



Evaluation of Turkish Grammar Instruction Based on Primary School Teachers' Opinions

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the holistic approach to Turkish grammar instruction in the first stage of primary education from the opinions and experiences of Turkish primary school teachers. This study is a qualitative research designed as a phenomenological study. The study participants were selected using maximum variation and criterion sampling, both of which are purposive sampling strategies. Thirty-two primary school teachers working at public primary schools in Turkey during the spring term of 2011–2012 were selected as the study participants. Data were collected using a written structured interview, then analyzed descriptively, from which themes were developed. The results showed that the study participants employed methods such as using relevant examples, teaching the grammar rules implicitly and using activities. It was found that some participants allocated a separate class hour for grammar teaching, while others found the Turkish Course Curriculum for Grades 1–5 inadequate. Some participants found the grammar teaching content and activities in the teaching set (i.e., students' textbook, students' workbook and teachers' book) inadequate both quantitatively and qualitatively, and therefore, turned to different resources. Overall, it was found that there were inadequacies in the teaching set because of a lack of explanations, exercises and examples, and a clear relationship to the students' social environment.

Keywords

Grammar Teaching, Primary Education, Primary School, Primary School Teacher, Turkish.

The Turkish language course in primary schools is a communication and skill-based course. In the light of this, the Turkish Ministry of National Education adopted a skill-based approach in the Turkish Course Curriculum (TCC) for Grades 1–5, which was developed within a constructive understanding and launched in the 2005–2006 academic year. The curriculum was developed based on “listening, speaking, reading, writing, and reading and visual presentation” skills, which are also called basic language skills or language arts in the research (Fray & Fisher, 2006; Harris & Hodges, 1995; Nahachewsky & Slomp, 2005; Parr & Campbell, 2007; United States National Council

of Teachers of English & International Reading Association, 1996). These skills are described as learning domains in the 2005 TCC Curriculum.

One of the major factors closely related to basic language skills and the teaching of these skills is grammar. While grammar is defined in various different ways (McClure 2006), research has most often defined it in general terms as the branch of science which examines and aims to explain the functioning of a language, its order, and regulations (Demirel & Şahinel, 2006; Karadüz, 2007; Koç & Müftüoğlu, 1998; McWhorter, 1998; Thornbury, 2001; Williams, 2003).

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Grammar, which is defined in the Turkish dictionary as a science which examines the vocal, style and sentence structure of a language, and determines its rules (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2005), examines the sounds and words of a language and the duties of the words within a sentence in a detailed manner, and determines the rules which need to be paid attention to (Güneş, 2007). Thus, grammar examines the manners of narration in a language through tables and by giving examples (Özbay, 2006), and standardizes the language (Demir, 2013) by reaching generalizations concerning the structure of the language (Chomsky, 2001).

An individual who learns one's own native tongue from one's parents or in a closed environment adheres to the rules of the native tongue without much efforts (Aşlıoğlu, 1993). Therefore, people start from an early age to use their native language with a subconscious language structure without the being taught. The purpose of grammar teaching, then, is to move this language structure from the subconscious to the conscious, and to broaden the dimensions in which it is used (Koç & Müftüoğlu, 1998) so that students are able to understand the grammar explanations without having to memorize rules and definitions (Calp, 2010). This aim also coincides with an approach defined as neo-grammar, which, in contrast to the strict detailed teaching of traditional grammar rules, focuses on actively learning the functions and rules of a language, discovering the logic and operating rules of the language, and using these in reading and writing studies (Güneş, 2013).

The grammar teaching provides students with individual skills such as developing self-confidence about their language, standardizing language teaching, increasing understanding, developing analytical thinking, preventing incorrect language use, and deepening general language knowledge (Hudson, 1992). However, how to effectively teach grammar, which is extremely important both in terms of language teaching and the individual attainments of students, and how, why, where, and how much grammar training should be conducted, and even whether it should be carried out at all, has been a subject of discussion in many language teaching focused studies (Aksan, 1993; Arıcı, 2005; Hartwell, 1985; Hudson & Walmsley, 2005; İtmeç, 2008; Kerimoğlu, 2006; Kolln & Hancock, 2005; Micciche, 2004; Myhill, 2005; Sağır, 2002; Tchudi & Tchudi, 1991; Tomlinson, 1994; Tompkins, 2002; Upton, 2005; vanGelder, 2006; Watson, 2012; Weaver, 1996; Wyse, 2001, 2006; Yılmaz, 2012).

