

An examination of theses and dissertations on teaching Turkish as a foreign language: a documentary analysis of studies carried out between 2008 and 2020*

Journal of Innovative Research in
Teacher Education, 3(1), 37-49.
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ISSN: 2757-6116
<http://www.jirte.org>
DOI: 10.29329/jirte.2022.436.3

Received: 26/01/2022

Revised: 09/03/2022

Accepted: 06/04/2022

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques used in quasi-experimental theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language. The documents examined in this study were retrieved from the Council of Higher Education Thesis Centre database. The keywords “Turkish for foreigners” and “Turkish as a foreign language” were used in the database search. As a result of the database search, a total of 50 quasi-experimental theses or dissertations that included information about the approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques were accessed. The basic qualitative research design was employed in the study. The examined documents were limited to those conducted between 2008 and 2020. The document analysis method was used to collect data. Using descriptive analysis, the data were classified based on the sub-problems. It was determined that there were differences in the distribution of approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language and that most studies were carried out on teaching techniques. In addition, it was found that most of the applications in the theses and/or dissertations were for the independent user level and that the researchers mostly preferred the areas of writing skills and vocabulary in their applications. Another finding of this study is that attributing equal importance to four basic language skills, the number of experimental studies on teaching Turkish as a foreign language has been increasing.

Keywords:

Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language, Graduate Theses, Quasi-experimental Theses.

Cite: Kılıç, F. G. (2022). An examination of theses and dissertations on teaching Turkish as a foreign language: a documentary analysis of studies carried out between 2008 and 2020. *Journal of Innovative Research in Teacher Education*, 3(1), 37-49. <https://doi.org/10.29329/jirte.2022.436.3>

* Ethics committee approval is not required as document analysis technique was used in this study.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In this information age in which we live, education is one of the foundations that enable nations to survive and adapt to changing world conditions. Language is one of the fundamental learning elements that help reach this foundation and reveal the human brain's capacity. It is one of the principal elements that provide communication between people and societies. Through language, people express their feelings and thoughts and interact with the other person (Büyükkız, 2014). People can interact with other individuals and communities in their own country through their mother tongue and with people and communities in other countries through foreign languages. Not attaching enough importance to language teaching negatively affects the development of countries because people with advanced language and mental skills are needed in every field: their progress is simultaneous with the progress of their countries (Güneş, 2018). This function of the language is important to educate qualified people in teaching Turkish both as a mother tongue and as a foreign language, in the development of the country, and in promoting the Turkish language in the international arena.

With the unprecedented scientific and technological advances in our age and parallel with globalization, many people need to learn a foreign language for reasons such as trade, education, the desire to know people from different cultures, war, etc. (Türkben, 2018). Today, knowing a foreign language has ceased to be an advantage and has become a skill that everyone should have because people feel the need to learn one or even two foreign languages no matter what field they work in (Göçer, 2009). In parallel, the interest in Turkish, which is spoken in wide geographies, is increasing day by day. The fact that great numbers of immigrants have, in recent years, settled in Turkey with temporary protection status due to the developments in Turkey's economy and education and the political developments in the Middle East countries has expanded the teaching of Turkish as a foreign or second language. This situation, in turn, has led many people to want to learn Turkish as a foreign language due to various needs. For all these reasons, *teaching Turkish as a foreign language* is of great importance.

In recent years, many Turkish universities have established Turkish teaching centers to meet the increasing need for learning Turkish as a foreign language. To train more qualified people in this field, graduate education in teaching Turkish as a foreign language is delivered in many universities. The number of graduate and doctoral studies carried out in these graduate programs is increasing day by day. The studies are effective in identifying the problems in teaching Turkish as a foreign language and producing solutions to the problems; also, each research fills a gap in the relevant literature and helps evaluate the current situation in the field (Baki, 2019). In addition, the studies play a major role in designing programs, methods, techniques, and educational tools to be used when teaching Turkish as a foreign language (Büyükkız, 2014).

It is known that there is a need for new studies on teaching Turkish as a foreign language in universities. In this regard, it is necessary to review the previous studies and carry out new studies that will fill the gaps in the field (Türkben, 2018). Hence, studies are needed to determine the trend of graduate theses and/or dissertations conducted in the relevant field. Through trend studies, the general situation in theses and/or dissertations is examined from a holistic perspective to identify the gaps in a certain field. Trend studies provide researchers with information about the general situation and gaps in the relevant field.

