



Teaching Turkish as A Second Language at Primary School Level: A Comparative Case Study¹

İlkokul Düzeyinde İkinci Dil Olarak Türkçe Öğretimi: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Durum Çalışması

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doi: 10.38089/iperj.2024.155

Geliş Tarihi: 21.11.2023

Kabul Tarihi: 04.01.2024

Yayınlanma Tarihi: 31.03.2024

Abstract: Türkiye's geopolitical position has increased the interest in teaching Turkish as a second language. Both human and geographical conditions are factors that cause migration to Türkiye. Therefore, it is important to examine the processes of teaching Turkish as a second language in depth and to identify the problems that exist in the process to make the process more qualified. In this context, this research, which aims to examine the problems encountered in teaching Turkish as a second language at the primary school level from a broad and in-depth perspective, was designed as a case study from qualitative research methods. Since this study examines more than one situation that can be holistic in itself, it is suitable for a holistic multiple-case study. Since it was aimed to examine teaching Turkish to foreigners from a broad perspective, 19 teachers and 29 students from three different school types (bilingual, international, and public schools) were studied. The data collected through interviews and observations were analyzed through content analysis. The findings were analyzed in terms of teaching Turkish as a second language in bilingual schools, international schools, and public schools. As a result of the research, it was found that lack of materials, mother tongue, and environmental influences were common in all three types of schools and were effective in learning Turkish as a second language. In addition, children's and parents' attitudes towards Turkish were also found to have a significant impact on language learning. Within the scope of the research, suggestions for researchers, those working in the field, and program preparers are presented.

Key Words: Primary school, Turkish teaching, teaching Turkish as a second language

Özet: Türkiye'nin içerisinde bulunduğu jeopolitik konum ikinci dil olarak Türkçe öğretimine olan ilgiyi artırmıştır. Hem beşeri hem de coğrafi koşullar Türkiye'ye göçe neden olan faktörlerdir. Dolayısıyla ikinci dil olarak Türkçe öğretim süreçlerinin derinlemesine incelenmesi ve süreçte var olan sorunların belirlenmesi süreci daha nitelikli hale getirmek açısından önem taşımaktadır. Bu kapsamda ilkokul düzeyinde ikinci dil olarak Türkçe öğretiminde karşılaşılan sorunları geniş ve derinlemesine bir bakış açısıyla incelemenin amaçlandığı bu araştırma nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden durum çalışması olarak desenlenmiştir. Gerçekleştirilen bu çalışmada birden çok fakat kendi içlerinde bütüncül olabilecek bir durum incelendiği için durum çalışması türlerinden bütüncül çoklu durum çalışmasına uygundur. Yabancılara Türkçe öğretimi geniş bir bakış açısıyla incelemek hedeflendiği için üç farklı okul türünden (çift dilli, uluslararası ve kamu okulları) 19 öğretmen ve 29 öğrenciyle çalışılmıştır. Görüşme ve gözlem yapılarak toplanılan veriler içerik analizi yöntemiyle çözümlenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular çift dilli okullarda, uluslararası okullarda ve kamu okullarında ikinci dil olarak Türkçe öğretimi olarak incelenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda üç okul türünde de ortak olarak materyal eksikliği, ana dilinin ve çevre etkisinin ikinci dil olarak Türkçe öğreniminde etkili olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Buna ilave olarak çocukların ve ailelerin Türkçeye yönelik tutumlarının da dil öğrenimine etkisinin önemli olduğu görülmüştür. Çalışma kapsamında araştırmacılara, alanda çalışanlara, program hazırlayıcılara yönelik öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İlkokul, Türkçe öğretimi, Türkçenin ikinci dil öğretimi

¹This study is derived from the first author's master's thesis conducted under the supervision of the second author.

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Introduction

People are social beings from birth, so they need to communicate with other people. People fulfil this need for communication through language. Language is defined as the transfer of feelings, thoughts and expectations of people living together to each other through common gestures and rules (Aksan, 2003). Based on this definition, it can be stated that language has many functions as a developed word. When transport between countries was not so widespread, most people used only their mother tongue. With the development of technology, means of communication and transport, individuals have encountered the need to know not only their mother tongue but also more than one language. So much so that the importance of learning another language other than one's mother tongue is frequently reminded in education and daily life (Cesur, 2008). This reminder is necessary for two reasons. First, with the advancement of communication equipment, two individuals from different nations can communicate effortlessly. Secondly, people are forced to move from one place to another for reasons such as education, war or natural disasters. People are compelled to acquire a second or foreign language for these reasons. At this point, the concepts of mother tongue teaching, foreign language and second language teaching emerge. Mother tongue is defined as "the language that the child acquires from his/her family or the community in which he/she lives" (Turkish Language Association, 2023). On the other hand, a foreign language can be defined as a language in which the target language is not widely spoken in the country of study, while a second language can be defined as a language in which the target language is widely spoken in the country of study or used as a mother tongue (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). Based on these definitions, a person who learns Turkish in a country other than Türkiye, such as Germany, can be said to be learning a foreign language, while a foreigner who learns Turkish in Türkiye can be said to be learning a second language. As a result, if the target language is also spoken as the mother tongue in that place, this is considered second language acquisition. Today, as the number of individuals migrating for human or natural reasons increases, so are studies on second language education.

Wars and climate changes force societies to migrate and as a natural result of this situation, different nations can live together. Türkiye receives many immigrants due to its geographical and geopolitical position. This situation makes teaching Turkish as a second language important. Although these reasons are important, teaching Turkish to foreigners has been practiced for many years. Teaching Turkish as a foreign language starts with the teaching of Turkish to an Indian priest by the Huns (Biçer, 2012). It may not be called a programmed study for this teaching carried out at that time, but this situation can be presented as proof that teaching Turkish as a second language has started. Today, teaching Turkish to foreigners is progressing in a more programmed and planned way. People want to learn Turkish for educational, economic, political, migration, etc. reasons. According to the data of the Directorate General of Migration Management [DGMM] (2023), there are around 1 million migrants in Türkiye and around 140,000 of them reside with student permits. In addition to this, approximately 3 million Syrians who had to leave their country due to the civil war live in Türkiye (DGMM, 2023). Considering these numbers, it can be said that approximately 5 million people are learning Turkish as a second language while living in Türkiye. Learning Turkish is an important point for these migrants to adapt to the region they live in. Learning a second language does not mean learning the grammar rules of that language or learning the Turkish versions of the words in their mother tongue (Maden, 2017). To learn a second language, it is necessary to use it actively in written and verbal communication. As a result, immigrant students must learn the target language correctly in order to adapt to the education system and social life of the nation to which they move (Magos & Politi, 2008). Students who learn the target language at an adequately will be able to meet their daily life needs easily and communicate with their peers and teachers in the classroom (Bailey, 2006). As a result, target language learners' active communication is a significant variable in both their daily and academic life. In addition to communication, there are many variables that affect second language teaching.

