



Research on Writing a Local Tourism Book for Germans

Doğru Ataş^{a *}, Ayten Genç^b

^a Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey

^b Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey

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Abstract

Tourism is an important sector in Turkey and the employees in this sector are required to speak foreign languages in order to have good communication with tourists. The official records (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism) show that the majority of tourists visiting Turkey for holidays come from Germany. Therefore, students attending vocational schools of tourism or taking tourism courses at the undergraduate level are encouraged to learn German. Unfortunately, most of the textbooks used in schools and German language courses are imported publications. These books are not intended for the needs of the general Turkish population of students or employees. Many of the domestic textbooks on the market, on the other hand, should be updated according to the needs analysis based on today's conditions and scientific data. This study aims to determine the purposes of speaking German, which is a requirement for the people who work, or are going to work in the tourism sector, and the communication difficulties people encounter. The purposes of speaking German and the communication problems are the factors determined by using a mixed research design. We believe that if these factors are taken into consideration and a basic-level textbook of German for tourism is written, teaching German for tourism will be more successful.

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Keywords: German for tourism; purposes of speaking; German textbook

1. Introduction

The recent economic growth and the improvement of living conditions in Turkey have brought attention to the tourism sector. This sector has grown increasingly stronger through efforts to improve customer service and create higher quality facilities and amenities to please the tourists. The satisfaction of tourists faced with better service and more qualified goods is attached more importance for marketing the next tourism season. Today, many countries strive to attract tourists from other countries to take advantage of the benefits of this tourism sector and strengthen its own economy. More affordable holiday packages and other vacation options that include various lessons and entertainment services geared toward a broad range of tourists are available on the market. In addition to the various vacation options to satisfy the needs of tourists, the skills and qualifications of employees in the tourism sector are also another important point that should be evaluated. Many issues, such as good communication with tourists, understanding their culture and showing them respect help employees meet the tourists' satisfaction. Understanding tourists and having good

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +0-312-297-8575
E-mail address: doguatas83@gmail.com

communion with them are good qualities to have in order to satisfy the tourists and to make them feel at home. Thus, it is important for employees working in the tourism sector to know the native language of a tourist or any other foreign language the tourist may know.

According to the data provided by the Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the year 2014, Turkey is most visited by tourists from countries where German is spoken (the number of tourists speaking German is 6,156,883), such as Germany, Sweden and Austria (see Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism). The fact that German-speaking tourists are large in number and rank first among tourists speaking other languages highlight the importance of the German language in Turkey's tourism sector. Hotel employees, in particular, are expected to at least be able speak German when necessary and have good communication with tourists in this language. Therefore, the hotels, which are often visited by tourists employ staff who have learned German in vocational training or have their employees take German language courses.

The publications used for German lessons in vocational schools of tourism, tourism courses at the bachelor degree level, or in German language courses are the textbooks intended for teaching "German for Tourism". Moreover, domestic tourism textbooks are generally selected from imported textbooks for learners of "German for Tourism" from every country. In Turkey, the textbooks in German intended for tourism schools, students, and tourism sector employees are limited in number; but the fact that these books are the first and most important publications in this field should not be underestimated. However, taking today's conditions and the requirements of the tourism sector into consideration, it is evident that these books are not intended for improving speaking and listening skills, which are the most required among the four language skills, and they have not been updated according to the current technological developments.

In foreign language teaching, improving the instructional materials, such as textbooks, for a certain group by considering the needs of this group brings success. This study has resulted from Turkish tourism school students' and hotel employees' needs for a domestic textbook, which will allow them to learn German for tourism. A needs analysis was conducted to determine the needs of the groups.

1.1. Planning Foreign Language Teaching for Tourism-Related Professions

A vocational foreign language is learned during vocational training in preparation for a profession or while working in it. During the vocational training, the purpose of the foreign language course which students take to prepare for the profession is to introduce students to the foreign languages they will use in their profession, provide them with language skills so that they can cope with professional challenges and teach them the culture and social behavior related to the foreign language they will use in their profession (Funk 2010:1145; Kuhn 2007:128; Linthout 2004:7). In order to enable students to cope with the professional challenges involving foreign languages, communication media aimed at developing behavior related to foreign languages in vocational contexts should be prepared. Thus, firstly it is necessary to create a program for learning vocational communication behavior. As in every curriculum, communicational needs of target groups should also be determined in the foreign language program, which is why the needs analysis should first be conducted. The results of the needs analysis will enable instructional materials to be chosen easily (Funk 2010: 1147; Thielmann 2010: 1053). The situations that are likely to be encountered in the profession can only be identified by determining the communication media. Supporting the teaching and learning process based on student needs, with the original materials and conducting it as student-centered will not only help students become autonomous learners capable of using certain learning strategies (Koban-Koç & Koç, 2016) but it will also improve their communicational skills and cultural awareness. Through the use of a virtual

