



TÜRKERİ DİL VE EDEBİYAT DERGİSİ (TürkeriDE)

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• **Dr. Ahmadou TOURE**

*L'héritage intellectuel d'Ahmed Baba Es-Sudani de Tombouctou :
Analyse contemporaine*

• **Dr. Ferdi ÇELİK**

*A Corpus-Based Analysis of Distributional and Functional Differences
in Discourse Markers across Spoken and Academic English*

• **Öğr. Gör. Kamola NOSIROVA**

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*Teacherpreneurship in the Middle East through the Lens of
Language Teachers*

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TAKDİM / EDİTÖRDEN

Değerli okurlarımız,

Bu sayımızda Türkeri Dergisi, dil, söylem, eğitim ve entelektüel miras ekseninde şekillenen dört özgün çalışmayı bir araya getirmektedir. Farklı coğrafyalar, diller ve kuramsal yaklaşımlar üzerinden ilerleyen bu çalışmalar, hem tarihsel derinliği hem de çağdaş akademik tartışmaları aynı çatı altında buluşturmaktadır.

İlk çalışma, L'Héritage intellectuel d'Ahmed Baba es-Sudani de Tombouctou başlığıyla, Ahmed Baba es-Sudani'nin entelektüel mirasını çağdaş bir bakış açısıyla ele alarak Afrika-İslam düşünce geleneğine önemli bir katkı sunmaktadır. Tarih, kültür ve düşünce tarihini kesiştiren bu çalışma, klasik metinlerin günümüz akademik okumalarına nasıl taşınabileceğini göstermektedir.

İkinci çalışma, A Corpus-Based Analysis of Distributional and Functional Differences in Discourse Markers Across Spoken and Academic English, derlem temelli yaklaşımıyla konuşma dili ve akademik İngilizce arasındaki söylem belirteci kullanımını ayrıntılı biçimde incelemekte; yöntemsel titizliği ve pedagojik çıkarımlarıyla uygulamalı dilbilim alanına katkı sağlamaktadır.

Üçüncü makale, B1 Seviyesinde Türkçe Öğrenen Türk Soylu Öğrencilerin Karşılaştığı Dil Edinim Sorunları, Türkçenin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi bağlamında önemli bir boşluğu doldurmakta; Türk soylu öğrencilerin dil edinim süreçlerini nitel veriler ışığında ele alarak farklılaştırılmış öğretim yaklaşımlarının gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Son olarak Teacherpreneurship in the Middle East through the Lens of Language Teachers başlıklı çalışma, Orta Doğu bağlamında dil öğretmenlerinin girişimci rollerini incelemekte; öğretmenlik mesleğinin dönüşen doğasına, yenilikçilik ve mesleki gelişim perspektifinden ışık tutmaktadır.

Bu sayıda yer alan çalışmaların, dil ve eğitim alanlarında çalışan araştırmacılar için yeni tartışma alanları açacağına ve disiplinler arası etkileşimi güçlendireceğine inanıyoruz.

Editör

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Murat DELİBAŞ

BAMAĞO - 31 Aralık 2025

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

In this issue, *Türkeri Journal* brings together four original studies that reflect the journal's multilingual, interdisciplinary, and international orientation. Addressing language, discourse, education, and intellectual history from diverse geographical and theoretical perspectives, the articles in this volume contribute both to longstanding scholarly traditions and to contemporary academic debates.

The first article, *L'Héritage intellectuel d'Ahmed Baba es-Sudani de Tombouctou: Analyse contemporaine*, offers a contemporary analysis of the intellectual legacy of Ahmed Baba es-Sudani, highlighting his significance within the African-Islamic scholarly tradition. By revisiting classical thought through modern analytical frameworks, the study enriches discussions in intellectual history, cultural studies, and Islamic scholarship.

The second contribution, *A Corpus-Based Analysis of Distributional and Functional Differences in Discourse Markers Across Spoken and Academic English*, employs a rigorous corpus-based methodology to examine discourse marker usage across registers. By combining quantitative frequency analysis with functional validation, the study provides valuable insights for applied linguistics, discourse analysis, and language pedagogy.

The third article, *Language Acquisition Problems Encountered by Students of Turkish Origin Learning Turkish at the B1 Level*, focuses on the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language. Drawing on qualitative classroom observations, the study examines the linguistic challenges faced by students of Turkish origin and underscores the need for differentiated instructional programs tailored to learner profiles within Turkish language education.

The final article, *Teacherpreneurship in the Middle East through the Lens of Language Teachers*, explores the evolving professional identities of language teachers in the Middle Eastern context. Through a phenomenological approach, the study sheds light on how teachers engage in entrepreneurial practices, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges associated with innovation, professional growth, and educational leadership.

Collectively, these contributions demonstrate the breadth and depth of current research in language studies and education. We believe that this issue will foster scholarly dialogue, support interdisciplinary inquiry, and offer meaningful insights for researchers, educators, and practitioners.

We extend our sincere thanks to the authors and reviewers whose efforts made this issue possible, and we hope our readers find the studies both informative and thought-provoking.

Founding Editor

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Murat DELİBAŞ

BAMAKO - December, 31, 2025

L'HÉRITAGE INTELLECTUEL D'AHMED BABA ES-SUDANI DE TOMBOUCTOU : ANALYSE CONTEMPORAINE

ARTICLE DE RECHERCHE

Dr. Ahmadou TOURE

Université Kurukanfuga de Bamako
Faculté des Sciences Administratives et Politiques

toureaahmadou799@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0009-5179-0587

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RÉSUMÉ: Cet article explore l'héritage intellectuel d'Ahmed Baba Es-Sudani (1556-1627), savant de Tombouctou, en s'appuyant sur une analyse documentaire de son mémoire de maîtrise et de sources historiques. La problématique porte sur la pertinence contemporaine de sa doctrine dans un contexte africain marqué par les dynamiques digitales et pluri-sectorielles, notamment la préservation numérique des manuscrits et la gouvernance inclusive. La méthodologie adopte une approche qualitative, combinant recherche bibliographique et entretiens avec des spécialistes à Bamako et Tombouctou. Les résultats mettent en lumière sa vie, ses œuvres et sa doctrine rationaliste, fideïste et humaniste. La discussion critique souligne son actualité pour la défense des droits humains et la bonne gouvernance en Afrique. En conclusion, Ahmed Baba reste un modèle pour la réhabilitation du patrimoine intellectuel africain via les outils numériques.

Mots-clés: Ahmed Baba Es-Sudani, héritage intellectuel, doctrine rationaliste, gouvernance africaine, préservation numérique.

The Intellectual Heritage of Ahmed Baba Es-Sudani from Timbuktu: Contemporary Analysis

ABSTRACT: This article explores the intellectual heritage of Ahmed Baba Es-Sudani (1556-1627), a scholar from Timbuktu, based on a documentary analysis of his master's thesis and historical sources. The problem focuses on the contemporary relevance of his doctrine in an African context marked by digital and multi-sectoral dynamics, particularly the digital preservation of manuscripts and inclusive governance. The methodology adopts a qualitative approach, combining bibliographic research and interviews with specialists in Bamako and Timbuktu. The results highlight his life, works, and rationalist, fideist, and humanist doctrine. The discussion critically emphasizes its relevance for human rights defense and good governance in Africa. In conclusion, Ahmed Baba remains a model for the rehabilitation of African intellectual heritage through digital tools.

Keywords: Ahmed Baba Es-Sudani, intellectual heritage, rationalist doctrine, African governance, digital preservation

Introduction

Tombouctou, capitale de l'intelligentsia, carrefour multiracial et pluriethnique, a joué un rôle pivot dans l'histoire intellectuelle de l'Afrique subsaharienne, abritant un patrimoine souvent méconnu en raison des narratifs coloniaux et des défis de préservation contemporains. Ahmed Baba Es-Sudani, érudit de Tombouctou au XVI^e siècle, incarne ce génie sahélien avec une doctrine alliant rationalisme islamique, humanisme et critique sociale. Dans un contexte actuel marqué par les transitions digitales – comme la numérisation des manuscrits de Tombouctou par l'UNESCO – et les dynamiques plurisectorielles (éducation, gouvernance, droits humains), revisiter son héritage s'avère pertinent.

La problématique posée réside dans l'oubli volontaire de ce patrimoine durant la colonisation, qui a occulté la grandeur de penseurs comme Ahmed Baba, résumant le génie des savants sahéliens, et dans la nécessité de le réhabiliter face aux défis africains actuels.

La question principale de recherche est : Comment la doctrine d'Ahmed Baba peut-elle informer les défis africains contemporains, tels que la bonne gouvernance et la préservation numérique du patrimoine ?

Les hypothèses de recherche postulent que (1) Ahmed Baba est un philosophe africain rationaliste et humaniste dont la doctrine équilibre raison et foi, et (2) son héritage reste pertinent pour aborder les dynamiques digitales et plurisectorielles en Afrique, en promouvant l'égalité raciale et une gouvernance éclairée.

L'objectif de la recherche est de contribuer à la réhabilitation du patrimoine culturel africain en décrivant sa vie et ses œuvres, en analysant sa doctrine, et en évaluant sa pertinence critique aujourd'hui, alignée sur les appels à une pluridisciplinarité ouverte.

Les questions de recherche secondaires incluent : Qui était Ahmed Baba et quelle est sa doctrine ? Quel regard critique porter sur son legs dans un cadre empirique ancré dans les réalités africaines ?

Méthodologie

Cette recherche empirique s'appuie sur une approche qualitative, centrée sur l'analyse documentaire et des données secondaires.

Les sources primaires incluent le mémoire de maîtrise d'Ahmadou Touré (2007/2008) sur Ahmed Baba, analysé via des outils d'extraction textuelle pour identifier les thèmes clés (vie, doctrine, critique). Des entretiens semi-directifs ont été menés avec des spécialistes (descendants de savants à Tombouctou, experts du Centre Ahmed Baba) pour contextualiser l'actualité.

La collecte des données s'est faite en deux phases : (1) revue bibliographique de 15 ouvrages et articles sur l'histoire sahélienne ; (2) analyse thématique des manuscrits numérisés de Tombouctou, accessibles via plateformes digitales comme celles de l'UNESCO.

L'échantillon est focalisé sur des textes du XVI^e siècle. L'analyse utilise une grille IMReDiC, avec un codage manuel pour extraire les résultats et des discussions. Les limites incluent l'accès partiel aux manuscrits originaux, atténuées par des outils numériques.

Cette méthodologie assure un ancrage empirique, respectant les normes CAMES pour la rigueur scientifique.

Résultat

Les résultats révèlent un héritage riche. Ahmed Baba naquit en 1556 à Tombouctou, formé par des maîtres comme Muhammad Bagayogo. Exilé au Maroc en 1593, il produisit 56 œuvres, couvrant théologie, droit et philosophie (*Tuhfat al-fudala* sur la supériorité des savants).

Selon un spécialiste interviewé à Bamako, « Ahmed Baba était un maître qui enseignait toute sa vie, laissant de nombreux disciples au Soudan et au Maghreb ».

Sa doctrine est rationaliste : il privilégie la science sur la foi aveugle, argumentant via le Coran et les hadiths. Politiquement, il prône une gouvernance éclairée (*Jalb al-nima*), séparant savoir et pouvoir abusif. Socialement, il défend l'antiracisme (*Mi'raj al-su'ud*), condamnant l'esclavage abusif, comme l'exprime un enquêté à Tombouctou : « Il luttait contre les déviations religieuses et rétablissait l'orthodoxie musulmane pour une société juste ». Religieusement, il équilibre raison et foi, rejetant l'obscurantisme. Ces éléments empiriques, tirés d'analyses textuelles, montrent un penseur pluridisciplinaire.

Tableau 1 : Œuvres clés d'Ahmed Baba

Œuvre	Date	Thème principal
Tuhfat al-fudala	1603	Supériorité des savants sur les saints
Mi'raj al-su'ud	1615	Critique de l'esclavage antiraciste
Jalb al-nima	1588	Bonne gouvernance et autonomie des savants

Discussion

L'analyse critique révèle l'actualité d'Ahmed Baba. Sa doctrine rationaliste résonne avec les défis digitaux africains : la numérisation des 300 000 manuscrits de Tombouctou (post-2012, après destruction par extrémistes) promeut une préservation multi-sectorielle, alignée sur son appel à la science collective. Politiquement, sa critique des oppresseurs informe les luttes contre la mauvaise gouvernance en Afrique, comme le note un spécialiste : « Son sens de la bonne gouvernance et de la défense des droits humains est encore d'actualité ». Socialement, son humanisme antiraciste combat les inégalités ethnoraciales persistantes.

Comparé à Ibn Khaldoun, Ahmed Baba ajoute une dimension fidéiste, équilibrant raison et foi pour une société inclusive, selon un enquêté : « Il était un penseur rationaliste de tendance fidéiste qui mettait fin à l'obscurantisme ». Limites : sa pensée islamocentrique peut limiter l'universalité, mais son empirisme (basé sur observations sahéliennes) offre un ancrage pour des politiques plurisectorielles. Aujourd'hui, intégrer sa doctrine via plateformes digitales renforcerait l'éducation africaine.

Conclusion

Ahmed Baba Es-Sudani incarne un héritage intellectuel vital pour l'Afrique contemporaine. Sa doctrine, rationaliste et humaniste, offre des outils pour aborder les dynamiques digitales (préservation patrimoniale) et plurisectorielles (gouvernance, droits humains).

Les principaux résultats obtenus incluent la description de sa vie et de ses 56 œuvres, l'analyse de sa doctrine rationaliste, fidéiste et humaniste, et l'évaluation de son actualité pour la gouvernance et les droits humains en Afrique.

Les hypothèses ont été confirmées : Ahmed Baba est bien un philosophe africain équilibrant raison et foi, et son héritage informe les défis contemporains, justifié par son appel à la rationalité scientifique et à l'égalité raciale, qui résonnent avec les besoins actuels en préservation numérique et gouvernance inclusive.

L'apport de ce travail au développement de la science réside dans sa contribution à la philosophie africaine, en réhabilitant des penseurs sahéliens occultés.

Son apport à la connaissance du sujet abordé enrichit la compréhension d'Ahmed Baba comme modèle de rationalisme islamique.

Les innovations incluent l'intégration d'une analyse contemporaine avec des dynamiques digitales, comme la numérisation des manuscrits.

Les limites du travail sont l'accès partiel aux sources primaires et l'absence de verbatim exhaustifs des entretiens.

Les perspectives de recherches pour les travaux futurs concernent l'exploration de son impact sur l'IA pour l'analyse textuelle des patrimoines africains, ou des comparaisons avec d'autres savants subsahariens.

Les enquêtes de terrain ont eu lieu durant l'année universitaire 2007-2008.

Plusieurs personnes ont été interviewées (environ cinq, incluant Dr. Mahmoud A. Zouber), des spécialistes en histoire et philosophie sahélienne, tels que des conseillers techniques, historiens et descendants de savants.

Les entretiens ont eu lieu à Bamako et à Tombouctou, utilisant des moyens techniques comme des notes manuscrites et des enregistrements audios pour la précision.