For the effective realization of the teaching activities in education, which consists of learning and teaching elements, it is important to design activities, provide educational materials, and guide students to facilitate learning. Similarly, in language teaching, to enable students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, the learning outcomes should be determined in advance, and content, methods, and techniques should be designed appropriately. Approaches and strategies to be implemented should be determined in advance based on the usage area of the language (Güneş, 2018). In short, language teaching should not be carried out haphazardly: it should be done in the light of planned and

predetermined goals. Both teaching and learning a foreign language require a lot of effort and a long process. The teacher or learner of a foreign language should first determine what they will teach/learn and how and why they will teach/learn it. Throughout the history of language teaching, various approaches and methods have emerged to answer these questions. In addition, with the emergence of the concept of lifelong learning, it has become important for learners to determine their learning styles. At this point, acquiring and teaching the learning strategies has become one of the areas that should be emphasized (Uzuntaş & Yıldız, 2017). Approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques are crucial elements for effective language teaching. Every teacher aiming to achieve permanent learning in their students should have a good grasp of these concepts and employ the most appropriate teaching elements.

Recently, there has been a major change in the teaching approaches used in education. Now, concepts such as communication, interaction, and daily life tasks are given more importance in the teaching process. Foreign language learners are expected to participate in real communication settings and use language skills actively. This change in the way foreign languages are taught has also brought about a change in the teaching methods used, leading to the emergence of various methods (Gökçen, 2020). In this respect, knowing the new approaches, methods, and techniques that have emerged with changing perspectives can ensure more effective language teaching. Teaching methods and techniques are the elements used to make students more competent learners. The approaches, methods, and techniques used in foreign language teaching provide learners with knowledge about the language, give information about the culture and users of the learned language, and ensure effective communication between people from different cultures. Despite the abundance of approaches, methods, and techniques developed to date, it is not easy to determine which one is more effective (Memiş & Erdem, 2013). The important thing is that the teacher enriches the teaching process in the light of these various approaches, methods, and techniques according to the purpose and target audience of the lesson, and thus teaches the Turkish language more effectively.

The literature review on teaching Turkish as a foreign language yielded some trend studies on the examination of graduate theses and/or dissertations (Akkaş-Baysal, 2020; Bağcı-Ayrancı, 2019; Baki, 2019; Başaran & Demir, 2020; Büyükikiz, 2014; Çelebi et al., 2019; Ercan, 2015; Erol, 2021; Kemiksiz, 2021; Özer & Turhan-Tuna, 2020; Tiryaki & Soybal, 2021; Türkbën, 2018). Most of these studies examined theses and/or dissertations under titles such as publication year, university, type of theses and/or dissertations, research method, and sample characteristics (Baki, 2019; Büyükikiz, 2014; Çelebi et al., 2018; Ercan, 2015; Tiryaki & Soybal, 2021; Türkbën, 2018). In some studies, the examination of theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language was limited to certain topics. Akkaş-Baysal (2020) examined, based on various variables, the theses and/or dissertations aiming to determine foreign students' language learning strategies, while Bağcı-Ayrancı (2019) determined the general trends in theses and/or dissertations related to the cultural transfer. Erol (2021) examined the theses and/or dissertations on vocabulary. Kemiksiz (2021) examined the theses and/or dissertations related to textbooks under various headings. On the other hand, the literature review of trend studies yielded no study examining, based on various variables, the quasi-experimental theses and/or dissertations prepared by using approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Hence, the present study aimed to examine in detail the proven approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. In this respect, this study is unique. Unlike trend studies examining graduate theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language, this study determined the approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques studied in quasi-experimental theses and/or dissertations and examined them in detail based on various variables.

