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Positioning of German as a foreign language according to different occupational groups in Turkey

Fatma KARAMAN

f.karaman@firat.edu.tr

Fırat University

Article

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Abstract

There may not always be an overlap between foreign language teaching policies and the foreign language needs of people in real life. As a matter of fact, when this situation is examined specifically in the context of German, Germany's recent demand for manpower from Turkey across different professional groups has brought the society's need and desire to learn German back to the agenda. These developments have made German a necessary language. The desire of people to practice their professions abroad is one of the important reasons for this need. All these developments necessitate the investigation of whether German is a preferred language by individuals at the society level, the attitudes towards German, and the determination of whether there is a harmony between the foreign language policies adopted by the country and the language preferences of individuals, and how German is positioned in Turkey. In this context, this research aims to determine how German is positioned according to different occupational groups in Turkey. In this study, phenomenology method, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. In determining the participants' views on the positioning of German, a semi-structured interview technique was used as a data collection technique. Within the scope of the research, data were obtained from a total of 70 people who studied at the faculties of engineering, health sciences, medicine, nursing, technology and education and who graduated and practiced their professions. The obtained data were analyzed using descriptive analysis method. From the data obtained, it was understood that the participants (61) representing different professional groups wanted to learn German. It has been determined that Turkey only prioritizes teaching English and does not implement a multilingual foreign language policy, and foreign language policies are not developed according to the needs and expectations of its citizens. It has been concluded that the Turkish education system does not offer different foreign language options to its citizens, considering their educational and professional needs.

Introduction

The foreign language to be taught in the education system of a country is determined by the state within the framework of foreign language policies. When making choices about which foreign language to teach in the education system, states take into consideration the political, economic and commercial bilateral relations of the country where the foreign language is spoken. In the future, these decisions taken at the social level affect both the educational and professional situations of individuals positively or negatively. When the foreign language policies adopted by Turkey are examined within this framework, it is understood that English is widely taught in educational institutions by implementing a single foreign language approach, and even a monopoly is created in foreign languages (Balcı & Balcı, 2004; Balcı, 2013). Although in the historical process of foreign language teaching in Turkey, other languages such as French and German have been included as electives in addition to English, when compared to European countries, it cannot be said that a multilingual foreign language teaching approach is fully implemented in our country. Finally, the decision of the Ministry of National Education to make German courses elective starting from the 9th grade in 2023 also supports this situation (MEB, 2023). In fact, the Board of Education has set back the foreign language teaching process by including German courses, which are compulsory second foreign language courses at secondary education level, in the category of elective courses. With this decision, the multilingualism approach that offers language diversity in foreign language teaching has lost its importance. This situation affects Turkey's development by preventing it from establishing and developing relations with countries that have different cultural, economic and commercial characteristics.

There may not always be an overlap between foreign language teaching policies and the foreign language needs of people in real life. As a matter of fact, when this situation is examined specifically in German, Germany's recent demand for manpower from Turkey belonging to different professional groups has brought the society's need and desire to learn German back to the agenda. As is known, with the labor agreement and labor law signed between Germany and Turkey on October 31, 1961, Germany employed many Turkish citizens. Thus, many of our expatriates from Turkey started to work in Germany and even settled there over time, establishing a routine there, where they initially went temporarily (Öztürk, 2002; Karaman, 2022). Therefore, the social and economic relations between the two countries make learning the language of the country in question an essential need. Because Germany requires a certain level of German knowledge when recruiting workers. These developments made German a needed language. One of the important reasons for this need is that people want to practice their professions abroad. All these developments necessitate determining whether German is a preferred language by individuals at the society level, whether attitudes towards German differ according to occupational groups by investigating whether there is a harmony between the foreign language policies adopted by Turkey and the language preferences of individuals, and how German is positioned in Turkey. In this context, this study aims to determine how German is positioned according to different occupational groups in Turkey. When the literature was examined, it was determined that there was no research on whether different professional groups in Turkey needed German, and that the Ministry of National Education did not have a needs analysis study on this subject. In this context, this study has an original value in terms of determining how German is positioned in Turkey, and the data and results obtained from the study are also of great importance in terms of contributing to the foreign language policies implemented in our country.

Literature Review

Learning a foreign language is related to the various impacts of the country where the language is spoken on the world, including economic, technological, strategic, political, etc. As a matter of fact, these variables are decisive in the foreign language teaching policies of countries and play an important role in the foreign language teaching process. In this direction, countries are creating foreign language policies. Foreign language policies in Turkey also affect students' foreign language preferences. Generally, which foreign language will be taught at which levels and how many hours will be added to the curriculum are determined as a result of decisions taken within the framework of foreign language policies. Therefore, when making these decisions, foreign language policies are created by taking into account different variables such as political relations with the country where the foreign language in question is included in the curriculum and its spoken, as well as the country's economic, technological and political power. In addition to the bilateral relations between states, researching the opinions and attitudes of learners, who are important stakeholders in foreign language teaching, regarding the foreign language to be included in the curriculum and taking them into consideration in the process of making decisions regarding foreign language policies will positively affect the education system in general and the foreign language learning process in particular. Because in this process, depending on the determination of the foreign language preferences of individuals who want to learn a foreign language, learners will also be included in foreign language policies.

In addition to many factors such as teacher qualifications, methods, techniques, measurement and evaluation used, the language policies adopted by the country are also an important factor in the success process in foreign language teaching. The arrangements made in the education system at certain periods according to school levels also affect the foreign language teaching process (Aksöz & Balcı, 2018; Aksöz, 2021; Aksöz & Darancık, 2022). When the historical process is examined, it will be understood that many changes have been made in foreign language teaching policies in Turkey. In fact, the English course given in secondary school started to be given in the fourth grade in 1997. In 1998, German as a second foreign language began to be taught from the fourth grade onwards (Islattı, 1999). These regulations support the foreign language teaching process of learning two foreign languages at an early age, as in many other European countries (Haznedar, 2010). German began to be taught as a second compulsory foreign language in some types of schools in 2001, and in Anatolian, Science and Fine Arts high schools in 2004. In addition, since 2012, foreign languages have started to be included in the curriculum starting from the second grade of primary school. This positive development in English has changed the perception of German in Turkey in a positive way (Balcı, 2016). Because today, parents have become aware of knowing a second foreign language other than English, and they have started to encourage their children to learn German from an early age by providing education in educational institutions such as nurseries and private schools that have second foreign language opportunities (Karaman, 2017). Despite all these positive developments, it cannot be said that foreign language teaching in Turkey is carried out in the context of multilingualism (Akıllılar, 2013). While students in Turkey have the opportunity to learn a foreign language at primary education level, in European countries students are offered at least two foreign languages from an early age (Tok, et al. 2008).

As mentioned above, the Ministry of National Education lastly decided to teach German in August 2023, removing the German course from the compulsory courses and making this course an elective. In the August 2023 issue of the Ministry of National Education's Communiqués magazine, it was stated that the compulsory Second Foreign Language course will be gradually removed from the compulsory courses starting from the 9th grade as of the 2023–2024 academic year (MEB, 2023). With the decision to make compulsory German courses elective, German has been positioned differently by the Ministry of National Education. This decision, made by the Board of Education in 2023, is the most up-to-date example of the changes made recently regarding foreign languages. In this context, the issue that needs to be investigated is the effects of these decisions on the attitudes of the students and their future career opportunities, and the views of those who want to learn a foreign language other than English on their foreign language preferences. Despite official foreign language policies, what foreign language preferences people have in both their education and professional life, and which language or languages they need to learn when making career plans, are important issues that need to be researched in the field. However, in the literature review conducted so far, no research has been found on the needs and expectations of learners, who are important stakeholders in the foreign language teaching process, regarding German. In this context, this study has a unique value as it will investigate how German is positioned by different segments of society, independent of the officially adopted foreign language policies in our country. In addition, this study is expected to contribute to the decisions to be taken in the foreign language policies adopted by Turkey by providing a detailed perspective on how the foreign language preferences of people belonging to different professional groups that constitute the society are shaped.

