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Receiving Education in a Different Country: Challenges Encountered by Foreign Students and Proposed Solutions

Fevzi Dursun - Özge Maviş Sevim*

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Abstract:

Introduction: The purpose of this study is to determine the problems of primary and secondary school teachers about foreign students and propose solutions to these problems.

Methods: In the research, qualitative research method was conducted. Primary and secondary school teachers who had at least one foreign student in their class and volunteered to participate in the study in one of the provinces of Middle Black Sea Region of Turkey were included in study group. They were 29 participants in total (15 female and 14 male). The classes of the teachers generally included 1-5 foreign students. As a data collection tool, a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire consisting of 7 questions was used. After data collection, analyses were performed with content analysis method.

Results: Findings of the study reveal that the most basic problem experienced by foreign students is the language problem. Students had difficulty in understanding their environment because of this problem and this situation brought problems of adaptation to school, the teacher and classmates. Especially the students whose parents did not know Turkish experience these problems more than others because of the lack of support from their parents. The majority of the teachers mentioned that they could not reach the achievements in the education programs with these students, and they stated that they included additional activities related to reading and writing. Conducting orientations programs, language and literacy courses, family education (especially language teaching to families), providing therapy for children who had a tendency to violence, providing a separate education program for foreign students and providing training by teachers who were their own citizens in separate classes were among the proposed solution obtained as a result of the research.

* Fevzi Dursun, Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, Faculty of Education, Tokat, Turkey; fevzi.dursun@gop.edu.tr
Özge Maviş Sevim, Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, Faculty of Education, Tokat, Turkey; ozge.mavis@gop.edu.tr

Discussion: The opinions of the teachers were evaluated under the themes of positive opinions about foreign students, the level of achievement of outcomes, additional activities, experienced problems, the way teachers solve problems, and teachers' suggestions for solutions. The study shows that the first problems of foreign students that need to be solved are language and communication problems. Also, parents are as important as students in teaching foreign students and that parents' language skills are critical in terms of informing parents and conducting the process with school-family cooperation. Furthermore, it is of great importance that foreign students must not be alienated because of their culture, that they must not be excluded by other students, and that they must primarily be helped to ensure their adaptation and integration into culture and school through activities.

Limitations: The study group of the research includes 29 primary and secondary school teachers who had at least one foreign student in their class and volunteered to participate in the study in one of the provinces of Middle Black Sea Region of Turkey.

Conclusions: Based on the results obtained throughout the study, it is possible to say that taking into account the given recommendations can contribute to the solution of the problems of foreign students. Further research can be conducted in different context to shed light on different problems of foreign students experience and proposed solutions to these problems.

Key words: foreign students, problems, proposed solutions, teacher.

Introduction

From time to time, geographical, social, political, and economic events force people to migrate from their places. Especially in recent years, wars and internal upheavals have led to large waves of migration. Turkey's political and geographical position causes to attract more migration than other countries, and the number of people migrating to Turkey is increasing day by day. According to the latest TUIK Reports (2018), the number of migrations from abroad to our country increased by 22.4% in 2017 compared to the previous year. Migrations have economic, cultural, social, and demographic impacts, as well as educational impacts. As a matter of fact, about half of those who immigrate to the country consists of a child population and this situation requires that the educational needs of these children should be supplied. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHRC) report, education of migrant children can perform many functions, such as social integration, providing a stable and safe environment, and responding to psycho-social needs, though 61% of these children do not receive education even at the primary school level

(UNHCR, 2017). It is believed that students who receive education do not get enough efficiency from the education they receive (Aslan, 2001; Bozan & Kaştan, 2018).

People are temporarily or permanently migrating from one place to another for different reasons (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). The causes of international migration include political instability, human rights violations, repressive regimes, civil wars, ethnic conflicts, economic hardship, and fear of life safety (Deniz, 2014; Saklan, 2018). As a result of mass migration movements caused by events, such as the war, migrants are found as refugees or asylum seekers in various countries (Lordoğlu, 2015). The number of these refugees and asylum seekers has increased rapidly in recent years. Turkey, in particular, has been greatly affected by this situation. As it is known, all over the world, the children need protection and care for their development (Bulut, 2020) and according to the education policies of the Turkish Ministry of Education, all children, including foreign children, have the right to receive education at the level of primary and secondary education in Turkey (Bircan & Sunata, 2015). But it seems that foreign students face different problems in schools. Many studies aimed at identifying the problems faced by students and suggestions for solutions to these problems are included in the literature. However, many of these studies focus on students at higher education level (Kıroğlu, Kesten, & Elma, 2010; Kumcağız, Dadashzadeh, & Alakuş, 2016; Şahin & Demirtaş, 2014). Also, studies usually include surveys on students at the primary school level (İmamoğlu & Çalışkan, 2017; Sarıtaş, Şahin, & Çatalbaş, 2016) or students of a certain nationality (especially Syrian) (Aykırı, 2017; Büyükikiz & Çangal, 2016; Levent & Çayak, 2017). This study aims to handle the problems experienced by different foreign students at different education levels and reveal the suggestions for the solutions to these problems. Therefore, in addition to many studies in the literature, the aim of this study is to identify the problems experienced by teachers carrying out teaching activities at the primary and secondary school level with foreign students and the solution proposals for solving these problems. For this purpose, teachers with foreign students in their classes were asked about their general opinions about these students, their level of access to the education outcomes in teaching programs, and the additional teaching activities (method, technique, material, etc.) that they have specially configured for these students during the teaching process. In addition, teachers were asked about the problems they faced with these students, the way they solved these problems, and their suggestions for solving the problems, so their ideas about these issues were taken. The opinions of teachers who have foreign students in their class about the problems of these students are important in terms of discovering what kind of problems students face and what can be done to solve them. In addition, the discovery of activities that these teachers perform to ensure that their students participate and

