



Message-Based Education in Foreign Language Teaching

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Abstract: Foreign language education, with its structure not limited to a specific subject or field, has the potential to deeply penetrate an individual's life and emotional world. A course with such a broad scope in life contributes significantly to a student's education. The increasing importance of foreign language learning demonstrates that studies in this field should not be limited solely to language teaching. This study aims to draw researchers' attention to this aspect of foreign language teaching by incorporating individually and socially accepted achievements and values into foreign language education. The study employed a case study design, a qualitative research method, and conducted open-ended questionnaires and interviews with 28 foreign language teachers across Iraq. The findings revealed that while cultural and general educational information is included in language teaching resources, this information is neither systematic nor sufficient. The study argues that educational messages embedded in foreign language teaching contribute to students' personal development and play an effective role in ensuring individual and social adaptation. In this regard, various methods of delivering messages, such as using message-based sentences in class and utilizing materials and video-listening activities, are discussed. As a result, it is suggested that foreign language teaching resources should be designed in collaboration with linguists and education experts to integrate educational messages without hindering language development.

Key words: *Foreign Language Teaching with Educational Content; Education with Message; Foreign Language.*

Introduction

Education and training are two fundamental terms central to human life throughout its lifespan. Because these terms have shared the same spaces and are often intertwined throughout history, they have often been used interchangeably. The Turkish Language Association (2011) defines education and training as follows: "Education: Direct or indirect assistance, within or outside of school, in helping children and young people acquire the knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary to take their place in social life and to develop their personalities. Instruction: The act of imparting necessary information for a specific purpose; training, education, instruction."

An examination of education systems reveals that, in addition to teaching, the primary goal of these systems is to raise individuals to be individuals with good and correct values and who can take responsibility (Kan, 2010). However, not every subject has the same impact in achieving these goals. This is primarily due to the emphasis placed on teaching, while the intensive transfer of knowledge leaves education in the background. Because every student, from kindergarten to university, spends a significant portion of their day in school, schools have a significant impact on students' lives. To increase this impact, it is necessary to focus on how to better integrate education into the classroom.

Failure of students' families to position Turkish as a functional and necessary foreign language in their children's lives can negatively impact students' motivation. Therefore, in courses where Turkish is taught as a foreign language, awareness should be raised among students and parents by emphasizing the individual, academic, and cultural functions of the language. Using methods that stimulate interest, encourage exploration, and stimulate multilingual skills in the teaching process will support students' active participation in the lesson and language acquisition processes (Yilmaz & Ozdemir, 2022).

Every subject and every teacher should not only teach students the subject but also provide them with healthy guidance about life. People are more likely to absorb information that touches life, and by leveraging this tendency, paths to success can be created. Today, in addition to knowing their native language, people strive to learn at least one foreign language (Dayan & Yildiz, 2022). Factors such as globalization, rapid change, and advanced communication methods have made knowing a foreign language a necessity (Alici, 2016). It is important to turn this necessity into an opportunity and contribute to the development of individuals. Foreign language teaching is gaining increasing importance worldwide (Dayan, 2020). Therefore, message-based education aimed at educating individuals and society should be integrated into foreign language teaching.

Foreign language learning has transcended the boundaries of schools, becoming accessible at home and even on the go (Daskan, Dayan, & Polat, 2021). Even mother tongue teaching doesn't have the same breadth of subject matter as foreign language teaching. Furthermore, foreign language learning is a lifelong process, continuing from kindergarten to older ages (GmbH, 2013). This demonstrates the importance of incorporating educational information into foreign language teaching and the potential for messages to reach a wide age range.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this research is to contribute to the individual and social development of students by leveraging the potential of foreign language education. Turkish language instruction should be hands-on, and students should actively participate in their learning (Ozdemir, 2018). Foreign language courses, with their wide range of topics, offer a unique opportunity to convey educational and informative messages to students. This study aimed to teach students personally and socially valuable information, integrated with the course content, without boring them.

This study is of great importance because it highlights how powerful foreign language teaching can be as a tool for nurturing and preparing individuals for life, beyond simply imparting language skills. The primary focus of this research is the integration of individually and socially accepted values and achievements into foreign language education, a practice common throughout the world. Thus, it is hoped that the research will highlight this aspect of foreign language teaching, encourage researchers in the field, and pave the way for further research on this topic.