In graduate theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language, many experimental studies have been carried out using different approaches, strategies, methods, and

techniques (Aydın, 2020; Başaran & Demir, 2020; Demirekin, 2017; Dervişoğlu, 2008; Gönen-Kayacan, 2018; Hamaratlı, 2015; Karagöz, 2019; Kır & Bakır, 2021; Takıl, 2014). Through these studies, various applications have been designed and implemented at the graduate level to teach Turkish more effectively. These applications aim to improve Turkish teaching in various learning areas and for various language levels by using different approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques. However, the literature review yielded no trend study examining for this purpose the experimental studies carried out in graduate theses and/or dissertations. It is thought that the detailed and holistic assessment of the applications designed by the researchers in theses and/or dissertations can help to evaluate the general situation and to identify the gaps in the field. In addition, a holistic examination of experimental studies, the effectiveness of which has been tested in graduate theses and/or dissertations, can summarize the current situation in Turkish language teaching. Moreover, determining which approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques are employed more can enable us to identify the most studied language levels, language skills, and learning areas. In addition, identifying the gaps in previous studies and revealing different untested applications can be a source for new research. Taking these as a starting point, the present study aims to examine in detail the approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques used in graduate theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

The problem statement of the study is "How are the approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques used in theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language distributed according to various variables?" Based on the problem statement, answers were sought for the following sub-problems:

1. How are the theses and/or dissertations using approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language distributed according to years?
2. How are the theses and/or dissertations using approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language distributed according to their types?
3. How are the theses and/or dissertations using approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language distributed according to their research methods?
4. How are the theses and/or dissertations using approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language distributed according to the language level?
5. How are the approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques used in theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language distributed?
6. How are the theses and/or dissertations using approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language distributed according to learning areas?

METHOD

Research Design

Seeking to determine the trends in the approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques used in graduate theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language, this study employed the qualitative research method. Document analysis was used as the data collection technique. "Document analysis is a qualitative research method used to analyse the content of written texts in a detailed and systematic way" (Wach, 2013). The data, interviews, observations, and documents reached in the document analysis are organized under main themes and grouped through content analysis (Labuschagne, 2003). In this study, theses were examined under seven headings: the year of publication, type of theses and/or dissertations, research method, approach/strategy/method and technique used, language level of the target audience, and learning area.

Study Material

The study material consisted of graduate theses and/or dissertations in the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language indexed in the database of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Study materials are limited to quasi-experimental theses and/or dissertations submitted between 2008 and 2020. The

document analysis method was used to provide data on the subject under study. It is aimed to achieve the study goals through document analysis without the need for interviews and observations. Through document analysis, the researcher saves time and resources. Based on the research subject, the researcher decides which source is important and which can be used as a data source (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Since this study aimed to examine the trends of approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in graduate theses and/or dissertations, only the texts prepared for this purpose were examined. In the study, data were collected in three stages. First, graduate theses and/or dissertations were searched in the YÖK database with the keywords "Turkish for foreigners" and "Turkish as a foreign language." Secondly, among the theses and/or dissertations obtained, 96 theses and/or dissertations in which the subjects of strategy, method, and technique were examined were recruited. In the last stage, the research methods and designs of the theses and/or dissertations were examined. Documents using quantitative research and mixed research method and quasi-experimental model were included. Eventually, a total of 50 theses and/or dissertations were included in the research.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by the descriptive analysis method. In the descriptive analysis method, the researcher can arrange the obtained data according to predetermined themes. In addition, the researcher summarizes the findings and interprets the results. The purpose of this method is to summarize and interpret the research findings before presenting them to the reader (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The graduate theses and/or dissertations recruited were examined based on the publication year, their types, and research methods used. The theses and/or dissertations were also classified based on the approach/strategy/method and technique used. Besides, for which learning area the applications implemented in the theses and/or dissertations were was identified. The findings obtained were presented together with the frequency (f) values, and the results were compared with other studies.

Research Ethics

Ethics committee approval is not required as the document analysis technique was used in this study.

FINDINGS

This part of the study presents the findings obtained as a result of the research questions. Figure 1 demonstrates the findings for the first research question.

