TEACHERS' OPINIONS ON THEIR PREFERRED METHODS AND EXAM PRACTICES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF GRAMMAR TEACHING IN TEACHING TURKISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

OPINIÕES DOS PROFESSORES SOBRE SEUS MÉTODOS PREFERIDOS E PRÁTICAS DE EXAME NO ÂMBITO DO ENSINO DE GRAMÁTICA NO ENSINO DE TURCO COMO LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA

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ABSTRACT

Grammar teaching plays an important role in language learning. However, traditional teaching methods limit students' understanding of grammar rules, and therefore more innovative, student-centered approaches are required. In this study, the methods teachers use in teaching grammar and the types of exams they prefer will be examined, and solution strategies will be developed for the difficulties encountered in this process. The main purpose of the research is to examine the effects of the constructivist model and the contributions of modern measurement-evaluation methods to student success. In this study, qualitative research methods were used and it was carried out within the framework of phenomenological design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the data collection process and the data obtained from these interviews were analyzed with content analysis. The participants consisted of teachers with professional experience between 1-6 years, 7 of whom were female and 7 of whom were male. The interview form was started with 12 questions and was reduced to 9 questions as a result of the pilot application. The obtained data reveal the preferences of teachers about grammar teaching and exam types and the development strategies suggested in this process. Teachers use different exam types such as multiple choice, open-ended, performance assessment and portfolio to measure students' grammar level. In grammar teaching, student-centered, innovative methods are preferred; creative and interactive approaches such as story writing, guided discussions, song-poem analyses are used. Teachers recommend the use of technology-supported materials, the use of digital platforms, the increase of peer interaction, and the more effective use of portfolios and performance-based assessments. Recommendations for the study are that the use of digital tools should be increased, the use of materials related to real life in classroom activities should be encouraged, game-based learning applications should be increased, and group work should be supported. Such strategies can help students develop their language skills more effectively.

Keywords: Teaching Turkish as a foreign language, grammar, exams, methods.

RESUMO

O ensino de gramática desempenha um papel importante na aprendizagem de línguas. No entanto, os métodos de ensino tradicionais limitam a compreensão dos alunos sobre as regras gramaticais e, portanto, abordagens mais inovadoras e centradas no aluno são necessárias. Neste estudo, os métodos que os professores usam no ensino de gramática e os tipos de exames que eles preferem serão examinados, e estratégias de solução serão desenvolvidas para as dificuldades encontradas neste processo. O principal objetivo da pesquisa é examinar os efeitos do modelo construtivista e as contribuições dos métodos modernos de medição e avaliação para o sucesso do aluno. Neste estudo, métodos de pesquisa qualitativa foram usados e foi realizado dentro da estrutura do design fenomenológico. Entrevistas semiestruturadas foram conduzidas no processo de coleta de dados e os dados obtidos dessas entrevistas foram analisados com análise de conteúdo. Os participantes consistiram em professores com experiência profissional entre 1 e 6 anos, 7 dos quais eram mulheres e 7 dos quais eram homens. O formulário de entrevista foi iniciado com 12 perguntas e foi reduzido para 9 perguntas como resultado da aplicação piloto. Os dados obtidos revelam as preferências dos professores sobre o ensino de gramática e os tipos de exames e as estratégias de desenvolvimento sugeridas neste processo. Os professores usam diferentes tipos de exames, como múltipla escolha, aberto, avaliação de desempenho e portfólio para medir o nível gramatical dos alunos. No ensino de gramática, métodos inovadores e centrados no aluno são preferidos; abordagens criativas e interativas, como escrita de histórias, discussões guiadas, análises de poemas e canções são usadas. Os professores recomendam o uso de materiais com suporte de tecnologia, o uso de plataformas digitais, o aumento da interação entre pares e o uso mais eficaz de portfólios e avaliações baseadas em desempenho. As recomendações para o estudo são que o uso de ferramentas digitais deve ser aumentado, o uso de materiais relacionados à vida real em atividades de sala de aula deve ser encorajado, aplicativos de aprendizagem baseados em jogos devem ser aumentados e o trabalho em grupo deve ser apoiado. Essas estratégias podem ajudar os alunos a desenvolver suas habilidades linguísticas de forma mais eficaz.

Palabras clave: Ensino de turco como língua estrangeira, gramática, exames, métodos.