platform, students' ability to experience the situations they are likely to encounter in their professional lives and to practice these situations will enable them to acquire communicational language proficiency. "Pragmatic competence, one of the aspects of communicative competence, determines the functional use of linguistic materials (...) using interactive scenarios and fictionalized situations. (...) For this competence, it is not necessary to emphasize the importance of the interaction and the cultural environment in which these abilities arise" (Avrupa Ortak Öneriler Çerçevesi, 2013:21).

It is a fact that tourism employees encounter tourists from diverse countries and cultures each day. Thus, in teaching foreign languages for tourism, students should acquire language skills and be able to communicate with these foreign tourists. However, it is necessary not only to learn a foreign language, but also to communicate with tourists using that language which is only possible by knowing their culture as well. Therefore, it is necessary to teach German to tourism students about the social lives of the tourists and show them how the behavioral norms within their ceremonies, generations, genders, classes and social groups affect the communication style of some basic moral habits (AOÖÇ 2013:21). In addition to becoming familiar with the social lives of tourists, a tourism employee should also have intercultural competence, one of the other aspects of the communicative competence, to have good communication. It is necessary to become familiar with a range of different strategies and use them to associate one's own culture with foreign cultures to enable cultural awareness and to be able to communicate with someone from another culture. Thus, one will be able to build a bridge between his own culture and the foreign culture and cope with cross-cultural disputes and conflicts (AOÖÇ 2013:105-106).

Tourism students or employees should be provided with training to improve these competences and become familiar with tourists' social behavior to avoid communication problems and disagreement with tourists. Braun (1991:198) states that concerning the vocational foreign language teaching, studies should be conducted on transferring knowledge of foreign cultures and internalizing the cross-cultural ways of thinking and behaving; and the results should be used to educate the students in understanding foreigners and foreign cultures. Also, Krumm (2007:141) argues that studies should be conducted to enable students to understand foreign cultures and compare them to diverse cultures. For that purpose, appropriate instructional materials and activities should be selected or developed and diverse cultural values should be compared to each other in an unbiased way.

Vocational foreign language teaching is a type of foreign language education, and in principle, teaching methods that are used in foreign language education should be employed. The method to satisfy the communicational needs of the target group should be selected and original instructional materials appropriate for the group, communication situations and their purposes should be developed (Thielmann 2010:1055).

Braun (1991:196) states that communication situations in tourism create specific expressions, which have been standardized in line with the specific purposes for speaking them. Therefore, speaking situations are non-personal and a foreseeable dialogue between the tourist and the employee can be discussed. Performing the education through an action-oriented approach, the students can acquire behavior and learn by experience through putting themselves into appropriate scenarios that they can actively participate in. Action-oriented means active participation of the students and allowing them to learn this way (Linthout, 2004:13). Teaching virtual scenarios that are designed in line with specific speaking situations through dialogues will enable students to have good communication with tourists. Thus, a current needs analysis should be conducted and depending on the results, textbooks that will enable active participation of the students should be developed.

2. Method

The purpose of the study is to make scientific contributions to a textbook that will be developed to satisfy the communicational competence needs of tourism students and employees in Turkey concerning the German language. Quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used to determine the purposes of speaking that would underlie this textbook. A needs analysis was conducted and data were collected by different measuring techniques. The implementation process of the study was conducted in two stages. In the first stage of the study, the existing tourism textbooks in German were examined. Two textbooks, one imported and the other domestic, were scanned to determine the purposes of speaking used through a deductive method of content analysis. The purposes of speaking in question, which have been simplified and found necessary for a basic level, were used during the second stage of the research, which was survey development. Structured as a two-stage study, the survey was administered to 100 hotel employees in 2013 during a pilot study, and the purposes of speaking between the tourism employees in Turkey and the German tourists were determined by evaluating the obtained data.