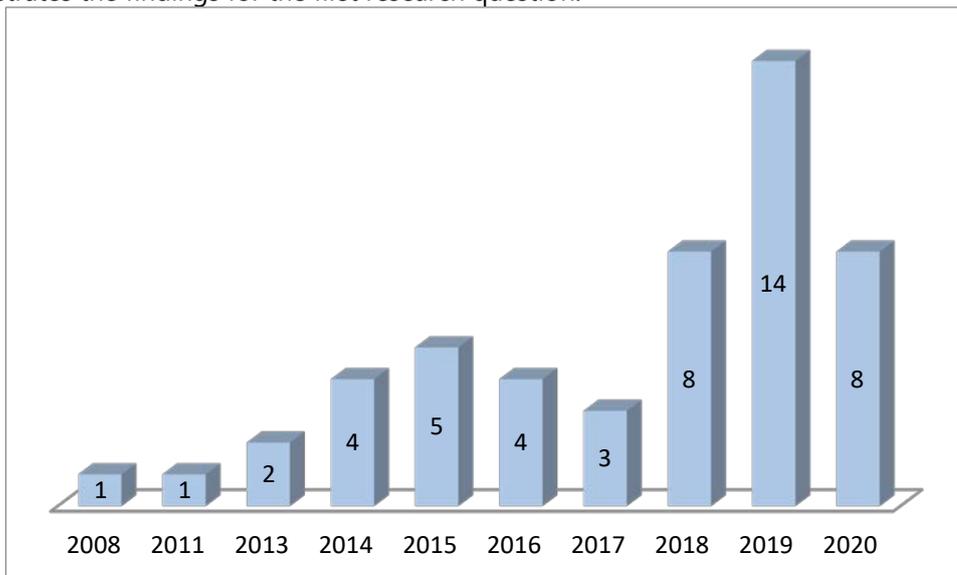


Figure 1. Distribution of the theses and/or dissertations by years.

As can be inferred from Figure 1, the first thesis and/or dissertation was written in 2008. It is also understood from the graph that the second study on the subject was carried out in 2011. Although studies on the subject were conducted every year between 2013 and 2020, there were fluctuations in the number of studies over the years. Most studies were done in 2019 (f: 14), followed by 2018 and 2020 (f: 8). According to the findings, it can be said that in the last three years, there has been an increase in the number of theses and/or dissertations. Table 1 demonstrates the findings for the other research question.

Table 1. Distribution of theses and/or dissertations According to Various Criteria

Variable	Category	f
Thesis Type	Doctoral Dissertation	21
	Master's Thesis	29
Research Methods	Mixed	31
	Quantitative	19
	A1	8
Language Levels	A2	5
	B1	15
	B2	22
	C1	6
	Not Specified	5
	Teaching Techniques	25
	Technology-Based Techniques	21
	Foreign Language Strategies	2
	Foreign Language Approaches	1
	Foreign Language Methods	2
The Approaches, Strategies, Methods, and Techniques	Peer Assessment Technique	1
	Computer-Assisted Teaching Technique	4
	Prosodic Learning Method	1
	Association Technique	1
	Dictation Technique	1
	Language Learning Strategy	1
	Language Learning Method	1
	Direct Learning Method	1
	Drama Technique	5
	Thinking Techniques	1
	Electronic Learning Technique	6
	Film-Story Technique	1
	Communicative Method	2
	Word Network Technique	1
	Micro Teaching Technique	1
	Music Technique	1
	Authentic Writing Technique	1
	Gaming Technique	3
	Pantomime Technique	1
	Portfolio Technique	1
	Word Learning – Context Technique	1
	Process-based Writing Technique	1
	Web-Based Techniques	10
	Incorrect Analyse Technique	1
	Creative Writing Technique	2
	Grammar	7
	Listening	5
Learning Areas	Four Basic Skills	3
	Speaking	7
	Reading	5

Vocabulary	12
Writing	15
Culture Teaching	1
Achievement, Attitude, Anxiety	2

As seen that Table 1 includes 50 theses and/or dissertations (29 master's theses and 21 doctoral dissertations). Based on the findings, it can be said that the numbers of master's theses and doctoral dissertations are close to each other. As can be inferred from the findings given in Table 1, 31 studies employed the mixed method while 19 of them employed the quantitative method. Since quasi-experimental studies can use quantitative and mixed methods, no studies using qualitative methods were found. The language levels specified in the theses and/or dissertations were as follows: basic user (13 studies in total): A1 (f: 8), A2 (f: 5); independent user (37 studies in total): B1 (f: 15), B2 (f: 22); proficient user (6 studies in total): C1 (f: 6), C2 (f: 0). Five of the studies did not specify any language level. Based on the above findings, most of the theses and/or dissertations were written for the independent user level. Indeed, the number of studies for this language level is higher than that of the studies for other language levels. It is seen that most of the studies were carried out for the B2 level (f: 22). The second most preferred language level is the B1 level (f: 15). 13 studies (f: 13) were conducted for the basic user level. It is seen that this level is the second most preferred language level. At the proficient user level, studies only for the C1 level were carried out (f: 6). It is noteworthy that no studies were conducted for the C2 level. Only a few studies (f: 5) included approaches-methods-strategies on foreign language teaching, which is another remarkable finding of the study. It can be inferred from the above findings that teaching techniques were studied in general (teaching techniques=25, technology-based techniques=21) (f: 46). Indeed, in nearly half of the theses and/or dissertations (f: 25), teaching techniques were studied. It is another notable finding that a great number of theses and/or dissertations (f: 21) studied technology-based techniques in parallel with technological advances.

