Investigating Syrian Learners' Needs According to Various Variables within the Framework of Teaching Turkish to Children as a Second Language

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Abstract

The current study aims at identifying and analysing language needs of Syrian children under temporary protection. In line with this, we administered the "Needs Scale for Learning Turkish", "Needs Scale for the Content" and "Needs Scale for the Process" developed by Çağ (2022) to 194 primary school students. We adopted survey model, one of quanlitative research methods, and used percentage, arithmetical mean, Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests to conduct the analysis. We concluded at the end of the analysis that students' needs about the goal of learning Turkish included establishing a communication with the teacher, having a job and finding a job in Türkiye in the future. The study findings revealed that students' goals of learning Turkish varied significantly according to grade level, time period of living in Türkiye and use of Turkish out of school, whereas there was no significant difference according to gender. On the other hand, students' needs in terms of skills were not affected by grade level, gender, time of living in Türkiye and the frequency of using Turkish out of school. The study findings also showed that students' needs in terms of methods and techniques, materials, subjects and themes were affected only by grade level, but not affected by gender, time period of living in Türkiye and frequency of using Turkish out of school. In the light of the study findings, it seems possible to state that students meet the need of learning Turkish mostly at school, so teachers and schools serve an important function in that sense.

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Introduction

Migration resulting from wars, natural disasters and financial reasons deeply affects countries' political and social structure. Türkiye has been a country of transit as well as destination for immigrants looking for better financial and social conditions, especially for the last ten years (İçduygu and Aksel, 2012, p. 63), and it has often been exposed to migration waves due to some reasons such as the country's geopolitical importance, geographical location, cultural features, and social opportunities.

One of the most important migration waves in Turkish history started in 2011 as a result of political, social and military emergences in Syria. Türkiye has been accepting Syrian immigrants since 2011 within the framework of temporary protection. Statistical data reported by Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management (TDGMM) show that there are about 4 million Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye today. 47% of Syrian immigrants are composed of children between the ages of 0-18 (1.772.705) (TDGMM, 2022).

Literature Review

It is of great importance for immigrant children under temporary protection to learn Turkish in order to get access to the basic right of education, avoid learning loss, adapt to Turkish culture, be successful in job and social life if they happen to continue their life in Türkiye. Literature review shows that Syrian immigrants under temporary protection do not have the necessary language proficiency to adapt to school and society, and they have to deal with many problems arising from language barrier (Aksakal, 2017; Aykırı, 2017; Coşkun and Emin, 2016; ÇOÇA, 2015; Erbaş, 2021; Gözübüyük-Tamer, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2015; Koçoğlu and Yanpar-Yelken, 2018). Most common problems Syrian immigrants have resulting from language barrier include starting and staying at school (Aksakal 2017), communication problems with teachers, principals and other students (Emin, 2018; Er and Bayındır, 2015; Gözübüyük-Tamer, 2017, p. 145), academic failure (Emin, 2018), finding a job, starting university and adaptation (Çangal, 2022). Aksakal (2017, p. 675) indicates that children drop out school as they have difficulty in adapting to school because of language problems. Coşkun and Emin (2018, p. 10-11) state that problems about culture and language constitute a significant reason why immigrant children and teenagers cannot achieve schooling.

Immigrant children and teenagers who can go to school have other problems. Coşkun and Emin (2016, p. 11) remark that Syrian students receiving education at a state school face many problems such as receiving education in classes that are not appropriate for their age group and grade level, being excluded by their Turkish citizen peers and having communication problems with teachers and principals due to not having the necessary language proficiency. On the other hand, Koçoğlu and Yanpar-Yelken (2018, p. 145) express that teachers come across various problems such

as communication, social problems, physical conditions, differences in students' level of Turkish language proficiency and deficiency in basic language skills while trying to educate Syrian students to gain Turkish language skills. As Gözübüyük-Tamer (2017, p. 137) clearly specifies in a field study, the leading expectation and demand of teachers is solving the language problem. It is of crucial importance to plan and start language education at primary school level in order to help Syrian students overcome language barriers and get rid of secondary problems arising from language barrier. The point is that planning language education requires analysing students' language needs. Because of that reason, it seems possible to state that analysing students' language needs can yield many benefits in practice.

