

The Influence of Turkish Soap Operas (SOs) Shown on Georgian Television on the Decision of Learners to Start Learning the Turkish Language at the Georgian Universities

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Abstract

Turkish language has been spoken in Georgia since the 5th century, AD. During this period the motivation of speaking and learning the Turkish language in Georgia depended on different conditions. In recent years the number of learners of the Turkish language at Georgian universities has been increasing. The reason of the increment in the number of learners of Turkish language might be partly attributed to 12 Turkish soap operas shown on Georgian TV channels during the 2013- 2014 years. The current paper based on a survey deals with finding out whether Turkish soap operas on Georgian TV channels have risen more interest in people to learn the Turkish language at Georgian universities.

Keywords: Learners' Motivation, Turkish Language Teaching at Georgian Universities, Turkish Soap Operas

Introduction

According to Georgian chronicler, Leonti Mraveli (Cikia, 2013: VII), and historians Robert W. Thomson, (1996: 19-23) and Marie Félicité Brosset (2003:13-15), the Turkish language has been spoken in Georgia since the 5th century, A.D. During this period the motivation of speaking and learning the Turkish language in Georgia depended on various reasons. Turcologist Prof. Tsisana Abuladze (2004: 536-538) argues that cultural, historic and economic relationships with Turkic peoples have been the most attractive reasons for Georgian people to learn Turkish in Georgia for many centuries.

Between the years of 2008-2012 the number of learners of Turkish language at Georgian universities cooperating with the International Black Sea University (IBSU) through Friendship Language Center (FLC) sponsored by IBSU has presented a similar ratio, whereas over the last year the number of learners of Turkish language at the same universities gradually increased.

FLCs at Georgian universities (Sokhumi State University, Georgian Technical University, Tbilisi Medical University, Kutaisi A. Tsereteli State University, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Telavi I. Gogabashvili State University, Gori Teaching University, Poti A. Tsereteli State University (Branch), Rustavi Rvali Institute) were opened in the framework of current cooperation agreement with IBSU. Upon request of the mentioned universities to IBSU at FLCs different foreign languages, including Turkish, have been taught since their establishment in 2008.

The number of learners of the Turkish language at the mentioned centers ranked between 600 and 700 in the

2008-2012 educational years, in the 2012-2013 educational year their number reached 711 students. As for the 2013-2014 educational year, the number increased significantly and reached 1040 students.

Survey

To the question given to the learners of the Turkish language, whose ages vary between 18-65 years (including lecturers working at the mentioned universities), by Turkish teachers at FLCs in the beginning of the 2013-2014 educational year "Why do you want to learn the Turkish language?" learners answered almost in the same manner as in previous years. Their answers can be arranged in the following order by answers' frequency:

1. To know more about the neighbor country's - Turkey's - history, culture, life style, etc.
2. To be employed at Turkish companies in Georgia
3. To pursue higher education at Turkish universities in Turkey
4. To benefit from internship at Turkish universities and companies in Turkey (mostly students from the medical department)
5. To benefit from Turkish sources and archive documents about Georgia (Turcologists and Historians)

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6. To communicate better with distant relatives in Turkey
7. To deliver courses at Turkish universities (mostly Georgian lecturers, experts in theater)
8. To be able to help Turkish students understand their subjects easily (prep schools' teachers)
9. To be able to communicate with Turkish partners in business
10. To be acquainted with Turkish people visiting or staying in Georgia
11. To get married to a Turkish citizen.

The lack of a new persuasive approach among the received responses from learners of the Turkish language in October, 2013-2014, stimulated us to think about some new reasons which might have influenced learners to start learning Turkish language. One of the reasons of the increment in the number of learners of the Turkish language might be attributed to Turkish soap operas (SOs) shown on Georgian TV channels at the same period.

Determination of the accuracy level of the mentioned hypothesis and revealing of what events and phenomena in Turkish SOs influenced people's decision to start learning the Turkish language might shed light on three methodological tips related to Turkish teaching primarily for authors preparing Turkish course books, readers, listening and video fragments for Georgian people and further for Turkish teachers teaching Turkish as a foreign language at Georgian universities.