La place de l'internet dans la réalisation des enquêtes a été limitée, servant principalement à la recherche bibliographique initiale via des plateformes comme l'UNESCO.

Les principales difficultés rencontrées étaient les contraintes logistiques pour voyager à Tombouctou (sécurité et accès) et la disponibilité des spécialistes ;

Les solutions adoptées incluaient l'appui financier et logistique du CODERSRIA, ainsi que des planifications flexibles des entretiens.

Recommandations : accélérer la numérisation des manuscrits et intégrer son enseignement dans les curricula éducatifs.

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A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF DISTRIBUTIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL DIFFERENCES IN DISCOURSE MARKERS ACROSS SPOKEN AND ACADEMIC ENGLISH

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Dr. Ferdi ÇELİK

Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi

ferdicelik99@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0001-8272-4720

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ABSTRACT: This corpus-based study examines the extent to which selected discourse markers (*well*, *you know*, *actually*, *I mean*, *anyway*, *in fact*, *indeed*) differ in distribution and functional realization across spoken and academic written English in the Corpus of Contemporary American English. Using the spoken (126,135,576 words) and academic (119,790,456 words) sections in the corpus, the analysis extracted raw token counts and normalized frequencies per million words, and computed spoken-to-academic ratios as a register-sensitivity index. To address polyfunctionality, a targeted concordance validation was conducted for *well* and *actually*, sampling 10 lines per register (20 per marker) and coding each instance as discourse-marker/discourse-marker-like versus non-discourse marker, with an indicative adjusted discourse marker rate derived from observed proportions. Results show strong register differentiation: *you know*, and *I mean* display the largest spoken skew, *anyway*, is also spoken-preferential, while *well* and *actually* show moderate spoken skews in raw counts. *In fact* exhibits only a modest spoken preference, whereas *indeed* is the sole marker favoring academic prose. Functional validation indicates that raw frequencies substantially overestimate DM use for polyfunctional items, especially *actually*, whose discourse-pragmatic uses are minority instances in both registers. Pedagogically, the findings support corpus-informed instruction that treats discourse markers as register-bound resources and incorporates concordance-based activities to build learners' pragmatic and register competence.

Keywords: discourse markers; register variation; corpus-based analysis; COCA; spoken and academic English; functional realization; EFL

Konuşma Dili İngilizcesi ile Akademik İngilizce Arasında Söylem Belirteçlerindeki Dağılımsal ve İşlevsel Farklılıkların Derlem Temelli Bir Analizi

ÖZ: Bu derlem temelli çalışma, seçilmiş söylem belirteçlerinin (*well*, *you know*, *actually*, *I mean*, *anyway*, *in fact*, *indeed*) konuşma dili İngilizcesi ile akademik yazılı İngilizce arasında dağılım ve işlevsel gerçekleşim bakımından ne ölçüde farklılaştığını Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) verileri üzerinden incelemektedir. Çalışmada, derlemin konuşma dili (126.135.576 sözcük) ve akademik (119.790.456 sözcük) bölümleri kullanılarak ham sözcük sıklıkları çıkarılmış, milyon sözcük başına normalize edilmiş frekanslar hesaplanmış ve konuşma dili-akademik oranları, tür (register) duyarlılığını gösteren bir indeks olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Çok işlevlilik (polyfunctionality) sorununu ele almak amacıyla *well* ve *actually* için hedefli bir dizin (concordance) doğrulaması yapılmış; her bir türden 10 satır (belirteç başına toplam 20 örnek) örneklenmiş ve her kullanım söylem belirteci/söylem belirteci benzeri ya da söylem belirteci olmayan olarak kodlanmıştır. Gözlenen oranlara dayanarak gösterge niteliğinde düzeltilmiş bir söylem belirteci kullanım oranı türetilmiştir. Bulgular, güçlü bir tür ayrışmasına işaret etmektedir: *you know* ve *I mean* konuşma dilinde en belirgin yoğunlaşmayı gösterirken, *anyway* de konuşma dilini tercih eden bir kullanım sergilemektedir. *Well* ve *actually* ham sayılarda orta düzeyde konuşma dili eğilimi göstermektedir. *In fact* yalnızca sınırlı bir konuşma dili tercihinin sahipken, *indeed* akademik yazıyı tercih eden tek belirteçtir. İşlevsel doğrulama, özellikle *actually* için, ham frekansların söylem belirteci kullanımını önemli ölçüde fazla tahmin ettiğini; bu belirtecin söylem-edimsel kullanımının her iki türde de azınlıkta kaldığını göstermektedir. Eğitsel açıdan, bulgular söylem belirteçlerinin türe bağlı kaynaklar olarak ele alınmasını ve öğrenenlerin edimsel ve türel yeterliklerini geliştirmek amacıyla dizin temelli etkinliklerin öğretime dâhil edilmesini desteklemektedir.

Keywords: söylem belirteçleri; tür değişkenliği; derlem temelli analiz; COCA; konuşma dili ve akademik İngilizce; işlevsel gerçekleşim; EFL

Introduction

Discourse markers (DMs) such as *well*, *you know*, *actually*, *I mean*, *in fact*, and *indeed* are essential elements of spoken and written communication. They function as pragmatic cues that organize discourse, indicate speaker stance, and facilitate coherence between utterances (Crible, 2017; Cuenca & Crible, 2019). In spoken discourse, DMs often manage turn-taking, repair, and interactional alignment, while in academic writing, they signal logical relationships, mark evidentiality, and frame argumentation

(Zhou & Xia, 2024). Despite their communicative importance, DMs remain underrepresented in pedagogical and applied linguistic contexts, particularly in English language teaching (ELT), where register variation is seldom explicitly addressed (Le Foll, 2024; Aşık, 2015).

The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) offers an empirical basis to the study of register variation in the use of DM. The systematic comparison of the differences in the distribution and functioning of DMs is possible due to its balanced coverage of spoken and academic written registers. These analyses play a vital role in the gap between theoretical linguistics and pedagogy, as it is shown that EFL learners do not use or misuse DMs because of insufficient input and teaching (Vickov & Jakupcevic, 2017; Neary-Sundquist, 2014).

The knowledge of the variation of DMs between registers, therefore, is important in corpus-based linguistic studies as well as the development of pragmatic competence in ELT. Since learners are exposed to the English language in more and more contexts, academic writing, or conversational fluency, the knowledge of DM use in real corpora is a potent means of teaching contextualized communication (Cushing, 2017).

Literature Review

Discourse markers are typically considered to be procedural features indicating relationships between discourse segments without any change in propositional content (Crible, 2017; Crible & Cuenca, 2019). Pragmatic theories place DMs in the textual, interpersonal, and cognitive space (Crible & Pascual, 2020). They are in charge of controlling coherence, repairing, and directing listeners to interpret (Shustova & Tsarenko, 2019). Cognitively linguistically, DMs are formed in a process of grammaticalization and constructionalization, in which lexical items become discourse-organizing over time by repeated contextualization (Traugott, 2021). This explains the polyfunctionality of markers like “*well*” and “*actually*”, which can signal stance, correction, or topic shifts depending on context (Crible & Blackwell, 2020). DMs also reflect speakers’ probabilistic competence, which can be defined as the ability to select forms appropriate to context, audience, and modality (Engel et al., 2022). In this context, DMs are dynamic structures that are influenced by social interaction, communicative objectives, and contextual limitations.

Register theory offers an alternative point of view. According to the multidimensional model by Biber (2002), linguistic variation is determined as functional adjustment to situational parameters, including mode, tenor, and field. Spoken registers are more concerned with participation and mutual understanding, whereas written academic registers are more concerned with the density of the information and its abstraction (Biber et al., 2002; Szmeccsanyi, 2019). Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) DMs are interpersonal metaphors of modality, which can be used to show commitment, evaluation, and rhetorical stance (Cuenca, 2022). For instance, *in fact*, and *indeed* strengthen claims epistemically, while *well* and *you know* mitigate or contextualize interpersonal intent. Corpus-based research in the recent past has revealed that there is a systematic difference in modality and stance expressions in English across registers, which confirms that DMs are distributed functionally (Zhou & Xia, 2024). The fact that such register differences are almost universal is further supported by cross-linguistic corpus studies, which show that orality is associated with the frequent, polyfunctional use of DM, whereas formal writing limits the scope and functionality of such distinctions (Schnell & Schiborr, 2022; Shirtz, 2024).

The literature of corpus has drawn definite differences in DM frequency and role in registers. Research on COCA, the British National Corpus, and DisFrEn has established that DMs are one of the most common aspects that differ between spoken language and written prose (Jucker, 2021; Crible, 2017). Spoken English is rich in interactive markers like “*you know*”, “*I mean*”, and “*well*”, which facilitate real-time discourse management, whereas academic texts rely on cohesive devices such as “*in fact*”, “*indeed*”, and “*however*” for logical progression (Biber et al., 2002; Zhou & Xia, 2024). A comparative study of English and French by Crible (2017) showed that DMs are often co-occurring with disfluencies, pauses, and repairs and serve as cognitive scaffolds in the speech production process. In the same vein, Cuenca and Crible (2019) discovered that patterns of co-occurrence of DMs are recurrent, which proves that such markers as *well* and *so* are functional within discourse sequences.

The difference in discourse markers among the varieties of English and other languages highlights the sociolinguistic embeddedness of these discourse markers. A comparative study of Zimbabwean and

British English revealed significant pragmatic differences in the use of *so* and *well*, reflecting local discourse norms (Chapwanya & Nel, 2024). Apostol et al. (2025) confirmed that multiword DMs such as *you know* and *in fact* vary across languages, correlating with genre and register. Typological corpus studies extend these insights, suggesting that DMs universally mark cohesion and narrative structure, though their lexical realizations differ (Schnell & Schiborr, 2022). In Catalan, for instance, shifts in the norms of DMs like *de fet* (“in fact”) illustrate sociolinguistic change influenced by contact and genre (Cuenca, 2022). All these findings confirm that DM use is a manifestation of cognitive universals, as well as culture-specific patterns of communication.

In applied settings, DMs are key indicators of communicative competence. Studies on learner corpora show that L2 speakers’ DM usage increases in range and appropriateness with proficiency (Neary-Sundquist, 2014). Aşık (2015) demonstrated that explicit instruction in DM use enhances pragmatic awareness and fluency among Turkish EFL learners. Similarly, in classroom discourse, non-native teachers often underutilize interactive DMs, relying on a restricted set of connectors (*so*, *ok*, *and*) for discourse organization (Vickov & Jakupčević, 2017). This is in contrast to the native speaker talk, where DMs have a broad range of interpersonal and cohesive roles. The latest studies support the idea of corpus-based teaching that uses real-life register information to educate DMs in context (Cushing, 2017; Le Foll, 2021). The interaction of the learners with the corpus examples promotes pragmatic sensitivity and assists in overcoming the distance between formal learning and spontaneous communication.

DMs are mainly employed in academic registers to organize the argumentation and express epistemic position. Studies of student writing reveal consistent underuse of metadiscourse markers like *indeed*, *therefore*, and *in fact* (Chung et al., 2023). Barbara et al. (2024) discovered that beginners are not aware of the encoding of certainty and politeness by stance markers, which leads to excessive assertiveness or incoherent academic writing. Zhou and Xia (2024) demonstrated that COCA’s academic subcorpus displays a high density of nominalized and impersonal modality (*the possibility that, it is likely that*), distinguishing it from spoken registers that rely on personal expressions like *I think* or *you know*. DMs are also crucial to discourse in genres. In theater translation, Tarantini and Benatta (2021) discovered that DMs maintain naturalism and rhythm in a conversation, which supports their role in the natural interaction. Furko (2017) demonstrated in the political context that DMs have manipulative rhetorical purposes, positioning arguments and directing the interpretation of the audience. Together, these studies emphasize that DMs are versatile discourse tools that adapt to communicative purpose and audience expectations.

The Gap and the Present Study

Although extensive studies have been carried out on DMs in languages and genres, there is still no systematic, functionally tested register comparison of DMs in COCA. Earlier research tends to focus on individual markers, small corpora, or even on particular genres without considering large-scale register differences between spontaneous speech and formal academic writing. Furthermore, there are not many studies that combine quantitative frequency analysis with qualitative functional validation- a method that is essential in the differentiation of discourse-pragmatic and lexical uses of polyfunctional items like *well* and *actually*. Moreover, even though corpus linguistics has proven to be pedagogically viable, its use in ELT materials and pragmatic teaching is scarce (Le Foll, 2021). This empirical-practical gap will help us to improve our knowledge about register competence and guide information-based language teaching. Therefore, this study investigates to what extent selected discourse markers (“*well*, *you know*, *actually*, *I mean*, *anyway*, *in fact*, *indeed*”) differ in their distribution and functional realization between the spoken and academic written registers in COCA. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Quantify DM frequency and register ratio differences between spoken and academic English;
2. Functionally validate polysemous DMs (*well*, *actually*) through concordance sampling;
3. Interpret findings pedagogically to inform ELT practices related to register awareness and discourse competence.

By combining quantitative corpus methods with qualitative pragmatic validation, the study provides an empirically grounded model for understanding DM variation across registers and contributes to corpus-informed ELT pedagogy. Therefore, the study is guided by the following research question:

RQ. Is there a difference in the use of markers (e.g., well, you know, actually) between spoken and written registers in COCA, and how should these differences be addressed in ELT?

Methods

Corpus and register design

The study used the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) as the sole data source, with analyses restricted to the 1990–2019 span as represented in the COCA interface. The register comparison was operationalized as a contrast between the SPOKEN and ACADEMIC sections, because this pair most directly instantiates the spoken–written distinction that is central to English language teaching decisions about discourse markers. The section word counts reported by the COCA “compare sections” output were 126,135,576 words for SPOKEN and 119,790,456 words for ACADEMIC, and these values were treated as the denominators for normalized frequency calculations.

Target markers and query specification

Seven high-frequency candidates were selected to represent discourse marking and related pragmatic work often discussed in ELT materials and applied linguistics: you know, I mean, well, actually, anyway, in fact, and indeed. The queries were entered as literal word/phrase searches in COCA (e.g., “YOU KNOW”, “I MEAN”, “IN FACT”), thereby targeting the orthographic realizations most likely to be visible to teachers and learners. Because some items are polyfunctional (most notably well and actually), the study adopted a two-stage logic: (a) establish register distribution through normalized frequencies and (b) validate the DM function where lexical uses could substantially inflate counts.

Frequency extraction and normalization

For each marker, COCA’s section-comparison output was used to obtain (i) raw token counts per section and (ii) normalized frequencies per million words (pmw) for SPOKEN and ACADEMIC. A spoken-to-academic ratio was computed as $PM(SPOKEN)/PM(ACADEMIC)$. Ratios substantially greater than 1 were interpreted as spoken-leaning; ratios substantially less than one were interpreted as academic-leaning. Given the study’s urgent, rapid-conduct design, the ratio was used as the primary effect-size index, and statistical significance testing was not treated as necessary for inference, because the corpus sizes are large and the observed contrasts for several markers are orders of magnitude.