adapt to the lesson will also serve as an example for other teachers who have foreign students in their class.

1 Methods

1.1 Research design

In the research, qualitative research method was employed, and basic qualitative research design was conducted. The basic qualitative research tries to reveal how the researchers "make sense of a situation, process, perspective or world view" of the participants. In this design, an inductive strategy is used, and descriptive results are obtained. The data obtained are presented in a rich and descriptive manner and discussed using the literature (Merriam, 2002, p. 6). By using this design, this study focused on the problems that teachers experienced with students, ways to solve problems, and solutions. Also, the general views of teachers about these students, their access to the course outcomes included in the curriculum, and the additional activities they organized were also explored and tried to be presented in descriptive manner.

1.2 Study group

In this study, the criterion sampling method, which is one of the sampling methods used in qualitative research methods, was employed. In the criterion sampling method, sampling which will be the subject of research is created by determining specific criteria by the researcher. In this study, the criteria were that teachers who will participate in the research must have more than one foreign student in the classrooms. Twenty-nine teachers, who worked in primary and secondary schools in one of the provinces of Middle Black Sea Region of Turkey, who had at least one foreign student in their classes, and who volunteered to involve in the study, participated in the study. Demographic information about teachers is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic information about teachers

Demographics	*Category*	*Frequency*
Gender	Women	15
	Men	14
Age	31-40	8
	41-50	11
	51 and above	10
School	Primary	16
	Secondary	13
Seniority (years)	11-20	10
	21-30	10

	31-40	7
	41 and above	1
Number of foreign students	1-5	25
	6-10	4
Total number of students	10-20	8
	21-30	10
	31-40	11
Nationality of foreign students	Afghanistan	27
	Iraq	18
	Syria	2
	Iranian	1
	Turkmenistan	1

As can be seen in Table 1, 15 of the teachers are women and 14 are men. Eight teachers are in the age ranges of 31 - 40 years, 11 teachers are in 41-50 years, and 10 teachers are 51 and above. 16 of the teachers work in primary schools, and 13 work in secondary schools. Looking at seniority years, it is seen that 10 teachers have seniority years in the range of 11-20 and 21-30 years, 7 teachers with 31-40 years, and 1 teacher with 41 years and above. The number of foreign students in teachers' classes varies generally from 1 to 5 (n=25). There are 4 teachers with 6 to 10 foreign students. There are 8 teachers with 10-20 students, 10 teachers with 21-30 students, and 11 teachers with 31-40 students. Students usually come from Afghanistan (n=27), followed by Iraq (n=18), Syria (n=2), Iran and Turkmenistan (n=1).

1.3 Data collection tool

A semi-structured open-ended questionnaire consisting of 7 questions was used as a data collection tool in the study. Expert opinion was taken to ensure the scope and face validity of the questionnaire form. Two of the experts work in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and one in the Department of Educational Administration and Planning. In the first part of the questionnaire form, the purpose and instruction of the research were included, the participants of the study were informed about the subject and their consent was obtained. In the second part, teachers' information about gender, age, school type, seniority, number of students, and foreign students in the class was included. In the third part, there were questions about teachers' general thoughts about foreign students, their ability to reach the learning outcomes with foreign students, additional activities they do for these students, experienced problems, solutions they have developed for these problems, and their suggestions for solving these problems.

1.4 Data analysis

The data were collected and analysed by using the content analysis method. Content analysis involves combining the data obtained under certain concepts and themes and organizing and interpreting them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, methods such as depth-oriented data collection, detailed description, and coherency analysis were used. To ensure depth-oriented data collection, participants were not limited in time to fill out questionnaires, and they were required to write down their questions in detail under the questions in the form. To provide a detailed description, direct citations were often included in the results. In addition to obtaining expert opinion for scope and face validity to ensure consistency in the research, coding in the analyses was done separately by two researchers, and the findings were regulated to the extent that consistency was achieved. To strengthen the transfer of research results to similar study environments, the participants' information, steps for collecting and analysing data were explained in detail.