Grammar knowledge supports the development of all basic language skills. Therefore, grammar teaching is recognized as a key area in the teaching of Turkish along with the development of basic language skills to enable accurate concise Turkish language instruction (Cemiloğlu, 2005; Demirel & Şahinel, 2006; Kavcar, Oğuzkan, & Sever, 2005; Sever, 2004; Ünal, 2006). However, observing the grammar teaching as independent from the teaching of basic language skills is not the correct path to follow. In fact, this approach relates only to a traditional approach to grammar teaching.

There are certainly many variables affecting the quality of grammar teaching (McWhorter, 1998). These factors include the following: the curriculum; the methods and techniques applied; the tools used and the characteristics of the teachers who plan, implement, and assess all these in the teaching-learning process. The most basic element shaping and directing grammar teaching is the curriculum and the philosophy underlying it. The different approaches can be clearly observed when comparing the 1982 and 2005 curricula in Turkey, whereby the curriculum in 1982 adopted a behaviorist approach, while the 2005 curriculum adopted a constructivist approach.

In the constructivist grammar teaching approach, students are expected to discover the grammar rules based on inference and discovery and through activities and experiences rather than directly memorizing these rules (Güneş, 2013). For this reason, teachers need to take the holistic nature of basic language skills into account in the grammar learning-teaching processes and must be oriented towards student-centered methods and techniques. However, grammar learning and teaching is not a situation that occurs only in the classroom. Therefore, it is important that the textbooks, teaching materials, and tools used in and outside the classroom to teach grammar are adequate in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

The correct use of Turkish is only possible with the effective teaching of the grammar. Therefore, the grammar teaching should not be left to coincidence, and it should not be neglected. However, studies conducted at different levels of education have shown that the teaching of Turkish grammar has not been done in an effective manner, nor with the required importance or quality (Aköz & Bulut, 2010; Arıcı, 2005; Aydın, 1999; Aydın Yılmaz & Mahiroğlu, 2004; Demir, 2013; Erdem, 2007; Erdem & Çelik, 2011; Erdoğan & Gök, 2009; Güney, Aytan & Özer, 2012; Işcan & Kolkısca,

2005; İtmeç, 2008; Kahraman, 2010; Karadüz, 2006; Karatay, Kartallıoğlu & Coşkun, 2012; Kaygusuz, 2006; Kerimoğlu, 2006, 2007; Y. Kılıç, 2005; Kılıç & Akçay, 2011; Özbülür, 2011; Sevim & Varışoğlu, 2012; Ünal & Şahinci, 2011; Yapıcı, 2004; Yaman & Karaaslan, 2010; Yılmaz, 2012).

Almost all of these studies focus on the teaching of Turkish grammar from the second level of primary education, and other teaching levels. However, it is in the first level when students begin their learning life and where they first encounter teaching of their native tongue. Many of the teaching applications at this stage are focused towards the needs of higher education levels, so it is imperative that Turkish grammar teaching in the first level of primary education be effective as this base is vital for success in higher grades. Therefore, unless the grammar teaching is carried out correctly, rather than being based on memorization and meager, boring patronizing lessons, the children will have a poor basic beginning. Although the TCC for Grades 1–5 in the first stage of primary education suggests that knowledge should not be transmitted in an abstract way and grammar teaching should not be conducted separately, there is currently no scientific data which examines how grammar teaching practices should be conducted. In the light of this, therefore, it is important to determine how Turkish grammar teaching is being conducted in the first stage of primary education, what teaching practice methods are being adopted and what other methods are employed. Based on the real opinions and experiences of Turkish primary school teachers, this study was carried out mainly to achieve this purpose and make a contribution to the research.