Language Needs Analysis

Language needs analysis can be defined as the process of identifying language needs of a student or students in language teaching and designing language teaching curriculum, and arrange them in the order of priority (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p. 389). Needs analysis is a tool to know about the needs and deficiencies of students in order to develop course content. Therefore, it can be explained as identifying and describing the current curriculum as well as teaching and administration goals in order to make learning easier in an environment closely related to real life situations (Fatihi, 2003, p. 39). According to Nunan (1999, p. 149), needs analysis is a process of deciding on the methods, techniques and tools to be used in language learning for a specific group of students. Needs analysis serves as a compass that guides language teaching (Güzel and Barın, 2016, p. 234).

Language needs analysis is even more important nowadays as a result of the increase in the need to learn a foreign language for different purposes such as job, education, trade and other personal reasons since 1960s. Needs analysis has expanded and changed through different perspectives over time.

Needs analysis which basically meant evaluating students' needs of communication needs and reaching a specific educational goal in 1960s and 1970s is now more complicated and means gathering information about students and identifying their learning environments (Otilia, 2015, p. 54).

According to Brindley (1989, p. 63), one of the fundamental principles of student-centred language teaching is having a curriculum that complies with student needs. Because of that reason, needs analysis has often been used in second language studies as a result of switching from a teacher-based approach to a student-based understanding, and it has long been the focus of language teaching practices for the sake of identifying students' needs about learning a language.

Fatihi (2003, p. 41) states that needs analysis was first addressed within the scope of modern language teaching at European Council Modern Languages Department. The first version, accepted to be the pioneer of European Common Application Document, was prepared by Ek and Trim (1990) on

behalf of the European Commission, and was updated in 1990 and 1998. The document called Threshold Level posits that language teaching is based on three dimensions, which are needs, language functions and concepts. Threshold Level thoroughly explains possible language needs of students, and why and where a language can be used in daily life. Furthermore, it is obvious that the components of discourse strategies, socio-cultural competence, compensation strategies and learning to learn were re-adapted for the 1990 version of Threshold Level.

Data gathered from needs analysis can guide the process of preparing curriculum. Ek and Trim (1990, p. 1) emphasize that it is a must to design large-scale educational systems in a way to meet the common needs of students. Linse (1993, p. 36) indicates that a holistic and pedagogical curriculum is not possible without a comprehensive needs analysis. Moreover, Linse states that it is necessary to consider students' personal expectations, background information, cultural and political history as well as their personalities while preparing a curriculum for students who learn a second language.

If second-language or foreign language teachers want to respond to the changes, it is important to build courses on the findings of student needs analysis questionnaires (Long, 2005, p. 19). Linse (1993, p. 40) puts a special emphasis on identifying students' language needs in language teaching, and underlines that teachers need to know which language students use for which purpose (e.g. speaking with friends in second language and speaking with family in native language), which language is more valuable for them, and how they use a language to achieve a personally meaningful task.

According to Richards (2001, p. 51), needs analysis in language teaching has various goals:

* Identifying which language skills students need to fulfil a specific role (e.g. sales manager, tour guide or university student)

* Finding out if the current course sufficiently meets students' needs

* Identifying which students in a group need education for a specific language skill

* Deciding on changes that might be important for the target people

* Identifying the differences between what students can do and what they need to do

* Gathering information on a specific problem experienced by students

A needs analysis can be done through questionaries, self-evaluation forms, interviews, placement tests, students' diaries, final evaluation forms, meetings, observation, analysing examples of students' studies and conducting case studies (Deliktaş, 2019, p. 23-26). A needs analysis helps to gather objective and subjective information via data tools such as questionnaires, tests, interviews and observation (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p. 389). On the other hand, Nation and Macalister (2010, p.

27) state that the method of doing a needs analysis can vary according to the type and focus of the need.