Purpose and scope of the study

The aim of this study is to determine the positioning of German as a foreign language according to different occupational groups in Turkey. The aim of this study is to investigate how German is positioned in Turkey according to different professional groups by determining the attitudes of individuals belonging to different professional groups and candidates for these professions towards German, independent of the foreign language policies adopted by Turkey. For this purpose, data was obtained from individuals who studied at engineering, health sciences, medicine, nursing, technology and education faculties and graduated and practiced their professions. In line with the data obtained, it is aimed to investigate to what extent German is a desired language to be learned as a foreign language in Turkey, whether there is a need to learn German, and accordingly, how German is positioned, and to provide an idea to the authorities about which foreign languages will be preferred in our education system by including professional groups in the foreign language policies implemented in our education system. Research questions were prepared in order to further clarify the aims of the study. In this context, the research questions of this study are as follows;

1. What are the participants' attitudes towards German?
2. What are the participants' views on the foreign language policies adopted by Turkey?
3. What are the advantages of knowing German from a professional perspective?
4. Do the foreign language preferences and expectations of the society coincide with the foreign language policies implemented?

Methodology

In this study, which aims to determine the positioning of German as a foreign language according to different occupational groups in Turkey, the phenomenological method, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Phenomenology is the acquisition of participants' thoughts on the research topic using certain tools (Güler et al., 2015). In the phenomenological method, interviews are conducted to determine the participants' thoughts and attitudes regarding the research (Büyüköztürk et al. 2013). In this context, semi-structured interview technique, one of the data collection techniques, was used to determine the participants' views on the positioning of German. The ethics committee permission for this study was obtained from the X University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee dated 25.11.2024 and numbered 29056.

Research Group of the Study

In case of not being able to reach all the participants on the subject, a sample is selected from the participants to achieve the purpose of the study (Cansız Aktaş, 2015). The research group of this study was determined by maximum diversity sampling, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. Maximum diversity sampling is to represent the people related to the research topic at the maximum level by accessing a more accessible sample from very

comprehensive data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In the maximum variation sampling method, data richness is achieved by reaching people with different conditions and qualifications (Creswell, 2017). In this context, within the scope of this research, data were obtained from a total of 70 people who studied at the faculties of engineering, health sciences, medicine, nursing, technology and education and who graduated and practiced their professions. Demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of the participants.

Participant order	Gender	Age	Department of Education	Job
K1	Male	42	Faculty of Medicine	Urologist
K2	Male	26	Faculty of Medicine	Physiotherapist
K3	Male	40	Faculty of Education	Branch Manager
K4	Male	41	Engineering	Technician
K5	Female	51	Nursing	Nurse
K6	Female	27	Engineering	Biomedical engineer
K7	Female	30	Engineering	Biomedical engineer
K8	Male	53	Faculty of Education	Physical education teacher
K9	Male	44	Faculty of Education	Religious culture teacher
K10	Female	42	Faculty of Education	Turkish teacher Lecturer
K11	Male	54	Faculty of Literature	Electrical-Electronics Engineer
K12	Male	25	Engineering	Religious Officer
K13	Male	37	Theology	Dental Technician
K14	Male	34	Health sciences	Dentist
K15	Male	26	Faculty of Medicine	Computer Teacher
K16	Male	29	Faculty of Education	History Teacher
K17	Male	50	Faculty of Literature	Math Teacher
K18	Female	46	Faculty of Education	Electrical-Electronics Engineer
K19	Male	51	Engineering	Academic Member
K20	Male	53	Theology	English Teacher
K21	Male	54	Faculty of Literature	Elderly
K22	Female	33	Health sciences	Care
K23	Male	46	Health sciences	Administrator
K24	Male	21	Engineering	Student
K25	Female	22	Architecture	Student
K26	Female	22	Engineering	Student
K27	Female	17	Medical laboratory T.	Student
K28	Female	19	Medical laboratory T.	Student
K29	Male	25	Health sciences	Nurse
K30	Female	40	Health sciences	Nurse
K31	Female	25	Health sciences	Nurse
K32	Male	22	Health sciences	Nurse
K33	Female	20	Health sciences	Nurse
K34	Female	20	Health sciences	Emergency medical technician
K35	Female	23	Health sciences	Paramedic
K36	Female	25	Health sciences	Nurse
K37	Female	24	Health sciences	Nurse
K38	Male	25	Health sciences	Nurse
K39	Female	22	Health sciences	Nurse
K40	Female	20	Archeology	Student
K41	Female	26	Translation	Translator
K42	Female	28	Psychological counseling	Psychological counselor

Participant order	Gender	Age	Department of Education	Job
K43	Male	25	Engineering	Software expert
K44	Female	26	Dentist	Dentist
K45	Male	32	Radiotherapy	Radiotherapy technician
K46	Female	27	Dietician	Dietitian
K47	Female	32	Chemical	Student
K48	Female	27	Engineering	Software engineer
K49	Female	27	Midwifery	Midwife
K50	Female	25	Social work	Social worker
K51	Female	34	Geography	Lecturer
K52	Female	25	Health sciences	Health technician
K53	Female	27	German language and literature.	Cabinet attendant
K54	Female	32	Banking	Banker
K55	Male	45	Theology	Religious official
K56	Female	31	Statistics	Academician
K57	Female	29	Turkish language and literature.	Lecturer
K58	Female	28	Turkish language and literature.	Civil Servant
K59	Female	31	Primary education teaching	Lecturer
K60	Male	34	Computer programming	Military Personnel
K61	Male	25	Maths	Police
K62	Female	30	business	Banker
K63	Male	54	German Language and literatu	Lecturer
K64	Female	28	Turkish language and literature	Lecturer
K65	Female	30	Turkish language and literature	Lecturer
K66	Male	32	Dentistry	Dentist
K67	Female	39	High school graduate	Civil Servant
K68	Female	32	Foreign trade	Logistics Specialist
K69	Female	44	Librarianship	Librarian
K70	Female	28	Faculty of Communication	Journalist

As can be seen from the table above, (Table 1) data were obtained from 70 participants from different professional groups in Turkey, 42 women and 28 men.

Data Collection Tools and Data Analysis

Before the study, the ethical considerations were addressed through the application of two fundamental principles: confidentiality and anonymity. So, first of all, the approval from the university's Ethics Committee was secured for the study. Then participants were assured that all recordings and identifying information would be kept confidential. Informed consent forms were collected prior to their involvement in the intervention process, ensuring that participants understood their rights and the scope of the study. Also, to uphold the principle of anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, effectively safeguarding their identities and ensuring that data could not be linked back to any individual. These measures were implemented to protect participant privacy and uphold the integrity of the research process.

Interview questions were prepared by the researcher to be used in the interviews in line with the findings and results of the studies on the subject in the literature and the experiences of the researcher. Later, expert opinions were obtained regarding the interview questions and the questions were finalized. The relevant interview questions are listed below.

- Do you think German is a language that should be learned in our country?
- What does German mean to you?
- If you were given the chance to choose a foreign language, would you choose German?
- What would be your reasons for choosing German?
- Do you think German is an important language for your profession?