The aim of this study was to evaluate the Turkish grammar instruction in the first stage of primary education based on Turkish primary school teachers' opinions and experiences. As a part of this primary objective, this study also explored what methods primary school teachers adopted to teach grammar, what tools and materials they used, how they felt about the quality of these tools and materials, what they thought about the curriculum and the teaching set, what problems they faced, and the cause of these problems.

Method

Research Design

This study was designed as a qualitative evaluation of the Turkish grammar teaching practices in the first stage of primary education based on primary school teachers' opinions and experiences.

Qualitative studies are preferred as they allow for a detailed and in depth evaluation of a certain situation (Creswell, 2012; Woodside, 2010; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011; Yin, 2003). The research design chosen in this study was phenomenology, which focuses on collecting individual participant experiences. Phenomenology is concerned with the questioning of the meanings participants have acquired from their experiences and the patterns created from these experiences (Cresswell, 2012).

Study Sample

The study sample was determined using maximum variation and criterion sampling, which are purposive sampling strategies (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The selection criteria was participants working actively as primary school teachers at any grade level, willing to participate in the study. Maximum variation sampling does not to make generalizations but seeks to determine whether there are common or shared phenomena in diverse cases so as to present different accounts of same problem. Therefore, choosing primary school teachers working in different Turkish cities, living in different residential units, and teaching at different grade levels was an appropriate criterion to allow for maximum variation. The sample included 18 female and 14 male teachers. Sixteen teachers had less than 5 years, ten teachers had 5 to 10 years, four teachers 16–20 years and two teachers over 20 years of experience. Therefore, the final participants were 32 primary school teachers working at public primary schools in Turkey during the spring term of 2011–2012. Five teachers taught in provincial city centers, five teachers taught in villages and twenty-two teachers taught in small towns.

Data Collection

This study used a written structured interview consisting of open-ended questions, which is a commonly used data collection method in qualitative studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 2012; Mason, 2005; Newton, 2007; Paliç & Keleş, 2011; Tekinarslan & Güreş, 2011; Tochon & Okten, 2010; Yıldırım, 2013). The written interview form was prepared by the researcher and consisted of six questions about the personal characteristics of the teachers and 12 questions about Turkish grammar instruction conducted in the first stage of primary education. The research data were collected from April–May, 2012. The researcher delivered the data collection tool by hand to participants living in

the same city as the researcher (four teachers) and was sent by mail or e-mail to participants living in different cities (28 teachers). In addition, all participants were contacted by phone and e-mail and were informed about the research focus.

Data Analysis

The study used a descriptive analysis technique as it aimed to explore primary school teachers' opinions about Turkish grammar instruction conducted in the first stage of primary education based on their own perceptions and expressions in a detailed holistic manner so as to identify the similarities and differences, and to allow for a detailed analysis of the research data based on the interview questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2012; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The research data were analyzed based on a conceptual framework and the research questions and in accordance with the preparation, organization and reporting phases suggested by Elo & Kyngäs (2007). The processes followed in this research are outlined below:

Preparation Phase: First, the forms answered and submitted by the participants were transcribed on computer. Each respondent was assigned a code beginning with the letter "T." In this way, all teachers in the study were assigned a code from T1 to T32.

Organization Phase: As the first step in this phase, a framework was created which took the research questions and research conceptual dimension into account, and, then the themes under which the research data would be organized and presented were determined. Then the data were grouped and matched with the corresponding interview question. The main themes were then developed based on the interview questions.

Reporting Phase: In this phase, the main themes and sub-themes were presented in an intelligible way. The qualitative data were represented in tables as frequencies and percentages. To give a clear account of the topic, direct quotes were taken from the participant statements on the interview forms. This contributed to the validity and reliability of the study (Wolcott, 1990). Finally, the themes reflecting the teachers' opinions about Turkish grammar instruction conducted at the first stage of primary education were interpreted based on a literature review.