Learner characteristics are the first variable influencing second language learning. Skehan (1991) characterized language learning as a result of the characteristics of learners (desire, motivation, intelligence, personality, and age) and their learning strategies and styles. At this point, while the language learning process proceeds instinctively for the first language, it proceeds differently for the second language. This is because the willingness of second language learners, their personalities, and

why they want to learn (motivation) directly affect the process. On the other hand, which strategies and styles are suitable for individuals in language learning is also an important point. Also, the culture in which the second language is learned is also one of the important variables in the process. Because culture has an active influence on language, and language is a key tool in cultural transmission.

It is an undeniable fact that language and culture are mutually communicative and part of each other (Baskın, 2018). Therefore, for immigrants to adapt to the countries they go to, they need to learn the language as well as their culture. When considered in this way, second language teaching can be defined as a challenging process. The process of teaching Turkish to foreigners is also a process that includes different practices and some difficulties. In teaching Turkish as a second language, both learners and teachers may encounter different difficulties in the process. These difficulties in teaching Turkish as a second language may arise from students, teachers, materials, and Turkish teaching programs. In addition, differences in school types (international, bilingual schools, etc.) and differences in the students and families attending these schools can also cause problems in teaching Turkish as a second language (Brown, 2023; Sabirova & Khanipova, 2019). To eliminate the problems experienced and to make Turkish language teaching qualified, the problems should be identified well and studies should be carried out for their solution after the problem is identified.

In the current study, it is aimed to determine the problems faced by immigrant students studying in different school types during the Turkish language learning process. When the studies on teaching Turkish as a second language are examined, it is seen that they are carried out by the qualitative approach and only for one situation (Güngör, 2015; Khomeniuk, 2020; Çiğerci & Güngör, 2016; Çiğerci & Yıldırım, 2020) in addition to a survey study to identify problems (Alan, 2021; Durmuş, 2013; Er, Biçer, & Bozkırlı, 2012; Erol, Erdem & Akkaya, 2019). This study focuses on three different situations under the title of teaching Turkish to foreigners, not on a single situation in the literature. In the study, the problems of refugee students studying in public schools, international schools, and bilingual schools in the process of learning Turkish as a second language were determined as the focal point. In determining this aim, it was aimed to present different perspectives on teaching Turkish as a second language instead of a single focal point. In addition, it also aimed to deepen the study by determining the problems experienced in teaching Turkish as a second language by different nationalities instead of only one nationality group. Therefore, it is considered important to examine both the problems encountered by students of different nationalities in teaching Turkish as a second language and the problems experienced in different teaching environments together. It is considered important to reveal the problems caused by these differences in teaching Turkish as a second language to look at this field as a whole. In addition, it is thought that this situation will benefit researchers, program makers, and practitioners working on teaching Turkish as a second language. In the current research conducted in this direction, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How do school types (international, bilingual, and public schools) affect teaching Turkish as a second language?
2. What are the problems in teaching Turkish to foreign students studying in bilingual primary schools in Türkiye?
3. What are the problems in teaching Turkish to foreign students studying in international schools in Türkiye?
4. What are the problems in teaching Turkish to foreign students studying in public schools in Türkiye?

Method

This study aims to determine which problems foreign students studying at the primary school level in Türkiye and their teachers experience in the process of teaching Turkish. In this context, the research was conducted in a case study design, one of the qualitative research methods. A case study is a type of study that examines one or more limited events in depth (Creswell, 2007). On the other hand, in this study, since more than one case (bilingual, international, and public schools) but a situation (Turkish language teaching) that can be holistic in itself is analyzed, it is suitable for holistic multiple case study, one of the case study types.

Study Group

In the current study, the maximum diversity method was preferred when determining the study group. In the maximum diversity sampling method, the people to be included in the study group are aimed to create diversity by the research purpose (Yıldırım, & Şimşek, 2013). Therefore, different school types were taken into consideration when determining the schools, and different professional seniority was taken into consideration when determining the teachers. In terms of students, the selection was based on the fact that they were from different nationalities. As a result, 19 teachers and 29 students were studied in this research. Information about the teachers in the study group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information about the teachers

| School type | Gender | Age | Department | Seniority in the organisation | Seniority |
|----------------------|--------|-----|------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| International School | Female | 26 | Primary school teacher | 3 years | 4 years |
| | Male | 44 | Turkish teacher | 13 years | 21 years |
| | Female | 34 | Primary school teacher | 2 years | 4 years |
| | Female | 44 | Turkish teacher | 2 years | 21 years |
| Bilingual School | Female | 43 | Primary school teacher | 3 months | 18 years |
| | Female | 27 | Primary school teacher | 3 years | 4 years |
| | Female | 38 | Primary school teacher | 1 year | 10 years |
| | Female | 27 | Primary school teacher | 1 year | 5 years |
| | Male | 36 | Primary school teacher | 2 years | 10 years |
| | Female | 28 | Primary school teacher | 1 year | 5 years |
| | Female | 29 | Primary school teacher | 4 years | 5 years |
| | Female | 44 | Primary school teacher | 11 years | 19 years |
| Public School | Female | 28 | Primary school teacher | 5 years | 5 years |
| | Female | 50 | Primary school teacher | 17 years | 25 years |
| | Male | 29 | Primary school teacher | 2 years | 7 years |
| | Female | 39 | Primary school teacher | 10 years | 15 years |
| | Female | 53 | Primary school teacher | 13 years | 24 years |
| | Female | 43 | Primary school teacher | 18 years | 20 years |

25

When Table 1 is analyzed, the majority of the participants are primary school teachers. The average professional seniority of teachers working in international schools is 12.5 years. The average seniority of teachers working in bilingual schools is 9 years. The average seniority of teachers working in public schools is 16 years. In terms of gender, the number of women in the study group is 16 and the number of men is 3.