- How would knowing German contribute to your professional development?
- Do you think knowing German will provide you with wider opportunities to practice your profession? What are these opportunities?
- Are you learning German on your own or would you like to learn?
- What do you think about foreign language policies in our country?
- Do you think that our education system offers you foreign language choices by taking into account variables such as education and professional needs?
- What do you think should be done for German to become as important as English?

The obtained data were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. Descriptive analysis is the summarization and interpretation of data related to the research topic by creating themes and categories (Kartal, 2021). The participants' answers to each question were divided into themes, and the themes were divided into categories, and the data was classified. The themes were tabulated and sub-themes were created when necessary. The findings were then interpreted and the results were written.

Findings

In this part of the study, the data obtained from the participants were tabulated and analyzed. The data were divided into themes and analyzed by categorizing the themes. The data were collected under 11 themes, namely, “Views on whether German is a language that should be learned in our country, views on what German means to the participants, the participants’ preference for German, the reasons for this, the fact that German is an important language for the participants’ professions, the contributions of knowing German to their professional development, thoughts on whether knowing German will provide wider opportunities in practicing their profession, the participants’ desire to learn German, their views on the foreign language policies adopted by Turkey, the situation of the Turkish education system offering foreign language preferences by taking into account variables such as education and professional needs, and suggestions for German to become as important as English in Turkey” and the participants’ direct statements were included.

Table 2
Opinions on whether German is a language that should be learned in our country

Theme	Categories	Justification	f
THEME 1 Opinions on whether German is a language that should be learned in our country	Yes	Important sources in medical literature are German	59
		German advances in technology	
		Germany's development in the field of health	
		Having trade relations with Germany	
		Many Turks live in Germany	
		Germans living in Turkey	
		Having a historical background	
		Immigration to Germany	
		Being a widely spoken language in the World	
		Offering job opportunities	
		Being an important language	
	No	Not needing	11
	Total:		70

As can be seen from the Table 2, 59 participants stated that German is a language that should be learned in Turkey, while 11 participants stated that it is not a necessary language. Those who stated that German is a language that should be learned based their thoughts on reasons such as "the fact that important resources in medicine are in German, Germany's advancement in technology and health, historical and commercial ties, the fact that many Turks live in Germany, the fact that Germans live in Turkey, it is a widely spoken language in the world and it offers job opportunities." Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K3: “I definitely think so, because German is a completely medical language, especially Hitler's doctor Joseph Mengen wrote all his works in German as the only living proof because he experimented on 2 million people. German is definitely a language that should be used in anatomy and other technological developments.” K3 stated that German is a language that needs to be learned for their profession because many of the anatomy and technical developments in the field of medicine took place in Germany and important medical works are in German.

K6: “I am saying this based on my professional experience. I think German is a language that needs to be learned, because it is a country that has started to rise and develop itself rapidly in the fields of information and technology, and it is a country that has moved itself to very high places in the field of language and health, so the spread of German can contribute a lot to Turkey’s progress in the fields of industry and technology.” K6, like K3, stated that learning German would enable Turkey to benefit from developments in the fields of medicine, industry and technology, as Germany is in a good position in the fields of information, technology, medicine and industry.

K9: "I think German is a language that needs to be learned in our country because there has been a serious wave of immigration to Germany in our country and we have deep-rooted ties with Germany. German is a universal language as much as English, it is very common in our country, there are many Germans. Especially in the Mediterranean region." K9 emphasized the migration process to Germany that started in the 1960s and stated that there are deep-rooted ties with Germany, that there are many Germans in Turkey, especially in the Mediterranean region, and that German is a widely needed language.

K23: "Yes, first of all, Turkey uses a reimbursement system transferred from Germany in terms of Health Management, where I studied. On this occasion, the reimbursement systems in our literature and in the perspective of the health system used in our country are exactly the same as in Germany. In this respect, I think knowing the German language is essential in order to read current sources about this model from original sources." K23, who studies health management, emphasized the importance of knowing German in order to follow the literature and current studies, and stated that German is a language that must be learned, since Turkey uses the same health management system as Germany.

K36: "I would prefer English to be the priority since it is very difficult for people to learn a language in our country. When the conditions are better, German can be preferred as a second language." K36 emphasized that the foreign language teaching process in Turkey was not successful (see Aktaş, 2005; Bayraktaroğlu, 2015; Balcı, 1997; Balcı, 2016; Coşkun Demirpolat, 2015; Karaman, 2013), and stated that she preferred to learn English first, but after improvements were made in foreign language teaching, German was a language that should be learned as a second foreign language.

K43: "Yes, I think German is a language that needs to be learned in our country. If it could be learned at an earlier age, it could become a more important language for us in the future." The advantages of teaching a foreign language at an early age have been given in many studies in the literature (see Albers, 2009; Böttger, 2016, 2021, Junk, 2012; Wode, 2004). In fact, K43 also emphasized early age foreign language teaching and stated that starting to teach German at an earlier age, starting from the basic education level, would make German a more advantageous language for them.

K44: "I can consider German as a second alternative due to the shortage of workers born in Germany from time to time and the brain drain." K44 stated that German is a language that should be

learned due to the job opportunities in Germany, depending on Germany's progress in fields such as medicine and technology.

Table 3
Opinions on what German means to participants

Theme	Categories	f
THEME 2: What German means to the participants	Language of education	36
	The language of a powerful country	21
	The most spoken language in Europe	51
	The language of technology	45
	The language that must be learned	60
	Engineering	31
	Technology	48
	Industry	63
	The language that is becoming widespread in our country	54
	Expatriate	31
	Art	52
	Literature	36
	Job Opportunity	28
	Language as important as English	31
	Culture	36
	Difficulty	56
	Fun to learn	58
	Language of science	51
	Language of business	48
	Migration	51
	Punctuality	38

Participants were asked questions about what German means to them. As seen in Table 3, participants stated that German evokes concepts such as "engineering, technology, industry, literature, art, difficulty, enjoyable, important language, job opportunity, culture, science, business language, migration, punctuality, expatriate, the language that is widespread in Turkey, the language of education, the language of a powerful country, the most spoken language in Europe, the language of technology, the language that needs to be learned" for them. Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K3: "For me, German represents the language of a country with technological and engineering superiority, a kingdom with Germanic history and origins, and also a country that is the locomotive of Europe." According to K3, German represents the language of a country that is the center of technology and the locomotive of Europe as a pioneer in engineering and technological developments.

K8: "German, like English, is a developing language in our country, I can say that it is the second language in the world after English." K8 stated that German is a language whose importance is increasing in Turkey and that it is the second most preferred foreign language in the world after English.

K9: "For me, German means expatriates, working workforce, and close relatives coming from there. I can say that German is a language at least as important as Turkish for me." As is known, within the scope of the labor agreement between Germany and Turkey in 1961, Turkish citizens from many regions of Turkey immigrated to Germany for work. K9 also emphasized this situation and stated that German is a language as important as Turkish for him because many of his relatives live in Germany, and that it reminds him of the concept of expatriate and close relatives.

K11: "It is actually possible to think that German has a valuable structure in terms of having very important writers such as Thomas Mann who have deeply influenced world literature." K11 evaluated German in the context of German literature and stated that there are very important writers and works in German literature and that the value of German has increased due to these works.

K12: "German is an important language for me in professional and academic terms. Knowing German in a technical field such as electricity, electronics, and engineering can provide a great advantage in terms of taking part in international projects, following new technologies, and accessing job opportunities more easily." K12 stated that German is an important language for many areas of engineering and that German is necessary to take part in international projects, follow technology and be informed about job opportunities.

