

The Effects of Foreign Language as a Medium of Instruction on Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance in Istanbul, Turkey

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of foreign language on undergraduate academic achievement in Istanbul, Turkey. It demonstrates that deficient language abilities, an inadequate curriculum, and uncooperative instructors all lead to poor academic achievement. The study used a mixed method approach, with questionnaires and semi-structured interviews conducted at five Istanbul institutions. According to the findings, students struggle to grasp lectures, are stressed, and experience psychological and emotional hazards such as test failure, anxiety, and scholarship loss.

***Keywords:** Foreign Language, Medium of instruction, Academic Performance, Motivation, Psychological and Emotional Experiences*

Introduction

Around the world, numerous educational institutes are struggling with issues related to language as several countries have only one language used throughout the whole country but numerous other countries have more than a hundred languages changing with a specific distance. Language plays an integral role in terms of both learning and teaching in the learning medium because as according to Moeller and Theresa (2015) “Language is the vehicle required for effective human-to-human interactions and yields a better understanding of one’s language and culture”. Mulovhedzi (2015) also mentioned in their research that language is an important aspect of every human development that serves long-term benefits especially when it comes to a foreign language.

Concept of Foreign Language and Second Language

Presence of many languages operating in different regions of the same country makes it hard for the people to understand each other and hence acquiring the specific regional language becomes a need for communication and better understanding. Whereas any language that is not understood, spoken, or used by any single group of the population residing in the country is considered as a foreign language. It is a language willingly selected by a learner in terms of better communication, survival, and understanding of the people and their culture when migrating to another country or in some other cases it is more of an interest of the learner to acquire a different

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language. According to the 2017 report by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) there are almost 2725 languages spoken in the whole world. Do (2018) has argued that almost ninety six percent of the different languages are being used by about three percent of the total population of the world and out of which 2000 languages are being used only by less than a hundred local people due to the different thoughts, ethnicities and cultures that exist in Southeast Asia. Thereby, any language learned in a “formal setting” is considered as a foreign language.

Foreign language is defined by Moeller and Theresa (2015) as a language that is “learned largely in the classroom and is not spoken in the society where the teaching occurs”. It is a language that is not well known or well familiar and is not understood or spoken by the people living in a particular area or environment. There is a clear difference between a “second Language” and a “Foreign Language” but in some scenarios a second language acquired by a learner turns out to be a foreign language. In any country where more than one language is understood and is used for communication by a specific group or population of the country is known as a second language. People willingly or unwillingly can acquire a second language to communicate with the other group of the population residing in the same country as per need. So many language families are found in Asia like Tungus, Austroasiatic, Dravidian, Semitic, Thai-Kadai, Mongolian, Turkic, Indo-Iranian, Sino-Tibetan and Austronesian. Among which Sino-Tibetan has the highest number of speakers, Indo-Iranian has 900 million speakers, and Dravidian has almost 200 million speakers and so on (Riza and Moedjiono, 2006). These families have several different languages spoken in different countries and areas, for example Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Iran come under the Indo-Iranian family where different languages like Urdu, Hindi, Bengali and Persian are spoken. Furthermore many other languages are spoken in these countries in different region and areas and this is the reason that national language for these countries differ from the mother tongue.

According to Eddy (2011), Formal setting is "where the learning process takes place in a classroom and formal instruction on rules in the target language is given and the subject matter is practised using various techniques." This environment is believed to enhance accuracy and, therefore, contributing to better acquisition of skills in grammar”. “Language is the vehicle required for effective human-to-human interactions and yields a better understanding of one’s language and culture” Moeller and Theresa (2015). Around the world, numerous educational institutes are struggling with issues related to language. Language plays an integral role in terms of both learning and teaching in the learning medium. Mulovhedz et al., (2015) argued that language is an important aspect of every human development that serves long-term benefits especially when it comes to foreign language. The undeniable fact that several countries have more than a hundred languages and each changes every 12 KM; on the other hand, there are countries with only one.

Background of English as a Foreign Language and medium of Instruction in Turkey

For the past few decades, there has been a notable increase in the demand for using English as a medium of instruction especially in the private and Anatolian High

School system also known as Anadolu Lisesi in Turkey. On one hand, where the willingness of attending classes in the English language has given opportunity to the students to expose themselves widely to the foreign culture through communication however on other hand has raised a lot of questions in terms of its effects on their academic performance. The Turkish Ministry of Education published some statistics for the year 2002-2003 and found out that "579 out of the 2559 secondary schools in the country (23%) offer instruction in a foreign language (predominantly in English), which means that approximately 12% of all secondary school students in Turkey are exposed to a foreign language at least as the medium of instruction for a considerable amount of time on a regular basis" (Kirkici, 2004). This step was further seen as a threat by many officials especially the political leaders to the Turkish language which in their point of view would be contaminated with the English language hence leaving it hybrid and not in its pure form. The other concern was about compromising the effective learning of the students in the schools since they are exposed to English only as a subject and is practiced just two to three hours per week in grade fourth and fifth which later increase to four hours per week for the sixth, seventh, eighth graders (İnceçay, 2011). From the year 2005, a positive attitude has been observed on the governmental level to adopt English for medium of instruction as Turkey is seeking to be among the European Union and seeking to be in accordance to the European Union standards (Kirkgoz, 2007)

Statement of the Problem

Language problem in the class directly affects the academic performance of the students and gives rise to the mental health risk as well. Problems related to language have always hindered the students to achieve their potential due to a different medium of instruction mainly because of the short period of one year that they spent for acquiring that language but do not feel completely prepared or comfortable for the challenge of pursuing their studies in it. Making students study in a language that they are not well familiar with hampers the learning and learning quality thereby resulting in poor academic performance. Any foreign language, when used as a medium of instruction, cannot be learned within a year or two since every language has a complex structure, different grammatical rules, and different vocabulary which are comprised of different levels varying from daily use language to the academic one. This is the reason that language programs for preparing the student to study in a foreign language are not enough to prepare them well for the different medium of instruction in class. Education is meant to provide a life-time learning experience to the students and not to measure their knowledge or intelligence based on their command over a particular language. Hence, letting a child to study in a language that he/she feels comfortable with significantly enhances academic outcomes and serves the true purpose of education but putting the students in a situation where they have to study in a language that they are not well acquainted with affect their learning which results in disappointment for the teachers and students both.

The Objective of Research

Turkey's geopolitical distribution, with 97% of its territory in Asia and 3% of its landmarks, makes it a "significant zone for the intersection of Europe and Asia, as well as its proximity to the Middle East and Africa." Kirkgoz (2007), the students coming from different countries through different scholarship programs feel encouraged to learn Turkish and likewise the English language is gaining popularity among the students of the Turkey to pursue their studies abroad. The objective of the research is to find out the effects of the language barrier on the academic performance of the undergraduate students. Students' academic life and their experience with a different medium of instruction vary based on how similar or different a new language is as compared to their own language, and how easily it can be acquired and used not only for academic purposes but also as an everyday experience.

Research Question

As a foreign language learner, which academic set backs are faced by the undergraduate university students in the different medium of instruction?

