

CHAPTER

16

SUPERLATIVE TEACHING VIEWS: FRENCH-ENGLISH DOUBLE MAJOR TEACHERS

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16.1 INTRODUCTION

In our increasingly globalized world, the importance of knowing a foreign language is increasing day by day, with individuals knowing more than one language and thus being able to communicate with people from different cultures and societies. With the development of societies with technological advances and the emergence of various methods of accessing information, knowing a foreign language is important for the individual to develop himself intellectually and contribute to society (Cangil, 2004). For this reason, in order to train individuals who know foreign languages in our country, studies have been carried out from past to present, such as the opening of institutions providing foreign language education. These studies have been continuing since the Ottoman Empire until today.

The Chamber of Translation in the Ottoman Empire, which was opened in 1821 in order to train officials who knew foreign languages, and sending students to Europe for this purpose can be given as examples of the first studies. In 1839, after the proclamation of

Tanzimat, foreign language courses were included more in the curricula of modern schools, which may be an indicator of the increasing importance of foreign language teaching (Demiryürek, 2013).

In recent years, foreign language education has gained great importance not only in our country but also in multinational communities such as the European Union in order to raise multilingual and multicultural individuals. Within the scope of foreign language education, with the publication of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages by the European Union in 2001, definitions and explanations were made for language learning, teaching, and language levels (Çelik & Başutku, 2020). According to the principles in the text, a foreign language teacher should have the knowledge and skills to gain the basic (reading, writing, speaking, listening) and complementary (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, culture) skills according to the levels of his/her students while teaching a foreign language.

In our country, many studies are carried out by the higher education institution in order to train qualified foreign language teachers in this way. Foreign language education departments such as English language education, German language education, French language education, and Arabic language education, as well as philology departments in foreign languages, are available in the relevant faculties of universities. In addition, thanks to the double major programs implemented in many university departments, foreign language teacher candidates who meet the necessary conditions (such as English, German, French language education) can also receive a bachelor's degree in a second foreign language program (Hopcan et al., 2014). Although double major programs, which have been in force in our country since 1998, are considered to be difficult due to the intensity of the curricula and the difficulties caused by studying in two different departments, the double diploma opportunity, employment rate, and language skills are a source of motivation for foreign language teacher candidates (Şahin & Öztürk, 2020). In addition, in the studies conducted, it has been observed that most of the pre-service teachers have an interest in the program before

starting the double major, but they do not have any information about it. In this context, pre-service teachers can be informed about double major programs through the web pages of universities, orientation programs, and information provided by academic staff (Aykırı & Aktuna, 2021). With double major programs, it is aimed to train pre-service teachers in the department of foreign language education to be multilingual and qualified.

In foreign language education, as in other disciplines, there are different skills that students need to learn. These skills are categorized under the titles of basic and complementary skills (Gelen, 2017).

Basic skills are divided into four subheadings: reading skills, writing skills, listening skills, and speaking skills, and each skill can be related to each other. Complementary skills are important elements for the development of these four basic skills.

They are divided into four subheadings: vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and culture. For example, in a foreign language lesson, with an effective lesson plan prepared by the teacher, the student can develop both basic and complementary skills simultaneously through activities such as reading a story and question-answer activities. In order to teach basic and complementary skills effectively, it is necessary to determine the appropriate language teaching method and approach by taking into account the student's readiness, age, level and positive or negative attitude towards the target foreign language.

In the field of foreign language education, prospective teachers who double major in two different foreign languages can have the chance to develop themselves more in this field since they take courses such as Teaching Practice, Teaching Language Skills, and Foreign Language Teaching to Children in both foreign languages in which they can apply foreign language teaching methods and approaches.

16.1.1 Purpose of the Research

Within the scope of the study, it is aimed to obtain the opinions of pre-service teachers studying French language teaching and double

majoring in English language teaching about the teaching of the superlative grammar structure (the superlatives/ les superlatifs) with authentic texts in teaching French and English as foreign languages.

In line with this aim, answers to the following research questions will be sought:

- (1) What are the opinions of pre-service teachers studying French language teaching and double majoring in English language teaching about the effectiveness of authentic texts used to teach 'Superlatives'?
- (2) How do pre-service teachers studying French language teaching and double majoring in English language teaching evaluate the role of authentic texts containing the topic 'Superlative' in grammar teaching?
- (3) Do pre-service teachers studying French language teaching and double majoring in English language teaching observe differences between authentic texts dealing with the same topic in terms of grammar teaching in French and English language education?
- (4) What are the opinions of pre-service teachers about how grammatical structures and rules in authentic texts can be transferred to students in teaching French and English as a foreign language?