2.1. Textbook Analysis

This study examined an A1 level set of imported textbooks called *Zimmer frei: Deutsch im Hotel* created by Ulrike Cohen and Nicoletta Grandi and published in 2012, and a domestic textbook called *Deutsch im Tourismus*, written by Vedat Martin İnce and published in 2011. These textbooks have been widely used in tourism schools in Turkey. They were examined firstly according to the scale developed by Buhlmann and Fearn (2000). As a result of the examination, it was shown that these books were designed in a different way from each other: not only there were differences in terms of structure and content, but there were also differences in teaching methods. Furthermore, directly concerning the study, the purposes of speaking were scanned in these textbooks. The following 31 common purposes of speaking were determined: *Gäste empfangen (receiving guests)*, *Gäste begrüßen (greeting guests)*, *Vermittlung von Unterkünften – Zimmerkategorien, Zimmerpreise (giving information about the accommodation service – room types, room prices)*, *Hotel empfehlen und reservieren bei Weiterreise (hotel recommendation and providing reservation services for their travels)*, *Reservierungen für das Hotelrestaurant entgegennehmen (accepting reservations for the hotel restaurant)*, *Bestellungen entgegennehmen – Essen, Getränke (taking orders – food, beverage)*, *auf Wünsche und Reklamationen reagieren (responding to requests and complaints)*, *Wege beschreiben (address description)*, *die Rechnung erklären (explaining the bill details)*, *Bezahlung entgegennehmen (accepting payment)*, *Gäste verabschieden – Check-out (check-out procedures)*, *fragen und nachfragen – Nach dem Namen fragen und buchstabieren (addressing questions – asking and spelling names)*, *Anmeldungen entgegennehmen – Check-in (check-in procedures)*, *aufs Zimmer bringen (accompanying guests to the room)*, *Zimmerbesichtigung (room visit)*, *ins Zimmer einweisen (guiding guests through their rooms)*, *Bestellungen für das Frühstück aufnehmen (taking orders for breakfast)*, *schriftliche Zimmerreservierungen beantworten (responding to online room reservations)*, *Reservierungen per Fax oder E-Mail bestätigen (confirming reservations by fax or e-mail)*, *Auskunft über die Orte im Hotel und in der Hotelumgebung geben (hotel introduction – giving information about the places in the hotel)*, *die Uhrzeit nennen (expressing hours)*, *Öffnungszeiten nennen (expressing opening and closing hours)*, *Mitteilungen entgegennehmen und Nachrichten übergeben (writing down and delivering messages)*, *einen Mietwagen besorgen bzw. ein Auto vermieten (providing rental cars)*, *Essen aufs Zimmer bringen – Zimmerservice (serving foods in room – room service)*, *Verkäufe im Hotelkiosk (sales at the hotel kiosk)*, *Dienstleistungen anbieten (providing service)*, *Sport- und Freizeitprogramme im Hotel anbieten (providing sports and leisure activities)*,

Kunden beim Einkaufen – Hotelboutique beraten (giving information, for example, about the hotel store while guests are shopping), die Zufriedenheit der Gäste – die Meinungen über das Hotel erfragen (asking the guests about their satisfaction or their opinions about the hotel), Fundsachen (lost property).

These 31 speech patterns detected in the textbooks were evaluated by experts working in the fields of foreign language instructional materials development for tourism. The most frequently used basic-level materials were selected, and some of the survey questions were created. The pilot study implementation made it possible for the most frequently used speech patterns to be evaluated once. The purposes of speaking that were decided upon to be used in the context of the survey are: *sich vorstellen (introducing oneself), Gäste begrüßen (greeting guests), Auskunft über das Hotel geben (hotel introduction), Wege beschreiben (address description), Zufriedenheit der Gäste erfragen / Auf Reklamationen reagieren (asking guests about their satisfaction and responding to complaints), Bestellungen entgegennehmen (taking orders), Sehenswürdigkeiten empfehlen (giving information about tourist attractions), Mail schreiben (writing an e-mail), Einladungen schreiben (writing an invitation card), Anmeldungen entgegennehmen / Gäste verabschieden (reservation and check-in/check-out procedures), Housekeeping – auf Wünsche reagieren (housekeeping – asking for demands).*