Table 1. Language Needs Techniques

Type of the Need	Focus	Method
Needs	Language Proficiency Level	Self-evaluation
		Placement Test
	Language Use	Self-Evaluation
		Observation and Analysis
		Reviewing Previous Studies
		Analysis of Collection
Deficits	Language Proficiency Level	Self-Evaluation
		Test
	Language Use	Self-Evaluation
		Observation and Analysis
Demands	Wishes	Self-Evaluation
	Usage	Observation

According to Long (2005, p. 20), carrying out a needs analysis is similar to a case when a doctor asks a patient some questions to diagnose the illness. Just like a doctor asks a patient what has brought them to the clinic in order to start an appropriate treatment, second language researchers should ask students about the purpose of learning a second language and identify their language needs.

There are a number of studies in the literature that focus on identifying language needs of Syrians under temporary protection (Biçer and Alan, 2017; Bölükbaş, 2016; Phutkaradze, 2018; Ünal, Taşkaya and Ersoy, 2018). The common point of these studies is that they all analyse language needs of adults or teenagers. The current study aims at identifying and analysing children's language needs. The starting point of this study is the idea to customize Turkish teaching according to the needs of the target group after identifying and analysing the language needs of Syrian children who learn Turkish as a second language. The current study is expected to shed light on practices of teaching Turkish. This study aims at analysing language needs of Syrian immigrant children, and contributing to researchers, teachers and those who prepare curriculum in this field.

In this line, we looked for answers for the following questions in the current study:

1. What are the needs of students who are learning Turkish as a second language?

2. Which sub-dimensions do students' language needs appear at?

3. Do students' needs vary according to grade level, gender, time period of living in Türkiye and using Turkish out of school?

Research Method

This part of the study gives information on research design, study group, data collection tools and data analysis.

Research Design

This study, which aims at identifying language needs of Syrian children learning Turkish as a second language, adopted a quantitative research method. The research design was survey research model, which is one of the qualitative research methods.

Survey model is a method that aims to gather data to identify some specific features of a specific group (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020, p. 16). In survey models, data is gathered through responses to specific questions. Data is gathered from a sub-group of the population, not all the members of the population (Groves et al., 2004, p. 3).

Sample and Population

The population of the current study is composed of Syrian primary school students who learn Turkish as a second language. According to data reported by TDGMM (2022), around a million of Syrian students attend a primary school. The sample of the current study is composed of 194 primary school students who were attending a primary school in the central district of Kilis province in 2021-2022 educational year. There is a balance between the number of female (f=94, 48,5%) and male (f=100, 51,5%) participants. The participant students were 8 (f=53, 27,3%), 9 (f=52, 26,8%), 10 (f=59, 30,4%) and 11 years old (f=30, 15,5%). We thought that including first-grade students in the study might not be appropriate as their reading and writing skills might not be sufficient to respond to the items in the scale, so it would be more appropriate to include second, third and fourth grade students in the study. In this line, the numbers of third and fourth grade participant students were close to each other (third grade, f=81, 41,8%, fourth grade, f=82, 42,3%), while there were also second-grade students (f=31, 16%) in the study.

While selecting the sample group, we used convenience sampling method within the scope of purposeful sampling method, which is a non-random sampling method. Purposeful sampling makes it possible to choose a case that is rich in terms of information in line with the study purpose and deeply investigate it, and it is preferred when researchers want to conduct a study on one or more cases that meet specific criteria or have specific features (Creswell, 2017).

Data Collection Tools

The data collection tools in the current study include "Needs Scale for Learning Turkish (NSLT)", "Needs Scale for the Process (NSP)" and "Needs Analysis for the Content (NSC), which were all developed by Çağ (2022). NSLT is composed of 16 items, and it is a 3-point Likert type scale with three alternatives, which are yes, no, not sure". NSP is composed of two sub-scales, which are "skill areas" and "methods and techniques". The part of skill areas has 13 items, and it has three points, which are easy, medium and difficult. The part of methods and techniques is composed of 10