The Significance/Importance

A lot of work has been done in the past focusing on the role of languages in a learning medium, their importance and their impacts. This research studies the reasons in terms of different medium of instruction that why the standards set or expected out of a student by the teachers are not met and how a language when learnt in a short period affects the performance of the students and also the ways these students handle or interact with this language in their class. This research looks deep into the aspects of the learning process and the hindrance of effective learning by a foreign language as a medium of instruction. The students who get the opportunity of studying abroad end up getting frustrated and struggle with the problem of language so this research benefits the students by giving them a wider understanding and the problems they might face before taking any decision for studying abroad. This research also targets the educational institutes to provide them the perspective of the students over the different language as a medium of instruction which could help these institutes to think over the criterion for accepting any student in a specific program with a language that the students do not feel comfortable for studying. This research also contributes to improvise the programs offered in a foreign language to accommodate needs of all students as a foreign language learner for the quality and effective learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mind-set towards Foreign Language as a Medium of Instruction

Learning any foreign language depends greatly on the mindset one has towards the language. Some people learn foreign language due to curiosity to understand different cultures and values some tend to learn a language out of interest and some people learn a foreign language to find the better job opportunities abroad. This mind set keeps them motivated enough to go through the whole process of acquiring the language smoothly.

Tamtam et al., (2013) conducted a study in Libya that concluded that Arabic (Mother Language) when used as a medium of instruction, assisted better understanding in terms of learning for the students but English on the other hand as a medium of instruction raised intolerance among the students towards the western cultures. It was seen as a threat and offense to their cultural values and nationalism. Language and nationalism go hand in hand and thereby the study has rightly height lighted the insecurities of the students and their resistance to learning any foreign language. Keeping these critical affiliations and complexities in mind, language issues should be respected and dealt in a way that should be more inclined towards the positive change in a students' academic carrier.

Doiz, et al., (2011) included a group study of teaching staff involved in English as a medium of instruction through their "pedagogical, ecology-of-language and personal" point of view in a Spanish university where multi-language such as Spanish, English, Basque coexisted and gave rise to some serious problems. It was found that English has gained a status of L2 in Europe but needs time to grow and get recognition from the people. Secondly, the students' poor grasp over the language has caused failures in the language programs and most importantly, the teachers' concept and misgivings about the language have done harm to the learning of the students in the English Language. The failure of the language program according to the above-mentioned study was due to students' poor performance but the causes behind the failures other than the incompetent teachers are not discussed in detail. Whereas this study explores the failures of a language program in detail including factors like availability of proper resources for the successful program, the number of hours allotted for practicing the language, and the curriculum developed for the program. According to David Marsh (2006) adoption of any foreign language specifically English has both negative and positive outcomes in terms of education. In poor countries where English is learned or acquired as a foreign language and used in education institutes result in "Confusion, despair and high dropout rates". Şener (2014) analysed the willingness of the students studying in the English department to communicate in English language inside and outside of the class. Students' willingness to communicate in the English language was found moderate. The students have positive attitude towards practicing English inside and outside the class. They also showed positive attitude towards the English culture that is followed by countries. Students also expressed that their language competence is slightly higher than moderate when it comes to communication inside and outside the classroom.

The problems that are caused by the medium of instruction is irrespective of the economic condition of the country, poor or wealthier countries equally face the problem if the mother tongue or first language is different from what is adopted at the education institute as a medium of instruction. The education institutes should focus more on the quality of learning taking place in the classroom and should worry less about the language used in the class as far as the students understand whatever is being taught to them. Acquiring a language should not be compared to the intelligence of a student whereas it should be considered as a positive sign of a child's ability.

The Opportunity gates opened by foreign language

English language is considered a global language, a language that is popular enough to be used as a source of communication around the world. Hence mastering the English language not only gives ample opportunities to interact with the people knowing this language but also opens a wide range of jobs and student exchange program opportunities. Karvonen (2017) mentions that in a country like Ethiopia, the kids are raised by learning three or more different languages. "English becomes the medium of instruction at secondary school level and/or at the university level; consequently, it is taught as a foreign language beginning with the first year of elementary schooling." (FDRE 1994, Dearden, 2014). In connection, AlBakri (2017) also analyzed the perception of students in Oman over English as the medium of instruction at higher education and found that students appreciated studying in English due to better opportunities it opens for them in terms of job in future. However, these students also admitted the fact that English being a foreign language in Oman made it difficult for them to entirely understand what is being taught in the class. Uçar (2018) investigated the students' opinion regarding their motivation, achievement and anxiety while studying in French and English as the medium of instruction in accordance to the factors like gender, age, year of the study, language preparatory program and CGPA. It was found that students were motivated to learn a new language to hunt high ranked job opportunities. Female students in this study were found successful in tackling the language challenges but all students overall displayed a positive attitude towards the and the students in their third year of the study were found more anxious than the initial year students due to the trouble of not finding the proper resources.

The things explored through these studies are an undeniable fact about the benefits of using the English language as a medium of instruction which includes offering a wide variety of material and curriculum, more job opportunities and better opportunity for multi-cultural interactions. Acquiring a foreign language is always not problematic and there is always another side of the story and that is the positive point of learning any foreign language. Civan and Coşkun (2016) identified the performance of the students in Turkey studying in Turkish was better than the performance of the students studying in English, where English is a foreign language and Turkish is the mother tongue. Thereby, the students who were studying in English suffered and performed poorer compared to the students who were studying in the same subject and content but in Turkish. The research has significantly highlighted the hindrance

in the academic growth caused by the language problem but the psychological journey of the students have not been mentioned which carries a lot of importance for their well being.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The mixed research approach is used to better investigate the subject under discussion. The mixed research technique is "research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to methods in a single study." (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2000). The research design utilised for the mixed research method is explanatory sequential design. "The first phase is followed by the subsequent collection and analysis of quantitative data. The second, qualitative phase of the study is designed so that it follows from (or connects to) the results of the first quantitative phase" (Creswell & Plano, 2006). The collection of research materials and the methods used to collect them are a vast variety of assortments. The collection may vary depending on the study or the research that is being conducted. There are multiples of ways to go on about and collecting them. For instance, qualitative research has multiple aspects to get and collect the information. Qualitative research has an array of interpretations from the interviewee through open ended questions, personal experiences and even images which lead to the assistance of answering the questions for feedback on the questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). One of the ways to assert that not all of the data collected is just open ended and based on personal experiences is quantitative research method. Like the name suggests, quantitative has to do with figures and numbers. The numbers represent an exact quotient to which the interviewee becomes more like a survey taker. In the survey there are a more series of questions but most of the format is that it's short and to the point (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The numerical value can be deduced and therefore more accurately recorded to benefit the researcher. There are numerous ways which undeniably assist the researcher to better collect data that is beneficiary but one of the most common ones is included in the mixed methods. Nevertheless, the ease of attaining better information should never be compromised to a researcher.