Data Collection Tools

Teacher's and student's semi-structured interview forms and observation forms were used as data collection tools in the study. While preparing the teacher's semi-structured interview form, a draft form was created. It was created by examining the forms prepared in qualitative studies in the literature and the problems arising in quantitative studies. The form was sent to two field experts and two teachers and expert opinion was taken. After the feedback from the experts, one question was removed and two questions were edited. The form consisting of 9 questions was finally shown to an expert in terms of language. In the teacher interview form, questions such as how the language teaching process is, how the effects of the student, the program, and the teacher on the process were tried to be examined. Similarly, the student semi-structured interview form was prepared after 3 questions were removed and 3 questions were edited after the expert opinions. The student's semi-structured interview form also consists of 9 questions. In the student's interview form, questions such as how the language learning process continues, which skills he develops more easily in terms of Turkish, and which skills he has difficulty in were tried to be examined.

The observation form was created to collect observation data during the observation of teachers and students in the natural environment during Turkish language teaching. While creating the observation form, items were written under the headings of teacher and student behaviors. For example, under the heading of teacher, it was observed that the lessons were understandable and that the teacher involved the students in the process. The researchers aimed to support and compare the data obtained from the interview forms with the observation data. The first researcher, who made observations, identified the problems in teaching Turkish to foreigners by conducting a literature review and collected data by paying attention to these points during the observation. Under the student heading, items such as students' use of Turkish skills, their reactions to instructions, their use of Turkish outside the classroom, and their communication with native Turkish speakers were observed.

Data Collection and Analysis

After the development of the data collection tools, necessary permissions were obtained. The 1st researcher made 106 minutes of observation in a public school, 210 minutes in an international school, and 135 minutes in a bilingual school. In addition, interviews were conducted with teachers and students in the schools. Information about the interviews is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Information on interviews

| Date | Event | Duration |
|------------------------|--|----------|
| 02.10.2019- 14.10.2019 | Public school teacher interview | 146 min |
| 15.10.2019- 19.02.2020 | Public school student interview | 138 min |
| 08.11.2019- 05.02.2020 | International school student interview | 196 min |
| 01.10.2019- 05.02.2020 | International school student interview | 176 min |
| 25.10.2019- 02.01.2020 | Bilingual school student interview | 125 min |
| 09.10.2019- 26.02.2020 | Bilingual school teacher interview | 116 min |
| 19.02.2020 | Public school observation | 106 min |
| 22.01.2020 | International school observation | 210 min |
| 12.02.2020 | Bilingual school observation | 135 min |

26

The interviews were audio-recorded after obtaining the permission of the participants. Then, the voice recordings were transcribed. The data obtained were analyzed by content analysis method. Content analysis consists of coding the data, finding themes, and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In the research, research questions were determined as the unit of analysis. For example, under the theme of problems encountered by foreign students studying in bilingual schools in Turkish language learning, the code of mother tongue target language difference was reached and from this code, the category of causes of problems in Turkish learning was reached. After the analysis, direct quotations from the participants were given while presenting the findings. While presenting the quotations from the participants, teachers working in bilingual schools were named C1, C2,...; students were named CS1, CS2...; teachers working in international schools were named I1, I2,...; students were named IS1, IS2...; teachers working in public schools were named as P1, P2,...; students were named as PS1, PS2...

Validity and Reliability

Several procedures were followed to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. One of the factors that threaten validity and reliability in qualitative research is sample size. Since there is no specific criterion in qualitative research, this may pose a problem (Creswell, 2007). In the current study, the data collection process was terminated when data saturation occurred, that is, when the data collected from the participants became repetitive. One of the factors that threaten validity and reliability in qualitative research may be the subjective interpretations of the researchers. In this context reliability was tried to be ensured by obtaining participant confirmation (Fraenkel et al. 2012.). For the research results to be generalizable, the process and participants were explained in detail. Thus, external validity was tried to be ensured (Büyüköztürk et al. 2019). Finally, the researcher triangulation method was used

to ensure reliability. In this way, researcher bias, which threatens qualitative research, was tried to be eliminated. Multiple perspectives are provided by using more than one data collection tool (Neuman, 2014). In this study, both observation form and interview form were used. Thus, more generalizable data were tried to be obtained.

Findings

The findings obtained in the study are presented according to the research questions. In this context, the problems encountered in teaching Turkish as a second language in bilingual schools, then in international schools, and finally in public schools are presented. Categories and codes related to 3 themes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Themes, categories and codes

| Themes | Categories | Codes |
|---|---|--|
| Problems in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners in Bilingual Primary Schools in Türkiye | Causes of problems in Turkish learning | Mother tongue target language difference |
| | | School program |
| | | Learning more than one language at the same time |
| | | The importance given to Turkish Turkish vocabulary |
| | | Environmental factors |
| Problems arising from not being able to learn Turkish | Problems arising from not being able to learn Turkish | Communication problem |
| | | Adaptation problem |
| Problems Experienced in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners in International Primary Schools in Türkiye | Causes of problems in Turkish learning | Mother tongue target language difference |
| | | Environmental factors |
| | | Lack of materials and programs |
| | | Motivation |
| | | Turkish vocabulary |
| Problems arising from not being able to learn Turkish | Problems arising from not being able to learn Turkish | Adaptation problem |
| | | Communication problem |
| Problems Experienced in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners in Public Schools (Where Refugee Students are Intensive) | Causes of problems in Turkish learning | Mother tongue target language difference |
| | | Psychological reasons |
| | | Fear of assimilation |
| | | Lack of materials |
| | | Adaptation problem |
| Problems arising from not being able to learn Turkish | Problems arising from not being able to learn Turkish | Adaptation problem |
| | | Communication problem |

Findings on the Problems in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners in Bilingual Primary Schools in Türkiye

The themes obtained from the data obtained from the observations and interviews regarding Turkish language teaching in bilingual schools are adaptation problems, mother tongue, communication, environmental causes, Turkish vocabulary knowledge, importance given to Turkish, multilingual teaching, and programme.