2.2. Survey Study

In the second stage of the research, the survey study that has gone through the relevant phases was conducted with the view to qualitative data collection and evaluation. The frequently observed speaking situations between tourists and employees and the speaking situations which cause communication difficulties were determined. The survey questions were created based on the textbook examination results, and they were directed to 25 hotel employees in different hotels in Antalya, which is the most preferred holiday spot by German-speaking tourists, to be evaluated in terms of clarity and conformity. The feedback of this pilot study was evaluated by the experts. Moreover, the validity of the questions of the survey which included two parts was measured using the Split-Half method. The Cronbach-Alpha coefficient value of the first part that was prepared to find the purposes of speaking was 0.795 and the corresponding value of the second part that included the questions for determining the speaking difficulties was 0.792. Accordingly, the mean value was above 0.70, which indicated that the survey was reliable. The survey data acquired after the implementation were analyzed using the SPSS 20 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software package.

The first seven questions of the survey are about the demographic information, such as age, gender, educational background, workplace and year, etc. The following three questions inquired which other language(s) the hotel employee had knowledge of in addition to German, which employees in the sector mostly used with the tourists and in which service area there were communicational difficulties between tourists and employees. The other questions are about the purposes of speaking inferred from the textbooks and determined by previous evaluation with the experts. These questions are about the speaking situations encountered between the tourists and the employees and the speaking contexts where there are the most communicational difficulties. At the end of the survey, the goal was to find the reasons for the communication difficulties between hotel employees and tourists. Because the employees are Turkish, the questions were prepared and administered in Turkish.

3. Results

The data collected from the first part of the survey showed that most of the employees in the tourism sector who participated in the survey were males (66%) and the average age was 28 for all the participants. Approximately 60% of the participants had 6 or more years of experience in the tourism sector. Only 5% of the participants were interns, 27% were waiters, 25% were front desk clerks, 11% were animators, 7% were public relations specialists, 6% were bartenders, 5% were housekeepers, 2% were tour professionals and 2% were hotel managers. Regarding the educational backgrounds of the participants, 13% were graduates of middle/junior high school (8%) and elementary/primary school (5%), 38% were high school graduates, 16% were vocational high schools of tourism graduates and 6% were vocational school graduates. The remaining 27% were university (vocational school of tourism) graduates. Approximately half of the participants (43.43%) learned German at school, and the total ratio of the ones who learned it by themselves (38.38%) and abroad (12.12%) similarly constituted almost half of the participants. The majority of people (75%) spoke English. The participants who knew German and the ones who knew Russian were the same ratio of 11.21%. Otherwise, 6.03% knew French, 2.59% knew Dutch and 1.72% knew Norwegian.

The front desk clerks were those who communicated most with tourists in German, with a participation ratio of 35.29%. German was most frequently used by the following participants respectively: public relations specialists (18.63%), waiters (18.14%) and animators (15.69%). However, it was understood that the service groups including tour professionals (7.35%), housekeepers (4.41%) and bartenders (0.49%) did not use the German language often.

The data for the second part of the survey, which was formed by picking out the purposes of speaking obtained as a result of scanning the chosen textbooks using the method of content analysis were evaluated below.