To ensure study validity, the relevance of the results was discussed in an unbiased manner using direct quotes from the participant statements. Some

additional methods were also used to increase the validity of research, such as data triangulation and colleague verification (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011) and a participation process was also used. In this process, participants living in the same city as the researcher were contacted in person and those living in a different city were contacted by telephone and e-mail. In this way, the analyzed data were verified.

The reliability of the study was measured with what Stemler (2001) called reproducibility and stability, or intra-rater reliability. Accordingly, if coding schemes lead to the same text being coded in the same category by the same coder or different coders, the measurement reliability is ensured. Stemler (2001) suggested that a higher percentage of agreement in terms of the consistency of one rater in coding or consistency between multiple raters indicated a higher reliability measurement. Therefore, the intra-rater agreement percentage was used. The reliability was measured using a formula recommended by Miles & Huberman (1994): $P \text{ (Percent of agreement)} = \frac{NA \text{ (Number of Agreements)}}{NA \text{ (Number of Agreements)} + ND \text{ (Number of Disagreements)}} \times 100$. Using this formula, the measurement reliability was calculated at 94% and the study found to be reliable.

Results and Interpretation

The results of this study were grouped under 10 main themes.

Methods Used in Grammar Teaching

Some primary school teachers in the study used relevant examples when teaching grammar, and because they wished to present a subject with as many examples as possible, they used diverse examples. Some teachers prepared their own examples before the lessons and presented a subject based on these examples, whereas some other teachers asked their students to come up with appropriate examples. The teachers often had different goals when using the examples such as discovering focus points, noticing differences, and identifying errors. Nevertheless, the main reason underlying the use of examples was an effort to present the subject in a relevant context.

The teachers who used methods such as elicitation and discovery also used a method known as the Socratic Method in philosophy, but which is called "maieutic method" in modern education. According

to this method, teachers tried to make sure that students found “the truth” by asking them various questions. Another method used was the raising of awareness, a method usually preferred by critical educators. According to this method, students can have permanent knowledge about a subject only when they develop an awareness of a particular subject. These methods of teaching can be taken to indicate that the teachers sought to implement the practices prescribed in the curriculum.

A Separate Class Hour for Grammar Teaching

Some participants had a separate class hour for teaching grammar. Some teachers felt that a separate lesson was a natural part of the learning-teaching process, while some others stated that they made time for a separate lesson based on “needs.”

Teachers made decisions about whether to allocate a separate class hour for teaching grammar based on informal evaluations of their classes. In other words, the teachers allocated separate classes for teaching grammar if they somehow felt that their students had a lower level of comprehension of a particular subject. The difficulty level of the subjects was another important variable for the teachers. In fact, some teachers stated that they often gave a separate class hour for more challenging topics.

Teachers who have separate class hours for teaching grammar referred to the relevant regulations and guidelines in the curriculum rather than understanding the issue from a logical perspective. While their perspective was parallel with the curriculum objectives, some teachers viewed teaching from the teachers’ books as inappropriate behavior.

Adequacy of the Curriculum and Teaching Set

Teachers’ opinions about the adequacy or inadequacy of the curriculum and/or the teaching set were primarily based on the extent of detail provided for each subject. Some teachers stated that they thought providing details made comprehension difficult, but others emphasized that the subjects were superficially covered in both the curriculum and textbooks. Considering the fact that most of the teachers found the curriculum inadequate, the teachers seemed to think that the curriculum should cover more grammar topics. Similarly, the majority of teachers thought that the curriculum was inadequate in terms of providing clear explanations and guidelines, but they did not discuss this inadequacy in detail.

Adequacy of the Content of Grammar Teaching

The teachers who found the grammar teaching content inadequate stated that there were very few examples or explanations about the grammar areas and they had to deal with negative learning experiences caused by this situation.

Parallelism between the Grammar Subjects and Texts

The majority of teachers stated that they thought the texts given in the textbooks did not match or only partly matched the grammar areas covered in the curriculum. Therefore, the teachers had to develop their own solutions. One teacher, for example, used additional resources to find further examples.

