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Review on Turkish Sign Language Studies

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Abstract- Communication is the transfer of people's emotion, opinion, belief, attitude and behaviours to other people via verbal, nonverbal or written means. Sign languages which are ways of non-verbal communication, are the basic methods used in the communication with each other by hearing-impaired individuals.

Construction and widespread utilization of national sign language was forbidden as a result of banning sign language, which is a mother tongue of hearing-impaired individuals, in the deaf & dumb schools in 1953. As a result of this ban, sign language was not taught, single and common signs were not able to be constructed, and therefore, Turkish Sign Language (TSL) becomes a language displaying diversity among regions and provinces. However, especially in the recent years, it is seen that there is an increase in both interest to TSL and academic studies related to TSL.

In this study, TSL was dealt with, books, dictionaries and post-graduate theses related to TSL were examined. The number of the resources which are about grammar rules of TSL are very limited. Turkish Sign Language Grammar Book on TSL grammar was published in 2015 by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. In this book, several grammar topics from sign construction to sentence structure are given in detailed manner.

In the dictionaries, TSL sign equivalents of Turkish words are depicted. Dynamic signs were illustrated with more than one picture in some dictionaries and with arrows describing the movement or action in some dictionaries as well. It can be said that the dictionary which includes 2672 signs and was prepared by General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services, is the most comprehensive one. Moreover, there are also video dictionaries.

Postgraduate Turkish theses were searched with the keyword of *türk işaret dili* (turkish sign language) and 1 PhD and 19 master theses provided as open access were acquired. In these theses, it was seen that the social, emotional, academic, cognitive and language development besides communication styles, social and visual perceptions of hearing-impaired individuals were generally taken into consideration. Furthermore, it was also found out that there are studies on a web page prepared for hearing-impaired individuals, recognition of signs and alphabets included in TSL with image processing techniques and various grammatical features of TSL.

Keywords- Turkish Sign Language, grammar, hearing-impaired.