K13: "As an imam working in the Directorate of Religious Affairs, it is important for me to learn German in order to be able to work abroad. Another reason is that my children can learn German much more easily in Germany, and German is of great importance to me in terms of them being able to have a foreign language." K13, a religious official, stated that German was an important language for him because he wanted to work abroad and that his children would also have the opportunity to learn German while living abroad.

K17: "German is the language of a big state like Germany, which has an important place in the world. In other words, I think Germany is at an advanced level in the fields of commerce, philosophy, engineering and social sciences." According to K17, German is an important language because Germany is a developed country in the fields of trade, philosophy, engineering, literature and social sciences.

K24: "For me, it is a beautiful, understandable language that can be learned easily and taught with pleasure." K24 drew attention to the linguistic and structural features of German and stated that it is an understandable language because it can be both learned and taught with pleasure.

K34: "It is a language that needs to be learned because it is the language of a country with intense immigration." K34, like K9, emphasized the phenomenon of external migration and stated that German is a language that needs to be learned due to the migration from Turkey to Germany from past to present.

K38: "When I think of German, punctuality comes to mind." K38 drew attention to punctuality, a characteristic identified with German culture, and stated that German itself evokes the concept of punctuality, which is a habit of the German nation.

Table 4
Participants' preference for German

Theme	Categories	f
THEME 3: Desire to prefer German	Yes4. 5.	59
	No	11

Another question was asked to the participants whether they would choose German if they were given the right to choose a foreign language. As seen in Table 4, 59 participants stated that they would choose German if they had the opportunity to choose a foreign language; 11 participants stated that they would not choose German. As can be understood from the results, it was determined that the majority of the participants would prefer German. Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K3: "I live in the dormitory with 800 other medical professionals in the same room. I attach importance to German because all of the medical professionals frequently state that they want to learn German, that they are very lacking in this regard, and that their biggest regret in life is not learning German since high school." K3 stated that his perception of German developed positively by witnessing the experiences of people in his social circle. K3 stated that his dorm mates studying medicine needed German very much and that their biggest regret was not learning German since their secondary education, which made him realize that German was a very important language.

K9: "I would prefer German because I want to go to Germany, and since there are many Turks there, I would prefer German so that I can travel and speak German comfortably." K9 stated that he preferred to learn German in order to communicate with the Turks in Germany, both because he wanted to live in Germany and because Germany is one of the European countries with a large Turkish population.

K23: "I would definitely prefer it. Because German is perhaps the second most important language to learn in the world after English. In this respect, I would prefer to learn German both in high school and undergraduate education." According to K23, German is the second language to be learned after English, and it is a language he wants to learn in secondary education, higher education and later periods.

K40: "Yes. English is very widely used nowadays. I would also consider German as a second choice." K40, like K23, stated that English is now a language that everyone knows and that she would prefer German as a second foreign language.

K50: "Since I am a healthcare professional, would I choose it because of the need for healthcare professionals in Germany? I mean, I would." K50, which is in the health sector, stated that it would prefer German because Germany is currently recruiting health workers from other countries.

K56: "Yes, I would prefer it. German would be a logical choice, especially because of the academic cooperation opportunities in Europe, the richness of literature and the academic opportunities of German-speaking countries." K56 stated that she preferred to learn German because of the job opportunities and rich academic literature in German-speaking countries.

Table 5
Reasons why participants prefer German

Theme	Categories	f
THEME 4 Reasons for choosing German	Desire to work in Germany	48
	Germans are disciplined	36
	Having a dense population of Turks	51
	Benefiting from German scientists	48
	Having medical technologies in Germany	36
	Communicating with expats in German	28
	Professional need	49
	Reading scientific works in their original languages	32
	Benefiting from health tourism	36
	Understanding German culture	15
	Being a widely spoken language in Europe	56
	Wanting to live in Germany	36
	Forming cultural ties with Germany	25
	Need in tourism	35
	Studying in Germany	31
	Working with foreign companies	25
	Having a job opportunity in the software field	41
	Practising your profession abroad	45
	Germany's need for healthcare personnel	35
	Germany's academic opportunities	36
	Total:	70

Data were obtained from the participants regarding their reasons for choosing German. As seen in Table 5, participants preferred German for multiple reasons such as "wanting to work in Germany, Germans being disciplined, the large Turkish population in Germany, benefiting from German scientists, the presence of medical technologies in Germany, professional need, reading scientific works in their original languages, benefiting from health tourism, understanding German culture, being a widely spoken language in Europe, the formation of cultural ties with Germany, being needed in tourism, studying in Germany, working with foreign companies, having a job opportunity in the software field, practicing their profession abroad, Germany's need for healthcare personnel, and Germany's academic opportunities". Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K1: "I would like to live in Germany because I like their work discipline and because there are so many Turks, you feel like you are at home." K1 stated that he wanted to live in Germany because Germans have a work discipline, and that Germany has become a second home for Turkish citizens due to the recruitment of workers to Germany since the 1960s, which is why he preferred to learn German.

K3: "Especially, I am a doctor of atomic molecular physics. There are at least 3 Germans who have received the Nobel Prize. Einstein received very serious education in Germany and many of the physicists who have made very serious contributions to the world are German. Therefore, German is indispensable for me." K3, a molecular physics doctor, stated that he preferred German because the leading scientists in the field of physics were German and the resources related to this field were written in German.

K5: "All my relatives are in Germany so that I can get along with them more easily." First-generation Turkish citizens who went to Germany, like many people who immigrate to a new country, experienced language problems because they did not know German (Halm & Sauer, 2007; Haug, 2008; Pries & Sezgin, 2010). However, in later periods, third and fourth generation citizens of Turkish origin who were born and raised in Germany speak German as their mother

tongue. In this case, they cannot speak their mother tongue, Turkish, as well as German. As a matter of fact, since Turkish citizens in Germany do not know Turkish, it has become a necessity for their relatives in Turkey to know German in order to communicate with them.

K9: "I would prefer German to be able to communicate and speak more easily with my relatives and cousins in Germany, because no matter how much we speak Turkish, sometimes they do not understand us, sometimes we do not understand them, at least we could communicate by speaking German." K9, like K5, stated that he has relatives living in Germany and that he cannot communicate easily with his cousins in Germany because they do not know Turkish, so he would prefer to learn German in order to get along better with them.

K6: "I think of it entirely from a professional perspective. Because many chemical, medical, medical device companies, and many jobs in the field of medicine and industry are in Germany. If we learn the language, we will understand our job more quickly, so I think it should be preferred from a professional perspective." K6 stated that many medical devices used in Turkey are produced by companies in Germany, so knowing German would be advantageous for her to do her job better.

K11: "First of all, being able to read the texts of German philosophers in philosophy, such as Hegel and Luther. In this respect, it would be a pleasure for me to follow this development in their own language. For these reasons, I would like to learn German." K11 emphasized the contributions of German scientists to the field of philosophy around the world and stated that he wanted to learn German in order to read about developments in philosophy from primary sources and to gain information.

K18: "I think that it is a priority to analyze the cultural structure that each of them belongs to. I think that in order to make sense of the culture and life ideas of the Germans, it is necessary to first master that language." K18 considered the issue in the context of language-culture relations and stated that knowing the German language is a priority in order to understand the German mindset and culture, and therefore knowing German is necessary.

K24: "German is very enjoyable and necessary on its own, we need to learn the language and prefer it in order to help tourists from foreign countries." K24 emphasized the necessity of knowing German in order to communicate with German tourists coming to the hospital and to assist them in the health sector.