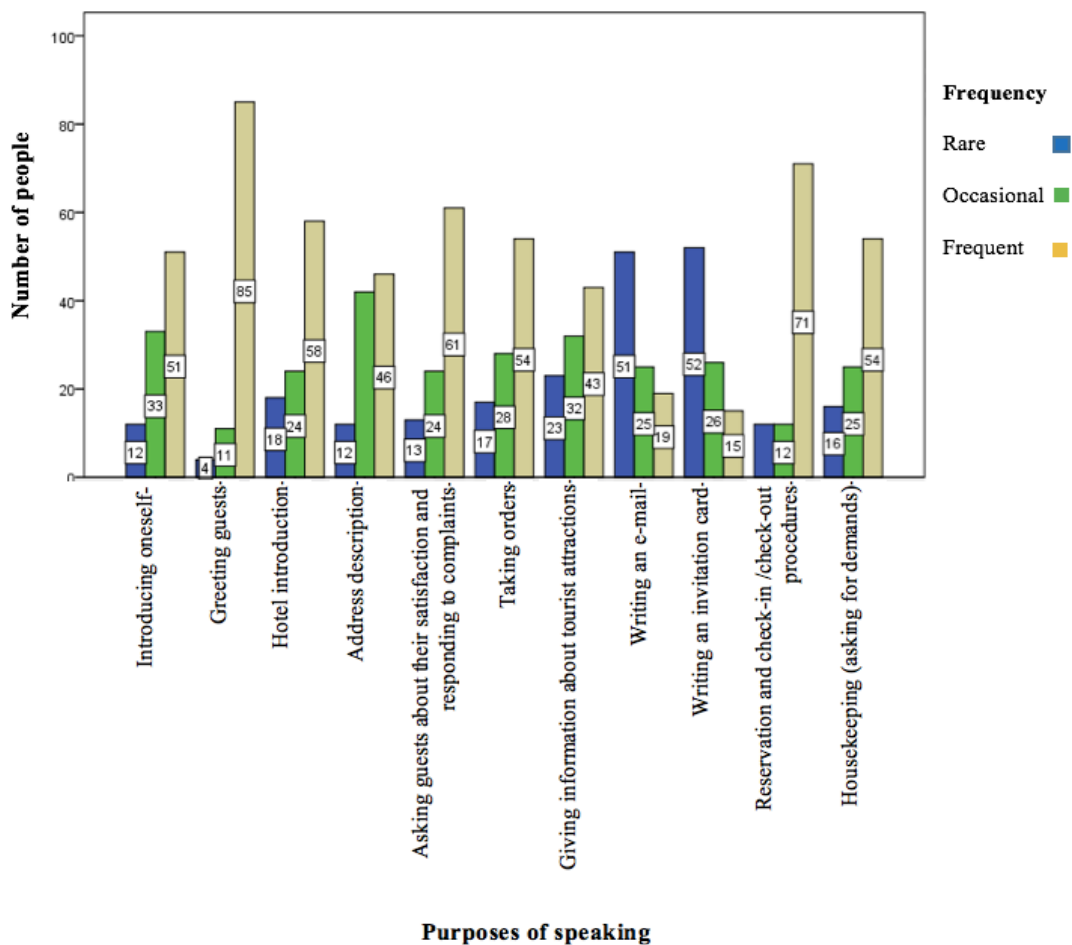
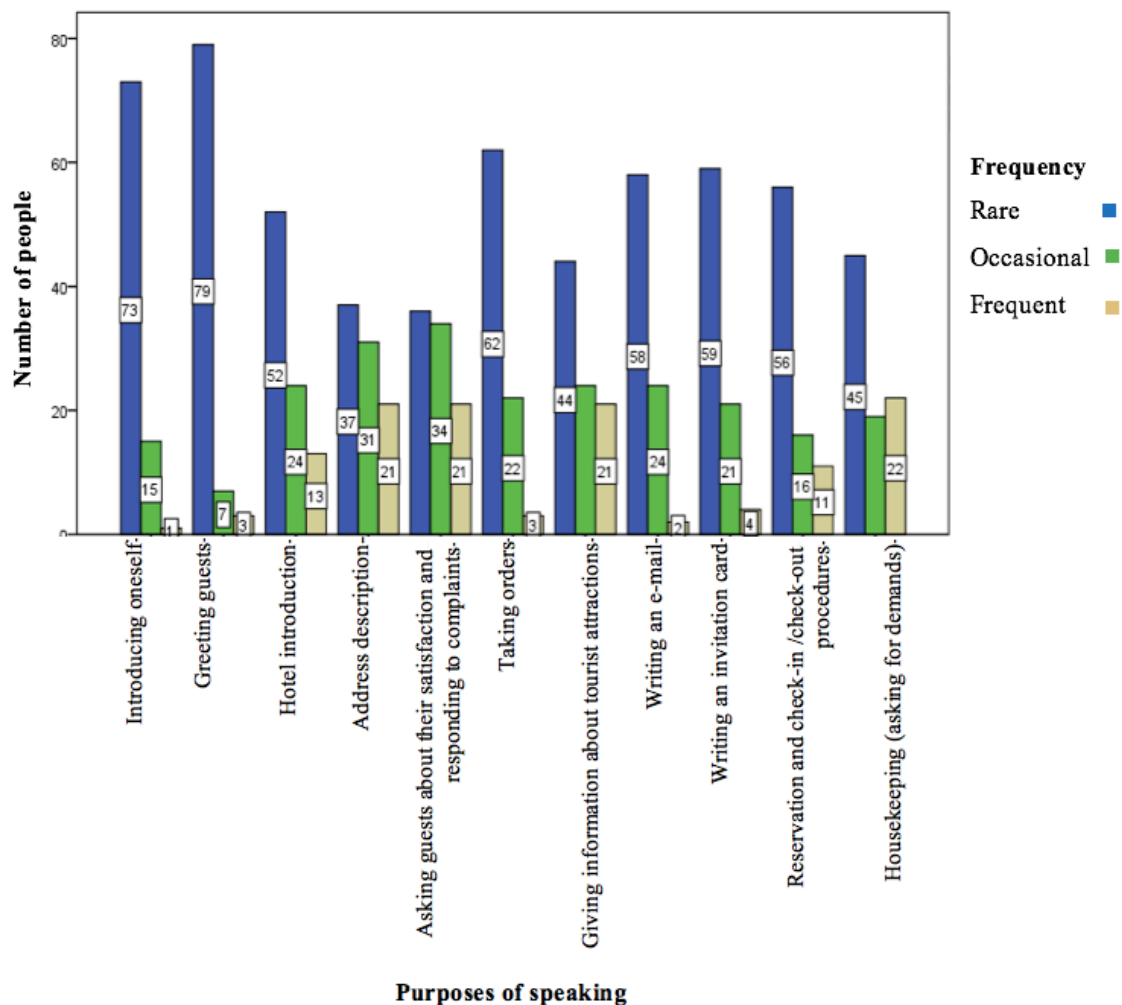
Figure 1. The purposes of speaking used frequently between tourists and hotel employees