As can be inferred from the findings in Table 1, various strategies, approaches, methods, and techniques (f: 25) were used in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Among the 25 methods, the most studied area (f: 10) is web-based techniques. Electronic learning techniques were the second most used technique (f: 6). In addition, the fourth most preferred field is computer-assisted teaching techniques (f: 4). The fact that studies mostly focused on web-based techniques, electronic learning, and computer-assisted teaching demonstrates researchers' interest in technology. On the other hand, the third most preferred area in theses is the drama technique (f: 5). Parallel to the drama technique, the playing technique (f: 3) and the pantomime technique (f: 1) were included in a total of nine (f: 9) studies. It can be said that the techniques that provide active student involvement are the second most preferred area in the theses and/or dissertations. The studies (f: 15) mostly examined the effects of approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques used in teaching Turkish as a foreign language on writing skills. The second most studied area after writing skills is vocabulary (f: 12). It is a remarkable finding that there are more studies on writing skills and vocabulary than on other skills. Therefore, it can be thought that writing and vocabulary applications are preferred more. The distribution of other basic language skills other than writing is as follows: speaking (f: 7), reading, and listening (f: 5). The number of studies focusing on these skills is close. Also, according to the findings given in the table, receptive skills (reading and listening) were studied in an equal number (5 each) of studies (f: 10 in total). On the other hand, productive skills (speaking and writing) were included in 22 studies (f: 22). Hence, it is seen that productive skills are given more place in the studies. All four basic language skills were examined in three studies. A total of seven studies (f:7) were conducted in the field of grammar. According to the findings in the chart, there are 35 studies on language skills, which is another noteworthy finding indicating that the theses and/or dissertations mostly focused on basic language skills. Apart from language skills, few studies were conducted in the fields of culture teaching (f: 1) and achievement-attitude-anxiety (f: 2).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research aimed to examine from various aspects the quasi-experimental theses and dissertations carried out using strategies, methods, and techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. The results of the research and the relationship of these results with other studies in the literature are given below. With regards to the distribution of the theses and dissertations by years, most studies (f: 14) were carried out in 2019, followed by 2018 (f: 8) and 2020 (f: 8). The decline in the number of studies in 2020 after the increase in 2019 can be attributed to the interruption in formal education due to the Covid-19 pandemic (it should be remembered that only quasi-experimental studies were examined in this study). Since quasi-experimental studies involve an active teaching process with participants, the decrease in the number of quasi-experimental studies during the pandemic can be considered normal. In the research, it was concluded that more studies have been conducted on approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in the last three years. Baki (2019), Büyükikiz (2014), Çelebi et al. (2019), Erol (2021), Kemiksiz (2021), Tiryaki and Soybal (2021), and Türkbën (2018) found that the number of studies had increased in recent years. This result is in line with the findings of this study. Based on this result, it can be said that the number of studies focusing on teaching Turkish as a foreign language is increasing day by day and studies in this field gain more importance.

With regards to the distribution of the theses and dissertations (f: 50) by the education level, master's theses (f: 29) are more than doctoral dissertations (f: 21). However, this number differs from the findings of other studies (Baki, 2019; Büyükikiz, 2014; Çelebi et al., 2019; Ercan, 2015; Erol 2021, Kemiksiz, 2021; Kır & Tekin, 2021; Özer, 2020) investigating the trends of graduate theses and dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language. This finding can be attributed to the fact that master's programs outnumber doctoral programs. At this point, a similar conclusion can be drawn from this study. The fact that in this study, the number of doctoral theses or dissertations is close to the number of master's dissertations can be attributed to the fact that the quasi-experimental studies examined in this study are mostly carried out at the doctoral level.