Concordance sampling and functional validation

To prevent misclassification for markers with strong lexical/polyfunctional behavior, a targeted concordance (KWIC) validation was conducted for well and actually. For each of these two items, 10 KWIC lines were extracted from SPOKEN and 10 from ACADEMIC (20 per marker) and coded for whether the token functioned as a discourse marker rather than a lexical item. The coding scheme was intentionally minimal and focused on a single decision boundary:

1. **DM / DM-like:** tokens used for turn initiation, stance framing, correction, repair, topic management, or parenthetical pragmatic orientation (e.g., “Well, ...”; “actually, ...” in a corrective parenthetical).
2. **Non-DM:** tokens functioning propositionally or lexically (e.g., well tempered; do well; actually implemented; actually work), including fixed academic sequences such as as well as.

Because a portion of ACADEMIC data contains embedded spoken genres (e.g., interview transcripts, classroom talk excerpts), DM-like uses in academic KWIC lines were additionally interpreted with genre sensitivity: a DM-like token occurring inside quoted speech was treated as evidence about the presence of conversational discourse within academic texts rather than as evidence that the marker is typical of authorial academic prose.

The KWIC-based proportions were used to derive an indicative “adjusted DM frequency” for well and actually by multiplying pmw by the DM proportion observed in the KWIC sample. This adjustment was

not treated as a definitive estimate; rather, it served to make transparent how far raw frequency might overstate discourse-marker use in writing.

Analytical strategy

The analysis proceeded in three steps. First, the register distribution of each marker was established through PMW and ratios. Second, markers were classified along a continuum from spoken-anchored interactional marking to written-anchored epistemic strengthening, with special attention to polyfunctional items whose raw frequencies risk pragmatic misinterpretation. Third, findings were interpreted with respect to the research question's pedagogical clause ("how should these differences be addressed in ELT?") by inferring which markers are appropriate targets for spoken fluency and interactional competence training versus which belong primarily to written argumentation and academic style.

Results

Results are presented in two blocks aligned with the analytic workflow. First, register distributions for seven candidate markers were reported using raw token counts and normalized frequencies per million words (pmw) in the COCA SPOKEN and ACADEMIC sections, together with a spoken-to-academic ratio. Second, because *well* and *actually* are polyfunctional, a targeted concordance-based functional check was conducted for these two items using 10 KWIC lines per register (20 per item), coded as discourse-marker (DM/DM-like) versus non-DM.

Table 1 reports the distributional results. Six of the seven markers occurred at higher pmw in SPOKEN than ACADEMIC, while *indeed* showed the reverse pattern.

Table 1. Register distribution of candidate markers in COCA (SPOKEN vs ACADEMIC)

Marker	SPOKEN tokens	SPOKEN pmw	ACADEMIC tokens	ACADEMIC pmw	Ratio (SPOK/ACAD)
you know	348,539	2,763.2	3,209	26.8	103.1
I mean	130,528	1,034.8	1,227	10.2	101.0
well	363,946	2,885.4	90,012	751.4	3.8
actually	89,657	710.8	16,157	134.9	5.3
anyway	11,195	88.8	1,205	10.1	8.8
in fact	35,930	284.9	18,976	158.4	1.8
indeed	10,450	82.8	22,638	189.0	0.4

Two multiword markers, *you know* and *I mean*, displayed the largest spoken–academic contrasts (ratios =103 and =101, respectively). *Anyway* also patterned as spoken-preferential (ratio =8.8), while *well* and *actually* showed smaller but still notable spoken skews (ratios =3.8 and =5.3). In contrast, *in fact* showed a relatively modest spoken preference (ratio =1.8). *Indeed* was the only marker with higher normalized frequency in ACADEMIC than SPOKEN (ratio =0.4, corresponding to an academic-to-spoken ratio of =2.3).

Because raw counts for *well* and *actually* may include substantial non-discourse uses, KWIC samples were coded for pragmatic function. Table 2 reports DM/DM-like versus non-DM classifications and the resulting DM proportions; an indicative adjusted DM pmw is included by multiplying the raw pmw by the observed DM proportion in the sample.

Table 2. KWIC-based functional validation for polyfunctional markers (*well, actually*)

Marker	Register	KWIC lines	DM/DM-like	Non-DM	DM proportion	Raw pmw	Indicative DM pmw	adjusted
well	SPOKEN	10	7	3	0.70	2,885.4	2,019.8	
well	ACA-DEMIC	10	3	7	0.30	751.4	225.4	
actually	SPOKEN	10	1	9	0.10	710.8	71.1	
actually	ACA-DEMIC	10	2	8	0.20	134.9	27.0	

In the SPOKEN KWIC sample for *well*, 7 of 10 instances were coded as DM/DM-like, while 3 were coded as non-DM. In the ACADEMIC KWIC sample for *well*, 3 of 10 instances were coded as DM/DM-like and 7 as non-DM; non-DM instances included additive and lexical realizations (e.g., *as well as*, evaluative lexical uses), while DM/DM-like realizations occurred in segments presented as reported or quoted talk within academic texts.

For *actually*, the SPOKEN KWIC sample contained 1 DM/DM-like instance and 9 non-DM instances, and the ACADEMIC sample contained 2 DM/DM-like instances and 8 non-DM instances. Non-DM instances in both registers primarily involved truth-conditional adverbial modification (e.g., *actually implemented, actually work*). DM/DM-like instances in ACADEMIC were observed in quoted or rhetorically marked sentence-initial environments within the sampled lines.

Consequently, the distributional analyses indicated substantial register differentiation across markers, with markedly higher spoken frequencies for *you know* and *I mean*, moderate spoken preference for *anyway*, smaller spoken skews for *well* and *actually*, comparatively limited spoken preference for *in fact*, and academic preference for *indeed*. The functional validation further showed that, for *well* and *actually*, raw frequencies included a substantial share of non-discourse uses in both registers, with DM/DM-like uses constituting a larger proportion of *well* in SPOKEN than in ACADEMIC, and constituting a minority of *actually* in both registers within the examined samples.

Discussion

The findings indicated a high and stable register distinction in the distribution and pragmatic expression of DMs in the spoken and academic written English in the COCA. Six of the seven markers discussed (*you know, I mean, well, actually, anyway, in fact*) were much more frequently normalized in the spoken register, and did have a reverse, scholarly preference. *You know* and *I mean* were the most markedly different, having a ratio of spoken-to-academic more than 100, and indicating their prototypical connection with informal, interactive discourse.

Functional validation of polyfunctional items (*well* and *actually*) by concordance further explained that raw frequency data exaggerates DM use in writing since most of the instances are lexical or truth-conditional but not discourse-pragmatic. *Well* retained a significant spoken dominance, after qualitative adjustment, and *actually* emerged as discourse-like only marginally in both registers. These results demonstrate that DM distribution is quantitatively and functionally register-sensitive, which is consistent with well-known models of register variation (Biber et al., 2002; Szmrecsanyi, 2019).

The register contrast of the current study supports and expands on previous studies in the field of corpus linguistics that separate the interactional spoken discourse and the informational written discourse. *You know* and *I mean* dramatic frequency skew are similar to those of previous studies that report that these multiword markers are canonical features of involvement, intersubjectivity, and turn-management in speech (Jucker, 2021; Crible & Cuenca, 2019). Their rarity in academic prose reflects the suppression

of interpersonal stance and dialogic engagement in formal registers (Biber et al., 2002; Zhou & Xia, 2024). Markers such as *anyway* and *well* occupy an intermediate functional position: while predominantly spoken, they serve broader textual or transitional roles that occasionally extend into quasi-spoken or quoted segments of academic texts. This continuum-based distribution mirrors Crible's (2017) observation that DMs cluster along pragmatic dimensions rather than forming discrete categories. The moderate ratios for *anyway* (=8.8) and *well* (=3.8) thus exemplify hybrid items that operate across contexts with varying pragmatic weight. Conversely, *indeed* demonstrates a clear academic preference, aligning with its established role in signaling epistemic reinforcement and rhetorical stance (Chung et al., 2023; Barbara et al., 2024). The high incidence of *indeed* in academic writing does highlight the preference of formal writing to position-oriented metadiscourse markers over interactional devices. This interpersonal/epistemic polarity of DMs supports the multidimensional register model of Biber, where spoken registers are involved and written registers are informationally dense.

The qualitative concordance analysis of *well* and *actually* shows the necessary subtleties in DM functioning. Although *well* demonstrated comparatively high proportions of discourse markers in spoken data (70%), in academic writing, it was only used in reported speech or parenthetical commentary. This proves that *well* is a relevant spoken organizational tool, which signifies the beginning of responses, fixing, or cushioning (Crible & Blackwell, 2020; Shustova & Tsarenko, 2019). The lower proportion of DM-like *well* in academic texts likely reflects genre-specific constraints that minimize interactional and evaluative markers in formal writing. By contrast, *actually* demonstrated low DM proportions in both registers (10% in spoken, 20% in academic). Its predominant truth-conditional function (e.g., "actually implemented," "actually work") affirms its lexical anchoring and supports prior claims that *actually* oscillates between propositional and metadiscursive uses (Traugott, 2021; Crible & Pascual, 2020). Interestingly, the occasional DM-like instances of *actually* in academic writing which are found often in quoted or contrastive environments suggest that when DMs do surface in academic texts, they do so under rhetorically marked conditions (e.g., argumentation, stance framing). Therefore, register variation in DM use involves not only frequency but functional specialization. Spoken discourse is more inclined towards intersubjective and sequential DMs, whereas written academic discourse is more inclined towards epistemic and textual markers, which is a trend that is observed in both cross-linguistic (Schnell & Schiborr, 2022) and pedagogical corpus (Le Foll, 2021, 2024).

The patterning of the observed registers is related to cross-linguistic research indicating that DM frequency is associated with orality and interactivity (Cuenca, 2022; Chapwanya & Nel, 2024; Apostol et al., 2025). Indicatively, Chapwanya and Nel (2024) found that *so* and *well* differ in frequency and pragmatic role in the Zimbabwean and British English, which highlights the role of sociocultural factors in DM implementation. In a similar manner, Apostol et al. (2025) have shown cross-linguistic differences in multiword markers (*you know*, *in fact*) based on genre and mode of communication. The existing results also overlap with the studies on polyfunctionality and co-occurrence patterns in spoken corpora (Crible & Cuenca, 2019), which proves that markers are frequently used in groups that represent common pragmatic functions instead of single cases. An example would be *you know* and *I mean*, which often occur together in speech as complementary position and clarification tools, an association which, perhaps, also explains their very high frequencies of speech.

In terms of cognitive-pragmatic perspective, DMs are observed to act as processing aids when spontaneous speech is produced. Their co-occurrence with disfluency characteristics (e.g., pauses, repairs) is an indication of the cognitive load of planning and monitoring speech (Crible, 2017). This practical position is the reason why they are relatively rare in written registers where the processing limitations are reduced to a minimum. The DM underrepresentation in scholarly prose also coincides with the rhetorical economy of formal writing, in which coherence is ensured by the use of explicit clause conjunctions (e.g., *therefore*, *however*) instead of interactive ones (Zhou & Xia, 2024; Barbara et al., 2024). These oppositions confirm that register does not only restrict the choice of language, but also organizes the very process of discourse.

The findings have a number of implications that can be made to inform theory and practice. Practically, the results support the need to incorporate register awareness and DM teaching in ELT programs. L2 learners tend to overgeneralize or underuse DMs because of the lack of exposure to real-life spoken input, as it has been demonstrated in numerous studies (Asik, 2015; Vickov & Jakupcevic, 2017). High-

frequency conversational DMs such as *you know* and *I mean* are usually underrepresented in pedagogical materials, with the focus on connective markers (*however, therefore*) that are characteristic of formal writing (Le Foll, 2021; Le Foll, 2024). Educators can develop pragmatic competence and assist students to adjust their discourse adequately in different contexts by providing them with corpus-based evidence of register-specific DM use. An example is that *you know* and *I mean* can be taught as signs of interactive conformity and clarification in spoken English, but *indeed* and *in fact* can be placed as formal signs of academic argumentation. This type of differentiation facilitates the understanding of situational suitability, which is a major constituent of communicative competence. Moreover, the functional validation process that we used in our research shows a pedagogically replicable model of classroom corpus tasks. Students were able to exercise concordance lines to differentiate between discourse and lexical applications of polyfunctional items, and this is an activity that has been demonstrated to enhance sensitivity to pragmatic subtlety and genre norms (Abidah et al., 2024; Cushing, 2017).

The current research also adds to the theoretical frameworks of register variation, pragmatic multifunctionality, and discourse organization. The findings quantitatively support the multidimensional model of Biber et al. (2002) by demonstrating that frequency differences between DMs are parallel to those between the involvement dimension and information density dimension. The data on DM proportions, in their functional aspect, indicate that the register differences cannot be represented by counting frequencies only; the functional coding is needed to distinguish between true discourse and lexical or grammaticalized versions (Crible & Pascual, 2020). The combination of normalized frequency analysis and a qualitative validation approach explains how corpus-based pragmatics can narrow down theoretical explanations of register. The data on the overlapping but distinct DM functions in registers confirms the opinion of Cuenca (2022) that DMs are interpersonal metaphors that are pragmatically adjusted to the situation, but not categories. Lastly, the paper is also a contribution to the field of integrating corpus linguistics and applied pragmatics, and how big data of empirical evidence can be interpreted pedagogically without losing theoretical rigor. COCA has a balanced design, which guarantees that the results represent general patterns of use and not genre-specific biases.

Although the current research has the advantage of scale and representativeness of COCA, some limitations are to be considered. To begin with, the KWIC validation sample size (20 lines per marker) provides suggestive rather than comprehensive information on functional proportions. A bigger, stratified concordance sample would permit more powerful statistical modeling of DM function. Second, the research is restricted to the American English language, which does not allow generalizing to other varieties of English; therefore, future studies might involve cross-corpora comparisons with the Global Web-Based English Corpus or the British National Corpus. In addition, the current analysis was limited to surface implementations of orthographic DMs. Multimodal and prosodic aspects, particularly those of interest to spoken markers such as *well* and *you know*, may also shed more light on how DMs mark discourse structure. Lastly, longitudinal and learner corpora studies might follow the development of DM use at different levels of proficiency, and this would add to the existing EFL-oriented studies (Neary-Sundquist, 2014; Asik, 2015).

Conclusion

This paper affirms that the use of discourse markers in the English language is highly influenced by register. Spoken discourse has a strong dependence on interactive markers (*you know, I mean, well*) that can control interpersonal alignment and real-time processing, whereas academic writing has a strong dependence on epistemic and rhetorical markers (*indeed, in fact*) which can control argumentation. Polyfunctional markers such as *well* and *actually* emphasize the necessity of functional validation of the raw frequency counts since their application in discourse is extremely context-related. The results are consistent with the current theories of pragmatic variation and elaborate on them by measuring the level of register differentiation in a large modern corpus. Pedagogically, they focus on the need to teach DMs as register-bound resources and not as universal connectors. Further studies in multimodal and cross-varietal data in the future will help us better understand the functioning of DMs in the varied communicative environments of English.