Figure 1 included frequency distributions for the participation level of 11 purposes of speaking between German-speaking tourists and Turkish hotel employees. The participation levels were specified as three options: rare, occasional and frequent. According to the results in Figure 1, a similar frequency distribution was observed in nine purposes of speaking except “writing an e-mail” and “writing an invitation card”, and a great majority of the participants stated that they used the relevant purposes of speaking frequently. For instance, frequent participation rates for the purpose of speaking labelled “greeting guests” was 85%, whereas frequent participation rate for the purpose of speaking labelled “reservation and check-in/check-out procedures” was 74%. Out of the other seven speaking situations, the frequent participation rate for the purposes of speaking labelled “introducing oneself”, “hotel introduction”, “asking guests about their satisfaction and responding to complaints”, “taking orders”, “housekeeping (asking for demands)” was higher than the total ratio of other two participation levels (rare and occasional) with a rate of above 50%. Although frequent participation rates for the purposes of speaking labelled “address description” and “giving information about tourist attractions” were below 50%, these rates, respectively 46% and 44%, were quite high. Compared to other purposes of speaking in frequency distributions for “writing an e-mail” and “writing an invitation card”, a reverse distribution was observed in Figure 1 and the rare participation level was higher than the total participation rate for the other two levels. Frequent participation rate for “writing an e-mail” was 54%, whereas this rate was 56% for “writing an invitation card”.

Figure 2. The purposes of speaking regarding communication difficulties encountered most frequently between tourists and hotel employees



Another purpose of the study is to identify the speaking situations in which the relevant communication difficulty is observed. For this purpose, the purposes of speaking which were asked to the hotel employees in terms of frequency of occurrence were reconsidered as speaking difficulties that might emerge between tourists and employees. The frequency distributions for how often communication problems occurred in these purposes of speaking were given in Figure 2. The purposes of speaking in which communication problems occurred were determined as follows: the total rate of occasional and frequent participation for “housekeeping (asking for demands)” was 48%, the total rate of “address description” was 59%, “asking guests about their satisfaction and responding to complaints” was 60% and the rate of “giving information about tourist attractions” was 51%. Approximately half of the 84 participants (53.57%) that replied to the question asked to determine the service sector in which communication problems occurred most as accommodation service. The second biggest communication problem was observed in food and beverage services with a participation rate of 32.14%. According to 9.52% of the participants, there were no communication problems.

4. Conclusions

The instructional materials developed based on the interests and needs of the students are known to enhance the success level. This is also true for the textbooks used in the foreign language teaching process concerning the tourism sector in which foreign languages are functionally used. While selecting the textbooks utilized in the process of preparing for the tourism profession, particular attention should be paid to choose textbooks in which speaking situations between tourism employees and tourists are taken into consideration because foreign language proficiency is among the competences of this profession.