K33: "The reason I would choose German is that it is one of the most spoken languages in Europe after English, and that it is spoken outside the borders of Germany and offers the opportunity to communicate with a wider audience." K33 stated that German is the most widely spoken language in the world after English, and that it is a language that should be learned because it is spoken by a wide audience, not only in Germany but also in many countries such as Switzerland and Belgium.

K39: I would prefer German because there are job opportunities in the software field in Germany." K39 stated that she preferred German because there are many job opportunities in Germany, including in many other fields, in the software field.

K45: "It is a great advantage for foreign patients coming to the hospital or for friends who are thinking of working abroad. There are many friends in the health sector who especially want to go abroad. All of them attend German courses." He stated that knowing German is very important in order to be able to communicate with German patients who apply to K45 hospitals and that many of his healthcare professional friends want to work in Germany, which is why they take German courses.

K53: "I would like to learn German because there are many tourists in our country and there are many job opportunities for nurses in Germany." K53 also stated that knowing German is necessary because Germany offers many job opportunities to healthcare professionals in general and nurses in particular, and because the majority of tourists coming to Turkey are German.

K56: "I would like to learn German because Germany offers academic opportunities with its world-renowned universities and research institutes." K56 stated that Germany has world-renowned universities in many scientific fields and that she wanted to learn German in order to benefit from the academic opportunities of these universities.

Table 6
The status of German as an important language for the participants' professions

Theme	Categories	f
THEME 5: German is important for professional purposes	Yes6. 7.	57
	No	13

As seen in Table 6, in this study conducted with different professional groups, 57 participants stated that German is an important language in their professions; 13 participants stated that German is not an important language for their professions. Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K3: "While I was the education branch manager, we were preparing European Union projects, we did very serious projects with the German Development Agency. If I knew German, we would be able to establish much better communications and undertake projects that would add value to the country, I felt the lack of this, I think it is important for my profession." K3, who does not speak German, stated that they prepared a project related to education with the German Development Agency, but that he missed many project opportunities that would add value to Turkey because he did not know the language, and thus he became aware of how important German is for his profession.

K43: "I am thinking about it. Because there is a big gap in the field of health in Germany. In general, there are many people from our country who go to Germany. If I knew German, I could practice my profession well in Germany." K43 stated that many healthcare professionals from Turkey immigrated to Germany due to the need for personnel in the healthcare sector in Germany, and that he would also like to work in Germany if he could speak German.

K7: "Yes, German is valuable to us because I am an engineer. German is very important, especially for engineers in the health sector. The vast majority of our devices are of German origin." As an engineer serving the healthcare sector, she stated that since the K7 devices are manufactured in Germany, German is very valuable for her profession in order to understand the features and uses of these devices.

K8: "Since English is more popular, I don't think German means much for my profession." K8 stated that he did not need to know German for his profession and that knowing English was sufficient.

K11: "Of course, I am a man of letters, and as a man of letters, I think that the fact that most of the writers, poets and novelists who shape world literature are of German origin, that they write in German, and that I read this in their own language will contribute a lot to me." K11, who works in the field of literature, stated that since many important writers and poets who shaped world literature were of German origin, many important literary works were written in German and knowing German would give him the opportunity to read these works in German.

K12: "I think Germany is important for my profession. Knowing German in a technical field such as electrical and electronic engineering would give me a great advantage. Germany has an important position in the world in the fields of engineering and technology, and many technical resources, research articles and engineering resources are published in German. It would give me a great advantage to read this directly from the source." K12, who is an engineer, emphasized that Germany has a very important place in the world in the field of electrical and electronics engineering and that knowing German would be a great advantage for him since scientific studies in the field of engineering are written in German.

K14: "German is an important language for my profession. I am a dental technician and I have a dental laboratory. There is health tourism in our country. Especially many patients come from Germany. We need interpreters. It would be a great advantage for this." K14 stated that he needed a translator because many patients came from Germany due to Turkey's important position in health tourism and that German is an important language for a dentist.

K60: "Yes, I think so. I think it will be useful especially in wars, in capturing prisoners, and for illegal immigrants." K60, a military personnel, stated that German was important for the military in order to communicate with people who were taken prisoner during the war and those who entered the country illegally.

Table 7
Contributions of knowing German to professional development

Theme	Categories	f
THEME 6: Contributions of knowing German to professional development	No contribution	7
	Using devices	22
	In R&D studies8.	18
	Establishing company connections	31
	Internationalization	45
	Competing9.	34
	Providing quality service	21
	Following technology	51
	Benefiting from foreign literature	32
	Earning better money	47
	Getting training in the field	35
	Communicating	36
	Working abroad	54

Another question asked the participants whether knowing German contributed to their professional development. As seen in Table 7, seven participants stated that knowing German did not contribute to their professional development; 63 participants stated that German would contribute to their professional development in terms of "using devices, being able to compete, being able to follow technology, being able to work abroad, being able to communicate, being able to receive education, participating in R&D studies, establishing company connections, being able to follow foreign literature, and earning better." Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K2: "German does not contribute anything to my profession since the articles are generally written in English." K2 expressed a negative opinion and stated that his knowledge of English was sufficient because the articles in his field were written in English and that German did not contribute to his professional development.

K23: "I follow that there are many original publications written in German in Germany in terms of health economics and health financing. I think that being able to read field articles in German will contribute." K23 stated that since important studies written in the fields of health economics and health financing are in German, it will contribute to his profession in terms of following these studies.

K3: "As a physicist and also a psychological counselor, I think that German is important for the history of science. Since German is the locomotive of Europe, I think it has an important place in my current profession." It is understood that K3 thought that German would contribute to his professional development in order to transfer the information in these works to his profession, since important works on both the history of science and psychology are in German.

K7: "We can make company connections more easily. When you know German, the company is accepted more quickly. There is a possibility of settling in Germany and a job potential." K7 stated that knowing German enables easier connections with companies in Germany, enabling the company to develop abroad and increase its business potential.

K8: "I think knowing German is necessary, especially in refereeing, according to international standards. Since I am a physical education and sports teacher, I think knowing German will provide benefits in the field of sports due to Germany's contribution to world sports." K8, a sports trainer and referee, emphasized that Germany has significant success in the field of sports, as in many other fields, and stated that knowing German would contribute to his professional development.

K12: "Knowing German would accelerate my professional development and put me in a more competitive position in the international engineering world." K12, an engineer, stated that knowing German would contribute to his professional development and provide him with the opportunity to compete at an international level.

K21 "If I could speak German, I would have the opportunity to earn more money than I earn both abroad and at home." K21 emphasized the amount of money he earned while practicing his profession at home and abroad and stated that he would be able to practice his profession abroad with more income if he knew German.

K44: "Generally, healthcare professionals are subjected to exams before going abroad. Sometimes some pass or fail the exams. So I think it will make things easier. It offers the opportunity to work in hospitals in Germany." When recruiting personnel for the healthcare sector in Germany, a certain level of German proficiency is required. For this reason, healthcare professionals who want to work in Germany have to take an exam. In fact, K44 stated that knowing German would make it easier for healthcare professionals to pass the exam.

K56: "Knowing German allows me to obtain information from original sources, attend conferences in German-speaking countries, and establish academic collaborations in these countries. It also increases my chances of participating in international projects." K56 stated that knowing German would contribute to the development of his/her profession in many ways, including reading resources written in German, attending conferences, and establishing academic collaborations by taking part in projects.