Adequacy of the Grammar Teaching Activities in the Students’ Workbooks

Some teachers thought that the variety and number of activities in the workbooks were limited and the existing activities made it difficult for the students to learn a subject, while others complained that the activities were too simple. Considering that there are fast, average and slow learners in every classroom, the teachers seemed to expect that these activities should have been designed with this situation in mind.

Adequacy of the Guidelines of the Teachers’ Books for Grammar teaching

The teachers seemed to evaluate the adequacy of the guidelines of the teachers’ books based on practical considerations and the convenience they offered. In this regard, they tended to evaluate the quality of the teachers’ books in relation to the quality of and texts in the textbooks.

Teachers who stated that grammar activities and subjects were not sufficiently covered in the teachers’ books were actually concerned about the organizational properties and form of the teachers’ books. They thought that this situation led to confusion and made teaching practice difficult instead of facilitating the learning-teaching process.

Need for Additional Resources in Grammar Teaching

Of the 32 primary school teachers in the study, only two teachers stated that they found the Turkish course teaching set (i.e., students’ textbook,

students' workbook and teachers' book) adequate for grammar teaching and felt there was no need for any additional resources. One of these teachers was teaching grade two and explained that there was no need for additional resources at this grade level, but the other teacher did not give any further explanation. On the other hand, most teachers stated that they found the Turkish course grammar teaching examples, explanations, and activities inadequate; they needed additional resources to enhance the learning process, improve their teaching, and be more productive.

Measurement and Evaluation in Grammar Teaching

The teachers in the study stated that they conducted measurement and evaluation activities with the forms and scales in the teachers' books. However, whether these forms and scales were in parallel with the teachers' measurement and evaluation objectives was not clear as they did not give any details about this issue in their statements.

The teachers tended to use traditional measurement and evaluation activities. The constructivist approach, however, suggests that students should be assessed with alternative measurement and evaluation methods. However, no teacher made any statement about experiences with alternative measurement and evaluation practices. The reason for this situation could be that these methods require time and effort.

Problems Encountered in Grammar Teaching

Twelve teachers stated that they had problems in teaching grammar because of the teaching set inadequacy, poor explanations, exercises and examples in the resources provided, and problems caused by the students' social environment. Nine teachers stated that they sometimes encountered problems with the teaching, the giving of examples, and the practice of some subjects in some grade levels.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This study explored the learning-teaching process and teachers' experiences regarding grammar instruction as a part of Turkish course for the first stage in primary education. The study found that some teachers conducted grammar teaching based on relevant examples. In the learning-teaching process, providing students with examples relevant to

the topic facilitates permanent learning. In fact, Ağar (2004), Andrews (2005), Aydın Yılmaz & Mahiroğlu (2004), İtmeç (2008), Karadüz (2006), Kılıç & Akçay (2011), Wyse (2001), and Yaman & Karaarslan (2010) have suggested that utilizing diverse and plentiful examples is effective in grammar teaching. The study found that the teacher participants sought to enhance grammar learning-teaching processes through the use of diverse examples which is related to the desire to provide rich and varied examples, and it also reveals the effectiveness, quality, and role of the teachers in the grammar teaching process. Bağcı (2007) noted that the knowledge, skills, and competencies of teachers have not been sufficiently elaborated in previous studies.

According to the philosophy underlying the constructivist-oriented TCC (Turkish Course Curriculum), students are expected to learn grammar topics through elicitation (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 2009). In this regard, some teachers in the study used teaching methods aimed at having students discover the target subjects themselves. This result is similar to that in Yaman & Karaarslan (2010), but it deviates from Çebi (2006). In the constructivist approach to grammar teaching, students are expected to discover grammar rules based on inference and discovery and through activities and experiences rather than directly receiving them through memorization (Güneş, 2007, 2013; MEB, 2009; Sağır, 2002). Even though it is expected that the rules of grammar are taught by making them understood, Upton (2005) emphasized that rule-based grammar teaching continues even in the teacher training system. However, the fact that teachers have stated that they use varied methods in the grammar teaching is parallel with the views of Ur (2009) that the best method of teaching grammar is determined by the teachers own experiences.