Since Turkey is most visited by German-speaking tourists, this study emphasized the speaking situations using the German language. German for tourism textbooks were examined in terms of purposes of speaking. In this context, the obtained purposes of speaking were evaluated and included in a survey. The survey asked hotel employees about the frequency of occurrence of these speaking situations, and the Turkish tourism sector employees were asked for their opinions. This study determined the purposes for speaking German, which is a requirement for the people who work, or are going to work, in the Turkish tourism sector. According to the participants, the following purposes of speaking were frequently used between German tourists and hotel workers: *sich vorstellen* (introducing oneself), *Gäste begrüßen* (greeting guests), *Auskunft über das Hotel geben* (hotel introduction), *Wege beschreiben* (address description), *Zufriedenheit der Gäste erfragen / Auf Reklamationen reagieren* (asking guests about their satisfaction and responding to complaints), *Bestellungen entgegennehmen* (taking orders), *Sehenswürdigkeiten empfehlen* (giving information about tourist attractions), *Anmeldungen entgegennehmen / Gäste verabschieden* (reservation and check-in/check-out procedures), *Housekeeping - auf Wünsche reagieren* (housekeeping – asking for demands). Purposes of speaking were given according to the rating of frequency of occurrence here. They will form a basis for the development of an A1 level imported textbook. Provided that materials appropriate for the purposes of speaking used frequently are selected or written, Turkish tourism students and employees will become more successful in learning the German language. If the current study covers more purposes of speaking and includes more participants, developing materials appropriate for the group will become easier and more functional. Speaking situations causing communication problems should also be determined through the survey. Furthermore, the fact that more than half of the participants selected accommodation services and approximately half of the participants selected food and beverage services as the speaking situations with the most frequent communication problems should be evaluated as well. While developing textbooks, selecting or writing the materials particularly related to speaking situations which lead to communication problems may contribute to solving the problems. This study determined the purposes of speaking in German used in tourism and it is an example for the communication situations in this sector. Similar studies for other languages, such as English, French, Russian, etc. can also be conducted.

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Turizm Almancasına Yönelik Yerel Bir Ders Kitabı Yazmak İçin Bir Araştırma

Öz

Türkiye için önemli olan turizm sektöründe, turistlerle sağlıklı iletişim kurabilmesi için çalışanlarından yabancı dil bilmelerini talep etmektedir. Resmi istatistikler, Türkiye’de tatilini geçiren turistlerin çoğunluğunu Alman turistlerin oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, mesleğe hazırlık sürecindeki turizm okulu/yüksekokulu öğrencileri ya da otel çalışanları, Almanca öğrenmeye teşvik edilmektedir. Okullarda ya da Almanca kurslarında Turizm Almancası öğrenenlere okutulan ders kitaplarının birçoğu ithal ders kitaplarıdır ve Türk öğrencinin/çalışanının ihtiyacına yönelik yazılmış kitaplar değildir. Piyasada bulunan yerel ders kitaplarının

birçođunun da günümüz koşullarına ve bilimsel verilere dayanılarak yapılan ihtiyaç analizleri sonucunda güncellenmesi gerekmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türk turizm sektöründe çalışacaklar ile çalışanların ihtiyaçları olan Almanca konuşma amaçlarını ve yaşanan iletişim güçlüklerini belirlemektir. Karma desenli bir araştırma yöntemi uygulanarak saptanan konuşma amaçlarının ve iletişim sorunlarının dikkate alınması ve temel düzeyde bir Turizm Almancası ders kitabının yazılması durumunda Turizm Almancası öğretiminde başarı artacaktır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Turizm Almancası; konuşma amaçları; Almanca ders kitabı

AUTHOR BIODATA

Dr. Dođu Atas is currently working in the Division of German Language Education at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey. He received a Ph.D. degree in German Language Education from the Hacettepe University in 2016, an M.A. degree in German Language Education from Gazi University in 2010 and a B.A. degree in German Language Education from Hacettepe University in 2007. His interests are professional languages, materials development and vocational education.

Prof. Dr. Ayten Genç is currently working in the Division of German Language Education at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey. Her current interests include Foreign Language Education (German teaching & Turkish teaching), materials development, adaptation, and design in foreign language education.