items, and it has three points, which are very useful, a bit useful and not useful. NSC is composed of two sub-scales, which are "materials" and "subject and themes". The part of materials is composed of 10 items, and it has three points which are very useful, a bit useful and not useful. The part of subject and themes is composed of 15 items, and it includes three points, which are yes, no and not sure. Reliability coefficients of the data collection tools were as below: Cronbach's Alpha= 0,767 for NSLT, Cronbach's Alpha=0,867 for skill areas, Cronbach's Alpha= 0,685 for methods and techniques of NSP, Cronbach's Alpha= 0,830 for materials of NSP, Cronbach's Alpha=0,707 for subject and themes of NSC, Cronbach's Alpha=0,851 for the general reliability coefficient of the scales, which all show that the data collection tools are highly reliable.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the participants were transferred to the computer to conduct the analysis. The analysis showed that the data did not display normal distribution as Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests resulted in a statistically significant difference in each group ($p < 0,05$) and coefficients of skewness and kurtosis were higher than (+1), (-1). That's why, we preferred non-parametric tests in the current study. We analysed the data through percentage, arithmetic mean, Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests. While scoring the responses, yes referred to 3, not sure referred to 2 and no referred to 1, easy referred to 3, medium referred to 2 and difficult referred to 1. On the other hand, very useful referred to 3, a bit useful referred to 2, not useful referred to 1. The statistically significant value was $p < 0,05$ during data analysis.

Findings

The first sub-problem of the current study is "What are the needs of students who are learning Turkish as a second language?" Students' needs about learning Turkish are as below:

Table 2. Needs about the Purpose Learning Turkish

Needs about the Purpose of Learning Turkish	*Yes*	*No*	*Not sure*
To communicate with classmates	%73,20	%24,24	%2,58
To communicate with my teacher	%95,88	%2,58	%1,55
To shop in the canteen	%90,72	%6,19	%3,09
To listen to/understand lessons	%88,60	%2,06	%2,06
To communicate with out-of-school friends	%86,08	%12,89	%1,03
To communicate with neighbours	%79,38	%10,31	%10,31
To shop in the market/grocery	%86,08	%9,79	%4,12
To communicate with the doctor	%84,02	%13,40	%2,58
To play games on the computer/phone	%68,56	%21,13	%10,31
To play with friends	%84,02	%13,92	%2,06
To listen to Turkish songs	%88,14	%9,28	%2,58
To watch TV	%80,93	%15,98	%3,09
To go to secondary school/high school/university in Türkiye in the future	%90,21	%8,25	%1,55
To find a job in Türkiye in the future	%91,24	%7,22	%1,55
To have a job	%92,27	%5,67	%2,06

As is seen in Table 2, students' needs are mostly about communicating with the teacher (%95,88), having a job (%92,27) and finding a job in Türkiye in the future (%91,24). The areas for which students need Turkish the least are playing a game on the computer/phone and communicating with their classmates (73,20%).

Students needs about the process of learning Turkish are as below:

Table 3. Needs about the Process

Needs About the Process *Skills*	Easy	Medium	Difficult
Having daily dialogues	%60,31	%30,41	%9,28
Pronouncing words correctly	%63,40	%32,47	%4,12
Using idioms	%38,14	%26,29	%35,12
Talking on the phone	%67,53	%24,74	%7,73
Watching TV	%68,04	%28,87	%3,09
Listening to a song	%65,46	%30,41	%4,12
Listening to/Understanding classes	%68,04	%28,87	%3,09
Listening to/Understanding coursebooks	%56,19	%34,54	%9,28
Understanding idioms	%44,85	%26,29	%28,87
Using a dictionary	%45,36	%29,38	%25,26
Doing homework	%73,20	%24,23	%2,58
Writing in class	%79,90	%18,56	%1,55
Writing a comment on social media	%45,88	%30,93	%23,20
Methods and Techniques	Very useful	A bit useful	Not useful
Doing groupwork	%93,81	%5,15	%1,03
Role-playing	%75,77	%18,04	%6,19
Playing a game in class	%64,95	%3,09	%31,96
Question-answer	%97,42	%1,03	%1,55
Listening to the teacher	%99,48	%0,00	%0,52
Copying the blackboard on the notebook	%96,39	%2,58	%1,03
Doing dictation	%94,33	%3,09	%2,58
Doing homework	%95,88	%2,58	%,155
My friends correcting my mistakes	%86,60	%10,31	%3,09
My teacher correcting my mistakes	%91,24	%4,64	%4,12

As is seen in the skills part of the table above, students find it easy to write in class (79,90%) and do homework (73,20%). On the other hand, it is clear that students have difficulty in using idioms (38,14%) as well as understanding them (44,85%).