Although TCC suggests that there should be no separate class hours allocated for grammar teaching (MEB, 2009), most teachers in the study stated that they taught grammar in a separate lesson. This result is similar to that in Karadüz (2006). Similarly, İşcan & Kolukısa (2005) and Erdem & Çelik (2011) suggested that teachers regard grammar as a separate course. However, teaching grammar in a separate and isolated lesson is based on the traditional approach to grammar teaching; so this finding suggested that those teachers who took a separate class hour for grammar were still affected by the traditional approach. From Erdem's (2007) study, it was found that a completely separate

lesson was not set aside for the grammar teaching, an issue which showed similarities to the findings of this study. This result contradicts both the integrated and convoluted structures adopted by the constructivist approach to grammar teaching and the natural structure of the language itself.

The majority of teachers in the study stated that they found the explanations and guidelines in the TCC inadequate in terms of grammar teaching. This result is similar to that in Elvan (2007), Epçaçan & Erzen (2008), Coşkun (2005) and Yalar (2010). Paterson (2010) suggested that the English National Curriculum was not clear about teaching grammar and did not provide teachers with clear guidelines, which was similar to the results obtained in this study, and it demonstrates that this controversy occurs not only in Turkey but all around the world.

The teachers also thought that the Turkish course students' books, students' workbooks, and teachers' books for Grades 1–5 were inadequate for the grammar teaching. This result was supported by previous research. Arıcı (2005), Epçaçan & Erzen (2008), and Epçaçan & Okçu (2008) all reported that teachers thought Turkish textbooks were inadequate. In a study by Güven (2010), teachers felt that there were shortcomings in both the textbooks and the student study books. Ocak and Dai (2010) also had the view that the Turkish text and study books were not consistent with the constructivist approach. While the scope of the student study books allows for additional materials such as CDs and DVDs, which cover various examples, exercises, reading sources, and other activities to support skills development and simplify subject learning in line with the objectives and explanations in the related teaching programs (Özbay, 2006, p. 171), Göçer (2010a) believed that the Turkish student study books were far from this. Göçer (2010b) also felt that because the teachers' guides were very comprehensive, this could encourage teachers to use these prepared materials and become dependent on these, and, indeed, some of the statements in this study do verify this. In studies carried out by Şahin (2008; 2009; 2010), on the other hand, teachers generally found the textbooks to be adequate, but were of the opinion that there were deficiencies in the student study books and the teachers' guide. Most teachers in this study stated that the students' book and the students' workbook did not match each other. The teachers expected the teachers' book to present the topics with detailed explanations. However, this expectation involves turning the teachers'

book into a resource book, which is another controversial issue. The conclusion reached in this study also coincided with other findings in this area. In a study carried out by Coşkun (2008), in which the characteristics of the primary education content in the Turkish teacher guides and student study books were examined, the activities in the students' study book were found to be inadequate to meet the attainments stated in the guide book. In a study carried out by Erdoğan and Gök (2009), teachers were also of the opinion that the grammar content was inadequate. İtmeç (2008) stated that the content in the teachers' guide books needed to be reviewed.

Half the teachers in the study found the grammar teaching content inadequate because there were very few topics, examples, or activities. This opinion could be associated with the traditional approach to teaching grammar that emphasizes giving theoretical knowledge. However, this is not the case in the constructivist approach. In fact, the current curriculum provides a clear framework for both the grammar teaching and the scope of the relevant grammar topics.