When the data obtained from interviews with teachers and students and classroom observations were analyzed, it was found that it took a long time for foreign students to adapt to the class. The fact that Turkish students did not take steps to integrate foreign students and that foreign students enrolled after the school started were found to be effective in the emergence of this situation. The views of C6 reveal this situation.

“It takes time for foreign students and Turkish students to integrate, there are polarisations from time to time. Turkish students expect the first step from others, and foreign students can be excluded because they join the school later.”

From the statements of C7, it can be concluded that the fact that there are many native Turkish speakers in the classes makes it difficult for foreign students to adapt to the environment because they

do not speak Turkish at the beginning. In addition to this, it is seen that foreign students cannot communicate with other people in the school (cleaning staff, etc.) because they do not speak Turkish.

“When Turkish students are predominant in the classroom, they have difficulties in getting used to the environment and creating a social environment... They also have language barriers with other people working at the school.”

In the students' statements about this situation, it is seen that they are anxious because they do not know Turkish sufficiently and they cannot communicate with their peers. This situation naturally causes foreign students to communicate with other foreign students. In addition, it is seen that they do not have an environment where they can speak Turkish outside the school. As a result, it can be said that immigrant students do not have an environment where they can speak Turkish outside the school and they cannot practice Turkish sufficiently and this situation creates an adaptation problem for them.

“I am not happy to talk to them because I cannot understand their language, it is very difficult.”
CS2

“I only have friends at school, so I am not happy. I cannot speak Turkish and therefore I find it difficult to make friends.” CS8

The adaptation problem arising from the students' not speaking Turkish is also included in the researcher's observation notes. It is seen that students who cannot speak Turkish are excluded by other students.

“Students who do not speak Turkish can be excluded or have adaptation problems. For example, they don't let them games, or interaction in the classroom only happens when they have to.”
(Researcher observation notes 12.02.2020)

As can be seen from the teachers' opinions and the researcher's observations, it is understood that students who are proficient in only one of the two different languages have communication problems. Naturally, it seems inevitable that individuals who do not know each other's mother tongues or who are not proficient in the language they will use together will experience this problem. This means that as a second language, it can negatively affect the teaching of Turkish.

Teachers expressed a number of opinions about the students' not knowing Turkish and making it difficult. Firstly, the teacher's statements show that the alphabet differences between the students' mother tongue and Turkish make it difficult for them to learn Turkish as a second language and that students have problems vocalizing letters that are not in their mother tongue. As a natural consequence of these differences between the target language and the native language alphabets, it slows down the learning of Turkish as a second language.

“At first, the Turkish alphabet and pronunciation were very difficult for them. They have difficulty in understanding the use of tenses...” C6

“The first problem I have while teaching Turkish is that the sounds are different. The equivalent of the letter in their mother tongue and the sound in Turkish create confusion. There is a delay in progressing at the same level with Turkish students.” C7

Student opinions also support the difficulties arising from the difference in alphabets. For example, ÇÖ2 mentioned the reading skill by saying “Reading is a big problem for me.”, CS5 stated that while he could write easily in his mother tongue, he had difficulty in Turkish with the following statements.

“Turkish is a difficult language, so is writing because I write in Persian...”

It is seen that similar language structures are important in teaching Turkish as a second language and student characteristics are effective. While the presence of similar words between the mother tongue and Turkish facilitates the process, the presence of differences makes the process difficult. On the other hand, students' characteristics also affect this process. It was determined that the student's discipline and willingness to learn Turkish facilitated the process. On the contrary, the fact that the student is not willing to learn and does not have sufficient motivation towards Turkish has emerged as a factor that makes the process difficult. Therefore, it can be said that student profiles and mother tongues are effective in Turkish language learning.

“I will describe the general student profile. So far I have had 6 Korean, 1 Azeri, 1 Kazakh, 2 African, 2 French, 1 Indian, 1 American, 1 Czech, and 1 Russian students. Korean students are very used to listening and discipline, they are determined and want to learn and speak Turkish. The French are the same. The French learn very easily. Because some of our words are similar to each other, they understand easily. My African students had great difficulty in pronunciation. My Azerbaijani student understood and spoke Turkish in 5 months even though his sentence structure was not complete. My student from Kazakhstan was withdrawn and was not very enthusiastic about learning Turkish because they were going to move after 6 months. My Indian student's pronunciation and comprehension level was good. This was because he was making a lot of effort, working hard and his family supported him.” C4

Another statement that supports the effect of the mother tongue on Turkish language learning is given by C2. C2 stated that a Korean citizen student of his was successful in reading and writing skills in Turkish, but had difficulty in speaking skills.

“For example, I have a Korean student. He is very successful in reading and writing, but he has difficulty in pronunciation.”

Korean student CS6 also supported his teacher and stated that even if he spoke Turkish, he could not be understood due to the reasons arising from the mother tongue of the people in front of him.

“... I don't speak Turkish at all, I can't speak when I go to the supermarket. When I speak Turkish, they don't understand me.”

According to the statements of teachers and students, it can be said that students' different mother tongues show differences in Turkish language learning. For example, it is seen that Azerbaijani students are more advantageous. This may be because Azeri Turkish is a dialect of Turkish and has the same origin. On the other hand, although Turkish and Korean are in the same language family, the fact that Korean students' native language pronunciation or the alphabet difference in their native language is different from Turkish shows that students have difficulty and pushes them to think that they are not understood.

The lack of importance attached to Turkish lessons is another problem experienced in bilingual schools. In the interviews, it is seen that school administrations do not attach importance to Turkish language teaching in bilingual schools. It has been determined that Turkish language teaching in bilingual schools is carried out in a limited time and in addition to this, a suitable classroom environment is not provided.

“Students are taught Turkish during breaks, but it is not a quality education. We do not have enough space, we do it in the music room. There should be a Turkish class like the English class.”

C4 stated that the reason why bilingual schools do not attach importance to Turkish teaching is that they give more importance to English in line with their student profiles and goals. This approach of the school administration is reflected in the students and their families.

“I think bilingual schools do not care about Turkish. They aim to give English-orientated lessons like international schools. They value foreign teachers more. This is reflected in families and students.”

Similar statements were also made in the interview with C8. It is seen that the school administration gives less importance to Turkish teaching compared to English teaching, therefore, they do not provide a suitable environment for teaching and do not support the teachers in terms of materials. It can be said that this situation negatively affects the teaching of Turkish as a second language.