1.5 Ethical considerations

The teachers were informed about the purpose of the research and information was given about the researchers in order to comply with the ethical rules in the study. In addition, the participating teachers were informed about the possible outcomes of the study, and where the information obtained from the study would be used was expressed. In the form where the contact information of the researchers was given, it was stated that participation in the study was voluntary, and the participants could leave the study at any time. In this sense, the research was conducted with the approval of the participating teachers.

2 Results

The opinions indicated in accordance with the questions asked to teachers with foreign students in their classes were organized under the themes of positive opinions about foreign students, the achievement level of learning outcomes, additional activities, experienced problems, the way teachers solve problems, and teachers' suggestions for solutions to problems.

2.1 Positive opinions about foreign students

Within the scope of the research, teachers were first asked about their general thoughts about students. Some of the teachers were determined to have positive views regarding foreign students in their classrooms, and these opinions were evaluated under the theme of “positive opinions”. Content analysis results for this theme are presented in Figure 1.

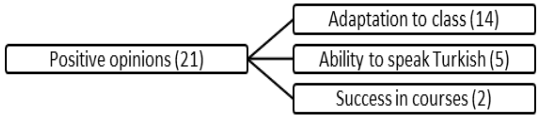


Figure 1. Codes on the theme of "positive opinions".

As shown in Figure 1, the codes under the theme of positive opinions about foreign students include adaption to the class (f=14), ability to speak Turkish (f=5), and success in courses (f=2). Some of the teachers stated that foreign students in their class were conformable to the class environment. According to the teachers, although students experienced adaptation problems and behaved timidly in the first few months, they did not have much difficulty in adapting to the classroom. *"They are very young and do not have a problem with their friends in general. I think there is a language called 'Children's language', and students can communicate very well with each other by using this language." (T10) and "These children who leave their country out due to necessity are timid at first and can soon adapt to the classroom environment."* (T17)

One of the biggest factors in the adaptation to class is the knowledge of the language. As a matter of fact, teachers expressed the students' ability to speak Turkish well as a positive situation, noting that students can adapt to the class and school culture because they know Turkish. One of the teachers stated that speaking language well was one of the positive aspects by using the expressions *"Afghan students are more conformable with school culture than our own students. They use Turkish better."* (T21) Students' ability to speak well is also a factor in their success. In this subject, one of the teachers used the expressions *"I have two siblings in my class. The boy speaks Turkish better because he came to Turkey earlier than his sister. His adaptation to the lessons and his friends is also fine. He loves to read books. He is also very successful in mathematics."* (T29) and mentioned that his student was able to achieve success in the class thanks to his ability to speak Turkish language well. Another teacher who mentioned success in classes stated that his student from Afghanistan was more successful than the Iraqi student. The teacher's own statement is that *"Afghan students in our class are more interested in the lesson than Iraqi students. They're very, very good at writing-reading or math."* (T20)

2.2 Achievement level of learning outcomes

Whether the learning outcomes of the courses were achieved by foreign students was the next question of the research. Under the theme of achievement level of learning outcomes, teachers' responses are described under the codes of negative

(f=12), vary according to the situation (f=10), and positive (f=7). Content analysis results for this theme are as follows:

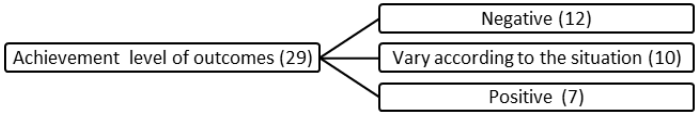


Figure 2. Codes related to the theme of the "level of achievement of the outcomes".

As shown in Figure 2, 12 of the teachers mentioned that they could not achieve learning outcomes with foreign students. According to the teachers, students' communication problems and lack of knowledge of Turkish constitute the biggest obstacle to the achievement of the learning outcomes. T10 referred to this situation through the phrase *"There's no way they can get the outcomes in the program when there's a lack of communication. We can only teach reading-writing. But reading doesn't mean much either. Because most of the time they can't understand what they read."* Ten of the teachers mentioned that the level of outcome varied according to lessons, student status, and class level. For example, one of the teachers used the phrases *"There's nothing wrong with the math. There is a problem with Turkish and Social Science lessons. They're having trouble understanding them."* (T9), indicating that students suffer more problems in lessons that require reading and comprehension. T2, on the other hand, mentioned that the student status and class level were effective in achieving learning outcomes, with their explanations like *"We experience no problem with those who speak the language and come long ago. (...) Those who are in intermediate level of the classes and have language problems don't accomplish to get learning outcomes."* Finally, 7 of the teachers mentioned that they were able to provide students with achieving the learning outcomes. One of the teachers' own statements on this subject are as follows: *"I can achieve the vast majority of the outcomes in the curriculum with my students who previously went to the language course and learned Turkish. Even many of my foreign students who have learned Turkish show similar success with my Turkish students."* (T23)

2.3 Additional activities

Another interest of the study refers to the question of whether teachers conduct additional activities for foreign students, and what kind of activities they participate in if they do. Teachers who stated that they did additional activities listed these activities as reading-writing activities (f=16), using games/visuals (f=8), speaking activities (f=4), four operations activities (f=4), and Turkish

teaching to foreigners' activities (f=4). Content analysis results for the additional activities theme are described as follows:

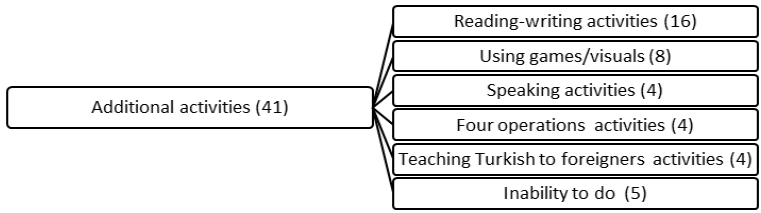


Figure 3. Codes for the theme of "additional activities".

As shown in Figure 3, the additional activities of teachers are mostly activities related to Turkish teaching. As a matter of fact, the vast majority of teachers indicated that they focused on reading-writing activities. Speaking activities and Turkish teaching activities for foreigners also constituted language teaching activities. One of the teachers' statements on this subject is as follows:
"When a foreign student comes, I first do a reading study to learn his/her level. For example, I teach 4th grade this year. My Iraqi student, who had just joined my class, was illiterate in any language. We taught literacy through the activities of 1st-grade teachers with the letter and syllabic studies by conducting the IYEP (Education Program in Primary Schools) process." (T10)
Apart from communication skills such as reading, writing, and speaking, it was seen that four operations teaching which formed the basis of mathematics were tried to be given by teachers as additional activities. Teachers stated that they did these activities by using games and visuals. Some of the teachers mentioned that they could not do additional activities for reasons such as the overcrowding of classes, the intensity of teaching programs, and the lack of knowledge about what activities they could do. One of the teachers' own statements on this subject is as follows:
"My classes are too crowded. I have one in my class, but there are dozens of refugee students in other classes. I can't give them a separate activity. Also, I don't have information on the subject. (...) I can't give to them any benefit. There are very smart children among them, but we cannot do anything for them." (T26)

2.4 Experienced problems

In the study, teachers mentioned the problems they experienced when expressing their general views and answering the question about whether they had problems with foreign students. According to the responses, the code of language/

communication problem (f=25), compliance with peers (f=14), family inability to contribute (f=8), disrupting the classroom order (f=7), behavioural disorders (f=6), learning difficulties/reluctance (f=5), absenteeism (f=5), financial difficulties (f=5) and cultural problems (f=4) were included under the theme of "Experienced problems". Content analysis results for this theme are listed in Figure 4.

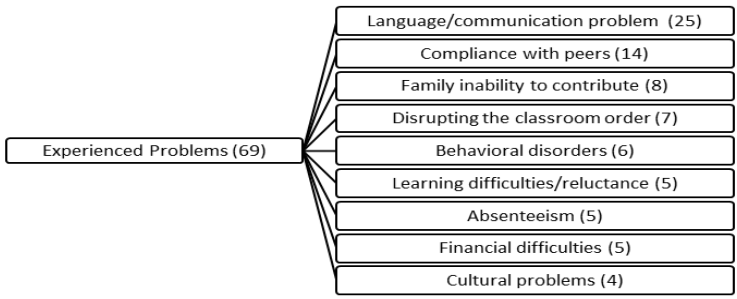


Figure 4. Codes related to the theme of the "experienced problems".

As shown in Figure 4, the first code of the experienced problem theme is the language/communication problem. Most teachers mentioned that students had communication problems caused by their inability to use Turkish. For this reason, communication became difficult, and this slowed down education to a certain extent. The teachers also mentioned that students who could not speak Turkish had problems communicating not only with their teachers, but also with their friends, so they also had problems with their peers. Teachers' own statements about the language/communication problem are as follows:

"Our biggest problem is that they do not know Turkish when they first come. As communication becomes difficult, there are failures in planning and learning process." (T18)

"Sometimes they have problems with their friends. Usually due to the language problem. (...) They are often misunderstood by students, and they experience some problems because of this situation." (T21)

The second code under the theme of experienced problems is the problem of compliance with peers and peer pressure. According to teachers, some foreign students had difficulty in agreeing with their peers, which led to adaptation problems. Students who had problems adapting to peers either became emotional or angry. These problems among peers could also cause foreign students to be excluded and subjected to peer pressure. T28 expressed these problems in the following sentences: *"When they have a problem with their friends or cannot express themselves properly, they either immediately start crying or get angry*

and fight. (...) Our students can also sometimes feel antipathy to our foreign students." Also, T26, by using the statements "Intolerance was shown to Christian students", mentioned that foreign students could also be alienated because they belonged to different religions. Furthermore, teachers stated that when students experience a problem, families were involved in it and felt the need to defend themselves. T10 stated this situation as follows: *"For example, in the slightest problem they have with their friends in class or in school, their families get involved. They're always defensive. Many of them are unable to adapt to society and feel excluded by their friends in the slightest negativity."*