The first way to collect data was through questionnaire which was applied with 182 students in the total time period of month and half, followed by the observation which took 2 weeks in total and finally the semi structured interviews were conducted which lasted for 9 days. Questionnaires of four different categories were used which included Demographic Questions, which helps in identifying who have the researcher surveyed and also identifies the different pattern that exist in different participants. Dichotomous Questions well known as Yes or No Questions, Likert Scale Questions which the students were supposed to answer by selecting the options like Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree scale and Nominal Questions which had different options for the participants to select from. Thus questionnaire was distributed among the randomly selected students and were collected after a week or so once filled. Semi-structured Interview questions which were open ended and were seven in number were asked from those students who were studying in foreign language as a medium of instruction and were willing to answer. The responses of

the students were noted down by the researcher as most of the participants did not give consent to record it. Class observations were also done by the researcher, where researcher observed five classes in order to observe the overall interaction of the students with the language especially what was being taught in the class and the struggle with language that was being used. The researcher made notes for the interaction of students in the class and the level of language, and vocabulary used by the teacher in the class accordingly.

Sampling Strategy and Generalizability

In the study, the sampling method employed was that of convenience as it targeted undergraduate students studying in five major institutions of higher learning in Istanbul. This sampling technique was selected because it would enable the researcher to recruit a population that is actively involved with foreign-language-based instruction. The final sample was 182, which was chosen to provide sufficient statistical power to perform quantitative analyses and still be feasible given the qualitative aspects of the mixed-methods design. By narrowing the study to those people who had undergone one-year language preparatory program, the study could guarantee that the participants had the necessary background in terms of experiences to offer relevant information on the process of language acquisition to learning content.

The selection of Istanbul as the main site of research was done intentionally due to the fact that this is the pedagogical centre of Turkey. Being a transcontinental metropolis located between Europe and Asia, the city harbours the greatest concentration of universities in the country that feature foreign-language programs. This unique geopolitical and pedagogical space attracts a demographically diverse group of students who represent many different parts of Turkey, thus creating a representative microcosm of the national urban undergraduate experience. In line with this, the evidence gathered in this scenario has a high ecological validity in terms of the role of the foreign-language teaching in cosmopolitan academic environments. The fact that focusing on Istanbul limits the generalizability of the results to the rural and/or less developed areas is strategically consistent with the main purpose of the study. The foreign-medium instruction, especially English is another trend of urban education which is also driven by globalization and market pressures. The sampling of the large institutions in Istanbul will, therefore, help provide a narrow investigation into the particular group that would most be affected by these policies. This focus method allows a strict analysis of the impact of linguistic barriers to the academic achievement and psychological comfort in the very situations in which these educational models are actively used most of all.

Questionnaire Analysis, Survey number 1 (For all students):

For the questionnaire conducted in different universities was analysed by using statistical method by using SPSS program and Microsoft Excel. In order to check if

the data is normally distributed Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of normality was conducted. The tables for test of normality are as follows:

Table 1 : Case Processing Summary

Students Studying in Native or Foreign Language	Cases		Missing		Total	
	Valid N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Students studying in Native Language	91.000	100.00 0%	0.00 0	0.000 %	91.0 00	100.000 %
Students studying in Foreign Language	91.000	100.00 0%	0.00 0	0.000 %	91.0 00	100.000 %

According to the table above “N” represents the number of participants in each group and in this case the total is 182 participants out of which 91 were the students studying in native language and 91 were the students studying in foreign language. The table further indicate that none of the cases out of the 182 participants is missing. Hence all the participants are taken in account in order to check the normality of the data.

Table 2: : Test of Normality

Students Studying in Native or Foreign Language	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Students studying in Native Language	0.071	91.000	0.200 *
Students studying in Foreign Language	0.073	91.000	0.200 *

The table above shows the result for Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and according to the table the significant value of P for both the students studying in native language and students studying in foreign language is 0.200 which is greater than the standard P value of 0.05. According to the rule when the calculated value of P is greater than the P value of 0.05, it means that the data is not statistically significantly different and in this case it means that the data is normally distributed.

Based on the test of normality, it is clear that the data is normally distributed thereby for Survey number 1 to evaluate the performance of the students studying in the native language with the performance of the students in the same department but studying in the foreign language Independent Sample T-Test was conducted on the CGPA percentage of the both groups. Independent Sample T-Test is a parametric test conducted on the data set that is normally distributed. The results of the test are as follows:

Table 3:: Mean differences of the marks obtained when studying Foreign Language as medium of instruction compared to studying in a Native Language as a medium of instruction.

Statistics					
	Students Studying in Native or Foreign Language	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
University CGPA Percentage of the Students studying in Native and Foreign Language	Students studying in Native Language	91.000	84.341	9.973	1.040
	Students studying in Foreign Language	91.000	69.622	13.014	1.372

When looking at the table above, it is very clear that the mean difference between the two marks obtained in different level of education carrier of the students in different languages is large. The mean value of the CGPA percentage of students when studying in the native language is 84.341 which is greater than the mean value of the CGPA percentage of the students when studying in foreign language which is 69.622. Evaluating the CGPA percentages of both the group proves that the performance of the students studying in foreign language have surely been affected negatively as compared to the academic performance of the studying in the native language. Since the mean difference of CGPA percentage of the students studying in foreign language as a medium of instruction is lower than the mean difference of CGPA percentage of the students studying the same department in native language.

Table 4: Comparison of “t and p” value to deduce the effect of foreign on the performance of the students.

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				T-test for Equality Of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper	
University CGPA Percentage	Equal variances assumed	10.041	0.002	8.566	180	0.000	14.725	1.719	11.333	18.117
	Equal variances not assumed	-	-	8.566	168.568	0.000	14.725	1.719	11.331	18.119

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Likewise in this table, the value of P which is also known as significant value (0.000) is less than 0.05 which means that the two sets of data collected and the information gathered about the CGPA percentage of the students studying in native language is significantly different than the students studying in the foreign language. According to the table 4.2, the t value of 8.566 is also greater than the critical value of t 1.960 in accordance to the “t Student’s table”. According to the rule the critical value of t in the Student’s table is smaller than the obtained value of t which means that the test conducted and mean value obtained are significantly different than each other. Hence the test results clearly depict that student when studying in foreign language did not perform better academically as compared to the students studying in their native language.

Questionnaire Analysis, Survey number 2 (only for students studying in foreign language as a medium of instruction):

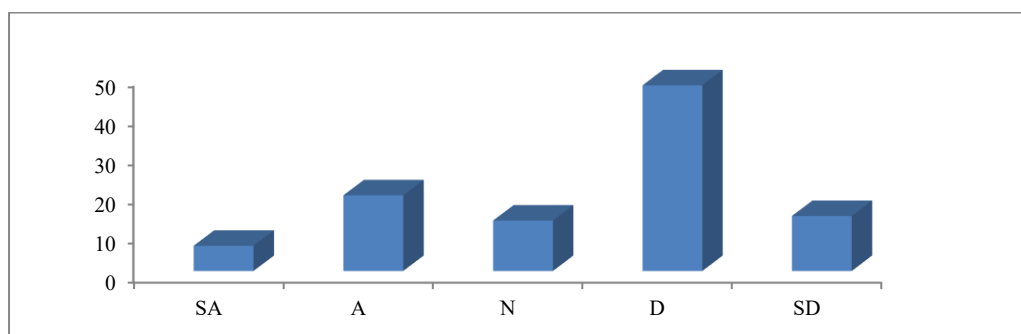


Figure4.1 The curriculum designed for all the subjects fulfils the learners’ needs in terms of new knowledge, skills, innovation and vocabulary

SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

The students entering from high school to the university with the change of the medium of instruction go through undoubtedly a lot of problems among which understanding of the subject matter is the one to look into deep. Having no background knowledge of the field that the students have entered in the university makes it even worse for them to study it in a language that they are very new to and have not mastered it to meet the requirements to understand the subject matter. The curriculum designed for such students does not suffice the need as the vocabulary used in the books, the topics for teaching, the teaching strategies utilised in the class are tough and rigid which does not help these students in any way for a better learning. The bar graph in figure 4.3 illustrates the results when students were asked about the curriculum especially the vocabulary, content and knowledge. Almost 47% students were of the view that the curriculum designed for them fails to meet the needs of the students, 14% of the students strongly disagreed with the fact that the curriculum helps the students with new innovation skills, knowledge or vocabulary whereas 12% students were neutral about the whole scenario. On the contrary 19% of the students agreed with the opinion that the curriculum provides them with enough opportunities required to suffice the students' need and almost 6.4% of the students strongly agreed with the statement.

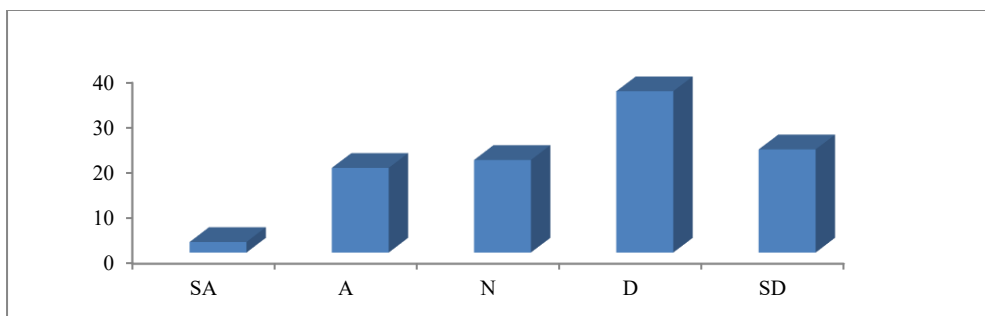


Figure4.2 After taking a yearlong language program, studying in a foreign language is easy

The students studying in a foreign language after a yearlong program were asked about their satisfaction of studying in a foreign language especially after a yearlong language program. The results show that 35% of the students disagreed with the statement that it is easy to study in a foreign language after taking a yearlong language program whereas 22% of the students also negated the statement by strongly disagreeing to it, 20% students stayed neutral with their response to this specific statement whereas 18% students agreed with the statement that it is actually easy to study in a foreign language after a yearlong language program and 2% of the rest of the students selected strongly agreed and supported the statement.

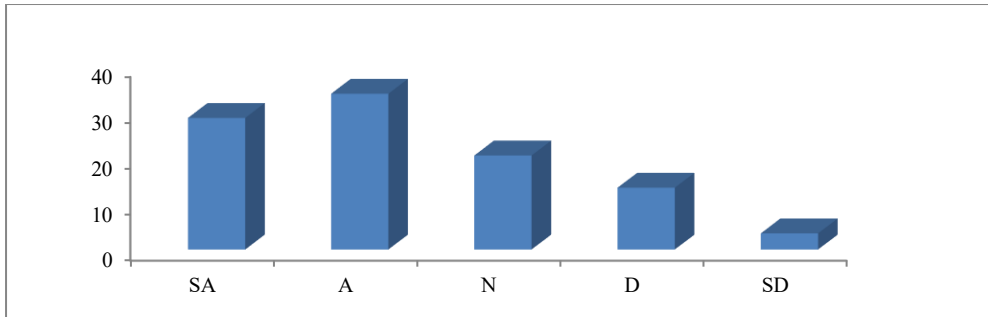


Figure 4.3 Learning a foreign language is more of a necessity for my degree than an interest

Almost 34% students agreed and 28% of the students strongly agreed with the statement that for them studying in a foreign language is a necessity than the interest. This makes it difficult for them to develop interest in learning a language as their choice or willingness is not involved for doing this task. 20% of the students were neutral about the statement whereas 13% of the students disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed as they believed that it is not a necessity but an interest to learn a foreign language which opens a lot of opportunity gates for them.

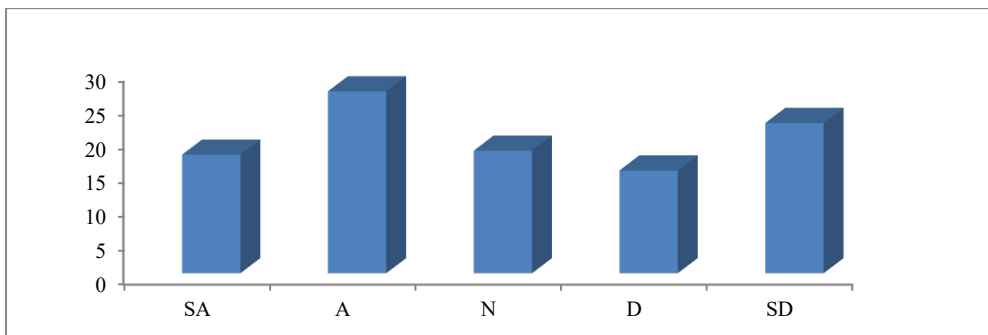


Figure 4.4 I regret my decision to do my undergraduate degree in a foreign language

After entering the university and continuing the degree in a language that the students are not well familiar with makes it challenging for the students to understand and comprehend the things being taught in the class by the teachers. 27% agreed and 17% of the students strongly agreed to the fact that they regret their decision of studying in a language that they are not familiar with. Whereas 18% of the students were neutral about the statement but 13% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed by negating the statement and do not regret their decision of studying in a foreign language.

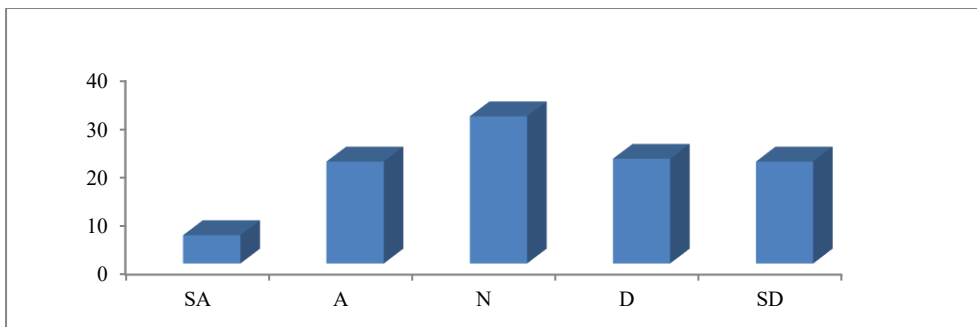


Figure 4.5 After a year-long language program, course teachers make things easier for those students

Students who enter university after taking a yearlong language program suffer a lot of problems and hence the teachers teaching them are also well aware of the problems at hand. In a situation like this more efforts are required by the teachers in order to make things easier and understandable for the students. As seen from the graphs the majority of the students that is 30.4% answered the question neutrally, whereas 21% students disagreed and 21% students strongly disagreed that the teachers do not cater the needs of the students pertaining to the language issues. On the other hand 21% students agreed and 6% of the students strongly agreed that the teachers help them during their academic carrier to make things easier for them as they understand the difficulties these students face when studying in any language they are not comfortable with.