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B1 SEVİYESİNDE TÜRKÇE ÖĞRENEN TÜRK SOYLU ÖĞRENCİLERİN KARŞILAŞTIĞI DİL EDİNİM SORUNLARI¹

ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

Öğr. Gör. Kamola NOSIROVA

Özbekistan Devlet Dünya Dilleri Üniversitesi

kamolanosirova@uzswlu.uz

ORCID: 0009-0002-5605-0253

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B1 Seviyesinde Türkçe Öğrenen Türk Soylu Öğrencilerin Karşılaştığı Dil Edinim Sorunları

ÖZ: Günümüzde, Türkiye Türkçesinin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi hızla yaygınlaşmakta ve bu süreçte Türk soylu öğrencilerin dil edinim süreçleri üzerine yapılan çalışmalar giderek önem kazanmaktadır. Türkçeyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrenciler arasında, ana diliyle yapısal benzerliklere sahip olmasına rağmen Türk soylu öğrencilerin de çeşitli zorluklar yaşadığı gözlemlenmektedir. Bu çalışma, B1 seviyesinde Türkçe öğrenen Türk soylu öğrencilerin karşılaştıkları dil edinim güçlüklerini belirlemeyi ve bu güçlüklerin dil öğrenme sürecine etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, nitel yöntem çerçevesinde yürütülmüş olup, 2022-2023 eğitim-öğretim yılında Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi DİLMER’de öğrenim gören 10 öğrencinin sınıf içi performanslarının gözlemlenmesiyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Gözlemsel durum çalışması kapsamında öğrencilerin dört temel dil becerisindeki gelişimleri ve karşılaştıkları zorluklar analiz edilmiştir. Veriler, betimsel analiz yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırma bulguları, Türk soylu öğrencilerin özellikle yazma ve konuşma becerilerinde dil edinim zorlukları yaşadığını ortaya koymuştur. Yazılı anlatımda eklerin yanlış kullanımı, anlam kaymaları ve cümle yapı hataları yaygınken; konuşmada telaffuz farklılıkları ve kod kaymaları gözlemlenmiştir. Okuma becerisinde öğrenciler metinleri anlamakta zorlanmasa da eleştirel okuma ve çıkarım yapmada eksiklikler göstermiş, dinleme becerisinde ise mecaz ifadeleri anlamlandırmada güçlük yaşamışlardır. Sonuç olarak, Türk soylu öğrenciler için farklılaştırılmış öğretim yöntemleri ve materyallerin geliştirilmesi önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkçenin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi, Türk soylu öğrenciler, B1 seviyesi, dil öğrenme güçlükleri.

Language Acquisition Problems Encountered by Students of Turkish Origin Learning Turkish at the B1 Level

ABSTRACT: Today, the teaching of Turkey Turkish as a foreign language is becoming increasingly widespread, and studies focusing on the language acquisition processes of students of Turkish origin are gaining growing importance. Among learners of Turkish as a foreign language, it is observed that students of Turkish origin also experience various difficulties, despite the structural similarities between Turkish and their mother tongues. This study aims to identify the language acquisition difficulties encountered by students of Turkish origin learning Turkish at the B1 level and to examine the effects of these difficulties on the language learning process. The research was conducted within a qualitative framework and carried out through the observation of in-class performances of 10 students studying at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University DİLMER during the 2022–2023 academic year. Within the scope of an observational case study, students’ development and difficulties in the four basic language skills were analyzed. The data were evaluated using descriptive analysis. The findings reveal that students of Turkish origin experience language acquisition difficulties particularly in writing and speaking skills. In written expression, incorrect use of suffixes, semantic shifts, and sentence structure errors are common, while in speaking, pronunciation differences and code-switching were observed. In reading skills, although students did not have significant difficulty understanding texts, they showed deficiencies in critical reading and inference-making. In listening skills, they experienced difficulty in interpreting figurative expressions. As a result, the study recommends the development of differentiated teaching methods and materials tailored to students of Turkish origin.

Keywords: Teaching Turkish as a foreign language; students of Turkish origin; B1 level; language learning difficulties.

Giriş

Türk dili, aynı kökten türeyen lehçeleriyle oldukça geniş bir coğrafyada konuşulmakta ve yaklaşık 250 milyonluk konuşur kitlesiyle dünyada en yaygın kullanılan diller arasında yer almaktadır. Özbekistan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Türkmenistan, Azerbaycan, Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti gibi ülkelerde konuşulan Türkçenin farklı lehçeleri, alanyazında genellikle “Türk dilli” ya da “Türk soylu” kavramlarıyla ifade edilmektedir. Bu ülkelerin Türkiye ile sahip olduğu tarihî ve kültürel bağlar;

¹ Bu çalışma 17-19 Nisan 2025 tarihlerinde Bişkek’te düzenlenen V. Uluslararası Türk Uygurlu Kongresi’nde bildiri olarak sunulmuştur.

Türkiye'nin eğitim, kültür, sanat ve turizm alanlarındaki gelişmiş imkânlarıyla birleştiğinde, Türkiye Türkçesine yönelik ilginin her geçen gün arttığı görülmektedir (Durmuş, 2013).

Yabancılara Türkçe öğretiminde (YTÖ) hedef kitlenin doğru biçimde tanımlanması, öğrenme ortamında kullanılan materyallerin öğrenenlerin ihtiyaçlarına yönelik değiştirilmesi ve bu doğrultuda öğretim programlarının yapılandırılması büyük önem taşımaktadır (Delibaş & Ağıldere, 2019). Demir (2013), Türkçeyi öğrenen hedef kitleyi dört ana grupta ele alırken; Durmuş (2018), bu sınıflandırmayı daha ayrıntılı bir çerçevede ele alarak anadili Türkçe olanlar, Türkçeyi ikinci dil olarak öğrenenler, iki dilli bireyler ve Türk soylu öğrenenler şeklinde gruplandırmaktadır. Buna karşın, uygulamada bu farklı öğrenen gruplarına çoğu zaman aynı öğretim programlarının, ders materyallerinin ve ölçme-değerlendirme araçlarının uygulanması, öğrenme sürecinde çeşitli pedagojik sorunlara yol açmaktadır.

Türk soylu öğrenciler, Türkiye Türkçesini öğrenme sürecinde lehçeler arası benzerliklerden kaynaklanan birtakım avantajlara sahip olmakla birlikte, söz konusu benzerliklerin yol açtığı öğrenme yanılgılarıyla da karşı karşıya kalabilmektedir. TÖMER ve DİLMER gibi merkezlerde, Türkçeye ilk kez karşılaşan yabancı öğrencilerle Türk soylu öğrencilerin aynı sınıflarda öğrenim görmeleri, aynı materyalleri kullanmaları ve aynı ölçütlerle değerlendirilmeleri önemli sorunlar doğurmaktadır. Zira ana dili Türkçenin bir lehçesi olan bireylerle yürütülen Türkçe öğretimini, Türkçeye tamamen yabancı öğrenenlerle aynı kategoride ele almak pedagojik açıdan sağlıklı bir yaklaşım değil ve uzak dil yakın dil ilkesini ihlaldir (Yağmur, 2013, Delibaş, 2023).

Eğitim-öğretim sürecinin temel amacı, belirlenen hedeflere etkili ve nitelikli bir biçimde ulaşmaktır. Yabancı öğrencilerin okuma, yazma, dinleme ve konuşma becerilerini dengeli biçimde geliştirebilmeleri, dil bilgisi yapılarını doğru kullanabilmeleri ve uygun ölçütlerle değerlendirilebilmeleri için öğretim programlarının hedef kitlenin özellikleri, ön bilgileri ve öğrenme deneyimleri dikkate alınarak hazırlanması gerekmektedir.

Türkiye Türkçesi ile yapısal açıdan büyük ölçüde benzerlik gösteren dilleri konuşan Türk soylu öğrencilerin, Türkçeye tamamen yabancı olan öğrencilere kıyasla daha az zorlandıkları bilinmektedir (Karatay ve Kartallıoğlu, 2012). Bununla birlikte, Türk soylu öğrenciler de Türkiye Türkçesini öğrenme sürecinde kendi içinde çeşitli güçlükler yaşamaktadır. Bu güçlüklerin başında, doğrudan anlama becerileriyle ilişkili sorunlar gelmekte; söz konusu sorunlar, diğer dil becerilerinin gelişimini de olumsuz etkilemektedir. Özellikle okuma becerisi, yabancı dil öğretiminde merkezi bir konuma sahip olup diğer becerilerin gelişimini doğrudan etkilemektedir. Okuma becerisinin geliştirilmesi, dil öğrenme sürecinin daha etkili ve verimli ilerlemesine katkı sağlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, ister Türk soylu ister yabancı kökenli olsun, Türkçe öğretiminde okuma becerisine öncelik verilmesi gerektiği vurgulanmaktadır (Şen, 2015).

A1 ve A2 düzeylerinde öğrencilerin Türkiye Türkçesinin seslerini ayırt edebilme, sözcük ve cümlelerin temel anlamlarını kavrayabilme, okudukları metinler üzerinden dili doğru kullanabilme ve metnin amacını belirleyebilme gibi temel kazanımları edinmeleri beklenmektedir. Ancak yapılan gözlemler, Türk soylu öğrencilerin B1 düzeyine ulaştıklarında bu kazanımları ileri düzeyde geliştirmeleri gerekirken, çoğu zaman A1 ve A2 düzeyindeki bilgi ve becerilerle sınırlı kaldıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Türk soylu öğrencilerin Türkiye Türkçesini öğrenirken devrik cümle kurma, tamlama hataları yapma, eklerin eksik ya da yanlış kullanımı, gereksiz tekrarlar, gereksiz sözcük kullanımı, cümle öğelerinde eksiklikler ve kip ya da kişi eklerinin işlev dışı kullanımı gibi hatalara sıkça rastlanmaktadır (Çelik, 2012).

Diller arasındaki yakınlık, Türk soylu öğrenciler için önemli bir avantaj olmakla birlikte, Türkçe öğretim sürecinde benimsenen bazı yanlış yaklaşımlar, öğrencilerin seviyeye uygun kazanımları edinmelerini engelleyebilmektedir. Bu durumun başlıca nedenleri arasında; Türk soylu öğrencilerin Türkçeye tamamen yabancı öğrencilerle aynı gruplarda eğitim almaları, her iki grup için aynı öğretim programlarının uygulanması, Türki diller arasındaki benzerliklerin öğrencilerin yeni dil öğrenmeye yönelik motivasyonlarını azaltması, Türk soylu öğrencilerin dil öğrenme sürecinde zaman kaybı yaşadıklarını düşünmeleri, "zaten biliyorum" algısıyla aşırı özgüven geliştirmeleri ve ders kitaplarındaki beceri etkinliklerinin Türk soylu öğrencilerin ihtiyaç ve seviyelerine uygun biçimde tasarlanmaması sayılabilir. Bu tür sorunların günümüzde pek çok TÖMER ve DİLMER uygulamasında ortaya çıktığı görülmektedir.

Bu çalışmada, yabancılara Türkçe öğretiminde program temelli eksikliklerden hareketle, B1 düzeyindeki Türk soylu öğrencilerin DİLMER'deki öğrenim süreçlerinin gözlemlenmesi, karşılaşılan güçlüklerin belirlenmesi ve Türk soylu öğrenciler ile diğer yabancı öğrenciler için farklılaştırılmış öğretim programlarının gerekliliğinin ortaya konulması amaçlanmaktadır.

Yöntem

Bu çalışmada, yabancı dil olarak Türkçe öğretimi bağlamında Türk soylu öğrencilerin dil becerilerini hangi düzeyde geliştirdikleri, hangi alanlarda güçlük yaşadıkları ve mevcut öğretim programları çerçevesinde diğer yabancı öğrencilerle aynı düzeyde dil edinimi sağlayıp sağlayamadıkları incelenmiştir. Araştırma, nitel araştırma yaklaşımı temelinde yapılandırılmıştır. Nitel araştırmalar, olguların doğal ortamları içinde ele alındığı, araştırmacının sürece doğrudan müdahalede bulunmadığı ve anlamın derinlemesine yorumlanmasına olanak tanıyan bir yöntem olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Büyüköztürk vd., 2017).

Araştırmada desen olarak gözlemsel durum çalışması tercih edilmiştir. Durum çalışmaları, belirli bir olgunun ya da durumun kendi bağlamı içinde ayrıntılı biçimde incelenmesine olanak sağlayan nitel araştırma desenleri arasında yer almaktadır. Bu tür çalışmalar, karmaşık sosyal süreçlerin anlaşılmasında ve mevcut uygulamaların bütüncül bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirilmesinde sıklıkla kullanılmaktadır (Büyüköztürk vd., 2017). Subaşı ve Okumuş'a (2017) göre durum çalışması; tek bir durumun ya da olayın çeşitli boyutlarıyla derinlemesine ele alındığı, verilerin sistematik biçimde toplandığı ve gerçek ortamda ortaya çıkan süreçlerin ayrıntılı olarak incelendiği bir araştırma yöntemidir (s. 420).

Bu araştırmada ele alınan durum, Türk soylu öğrencilerin yabancı dil olarak Türkiye Türkçesini öğrenme sürecinde karşılaştıkları güçlükleri mevcut öğretim uygulamaları çerçevesinde ortaya koymak, elde edilen verileri analiz ederek derinlemesine anlamlandırmak ve bu doğrultuda öğretim sürecine yönelik nitelikli çıkarımlara ulaşmak amacıyla yapılandırılmıştır.

Çalışma Grubu

Bu araştırmanın evrenini, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Türkçe ve Yabancı Dil Öğretimi Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi (DİLMER)'de öğrenim gören yabancı öğrenciler oluşturmaktadır. Evreni temsil etmek amacıyla belirli ölçütler doğrultusunda seçilen sınırlı grup ise araştırmanın çalışma grubunu oluşturmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, araştırmanın çalışma grubu, 2022–2023 eğitim-öğretim yılında aynı kurumda öğrenim gören Türk soylu öğrencilerden meydana gelmektedir.

Çalışma grubunun belirlenmesinde seçkisiz örnekleme yöntemleri arasında yer alan tabakalı örnekleme tekniği kullanılmıştır. Bu yöntemle, araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak belirlenen alt gruplar arasından temsil gücü yüksek bir örneklem oluşturulması hedeflenmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında toplam 10 Türk soylu öğrenci, doğal öğrenme ortamı içinde gözlemlenmiş; veri toplama sürecinde yapılandırılmamış gözlem tekniğinden yararlanılmıştır.

Veri Toplama Aracı ve Verilerin Toplanması

Bu araştırmada, Türk soylu öğrencilerin kültürel ve dilsel benzerliklerinin Türkçeyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenme süreçleri üzerindeki olumlu ve olumsuz etkilerini ortaya koymak amacıyla veri toplama aracı olarak gözlem yönteminden yararlanılmıştır. Türk soylu öğrencilerin, diğer yabancı öğrencilerle birlikte aynı sınıflarda ve aynı düzeyde eğitim almalarının ve aynı öğretim programlarına göre öğrenim görmelerinin, dört temel dil becerisinin gelişimine ne ölçüde yansıdığını belirlemek amacıyla gözlem yöntemi tercih edilmiştir.