Family inability to contribute students' learning process is another problem encountered by the teachers. Some of the teachers mentioned that families could not contribute to their students because they could not speak Turkish. One of the teachers expressed his thoughts on this situation as follows: *"I have difficulty with them because their families do not speak Turkish. Their parents never come to school. I can't meet the family when the children don't understand what I want or what I'm saying. If I call, they don't know any Turkish. At the beginning of the year, they put their children in school, and they haven't come in yet*." (T6)

According to teachers, other problems experienced by students include disrupting classroom order, behavioural disorders, and learning difficulties/reluctance and absenteeism. According to teachers, some of the foreign students may exhibit behavioural disorders when they cannot understand and do not comprehend lessons, which disrupts the class order and leads to a loss of time. T6 expressed this situation with the following statements: *"Their behaviours deteriorate when they can't do their studies and when they don't understand the lesson. They remain unconcerned, engaging in different events. This also distracts other students."* In addition, according to teachers, cultural problems that students experience also make it difficult for them to learn. T12 explained this situation with the following sentences: *"Cultural differences make it difficult to learn. It seems that the education system in their country is very different from ours."* Finally, it is indicated by teachers that financial difficulties experienced by the students were among the problems under this theme. Teachers mentioned that many of their foreign students were in very poor financial condition and therefore had problems with the supply of their educational needs, even nutrition. One of the teachers' own statements on this subject is as follows:

"Most of my foreign students, except for a few, are in poor financial condition. They can't meet their needs in any way. Often, they ask for money from their teachers. (...) Most of these students can't get any pocket money, while their other friends can do. They come without having breakfast. As a result, they either pass out in class or have a stomach-ache." (T28)

2.5 The way teachers solve problems

Another question of the research is how teachers solve their problems that they experienced with the foreign students. According to the given responses, the way teachers solve problems is gathered under the codes of using translator/body language (f=11), meeting with families (f=11), friendly approach/care (f=10), ensuring participation in different activities (f=4), allocating additional time (f=4), receiving help from school/administration/colleagues (f=4), providing financial/moral support (f=3), and raising awareness of other students (f=3). Content analysis results for this topic are as follows:

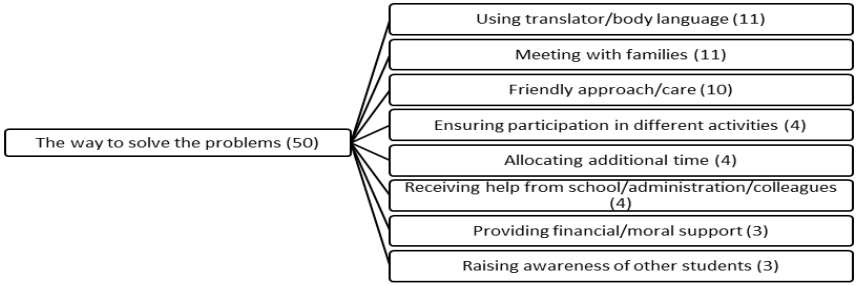


Figure 5. Codes for the theme of "ways to solve problems".

A large number of teachers have stated that they use other foreign students who speak Turkish as translators in school or class to solve the language problems that students experience. T7's statements on this issue are as follows: *"We solve problems by talking to their friends who speak the same language. They're kind of translator."* Another frequently used method is to try to cooperate with students' families. Ö28 explained this issue with the following statements: "*We also try to solve other problems, such as fighting, by trying to reach out to their families, by calling them to school. We also include their families in the solution process."* A friendly approach to student and personal interest are also among the ways teachers solve problems. T4 used the following statements on this issue: *"We talk about mistakes together. We try to be friends with them as much as possible. We listen to them and their needs."* Teachers also stated that they were targeting fewer problems by enabling foreign students to participate in different activities within the classroom and to engage in different sports and arts activities. Other than these, they mentioned that they gave them additional time to solve their problems, they received support from school/administration and colleagues, and they tried to provide financial and moral support to students. Furthermore, they stated that they tried to raise awareness of other students about foreign students. T28 addressed this issue with the following statements: *"We*

want them to communicate healthily with their friends. We want them to 'empathize' with our students, to put themselves in those students' shoes so that they understand the distress experienced by foreign students."

2.6 Teachers' suggestions for solutions

Finally, teachers were asked what suggestions they offered to solve the problems experienced by foreign students. The recommendations of the teachers were evaluated under the theme of "Suggestions for Solutions". The codes under this theme are additional course organization (f=11), the execution of separate training activities (f=8), orientation training (f=6), living in separate camps/return (f=4), family education (f=3), teacher seminars (f=3); the other suggestions comprise of the preparation of special materials (f=2), therapy for children with a tendency to violence (f=1) and the provision of financial support (f=1). The results of the content analysis for the suggestions for solutions theme are as follows:

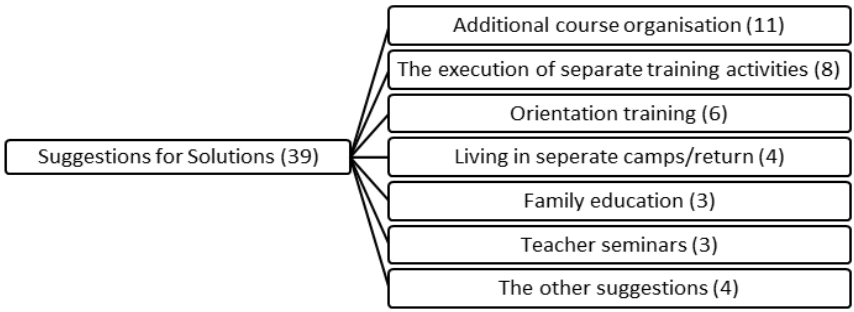


Figure 6. Codes for the theme of "suggestions for solutions".

As shown in Figure 6, the first proposal of teachers to solve the problems of foreign students is to provide additional courses. Teachers believed that foreign students should be directed to courses that specifically teach (Turkish) language before they were placed in classes. The following statements of T21 support this view: *"Language must be taught first. At the heart of the problems is the inability to understand, the inability to explain their problems."* Some teachers believed that foreign students should participate in separate educational activities with teachers of their nationality. T1's following sentences can be given as an example of this view: *"I believe it would be more beneficial for these students to be trained by their teachers who are from their countries."* A few of the teachers stated that orientation training should be given to students for adapting them to the class, society, and culture. Teachers who felt that students could not adapt

stated that foreigners should live in separate camps or return to their countries. T12 expressed his views on this issue using the following statements: *"No country has allowed the free movement of refugees in public. They must live in separate camps. Health, education and life needs should be provided there."* Teachers also stated that the families of foreign students should be made aware by receiving training about the problems of their children and how to solve these problems. Other than these, teachers indicated that they should be equipped with the necessary knowledge about how to approach and provide a healthy education process for these students with the help of seminars. Other recommendations of teachers included preparing special materials for foreign students, organizing therapies for foreign students who were prone to violence, and providing financial support to these students and their families. Finally, T16 mentioned the need to create an environment of love, respect, team spirit, and empathy between students, to ensure that students learn by doing, to value students, to share with them, to emphasize universal values in solving problems with foreign students. The teacher's own statements are as follows:

"Each child is a flower of a different colour, and by holding hands, they turn the world into a beautiful garden. In addition to telling students about the importance of being able to respect and empathize in personal relations, we must ensure that they learn by living with each other. We (parent-student-teacher) should share our knowledge and love with students through various activities (games, drama, social activities, excursions, etc.)." (T16)

"People who do not speak the same language, but share the same feelings, can understand each other. Based on this phrase, teachers play a big role in circumventing the adaptation process. After you can give the bond of love and team spirit between the children, the solution comes spontaneously. It is necessary to make people feel that individual differences are richness and understand the meaning of universal values (every child likes to play, every child laughs when they are happy, etc.)." (T16)

3 Discussion

In this study, which aims to identify the problems that primary and secondary school teachers experience with foreign students and suggestions for solutions to address these problems, the opinions of the teachers were evaluated under the themes of positive opinions about foreign students, the level of achievement of outcomes, additional activities, experienced problems, the way teachers solve problems, and teachers' suggestions for solutions.

The positive views of teachers who express opinions about foreign students within the scope of the research constitute the adaption to the classroom, the ability to speak Turkish well, and success in courses. According to some teachers, the adaption to the classroom, the ability to speak Turkish well and

success in the courses, as well as, the time when students arrive in Turkey, the gender and nationality can also be decisive or cause differences. As for the ability to achieve course outcomes with students, teachers similarly mentioned that the status of achieving outcomes varies depending on the student's status and class level. With the increase in the number of foreign students in Turkey, the studies on these students have increased in recent years (Akarsu, 2018; Ersoy & Turan, 2019; Sarıahmetoğlu, 2019; Sarıer, 2020; Kırılmaz & Öntaş, 2020). But it seems that the studies in the literature focus on the general problems and suggestions for solutions of students, without focusing on different variables in a general sense. Based on the finding of this study, it can be said that further studies taking into account different variables are also needed. In other words, it is possible to say that there is a need for studies to shed light on the problems foreign students are having and the solution proposals for these problems by considering the different variables, such as the students time of arrival into the country, gender, courses they are successful, whether they are in the intermediate class, or what nationality they have.