K61: "German is also spoken in other countries. The most important of these countries are Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg and since we frequently visit these countries, it would be very beneficial for us." K61, who works internationally, stated that German is a language spoken not only in Germany but also in many European countries such as Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Belgium and Switzerland, and that they also travel to these countries for work, so knowing German would contribute greatly to their professional development.

Table 8
Thoughts on whether knowing German would provide wider opportunities in practicing the profession

Theme	Justification	Categories	f
THEME 7 Thoughts on whether knowing German would provide wider opportunities in practicing the profession	European Union projects	Yes	61
	Opportunity to work in German-speaking countries		
	Using devices		
	Being able to be in a fire		
	Getting a higher education		
	Working in technological companies		
	Private tutoring		
	Systematic comparison		
	Getting together with German colleagues		
	Ability to work in international companies		
	Economic contribution		
	Developing a network		
	Learning new medical terms		
	Benefiting from exchange programs		
	Being able to convey the linguistic differences and similarities between Turkish and German		
	Does not offer any opportunity	No	9
		Total:	70

Another question asked the participants whether knowing German would provide them with wider opportunities in practicing their profession. As seen in Table 8, 61 participants responded positively to this question; 9 participants responded negatively. Participants stated that knowing German would provide many opportunities such as taking part in European Union projects, working abroad, exchanging information with German colleagues, working in

international companies, learning medical terms, making systematic comparisons between two countries, receiving new training, establishing a communication network with foreigners, and giving private German lessons while practicing their profession. Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K3: "Yes, I think it will provide me with broader opportunities. These are European Union projects. Even now, our institution has studies on Syrian immigrants together with the German Development Agency. They have invested approximately 6 million Euros in Malatya alone, if I knew German, maybe the amount of these investments could have increased and the young people in our country could benefit more from many things." It is understood from K3's thoughts that he thinks that knowing German will provide better professional opportunities. K3 stated that they were carrying out a high-budget project with the German Development Agency for Syrian immigrants, and that if he knew German, the amount of the project could be higher, thus offering more opportunities to young people.

K5: "Of course, it definitely does. For example, I would be more comfortable working in Switzerland, Austria, Germany. At least I would have the opportunity to work here." K5 stated that knowing German would give her the opportunity to work not only in Germany but also in German-speaking countries such as Austria and Switzerland.

K6: "I definitely think so. For example, when a new device is produced in a German company, I will be able to learn about that device. Since I do not have any communication problems, I may have the chance to understand the work done better and try it in my own laboratory by using it in my own profession." K6 explained with an example that German would make positive contributions to his profession. For example, he stated that if he knew German, he would be able to understand the features of the device produced by the German company and use the device in his own workplace by contacting the relevant company.

K9: "In this sense, I have friends who go to Germany and are religious officials and attachés, and they generally prefer that place. Because of the density of Turks, if I knew German, Germany would probably be my first choice." K9, a religious culture teacher, stated that knowing German would give him the opportunity to practice his profession in Germany, like his friends who were assigned as attachés or religious officials in Germany by the Turkish government.

K23: "Of course, if I knew German, I could make publications that would compare the German system with the Turkish system and suggest important policies for Turkish health policy. Although health management graduates are not given the necessary value in our country, they are among the professional groups with wide job opportunities in Germany. In this respect, I think that it will actually allow me to have wider job opportunities not only in Turkey but also in Germany." K23 stated that if he knew German, he could develop important policies by comparing the Turkish and German healthcare systems, and he could also have the opportunity to work in Germany.

K40: "Yes, I think so. I can do my research more comprehensively. I can even have the chance to meet with archaeologists abroad and learn techniques and historical information from them." K40, an archaeologist, stated that if she knew German, she would be able to work together with archaeologists in Germany in joint studies and learn new technical and historical information about her profession and perform her profession in the best possible way.

K56: "It makes it easier for me to apply for academic positions in German-speaking countries and supports me in benefiting from Erasmus and other exchange programs." K56 stated that knowing German would enable her to apply for academic positions abroad, as well as having the opportunity to go abroad through programs such as Erasmus.

K60: "Yes, I think so. In the First World War, a significant number of the weapons used by the Turkish people in their struggle for independence were German weapons. I think that knowing German provides us with better opportunities for the German weapons that we still use for our country in bilateral dialogues from those years to the present." According to K60, knowing German will contribute militarily to knowing the features of the weapons used today, due to the use of German weapons in the Turkish War of Independence.

K3: "In the profession I currently practice, we are carrying out a flute project together with the European German Development Agency. We have opened two huge facilities for immigrants in our country. If German was known, we could send our students to Germany and receive more serious contributions, we would do joint projects with them and there would be more mutual student mobility." K3 stated that they opened a facility for immigrants as part of a joint project with the German Development Agency, but if the students know German, they can also go to Germany and carry out joint projects.

Table 9
Participants' desire to learn German

Theme	Categories	f
THEME 8: Desire to learn German	Yes10. 11.	61
	No	9

In the study, data were also obtained from the participants regarding whether they wanted to learn German. When Table 9 is examined, it is understood that 61 participants want to learn German and 9 participants do not want to learn German. Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K12: "Ultimately, learning German would definitely be a goal of mine, both personally and professionally, as it would increase my professional opportunities and contribute greatly to my career." K12 stated that he aims to learn German both individually and professionally, as German will contribute to his career and offer various professional opportunities.

K13: "Yes, I am currently trying to learn German with my own means. Before this, I had taken a German course for a month or two. I can now say that I have completed the A1 and A2 levels. I am currently doing this on my own at home." K13 stated that he had previously taken a German course for a short time, that he was now at A2 level and that he was individually studying German at home, and that he was trying to learn German.

K22: "Yes, I am currently trying to learn using the internet and social media." K22 stated that she made an effort to learn German through social media by using the possibilities of technology.

K23: "Yes, I would like to learn and I have a plan in mind for German for the future. I would like to speak German as a second foreign language." K23 stated that learning German is among his future goals.

K25: "I use online language learning applications." It is understood from K25's statements that she supports her individual German learning process by using language learning applications.

K56: "Yes, I have an interest in learning German. Because knowing German could be useful for my academic studies." K56, who continues her academic studies, stated that her motivation to learn German is high in order to follow academic studies written in German.

Table 10
Participants' views on foreign language policies adopted by Turkey

Theme	Categories	f	Justification
THEME 9 Views on foreign language policies	Positive	5	Suitable
	Negative	65	Giving priority to English
			Language education is not practice-oriented
			Language teaching is not communication-oriented
			Failure to teach languages
			Lack of cultural transmission
			Does not offer many language options
			Focused on English
			The system is constantly changing

Another question asked the participants about their opinions on foreign language policies implemented in Turkey. As seen in Table 10, 65 participants stated that foreign language policies were negative and 5 participants stated that they were positive. Participants explained that the foreign language policies adopted by Turkey were negative due to reasons such as "prioritizing English, foreign language teaching not being communication-oriented, failure in language teaching, not offering different language options". Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K3: "I think that the foreign language policies in our country are not based on the future but on saving the day. The policies are based on passing the course, and are aimed at speaking, listening and applying the language. However, in our country, education is provided only in one area of this, I think it would be better if an education that includes all areas of intelligence was provided." K3 stated that foreign language policies in Turkey are not designed by taking into account the needs and expectations of citizens in the future, and that a method aimed at developing the four skills is not applied in foreign language teaching due to the fact that these policies are made without thinking thoroughly.

