant difference on the basis of nationality was not found to be statistically significant ($F_{(1-135)}=2.262$; $p=0.066>0.05$). The students' success scores after the film application were similar regardless of their nationality (Table 6).

Table 4: Average score variations in the pre-test and post-test groups

	Group	N	Av	Sd	t	p
Variations	Experiment	81	7.111	3.997	10.659	0.000
	Control	56	1.089	1.643		

Table 5: Averages of the pre-test points of the experiment group based on nationality

	Group	N	Av	Sd	F	p	Variation
Total Pre-test Points	Europe	15	10.670	6.411	4.620	0.002	2 > 1
	Africa	29	14.030	5.609			2 > 4
	Middle Asia	10	10.900	3.725			2 > 5
	Middle East	64	10.970	3.821			4 > 5
	Far East	19	8.530	3.272			

Table 6: Averages of the post-test points of experiment group based on nationality

	Group	N	Av	Sd	t	p
Total Post-test Points	Europe	15	14.000	7.397	2.262	0.066
	Africa	29	18.100	5.434		
	Middle Asia	10	15.400	4.789		
	Middle East	64	16.020	5.063		
	Far East	19	13.840	6.021		

The differences between the group averages found by the t-test which was conducted to find out whether the average pre-test scores of the students participating in the study showed a significant difference on the basis of gender was not found to be statistically significant ($t_{(1-135)} = -0.299$; $p = 0.782 > 0.05$). Prior to the film application, both male and female students had similar success scores (Table 7).

The differences between the group averages found by the t-test which was conducted to find out whether the average post-test scores of students participating in the study showed a significant difference on the basis of gender was not found to be statistically significant ($t_{(1-135)} = -1.307$; $p = 0.193 > 0.05$). Following the film application, both male and female students had similar success scores (Table 8).

There are many studies available in the field regarding the use of films in language teaching. In these studies, the significance of using films for language teaching was given special stress and it was stated that students benefited in numerous ways (Johnson 1956; Lottmann 1961; Fehlman 1996; Berk 2009; McNulty and Lazarevic 2012). "The use of video in the foreign language classroom has been the subject of numerous studies, with nearly exclusive emphasis placed on its linguistic benefits and its effectiveness in increasing listening comprehension" (Weyer 1999). Despite the recent increase in the number of studies regarding teaching Turkish as a foreign language, there are still no studies about teaching structures with depth in language meaning, such as idioms and proverbs. If materials for special teaching purposes are designed and research is carried out, then the chances of success will rise.

CONCLUSION

Considering the pre-test score averages of the participants, we can conclude that students

in the experiment and control groups had similar scores as the tests on proverbs and idioms, which means they were equally knowledgeable and competent before the application.

The post-test score averages showed that pre-test score average of the experiment group, which was 11.120, increased to 18.230 as a result of the eight-week training they received. This finding suggests that the training was successful. When it comes to the control group who received no training, their pre-test score average rose from 11.410 to 12.500. So, the control group showed no noteworthy improvement.

Examining the variation of scores, one can see that the score variations of the experiment group ($\bar{x} = 7.111$) were greater than the control group ($\bar{x} = 1.089$). It is also understood that the level of variation in the experiment group was much higher than that of the control group. These findings suggest that the practice applied to the experiment group for teaching proverbs and idioms was more successful than the classical method.

The analyses carried out in order to find out any possible significant difference among participants regarding their nationalities revealed that there was a significant difference in the pre-test scores in terms of nationality, while the post-test averages showed no such significant difference. While the African students had the highest pre-test score averages, the lowest averages belonged to the students from the Far East. The students' success scores after the film application were similar regardless of their nationalities. As a result of the analyses carried out in order to find out any possible significant difference among the participants regarding their gender, no significant difference was found in either the pre-test or post-test score averages. It was clear that the success scores of both the female and male participants were similar prior to the film application. Likewise, the post-test score averages were not found to be statistically significant in terms

Table 7: Averages of the pre-test points of the experiment group based on gender

	Group	N	Av	Sd	t	p
Total Pre-test Points	Female	50	11.080	5.591	-0.299	0.782
	Male	87	11.330	4.228		

Table 8: Averages of the post-test points of the experiment group based on gender

	Group	N	Av	Sd	t	p
Total Post-test Points	Female	50	15.060	6.186	-1.307	0.193
	Male	87	16.370	5.301		

of the gender variable, and similar results in the success scores were gathered for both the male and female students. After the training period, similar rates of a rise in success were observed for both the male and female participants. No difference in terms of gender was discovered.

In the light of the above findings, one can conclude that teaching proverbs and idioms through films produces fruitful outcomes. Thus, the regular inclusion of teaching through films in lessons will be of great help for students' education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was observed that making use of films in foreign language teaching significantly contributed to students' language learning. Materials including the use of films in language teaching should be prepared and these materials should be utilized in class. Hence, the problem about insufficient materials in teaching Turkish will be overcome and there will be significant results.

NOTES

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