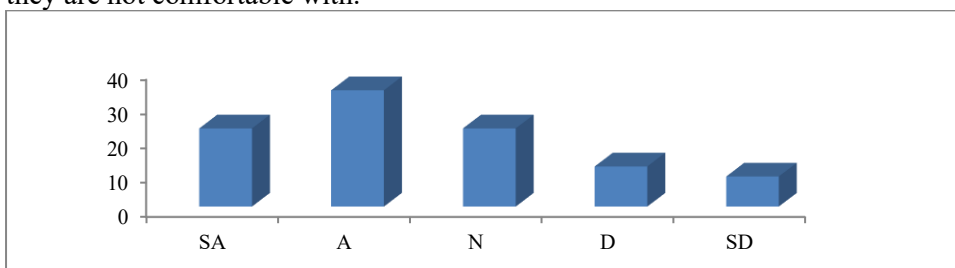


Figure 4.6 Foreign language results in poor academic performance which leads to stress, anxiety, and low self-esteem

When studying in a foreign language students have to come across some psychological setbacks which mean these students have to go through stress, extreme tension, depression and low self confidence issues. Majority of the students that is 34% have agreed and 23% of the students have strongly agreed that they have been victim of these psychological issues in the learning medium. 22% of the students were neutral in their response to the statement whereas 11% of the students disagreed and 8% of the students strongly disagreed that they have never felt any kind of stress or anxiety in their academic carrier especially due to the language problems.

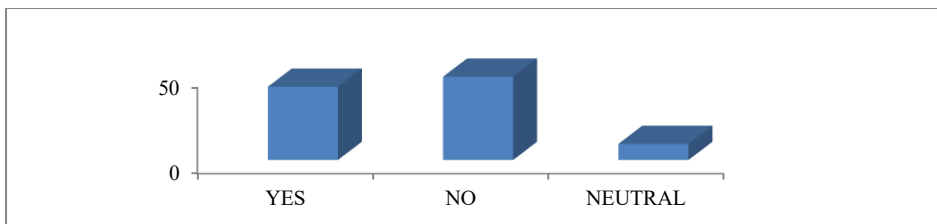


Figure 4.7 I will not prefer to continue my further studies in a foreign language because I am not comfortable with it

Students facing the problems due to a different language as a medium of instruction when asked about pursuing their further studies in a foreign language shows that 48% of the students will like to continue their further studies in a foreign language due to the opportunities that language open for them. 42% of the students will not opt to study in a foreign language for their further studies knowing the further challenges they might have to face as a result of ineffective learning due to the language problem. 9% students were neutral about the statement.

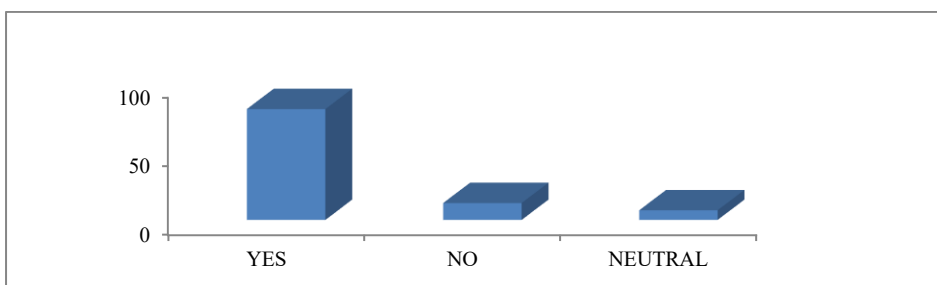


Figure4.8 My academic performance can be better if I study in a language that I am well familiar with

Almost 80% of the students were of the view that language has affected their academic performance overall in terms of their scores or CGPA. A language that they are more familiar with would help to improve their academic performance. 12% of the students disagreed with the statement and think that there might be some other factors that can improve their academic performance and not just the language. 7% of the students also believe that language might or might not be a factor that could help in a better academic performance.

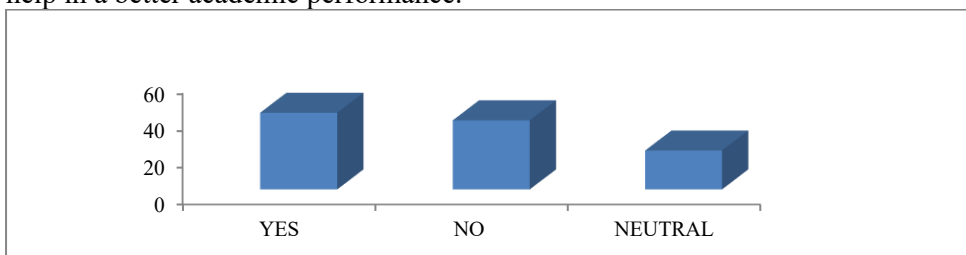


Figure4.9 I am satisfied with my academic performance and academic growth

37% of the students were not satisfied with their academic performance and academic growth as they tend to believe that they could learn out of the box and have an improved score if they were taught in any language that they were well familiar with. Whereas majority of the students that is almost 41% were very much satisfied with their academic performance and their academic growth due to the different opportunities that they get to avail every day due to a new language. Almost 21% of the students stayed neutral about the statement as for them it is just not the language but other factors are also involved for the academic growth of a student.

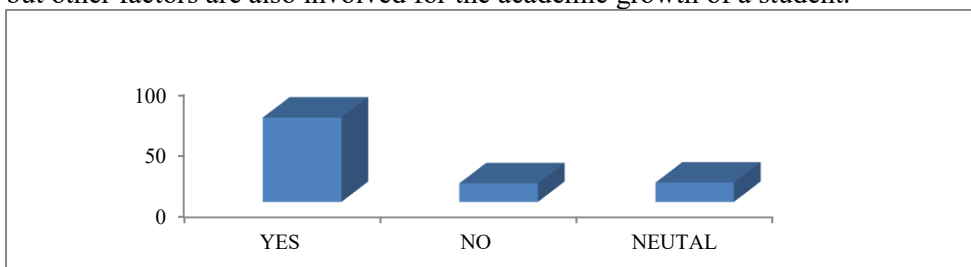


Figure4.10 Foreign language as a medium of instruction has affected my overall academic performance

69% of the students were of the view that their academic performance has been compromised due to the foreign language due to the less command over the subject matter being taught. 15% of the students believed that their academic performance is not affected by the language whereas 16% of the students are neutral or indecisive over the statement.