Theses and dissertations using strategies, methods, and techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language employed mixed-method (f: 31) and quantitative methods (f: 19). In this respect, it is normal that qualitative studies were not encountered, since only quasi-experimental theses and/or dissertations are examined in the study. It was determined that the examined studies mostly employed the mixed-methods research design. The reason why researchers mostly preferred this design may be the desire to obtain a more holistic perspective through quantitative and qualitative data together. Akkaş-Baysal (2020), in their study on language learning strategies, determined that the majority of theses and dissertations were quantitative studies. They also determined that qualitative and mixed methods were employed in the theses and dissertations. In this regard, the findings of Akkaş-Baysal (2020) and the findings of this study are consistent. As a result of their research, the authors (Baki, 2019; Büyükikiz, 2014; Çelebi et al., 2019; Erol, 2020; Tiryaki & Soybal, 2021; Türkbën, 2018) concluded that the qualitative research method, quantitative research methods, and mixed research methods were used the most, respectively, in theses and dissertations. In this regard, the findings of this study differ from the studies mentioned above. The reason for this is that these studies examined theses and dissertations only in general terms, while this study examined quasi-experimental studies on a specific subject, that is, the study focused on a particular area.

With regards to the distribution of the theses and/or dissertations by language level, the most studied (f: 22) language level is the B2 language level. The second most preferred language level is the B1 level (f: 15). Hence, it is seen that most of the studies were carried out for the independent user level. Eight studies (f: 8) were conducted for the A1 level and five studies (f: 5) for the A2 level. On the other hand, six studies (f: 6) were conducted for the C1 level. Five studies (f: 5) did not specify any language level, and no studies for the C2 language level were found. Overall, there is no gradual increase or decrease in the distribution of language levels in the theses and/or dissertations. Studies are mostly concentrated

at the independent user level. Since the studies aimed to determine the effect of approach-strategy-method-techniques on learning, researchers may have preferred the participants to have an intermediate language level to achieve effective results. It can be difficult to carry out applications for the basic user level since the learner cannot use the language competently yet. At the proficient user level, on the other hand, the effect of the method used may not be adequately measured because the learner is more proficient in the language. Erol (2020) examined the language levels studied in the theses and/or dissertations related to vocabulary teaching. The author determined the language levels used in the theses and/or dissertations as A1 (f: 44), A2 (f: 38), B1 (f: 44), B2 (f: 34), and C1 (f: 25). The author also concluded that the relevant theses were concentrated at the A1, A2, B1, and B2 levels, and a limited number of studies were conducted at the C1 level. Therefore, the numbers of studies for the independent user level and the basic user level, as reported by Erol (2020), were 78 and 82, respectively. As such, this study's findings are similar to those of Erol's (2020) study in that the number of studies for the independent user level was close to the number of studies for the basic user level, only a few studies for the C1 level were found, and no study for the C2 level was found. Examining the studies on textbooks used in teaching Turkish as a foreign language, Kemiksiz (2021) concluded that most of the textbooks (72.31%) were for the basic user level. The author also found that the numbers of studies for the intermediate level and the proficient user level were 148 and 113, respectively. It was seen that there was a gradual decline in the language level (from the basic user level to the proficient user level) of the target audience in the theses and/or dissertations. It is seen that the findings of Kemiksiz (2021) differ from the findings of this study.