Some of the teachers who stated that foreign students in the class are adapting to the class mentioned that the most important factor in adaptation to the classroom and success is the students' knowledge of Turkish. In the theme of achievement of outcomes, teachers who expressed a positive opinion considered the fact that students' knowledge of Turkish language is as a prerequisite for success. In parallel with this situation, the opinion of teachers is that speaking Turkish well is important for the achievement of course outcomes with foreign students, on the contrary, it was among the opinions of teachers that the biggest reason for the inability to achieve outcomes was communication problems and deficiencies in knowing Turkish. Also, in the theme of problems with foreign students, the language/communication problem was mentioned by most of the teachers. Many studies are also found in the literature on the importance of language in the conduct of educational activities with foreign students and the problem of language and communication they experience (Chrzanowska & Jachimczak, 2018; Momtselidze, 2020; Orłowska, 2019). For example, Akarsu (2018), in his study on Turkish courses with foreign students in secondary school, stated that one of the most important factors in achieving success in education with foreign students is the use of communication tools. One of the strongest feelings that people need is the ability to express themselves, and language knowledge plays a key role in fulfilling these missions. Again, Eren (2019) stated that the language problem occupies a large place among the educational problems of immigrant children in Turkey from the point of view of both students and parents. Sarıahmetoğlu (2019) also emphasized in his research that the most important problem in classrooms with foreign students is that they do not know Turkish. At the beginning of the problems, the language problem causes teachers to give a

separate place to teaching Turkish in the additional activities they organize. As a matter of fact, in the theme of additional activities in this study, teachers listed their activities as writing-reading activities, using games/visuals, speaking activities, four operations, and teaching Turkish to foreigners. As can be seen, the additional activities of teachers are mostly activities related to language teaching. The vast majority of teachers indicate that they focus on writing-reading activities while speaking activities and teaching Turkish to foreigners also constitute activities aimed at teaching the language. Similar studies have shown that language teaching to foreign students has a great place in the literature (Akarsu, 2018; Baldık, 2018; Bánhegyi & Nagy, 2019; Biçer & Kılıç, 2017; Büyükikiz & Çangal, 2016; Derderian-Aghajanian & Wang, 2012; Ereş, 2016; Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014). All these studies show that the first problems of foreign students that need to be solved are language and communication problems.

Another problem that teachers experience with foreign students is that they have communication problems not only with the student but also with the family. Because some parents do not speak Turkish, there are communication problems with parents as well as with students, and the inability of the family to contribute to students is a trouble for teachers. When students experience a problem, families are involved in it and feel the need to defend themselves, which are also among the problems. In many similar studies, communication problems with parents are mentioned, and all these studies show that parents are as important as students in teaching foreign students and that parents' language skills are critical in terms of informing parents and conducting the process with school-family cooperation (Akarsu, 2018; Eren, 2019, Dryden-Peterson, 2018; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016; Johns, 2001; Şimşir & Dilmaç, 2018).

In addition to language problems or communication problems, teachers have mentioned that foreign students also have some difficulties in adapting to peers and may be subject to peer pressure. According to teachers, foreign students may have difficulty agreeing with their peers, which leads to adaptation problems. Students who have problems adapting to peers either become emotional or angry. These problems among peers can also cause foreign students to be alienated and subjected to peer pressure. Foreign students of different cultures and religions may be subject to pressure and exclusion by other students. Peer influence is also mentioned by other studies in literature (Pong & Hao, 2007; Rumbaut, 2005; St-Hilaire, 2002). Şimşir and Dilmaç (2018) also noted that since foreign students have problems communicating with their Turkish friends, problems such as the inability of Turkish students to understand their foreign friends and the reluctance to communicate with their foreign friends occur. Ersoy and Turan (2019) also mentioned that foreign students experience problems such as absenteeism and insensitivity to academic success due to being ignored by

teachers or facing stigmatism and judgmental attitudes by their friends. In our study, other problems experienced by students include problems such as disrupting classroom order, behavioural disorders, learning difficulties/ reluctance, and absenteeism, which are similar to the findings of Ersoy and Turan (2019). These adaptation problems between students make it difficult for them to understand each other, which can lay the groundwork for deep divisions and can also cause students to experience different problems such as disrupting classroom order, behavioural disorders, learning difficulties, or reluctance and absenteeism. For this reason, it is of great importance to create environments where students can coexist in harmony with each other. As a matter of fact, Palaz, Çepni and Kılcan (2019) found that students who made friendships with foreign students had more positive attitudes towards these people than students who did not have foreign friends. It is not enough for students to know each other just because they are in the same classroom environment, it is also necessary to organize activities in which they can get to know each other more closely and become friends.

Another problem experienced by foreign students was expressed by teachers as financial difficulties. Teachers have mentioned that many of their foreign students are in very poor financial condition and therefore have problems with cleaning, providing school supplies, even nutrition. Different studies also show that students are experiencing financial difficulties that cannot meet their basic requirements, and this is reflected in educational activities (Atkinson, 2006; Gonzales, 2010; Güngör & Şenel, 2018; Sarıer, 2020; Sarıtaş, Şahin, & Çatalbaş, 2016; Singer & Paulson, 2004). It is difficult to expect students to succeed by adapting to the school and classroom environment unless their basic needs are met. For this reason, it is possible to say that in schools, first of all, studies should be carried out to ensure the basic needs of students.