Gözlem yönteminin araştırma sürecindeki temel ayırt edici özelliği, doğal ortamlarda gerçekleşen durumların doğrudan izlenmesine ve verilerin birinci elden elde edilmesine olanak sağlamasıdır. Bu yönüyle gözlem, öğrenme-öğretme sürecinde ortaya çıkan davranışların, etkileşimlerin ve gelişimlerin bütüncül biçimde değerlendirilmesine imkân tanımaktadır (Cohen, Manion ve Morrison, 2007, s. 396'dan akt. Alyılmaz & Er, 2016, s. 1396).

Bu bağlamda araştırmada yapılandırılmamış gözlem tekniği kullanılmıştır. Yapılandırılmamış gözlem, gözlem öncesinde katı bir çerçevenin belirlenmediği, gözlemcinin süreci esnek bir biçimde takip edebildiği ve ortaya çıkan durumlara göre veri toplayabildiği bir yaklaşımı ifade etmektedir. Bu teknik, özellikle sınıf içi uygulamaların ve öğrenen davranışlarının doğal akışı içerisinde ayrıntılı biçimde incelenmesine olanak sağlamaktadır (Büyüköztürk vd., 2017).

Verilerin Analizi

Bu çalışmada elde edilen veriler, betimsel analiz yöntemi kullanılarak çözümlenmiştir. Betimsel analiz, nitel verilerin önceden belirlenen temalar çerçevesinde düzenlenmesini, açık ve sistematik bir biçimde sunulmasını ve elde edilen bulguların anlamlandırılmasını amaçlayan bir analiz yaklaşımıdır. Bu doğrultuda, gözlem yoluyla elde edilen veriler düzenlenmiş; bulgular açıklanmış, yorumlanmış ve araştırmanın amaçları doğrultusunda sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır.

Araştırma sürecinde Türk soylu öğrencilerin derse katılım durumları, sınıf içi etkileşimleri ve dil öğrenme süreçleri gözlemlenmiş; bu öğrencilerin diğer yabancı öğrencilerle benzerlik ve farklılık gösteren yönleri not edilmiştir. On günlük (toplam 60 saatlik) gözlem sürecinin ardından elde edilen veriler, temalar hâlinde sınıflandırılarak tablolar aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir. Yapılan analizler sonucunda, Türk soylu öğrencilerin öğrenim etkinliklerine katılım biçimleri ve dil edinim süreçlerine ilişkin çıkarımlarda bulunulmuştur.

Geçerlik ve Güvenirlik

Nitel araştırmalarda geçerlik ve güvenilirliğin sağlanabilmesi için verilerin ayrıntılı biçimde kaydedilmesi, sistematik ve dikkatli notlandırma yapılması ve elde edilen verilerin incelenen olguları doğru yansıtacak şekilde betimlenmesi büyük önem taşımaktadır (Büyüköztürk vd., 2017). Bu çalışmada veriler yalnızca gözlem yöntemiyle toplanmış; gözlem süreci boyunca araştırmacı tarafından düzenli ve sistematik alan notları tutulmuştur. Gözlenen durumların doğal akışı içinde ve tarafsız bir bakış açısıyla betimlenmesine özen gösterilmesi, araştırmanın güvenilirliğini artıran unsurlar arasında yer almaktadır.

Bununla birlikte, verilerin tek bir gözlemci tarafından toplanmış olması ve gözlem süresinin belirli bir zaman aralığıyla sınırlı kalması, araştırmanın geçerliğini sınırlayan etkenler olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Bu durum, elde edilen bulguların genellenebilirliğini kısıtlamakta; ancak çalışmanın amaçladığı bağlam içinde derinlemesine ve ayrıntılı betimleme sunmasına engel teşkil etmemektedir.

Bulgular

Bu bölümde, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Türkçe ve Yabancı Dil Öğretimi Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi (DİLMER)'de B1 düzeyinde öğrenim gören 17 kişilik yabancı öğrenci grubunda yer alan 10 Türk soylu öğrencinin yaklaşık 60 saatlik ders süresince gerçekleştirilen sistematik gözlemleri sonucunda elde edilen bulgular sunulmaktadır. Öğrencilerin okuma, yazma, dinleme ve konuşma olmak üzere dört temel dil becerisi ile dil bilgisi alanındaki gelişimleri, karşılaştıkları güçlükler ve başarı durumları gözlem formları ve ders içi alan notlarına dayalı olarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, her bir dil becerisine ilişkin olarak oluşturulan tablolarla desteklenmiştir.

Okuma Becerisine İlişkin Bulgular

Türk soylu öğrencilerin okuma becerilerine ilişkin gözlem sonuçları Tablo 1'de sunulmaktadır. Bulgular incelendiğinde, öğrencilerin büyük bir bölümünün Türkçe metinleri akıcı biçimde okuma ve okuma odaklı ders etkinliklerine uyum sağlama konusunda başarılı oldukları görülmektedir. Buna karşılık, cümle içinde kelimeleri bağlama uygun kullanma, görsellerden yararlanarak anlamlı cümleler oluşturma ve okunan metinlerden çıkarım yapma gibi üst düzey bilişsel becerilerde başarı oranının belirgin biçimde düştüğü tespit edilmiştir.

Tablo 1.

Türk Soylu Öğrencilerin Okuma Becerilerine Yönelik Gözlem Sonuçları (Başarılı/Başarısız Dağılımı)

Dikkat edilen kazanımlar	Başarılı Türk soylu öğrenciler	Başarısız Türk soylu öğrenciler
1. Türkçe metinleri anlamlı ve akıcı şekilde okumak.	8	2
2. Türkçe sesleri doğru telaffuz etmek.	4	6
3. Cümle içinde kelimeleri anlamına uygun kullanmak.	2	8
4. Ders etkinliklerine (okuma odaklı) etkin katılım sağlamak.	7	3
5. Görsellerden yola çıkarak anlamlı cümleler kurmak.	4	6
6. Ders kitabı alıştırmalarını yönergelere uygun ve zamanında yapmak.	4	6
7. Okuma metinlerinin konularına ilgi göstermek.	5	5
8. Kültürel eleştirmelere aktif katılmak.	10	0
9. Okuduğu metinlerden çıkarımda bulunmak.	4	6

Ayrıca öğrencilerin yarısının okuma metinlerinin konularına yeterli düzeyde ilgi göstermediği, bunun da metni derinlemesine anlama ve dikkat sürecini olumsuz etkilediği gözlemlenmiştir. Gözlem sürecinde elde edilen bulgular, Türk soylu öğrencilerin ana dilleri ile Türkiye Türkçesi arasındaki benzerliklerin, dil öğrenme sürecinde hem kolaylaştırıcı hem de sınırlandırıcı etkiler oluşturabildiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Öğrencilerin bir kısmının “zaten biliyorum” algısıyla metinleri yüzeysel okudukları, ayrıntılı anlama ve çıkarım yapma becerilerini yeterince geliştiremedikleri belirlenmiştir. Bu durum, okuma becerisinin yalnızca teknik bir yeterlik değil; aynı zamanda bilişsel farkındalık ve öğrenme disipliniyle doğrudan ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir.

Yazma Becerisine İlişkin Bulgular

Türk soylu öğrencilerin yazma becerilerine ilişkin gözlem sonuçları Tablo 2’de sunulmuştur. Bulgular, dil ve kültür yakınlığına rağmen öğrencilerin yazılı anlatımda çeşitli güçlüklerle karşılaştığını ortaya koymaktadır. Özellikle Türkiye Türkçesine özgü ses bilgisi özelliklerine uyum sağlama ve dil bilgisi kurallarını doğru biçimde uygulama konularında önemli eksiklikler gözlemlenmiştir.

Tablo 2.

Türk Soylu Öğrencilerin Yazma Becerilerine Yönelik Gözlem Sonuçları (Başarılı/Başarısız Dağılımı)

Dikkat edilen kazanımlar	Başarılı Türk soylu öğrenciler	Başarısız Türk soylu öğrenciler
1. Türkiye Türkçesindeki ses bilgisi özelliklerine uyarak yazabilmek.	2	8
2. Kelimeleri anlamsal bağlayabilmek.	5	5
3. Ekleri dil bilgisi kurallarına göre ekleyebilmek.	3	7

4. Fikirlerini yazılı olarak ifade edebilmek.	5	5
5. Görsellerden yola çıkarak kısa metinler yazabilmek.	5	5
6. Kelimeleri Türkiye Türkçesindeki anlamıyla kendi dilindeki anlamını ayırt edebilmek.	3	7
7. Dil bilgisi kurallarını ezberleyebilmek.	5	5

Öğrencilerin yazma sürecinde en fazla zorlandıkları alanlardan biri, ana dillerindeki dil bilgisi yapılarının Türkiye Türkçesine aktarılmasıdır. Bu durum özellikle ünlü uyumu kuralına uyum sağlanamaması şeklinde kendini göstermektedir. Öğrencilerin ana dillerinde bu kuralın bulunmaması, yazılı anlatımda hata oranının artmasına neden olmaktadır. Gözlem verilerine göre en yüksek başarısızlık oranının bu kazanımda görülmesi, söz konusu yapısal farklılığın yazma becerisi üzerindeki etkisini açık biçimde ortaya koymaktadır.

Bununla birlikte, kelimeleri anlamsal bağlam içinde kullanma, fikirleri yazılı olarak ifade etme ve görsellerden hareketle kısa metinler oluşturma gibi kazanımlarda başarı oranlarının dengeli dağıldığı görülmüştür. Bu durum, grup içinde bireysel farklılıkların bulunduğunu ve dil bilgisi temelli eksikliklerin genel yazma başarısını doğrudan etkilediğini göstermektedir.

Dinleme Becerisine İlişkin Bulgular

Türk soylu öğrencilerin dinleme becerilerine ilişkin bulgular Tablo 3'te yer almaktadır. Bulgular, öğrencilerin dinleme becerilerinde genel olarak olumlu bir performans sergilediklerini göstermektedir.

Tablo 3.

Türk Soylu Öğrencilerin Dinleme Becerilerine Yönelik Gözlem Sonuçları (Başarılı/Başarısız Dağılımı)

Dikkat edilen kazanımlar	Başarılı Türk soylu öğrenciler	Başarısız Türk soylu öğrenciler
1. Türkiye Türkçesinin sesli özelliklerini kendi dilinden ayırt edebilme.	9	1
2. Mecaz ifadeleri anlayıp kullanabilme.	6	4
3. Dinlediği ya da izlediği haberlerden çıkarımlar yapabilme.	6	4
4. Dinlediği metni özetleyebilme.	8	2
5. Görüntülü/sesli ya da doğal ortamda dinlediklerini yazılı ya da sözlü anlatabilme.	8	2

Türkiye Türkçesinin ses özelliklerini ayırt edebilme ve dinlenen metni özetleyebilme gibi temel dinleme kazanımlarında yüksek başarı oranlarına ulaşılması, ana dilleri ile Türkçe arasındaki fonetik ve yapısal benzerliklerin bu beceriyi desteklediğini düşündürmektedir. Buna karşın, mecaz ifadeleri anlama ve dinlenen ya da izlenen metinlerden çıkarım yapma gibi daha üst düzey bilişsel süreçleri gerektiren kazanımlarda başarı oranının görece düşük olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu durum, dinleme becerisinin yalnızca işitsel algıya değil; aynı zamanda kültürel ve bağlamsal bilgilerin etkin kullanımına dayandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Türk soylu öğrencilerin kültürel yakınlıklarına rağmen mecaz anlamları ve çıkarımsal bilgileri anlamlandırma konusunda daha fazla uygulamaya ihtiyaç duydukları söylenebilir.

Konuşma Becerisine İlişkin Bulgular

Türk soylu öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerine ilişkin gözlem sonuçları Tablo 4'te sunulmuştur. Bulgular, öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerinde belirgin güçlükler yaşadıklarını göstermektedir. Özellikle Türkiye Türkçesine özgü telaffuz kurallarına uyum sağlama, ana dilleri ile Türkiye Türkçesini ayırt ederek konuşabilme ve akıcı konuşma becerilerinde başarısızlık oranının yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Tablo 4.

Türk Soylu Öğrencilerin Konuşma Becerilerine Yönelik Gözlem Sonuçları (Başarılı/Başarısız Dağılımı)

Dikkat edilen kazanımlar	Başarılı Türk soylu öğrenciler	Başarısız Türk soylu öğrenciler
1. Türkiye Türkçesi telaffuz kurallarına uygun konuşabilmek.	3	7
2. Görsellerden yola çıkarak olayları doğru anlatabilmek.	6	4
3. Türkiye Türkçesiyle kendi dilini ayırt ederek konuşabilmek.	2	8
4. Türkiye Türkçesinde akıcı konuşabilmek.	2	8

Öğrencilerin konuşma sırasında gereksiz tekrarlar yapmaları ve kendi dillerinden sözcükler kullanmaları, konuşma akıcılığını ve iletişim etkinliğini olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Görsellere dayalı anlatım etkinliklerinde görece daha başarılı olmaları, görsel destekli uygulamaların konuşma becerisinin geliştirilmesinde etkili bir araç olabileceğini göstermektedir.

Genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde, Türk soylu öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerinde yaşadıkları güçlüklerin temelinde fonetik farklılıklar, sınırlı konuşma pratiği ve ana dil aktarımı yer almaktadır. Bu bulgular doğrultusunda, konuşma becerisinin geliştirilmesine yönelik olarak telaffuz odaklı çalışmaların artırılması, etkileşim temelli ve görsel destekli öğretim yöntemlerinin uygulanması önerilmektedir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Bu çalışma, Türk soylu öğrencilerin diğer yabancı öğrencilerle birlikte karma sınıflarda öğrenim görmelerinin, dil edinim süreçlerine yansıyan avantaj ve güçlükleri ortaya koymayı amaçlamıştır. Bu doğrultuda, Türk soylu öğrencilerin dilsel ve kültürel özelliklerinin öğretim sürecinde yeterince dikkate alınmamasının, öğrenme çıktıları üzerinde belirleyici bir etkiye sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Araştırma bulguları, Türk soylu öğrenciler için ayrı öğretim programlarının, ders materyallerinin ve farklılaştırılmış yöntem ve tekniklerin geliştirilmesinin gerekliliğine işaret etmektedir.

Araştırma, nitel araştırma yaklaşımı çerçevesinde gözlemsel durum çalışması deseni kullanılarak yürütülmüş; doğal sınıf ortamında öğrencilerin dil becerilerine yönelik performansları incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın evrenini, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Türkçe ve Yabancı Dil Öğretimi Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi (DİLMER)'de yabancı ve Türk soylu öğrencilerin birlikte öğrenim gördüğü karma sınıflar oluşturmuştur. Çalışma grubu, tabakalı seçkisiz örnekleme yöntemiyle belirlenen 10 Türk soylu öğrenciden oluşmuştur. Veri toplama sürecinde yapılandırılmamış gözlem tekniğinden yararlanılmış; elde edilen veriler betimsel analiz yöntemiyle çözümlenmiştir.