As is seen in the Methods and Techniques part of the table above, listening to the teacher (99,48%), question and answer activities (97,42%) and copying the blackboard on the notebook (96,36%) are most useful according to students. On the other hand, it is clear that the least useful activity for students is playing a game in class (64,95%).

Students' needs about the content of the course while learning Turkish are as below:

Table 4. Needs about the Content

Needs About the Content			
Materials			
	Very useful	*A bit useful*	*Not useful*
Videos	%80,93	%12,37	%6,70
Songs	%69,07	%23,71	%7,22
Stories	%83,51	%14,95	%1,55
Jingles	%74,74	%11,86	%13,40
Riddles	%84,02	%8,25	%7,73
Visuals	%80,41	%15,98	%3,61
Dialogues	%86,08	%11,34	%2,58
Dictionaries	%73,71	%19,07	%7,22
Word cards	%82,99	%12,89	%4,12
Puzzles	%81,44	%14,95	%3,61
Subject And Theme			
	Yes	*No*	*Not sure*
Free time and hobbies	%76,80	%7,22	%15,98
Art	%84,54	%6,19	%9,28
Jobs/profession	%85,05	%11,34	%3,61
Health	%90,21	%6,70	%3,09
Sports	%90,72	%6,19	%3,09
Drinks and beverages	%93,30	%3,09	%3,06
Technology	%91,24	%5,15	%3,61
Science	%94,33	%3,61	%2,06
Nature	%91,75	%6,70	%1,55
Shopping	%87,63	%7,22	%5,15
Clothes	%93,81	%4,12	%2,06
Games	%90,21	%3,61	%6,19
Daily life	%94,85	%4,12	%2,06
Family	%95,36	%3,09	%1,55
Countries	%92,78	%4,64	%2,58

As is seen in Table 4, students find dialogues (86,08%), riddles (84,02%) and stories (83,51%) the most useful. Students think that the least useful materials for learning Turkish are songs (69,07%) and dictionaries (73,71%).

As is seen in the Subject and Themes part of Table 4, the themes that students want to learn in Turkish the most are family (95,36%), daily life (94,85%) and science (94,33%). The subject and theme that students want to learn the least is free time and hobbies (76,80%).

The second sub-problem of the current study is "Which sub-dimensions do students' language needs appear at?". Students' responses to the scales give the following results:

Table 5. Sub-Dimensions of Language Learning Needs

Sub-Dimensions of Language Learning Needs	X
Social Life	2,67
Communication	2,72
Having a Job and Exchange of Information	2,78
Fun and Game	2,74
Future Plans	2,71

Sub-Dimensions of Needs about the Process
A. Skills

Productive and Receptive Skills	2,67
Vocabulary and Writing Skill	2,15
Oral and Written Interaction	2,56

B. Methods and Techniques

Traditional Methods	2,95
Interaction-Based Methods	2,65
Feedback-Based Methods	2,89

Sub-Dimensions of Needs about the Content
A. Materials

Visual and Audial Materials	2,66
Visual and Written Materials	2,79
Written Materials	2,74

B. Subject and Themes

Life	2,84
Culture	2,84
Science and Nature	2,88
Personal Life	2,91
Fun	2,78

As is seen in Table 5, the goals of students about learning Turkish mostly focus on having a job and getting information (X=2,78). Students' needs about the process in terms of skills mostly focus on vocabulary and writing skills (X=2,15), which means that students have difficulty in these skills the most. When it comes to the part of methods and techniques, students find traditional methods more useful (X=2,95). As is seen in the table above, students' needs about the content in terms of materials show that they find visual and written materials the most useful (X=2,79); when it comes to subject and themes, they need to learn about personal life the most (X=2,91).