Teachers noted that another the main problem experienced by foreign students is caused by cultural differences. According to teachers, students may be alienated because they belong to different cultural structures and religions, or they may have difficulty adapting to the culture they have just come from. Problems experienced due to cultural differences are among the main problems highlighted in many different studies (Atkinson, 2006; Ponizovskiy, 2016). In one of these studies, Güngör and Şenel (2018) mentioned that students and their parents had difficulty adapting to Turkish traditions and customs and this situation was reflected in their educational activities. Again, Polat (2012) stated that the reflection of cultural differences in educational activities can cause some problems. According to the results of our study and similar studies, cultural problems are also factors that prepare the basis for adaptation problems, peer-to-peer conflicts, reluctance in learning, and absenteeism. For this reason, it is of great importance that foreign students must not be alienated because of their

culture, they must not be excluded by other students, and they must primarily be helped to ensure their adaptation and integration into culture and school through activities.

When teachers were asked what they were doing to solve their problems, many of them stated that they used other foreign students who spoke Turkish at school or in class as translators. In the work of Yenilmez and Çöplü (2019) and Güngör and Şenel (2018), it is also seen that teachers emphasize the need to use or employ translators. Another often used method is to try to cooperate with students' families. As mentioned earlier, ensuring school-family cooperation plays an important role in the conduct of educational activities, and this also applies to foreign students. For this reason, teachers' efforts to communicate with the family have a critical value in terms of solving problems. Another solution of teachers was expressed as a friendly approach to students and a one-to-one interest. Teachers also stated that they aimed to have fewer problems by enabling foreign students to participate in different activities within the classroom and to focus on different sports and arts activities. This can also help students avoid problems caused by their cultural differences. Other solutions of teachers include giving students additional time to solve their problems, providing support by the school/administration and colleagues, trying to provide financial and moral support to students, and trying to raise other students' awareness on foreign students. As can be seen, teachers are trying to implement solutions that are often mentioned in the literature to minimize the problems experienced by foreign students. In this context, in terms of both conducting the teaching process more healthily and being more beneficial to foreign students, it is possible to say that it will be important for teachers who have foreign students in their class to meet at certain time intervals and share these solutions with each other and discuss their proposals.

When teachers were asked what suggestions they had for solving the problems of foreign students, it was determined that their first suggestions were to provide additional courses. Teachers believe that foreign students should be directed to courses that specifically teach language before attending classes. In the literature, there are many studies indicating that additional courses, especially for language teaching, should be given to foreign students (Bulut, Kanat-Soysal, & Gülçiçek, 2018; Sarıtaş, Şahin, & Çatalbaş, 2016; Şimşir & Dilmaç, 2018; Yenilmez & Çöplü, 2019). Consideration and implementation of this proposal are of great importance in solving the communication problems of students and parents indirectly. A few of the teachers stated that orientation training is needed in order for foreign students to adapt to class, society, and culture. Teachers who felt that students could not adapt stated that foreigners should live in separate camps or return to their countries. Some teachers believe that foreign students should participate in separate educational activities with teachers of their nationality.

Teachers also stated that the families of foreign students should be made aware by receiving training and teachers indicated that they should be equipped with the necessary knowledge about how to approach and provide a healthy education process for these students with the help of seminars. As a matter of fact, under the theme of additional activities in the study, some of the teachers mentioned that they could not do additional activities for reasons such as the overcrowding of classes, the intensity of the curriculum, and the lack of knowledge about what kind of activities they could do. This indicates that some teachers are unaware of what kind of activities they can carry out for these students and their teaching process. Bulut, Kanat-Soysal, and Gülçiçek (2018) also mentioned the necessity of providing in-service courses to teachers as a result of their work but emphasized that these courses can be useful by planning them with long-term consideration and repeating them at certain intervals. Other recommendations of teachers include preparing special materials for foreign students, organizing therapies for foreign students who are prone to violence, and providing financial support to these students and their families. Finally, there are teachers who talk about the need to create an environment of love, respect, team spirit, and empathy between students in solving problems with foreign students. Aykırı (2017), and Kırılmaz and Öntaş (2020) also found that teachers attach importance to empathy, love, and inclusion of the student in the social climate of the class in communicating with foreign students.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to identify the problems that primary and secondary school teachers experience with foreign students and suggestions for solutions to address these problems. Most basic problem experienced by foreign students is indicated as language problem. Language problem also cause the problems of adaptation to school, teacher and classmates. Especially the students whose parents did not know Turkish experience these problems more than others because of the lack of support from their parents. The majority of the teachers mentioned that they could not reach the achievements in the education programs with these students, and they stated that they included additional activities related to reading and writing. Conducting orientations programs, language and literacy courses, family education (especially language teaching to families), providing therapy for children who had a tendency to violence, providing a separate education program for foreign students and providing training by teachers who were their own citizens in separate classes were among the proposed solution. Based on the results obtained throughout the study, it is possible to say that taking into account the given recommendations can contribute to the solution of the problems of foreign students. This study is limited to 29 primary and secondary school teachers who had at least one foreign

student in their class in one of the provinces of Middle Black Sea Region of Turkey. Further research can be conducted in different context to shed light on different problems of foreign students experience and proposed solutions to these problems.

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