Methodology

This research is a qualitative case study that provides an in-depth examination of the current status and potential of message-based education in foreign language teaching.

Research Design

This study utilized a case study, a qualitative research design. The research was conducted using data obtained through surveys and interviews with foreign language teachers, as well as through examination of resources such as books, apps, websites, and YouTube channels designed for foreign language teaching.

Population and Sample

The study population consists of teachers teaching foreign languages throughout Iraq. The sample consisted of 28 foreign language teachers of varying ages and experience.

Data Collection Tool

A survey form consisting of five open-ended questions was used as the data collection tool.

Recorded Data and Analysis

Interview and survey data were recorded as text-based data and analyzed using descriptive analysis.

Findings and Interpretations

In addition to interviews with foreign language teachers, books, videos, apps, YouTube channels, and websites that offer foreign language education highlight the sole purpose of teaching a foreign language. Other findings, in addition to teaching a foreign language, are generally as follows:

1. The culture of the language being taught
2. Some general cultural information
3. Some educational information
4. Unnecessary information and negative examples given because the sole goal is language teaching.

The findings of the survey and interviews with foreign language teachers are as follows.

1. Demographic Information of Teachers

- Years of foreign language teaching experience:

- o Less than 5 years: 3 people
- o Between 5 and 10 years: 6 people
- o Between 10 and 15 years: 5 people
- o Between 15 and 20 years: 5 people
- o More than 20 years: 9 people

- Levels of education held:

- o Primary school: 6 people
- o Secondary school: 7 people
- o High school: 8 people
- o University: 7 people

(The teacher responses below have been presented with spelling and grammatical errors preserved to reflect the participants' original statements).

2. Findings Related to Survey Questions

Question 1: In the foreign language teaching resources you use, is there any educational information other than language teaching that stands out? If so, what are the relevant topics?

• *Teacher 1: "Yes. There is a wealth of educational information, including cultural, health, social media, technology, and ethics."*

- Teacher 2: "The importance of character development and computer literacy."
- Teacher 3: "There can be various interesting general culture information."
- Teacher 4: "Yes. Introducing the richness of different cultures."
- Teacher 5: "Regional and cultural language use. Differences in language according to lifestyles."
- Teacher 6: "Yes."
- Teacher 7: "There is general culture-oriented information appropriate to the student's level. For example, space stations, a trip to Mars, robots and new developments, the locations of the Earth, continents, and countries, questions to be answered by researching in the workbook, etc."
- Teacher 8: "Social life."
- Teacher 9: "It's related to socialization."
- Teacher 10: "Yes. Cultural and universal values."
- Teacher 11: "Introducing the countries where the culture and language are used."
- Teacher 12: "Cultural characteristics of the nation that speaks that language."
- Teacher 13: "Dialogue patterns."
- Teacher 14: "No."
- Teacher 16: "Reading books."
- Teacher 17: "Character education, behavioral development, general knowledge, art and music skills, social skills development."
- Teacher 18: "No."
- Teacher 19: "Culture, art, biography, values education, personal development, entertainment, etc."
- Teacher 20: "No."
- Teacher 21: "Each unit includes encyclopedic information about the culture of a different country."
- Teacher 22: "Yes."
- Teacher 23: "We can call it covering general culture."
- Teacher 24: "Geographical or scientific information."
- Teacher 25: "Culture, love, respect, general etiquette."
- Teacher 26: "It is covered normally. It's not unnecessary."
- Teacher 27: "It's included frequently. No, I don't think it's unnecessarily frequent. If you teach a language, its culture and related vocabulary are both important, especially if you're going to visit that country someday."
- Teacher 28: "No, language means culture. I fully believe in that statement."

Question 2: How much space do you think is given to the culture of the language being taught in foreign language teaching resources? Do you think there is unnecessarily much space given to it?

- Teacher 1: "I don't think so. Cultural topics are covered enough, and there are even comparisons with other cultures."
- Teacher 2: "That's quite appropriate. If it were me, I would give it the same amount of space."
- Teacher 3: "I think it's given as much as it should be."