Although a textbook significantly affects the presentation of content (Küçükahmet, 2003), the majority of teachers in the study thought that not all of the texts given in the textbooks matched the grammar subjects covered in the curriculum. However, it is frequently emphasized that grammar should be taught through the reading texts studied in the Turkish lessons and within the context of these texts, rather than as a separate lesson or with activities independent of the reading texts (Karatay et al., 2012; Öz, 2001). In studies carried out by Susar Kırmızı & Akkaya (2009) and Gün (2012), it was also seen that teachers did not like the reading texts in the Turkish textbooks. However, there can be various types of texts which have one principal view, and which may be sections from a book, or several paragraphs which discuss a single topic or article (Akyol, 2010). The teachers thought that the variety and number of activities in the workbooks were limited and the activities were too simple and not detailed enough, and that they were inadequate for teaching grammar. This result is similar to other studies (Erdoğan, 2007; Lüle Mert, 2013; Şahin, 2008, 2009, 2010).

While the required content in a teacher guide book are stated in the Journal of Edicts (MEB, 2006), in general the teachers' guide assist teachers in planning, implementing and evaluating the learning and teaching process. Teachers need the

guide book at every stage of the learning-teaching process. Indeed, in a study carried out by A. Kiliç (2009), Turkish ranked second in lessons which teachers felt they most needed a guide book, and felt that this guide should have the grammar rules and relevant examples. The teachers in the study also felt that the Turkish teachers' guide did not give adequate guidance or explanations. Erdoğan (2007) was also of the opinion that the Turkish teachers' guide did not match the constructivist approach which is meant to shape the program.

McClure (2006) suggested the use of diverse and plentiful materials was important in grammar teaching. The teachers in the study stated that they found the examples, explanations and activities in the Turkish course teaching set for grammar teaching were inadequate and they needed and used additional resources to reinforce the learning process, to improve their teaching and to be more productive. Erdem (2007), on the other hand, thought that teachers had difficulty in finding adequate and standard sources for the grammar teaching. The teachers who took part in this study did not find the examples, explanations or activities for the grammar teaching in the Turkish teaching set, and felt the need to use additional sources to reinforce, develop and be more productive. This conclusion is similar to that of Karadüz (2006). This conclusion is in fact an indication that the teachers are searching for something when teaching grammar, while at the same time trying to overcome issues which reduced their Turkish teaching productivity and quality, a finding which was also highlighted by Çelenk (2002).

While it is known that class teachers experience various issues about measurement and evaluation (Epçacan & Erzen, 2008), they did use the various measurement and evaluation activities stipulated by the TCC when teaching grammar. This finding is similar to that in Şahin (2007), in which it was reported that teachers supported the measurement and evaluation approach in the program because the students needed to be evaluated in a sophisticated manner, a finding also raised in Göçer (2007). However, according to Arslan, Okumuş, and Kırbas

(2010), administrators did not give sufficient time to Turkish teachers for the development of alternative measurement and evaluation methods, while according to Kanatlı (2008), a lack of time and source material and the fact that class sizes are largely prevents the use of these methods.

The study also found that the teachers encountered problems because of the inadequacy of the materials used to teach grammar, an inadequacy of explanations, exercises, and examples in the resources provided, and the students' social environment. This conclusion is the same as in many other studies (Arıcı, 2005; Güney et al., 2012; Evran Acar, 2010; Kahraman, 2010; Işcan & Kolukısa, 2005; Karatay et al., 2012; Kiliç & Akçay, 2011; Sevim & Varışoğlu, 2012; Susar Kırmızı & Akkaya, 2009; Yaman & Karaarslan, 2010). Therefore, when the source of the problems experienced when teaching grammar are considered, it can be seen that in general the problems revolve around the content and quality of the teaching set, as well as on teacher competence. Watson (2012), on the other hand, believed that the negative feelings teachers have towards grammar has a negative influence on the grammar teaching.

Based on these results, some recommendations can be given. The results suggest that the teachers did not adopt nor have a clear and accurate understanding of the constructivist approach. This situation needs to be resolved so that TCC can be implemented efficiently.

Both the content and the presentation of each component of the Turkish course teaching set require careful research and development.

Further, teachers need to develop an awareness of the use of alternative measurement and evaluation methods and they need to be encouraged to implement these methods.

Each of the problems encountered in the teaching of Turkish grammar in the first stage of primary education requires detailed examination.

Future research can be extended to include larger samples so as to provide generalizations about this issue.

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