The third sub-problem of the current study is "Do students' needs vary according to grade level, gender, time period of living in Türkiye and using Turkish out of school?". The results of Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests in line with this sub-problem are given below:

Table 6. Comparing the Needs about the Goals of Learning Turkish According to the Variables

Grade Level	N	Mean	Mean Rank	Sd	p	Significant difference
2	31	45.00	111.29			2nd-3rd grades
3	81	42.38	74.19	2	0.001	3rd-4th grades
4	82	44.84	115.32			
Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**U**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Female	94	43.88	98.20	4634.00	0.864	-
Male	100	43.80	96.84			
Time period of living in Türkiye	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**Sd**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Those who were born in Türkiye	21	43.90	91.45			Those who were born in Türkiye/4-7 years
1-3 years	20	44.00	93.95	3	0.083	1-3 years /4-7 years
4-7	35	46.17	128.56			4-7 years /7 years and more
7 years and more	118	43.11	89.97			
Frequency of Using Turkish out of School	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**U**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Sometimes	96	42.90	89.32	3918.50	0.041	There is a difference
Always	98	44.75	105.52			

As is seen in Table 6, needs about the goals of learning Turkish vary at a statistically significant level according to the variables of grade level, time period of living in Türkiye and using Turkish out of school, whereas there is no statistically significant difference according to gender. When it comes to the variable of grade level, the mean of 3rd grades is lower than the means of 2nd and 4th grades, and there is a statistically significant difference between 2nd and 3rd grades as well as 3rd and 4th grades. When it comes to the variable of gender, female and male students almost agree on the goals of learning Turkish. When it comes to the time period of living in Türkiye, the highest mean belongs to the group including those who lived in Türkiye for 4-7 years and there is a statistically significant difference between the groups.

Table 7. Comparing Needs about the Skill Areas according to the Variables

Grade Level	N	Mean	Mean Rank	Sd	p	Significant difference
2	31	31.09	85.50			-
3	81	32.71	101.80	2	0.384	
4	82	32.07	97.79			
Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**U**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Female	94	32.02	93.61	4334.50	0.347	-
Male	100	32.34	101.16			
Time period of living in Türkiye	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**Sd**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Those who were born in Türkiye	21	33.47	112.69			
1-3 years	20	33.65	113.90	3	0.100	-
4-7	35	32.68	105.30			
7 years and more	118	31.55	89.70			
Frequency of Using Turkish out of School	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**U**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Sometimes	96	31.94	96.23	4582.00	0.754	-
Always	98	32.41	98.24			

As is seen in Table 7, students' needs about the skill areas do not vary at a statistically significant level according to the variables of grade level, gender, time period of living in Türkiye and frequency of using Turkish out of school.

Table 8. Comparing Needs about Methods and Techniques according to the Variables

Grade Level	N	Mean	Mean Rank	Sd	p	Significant difference
2	31	27.51	70.97			2nd-3rd grades
3	81	29.16	115.38	2	0.001	3rd-4th grades
4	82	28.03	89.87			
Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**U**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Female	94	28.57	100.88	4382.50	0.375	-
Male	100	28.28	94.33			
Time period of living in Türkiye	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**Sd**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Those who were born in Türkiye	21	27.85	79.17			
1-3 years	20	28.10	82.23	3	0.059	-
4-7	35	28.25	90.80			
7 years and more	118	28.62	105.17			

Frequency of Using Turkish out of School	N	Mean	Mean Rank	U	p	Significant difference
Sometimes	96	28.75	108.13	3684.00	0.004	-
Always	98	28.10	87.09			

As is seen in Table 8, needs about methods and techniques do not vary significantly according to gender, time period of living in Türkiye and frequency of using Turkish out of school, whereas there is a statistically significant difference according to grade level. There is a statistically significant difference between 3rd grades and 2nd and 4th grades, and the highest mean belongs to the 3rd grades.

Table 9. Comparing Needs about Materials according to the Variables

Grade Level	N	Mean	Mean Rank	Sd	p	Significant difference
2	31	26.67	77.15			3rd-2nd,4th grades
3	81	28.67	114.24	2	0.001	
4	82	26.41	88.66			
Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**U**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Female	94	27.73	101.35	4338.50	0.327	-
Male	100	27.09	93.89			
Time period of living in Türkiye	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**Sd**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Those who were born in Türkiye	21	27.04	81.10			
1-3 years	20	27.40	95.50	3	0.110	-
4-7	35	26.48	84.99			
7 years and more	118	27.73	104.47			
Frequency of Using Turkish out of School	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**U**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Sometimes	96	27.61	103.09	4167.00	0.146	-
Always	98	27.19	92.02			

As is seen in Table 9, students' needs about materials do not vary significantly according to gender, time period of living in Türkiye and frequency of using Turkish out of school, whereas there is a statistically significant difference according to grade level. There is a statistically significant difference between 3rd grades and 2nd and 4th grades, and the highest mean belongs to the 3rd grades.