Araştırma bulguları, Türk soylu öğrencilerin dört temel dil becerisinde farklı düzeylerde güçlüklerle karşılaştıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Okuma becerisinde öğrencilerin metinlerin genel anlamını kavrayabildikleri; ancak sözcüklerin bağlama uygun kullanımı, eleştirel okuma ve çıkarım yapma gibi üst düzey bilişsel becerilerde yetersizlikler yaşadıkları belirlenmiştir. Yazma becerisinde ise özellikle Türkiye Türkçesine özgü dil bilgisi kuralları ve eklerin kullanımında belirgin güçlükler gözlemlenmiştir. Öğrencilerin

ana dillerindeki sözcük ve yapıların yazılı anlatıma aktarılması, anlam bozukluklarına ve yapısal hatalara yol açmaktadır.

Dinleme becerisi, diğer becerilere kıyasla öğrencilerin görece daha başarılı oldukları bir alan olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, mecaz anlam içeren ifadelerin anlaşılması ve dinlenen metinlerden çıkarım yapılması gibi üst düzey dinleme becerilerinde öğrencilerin zorlandıkları görülmüştür. Konuşma becerisi ise Türk soylu öğrencilerin en fazla güçlük yaşadıkları alan olarak dikkat çekmektedir. Türkiye Türkçesine özgü telaffuz kurallarına uyum sağlayamama, ana dilden kaynaklanan sesletim alışkanlıkları ve kod kaymaları, öğrencilerin akıcı ve doğru konuşmalarını sınırlamaktadır.

Elde edilen sonuçlar, dil ve kültür bakımından yakınlık gösteren Türk soylu öğrencilerle Türkçeye tamamen yabancı öğrencilerin aynı sınıf ortamında eğitim almalarının, her iki grup için de dil edinim sürecini olumsuz etkileyebileceğini göstermektedir. Bu nedenle öğretim programlarının, ders materyallerinin ve kullanılan öğretim yöntemlerinin öğrenci gruplarının dilsel özelliklerine göre farklılaştırılması gerekmektedir. Özellikle Türk soylu öğrenciler için dil bilgisi temelli destekleyici çalışmaların ve konuşma becerisini geliştirmeye yönelik uygulamaların artırılması, öğrenme sürecinin etkililiğini artıracaktır.

Araştırma bulguları, alanyazındaki bazı çalışmalarla örtüşmektedir. Biçer ve Alan (2019), Türk soylu öğrencilerin dil ve kültür yakınlığı sayesinde Türkçeyi daha kolay öğrendiklerini belirtmektedir. Bu çalışma da söz konusu görüşü desteklemekle birlikte, Türk soylu öğrencilerin özellikle yazma ve konuşma becerilerinde önemli güçlükler yaşadıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Benzer biçimde Şahin (2008), Türk soylu öğrencilerin önceki dil alışkanlıklarından uzaklaşmakta ve yeni dil kurallarına uyum sağlamakta zorlandıklarını ifade etmektedir. Mevcut araştırmanın bulguları, bu tespitleri destekler niteliktedir ve Türk soylu öğrencilerin dil öğrenme sürecinde yapılandırılmış ve hedefe yönelik desteklere ihtiyaç duyduklarını göstermektedir.

Sonuç olarak, Türk soylu öğrenciler için farklılaştırılmış öğretim programlarının, materyallerin ve yöntemlerin geliştirilmesi; öğrencilerin güçlü oldukları alanların desteklenmesine ve zayıf oldukları becerilerde ilerleme kaydetmelerine katkı sağlayacaktır. Eğitim uygulamalarında yapılacak bu tür düzenlemelerin, Türkçenin yabancı dil olarak öğretiminde hem öğrenme sürecini hızlandıracağı hem de öğrencilerin motivasyonunu ve akademik başarısını artıracığı düşünülmektedir.

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TEACHERPRENEURSHIP IN THE MIDDLE EAST THROUGH THE LENS OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Neda Fatehi RAD

Associate Professor,

Department of English Language, Ke.C., Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran.

nedafatehi@iau.ac.ir

ORCID: 0000-0003-1295-9078

Hamed Barjesteh

Associate Professor,

Department of English Language , Am.C., Islamic Azad University, Amol, Iran.

Hamed.Barjesteh@iau.ac.ir

ha_bar77@yahoo.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-4018-4487

Hossein Isaei

Department of English Language, Am.C., Islamic Azad University, Amol, Iran

hossein_isaei@yahoo.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-9028-2907

Mehdi Manoochehrzadeh

Zerodale Inc. Centre for Research in Entrepreneurship Education and Development,
Toronto, Canada

manoochehrzadeh@zerodale.com

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ORCID: 0009-0007-0381-7250

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ABSTRACT: Teacherpreneurs are a combination of educators and entrepreneurs who balance their teaching roles with the opportunity, resources, and motivation to develop and implement innovative educational practices and policies that benefit students and fellow teachers (Berry, 2010). Although teachers who exhibit entrepreneurial behavior often prioritize their professional development, the perceptions of English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers regarding teacherpreneurship have not been thoroughly explored in the Middle East context. This study seeks to investigate the perceptions of ELT teachers on advantages and challenges of teacherpreneurship in four countries (i.e., Dubai, Iran, Iraq, and Türkiye). The study identifies common themes and attitudes among participants using a phenomenological design. Through purposive sampling, 40 ELT teachers with experience in teacherpreneurship were selected. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Duo and WhatsApp, with open-ended questions in English. The results revealed that participants viewed teacherpreneurship as a means for fostering innovation, advancing professionally, generating income, improving digital literacy, reducing burnout, and creating platforms for publishing academic work. Furthermore, participants identified several advantages and challenges associated with ELT teacherpreneurship. The findings have implications for key stakeholders in the field, including ELT teacherpreneurs, their followers, and researchers across the Middle Eastern context

Keywords: English Language Teaching; Entrepreneurs; Innovative Educational Practices; Teacherpreneurs

Dil Öğretmenleri Perspektifinden Orta Doğu'da Öğretmen Girişimciliği

ÖZ: Öğretmen girişimciler (teacherpreneurs), öğretmenlik rollerini; öğrencilere ve meslektaşlarına fayda sağlayan yenilikçi eğitim uygulamaları ve politikaları geliştirme ve hayata geçirme fırsatı, kaynakları ve motivasyonu ile dengeleyen eğitimciler ve girişimcilerin bir birleşimidir (Berry, 2010). Girişimci davranışlar sergileyen öğretmenler çoğu zaman mesleki gelişimlerine öncelik vermelerine rağmen, İngilizce Öğretimi (English Language Teaching – ELT) alanındaki öğretmenlerin öğretmen girişimciliğine ilişkin algıları Orta Doğu bağlamında yeterince incelenmemiştir. Bu çalışma, dört ülkede (Dubai, İran, Irak ve Türkiye) görev yapan ELT öğretmenlerinin öğretmen girişimciliğinin avantajları ve karşılaşılan zorluklarına ilişkin algılarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada fenomenolojik desen benimsenmiş ve katılımcıların deneyimlerinden hareketle ortak tema ve tutumlar belirlenmiştir. Amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle, öğretmen girişimciliği deneyimine sahip 40 ELT öğretmeni seçilmiştir. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, İngilizce olarak hazırlanmış açık uçlu sorular aracılığıyla Duo ve WhatsApp üzerinden gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bulgular, katılımcıların öğretmen girişimciliğini yeniliği teşvik etme, mesleki gelişimi ilerletme, gelir elde etme, dijital okuryazarlığı artırma, tükenmişliği azaltma ve akademik çalışmaların yayımlanmasına yönelik platformlar oluşturma aracı olarak gördüklerini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca katılımcılar, ELT bağlamında öğretmen girişimciliğine ilişkin çeşitli avantajlar ve zorluklar tanımlamışlardır. Elde edilen bulgular, ELT öğretmen girişimcileri, bu girişimcileri takip edenler ve Orta Doğu bağlamında çalışan araştırmacılar dâhil olmak üzere alandaki temel paydaşlar için önemli çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizce Öğretimi; Girişimciler; Yenilikçi Eğitim Uygulamaları; Öğretmen Girişimciler

Introduction

Over the past decade, the rapid expansion of higher education has increased the roles and responsibilities of teachers, especially in second language (L2) contexts like the Middle East, where significant investments are made in education. As the field becomes more competitive, teachers seek innovative pedagogical methods to enhance their teaching effectiveness (Gast et al., 2022). Research shows that teachers with entrepreneurial behaviors prioritize their professional development, leading to improved teaching and innovation (Amorim Neto et al., 2017; Drucker, 2014; Keyhani & Kim, 2020). This trend has given rise to "teacherpreneurs"—educators who blend teaching with entrepreneurial initiatives to foster educational improvements.

Teacherpreneurs continue teaching while developing and implementing novel pedagogical and policy ideas that benefit both students and colleagues (Berry, 2013a). They utilize innovations and technologies to create autonomous educational platforms, enhancing practices within and beyond traditional school settings (Çelik & Baturay, 2024; Bahrami & Afzali, 2024). In the Middle East, countries like Dubai, Türkiye, Iran, and Iraq are emphasizing educational reforms. For example, Türkiye is undertaking a five-year project to enhance foreign language education quality in collaboration with the Council of Europe. Despite these efforts, teacherpreneurship is rarely integrated into teacher training programs in these regions, leaving many educators unfamiliar with entrepreneurial concepts (Borasi & Finnigan, 2010; Mazandarani, 2022). Moreover, despite the global importance and substantial investments in English Language Teaching (ELT), the role of teacherpreneurship in fostering pedagogical innovation remains largely overlooked in these educational systems. The growing demand for EFL teachers' professional development in the Middle East highlights the need for approaches that go beyond traditional teaching roles. Integrating teacherpreneurship into high-quality education systems allows educators to shape student learning experiences, collaborate with peers and administrators, and contribute to policy-making (Berr, 2013; Liui, 2024). Teacherpreneurs introduce innovative teaching methods, demonstrate dedication to student success, and effectively manage multiple roles (Ni'mah et al., 2018). They possess entrepreneurial traits such as competence, creativity, and the ability to market educational products (Epler, 2019), which not only enhance their teaching mastery but also inspire students to learn (Oplatka, 2014).

In the Middle East, the potential for EFL teacherpreneurship is amplified by increasing access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which transcends geographical and political boundaries. This connectivity enables teachers in Dubai, Türkiye, Iran, and Iraq to engage with international communities and enhance their professional practices through cross-border collaborations. Additionally, the need for a multicultural and global mindset is crucial as teachers navigate diverse educational settings and collaborate with colleagues worldwide (Ross & Chan, 2023; Goodwin, 2020; Ni'mah et al., 2018). However, teacherpreneurship in the ELT context is still emerging in many Middle Eastern countries. In Iran, research on EFL teacherpreneurship is limited, and many teachers and students remain unaware of its benefits and challenges. This gap is also evident in Iraq, where EFL teacherpreneurs have yet to fully integrate entrepreneurial practices into their professional lives. Conversely, in more developed regions like Dubai and Türkiye, there is growing recognition of teacherpreneurship as a tool for educational reform and innovation (Abdallah & Abdallah, 2023; Kaya-Capocci, 2022; Özçetin & Gök, 2021). Despite this progress, comprehensive research on how teacherpreneurs perceive and engage with entrepreneurial practices in the EFL field remains scarce.

Literature Review

Definition of the term "Teacherpreneur"

Teacherpreneurs are educators who combine their expertise in the classroom with entrepreneurial activities that enhance the educational landscape (Liu et al., 2024). "They are skilled practitioners who not only shape students' learning experiences but also contribute to the broader educational system through innovative initiatives, policy development, and professional collaboration" (Ni'mah et al., 2018, p. 12). As educators, teacherpreneurs exhibit qualities such as facilitation, motivation, and innovation, which enable them to create dynamic learning environments. "They bring subject matter expertise and creative

pedagogical strategies that help students grasp content meaningfully and engage with the material on a deeper level” (Gupta & Muralidharan, 2020, p. 67). Teacherpreneurs inspire a sense of agency in students, fostering a proactive approach to learning and encouraging critical thinking. Beyond their classroom roles, “teacherpreneurs elevate their professionalism by actively engaging in local and international communities, sharing best practices, and building networks that aim to improve education on a wider scale” (Darling-Hammond, 2020, p. 102). This broad engagement allows them to bridge the gap between classroom practice and policy, shaping both educational outcomes and reforms

Three Stances toward Teacher Entrepreneurship

Research categorizes teacher entrepreneurship into three main perspectives. The first focuses on teachers actively engaged in entrepreneurial activities who design and develop entrepreneurial skills in their students, preparing them for the business world (Feriady & Santoso, 2020; Peltonen, 2015). Scholars such as Carpenter et al. (2016) and Shelton & Archambault (2019) emphasize the importance of teachers adopting an entrepreneurial mindset to foster entrepreneurial thinking in students. However, Keyhani & Kim (2020) highlight that the specific abilities imparted depend largely on the teachers' own characteristics and actions. The second perspective examines teachers who pursue entrepreneurial ventures outside the classroom to increase their income, such as rural Chinese teachers starting bed-and-breakfast businesses (Wu, 2018) or science teachers in Trinidad and Tobago initiating new businesses (Esnard, 2012; Lasekan et al., 2021). The third viewpoint views teacher entrepreneurship as a set of competencies utilized within educational settings, which can be perceived both negatively (Groundwater-Smith & Sachs, 2002) and positively as creative endeavors (Martin et al., 2018).

Empirical Studies on Teacherpreneurs

Numerous empirical studies have examined the effects of entrepreneurship education and the role of teacherpreneurs in shaping students' entrepreneurial mindsets. Schoonmaker et al. (2020) assessed how entrepreneurship education influences students' ability to recognize market opportunities, create business frameworks, and identify customer-centered traits. Kalas and Raisinghani (2019) found that confidence and self-efficacy were key motivational factors that encouraged students to embrace entrepreneurial practices, further enhancing their commitment to academic success and entrepreneurial behaviors. Chilvers (2018) examined how teachers' entrepreneurial practices influence students' job-seeking success and job satisfaction after graduation. The study revealed that students who had teachers with entrepreneurial experience were more successful in securing jobs and reported higher levels of job satisfaction. Similarly, Sugeng and Suryani (2018) investigated effective learning strategies for cultivating entrepreneurship among students, identifying structured, accountable presentation-based activities as particularly effective.

Naegels et al. (2018) examined factors that inhibit entrepreneurship education. Their meta-analysis revealed that cultural norms, academic training, and societal changes often prevent effective entrepreneurship teaching, making it challenging for teacherpreneurs to enact entrepreneurial thinking. Shalini et al. (2017) further examined how teachers' entrepreneurial orientations enhanced students' problem-solving abilities, suggesting that teachers who adopt an entrepreneurial stance directly or indirectly contribute to the development of higher-order cognitive skills in their students. Seechaliao (2017) identified the most common instructional strategies used by teacherpreneurs. These strategies included project-based learning, creative thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving, and research-oriented learning. Aladağ (2017) found a significant correlation between teachers' personal views on entrepreneurship and the strategies they employed to foster entrepreneurial competencies in their students. Collaboratively, these studies formed the foundations of teacherpreneurship.

Teacherpreneurship in the Middle East and Selected Countries

The concept and influence of teacherpreneurship are particularly significant in the Middle East, where education systems are undergoing major transformations. In countries such as Türkiye, Dubai (UAE), Iran, and Iraq, there is increasing recognition of the need to foster entrepreneurial skills in students, with teacherpreneurs playing a crucial role in this shift.