“The most important problem is that they do not care as much as English. There should be resource scanning, there should be a Turkish room, there should be listening devices, tape recorders, computers, personal computers, or personal tablets in the Turkish room, and the environment should be ready for listening, writing, and reading. The attitude of administrators and school founders, environment, family, resources, technology...”

As can be seen in the teachers' statements, the neglect of Turkish has a negative impact on Turkish language teaching, which in turn has a negative impact on students, teachers and even parents. In the data obtained from the interviews, it was stated that in bilingual schools, students do not feel the need to learn Turkish, do not attach the necessary importance to it and do not have interest and motivation in Turkish for reasons such as thinking that they will not stay in Turkey for a long time or that their families come to Turkey due to compulsory situations.

This negative attitude of the school administrations towards Turkish language teaching is reflected in the families. It has been determined that the families of the students demand from the teachers that their children should not be forced to learn Turkish. Since this demand of the parents is reflected in their children, students cannot provide sufficient motivation for learning Turkish.

"We do not force upon the request of the parents. Also, since it is said that students learn when they want to learn and learn over time, students prefer to speak English." C2

Another finding is that students who do not have sufficient motivation for Turkish language learning cannot focus on the lesson and therefore disrupt the classroom management of the teachers. It was stated that this situation makes the process of teaching Turkish difficult and children who want to learn Turkish may be negatively affected.

"Although it is rare, if there is no family predisposition or curiosity because it is not their own choice to be in Türkiye, there may be a lack of concentration in the lesson. This situation can disrupt the lesson organization." C7

In the interviews with the students, sentences expressing why they are not motivated to learn Turkish. As an example of this situation, the fact that the students will soon move to another country negatively affects their motivation towards Turkish.

"I am not learning Turkish because I am going to another country."

30

In the data obtained from the interviews, it is seen that learning more than one language at the same time and the differences arising from the sounds cause difficulties in comprehension and speaking. Regarding this situation, C2 stated that a student whose mother tongue is Russian had problems vocalizing the letters correctly due to learning English and Turkish at the same time.

"He speaks Russian and tries to learn Turkish and English at the same time. When he hears Turkish, he understands but does not react. He does not know the meaning of the words and confuses Turkish and English. For example, he calls the letter 'E' 'I'."

It was also stated by the students that learning more than one language at the same time posed a problem. For example, CS4 stated that the different sentence formations in Turkish and English posed a problem for him.

"... I liked English and Turkish, but it was very difficult at first. I had difficulty because the sentence formation in English and Turkish are very different from each other."

Based on the statements of teachers and students, it can be said that learning more than one language affects each other negatively, especially due to the differences between the target languages and the mother tongue. Another problem encountered in bilingual schools is the inadequacy of students' Turkish vocabulary knowledge. It has been observed that students do not attach importance to Turkish for different reasons (motivation, family perspective, etc.). As a natural consequence of this situation, their Turkish vocabulary knowledge is insufficient. Regarding this situation, C5 stated that even if students acquire Turkish reading and writing skills, they have problems with speaking skills due to insufficient vocabulary knowledge.

"Even if students learn to read and write, they may have problems with word meanings and speaking. If they are in a mixed class, they may lag behind others."

As a matter of fact, both in the interviews with the teachers and in the interviews with the students, it was stated that Turkish vocabulary knowledge is important in terms of language skills and that this situation is important in terms of communicating with their environment in Turkish:

“When he hears Turkish, he understands but does not react. He doesn't know the meaning of the words.” C2

“Vocabulary knowledge is a bit difficult for me. I try to learn new words.” CS7

As reflected in teacher and student statements, vocabulary is extremely important in the use of a language. Because vocabulary is one of the main factors in both meaning and comprehension. For this reason, students who are rich in Turkish vocabulary have relatively less difficulty in learning Turkish, while students who are deficient in Turkish vocabulary have more difficulty.

Another problem in bilingual schools is the lack of a program for teaching Turkish as a second language. The Turkish language knowledge of students with different mother tongues is not equal. According to the findings obtained from the interviews and observations, teachers do not know how to intervene in level differences. The fact that the school program did not provide a plan to overcome level differences hurt Turkish language teaching. The views of C4 reveal this situation.

“... I think a different curriculum is needed for them. Both Turkish language teaching and a normal curriculum where they can learn with their peers, such as teaching reading and writing. There is such a system in English. There are English as a Second Language courses, which consist of speaking, grammar, learning by listening, reading-writing, and vocabulary teaching for new learners of English. When a student does not speak English, he/she does not attend full-time English classes. For example, if there are 8 hours of English lessons, four of them are ESL lessons. They have the opportunity to use the new information they learned in ESL in their regular English classes. We do not have such a system. Therefore, we do not know what to teach or where to start.”

It is understood that immigrant students studying in bilingual schools do not have an environment where they can actively use Turkish. According to the data obtained from the interviews, it is seen that the fact that the students are not exposed to speaking Turkish and that they do not have an environment to speak Turkish hurts Turkish language teaching. C2's views on this issue reveal the situation;

“Since they are in environments where no Turkish is spoken, they have difficulty in recognizing letters, memorizing words, and using them in sentences. They do many things at the same time, which makes them feel that they have to use the English language to join their peers socially.”

The importance of being able to communicate with the environment in the target language is also seen in the interviews with the students. Some of the students prefer to speak English because they do not speak Turkish and they acquire an environment for this purpose. For this reason, students cannot realize their language development because they are not exposed to Turkish.

“Only language is a problem. In the beginning, I was speaking only English, but the Turks did not understand me at all. Now we have a few neighbors. I can talk to them.” CS4

It is seen that students do not attach importance to Turkish and do not speak Turkish outside the school. This situation is one of the reasons why students' Turkish skills do not develop.

“Students never speak Turkish at home... The teacher has difficulty in class control because they do not speak Turkish.” (Researcher Observation 12.02.2020).

Findings on the Problems Experienced in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners in International Primary Schools in Türkiye

The themes obtained according to the data obtained from interviews with teachers and students in international primary schools and researcher observations are mother tongue, environmental causes, adaptation, material and programme, motivation, Turkish word knowledge. Due to the difference between Turkish and students' mother tongue, it was stated that students had difficulties in reading, comprehension skills, and grammar while learning Turkish. Regarding this situation, I1 stated that the students' comprehension skills were not at a sufficient level and they could not understand the instructions in Turkish.