Introduction

Grammar teaching plays a critical role in learning a language and using language structures correctly. Grammar stands out as a fundamental component in teaching both the mother tongue and a foreign language. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), grammar teaching enables students to understand language structures and use them effectively. When the literature is examined, it is seen that teaching grammar, which plays an important role in language learning, is transferred to students through traditional practices, which often prevents success. The rote-based structure of traditional teaching methods leads to a decrease in students' interest and a slowdown in the learning process. This situation necessitates the use of more innovative and student-centered methods in teaching grammar. Traditional teaching methods generally position students as passive learners and reduce knowledge to a memorization process (Öz & Türkel, 2023).

However, such approaches limit students' understanding of grammar rules and their application in context. Bruner (1996) argues that the constructivist education model supports students' active participation in the learning process. The constructivist model allows students to critically analyze the learning material instead of just memorizing it and to relate this knowledge to their own lives. According to Fosnot (2013), the constructivist approach helps students develop meaningful learning processes based on their individual experiences. This idea suggests that the use of the constructivist model in grammar teaching enables students to develop their language skills more effectively.

It can be said that the measurement and evaluation methods used in evaluating the outcomes of the teaching process play a critical role in the success of the educational process. Shepard (2001) argues that modern measurement and evaluation approaches should not only measure knowledge accumulation but also aim to develop students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. While traditional written exams usually measure only students' ability to remember grammar rules, alternative assessment methods offer the opportunity to evaluate how students apply this knowledge and use it in context. Duncan (2012) suggests that the measurement and evaluation process should be restructured in a way that will increase student success. Therefore, the types of exams teachers prefer and the reasons behind these preferences are among the important factors that determine the success of grammar teaching.

The importance of grammar teaching is increasing in the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Alderson et al. (2014) argue that grammar exams in foreign language teaching significantly affect students' motivation and language skills. The methods and exam practices used in teaching Turkish are of critical importance in terms of ensuring that students learn grammar rules and apply these rules correctly. At this point, a detailed examination should be made on which exam types teachers prefer, how these preferences affect students' learning processes, and the difficulties encountered in this process (Avcı & Küçük, 2017). It is thought that such an examination will contribute to understanding the difficulties teachers

encounter in their education processes and developing solutions for these difficulties.

Effective grammar teaching is not just about transferring grammar rules. During the teaching process, students' individual learning needs should be taken into account and teaching strategies appropriate to these needs should be developed. According to Brown (2014), effective language teaching should include supporting students in learning grammar rules as well as providing a learning environment that allows them to apply the rules in real-life contexts. Adopting the constructivist model in grammar teaching ensures that students not only learn information but also use this information meaningfully.

The methods teachers use in teaching grammar and the types of exams they prefer are among the factors that directly affect the success of the educational process. For this reason, it is important to examine in detail the difficulties teachers encounter in this process and the solution strategies they develop for these difficulties. Shepard (2000) argues that the measurement and evaluation methods used in the teaching process should be designed in a way that increases students' learning motivation. How the types of exams used in teaching grammar affect students' learning processes and the contributions of these effects to student success should be discussed in detail. In this study, the opinions of teachers on the methods they prefer and the exam practices they use within the framework of grammar teaching in teaching Turkish as a foreign language will be discussed in detail. The main problem of the research was determined as "What are the opinions of teachers on the methods they prefer and the exam practices they use within the framework of grammar teaching in teaching Turkish as a foreign language?" The effects of the constructivist model on the teaching process and the contributions of modern measurement-evaluation methods to student success will be examined. It is anticipated that the study will provide an opportunity to evaluate teachers' exam type preferences and the effects of these preferences on student learning outcomes. It is thought that the findings will contribute to the development of strategies for the development of grammar teaching in teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

The sub-problem sentences developed depending on the problem sentence are as follows:

1. What are the exam types that instructors prefer to measure the grammar levels of students in the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language?

2. What are the criteria that instructors pay attention to when choosing exam types in the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language?

3. What methods do instructors prefer for teaching grammar in classroom practices in the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language?

4. What are the suggestions of instructors on how to improve the methods and exam types they use for teaching grammar in the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language?