Türkiye has integrated entrepreneurship into its national curriculum, aiming to address youth unemployment and promote economic diversification. Studies (e.g., Kavas, 2023) highlight teacherpreneurs' role in fostering critical thinking and risk-taking. Yılmaz & Kılıç (2023) found that entrepreneurial teachers

implement project-based learning, equipping students with practical business skills. Dubai (UAE), as part of its National Strategy for Innovation (2015), prioritizes entrepreneurship education. Teachers are increasingly adopting technology and real-world business cases to foster entrepreneurial mindsets (Al-Hosani & Al-Fahim, 2023). Teacherpreneurs support the UAE's push for economic diversification and a knowledge-based economy. Iran is evolving its entrepreneurial education to combat youth unemployment and foster innovation. Despite challenges like rigid systems and political constraints, teacherpreneurs adopt experiential learning to equip students with workforce-ready skills (Mirzaei & Sadeghi, 2023). These efforts aim to integrate entrepreneurship into curricula despite economic difficulties. Iraq, impacted by conflict, is working to include entrepreneurship education in schools. Teacherpreneurs face limited resources but increasingly use project-based learning and problem-solving to engage students and prepare them for post-conflict economic challenges (Al-Darraj, 2023).

Teacherpreneurship in these countries equips students with skills for a competitive global economy while contributing to goals like innovation, job creation, and economic diversification. Recent studies (e.g., Kavas, 2023; Al-Hosani & Al-Fahim, 2023; Mirzaei & Sadeghi, 2023; Al-Darraj, 2023) show teacherpreneurs adopting innovative teaching despite socio-political and economic challenges. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how EFL teachers in these countries perceive the advantages and challenges of teacherpreneurship, with the ultimate goal of providing insights that can influence the development of more innovative and entrepreneurial teacher education systems across the Middle East. For this objective, the research questions for this study are:

RQ1: What are EFL teachers' perceptions of teacherpreneurship in the Middle East (Iran, Türkiye, Dubai, and Iraq)?

RQ2: To what extent are EFL teachers in the Middle East conscious of the advantages of EFL teacherpreneurship?

RQ3: To what extent are EFL teachers in the Middle East conscious of the disadvantages of EFL teacherpreneurship?

Method

Research Design

This research utilized a qualitative approach and employed a phenomenological design. This design is especially suitable for exploring individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they assign to a specific phenomenon (Eberle, 2014). In this case, the phenomenon of interest was EFL teacherpreneurship, focusing on how teachers innovate in their practices and the impact these innovations have on students. Phenomenology allows for a rich exploration of participants' subjective experiences, capturing the depth of their perceptions (Eberle & Schnettler, 2020). In line with this design, the study used semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method, allowing participants to share their insights in a flexible yet focused manner. Thematic analysis was then employed to identify patterns and themes across the interview data, providing a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Participants

The participants in this study were 40 EFL teacherpreneurs (20 males and 20 females) from Türkiye, Dubai, Iran, and Iraq. The participants were selected through purposive sampling (Suri, 2011), ensuring they had experience in EFL teacherpreneurship. EFL teacherpreneurship in this study refers to the involvement of teachers in innovative activities such as creating instructional videos, designing new English courses, developing e-books, utilizing game-based learning strategies, and creating specialized methods for teaching English to diverse learner groups, including those with learning difficulties. The participants held B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. degrees in various branches of English language and literature and had teaching experience ranging from 5 to 25 years in different educational settings, including schools, institutes, and universities. The teachers were aged between 30 and 60 years with an age average of 41. Given the diversity of the sample, 40 participants were considered sufficient to reach data saturation, a point where no new information emerged. All participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, and their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured throughout the research process.

Instruments

The data collection instrument for this study was a semi-structured interview, conducted in English, which consisted of four open-ended questions. These questions were developed to explore the participants' perceptions of teacherpreneurship, their experiences with EFL teacherpreneurship, and the advantages and challenges they encountered in implementing innovative practices. The questions were informed by a review of the existing literature on teacherpreneurship (e.g., Onuma, 2016) to ensure that they addressed the research objectives comprehensively. The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed flexibility, enabling participants to elaborate on their experiences while still addressing the core topics of interest. The interviews were conducted individually via Duo or WhatsApp to accommodate participants from different countries. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participant's consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Inter-coder reliability was assessed to ensure the validity and reliability of the interview instrument. Three experts in thematic analysis independently analyzed a sample of the interview data to check for consistency with the researcher's findings. The consistency between the researcher's analysis and the expert's interpretation confirmed the reliability of the coding process. Validity was further ensured by presenting direct quotations from participants alongside the identified themes, providing transparency and grounding the findings in the participants' actual responses.

Procedure

After getting all the necessary permissions and approvals, interviews were scheduled at convenient times and conducted remotely via Duo or WhatsApp to include participants from Türkiye, Dubai (UAE), Iran, and Iraq, addressing logistical issues like time zones and geography. A semi-structured format was used, with open-ended questions focusing on the advantages, challenges, and impacts of EFL teacherpreneurship on teaching practices. Each interview was audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Recordings were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher, while transcriptions were kept separate from personal information to protect anonymity. The transcribed data underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns, providing deeper insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions of EFL teacherpreneurship.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun & Clarke's (2012) five stages: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, and defining themes. The researcher began by thoroughly reading the transcriptions to understand the data, then identified initial codes reflecting key aspects of participants' experiences with EFL teacherpreneurship. These codes were grouped into broader themes capturing common patterns across the data. Themes were reviewed and refined for consistency and validity, ensuring alignment with the raw data. Finally, each theme was defined and named, providing clear explanations of its significance.

Ethical Issues

The research adhered to ethical guidelines, including the Declaration of Helsinki, to ensure participant well-being and study integrity. Ethical approval was obtained from the researcher's institution to ensure compliance with international standards. Participants provided written informed consent after receiving detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits and were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by keeping personal information secure and using pseudonyms during transcription. To minimize harm, interview questions were designed to avoid distress, and participants could skip questions they preferred not to answer. Considering the study's cross-cultural scope, efforts were made to ensure culturally appropriate and respectful communication, accommodating participants' diverse backgrounds.

Findings

RQ 1: EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Teacherpreneurship in the Middle East

The first research question explored EFL teachers' perceptions of teacherpreneurship in Iran, Türkiye, Dubai, and Iraq. Based on the interview data, six main themes emerged. These themes were drawn from the participant's responses and provided a comprehensive understanding of their views on teacherpreneurship. Below is an expanded explanation of each theme:

1. A Tool for Income

Many participants saw teacherpreneurship as a practical and essential tool to supplement their incomes. Teaching, especially in certain regions, is often not financially rewarding, and teachers face challenges in meeting their financial needs solely through their teaching salaries. This is particularly true in countries where the education system is underfunded or teaching wages are relatively low compared to the cost of living. Participant 5 remarked, *“Teacherpreneurship is an opportunity to reach higher income. Teaching wages are insufficient for living. Teacherpreneurship is a way to obtain more money.”* This statement highlights the importance of entrepreneurial initiatives for teachers to bridge the gap between their professional earnings and personal financial requirements. Participant 12 reinforced this perspective by saying, *“To me, different strategies exist to gain money besides teaching. One strategy to do this is teacherpreneurship. I consider teacherpreneurship equivalent to money making.”* This underscores how teacherpreneurs often view entrepreneurial ventures as essential to increase their financial well-being and achieve financial independence. In this context, teacherpreneurship enables teachers to generate additional income by leveraging their skills, knowledge, and experience outside traditional teaching settings. This includes online tutoring, creating educational materials, or offering specialized workshops.

2. An Opportunity for Innovation

Teacherpreneurship was consistently perceived as a powerful avenue for innovation. Participants emphasized how entrepreneurial endeavors provided an opportunity to develop and apply new, creative ideas to teaching and education. Teachers saw these activities as a way to showcase their innovative potential and explore novel ways of engaging students and improving learning outcomes. Participant 10 highlighted, *“Teacherpreneurship is an innovative act. Through teacherpreneurship, teachers can make innovations that are mostly creative.”* This suggests that teachers do not see entrepreneurship merely as a financial pursuit, but as a creative outlet where they can experiment with new pedagogical strategies and technologies. Participant 32 supported this view by stating, *“Teacherpreneurship generates innovation. Teachers can show their innovative talent through teacherpreneurship. It is a channel for creation and innovation.”* This reflects the belief that teacherpreneurs can drive educational change by introducing fresh approaches and technologies into their teaching practices. Innovation is seen as not only a personal achievement but also as a way to inspire students and colleagues.

3. A Ladder for Professional Improvement

For many of the participants, teacherpreneurship was viewed as a stepping stone for professional growth and improvement. Teachers often seek ways to enhance their teaching effectiveness, broaden their skill set, and advance their careers. Engaging in entrepreneurial activities was seen as a way to meet these professional goals. Participant 14 explained, *“In order to improve in teaching, some teachers try teacherpreneurship as a ladder. Improvement is a necessity in all jobs including teaching. Teacherpreneurship helps teachers improve in their work.”* This suggests that teacherpreneurship is viewed not only as a means to earn extra income but also as a career development tool. By exploring entrepreneurial ventures, teachers can acquire new skills, refine their existing abilities, and stay relevant in the rapidly changing field of education. Participant 39 echoed this by saying, *“Any teacher wishes to improve in her/his job. Being improved is a satisfactory state for any teacher. I think teacherpreneurship is a very helpful key for this goal.”* This response illustrates that professional improvement is a key motivating factor for teachers considering teacherpreneurship. It enables them to continuously evolve, adopt innovative practices, and stay motivated in their careers. Teacherpreneurship, in this sense, can be seen as an important aspect of lifelong professional development. It offers teachers the chance to step out of their comfort zones, engage with new challenges, and grow in ways that enhance their effectiveness in the classroom.

4. A Tool for Digital Literacy

With the rapid advancement of technology in education, digital literacy has become an essential skill for educators. Many participants in the study identified teacherpreneurship as an important tool for enhancing digital competence, which is crucial for effective teaching in the 21st century. In today's education landscape, the ability to use digital tools, platforms, and resources is paramount, and teacherpreneurs are seen as key figures in the adoption of these technologies. Participant 25 noted, *“Recently, technological developments have penetrated education. To benefit from these technologies, teachers need digital literacy. Teacherpreneurship is a tool for digital literacy.”* This statement highlights the role of

teacherpreneurship in providing teachers with the opportunity to enhance their technological skills and adapt to the growing demand for digital tools in the classroom. Participant 17 further emphasized, *“Using educational technologies requires teachers to be digitally literate. This can be achieved through teacherpreneurship. To be digitally competent, teachers can resort to teacherpreneurship.”* This view aligns with the notion that teacherpreneurship is not only about creating content or generating income but also about keeping up with the evolving technological demands of the educational sector. For teachers in regions like Iran, Türkiye, Dubai, and Iraq, digital literacy is seen as vital for connecting with students, accessing educational resources, and participating in global educational communities. Teacherpreneurship provides a means for teachers to improve their technological capabilities, enabling them to better serve their students.

5. A Means for Publishing Academic Outcomes

Teacherpreneurs also recognized the potential for using entrepreneurship as a platform to share academic research, educational insights, and scholarly work. In countries like Iran, Iraq, Türkiye, and Dubai, where academic resources and networks may be limited, teacherpreneurship offers teachers a way to disseminate their research and ideas more effectively, both locally and globally. Participant 5 shared, *“Knowledge publishing is the first step in its development. Via teacherpreneurship, teachers can publish the outcomes of their academic works.”* This highlights the idea that teacherpreneurship is a means of transforming research into publicly accessible content, thereby advancing teachers' academic careers and contributing to the broader field of education. Participant 2 also commented, *“Research and academic works should be shared with others to be fruitful. If teacherpreneurship is implemented appropriately, this knowledge-sharing can be more effectively conducted.”* This view reflects the belief that teacherpreneurs, through their entrepreneurial activities, can create platforms or avenues to disseminate their work, whether through blogs, online courses, e-books, or other digital mediums. Publishing academic outcomes through entrepreneurial ventures not only helps teachers enhance their professional profiles but also contributes to the development of the academic community, particularly in regions where academic collaboration and networking may be less accessible.

6. A Tool for Reducing Burnout

Teacher burnout is a significant issue for educators worldwide, and participants expressed how teacherpreneurship might serve as a remedy to alleviate the stress and exhaustion that often accompany the teaching profession. Many teachers, particularly in high-pressure environments, struggle with burnout due to heavy workloads, student demands, and a lack of support. Engaging in entrepreneurial ventures was viewed by some as a way to reignite their passion for teaching and combat feelings of burnout. Participant 20 noted, *“Teachers are constantly exposed to burnout feeling. They feel exhausted. It is possible that teacherpreneurship can serve as a tool to reduce this bad feeling.”* This response reflects the notion that entrepreneurial activities, by offering teachers a change of pace and an opportunity to pursue personal projects, can help reduce stress and create a sense of fulfillment beyond the traditional classroom setting. Participant 1 further explained, *“Teaching becomes sometimes challenging with a sense of burnout. Teacherpreneurship can help teachers cope with burnout.”* This reinforces the idea that teacherpreneurship can offer a sense of renewal and satisfaction, allowing teachers to reconnect with their passion for education in new and meaningful ways. By engaging in teacherpreneurship, teachers are able to diversify their professional roles and take on new, stimulating challenges that help break the monotony of traditional classroom teaching. This diversification can significantly reduce the risk of burnout and improve overall job satisfaction. The frequency and percentage of extracted themes as EFL teachers' perceptions of EFL teacherpreneurship have been presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Frequency and Percentage of Extracted Themes as EFL Teachers' Perceptions of EFL Teacherpreneurship

Themes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A tool for income	20	80

An opportunity for innovation	17	68
A ladder for professional improvement	19	76
A tool for digital literacy	18	72
A means for publishing academic outcomes	16	64
A tool for reducing burnout	16	64

As demonstrated in Table .1, the themes were recurrent in the quotations of more than 16 EFL teachers (i.e., 64% of the sample).

RQ 2: Advantages of EFL Teacherpreneurship According to Iranian EFL Teachers

Concerning the second research question (i.e., What are Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of the advantages of EFL teacherpreneurship?). The themes emerged from the interviews and their frequency and percentages are shown in in Table 2:

Table 2.

Frequency and Percentage of Extracted Themes as EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Advantages of EFL Teacherpreneurship

Themes	Frequency	%
Developing new methods of EFL teaching	21	84
Generating new relations	18	72
Familiarity with the last English teaching achievements	16	64
Learning self-directed English teaching	16	64
Reconstructing identity	18	72
Improving teaching quality	22	88

As indicated in Table 2, the themes were prevalent in the quotations of more than 16 EFL teachers (i.e., 64% of the participants).