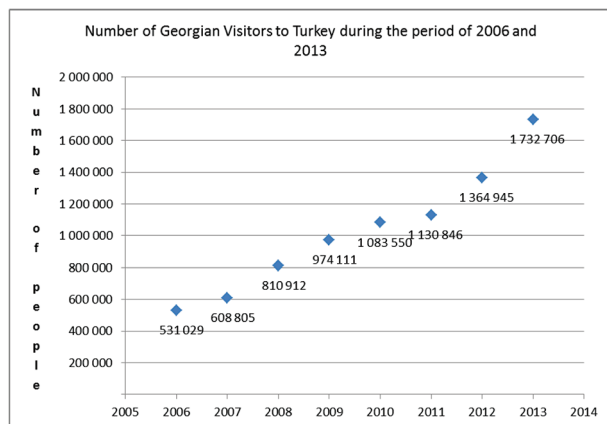
We think that these three methodological tips might be as follows:

- a. Proceeding from the learners' privileged 'interest codes' based on their age and sexuality, it might be possible to predict what kind of cultural, historic motifs in Turkish course books, readers, listening and video fragments will be more acceptable for Georgian learners of Turkish at the Georgian universities.
- b. The awareness of Turkish authors regarding learners' selected topics may determine the ways for course lecturers / textbook authors to handle the aforementioned topics in Turkish reading books, as well as listening and video fragments according to learners' choice frequency.
- c. Based on learners' preferences, and backgrounds, Turkish teachers can foresee and predict what teaching methods of foreign language are acceptable for Georgians to pursue the learning of the Turkish language.

From Turkish SOs to learning the Turkish language

Turkish SOs went air on Georgian TV channels in May, 2013. Within a very short time the number of Turkish SOs on Georgian TV channels increased and reached 12. Many of SOs are appropriately dubbed, such as the drama series: The Magnificent Century, Sila, Tulip Era, Love and Punishment, Diamond, Lost Time, Lady Dila, 1001 Nights, Asi, Love-Sky and Ground, Silent, and Forbidden Love. 9 out of 12 are still running.

Before we started our survey among learners of Turkish language we decided to investigate, if there had been an increment in the number of Georgian visitors to Turkey since Turkish SOs were launched on Georgian TV channels. Based on data received from Turkish Statistical Institute, we can easily argue that an analogous increment, as has been registered in the number of learners of Turkish language, has been observed in the number of Georgian visitors to Turkey in May 2013 - May 2014 period. Also, according to Turkish President Mr. Abdullah GUL's address made in Tbilisi on the 7th of May, 2014, over the last year "Turkey has become the country that Georgian citizens visit mostly" (Turkish President Abdullah Gül's Speech in Official Visit to Georgia, 2013). By the beginning of May, 2014, the number of Georgian visitors to Turkey was estimated as 1.8 million. The table below points out this increment:



Source: The figures of Georgians who visited Turkey between 2006-2013 (2014)

The above-mentioned figures for 2013-2014 years extremely exceeded Sekreter and Eray's (2013: 66) average forecast that was predicting a decline of Georgian visitors' to Turkey in the years 2007-2011. In reality a 30 % increment was achieved. The same 30 % increment both in the number of Georgian visitors to Turkey and in the number of learners of the Turkish language at Georgian Universities can be explained, at least partly, as the result of the influence of Turkish SOs on Georgian TV channels.

In order to probe and to justify the mentioned hypothesis and then to reveal which event and phenomena in Turkish SOs played dominant role for learners in making decision to start learning of Turkish language, we prepared a survey which focused just on Turkish SOs. To get exact respond to the questions and reach up more learners, survey, made up 15 questions, was distributed to learners in Georgian language.

A survey was conducted with students who started learning of the Turkish language in October, 2013, almost simultaneously with the launch of numerous Turkish SOs on Georgian TV Channels. Having deduced the number of (711) of learners in 2012th, from the newcomers (1049) in 2013, we received an increment of 338 that constitutes a 30 % increment to the number of learners of the Turkish language.

As a population of the survey, those learners who started learning the Turkish language in October, 2013 were chosen. To choose the sampling of the survey the System-

atic Sampling Selection Method was implemented, and as a result 102 respondents were selected as a Sampling. In the selection of sampling we paid attention to respondents' age, gender and place they came from.

In the evaluation of collected data SSPS software was applied.

The answers received from respondents are as follows:

A. Frequency Tables

1. Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	85	83.3	83.3	83.3
	Male	17	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

2. Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15-25 age	90	88.2	88.2	88.2
	26-36 age	4	3.9	3.9	92.2
	46-56 age	8	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

3. City you live in					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Tbilisi	61	59.8	59.8	59.8
	Telavi	11	10.8	10.8	70.6
	Batumi	15	14.7	14.7	85.3
	Rustavi	2	2.0	2.0	87.3
	Gori	13	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	102	100.0	100.0		