- Teacher 4: "Generally, in books written for learning a language, those who prepare it try to prioritize the language's own culture. But actually, the real success would be to include as many different cultures as possible in language teaching books prepared according to their added value."
- Teacher 5: "Sometimes it might be overused, but culture is very important in language teaching. Understanding and knowing the lifestyle of a society and their reactions plays a significant role in language teaching and learning."
- Teacher 6: "Yes."
- Teacher 7: "The culture of the language being taught is given space, but not excessively."
- Teacher 8: "No, culture is very important."
- Teacher 9: "I don't think so."
- Teacher 10: "I think it's given enough space."
- Teacher 11: "Of course, it should be given serious space. No, I don't think there's any harm in a child getting to know the countries of the language they're learning better, as long as the topics aren't boring."
- Teacher 12: "Sometimes."
- Teacher 13: "A fair amount."
- Teacher 14: "There are unnecessary resources."
- Teacher 16: "There's a fair amount of space on culture. It's not overly extensive. It would be better to have specific cultures. I think the textbooks are more than adequate."
- Teacher 17: "A little."
- Teacher 18: "No, there's not much space anyway. Knowing the culture of that language is also necessary in language teaching."
- Teacher 19: "No."
- Teacher 20: "Because language is a part of culture, the textbooks provide sufficient space."
- Teacher 21: "A language is best learned through its culture. It's important for culture to be included in the textbook."
- Teacher 22: "No. It's given enough space."
- Teacher 23: "Sufficient."
- Teacher 24: "No, the book we use also covers different cultures."
- Teacher 25: "Yes, it's normal."
- Teacher 26: "It's given normal space. It's not unnecessary."
- Teacher 27: "It's given frequent space. No, I don't think it's unnecessarily much. If you teach a language, both culture and related vocabulary are important, especially if you plan to visit that country someday."
- Teacher 28: "No, language means culture. I fully believe in that statement."

Question 3: Do you think educational information is sufficient in foreign language teaching resources?

- Teacher 1: "When you say educational information, if it's just about teaching English, it's sufficient, but if the need is for things like technical terminology, language textbooks aren't prepared for that anyway. It's superficial."
- Teacher 2: "Yes."
- Teacher 3: "It varies depending on the source, but generally speaking, yes."

- Teacher 4: "In the recently written English books, which is the language I teach, it is seen that the authors are trying to be educational in terms of content."
- Teacher 5: "Yes, it's given enough."
- Teacher 6: "Yes."
- Teacher 7: "Depending on the experience of publishers and authors, the educational information in books is either good enough or weak enough."
- Teacher 8: "Weak."
- Teacher 9: "Yes."
- Teacher 10: "Not enough, could be improved."
- Teacher 11: "Average."
- Teacher 12: "Yes."
- Teacher 13: "Yes."
- Teacher 14: "Relatively."
- Teacher 16: "Yes, it's given, but it's not at a level students can understand."
- Teacher 17: "Yes."
- Teacher 18: "No, if we don't give them anything outside the book, they won't learn. It gets boring for students because they explain the same topic two or three times in different chapters."
- Teacher 19: "Yes."
- Teacher 20: "Yes."
- Teacher 21: "Unfortunately, it's not quite enough."
- Teacher 22: "Yes, it's enough."
- Teacher 23: "Yes."
- Teacher 24: "We can't say the same thing for every resource."
- Teacher 25: "It's enough."
- Teacher 26: "It's enough."
- Teacher 27: "No."
- Teacher 28: "It's not enough."

Question 4: Do the foreign language teaching resources you use include general cultural information? If so, to what extent do you think it does (little, normal, excessive)?

- Teacher 1: "Of course, it does, and it should. I think it's normal in the books I teach."
- Teacher 2: "Yes, normal."
- Teacher 3: "Yes, it does. It's needed for the readings anyway. It's normal."
- Teacher 4: "The English books I teach generally focus on their own cultural content, but they generally choose from common topics. This is an analogy, so I try to explain information about other cultures I know."
- Teacher 5: "Yes, normal."
- Teacher 6: "Yes."

