

PREPARING SYLLABUS AT TEACHING TURKISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: SOME CONSIDERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Teaching languages to non-native speakers is very sophisticated and time-consuming work. As well as other languages, Turkish must be taught both theoretically and practically. It is well known that developing a curriculum and planning of the course are two basic factors in teaching foreign languages successfully. At this point, preparation of a well designed and an applicable syllabus can be a good start for an effective teaching. In this proposal, the importance of preparation of a syllabus was evaluated and some suggestion on its preparation for non-native Turkish language speakers were offered. The syllabus mainly contains course/instructor information and a course schedule. Basically, it was expected that a syllabus could inform students in advance about the course and topics and make them to be prepared accordingly.

Key words: Teaching Turkish, Syllabus, Course schedule

INTRODUCTION

After experiencing teaching Turkish language to native Turkish speaking students for a long time, I recognized the importance of preparing a syllabus before starting teaching the language to non-native Turkish speaking students. Even though there was a schedule plan for native Turkish speaking students, no any written syllabus was prepared for them. The contents, rules, and expectations of the course were discussed in the first class. This method may be acceptable for native speakers because their background knowledge can help them to guess what they will meet and how to find the information needed.

On the other hand, teaching language to non-native speakers is very sophisticated and challenging. It also requires effort and experience. Preparing a well-designed syllabus will help both students and instructor to organize themselves at the first hand. Even though

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preparation of a syllabus is a challenge by itself, its benefits should not be underestimated. The time spent for preparing a syllabus will have far-reaching benefits for the course. Balancing all of the necessary information and maintaining clarity and enthusiasms in the syllabus is a key point.

The following questions should be considered before preparing a syllabus when Turkish Language is taught as a foreign language.

1) What kind of syllabus should be prepared (a short course information, instructor information, text materials etc)?

2) Which parts should be included and stressed more in the scope of the course (general course schedule etc)?

Etymologically, syllabus means a “label” or “table of contents”. The American Heritage Dictionary defines syllabus as outline of a course of study. In some ways the syllabus is simply a session plan on a large scale. However, since it covers an entire course semester, not a single class period, it needs extra care and effort to prepare.

The following parts could be included in a well-designed syllabus for a Turkish language course:

Course Information

General information about Turkish language should be given and the relation, if any, to the spoken language should be addressed. What is the purpose of the Turkish language course from the instructor perspective? How does it fit into the curriculum?

It is also necessary to state that, the materials of Turkish language course must be organized to facilitate both developing specific speech skills and the basics grammar skills. For this reason, courses must be separated as oral (pronunciation) and written (grammar) practices.

Course description/Objectives

Describing the general content of Turkish language course and information about instructional methods can be given.

In this part it should be explained that, each session should contain a dialog, vocabulary, grammar notes and drills. From this,

1. Audio-visuals should be supplied for listening and seeing
2. The written text should be read
3. Basic grammar rules should be taught
4. Exercises should be carried out for vocabulary expansion

Assignments and Exams

This part informs the students about the number and type of assignments and their effect on the grading. The attendance requirement, if any, for the class can be stated.

The assignments in Turkish class should be designed to provide with the opportunity to practise and solidify skills as well as develop new skills. The learners should be assigned after each session which includes basic dialog or sentence patterns and vocabulary.

Text books, materials

Detailed bibliographic Information about the text books and supplementary readings can be listed in this part. The syllabus should also clearly inform students about the availability of aiding materials including audio and visual materials needed for the course. But, flexibility of the schedule may be necessary as the circumstances require.

Schedule

A good schedule is needed for both students and instructors. A weekly course calendar should be prepared at the beginning of the semester so that the students can get prepared in advance for the class. It should be kept in mind that a good schedule gives students a clear overview of the course and the purpose and goals of the course.

Turkish phonetics, morphology and sentence pattern should be scheduled so as to complete each other.

Finally, the name of the class solely does not reflect everything about the course. In some cases the scope of the class may be beyond the student's expectations. Pre-informing students, such as giving course outlines can give some ideas about the class. Also a syllabus can be thought as a contract between the student and instructor. It should not be inapplicable and very strict, but flexible.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

When a syllabus is prepared for teaching Turkish as a second language, the following points should be considered for an efficient and stable teaching.

1. The surface structure of the language should be given
2. The interest of the learner should be attracted
3. Some general rules of the language should be included
4. The content should be clear and comprehensive

RELATED REFERENCES

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