4. Faculty					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Medicine	23	22.5	22.5	22.5
	Social Science, Business and Law	30	29.4	29.4	52.0
	Exact and Natural Sciences	6	5.9	5.9	57.8
	Foreign Languages	1	1.0	1.0	58.8
	Humanities	14	13.7	13.7	72.5
	International Relations	3	2.9	2.9	75.5
	Business Administration	13	12.7	12.7	88.2
	Turkish Language and Literature	8	7.8	7.8	96.1
	Tourism	1	1.0	1.0	97.1
	Economy	1	1.0	1.0	98.0
	Journalist	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

5. Have you ever watched any Turkish SOs?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	94	92.2	92.2	92.2
	no	8	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

6. How did you first learn about Turkish SOs					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	From friends	76	74.5	74.5	74.5
	TV ad	17	16.7	16.7	91.2
	On the internet	9	8.8	8.8	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

7. Is there any Turkish SOs you watch regularly?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	52	51.0	51.0	51.0
	Not regularly	42	41.2	41.2	92.2
	I don't watch	8	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

8. How often do you watch Turkish SOs?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Every day	46	45.1	45.1	45.1
	Once in a week	33	32.4	32.4	77.5
	I don't watch	23	22.5	22.5	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

9. Which of the following is (are) your favorite SOs? Please give numbers to each of your choices from 1 to 12					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Magnificent Century	44	43.1	43.1	43.1
	Sila	12	11.8	11.8	54.9
	Tulip Era	10	9.8	9.8	64.7
	Love and Punishment	12	11.8	11.8	76.5
	Diamond	2	2.0	2.0	78.4
	Lost Time	6	5.9	5.9	84.3
	Silents	1	1.0	1.0	85.3
	Lady Dila	4	3.9	3.9	89.2
	1001 Nights	6	5.9	5.9	95.1
	Asi	4	3.9	3.9	99.0
	Love, Sky and Ground	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

Hurrem	7	6.9	6.9	52.9
Sıla	3	2.9	2.9	55.9
Boran	2	2.0	2.0	57.8
Çınar	1	1.0	1.0	58.8
Savash	30	29.4	29.4	85.3
Fatma Gül	1	1.0	1.0	79.4
Kıvanç Tatlıtuğ	1	1.0	1.0	80.4
Yeşim	1	1.0	1.0	81.4
Ezel	1	1.0	1.0	82.4
Halid Ergenç	1	1.0	1.0	93.1
Bergüzar Korel	1	1.0	1.0	94.1
Tuğba Büyüküstün	5	4.9	4.9	99.0
Necati Şaşmaz	1	1.0	1.0	100.0

B. Mapping Answers

1. Gender * 1. Have you ever watched any Turkish SOs?				
		yes	no	Total
Gender	Female	81	4	85
	Male	13	4	17
Total		94	8	102

1. Gender * 2. How did you first learn about Turkish SOs?					
		From Friends	TV	On the internet	Total
Gender	Female	65	13	7	85
	Male	11	4	2	17
Total		76	17	9	102

A. Which of the following is (are) your favorite Turkish SOs? Please give numbers to each of your choices from 1 to 12						
		Lost Time	Silent	Lady Dila	1001 Nights	Asi
Gender	Female	5	1	4	5	2
	Male	1	0	0	1	2
Total		6	1	4	6	4

B. Which of the following is (are) your favorite Turkish SOs? Please give numbers to each of your choices from 1 to 12				Total
		Love, Sky and Ground		
Gender	Female	1		85
	Male	0		17
Total		1		102

1. Gender * 3. Which factors that you have seen in Turkish SOs influenced your decision to learn Turkish?					
		Life Style	Clothing and Dress	Culture	Music
Gender	Female	10	2	31	3
	Male	1	0	5	0
Total		11	2	36	3

1. Gender * 4. Which of the following is (are) your favorite Turkish SOs? Please give numbers to each of your choices from 1 to 12						
		Magnificent Century	Sıla	Tulip Era	Love and Punishment	Diamond
Gender	Female	34	11	9	11	2
	Male	10	1	1	1	0
Total		44	12	10	12	2

A. Which factors that you have seen on Turkish SOs influenced your decision to learn Turkish?				
B				Total
		Sights	Others	
Gender	Female	18	20	85
	Male	3	8	17
Total		21	28	102

1. Age. 1. Have you ever watched any Turkish SOs?				Total
		Yes	No	
Age	15-25 age	82	8	90
	26-36 age	4	0	4
	46-56 age	8	0	8
Total		94	8	102

1. City you live in. 1. Have you ever watched any Turkish SOs?				Total
		Yes	No	
Age	Tbilisi	54	7	61
	Telavi	11	0	11
	Batumi	15	0	15
	Rustavi	2	0	2
	Gori	12	1	13
Total		94	8	102

Findings and suggestions

According to the survey results 92.2 % of the learners of Turkish at Georgian universities have watched Turkish SOs before they had started learning of Turkish language. 45.1 % watch Turkish SOs regularly on Georgian TV channels and 32.4 % of learners watch Turkish SOs once a week. 80 % of total number of learners are female and their ratio is 3 times higher than that of male learners, also their age scales vary between the ages 15-25. Accordingly, the authors of Turkish course books and readers, Turkish listening and video fragments for Georgian people and Turkish teachers working at Georgian Universities first should take the female factor into consideration.