- Teacher 7: "General cultural information is presented in a way that captures the student's attention and encourages them to do research. In this context, we can say it's at a normal level."
- Teacher 8: "A little."
- Teacher 9: "Normal."
- Teacher 10: "Normal."
- Teacher 11: "Yes. Normal."
- Teacher 12: "Normal."
- Teacher 13: "Normal."
- Teacher 14: "It's given, but it's not appropriate for our culture."
- Teacher 16: "Normal. Not enough."
- Teacher 17: "Normal."
- Teacher 18: "Not enough."
- Teacher 19: "Normal."
- Teacher 20: "Yes. Normal. Cultural elements have been increased according to the language level of the book."
- Teacher 21: "Normal."
- Teacher 22: "It's included. Normal."
- Teacher 23: "Normal."
- Teacher 24: "Yes, it is. I think it's given at a normal level."
- Teacher 25: "Yes, not enough."
- Teacher 26: "Normal."
- Teacher 27: "Normal."
- Teacher 28: "Yes, it is provided, I think it is at a very sufficient level."

Question 5: Have you ever witnessed negative examples being included in foreign language teaching resources?

- Teacher 1: "If you prioritize regional sensitivities, of course, it's possible to encounter negative examples in language textbooks."
- Teacher 2: "No."
- Teacher 3: "Yes, but even if it's negative in our culture, it's normal for them. The resources we use these days are designed for this region, so there aren't any negative examples."
- Teacher 4: "Yes, it can happen. There may be content that members of Eastern and conservative cultures would find unacceptable, but I tone it down and teach it."
- Teacher 5: "This varies depending on the structure of the society in which people live. It may be normal for some and inappropriate for others."
- Teacher 6: "Yes."
- Teacher 7: "Because the publishers and authors prepare the book considering the sensitivities in their own countries, an example that creates a negative impact in one region may be considered normal in another."

- Teacher 8: "No."
- Teacher 9: "Very little."
- Teacher 10: "Yes."
- Teacher 11: "Because of my geography, yes, but not too much."
- Teacher 12: "No."
- Teacher 13: "No."
- Teacher 14: "There are departments that are not appropriate for our culture."
- Teacher 15: (No answer)
- Teacher 16: "No."
- Teacher 17: "No."
- Teacher 18: "No."
- Teacher 19: "No."
- Teacher 20: "No."
- Teacher 21: "Yes, it doesn't appeal to everyone."
- Teacher 22: "No."
- Teacher 23: "No."
- Teacher 24: "There was a source where I observed that the information was at a level the student wouldn't understand. A story containing religious information was given. It contained information that contradicted the beliefs of our region. It contained information that children shouldn't learn at that young age."
- Teacher 25: "No."
- Teacher 26: "No."
- Teacher 27: "Very few."
- Teacher 28: "Yes, I saw a few encouraging images about issues like addiction."

3. Survey Data Analysis

- Most participants indicated that educational information was included. However, it was observed that these topics were not presented within a specific plan or program.
- Regarding the adequacy of cultural content, most participants believed that the level of cultural content was adequate.
- When asked about the adequacy of educational information, 13 participants responded that it was adequate, while 15 found it inadequate.
- Regarding the inclusion of general cultural information, all participants answered "yes," and 19 participants stated that this information was provided at an acceptable level.
- • Regarding negative examples, 13 participants stated that there were no negative examples, while 15 participants stated that they encountered some.

Discussion and Suggestions

In foreign language teaching, the culture of the country to which the language originates is one of the most systematically conveyed pieces of information. However, in a globalizing world, this approach is often inadequate. Since the goal of foreign language education is to ensure global integration, the arguments used must also be universal. Therefore, the teaching process should include educational messages that transcend national culture and encompass all world cultures. For example, when teaching English, the most widely spoken language, one should not limit oneself solely to British culture and morality. Today, most English learners use this language to interact with the rest of the world rather than to communicate with the British.

If knowledge of the country of origin of the language taught exceeds the purpose of language teaching, education can become a form of cultural instruction that carries the risk of assimilation. Languages like Arabic and Spanish, which are among the most commonly learned languages besides English, are used as mother tongues in dozens of different countries (Uzun, 2012). In languages like Arabic, which are learned as religious languages, one of the primary motivations is to understand and learn Islamic sources (Akmese, 2019). This demonstrates that limiting foreign language teaching to the cultural framework of a single country is an inadequate approach. Therefore, if more than just language is to be taught, it would be more appropriate to focus on universal values.