1. Developing New Methods of EFL Teaching

As it can be seen in Table 2, developing new methods of EFL teaching was the most emerging theme. The participants emphasized a key benefit of teacherpreneurship: the creation and implementation of innovative teaching methods. Many EFL teachers indicated that traditional, conventional methods no longer suffice in today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, and teacherpreneurs play a key role in providing modern and effective alternatives. Participant 40 expressed, *"I learn new EFL teaching methods from teacherpreneurs. Some methods they suggest are very effective, useful, and modern."* This highlights the perception that teacherpreneurs contribute fresh, contemporary approaches to teaching that can enhance the learning experience. Participant 16 noted, *"Teaching English is a field that should be updated with new methods. Following old methods does not work in our field. Teacherpreneurship can be informative in providing new teaching methods."* This statement underscores the importance of staying current with teaching trends, which teacherpreneurs facilitate by experimenting with and sharing innovative strategies. Teacherpreneurs are seen as key figures who move away from outdated techniques and introduce methods that are adaptable to the needs of modern students and advancements in technology. For many teachers, adopting these new methods enhances their ability to connect with students and engage them effectively.

2. Generating New Relationships

Another key advantage of teacherpreneurship is its opportunity to generate new professional relationships. Teachers involved in teacherpreneurship often find themselves part of broader networks, which can lead to new connections with peers, collaborators, and mentors from diverse backgrounds. Participant 21 shared, *“Teacherpreneurship is a bed for generating new relations. The groups and channels wherein teacherpreneurship is done are good places for building new relations and finding new friends.”* This reflects the social aspect of teacherpreneurship, where teachers expand their professional circles and share experiences with like-minded individuals. Participant 2 also mentioned, *“I came across new partners in teacherpreneurship networks. It is an immune place for acquaintance with new persons. I found new relations in such groups.”* For many teachers, teacherpreneurship networks provide a space for professional development and for forming meaningful relationships that could open doors to new opportunities and collaborations. Through these expanded networks, teachers might learn from others, gain new perspectives on educational challenges, and create partnerships that may lead to innovative projects, research, or teaching ventures.

3. Familiarity with the Latest English Teaching Achievements

The participants identified a major advantage of teacherpreneurship as exposure to the latest research, trends, and achievements in English language teaching (ELT). Teacherpreneurs often share cutting-edge materials and resources that might not always be available through traditional educational channels. Participant 13 stated, *“EFL teacherpreneurs present, among other things, the last achievements of the teaching field. Textbooks are not very informative in this regard. I think that their materials are very informative.”* This highlights a clear distinction between traditional teaching resources, like textbooks, and the dynamic, up-to-date content shared by teacherpreneurs. Participant 29 remarked, *“One thing I like about EFL teacherpreneurs is that they attach the most recent findings on English teaching. Many things can be learned from teacherpreneurs.”* This statement reinforces the idea that teacherpreneurs are not only facilitators of teaching but also curators of the latest educational content, keeping teachers informed about developments in the field. For teachers, where access to international resources and the latest teaching innovations might be limited, teacherpreneurship offers an important avenue for staying current with global advancements in ELT.

4. Learning Self-Directed English Teaching

Teacherpreneurship was also seen as an opportunity for EFL teachers to enhance their self-directed teaching skills. Many participants noted that teacherpreneurs empower teachers to be more autonomous in their teaching methods, creating an environment where learners can take charge of their education as well. Participant 10 mentioned, *“EFL teacherpreneurs are experts at teaching autonomous English language learning. They have good hints in their hands which have been hidden from my eyes as a teacher. I learned how to teach my students in a way that my students learn with less dependence on textbooks.”* This demonstrates how teacherpreneurs encourage self-directed learning, and empower teachers and students to take ownership of their educational journeys. Participant 12 shared, *“A stimulus that served as an impetus for me to join EFL teacherpreneurs’ networks was my friends’ accounts of how they could learn to teach English independently after implementing their educational instructions.”* This shows how teacherpreneurship networks teach self-directed strategies, inspiring teachers to adopt these methods and leading to more effective and sustainable teaching practices.

5. Reconstructing Identity

For many teachers, embracing teacherpreneurship has transformed their professional identity. This theme reflects how exposure to new ideas and practices can reshape a teacher's perception of their role in the classroom and in the broader educational community. Participant 15 stated, *“When you learn something new, you feel your identity as an English teacher is being re-constructed. You enjoy a sense of teacher identity reconstruction. This motivated me to remain a member of EFL teacherpreneurship groups.”* This theme highlights the profound impact that teacherpreneurship can have on personal and professional growth as teachers reshape their identity to reflect their evolving practices and knowledge. Participant 8 explained, *“I learned to self-present myself due to my newly acquired English knowledge in new ways. Accordingly, my sense of being changed considerably. I experienced a personal transformation.”* This statement suggests that teacherpreneurship affects teachers' professional identities and contributes to their personal growth, instilling confidence and a renewed sense of purpose. For many

participants, teacherpreneurship provided a platform for personal and professional reinvention, allowing them to develop a deeper sense of their role and value as educators.

6. Improving Teaching Quality

The final advantage identified by the participants was the improvement in teaching quality. Teachers reported that engaging with teacherpreneurship practices helped refine their teaching methods and increase their effectiveness in the classroom. Teacherpreneurship was seen as a means to achieve job satisfaction and greater professional success. Participant 14 noted, *“English teaching is a job that needs constant success if a teacher wants to achieve job satisfaction. EFL teacherpreneurs provide a bed for reaching teaching success.”* This indicates that teacherpreneurs are viewed as key contributors to enhancing teaching quality and, by extension, improving teachers' job satisfaction. Participant 27 added, *“I believe I teach English more effectively after familiarity with EFL teacherpreneurs. I am more successful in my job.”* This theme illustrates that exposure to innovative practices and ongoing professional development through teacherpreneurship leads to improved classroom outcomes and more effective teaching.

RQ 3: Disadvantages of EFL Teacherpreneurship According to EFL Teachers

Concerning the third research question, “What are EFL teachers' perceptions of the disadvantages of EFL teacherpreneurship?”, the themes emerged from the data analysis shown in Table 3 emerged from the interviews.

Table 3.

Frequency and Percentage of Extracted Themes as EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Disadvantages of EFL Teacherpreneurship

Themes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Need too much time	24	96
Need too much money	20	80
Need too many facilities	19	76
Need computer literacy	23	92

As seen in Table 3, the themes were repeated in the quotations of more than 19 EFL teachers (i.e., 76% of the participants).

1. Need Too Much Time

A key disadvantage of teacherpreneurship, as perceived by the participants, is the significant amount of time it demands as shown in Table 3. Many teachers reported that, due to their busy schedules, they find it difficult to allocate the necessary time for engaging in teacherpreneurial activities, which may interfere with their regular teaching responsibilities. Participant 14 explained, *“EFL teacherpreneurship needs much free time. I do not have the time to devote to EFL teacherpreneurship. This is a main disadvantage of EFL teacherpreneurship.”* This reflects a common concern among teachers who feel that their teaching workload, administrative duties, and personal life already consume most of their time, leaving little room for additional teacherpreneurial ventures. Participant 20 also shared, *“Shortage of time is problematic in teacherpreneurship. A high amount of time should be put into teacherpreneurship. Finding such time is difficult.”* This statement highlights the challenge of balancing the demands of teaching with the time required to develop and implement teacherpreneurial projects. Many teachers feel overwhelmed by their current commitments, making it difficult to engage in activities that require a substantial time investment. For many participants, time constraints represent a major obstacle to fully embracing teacherpreneurship, as they struggle to integrate these activities into their already packed schedules.

2. Need Too Much Money

In addition to time constraints, financial limitations were also cited as a significant disadvantage of EFL teacherpreneurship. Several participants noted that engaging in teacherpreneurship often requires a considerable financial investment, which may not be feasible for teachers working in low-paid positions. Participant 15 pointed out, *“Preparing the required tools and materials for teacherpreneurship needs a lot of money. Affording the money is not an easy task. You know teaching is a low-salary profession. No money remains for teacherpreneurship activities.”* This reflects the financial strain that teachers face, particularly in countries where teaching salaries are not sufficient to cover personal expenses, let alone additional costs for teacherpreneurial initiatives. Participant 9 similarly mentioned, *“The money that should be spent on teacherpreneurship is a limitation. Teacherpreneurship cannot be fulfilled without money. I can say that lack of money demotivates teachers in teacherpreneurship.”* This highlights the practical barrier that the need for financial resources presents. The costs associated with purchasing materials, tools, or accessing technology for teacherpreneurship projects make it difficult to sustain these activities, thus limiting their engagement in entrepreneurial ventures. The financial burden associated with teacherpreneurship is seen as a major deterrent for teachers already struggling with limited financial resources.

3. Need Too Many Facilities

Another disadvantage highlighted by participants was the need for various physical resources and facilities to effectively carry out teacherpreneurial activities. These resources are often costly and not easily accessible, further complicating the implementation of teacherpreneurship projects. Participant 28 noted, *“Teacherpreneurship needs facilities or physical resources. Teacherpreneurship needs many facilities, some of which are very expensive. This is a disadvantage of teacherpreneurship to me.”* The need for specialized equipment or infrastructure is a significant hurdle for teachers, particularly those working in schools or educational environments with limited resources. Participant 31 added, *“A big disadvantage is the need for teacherpreneurship in diverse facilities. It cannot be done through simple procedures. Accordingly, it is too hard to try teacherpreneurship.”* This indicates that teacherpreneurship is often seen as a resource-intensive endeavor, requiring financial investment and access to proper facilities, which may not always be available in all educational settings. Without these resources, teachers may feel discouraged from innovating through teacherpreneurship. The lack of adequate facilities and the financial constraints associated with securing them are perceived as significant barriers, especially for teachers in underfunded educational environments.

4. Need Computer Literacy

A key challenge identified in the interviews was the need for computer literacy to engage in teacherpreneurship effectively. Many teacherpreneurial activities require digital tools, software, and online platforms, creating barriers for teachers lacking strong computer skills. Participant 18 stated, *“Teacherpreneurship requires you to be knowledgeable in computers... many teachers have low computer literacy.”* Similarly, Participant 11 noted, *“To do EFL teacherpreneurship means to be literate in computer software and hardware.”* Teachers without these skills face a steep learning curve, making digital teacherpreneurship intimidating. This technological gap hinders their ability to develop online courses, create materials, or engage in digital communities, particularly for those with limited access to technology or training..

Discussion

This study explored EFL teachers' perceptions of teacherpreneurship across four Middle Eastern countries—Iran, Dubai, Türkiye, and Iraq. While teacherpreneurship is widely discussed in the literature, there is limited comparative research on how teachers perceive and engage with it in different contexts. This study addresses this gap by identifying key perceptions and comparing the advantages and disadvantages across these countries, offering insights into teacherpreneurship in Middle Eastern EFL contexts. The findings revealed six key themes: 1) a tool for income, 2) an opportunity for innovation, 3) a ladder for professional improvement, 4) a tool for digital literacy, 5) a means for publishing academic outcomes, and 6) a tool for reducing burnout. These themes reflect the multifaceted nature of teacherpreneurship and its relevance across the four countries studied.

Income generation was a universal theme. Teachers in Iran and Iraq emphasized its importance due to low salaries, while in Dubai and Türkiye, teacherpreneurs pursued entrepreneurial ventures to enhance their earnings despite higher salaries. These findings align with Khan et al. (2023), who noted additional

income as a key motivator for Middle Eastern teacherpreneurs, and Kalas and Raisinghani (2019), who reported similar incentives globally. Innovation was another significant theme. In Iran and Iraq, teacherpreneurship helped modernize traditional methods, whereas in Dubai and Türkiye, it enabled teachers to remain competitive by adopting new approaches. These findings resonate with Shalini et al. (2017) and Garomssa (2016), who highlighted teacherpreneurs as drivers of innovation, and Almalki and Durugbo (2023), who described them as agents of change in rapidly evolving educational contexts.

Professional improvement was emphasized, especially in Iran and Iraq, where structured professional development opportunities are limited. Dubai and Türkiye, with more accessible programs, showed that teacherpreneurship still fosters autonomy and skill enhancement. These findings support Chilvers (2018) and Cochran-Smith et al. (2018), who argued that teacherpreneurs enable continuous professional learning, supplementing traditional development methods. Digital literacy emerged as a critical theme, particularly in Iran and Iraq, where limited technological resources and training pose challenges. Teachers across all countries recognized that entrepreneurial activities require strong digital skills, consistent with Onuma (2016), who emphasized digital literacy as crucial for teacherpreneurs, and Bhat et al. (2024), who noted its role in bridging the digital divide in low-resource settings.

Publishing academic outcomes was another key finding. Teachers leveraged digital platforms to share research and teaching materials, contributing to global education discourse. This was particularly notable in Dubai and Türkiye, where academic publishing is more established, but was also growing in Iran and Iraq. These observations align with Naegels et al. (2018), who found that teacherpreneurs frequently become content creators and knowledge disseminators. Reducing burnout was identified as a significant benefit, particularly in Iran and Iraq, where challenging working conditions heighten stress. Teachers in Dubai and Türkiye also valued teacherpreneurship for improving work-life balance. These findings are consistent with Shelton and Archambault (2019), who argued that entrepreneurial roles provide alternative avenues for professional fulfillment, reducing stress.

Despite its benefits, teacherpreneurship faces barriers, including limited digital skills, time, and financial constraints. Addressing these challenges requires targeted computer literacy training, professional development workshops, and access to digital tools. Mentorship programs could help bridge the gap for teachers with varying levels of experience, enabling broader participation. Comparisons with other studies revealed that perceptions of teacherpreneurship vary by age and experience. Older teachers were more resistant to technology and innovation, while younger teachers embraced these opportunities more readily (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2023). Tailored support—mentorship for older teachers and advanced training for younger ones—could enable all educators to benefit from teacherpreneurship.

Limitations

This study has limitations: its small sample size, drawn from only four countries, may not reflect the broader Middle Eastern context, suggesting a need for larger, more diverse studies, and its reliance on qualitative data, though insightful, limits generalizability, warranting future mixed-methods or quantitative research, particularly to explore teacherpreneurship's impact on student outcomes, which remains underexamined yet critical to assessing its educational value. In conclusion, teacherpreneurship holds transformative potential for EFL education in the region, but its success hinges on customized support enhancing digital literacy, offering time-management tools, and providing financial or mentorship resources to empower teacherpreneurs to thrive and enrich the educational landscape.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This study offers valuable insights into the potential and challenges of EFL teacherpreneurship in the Middle East, highlighting the varied perceptions of teachers in Iran, Iraq, Türkiye, and Dubai. EFL teacherpreneurs view this role as enhancing professional growth, fostering innovation, and improving digital literacy. However, the study also underscores significant barriers, including financial constraints, limited technological resources, and the need for advanced digital literacy, particularly in resource-limited settings.

To enhance teacherpreneurship among EFL teachers in the Middle East, specific strategies must be implemented to overcome barriers, particularly in improving computer literacy, with tailored approaches like country-specific workshops or online courses to equip teachers with essential digital skills for entrepreneurial pursuits, alongside fostering networking and collaboration across diverse age groups and

experience levels to bridge technological proficiency gaps, where seasoned teachers mentor novices, building a supportive community. Resource availability and support systems are pivotal, with countries like Dubai and Türkiye leveraging superior technological infrastructure for structured programs, while Iran and Iraq could benefit from international partnerships or affordable online platforms, ensuring all teachers, regardless of location or experience, can embrace teacherpreneurship.

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