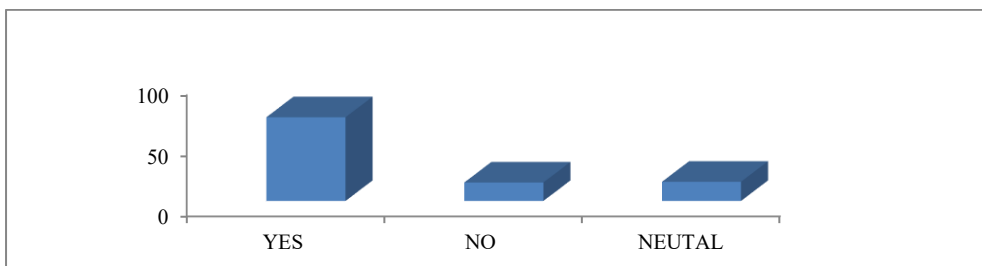


Figure4.11 I feel confident and motivated when learning in a foreign language

Almost 41% of the students do not feel confident and motivated when foreign language is a medium of instruction as it lowers their self confidence and restricts them from participation in the class. Not only this have had they also feared being judged by the fellow students due to the poor command over the language. 35% of the students feel confident when studying in foreign language as a medium of instruction as it helps them to grow by accepting the challenge and solving the problems courageously. 23% of the students were neutral about the statement.

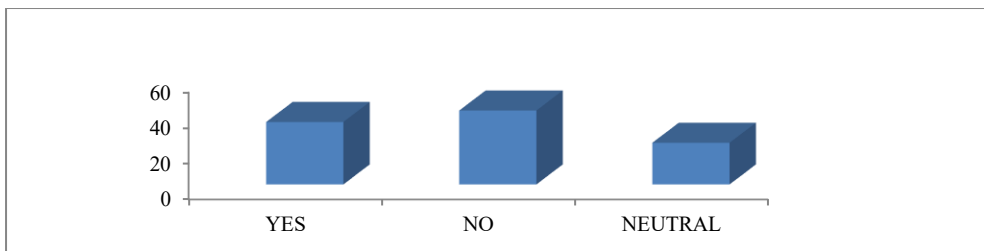


Figure4.12 I feel confident and motivated when learning in a foreign language

Psychological issues that the students face during their academic carrier can never be avoided and almost 31% of the students who were part of this study felt victimised to it. They faced stress, anxiety, fear of failure in their academic carrier due to the language problem whereas 37% of the students did not face any stress or anxiety or any kind of psychological issue just because of the different medium of instruction. 24% of the students often felt victimised to the psychological issues because of foreign language.

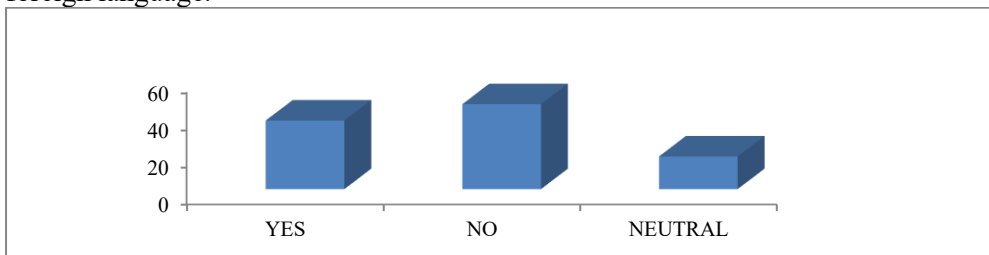


Figure4.13 I have not grown or developed academically as expected due to different medium of instruction

37% of the students believed that they have not grown academically and find themselves static due to foreign language that has hindered their effective learning. Likewise, 45% of the students believed that they have grown academically as expected even after the involvement of foreign language as a medium of instruction. 17% of the students were neutral about the statement.

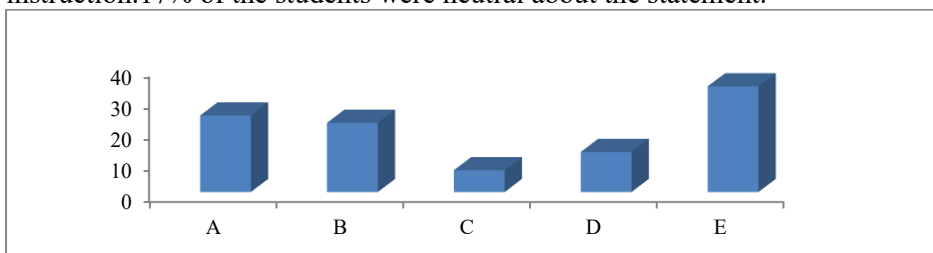


Figure4.14 What is the main cause of poor academic performance in a different medium of instruction?

- A) Failure to understand the lectures
- B) Complicated academic vocabulary
- C) Limited resources to take help from

- D) Lack of interest and motivation
- E) All of the Mentioned

When asked from the students about the reason for poor academic performance especially in a different medium of instruction, 24% of the students were of the view that they failed to understand the lectures to a greater extent because of the different medium of instruction used in the class, 22% of the students were of the opinion that a huge hindrance for the effective learning is due to complicated academic vocabulary whereas 7% of the students found it difficult to find enough resources in order to take help from. Almost 13% of the students were of the view that they were not motivated enough and were not interested in learning anything in an entirely new language. Whereas the majority of the students that is almost 34% of the students faced all of the problems including difficulty of understanding lectures, complicated vocabulary, limited resources problem and lack of interest.

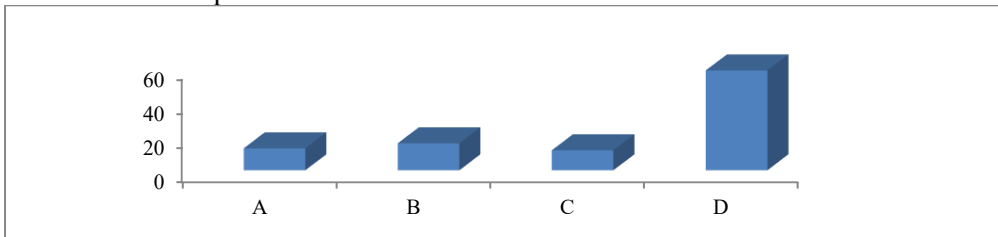


Figure4.15 How a language that you are well acquainted with helps in academic experience?

- A) Easy to understand
- B) Easy to communicate
- C) Helps to get better grades
- D) All of the above

A language with which students are well familiar with helps in effective learning, 13% of the students were of the view that studying in a well familiar language helps to understand the lectures and books better, 15% of the students were of the view that learning in familiar language makes communication easy not only with the peers but also with the teachers and the whole environment that they are part of. 12% of the students said that it helps them perform well academically since they are able to get good grades due to the better command over the subject matter. 59% of the students agreed that all the factors which include understanding, communication and good academic performance can be achieved if the language that is being used in the classroom is the language students are well acquainted with.