K4: "Unfortunately, in our country, no language other than English is given the necessary importance. Since no language other than English is given importance, I do not see foreign language policies as positive. It would be better if other languages were added." K4 stated that due to the lack of adoption of multilingual foreign language teaching within the scope of foreign language policies, different foreign language options are not offered to those who want to learn a foreign language.

K7: "I think the language policies are not right, we learned the language in a stereotyped way. This makes it difficult to speak and think. There is grammar-centered teaching. I think when learning a language, you need to learn its culture. You cannot learn the language without knowing its culture. In other words, since culture is not given, we cannot form sentences, we do not understand. Despite the education I have received since childhood, I cannot speak the language." K7 stated that she was not successful in a foreign language because she was taught grammar-centered language teaching and stereotyped expressions, and that she could not even form sentences despite taking language lessons from an early age.

K9: "The foreign language policies in our country are positive in my opinion, but although they seem very good in theory, there are deficiencies in practice." Although K9 stated that foreign language policies are good, it is understood from his statements that he does not have a positive perception of the language policies in practice.

K11: "Today, for example, as a professor working at the faculty of theology, we have a preparatory department. In the preparatory department, we cannot teach Arabic to students. Or why can't we? It is actually a very serious problem. At least we see that there are some problems with our language teaching method. We can see that people in Europe learn a language in 5 or 6 months." K11, a faculty member, made a comparison between Turkey's and Europe's foreign language success and stated that in Europe, people learn a foreign language in a short period of time such as 5 or 6 months, but in our country, despite the long time and effort devoted to foreign language teaching, the desired success is not achieved and there are problems with foreign language teaching methods, and he self-criticized that they are not successful in teaching languages.

K23: "Actually, this is a subject that can be discussed a lot. Because I see that the only language focused on in terms of foreign languages in our country is English. It is known that English is a very important language. However, I see that a monolingual foreign language policy is created in terms of English from

the 1st grade to the 12th grade. On the other hand, German is among the most widely spoken languages in the world. For this reason, I do not evaluate the foreign language policies adopted by Turkey positively."

K23 stated that when it comes to foreign languages in Turkey, only English comes to mind, that English is taught from primary to secondary education in accordance with a monolingual foreign language policy, and that although German is the language spoken in a large part of the world, it is not given as much importance as English by those who make language policies.

K32: "I think that language education given especially in schools is mostly a formality, and educators just cover the subject because it is included in the curriculum rather than teaching the child a language. I think they do not care whether children learn the language or not. I think that first the system and then the educators do not give enough importance to language education and students and families are not sufficiently aware. That is why I think we are lagging behind many countries in terms of learning foreign languages." K32 drew attention to many stakeholders of foreign language teaching, including the teacher, student and family dimensions, and stated that language teaching in schools is based on the passive transfer of subjects included in the official curriculum rather than teaching itself, that the foreign language teaching system in the country is not efficient, that families are not aware of foreign languages, and that Turkey lags behind other countries in terms of foreign languages.

K41: "I do not find Turkey's foreign language policies correct. When we look abroad, they learn English completely, then they learn German, French, Spanish." K41 compares the foreign language teaching process in Turkey and abroad and states that although success has not been achieved even in teaching English in Turkey, foreign languages such as German, French and Spanish are also taught successfully in many European countries.

K45: "I think it needs to be developed a little more. In other words, it would be much better if there were more German lessons in public schools and instead of hiring private teachers for our children and sending them to courses, the foundations were established. German should be taught from an early age." K45 stated that foreign language policies should be developed within the scope of multilingualism. The participant in question stated that since German was not given the necessary importance in schools, they sent their children to German language courses within their means, but suggested that the state also take steps to support children's German language education.

K5: "No, I evaluate it negatively. In other words, foreign languages are not given importance. For example, Germans here speak English so well, as if it were their mother language. Even those who came from Syria speak English very well, but we do not know it. In Turkey, they go by a single language." K5 emphasized that the state does not give the necessary importance to teaching foreign languages, that even citizens from Syria, a country that is socio-economically behind Turkey, speak English better than Turkish citizens, and that German citizens also know more than one foreign language.

Table 11
The status of the Turkish education system in offering foreign language preferences by taking into account variables such as education and professional needs

Theme	Categories	f
THEME 10: The status of the Turkish education system in offering foreign language options	Yes12. 13.	7
	No	63

Another question asked participants whether the Turkish education system offers foreign language preferences to citizens, taking into account variables such as educational and professional needs. As can be seen from the Table 11, 7 participants responded positively to this question, while 63 participants responded negatively. Therefore, it was determined that the majority of the participants thought that the Turkish education system did not offer them different foreign language options considering their educational and professional needs. Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K6: "Since I find the system faulty, I think the education system is also inadequate in this regard and they cannot provide us with the necessary service." K6 stated that the Turkish education system in general has many deficiencies, not only in foreign languages, and that the Turkish education system cannot meet the educational and professional needs of its citizens in the context of foreign languages.

K9: "We know that English has a certain weight in general. But for example, in engineering, Germans and Italians are ahead. In this sense, engineers can focus on German and Italian, or people who will pursue other professions can be directed to Chinese. In this sense, I do not think it offers much choice." K9 stated that English is generally a common language in the Turkish education system, but considering that the foreign language needs of different professional groups will vary, different language options should be offered to students, that Germany is very good at engineering and that German should be offered as an option to citizens.

K11: "So I think our education system does not offer it. I think our state is a bit concerned with being seen in the market. It does some things but does not establish the infrastructure for it. For example, in Nevşehir, there is German language and literature but it does not have a laboratory, it does not have a laboratory and it does not have a library. Therefore, this situation brings serious negativities. I met a student, he was in the French department, the child is the top student in the school. But his French is not sufficient, why? Because he cannot find the opportunity to practice or he does not have the opportunity to obtain materials. Therefore, it is not possible to say that education is positive by just opening a department, allocating a class there and assigning two teachers there." K11 explained that even in the German language and literature and French language and literature departments of universities in Turkey, there is no infrastructure suitable for teaching foreign languages, giving the example of a student studying in the French language and literature department. The participant stated that although the student was one of the most successful students in the department and received high grades, he could not speak French and therefore the education system was very inadequate.

K12: "I think that in Turkey's education system, there should be more variety in foreign language selection in line with the needs, language diversity and professional needs. It would be better if languages such as German and French were offered as more options." K12 stated that foreign language options in the Turkish education system are not determined in line with the professional and educational needs of the society and that citizens should be offered foreign language options other than English, especially German and French.

K43: "I don't think so. I think that in addition to English, German could also be taught starting from primary school. There could also be additional languages such as Spanish and Italian." K43 also stated that the Turkish education system does not support teaching a second foreign language at an early age, and that teaching German, like English, should be supported at an earlier age, starting from basic education, and that different language options such as Spanish and Italian should also be offered to citizens.

K56: "Unfortunately, I don't think it offers enough. The education system generally offers general foreign language education, but vocational language education is lacking." K56 stated that instead of teaching a vocationally focused foreign language in schools, a general language is taught, and this prevents the language from being used when needed.

Table 12
Suggestions for German to become as important as English in Turkey

Theme	Categories	f
THEME 11 Suggestions for the spread of German	Strengthening relations with Germany	25
	Making protocols with German universities	35
	Language policies should be changed	58
	Make language mandatory	47
	Teacher qualifications should be increased	32
	The number of schools and programs that provide education in German should be increased	37
	Studies that raise people's language awareness should be increased	36
	Cooperation with Germany should be increased	47
	Should be taught in basic education	56
	Class hours should be increased.	23
	Introduction of German	31
	Language awareness should be created among people	14
	Scholarships and exchange programs should be offered	23
	German language courses should be made more widespread	34
	Multilingualism should be adopted	24

Finally, the participants were asked to share their opinions on what they would suggest to make German more widespread in Turkey. As can be seen from the Table 12, participants made suggestions such as changing Turkey's language policies to ensure that the importance of German is understood, making German a compulsory language, increasing the number of schools that provide German education, cooperating with universities in Germany, supporting the teaching of German from an early age, embracing multilingualism, and expanding German language courses. Below are the participants' thoughts directly.