Table 10. Comparing Needs about Subject and Themes according to the Variables

Grade Level	N	Mean	Mean Rank	Sd	p	Significant difference
2	31	41.74	72.21			2nd -3rd,4th grades
3	81	43.19	104.18	2	0.012	
4	82	43.00	100.46			
Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**U**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Female	94	42.86	98.94	4564.50	0.711	-
Male	100	42.90	96.15			
Time period of living in Türkiye	**N**	**Mean**	**Mean Rank**	**Sd**	**p**	**Significant difference**
Those who were born in Türkiye	21	42.19	92.05			
1-3 years	20	42.55	96.40	3	0.963	-
4-7	35	42.85	98.69			
7 years and more	118	43.06	98.31			

Frequency of Using Turkish out of School	N	Mean	Mean Rank	U	p	Significant difference
Sometimes	96	42.94	94.89	4453.00	0.492	-
Always	98	42.81	100.06			

As is seen in Table 10, needs about subject and themes do not vary significantly according to gender, time period of living in Türkiye and frequency of using Turkish out of school, whereas there is a statistically significant difference according to grade level. There is no statistically significant difference between 3rd and 4th grades, while there is a statistically significant difference between 2nd and 3rd and 4th grades.

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

In this study, which aims at analysing language needs of Syrian children under temporary protection, we administered NSLT, NSC and NSP developed by Çağ (2022) to 194 Syrian primary school students and identified students' goals of learning Turkish as well as their needs about the process and content of learning Turkish.

The study results show that students' needs about the goal of learning Turkish are respectively communicating with the teacher, having a job and finding a job in Türkiye in the future in the order of preference. Bölükbaş (2016) conducted a study to analyse language needs of Syrian adults under temporary protection, and found out that the participants wanted to learn Turkish mostly to attend a university in Türkiye and continue their life in Türkiye. The Syrian participants between the ages of 15-24 who participated in a study conducted by Çangal (2022) pointed out that they wanted to learn Turkish in order to meet their basic needs, receive education, find a job and work, overcome communication problems in daily life. When we compare the findings of different studies conducted by Bölükbaş (2016) and Çangal (2022) with different age groups to the current study findings, the common concern of Syrian children, teenagers and adults is about future such as going to a university, having a job or finding a job. Phutkaradze (2018, p. 88) states that irregular migrants' professional life is affected badly because of not knowing Turkish, which supports the fact that immigrants of different age groups have similar concerns about that. On the other hand, the domains where students need Turkish the least include playing a game on the computer/phone and communicating with their classmates. The reason of this finding might be that Syrian students speak in Arabic with their classmates and they have difficulty in getting access to a computer/phone.

Students' mean scores about the goal of learning Turkish focus mostly on the sub-dimensions of having a job and getting information. Needs about the goal of learning Turkish vary at a statistically significant level according to grade level, time period of living in Türkiye and frequency of using Turkish out of school, whereas there is no statistically significant difference according to gender.

Students' needs about the process of learning Turkish are addressed in two different parts, which are skills as well as methods and techniques, in the current study. In terms of skill areas, students find it easy to write and do homework. On the other hand, students have the most difficulty in using and understanding idioms. Cognitive development can explain the difficulty students have about using and understanding idioms. "Understanding metaphors requires mental skills such as sorting, perceiving high level relations or making abstract arrangements" (Mağden and Tuğrul, 1994). This is something about age and mental development. Cometa and Eson (1978) state that children's ability to interpret a metaphor develops with age and children can interpret a metaphor in their native language when they are 6-8 years old and older. Because of that reason, considering the fact that Syrian primary school students have just started to develop the ability of interpreting a metaphor in their native language, it seems natural to see them having difficulty in understanding and using idioms having a metaphoric meaning in a second language.