Method

Research Model

In this study, qualitative research methods were used. In social sciences, the preferred qualitative research method was used to analyze events in depth and gain new perspectives (Leko, Cook & Cook, 2021). In the data collection process, techniques such as observation, interview and document analysis generally come to the fore (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In this study, the interview method was adopted for data collection and a semi-structured interview form was prepared. The study was conducted within the framework of the phenomenological design, which is one of the qualitative research methods. The phenomenological approach aims to determine and examine in depth the common meanings underlying a phenomenon by focusing on the experiences of individuals (Miller, 2003).

Persuasiveness

The positivist paradigm is associated with internal validity in qualitative research. Determining the opinions of the participants and interpreting the behaviors based on these opinions is considered an important element in increasing credibility in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, the

participant confirmation method was applied to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. In this process, two separate interviews were conducted with the participants. The first interview was conducted to fill out the semi-structured interview forms, and the second interview was organized to obtain confirmation from the participants that the information in these forms was accurate.

Research Group

The study group of the research was formed by using easily accessible sampling from purposeful sampling methods and 14 teachers who are specialized in teaching Turkish as a foreign language participated in the study voluntarily. The data of the study group is presented in the table below:

Table 1 – Data of the Study Group

Participant	Professional Experience (Years)	Gender
T1	3	Male
T2	4	Female
T3	4	Female
T4	5	Female
T5	4	Male
T6	4	Male
T7	2	Female
T8	4	Male
T9	1	Male
T10	6	Male
T11	1	Male
T12	5	Female
T13	6	Male
T14	5	Female

Table 1 provides some information by showing the professional experience (years) and gender of the participants. It is seen that there are 4 teachers with 1-3 years of professional experience and 10 teachers with 4-6 years of professional experience. It is stated that 7 of the participants are female and 7 are male.

Data Collection and Analysis

All data belonging to the research were obtained with a semi-structured interview form created by the researcher. In order to demonstrate the validity of the form, 7 academicians who are experts in their fields and have completed their doctoral education and 3 teachers contributed. The semi-structured interview form was initially formed with 12 questions. As a result of the pilot application applied to a group of 15 teachers, the number of items was reduced to 9 due to the similarity of the items in meaning and the difficulties in understanding them. The semi-structured interview form obtained at the end of the process was delivered to the participants via Google Forms application. The findings obtained in the obtained data were analyzed with the content analysis technique. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013, p. 227), the content analysis technique is defined as bringing together and organizing data that are similar to each other within the scope of certain themes. In order to ensure internal reliability of the study, the teachers were first given codes as "T1, T2, T3…". Both direct and indirect transfers were made regarding the teachers' opinions within the study. In addition, the process of creating the data set and the processes performed during the analysis were explained in detail in order to emphasize the transparency of the study. Following these processes, sample opinions were included using a table to make the study more understandable.

Findings

In this section, the data of the study are presented together in a table. The table indicates the exam types preferred by the participants, the criteria taken into consideration when choosing the exam types, the grammar teaching methods and the suggestions for developing the method and the exam types. The data in question are shown in Table 2:

Table 2 – Opinions of participants regarding the applications

Participant	Preferred Exam Types	Criteria Considered for Exam Types	Grammar Teaching Methods	Recommendations for Developing Methods and Exam Types
T1	Multiple choice, true-false, open-ended	Student level, time efficiency, measurement objectivity	Grammar games, guided discussions	Developing technology-supported materials, increasing feedback
T2	Open-ended questions, written essay	Measuring critical thinking, content accuracy	Story writing, creating sample sentences	Including different cultural content in instructional design
T3	Matching, fill-in-the-blank	Real level of usage in the target language	Dialogue studies, group activities	Integrating more speaking skills in exams
T4	Short-answer exams, multiple choice	Ease of measurement, rapid feedback	Vocabulary cards, teaching with visuals	Supporting with visual and audio materials
T5	Portfolio assessment, performance	Student focus, process monitoring	Project-based learning, peer assessment	Organizing portfolio content to cover broader skill areas
T6	Written exam, listening-comprehension questions	Evaluating all dimensions of language	Imitation method, explanation with examples	Integrating information technologies into exams
T7	Oral exams, open-ended written questions	Measuring communication skills, individual development	Role playing, scenario creation	Increasing peer interactions in classroom practices
T8	Multiple choice, matching	Ease of application, objective evaluation	Song and poem analysis	Developing fun and student-motivating applications
T9	Fill-in-the-blank, written essay	Applying grammar rules correctly	Grammar-focused approach, individual work	Using gamified applications more