16.2 METHOD

This study was designed by a descriptive analysis method, one of the qualitative research designs. Within the scope of the research, the participant pre-service teachers were asked semi-structured interview questions (Semi-structured Interview Questions for Pre-service Teachers Studying French Language Teaching and Double Majoring in English Language Teaching), research texts (*Explorer Les Merveilles du Tourisme: Aventures et Expériences Inoubliables/ Exploring the Wonders of Tourism: Unforgettable Adventures and Experiences*) and demographic questions. The data obtained were divided into themes, codes, and categories and organized by the researcher.

16.2.1 Study Group

The study group of this research consists of eight pre-service teachers studying French language teaching and enrolled in the double major program in English language teaching at a state university, Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Language Education, in the spring semester of 2023–2024.

Two of the participant pre-service teachers graduated from French Language Teaching and continue their education in the double major program in English Language Teaching. The other pre-service teachers continue their education in both French and English language teaching.

The characteristics of the pre-service teachers forming the study group of the research are given in Table 16.1

Table 16.1 Characteristics of the prospective teachers forming the study group

Prospective Teachers	Gender	French Language Teaching Term	English Language Teaching Term
T1	Female	4	2
T2	Female	Graduated	8
T3	Female	Graduated	8
T4	Male	4	2
T5	Female	6	2
T6	Female	6	4
T7	Female	6	4
T8	Female	8	6

16.2.2 Data Collection Tools

To collect data within the scope of the research, semi-structured interview questions were prepared from descriptive analysis, one of the qualitative research methods. With the descriptive analysis method, the

semi-structured interview questions prepared by the researcher were analyzed by dividing them into themes, codes, and categories (Eryilmaz, 2019). For the prepared interview questions and the French and English texts to be addressed to the pre-service teachers, the opinions of three expert academicians from a state university, Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Languages Education, in the fields of French language and English language education were consulted. For each question in the Expert Opinion Form prepared by the researcher, the experts were asked to explain the reasons by marking one of the options (appropriate, inappropriate, or should be improved) according to their opinions. As a result of the views received from the experts, the researcher rearranged the semi-structured interview questions. The reorganized questions directed to the experts are given in Table 16.2.

Table 16.2 Semi-structured interview questions organized by taking expert opinions

Questions on the Expert Opinion Form	Questions Revised According to Expert Opinions
1.How would you introduce the superlative form to students using this text?	1. At which language levels can the original texts given above be used in French and English language teaching?
2.What are the language structures or grammar rules related to the degree of superlatives in the text?	2. Using the texts given above, how would you teach grammar structure (Superlative/ Le Superlatif) in French and English lessons?
3.How do you guide students to identify and understand the superlative forms used in the text?	3. How do you guide students to identify the superlative structures used in the text?
4. Can you give other forms of superlatives that can be used to describe the places mentioned in the text?	4. How would you reinforce students' use of superlatives through writing activities inspired by the content of the text?
5.How would you reinforce the use of superlatives through speaking and writing	5. How would you reinforce the use of superlatives through speaking

activities inspired by the content of the text?	activities inspired by the content of the text?
6. How would you adapt this text to create exercises or activities with your students that focus on practicing superlatives?	6. How would you adapt this text to create exercises or activities with your learners that focus on practicing the skill of speaking with degrees of superiority?
7. What strategies would you use to help students remember and apply the superlative form correctly and effectively in their own writing and speaking?	7. How would you adapt this text to create exercises or activities with your students focused on practicing their mastery, writing skills?
8. How would you evaluate the meaning and use of superlatives based on students' language understanding and language production in response to this text?	8. What strategies would you use to help students remember and apply the superlative form correctly and effectively in their own writing?
9. Can you suggest other resources or materials to support teaching about degrees of superiority using this text?	9. What kind of authentic documents other than or like these texts can you use?
10. How would you address possible difficulties or misunderstandings about degrees of superlatives based on students' interpretation of this text?	10. Do you prefer to use authentic texts? If not, why?
11. In your opinion, is it necessary to use authentic texts in foreign language teaching or not? Explain.	11. What do you think about the use of authentic texts in French and English language teaching?