Foreign language teaching resources such as textbooks, videos, or audio recordings, while designed with the goal of teaching the language faster, may unknowingly contain inaccurate or negative messages. Even when teaching the simple verb "drink," beverage names like whiskey and beer can be used extensively. This necessitates the use of more educational and instructive words like water, tea, and fruit juice instead. The involvement of experts in the field will ensure that educational messages reach students without compromising the speed targets of linguists.

Consulting with experts from various fields is crucial when preparing course materials. Textbooks, in particular, contribute significantly to students' linguistic and cognitive development, and therefore are essential tools in foreign language teaching (Kardas & Cemal, 2017). When preparing textbooks, educational messages must be embedded in a way that doesn't overshadow the primary goal of language learning.

Ultimately, a universally accepted approach will be that the primary goal in teaching all foreign languages is to teach the language and then provide educational information. Other information included in teaching materials should not go beyond aiding language learning. This approach will elevate foreign language education to a more comprehensive and universal level.

Ways to Deliver Messages Based on Teaching and Learning Techniques

While students' lack of complete command of the language may lead one to believe that message-focused instruction in foreign language learning is difficult, the process can actually be significantly facilitated with the right techniques. Interest in this approach is growing today, and various methods are being used that yield effective results. By

integrating these methods into course content, targeted messages can be easily conveyed to students. Below are some frequently used techniques for this approach.

- **Message-Focused Sentence Use in Textbooks:** Sentences in textbooks can be selected to emphasize expressions that convey a message. This way, students acquire words and sentence structures that convey valuable messages while learning the language.
- **Message Conveying Through the Use of Materials:** The use of materials has always played a significant role in foreign language education. Indirect messages can be conveyed to students using materials such as pictures or related objects.
- **Message-Focused Approach in Video and Listening Activities:** Listening and viewing activities, one of the most frequently used techniques in foreign language teaching, improve students' speaking and comprehension skills. The content of these activities can be organized to reinforce the intended messages and conveyed to students.
- **Message Conveying Through Classroom Role-playing:** Role-playing techniques are widely used in foreign language teaching. In addition to developing students' social skills, these techniques allow students to firsthand experience an event in the language they are learning. These role-plays can be designed to reinforce the intended messages.
- **Conveying Messages through Place Visits:** While place visits are one of the most effective techniques in foreign language education, they may not be frequently preferred due to the difficulty of implementation. However, foreign language teaching, thanks to the variety and easy accessibility of places to visit, is one of the most suitable areas for implementing this technique. By preparing appropriate messages for each place visited or by arranging the place accordingly, effective delivery of targeted messages can be achieved.
- **Conveying Messages through Interviews:** Meetings can be arranged with relevant professionals, or these individuals can be invited to class. For example, a doctor can be invited to the classroom for a health topic, an athlete for a sports topic, a driver for a transportation topic, or an elderly person for a family and relatives topic. This allows students to both practice their language skills and receive valuable messages from relevant individuals.
- **Conveying Messages through Homework and Projects:** Targeted messages can also be conveyed through homework and projects assigned to students. For example, students might be asked to take photos with their ten closest relatives on the topic of "relatives," or to write about measures they can take in their own homes regarding "waste." Such projects support students' active use of language and their internalization of relevant values.

Foreign Language Topics and Possible Messages

This section focuses on the topics covered in foreign language teaching and the educational topics that can be included within these topics.

Foreign Language Topics

Some of the topics generally covered in foreign language teaching are:

- Introductions, Self-Introduction,

- Classroom Language,
- Time, Hours,
- Numbers,
- Routines,
- Professions,
- Our Body,
- Clothes,
- Days of the Week, Months, Seasons,
- Shopping, Daily Life,
- Family, Relatives, Home, Environment,
- Objects,
- Nature, Animals,
- Directions,
- Events, Hobbies,
- Literature, Film, Music, Concerts, Museums, TV Programs,
- Food, Drinks,
- Education, Professions,
- Special Days, Celebrations,
- Science, Technology,
- Sports, Health,
- Countries, Nations, Cultures,
- Holidays, Reservations, Transportation (Gultekin et al., 2015), (Simmons, 2014), (Ozturk et al., 2017).