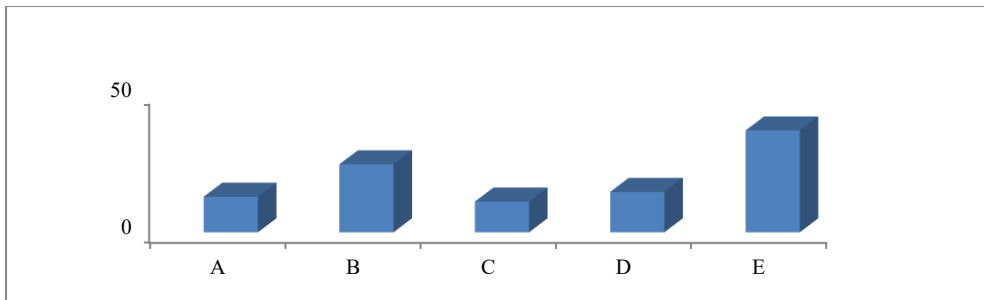


Figure4.16 Other than the requirement for medium of instruction, what is your motivation behind learning a foreign language?

- A) Cross-cultural understanding
- B) Professional and Personal Development
- C) Fond of learning Foreign Languages
- D) To survive better in surrounding
- E) All of the mentioned

The motivation behind learning a new language varies for the students, 13% of the students learned a foreign language for the cross-cultural understanding they were of the view that it helps them understand the people, their values, culture in a better way. 24% of the students learned a foreign language for the professional and personal development since knowing a foreign language has become a necessity due to the daily life interaction with certain people in personal and professional life. 11% of the students said that they are fond of learning foreign languages and they learn a new language as their hobby. 14% of the students learned a foreign language to cope and adapt to the place they are living in a better way since it involves daily interaction with the people and system. 37% of the students were of the view that learning a foreign language for them is for cross-cultural understanding, professional and personal development, like to learn a language, and to survive better in the surrounding.

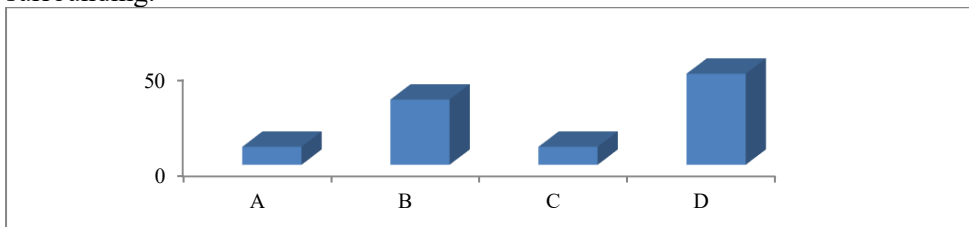


Figure4.17 In your opinion, what is the best way of learning a foreign language?

- A) Attending Language Preparatory School
- B) Maximum Interaction with the native speakers
- C) Practicing through online forums
- D) All of the mentioned

Learning a language is a long process that requires practice and struggle. 9.% of the students believed that attending a language preparatory school is one of the best ways to learn a language, 34% of the students were of the view that maximum interaction with the native speakers is one of the best ways to learn any language, 9% of the students were of the view that practicing through online programs, videos or forum is the best way to learn the foreign language whereas majority of the students that is 47% of the students believed that all the aforementioned points when combined together can result in an effective learning of a language.

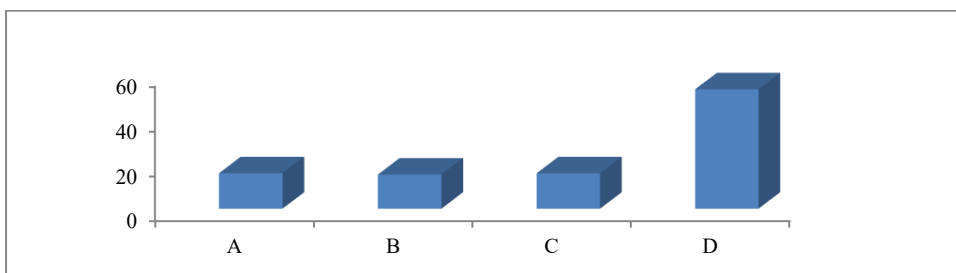


Figure4.18 Which problems do you face when teachers deliver a lecture in a Foreign Language?

- A) Problems in understanding the content
- B) Problem in expressing ideas
- C) Problem in participation and asking questions
- D) All of the mentioned

Students face a lot of problems when it comes to attending the classes or lectures being delivered in any language that the students are not well familiar with. 15% of the students face the problem of understanding the content because the teacher delivers the lecture in a foreign language, 15% of the students face the problem of expressing their ideas in the class due to the peer pressure and poor command over the language, 15% of the students faced the problem related to their participation and especially asking questions from the teacher. 53% of the students faced almost all of the problems in the class related to understanding the content, expressing ideas and participation.

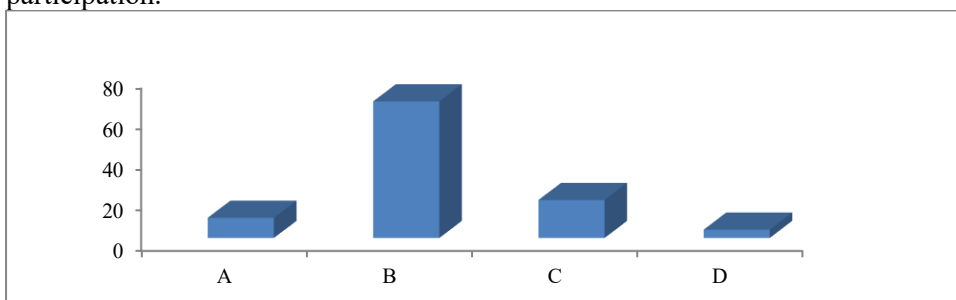


Figure4.19 In your point of view which language is more effective for academic learning?

- A) Foreign Language
- B) Native or Mother or Commonly used language in the country
- C) Language does not matter
- D) Others Specify

When asked from the students about their preference of the language that they would like to study in, majority of the students that is almost 67% of the students opted for the native language or any language commonly used in the country because this makes things easier for them to understand and hence result in good academic performance. 10% of the students believed that foreign language is effective since it provides them with certain opportunities, challenges and exposures. 18% of the students believed that language does not matter for performing well. 4% of the students gave their opinion like, “depends on the subject”, “depends on the teacher” and many more.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The open ended questions were prepared by keeping in mind the themes set for the purpose of the research. Total of seven open ended questions were prepared for the students to answer. Fifteen students from Marmara University participated in the interviews. A few interviews were done face to face, and a few were done through voice recordings in which the students were sent the questions and they gave response by sending their voice recordings.

Problems encountered by the students

The questions that were asked from the interviewees were about the problems they face in the class, doing their homework, understanding the lecture and preparing for the exams. Most of the students according to their response to the interview questions were having hard time understanding the lectures due to the huge size, complex academic vocabulary used by the teachers in the class, long lectures timing that made them bored which resulted in losing their interest in the class very quickly. Not only this but many students also complaint about not understanding the home tasks assigned to them in class by the teachers, taking extra time to tackle the language issue before preparing for the exams and certain problems with the teachers not allowing them to write their exams and homework in the language that they feel comfortable with. The responses of a few students regarding the questions related to the problems are: (S=student)

“I do not understand anything in the class, as a matter of fact nothing.” S1

“I am the only foreigner in that class and the class is so big that the teachers have no idea that I exist.” S2

“I don’t get an idea of what homework teachers have given me, I ask other fellows for help.”