16.2.3 Writing Research Texts

Within the scope of the research, the researcher wrote two authentic texts, which are completely identical in French and English, with the help of ChatGPT, to be directed to prospective teachers studying French language teaching and double majoring in English language teaching.

ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence software created by OpenAI and opened for use since 2022, and it is an up-to-date application that can answer the questions asked by people instantly and can be used in various languages (Yağcı & Yıldız, 2023).

In the writing of the research text, ChatGPT was used to ensure that the French and English texts were completely equivalent.

The texts are authentic texts that are frequently encountered in daily life and foreign language education textbooks. "Authentic texts" is the general name of writings such as magazines, columns, and recipes that we encounter in daily life, which are not written for any teaching purpose (Çakır & Göçen, 2023). The subject of tourism chosen in the texts is an important element in terms of being an important theme in foreign language education and being frequently preferred at the beginning levels of language teaching.

16.3 FINDINGS

In this part of the study, the data obtained through semi-structured interviews with eight prospective teachers studying French language teaching and enrolled in a double major program in English language teaching were analyzed by the descriptive analysis method. The data obtained were divided into three themes, eight codes, and twenty-three categories by the researcher. This theme, code, and category classification is given in Table 16.3.

Table 16.3 Themes, Codes, and Categories Resulting from the Analysis of Research Data

Theme	Language Teaching Methods	Using Authentic Texts	Activities and Applications in Language Teaching
Code	Grammar and Language Structures	Authentic Materials	Communication and Oral Skills
	Teaching Techniques and Activities	Motivation and Attention Grabbing	Writing Skills and Homework
	Drama and Play	Student Development and Knowledge Transfer	

Category	Linguistic rules	Daily life	Oral
	Explanation with examples	Authentic examples	communication skills
	Teaching through rules	Interests	
	-Identification and understanding of superlative grammatical structures	Motivation	Applications of language skills
	Interactive activities	Current issues	Discussion
	Reading	Culture knowledge	environment
	Effective use of drama	Communication skills	Natural use
	Develop language skills	The role and importance of authentic texts	Writing activities.
			Product oriented studies
			Correct use

As indicated in Table 16.3, according to the responses received from the participant pre-service teachers in semi-structured interviews, one of the three themes in the teaching of superlatives as a grammatical structure is language teaching methods. In general terms, the method is a form of application that can vary depending on the objectives of the lesson and the physical conditions of the classroom and the condition of the target audience (such as readiness, level, interest) and is an important element for lesson planning (Karagöl & Kurt, 2020).

Language teaching methods, on the other hand, are various applications used for foreign language education, which can vary according to the needs of the target audience.

When the data obtained in the context of the research are analyzed, according to some of the participants, grammar rules should be explained to the students in detail, and the subject should be explained with examples. Two of the pre-service teachers made comments about this issue in this way:

T1: "Firstly, I will explain which grammar topic Turkish is for (Superlative and Le Superlatif) and what it means. I explain in which situations the expression of superiority is used. Then I explain them in English and French and help them reinforce them with examples."

T7: "I find the (Superlative/ Le Superlatif) structures in the text and explain how they are used through an example.

For example, Les Plages les plus magnifiques

(le plus + adjective (adj))

/ the most magnificent beaches

(the most + adjective (adj))"

According to another part of the participants, it would be better for the students to learn the rules by discovering the areas of superlative usage themselves in order to understand the grammar rules better. One of the pre-service teachers made the following comment on this issue:

T8: "It would be appropriate to start by having them pay attention to the words and phrases in the text in both languages that they think are similar, similar and close to each other. I expect them to recognise the similarities even before I teach them the name of the subject."

In addition, according to this interpretation, reading activities in foreign language classes are an effective language skill in teaching the subject of the degree of superiority.

According to the pre-service teachers, in superlative teaching, interactive activities such as role-playing in the classroom environment, including activities under the title of drama as well as discussion, are activities that can be used in lessons as they can improve students' speaking skills along with superlative teaching. The pre-service teachers commented on this issue in this way:

T6: "I would like everyone to share their thoughts, their 'best'. Maybe I can organize a small discussion afterwards and ask them to discuss these ideas with each other."