The topics mentioned above also lead to different topics within themselves. For example, a food topic can touch on a wide range of topics, such as restaurants, home cooking, canteen meals, cafes, ready-made meals, and the food culture of a culture.

Example Topics and Contents for Educational Messages in Foreign Language Classes

Integrating educational messages into core subjects in foreign language education can contribute to students' personal development. Below are some topics that can be covered in classes and examples of educational messages that can be incorporated into these topics. These examples can be expanded and diversified as needed.

- Introductions: In this topic, human values such as greeting etiquette and the importance of smiling can be emphasized.
- Daily Chores: Beneficial habits such as personal hygiene, regular exercise, and reading can be incorporated into daily routines.

- Time and Clock: The importance of using time effectively can be emphasized, and the negative consequences of wasting time can be emphasized.
- Sports: The contributions of sports to individual health and social relationships (friendship, peace, brotherhood) can be discussed.
- Transportation and Vehicles: The importance of traffic rules and the need for patience in traffic can be emphasized.
- Food and Drinks: Meal etiquette, avoiding waste, and healthy eating habits can be discussed.
- Family and Relatives: The importance of family and ways to strengthen kinship relationships can be discussed along with the concepts of love and respect.
- Health: The precautions to be taken for a healthy life and the positive effects of health on social life can be emphasized.
- Clothing: The importance of dressing neatly, tidily, and healthily can be emphasized.
- Spaces: Topics such as adhering to the rules of shared spaces and how to behave in these areas can be discussed.
- Technology: The benefits and harms of technology and proper use can be discussed.
- Professions: Considerations when choosing a career and the social benefits of ethical behavior can be emphasized.
- Animals: The importance of animal love and the place of animals in the ecosystem can be discussed.
- Social Activities: The positive effects of social activities on human psychology and which activities are most beneficial can be discussed.
- Countries, Nations, and Cultures: Global awareness can be raised by emphasizing that every nation has its own unique characteristics and that every culture deserves respect.

An Example of Introducing Educational Messages Within a Lesson: The Subject of Relatives

This section provides a concrete example of how the educational topics mentioned above can be incorporated into a foreign language lesson. When discussing relatives, texts and dialogues can focus on activities with family and relatives. For example, a child describing their family in a reading passage might mention loving their family, playing with their siblings, and the enjoyable times spent together. This approach emphasizes the importance of family in life. Visiting relatives can be addressed at a different stage of the lesson. Weekend visits to grandparents, their role in bringing relatives together, and the respect that should be shown to older relatives can be emphasized.

Special occasions like birthday parties can be addressed in listening or viewing events. These events can emphasize the importance of strengthening family ties and fostering shared happiness by bringing all relatives together. Similarly, themes like visiting relatives living in a village or on a farm during summer vacation can highlight the joy of spending time with relatives. Overall, the value of family ties can be emphasized by conveying the message that kinship enhances the joys shared during happy times like holidays and special occasions, and that it also plays a supportive role during difficult times.

Conclusion

These individuals educated society by incorporating their ideas into their poetry, writings, and speeches. Our goal is to achieve this goal by integrating the approaches of such intellectuals into foreign language education. As stated in this article, collaboration between linguists and education experts will significantly contribute to the development of individuals and society through foreign language teaching.

Foreign language teaching is one of the most widespread and content-rich courses in the world. This field, which serves as a key to opening up the world beyond our country, is ideal for conveying universal values and behaviors encompassing both individual and societal issues. This will enable the development of individuals who act consciously both within their own culture and on a global scale.

Resources used in foreign language education should be prepared by experts, carefully positioning the intended messages without neglecting language development. Haphazardly prepared materials can negatively impact students' personal development. Therefore, course texts and content should be designed in a planned and meticulous manner, appropriate to their level. This can increase student interest and motivation without compromising the quality of language instruction.

Because the foreign language education market encompasses a vast area, unplanned activities can also emerge in this area. Therefore, it is imperative that foreign language education, in line with its goal of benefiting humanity, not be left under the control of hands unrelated to education. Care must be taken to ensure that individual and societal values are embedded in every piece of information conveyed to students. The texts and content in resources should convey messages that benefit both the student and society. This approach aims to promote individual and societal harmony.

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