Another study finding reveals that students have difficulty in vocabulary and writing skills the most, which means that students' needs mostly focus on this sub-dimension. A study conducted by Bölükbaş (2016) concluded that Syrian participants gave importance to speaking and writing skills while learning Turkish. In this light, it seems possible to state that the needs of both Syrian adults and children learning Turkish as a second language mostly focus on writing skills. When it comes to skill areas, it is clear that students' needs are not affected by grade level, gender, time period of living in Türkiye and frequency of using Turkish out of school.

Tzotzou (2014) conducted a study with Greek primary school students who were learning English as a foreign language and found out that students wanted to learn a language by using audial and visual strategies such as writing down a word after seeing it on the blackboard and hearing it at the same time. Like the study findings conducted by Tzotzou (2014), the current study findings show that students find it useful to listen to the teacher, do question and answer activities and copy the blackboard on the notebook in terms of methods and techniques. Students' needs about methods and techniques focus on the dimension of traditional methods. On the other hand, the participants who are primary school students think the least useful activity is to play games in class, which is surprising considering the ages of the study group. The finding which suggests that students find interactive methods such as playing a game less useful than other methods contradicts the study by Tzotzou (2014). Tzotzou (2014) concluded that children wanted to learn through pair work, group work or other activities done as a whole class. Students needs about methods and techniques do not vary at a statistically significant level according to gender, time period of living in Türkiye and frequency of using Turkish out of school, whereas there is no statistically significant difference according to grade level.

Students' needs about the content of learning Turkish are addressed in two parts, which are materials and subject and theme. In terms of materials, students find dialogues, riddles and stories useful, whereas they do not find songs and dictionaries very useful. Students' needs about materials focus on the sub-dimensions of visual and written materials, which means that students find visual and written materials useful. Furthermore, students' needs about materials are not affected by gender, time period of living in Türkiye or frequency of using Turkish out of school, but affected by grade level.

When it comes to subject and themes, students want to learn subject and themes such as family and daily life the most. Studies conducted by Bölükbaş (2016) as well as Ünal, Taşkaya and Ersoy (2018) concluded that Syrian immigrants needed Turkish the most in terms of daily life needs. In the current study, students' needs appear in the sub-dimension of personal life in terms of subject and themes. On the other hand, students' needs about subject and themes do not vary according to gender, time period of living in Türkiye and frequency of using Turkish out of school, but they vary according to grade level.

Another study finding shows that gender does not affect language learning needs. This finding contradicts studies by Çangal (2013) and Bölükbaş (2016), while it supports the findings of studies conducted by Jilta (2016) and Deliktaş (2019).

The current study shows that frequency of using Turkish out of school affects the goal of learning Turkish, whereas it does not affect the process and content of language learning. Nimer (2019) states that it gets difficult for immigrants who live in places densely-populated by Syrians to get in touch with Turkish people, which affects their language skills in a negative way. From this perspective, it seems possible to state that primary school students' motivation to use Turkish out of school varies according to their language learning goals, but frequency of using Turkish out of school does not make a difference for this age group in terms of language skills. This might result from the fact that students spend most of their time at school in a day, and they think that listening to the teacher is the most useful thing. Therefore, it is possible to state that students meet their needs to learn Turkish mostly at school, and school and teachers play a very important role in this respect. This might explain the study finding which suggests that frequency of using Turkish out of school does not affect their language learning process and content.

Consequently, as Nimer (2019) puts it, Syrian immigrants constitute a heterogenous group, and immigrants' socio-demographic differences affect their language needs. Because of that reason, identifying the language needs of immigrants of different ages and profiles will be an important step to solve immigrants' language problem and related secondary problems. As is stated by Başar (2020, p. 313), there are only a few studies on teaching Turkish to immigrants in general and immigrant children in particular, and related practices focus on foreign policies instead of considering Türkiye-

specific conditions and priorities. Therefore, it seems crucial to identify the language needs of Syrian immigrants in Türkiye and shape language policies in this line. The fact that almost half of the Syrian immigrants under temporary protection are between the ages of 0-18, which makes it even more important to identify the language needs of children and teenagers and shape the language needs in this respect. Identifying and analysing the language needs of Syrian children learning Turkish as a second language can make it possible to customize teaching Turkish according to needs of the target group and can shed light on practices of teaching Turkish.

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