T7: "I think drama is very effective in language teaching, so any of the students in the class can be asked to give examples about superlative with small games in the class"

The second theme identified according to the responses of pre-service teachers is the use of authentic texts. Authentic texts are non-didactic texts written in any language for native language users (Sadioğlu & Gürel, 2021). The participants stated that authentic texts are effective materials in teaching French and English as a foreign language in order to associate language learning with daily life and that they are also important elements in teaching grammar structures, which is one of the complementary skills in foreign language teaching:

T5: "I think it is very useful and thanks to the authentic texts, the subject matter stays in students' minds more."

T4: "Yes, I prefer it because with authentic texts, students can improve their vocabulary knowledge and learn grammar structures better."

T2: "Authentic texts in French/English language teaching encourage students to use the language in real life, it is more permanent and fun."

T3: "It is a realistic learning technique in learning the authentic language that is constantly used and needed. Therefore, it is very important. If it is not seen in daily life, learning remains as memorisation and is not transferred to permanent memory."

According to the pre-service teachers, during the teaching of French and English languages, motivation and interest are also important for students to get more efficiency from the lessons. A pre-service teacher gives the following examples of activities that can be done to increase motivation and interest while teaching superlatives:

T6: "I make them give examples from their own lives. I give various examples that may interest them according to their age groups. For example, the strongest hero, the cutest animal, etc. I choose the text content according to their interests. I ask them to write sentences expressing superiority by using their personal ideas."

The last theme identified according to the pre-service teachers' responses is activities and practices in language teaching. Within the scope of this theme, the pre-service teachers mentioned activities that they could apply during excellent teaching, including basic and complementary skills:

T1: "After reading the superlatives in the text a few times, I would want him/her to reinforce this by giving him/her an assignment that he/she can do outside the school on similar topics. This assignment can be a vlog-style activity for speaking skills."

T2: "I would like them to tell about the places they have visited or made a survey."

T3: "I do a speaking activity over the visuals I write on the board. For example: two countries that look rich and poor, or visuals with expensive and cheap labels will be useful."

According to the pre-service teachers, in superlative teaching, language skills-based activities will contribute to foreign language learning by enabling students to reinforce what they have learned by using what they have learned.

16.4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Within the scope of this project, eleven semi-structured interview questions were prepared by the researcher to be administered to prospective teachers studying French language teaching and double majoring in English language teaching, together with an authentic text containing the superlative structure in French and English. The text and interview questions were reorganized by taking the opinions of three academicians who are experts in French and English languages (Table 16.2). The semi-structured interview questions were answered after the researcher interviewed eight prospective teachers. The research data obtained were analyzed by a descriptive analysis method, and the findings were obtained.

According to the findings, pre-service teachers studying French language teaching and double majoring in English language teaching give importance to the language teaching method and approach in the teaching of French and English as foreign languages within the scope of a grammar structure such as superlatives, without any difference between French and English language teaching. According to the answers given to the questions, pre-service teachers prefer inductive and deductive approaches for teaching the superlative structure used in authentic texts.

The pre-service teachers stated that drama activities can be used in teaching French and English as a foreign language according to the level and interests of the students in order for them to better understand and reinforce what they have learned and emphasized that student motivation and interests are also important factors for effective teaching.

They emphasized that in the teaching of superlative constructions in French and English lessons, within the scope of such drama activities, in addition to interactive activities, they will both reinforce the subject, and students will learn better by using the language actively by creating small discussion topics in the classroom environment.

In teaching French and English as a foreign language, it is also important for pre-service teachers to prefer authentic texts containing grammatical structures such as superlatives, suitable for different subjects and student levels.

According to pre-service teachers, thanks to authentic texts, students will develop their language skills better by seeing the real uses of the language. Within the scope of authentic texts, newspaper news and columns are among the examples given.

In superlative teaching, pre-service teachers make their evaluations with the writing and speaking activities they give to students in order to understand whether permanent learning has taken place and to get more efficiency from the lesson as well as developing students' language skills.

In the literature, it has been observed that there are few studies conducted for pre-service teachers who double major in the field of

foreign language education in general as well as pre-service teachers who double major in French language teaching.

In this context, it is thought that it would be good to conduct more studies in order to train qualified teachers and to reach more data on the methods and forms of grammar teaching, which is one of the complementary language skills of pre-service teachers, on a subject basis.

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