This research, unlike the relevant literature, examines the approaches, strategies, methods, techniques, and activities whose effects on learning were investigated in quasi-experimental theses and/or dissertations in detail. It is seen that the studies examined included teaching techniques (f: 25), technology-based techniques (f: 21), foreign language strategies (f: 2), foreign language methods (f: 2), and foreign language approaches (f: 1). While the studies mostly focused on teaching techniques; methods and approaches for foreign language teaching were examined in very few studies. It can be said that the studies focused on the effectiveness of a particular teaching technique rather than applying special methods and approaches for foreign language teaching because most of the studies (f: 46) studied teaching techniques and technology-based techniques. In terms of teaching techniques, most studies were carried out in the fields of drama (f: 5), play (f: 3), and creative writing (f: 2). The fact that drama, play, and creative writing techniques among teaching techniques were included more can be interpreted as practical techniques are preferred more by researchers. In addition, technology has become an inseparable part of life in every field today. In parallel, the second most studied area (f: 21) is the effectiveness of technology-based techniques in foreign language teaching. Technology-based techniques are grouped as electronic techniques, web-based techniques, and computer-assisted techniques. It was seen that various applications using Web 2.0 tools were most preferred. Şahin and colleagues (2020) determined the trends in theses and/or dissertations related to technology-assisted Turkish language education. According to the results of their research, more studies were conducted on the use of technology in teaching Turkish as a foreign language than in other areas in the field of Turkish language education. They noted that studies on the use of technology in teaching Turkish as a foreign language constituted 40.54% of all the studies on Turkish language education. In this regard, the findings of Şahin (2020) and this research are parallel to each other. The high interest in technology-based techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language can be considered a great development in terms of reflecting up-to-date techniques into practice.

The learning areas of theses and/or dissertations prepared by using approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques in teaching Turkish as a foreign language are as follows: writing (f: 15), vocabulary (f: 12), speaking and grammar (f: 7), reading and listening (f: 5), four basic language skills (f: 3), success-anxiety-attitude (f: 2) culture teaching (f: 1). It is seen that most of the studies focused on writing skills, whereas a few studies were in the field of cultural transfer. 42 studies (f: 42) on four basic language skills were

identified. It can, therefore, be said that studies mostly focus on improving language skills. Özer (2020) determined that the doctoral theses or dissertations they examined mostly focused on writing skills (f: 10). On the other hand, only one doctoral thesis explored the cultural dimension of teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Hence, the findings of Özer (2020) and the results of this study are consistent. Büyükkız (2014) examined the theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language in terms of the language skills studied. The author concluded that writing skills were studied the most (f:50), followed by reading (7.48%), speaking (3.42%), and listening skills (2.04%). As such, the findings on writing skills in Büyükkız's (2014) study are similar to the findings of this study. Ercan (2015) determined that the theses and/or dissertations examined were mostly for grammar teaching, followed by material preparation assessment, method/technique/approach, and vocabulary teaching. The author noted that there were very few studies on language skills. Although the findings of Ercan's (2015) study differ from the findings of this study, the findings on grammar and vocabulary in both studies are consistent. Türkben (2018) found that studies focused on grammar teaching (13.93%), method trial/model suggestion (7.86%), vocabulary teaching (6.07%), encountered problems (7.50%), material preparation (10%), language skills (8.93%), and textbook analysis. In this regard, Türkben's (2018) findings differ from the findings of this study. Kemiksiz (2021) found that the most studied areas were vocabulary/vocabulary teaching (f: 55), cultural elements/cultural transfer (f: 51), activities for basic language skills (f: 38), and grammar (f: 37). The findings of Kemiksiz's (2021) study are similar to the findings of this study, except for the ones regarding the subject of culture.

In this study, the approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques used in quasi-experimental theses and/or dissertations related to teaching Turkish as a foreign language were examined in detail under various headings. Similar to studies examining graduate theses and/or dissertations in general, this study focused on teaching Turkish as a foreign language. It was determined that a few studies included approaches, strategies, and methods. Further research can be conducted in these areas. Through practical studies, the effectiveness of language teaching methods in Turkish teaching can be tested. The study determined that teaching techniques were researched more in the studies. It was also concluded that computer/internet-based techniques outnumbered others. Future studies can be conducted particularly on the effectiveness of teaching methods in teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

It was seen that the theses and/or dissertations included in the study mostly examined the effects of approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques on writing skills and vocabulary. Therefore, further studies can be conducted on other language skills. Studies can give equal importance to the four basic language skills. Also, further research can be carried out on culture teaching in foreign language education and the factors affecting student achievement, which are two important elements in language teaching. On the other hand, it was noted that the examined theses and/or dissertations were mostly conducted for the independent user level. Practical studies can give equal coverage to each language level instead of concentrating on a single language level. Besides, researchers can focus on less-studied language levels. Thus, the effectiveness of methods at all language levels can be determined.

Statement of Researchers

Researchers' contribution rate statement: The author's contribution rate is 100%.

Conflict statement: The author declares that she has no conflict of interest.

Support and thanks: None

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