“I do not participate in the class at all because I have no idea what are the ongoing topics in the class” S3

Findings ,Conclusion and Discussions

The study was conducted to evaluate the effects of foreign language on the performance of students especially who took part in the year-long language preparatory program. Yearlong language programs are gaining popularity among many European countries for the purpose of promoting the language and also giving the foreign students the real experience of learning in the regular classroom environment with all other native students. Such opportunity gives chance to the students to gain lots of experience in terms of interacting with the local students, learning about different educational system, dealing with language and learning about cultural and moral values. This research considered the significant analytical research questions relating to the setbacks endured by the students due to the difference in the medium of instruction. The problems faced by the students consisted with both psychological and emotional stress, the level of satisfaction from the year-long prep program, and the motivation behind studying in the foreign language. The survey was carefully designed by keeping in mind the research questions of the study, the semi-structured interview questions were prepared by discussing it with some experts of the field and also the students who had experienced it, and lastly the observations for which checklist was prepared to observe certain behaviors in the class by the researcher.

The result of the study demonstrated through the different tests conducted with the help of SPSS and Excel proved that foreign language as a medium of instruction has affected the performance of the students in a negative way and also affected them both psychologically and emotionally. When the CGPA of the students studying in the native language were compared with the CGPA of the students studying in the same department but in foreign language, it became clear that the students studying in foreign language were suffering academically. Their CGPA points were low as compared to the students studying in the native language.

The quantitative data showed a high drop in the academic performance of the foreign-language students as the mean CGPA stood at 69.62 in comparison to 84.34 in case of the native-language students. The statistical imbalance can be explained through the qualitative observations in which the students cited a lack of understanding as the root cause of bad grades. One of the interviewees said, I do not know anything in the class, nothing. This observation suggests that the low CGPA cannot be explained by the absence of intellectual ability but it is a problem that prevents the access of lecture material.

In addition to the immediate lack of comprehension, the qualitative data also help to interpret the structural and psychological processes underlying such poor academic performance. Whereas quantitative survey reported that 47 per cent of the students studying foreign languages feel that the curriculum does not respond to their needs, the interviews state that it results in the frustrations of using too difficult academic words and strict teaching approaches that do not close the linguistic gap. Besides, the statistically most common stress reported by 57 per cent of the students in the survey was contextualised in interviews to constitute a paralysing fear of failure. This qualitative understanding explains that the current CGPA depreciation is not just a result of cognitive misconception, but increased by the emotional weight of being an outcast and being in an environment that the student perceives himself as an outcast,

and is confused. Other comments gave more evidence of the feelings of being an outcast and being confused.

Not only this, the students also expressed how misfit and confused they felt in the classroom where the medium of instruction was the foreign language. Problems faced by these students such as inappropriate curriculum utilized in the class made it harder for them to cope with the regular classroom environment. Compared to the level of the language acquired the topics, books or material used in the class were beyond their understanding. The complexity of the vocabulary and sentence structure practiced by the teachers in class became one of the other major problems since students were unable to take interest in the lecture and did not participate in the class activities or discussion at all. Huge classroom size also became a hurdle in effective learning for the students since the teacher did not pay attention to every student of the class and hence the students who needed help in term of language and understanding the lectures became victim of negligence. All the problems related to classroom management and language thereby gave rise to the fear of failure. The students who were already suffering in the class developed the fear of failing. This fear came along with a lot of expectations from the family of those students and on the other hand a few students feared losing their scholarship. Certain other factors like problem in understanding the lectures, low self-confidence, and anxiety before taking the exams due to language difference resulting in poor academic performance are also highlighted in the study.

Certain universities have made it a prerequisite to learn a foreign language for its various departments. Many departments in different universities of Turkey in various foreign languages like English, Arabic, and German. The reason to do so is the interest of native students to pursue the higher education abroad and also because so many students from different countries come to Turkey for their higher studies. This is the reason that the students are ought to appear for the language proficiency exam before getting admission in any university. Scores of language proficiency exam along with the high school marks determine the admission of the students in the specific department. If the language proficiency exam score are less than 50%, the students must take a yearlong language preparatory program in order to pursue the desired field. One of the main motives of the universities to do so is to expose the students to a new language because foreign language also opens innumerable opportunities for students to divulge and conglomerate in absorbing rich cultures, the acquiring of better employment, coping with the environment, and also understanding of the opportunities for academic purposes.

The time span of one year to fully comprehend any language is inadequate especially when students are compelled to undergo such a process for their academics. It is also unjust to the professors and teachers who have to exert an array of strenuous effort to assist students not in language but also their subjects. The idea of studying in a foreign language is much appreciated by both students and teachers but the fact is it is not handled efficiently. The academic and physiological needs of every student in the class are not fully met by the teachers and thereby the students tend to lose their self-confidence due to the hardships faced by them dealing with the language and academic performance.

The dilemma that has been created due to the acquisition of language as a prerequisite lead to students developing insecurities from poor command of the language, the fear and stress of expectations from not only themselves but also loved ones, and the trauma that they fail the courses and lose the scholarships. This stress that has been created, it merges and hinders the students thus consuming valuable time for studying and preparatory for homework and exams. All of these factors when combined affect the students psychologically which has negative effects on their academic performance.

One of the most important roles of an educational institute is to teach students to actively engage in all aspects of state politics, social policy, and economics. One of the main things to accomplish so is by learning a language and specifically mastering the abilities of that language such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking for contact with people all over the world. (Ünal & İlhan, 2017). According to Wolff (2003), English is no longer a foreign language; rather, it is a qualification required to effectively engage in the global community. However, the way new languages are taught in preparatory schools is not up to the standard, and this is the reason why kids in the state schools are not gaining the fundamental targeted abilities of that specific language in hearing, reading, writing, and speaking even after a lengthy period of time. (Oktay, 2015). English and Turkish both are a foreign language for the students studying in Turkey and because of the language differences the students have to suffer academically and psychologically.

Research Limitations

The generalizability of these results is limited to the geographical and demographical scope. Specifically, the sample was focused on the universities that were only conducted in Istanbul, hence, restricting the representativeness of the sample to students attending universities in rural or less developed areas of Turkey, where exposure to foreign-language media and resources can be significantly lower. Even though Istanbul is an urban centre, students in this metropolitan setting often have more socioeconomic access to private tutoring and preparatory materials than students in the provinces. As a result, the academic and psychological issues observed in this study can have different or even more significant manifestations in the institutions located in non-urban areas, thus limiting the generalisability of the results to the overall Turkish system of higher education without further comparative research.

Moreover, it remains a methodological drawback that Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) is the only variable used to measure academic performance. CGPA is a composite variable that is affected by a lot of extraneous variables outside the language proficiency such as different grading scale of different instructors, differences in discipline-specific measurement scale and the previous academic background of students. Preferably, additional studies could be carried out in the future with a more detailed operationalization of performance, like standardized subject-level performance tests or longitudinal follow-up to separate language proficiency and other confounding items. The psychological statistics on stress and

anxiety are also based on self-reported data, which, though useful, are also subjective and prone to bias by the individual perception versus the clinical observations.

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