“Their reading comprehension level is quite low, they cannot understand the instructions.”

I4 emphasized that especially European students had serious problems in learning Turkish due to the different syntactic structure of Turkish and the syntactic structure of their mother tongue.

"The most intense problem for European students is that the syntactic structure is opposed to their language. Turkish is an agglutinative language and it is difficult to keep a lot of suffixes in their minds."

The students also indicated the issues they had difficulty with by stating the differences between their mother tongue and Turkish. For example, IS1 stated that he had difficulty in grammar by saying "Yes, it is very difficult to understand grammar", while IS2 stated that he had problems in comprehension skills by saying "...we learned fast but I don't understand that fast". IS6 expressed the problem in speaking and listening skills as follows;

"I struggle with speaking Turkish and comprehending Turkish sound (listening)."

As it is understood from the teacher and student statements given above and the researcher's observation notes, students' comprehension and understanding especially due to their different mother tongues. It is seen that they have problems with grammar.

Another important problem experienced in international schools is the lack of environments where students can use Turkish outside the school. According to the data obtained from the interviews, the fact that students are not exposed to Turkish and do not speak Turkish in the environment they live in makes it difficult for them to teach Turkish. Teacher I4's views reveal this situation:

"...Lack of environments that will enable students to use the knowledge they have acquired outside the school/course. The practice is limited to class hours."

Teacher I1 emphasized that families cannot support their children because they do not speak Turkish, so this situation poses a problem.

"There is a reading comprehension problem because they do not speak and read Turkish at home. I try to encourage reading with the family, but the family does not speak Turkish either."

As it is understood from the teachers' opinions, not using Turkish in out-of-school environments and in daily life, and the lack of support from the family and the immediate environment in this regard make Turkish teaching difficult. Because the reinforcement of the teaching of a language depends on the use of what is learned in daily life and the transfer of what is learned in daily life to the learning and teaching environment. Unfortunately, this situation cannot be realized for Turkish language teaching.

It is one of the findings that the adaptation problems experienced by the students prevent Turkish language teaching. The data obtained from the interviews with teachers and students and the researcher's observations revealed that some students could not adapt to the classroom environment because they did not know Turkish. Turkish language knowledge and adaptation are in a mutual relationship. As the students communicate with their peers, they will adapt, and as they adapt, their language skills will improve through increased communication. Teacher I2's views on this issue reveal the situation;

"When they have difficulty in expressing themselves, they build a wall around themselves, they are closed. It is necessary to touch them. They feel more comfortable with other Korean students. They do not communicate much with Turkish students. Because Turkish students speak Turkish among themselves. Both outside and inside the class... There may be some grouping in this regard from time to time."

The same situation was expressed in the researcher's observation notes as a new student not being able to communicate with the teacher due to not knowing the language.

"...a new student came. Since the student does not know Turkish and English, the teacher has difficulty in communicating..." (Researcher Observation 05.02.2020).

As it is understood from teacher and student opinions and researcher observations, students' inability to use Turkish effectively creates adaptation problems and this makes teaching Turkish difficult.

One of the other problems experienced in international schools is the lack of materials. It was observed that teachers could not find suitable books. On the other hand, some teachers stated that they had difficulty in teaching Turkish due to the lack of classrooms. The views of I1 reveal this situation;

"Since the program and textbooks are not written for children who do not speak Turkish, their use is not effective."

The lack of a common program and textbook for teaching Turkish to foreigners at the primary school level not only causes differences in practice but also leads to questioning the quality of the content designed. Teachers try to fill this gap with the materials they find on the internet. I2's views reveal this situation.

"We develop the program and textbooks completely by ourselves. We do not have a ready source. We come to the classroom with equipment completely orientated to the student's requests and needs. We prepare this from the Internet or ourselves. We make our preparations accordingly. We do not have a definite method."

The fact that administrators in international schools do not support Turkish language teaching sufficiently has a direct negative impact on the process. Failure to create a suitable environment for teaching Turkish to teachers and lack of material support negatively affect the process. The views of I4 reveal this situation.

"The fact that the Turkish lesson does not have its own classroom and visual materials are not exhibited in the classroom environment prevents it. Maybe if we had a classroom of our own, we could equip the classroom with as many materials as possible and address the students more."

In the researcher's observation notes, it is stated that the materials in teaching Turkish to foreigners are not at a sufficient level and that this situation is a general deficiency, not a school deficiency, with the following statements:

"...sometimes it can be difficult because there is a lack of visual, audio-visual materials and materials, not because of the school budget, but because they have difficulty in finding them because they are not on the market..." (Researcher Observation 22.01.2020)

In the data obtained from the interviews, it was determined that the student's motivation towards learning Turkish was low because they had the idea of staying in Türkiye temporarily. Teacher I2's views reveal this situation;

"Since Turkish is not very necessary for them now (this is the case for our students), most of them come here for 3-4 years and then they go back because of their families' jobs. In this 3-4 year period, there is not enough motivation towards Turkish language."

Another problem is that students have difficulty in vocabulary knowledge in Turkish language learning. As an example of this situation, IS3 stated the following:

"I have never learned Turkish before, so I have problems in speaking correctly and vocabulary."

IS5 also supported this situation by stating that he had difficulty in vocabulary learning.

"There is not much difficulty in learning Turkish, maybe I can say that it is only difficult to memorize words."

As reflected in teacher and student opinions, difficulties in learning vocabulary is one of the serious problems experienced by students in international schools. It is seen that students have problems especially in acquiring vocabulary.

Findings regarding the Problems Experienced in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners in Public Schools (Where Refugee Students are Intensive)

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained, the themes related to the problems encountered in teaching Turkish as a second language in public schools where refugees are mother tongue, psychological reasons, assimilation, material, communication, adaptation. One of the important

problems that make Turkish teaching difficult in public schools where Syrian refugee students are concentrated is the adaptation problems experienced by the students. In the data obtained from the interviews with the teachers, it was stated that Syrian students have difficulties in terms of adaptation and this situation reflects negatively on Turkish language teaching. Teacher P4's statements reflect this situation:

"When they are from different nationalities, they look at each other with prejudice. In addition, of course, what is spoken at home affects children's attitudes negatively. They show an accusatory attitude. They behave as if they are together because they are obliged to be."