K12: "Ultimately, German can be included in the compulsory foreign languages. The number of qualified teachers for German education can be increased. The number of schools and programs that provide education in German can be increased." According to K12, German, like English, should be taught as a compulsory foreign language in educational institutions. K12 stated that the number of schools and programs with German as the language of instruction and the qualifications of teachers should be increased in order for language teaching to be efficient.

K14: "German should be kept on the agenda by conducting studies such as this survey. In this way, I think people should be subconscious and contribute to learning German." K14 stated that studies such as this one should be conducted on the importance of German, and the awareness of both the authorities and the society regarding German should be increased and the teaching of German should be supported.

K18: "Cooperation with Germany in economic, political, educational, social and industrial terms should be increased, I think German will gain importance in this way." According to K18, German will gain importance as economic, political and commercial relations with Germany develop.

K22: "I think that if it is given as a course in basic education, maybe German will be as popular as English." K22 stated that by supporting the teaching of German at an early age and starting to teach German at the basic education level in schools, it will become as widespread as English. *K23: "The answer to this question is very simple, if it needs to be as important as English, our policy makers need to include German in our education system as a compulsory language like English. It is necessary to explain to people how German will provide both professional and social gains so that it becomes as important as English."* According to K23, in order for German to become as widespread as English, first of all, foreign language politicians should accept German as a compulsory language and awareness should be increased by explaining the benefits of knowing German to individuals.

K26: "Course hours should be increased and should be included in other levels." K26 suggested that German lesson hours should be increased firstly because of the insufficient number of lesson hours and that German lessons should be added not only to secondary education but also to primary education.

K29: "A country needs a second language. For this reason, German, just like English, should be taught compulsorily in all formal education institutions and at all levels." K29 stated that German is a language that should be taught at all levels of education because knowing a single foreign language is no longer sufficient today.

K35: "German can be made more impressive and attractive by making promotions in German. German songs can be played in more shopping malls." K35 stated that German events and social activities can be held in public places in order to understand the importance of German.

K56: "Scholarships and exchange programs should be offered to encourage learning German in educational institutions." According to K56, German language teaching can be supported by offering scholarships and exchange programs to citizens to support learning German.

K63: "Access to internationally recognized language certificates such as the Goethe Institute should be made easier for those learning German in Turkey, and these certificates should be recognized in a way that will provide an advantage in job applications. Public awareness campaigns should be carried out. International Agreements: Cooperation agreements should be made with Germany, Austria and Switzerland on language education and teacher exchange." K63 suggested that those who speak German should have easier access to international certificates to document their German language skills, that German awareness campaigns should be organized to increase society's awareness of the language, and that agreements for language education should be made with German-speaking countries such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study investigates how German is positioned in different occupational groups in Turkey. For this purpose, data were obtained from 70 participants. The first finding from the research was that the majority of the participants (56) wanted to learn German. From the data obtained, it was understood that 59 participants stated that German is a language that should be learned in our country. Those who expressed the relevant view based their reasons on the fact that "important resources in medicine are in German, Germany is advancing in the fields of technology and health, there are historical and commercial ties with Germany, many Turks live in Germany, and similarly, Germans live in Turkey, and it is a widely spoken language in the world and offers job opportunities." It was determined that German expressed concepts such as "engineering, technology, industry, literature, art, difficulty, enjoyable, important language, job opportunity, culture, science, business language, migration, punctuality, expatriate, the language that is widespread in Turkey, the language of education, the language of a strong country, the language of technology, the language that needs to be learned" for the participants. It was found that the majority of the participants (59) would prefer German if they had the opportunity to choose a foreign language, while 11 participants would not prefer German. Participants listed the reasons for preferring German as follows: "Wanting to work in Germany, Germans being disciplined, Turks being a large population in Germany, benefiting from German scientists, medical technologies being available in Germany, professional need, reading scientific works in their original languages, benefiting from health tourism, understanding German culture, being a widely spoken language in Europe, cultural ties being formed with Germany, need in tourism, studying in Germany, working with foreign companies, having a job opportunity in the software field, practicing one's profession abroad, Germany's need for healthcare personnel, Germany's academic opportunities." A large proportion of participants (57) representing different professional groups stated that German is an important language for their profession.

It has been determined that a large majority of the participants (63) think that German will contribute to their professional development in terms of "using devices, being able to compete, being able to follow technology, being able to work abroad, being able to communicate, being able to receive training, participating in R&D studies, establishing company connections, being able to follow foreign literature, and earning better income". From the data obtained, it was understood that the participants (61) representing different professional groups wanted to learn German. Participants' opinions on the foreign language policies adopted by Turkey were also taken. According to the participants' opinions, it was determined that Turkey did not implement a multilingual foreign language policy by prioritizing only English language teaching, and foreign language policies were not developed according to the needs and expectations of the citizens. Foreign language policies should be developed in line with the demands and expectations of Turkish society; because there is a mismatch between education policies and the expectations and practices of individuals in society (Suna & Durmuşçelebi, 2013).

It was determined that the participants thought that the foreign language policies adopted by Turkey were negative due to the reasons such as giving priority only to English, foreign language teaching not being communication-oriented, failure in language teaching, and not offering different language options. In support of this result, it was concluded that the Turkish education system does not offer different foreign language options to citizens, considering their educational and professional needs.

According to the participants, it was understood that knowing German would provide many opportunities such as taking part in European Union projects while practicing their professions, working abroad, exchanging information with German colleagues, working in international companies, learning medical terms, making systematic comparisons between two countries, receiving new training, establishing a communication network with foreigners and giving private lessons in German. At the end of the study, the participants made suggestions to understand the importance of German in Turkey. These suggestions are; changing Turkey's language policies, making German a compulsory language, increasing the number of schools that provide German education, cooperating with universities in Germany, supporting the teaching of German from an early age, embracing multilingualism, and expanding German language courses. Participants also made suggestions such as strengthening political, economic and cultural relations between Germany and Turkey, increasing teacher qualifications, carrying out studies that raise language awareness in society, and offering scholarships and exchange programs. As a result, it has been understood that the foreign language preferences and expectations of the society and the implemented foreign language policies do not match each other, and that German in Turkey is positioned as a language that is needed, important and must be learned by different professional groups.

Declarations

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Author contributions

FK conceived the study, collected and analyzed data, prepared figures, and wrote the manuscript.

Competing interests

The author declares no competing interests.

Ethical approval

This study was performed in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committees and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments. Ethical approval was obtained from the Fırat University Ethical Review Board (Approval No: 29056) on November 25, 2024. The approval covered all procedures involving participant recruitment, data collection, and analysis.

Informed consent

Written informed consent was obtained from all participants between November 28 and December 25, 2024, prior to data collection using a signed consent form. Participants were fully informed of the study's objectives, procedures, voluntary nature, potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. The consent covered participation, data use, and publication of anonymized findings. Participants were also informed of how their data would be stored and used solely for research purposes. No vulnerable populations were involved, and no identifiable personal data, images, or biometric information were collected. All data were anonymized to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

Data availability

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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