T10	Portfolio assessment, performance	Long-term success, observing language use	Problem-solving focused activities	Increasing the use of digital portfolio platforms
T11	Written essay, short-answer exam	Measuring creativity, encouraging students to express themselves	Text analysis, explanation with visuals	Diversifying creative writing activities
T12	Multiple choice, true-false	Rapid evaluation, time management	Teaching through meaning, use of context	Setting individual goals in the grammar learning process
T13	Performance assessment, portfolio	Personal development, original content	Dramatization, role-play activities	Expanding the use of authentic materials
T14	Oral exam, dialogue writing	Measuring fluency, verbal skills evaluation	Pair work, class discussions	Developing more flexible methods in applications measuring speaking skills

Table 2 presents the views of 14 teachers on grammar teaching and exam practices within the scope of teaching Turkish as a foreign language. The first column includes the exam types that teachers prefer to measure students' grammar knowledge levels. In this context, it is seen that different types such as multiple choice, open-ended, performance assessment and portfolio are used. Each exam type is selected according to various criteria such as teachers' suitability to the student level, objectivity of measurement, content accuracy and measuring communication skills. In the methods used for grammar teaching column, it is understood that teachers adopt innovative and student-centered approaches in classroom practices. For example, methods such as story writing, guided discussions, song and poem analyses aim to make students' understanding and use of grammar rules fun and meaningful. In addition, interactive approaches such as group work, dramatization and problem-solving activities are also prominent. The last column includes teachers' suggestions on how the methods and exam types used in grammar teaching can be improved. These suggestions include remarkable

ideas such as developing technology-supported materials, increasing the use of visual and audio content, and diversifying portfolios and gamified applications. In addition, strategies such as increasing peer interactions, using authentic materials, and taking advantage of digital platforms are also among the suggestions. This table systematically summarizes teachers' approaches, methods, and suggestions for grammar teaching and assessment and provides rich content that can guide other educators working in the field.

Discussion and conclusion

This research has presented an analysis of teachers' views on grammar teaching and exam practices in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. According to the research findings, teachers use various types of exams to measure students' grammar levels, among which methods such as multiple choice, open-ended, performance assessment and portfolio stand out. In choosing exam types, teachers consider a wide range of criteria such as suitability for students' language skills, objectivity of measurement, accuracy of content and measuring communication skills (Aydın, 1999). In this context, multiple choice exams are generally preferred to measure the accuracy of grammar rules, while open-ended exams are used to encourage deeper thinking (Anılan, 2014). In grammar teaching, teachers prefer student-centered and innovative approaches rather than traditional teaching methods. Creative methods such as story writing, guided discussions, song and poem analyses are used to ensure that students learn grammar rules in an entertaining and meaningful way. In addition, it is emphasized that interactive and participatory methods such as group work, dramatization and problem-solving activities are effective in language teaching (Başkale, 2016). Such activities help students develop both grammar and communication skills. The development strategies suggested by teachers to make grammar teaching and exam practices more effective are also noteworthy. Teachers recommend the use of technology-supported materials, greater integration of visual and auditory content, and use of digital platforms. These suggestions can increase student participation and make

students' grammar learning processes more efficient. In addition, it has been stated that authentic materials can make grammar teaching more concrete with content close to students' daily language use (Bayat, 2020). Another important suggestion is to increase peer interaction. Including students more in group work and peer evaluation processes will help them develop their language skills and learn how to express themselves (Benzer & Eldem, 2013). Additionally, teachers propose the idea that portfolio and performance-based assessments can provide a more comprehensive means of monitoring students' progress (Göçer & Aslan, 2018).

Suggestions regarding the study

The use of digital tools in grammar teaching should be more widespread. Interactive exams and online platforms can be effective tools for students to develop their language skills.

The use of materials related to real life should be encouraged in classroom activities. Students should be provided with the opportunity to use the grammar rules they learn in practice (Bayat, 2020).

Game-based learning applications and tasks should be increased in grammar teaching. This can increase students' motivation and make language learning more fun (Benzer & Eldem, 2013).

Students should be encouraged to participate in group work. Peer interaction can help students develop their language skills more naturally (Göçer & Aslan, 2018).

Performance-based assessment will allow students' language skills to be evaluated more holistically. Portfolio studies can be used to track student development (Benzer & Eldem, 2013).

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