Similarly, P5 emphasised that students of the same nationality spend time with each other and do not interact much with students of other nationalities.

"Students of the same nationality group together. They help each other, they are more hesitant with those who are different."

P6 stated that the grouping formed among the students can sometimes lead to physical violence.

"Sometimes Syrians group in the garden and fight with other students."

As seen in the teacher statements, there are problems of adaptation between Turkish and Syrian students, and even groupings may occur from time to time and they may marginalize others. This makes teaching Turkish difficult. Another finding obtained is that Syrian students experience adaptation and communication problems due to not learning Turkish. Teacher P6's views are reflective of this situation;

"Language and behavior problems. They do not understand what is said. They should learn the language first"

P4 attributes Syrian students' not learning Turkish to the fact that they do not speak Turkish in their lives outside of school.

"Continuing to speak Arabic in the family makes language adaptation difficult."

In the researcher's observation form, it was stated that there was a language-based communication problem between the teacher and the student and that these students made classroom management difficult.

"Some of the students do not understand the teacher. They give very different answers to the teacher's questions or interrupt the lesson by not listening to the teacher..." (Research Observation 19.02.2020).

P3 and P1 think that one of the biggest obstacles for Syrian students to learn Turkish is the family. The indifference of families and their belief that their children will be assimilated are the issues emphasized by the teachers as a barrier to Turkish language learning. As a solution to this situation, it was stated that school-family communication should be strengthened.

"Language problems, inability to communicate, difficulty in learning, the problem of adaptation to the environment, fighting with friends, violence, exclusion in the neighborhood, being despised, family problems, indifference towards the child... Families' fear of their children being assimilated." P3

"The most intense problem is the language problem, which stands in the way of all integration. The family's lack of interest in the child and the fear of the child's assimilation makes the child more closed. To solve it, school-family communication should be well established and different techniques should be tried for language teaching." P1

Another problem faced by teachers is the lack of materials. In the data obtained from the interviews with the teachers, it was stated that there were deficiencies in terms of books and materials and this situation negatively affected Turkish teaching. The views of P1 reveal this situation:

"There is a lack of materials to be used in classroom activities."

P3 stated that there are no books for primary school students, the books prepared are for adults and suitable for A1 level and it is difficult for children to use these books without knowing how to read and write.

"There is a lack of materials to be used in classroom activities... Since the textbooks are prepared for A1 level, reading and writing activities are not included. They have difficulty in A1 level studies without reading and writing."

P4, on the other hand, saw the lack of a curriculum as a more serious problem than textbooks and used the following statement

"I think textbooks are a problem in itself, it doesn't matter which nationality the children are from, it doesn't matter if there are no textbooks, it is enough to have a program."

As can be seen from the statements reflected in the teachers' opinions, there is no specific program for teaching Turkish in public schools where Syrian refugee students are concentrated, and there are no student and teacher books and course materials that can be used for the same purpose. This negatively impacts Turkish language teaching. According to the opinions of the teachers, refugee students have difficulty in making sounds and pronunciation of Turkish words due to the alphabet difference in their mother tongue. Teacher P1's views are as follows:

"Students have difficulty in Turkish letters after Arabic letters because there are no letters ö o ü u in Arabic, so they have difficulty in making those letters."

According to the data obtained from the teachers, the reason why students who have experienced war and who have come to a different country as refugees cannot learn Turkish is their mood. The views of P1 reveal this situation.

"They tend towards violence because of their traumas. This prevents them from communicating and adapting to the environment." P1

Similarly, P3 emphasized that Syrian students came to Türkiye due to an event such as war and this situation created a shock in the students, pushed them to be prone to violence, and that the students needed love very much.

"These students in our school have experienced great traumas because they have fled from the war in Syria, fear and violence are the main ones, so we are faced with students who are prone to violence, have a high sense of exclusion, and are hungry for love."

Regarding these problems experienced by the students, the researcher stated in the observation notes that the students reacted differently to the loud noise in the classroom while interviewing the students.

"During the interview, the door of the classroom slammed due to the wind, there was a loud noise and the student interrupted the interview and started running." (Researcher observation 19.02.2020)

Although interviews were also conducted with the students about the problems experienced by the students in the research, qualified data could not be obtained from these interviews and therefore the findings could not be shared. While the findings obtained from the observations and teachers show that the students cannot learn enough, the findings obtained from the students say the opposite. The views of student PS1 reveal this situation.

"I know Turkish, but I had some difficulty when I first came to school when I did not speak Turkish, but it was easier when I learned Turkish."

Concluision, Discussion and Suggestions

In this study, problems related to teaching Turkish to foreigners in three different types of schools were analyzed. In light of the findings obtained from the data collected for this purpose, it was concluded that teachers teaching Turkish to foreigners in three different schools experienced a lack of materials. It was observed that especially the textbooks used in teaching Turkish as a second language were inadequate. The fact that the textbooks are not suitable for the primary school level and focus only on certain skills are important reasons for the problem of inadequacy. It was determined that this

inadequacy in textbooks negatively affected the teaching process. As a matter of fact, in the research conducted by Candaş Karababa (2009), it was stated that the books used in the process of teaching Turkish to foreigners are not suitable for the level of the students and do not meet the needs of the students, so there is a deficiency in terms of textbooks. Similarly, Özdemir (2013) stated that the language used in the content of the textbooks used in teaching Turkish to foreigners is far from the Turkish used in daily life and that the books prepared at the university level are used in primary school because there are no books at the primary school level. It is seen that the books used in teaching Turkish to foreigners are suitable for adult levels and not for children (Dilber, 2018). In addition to the books, it was stated that the other materials used were insufficient in terms of content and that some materials were not available at all (Alan, 2021). On the other hand, Geçgel and Peker (2020) stated that digital tools are not sufficient for teaching Turkish to foreigners. However, for children to adapt to the class or school they are studying in, materials that will support their language learning should be designed considering their level. Especially at the primary school level, the materials to be prepared for teaching Turkish to foreigners should have content that can attract their attention and have fun while learning. As a result, this deficiency in the field of teaching Turkish to foreigners at the primary school level may negatively affect both the teaching process of teachers and the learning process of students.