The learners' profile of the Turkish language in terms of educational background is various at Georgian universities. The learners represent the following fields: Social Science, Business and Law (29.4%), Medicine (22.5 %), and Humanities (13.7 %). Some departments' representatives such as Tourism (1 %), Economy (1 %), and Foreign Languages' (1 %) show little interest in learning the Turkish language at Georgian Universities. Consequently, authors of Turkish course books, readers, listening and video fragments can mostly focus on related fields, and handle topics accordingly.

74.5 % of the respondents got information about Turkish SOs from each other. 65 % out of 74.5 % of learners are female, and 16.7 % of learners got information about SOs through TV ads, 8.8 % of learners got through internet, thereby it should be taken into account that one of the best ways to promote the Turkish language among learners in Georgia is to satisfy learners' needs, instead of giving advertisement to mass media.

The favorite Turkish SOs in comparison to others among the respondents is Magnificent Century (43.1% of the respondents chose it as the favorite SO). The female

audience in this amount is 34 %. These figures can be considered as an indicator that topics dealing with history are much more preferable (however, we should not forget about fiction in SOs) for Georgian TV audience. Therefore, short fiction texts based on Turkish history, can be recommended for Turkish course books and readers for pleasure reading. On the other hand, as least popular Turkish SOs are marked both Love-Sky-Ground and Silent (1 % of the respondents chose it as the favorite SO). The movies deal with family relations in the contemporary society. By the way, the Executive Board of Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (RTÜK) fined the Turkish TV channel FOX TV in May 2012 for running Love-Sky-Ground which was considered by RTÜK as the cause of mischievous relationships which would damage family structure of Turkey. So it can be considered that while preparing Turkish course books, readers, listening and video fragments for teaching the Turkish language to Georgian students that clash of cultural values should be avoided and it should be taken into account that Georgia and Turkey have a conventional family structure.

The respondents were mostly impressed by cultural codes in Turkish SOs (35.3 %) compared to other motifs (female learners constitutes 31% out of the 35.3%). The influence of sights in SOs on the respondents ranked highest for 20.6 % of respondents, life style's impact was recorded - for 10.8 %, clothing and dress influence was mentioned by 2 %. Consequently, while preparing Turkish course books, readers, listening and video fragments for Georgian students, the main focus in materials must be directed to the frequently chosen factors. While providing materials about famous sights, information about places (e.g., Ardanuch, etc.) that Georgians associate with their history will be motivating.

30.4 % of the respondents have no concrete idol in SOs, the ratio of individual fans toward the characters in SOs is various, and Savash (Savaş) was mentioned as the most popular figure in SOs by 30.4 % of respondents, among female actresses in SOs the leader is Hürrem with the 6.9 %, while Tuğba Büyüküstün took the second place with the 4.9 %. Based on these data in Turkish course books, readers, listening and video fragments mentioned actors' and actresses' biographies, some fragments from their personal life can be used. Besides, materials about successful Georgians working in Turkey like Shota Arveladze, will cause interest.

It is time to remember that after the Turkish movie *Scrub Bird* (Çalikuşu) run on the Soviet TV channels in 1980 the major character's name - Pheride's (Feride) - was given to children all over the Soviet Union.

The percentage of the respondents watching SOs in small towns is very high (nearly 100 %), whereas in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, is also high enough - 88 %. Consequently, fragments from SOs will increase the motivation of learning. However, to prepare more attractive Turkish learning materials for those living in Tbilisi who have more attractions than watching TV, new ways and strategies are also needed.

48 % of the respondents to the question, "Did Turkish soap operas affect your decision to learn Turkish?" answered

"yes". On the one hand, 7.8 % of the respondents said that they do not remember if they were impacted by SOs, on the other hand, 44.1 % respondents are sure that SOs did not impact them to start learning the Turkish language, albeit these answers contradict the affirmative answer with the 92.2 % of the question in the survey, "Have you ever watched any Turkish SOs?", it is fact that uncovering of real reasons of the contradictive answers in the next survey will make us closest to exact answers of research question.

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