Another result of the present study is that the mother tongue affects both learning speed and Turkish learning in teaching Turkish as a second language. It was observed that students with similarities between their mother tongue and Turkish learn Turkish more easily. However, it was concluded that students with differences between their mother tongue and Turkish (for example, the alphabet) had difficulty in speaking skills. For example, Şengül (2014) stated that letters such as ğ, j, ş, ç in Turkish do not exist in many languages and therefore, they have problems in learning and vocalizing the letters. When the literature is examined, it is seen that the similarities between the mother tongue and the target language facilitate the process of second language teaching, while the differences make the process more difficult (Xu & Ding, 2010). Therefore, the mother tongue can be said to be an important variable for learners of Turkish as a second language. In another study supporting this situation, it was stated that students whose mother tongue is Arabic at the primary education level learn Turkish easily due to the presence of common words in Arabic and Turkish (Özçakmak, 2019). A comprehensive study was conducted by Çetin (2020) on the problems arising from the mother tongue in teaching Turkish to foreigners. It was stated in the study that students whose mother tongue is Arabic have problems with round vowels, in the vocalization of letters such as p, ç, and j, which are in Turkish but not in Arabic; students whose mother tongue is Persian have problems in vocalizing the letters v, ö, ü, and students whose mother tongue is Korean have problems in vocalizing the letters "z, l, ö, ü". As a result, the effects of mother tongue on second language teaching can be high. Krashen (1981) defines this situation as not being perceived as the native language overriding the target language but as the person returning to his/her old knowledge due to not learning the target language sufficiently. Therefore, it may be useful to teach by taking into consideration the mother tongue of the group being taught.

It is concluded that immigrant students cannot adapt to the region they live in because they cannot learn Turkish at an adequate level. In the three different schools that were the focus of the research, students could not communicate well with their peers and teachers because they did not know Turkish. In support of this situation, it was observed that in the classroom where Syrian students were present, students whose Turkish was sufficient communicated with their Turkish peers, while children whose Turkish was not sufficient had problems (Türk et al., 2019). Indeed, Ana (2020) stated that it is difficult for foreign students to adapt to Türkiye due to cultural and language differences. As a result, not learning the target language in the destination country and cultural differences are important problems for foreign students to adapt to the environment. At the same time, it can be said that adaptation and language development have a linear relationship. Because the more they communicate in the target language, the faster they will be able to learn that language and if language development is ensured, they will be able to adapt to their environment faster.

As a common result of the students studying in three different schools, it was determined that they do not use Turkish outside the school. The environment of the students outside their school life is such that they do not need to speak Turkish. However, communicating in the target language is an important part of the process of second language learning (Adams & Oliver, 2019). Ünal and Demirtaş (2019)

stated that in teaching Turkish as a second language, the active use of Turkish, especially the active speaking skill, is an important principle. In parallel to this situation, the families of some refugee students attending public schools do not want their children to learn Turkish. It has been observed that families are worried that their children will be assimilated when they learn Turkish. It can be said that such attitudes of families reflect negatively on children. Because motivation is important in language learning (Skehan, 1991). What will ensure the formation of intrinsic motivation in children is their adaptation to the society they live in, and when this is not the case, children do not make much effort to learn the language (Ramage, 1990). Therefore, some of the children in the study do not have intrinsic motivation for learning Turkish. One of the most important reasons for this situation is the environment. In summary, it is seen that the effect of environment on second language learning should not be ignored.

It was concluded that students studying in three different schools had problems in terms of both Turkish grammar and vocabulary. Similarly, it was observed that the most difficult area for Ukrainian university students learning Turkish was grammar (Sorokin & Timkova, 2019). Grammar should be taught in a practical way rather than theoretically (Avcı & Küçük, 2017). In this study, it was observed that immigrant students had problems in communicating in Turkish due to a number of reasons (environmental, program, etc.). This situation reveals that they cannot learn the grammar structure of the target language practically. It has been stated that, therefore, when the students' problems of communicating in the target language are eliminated, Turkish grammar can be taught more easily in a practical way.

It is noteworthy that bilingual and international school administrators do not pay enough attention to teaching Turkish as a second language and as a result, they do not support teachers sufficiently in this sense. It has been observed that the school administrators, taking into account the fact that the families of the students studying in these schools are temporarily in Türkiye or that they do not care about Turkish, reflect this situation to the school and the process. As a different aspect to this situation, Yılmaz (2014), in his study on the concept of bilingualism for Turkish children studying in Germany, stated that it is preferred for immigrant children to speak the official language in schools. Therefore, it may be useful to encourage speaking Turkish in international and bilingual schools in Türkiye and to convey to parents and students that this is important.

In conclusion, learners need meaningful input (listening and reading) in second language teaching (Krashen, 1991). Meaningful input should be remarkable and comprehensible for the learner as well as being in sufficient quantity (Krashen, 1987). In the three schools in the study, this situation cannot be realised due to different reasons (school management and parent attitudes, environment, etc.). At this point, it is important to motivate all stakeholders and encourage students to use Turkish by increasing the quality of meaningful input. On the other hand, lack of materials is a common result across school types. In this sense, stakeholders are expected to provide materials (textbooks, digital tools, etc.) for teaching Turkish to foreigners in primary schools. Finally, it was concluded that teachers' competencies for teaching Turkish as a second language should be supported. Teachers need to be supported in preparing materials, recognizing differences (e.g. alphabet differences) and creating appropriate content.

In the light of these results and discussions, some suggestions are presented below.

- Teachers can carry out informative and motivational activities to inform parents and students about why they should learn Turkish.
- Turkish as a second language curriculum can be prepared in accordance with the primary school level.
- Digital tools for teaching Turkish as a second language at primary school level can be prepared.
- Teachers can be provided with professional development trainings on teaching Turkish as a second language.
- Teachers can recognize the cultures of the students and enrich the lessons with their cultural elements. In addition, they can say a few words or sentences from the mother tongue of immigrant students to make them feel closer to them.
- School administrators can create Turkish classes in schools and support teachers with materials.
- School administrators can organize informative seminars for parents to support their children's Turkish language learning.

- It has been observed that there is a lack of both programs and materials in teaching Turkish to foreigners at the primary school level. Researchers or the ministry can prepare programs and materials for the primary school level.
- Researchers can develop and implement solutions for the problems identified in this study or the literature.

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