

An Investigation of the Quality of Grammar Instruction: Case of Education Informatics Network

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ABSTRACT

Teaching grammar topics is a difficult and complex process. This process needs to be structured with functional activities that are appropriate for the objectives of the instruction, be it face-to-face or distance education. This study aims to investigate and evaluate the quality of grammar instruction in the Turkish lessons on the Education Informatics Network (EBA) used by the Ministry of National Education as a distance education tool. For this purpose, the data of the research were obtained through the investigation of 29 Turkish lessons at the elementary school level (5th-8th grades) between the dates 23.03.2020 and 19.06.2020 during which formal education was in a three-month hiatus. In designating these lessons, the criterion sampling technique was used and all lessons that included grammar topics were investigated by taking grammar topics as the criterion. The research used the case study as one of the qualitative research designs. The data obtained after the investigation were analyzed through the content analysis method. In the research, the analysis category was determined to be "Grammar Teaching" while the sub-categories were coded as "The State of Using the Sense and Induction Methods in Grammar Teaching", "Structure of the Examples Used in Grammar Teaching", and "The State of Supporting Grammar Teaching Activities with Comprehension and Expression Skills". It was found that induction and intuition methods that have a vital place in teaching grammar in elementary school Turkish lessons were seldom used. On top of this, it was revealed that grammar was taught in a way far from text-based grammar teaching and was not associated with receptive and productive skills.

Key words: Turkish Teaching, Grammar Teaching, Text-based Instruction, Distance Education, Education Informatics Network (EBA)

INTRODUCTION

The principal purpose of first language teaching is to improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. To effectively use these skills, one must know the rules and functions of the language. In other words, the development of language skills is not possible without the necessary linguistic knowledge. The knowledge which instructs the required rules to speak and write a language accurately and impressively is referred to as grammar (Yüzbaşıoğlu & Yüzbaşıoğlu, 1984, p. 8). To be more precise, grammar is a science branch that examines the rules regarding phonetics, word types, word structures, syntactic order, functions of the words, and conjunctions (Göğüş, 1978, p. 337).

Grammar should not be regarded as a set of static rules. Just as a language is not static, the grammar field has a dynamic nature. Grammar is not only a science that describes a language structurally but also a complementary construct that helps thinking and covers the systematic instruction of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. It is the ultimate organizer, integrator, and indispensable part of all language activities (Güney & Aytan, 2012, p. 3).

It is known that out of all language skills, listening and speaking skills are acquired in informal environments while reading and writing skills are learned through formal education activities in schools. Before getting involved in the first literacy process, in other words, before learning to read and write, a child can utilize the grammar of a language without knowing what it is, based on what is acquired from the listening and speaking skills of the immediate surroundings. This intuitive knowledge of the child about the language existing within is used both to learn the reading-writing skills and to develop literacy skills. Analyzing the letters on the paper during the process of learning how to read and write, the reader portrays a literacy skill based on sense-making during the development of literacy skills (Kurudayıoğlu & Tüzel, 2010). In both cases, linguistics holds an important place. Particularly, the sense-making process of the individual is affected by the proficiency in grammar during the portrayal of literacy skills.

Language is a system that is constituted by units valued by their interrelation with one another whereas grammar is a study area that aims to portray this system, identifying the

rules making up the system and explaining them consistently. Such interest in the language can be used to achieve two individual functions. First, it can be used to ensure more explicit, solid, and effective communication by enabling individuals to learn the structures and opportunities of a language. Second, it can make it possible to comprehend the rules constituting the system of the language while learning a second language to compare it to the first language. Grammar teaching syllabi must be designed to serve these two goals. The objective is not to teach grammar, but rather to project the language within which individuals live (Adalı, 1983, pp. 34-35).

Grammar teaching is obligated to equip individuals with the rules of a language, exceptions for the rules, functions, structures, opportunities, inclinations, usages, tricks, and richness of the language at knowledge and skill levels for people to establish an open, effective, and healthy communication, they need to be taught these features of their language in a functional way (Aslan, 2017). In grammar teaching, phonetic, stylistic, and sentential structures of the language should be conveyed to students through certain methods so that they can sense them. Using such methods, teachers must devise activities to make students use the language effectively and accurately (Dolunay, 2010, p. 277) because children possess an innate language device and intuitive grammar during the process of first language acquisition. Grammar teaching must be responsible for enriching this internalized knowledge. Intuitive grammar needs a well-designed presentation to achieve effective grammar teaching which will be used to inform this intuitive grammar (Özbay, 2006, p. 150).

Acknowledging that children possess intuitive grammar, functional grammar teaching can be used to enable children to sense the functionality and rules of the language. Functional grammar aims to identify the use of function and meaning components of the language in a text piece, why they are selected, and what functions they accomplish (İşcan, 2007, p. 2). From this perspective, grammar activities to teach topics, concepts, and rules should not be performed as if they were separate lessons, but rather they should be sensed by students within the reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities. Hence, students can appreciate that language can be learned through experience, not through rules.

The integrity principle which must be considered in the development of language skills that are interwoven as dictated by their nature also involves grammar teaching. Grammar must be handled separately from basic language skills as it is a field that shows the language rules, structures, opportunities, and functions. Grammar activities should be included within receptive and productive activities integrated with basic language skills; they must not be completed as a separate lesson or an activity area (Sağır, 2002; Sever et al., 2008). Works related to grammar must be run jointly with the activities of the reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills, with the mentality of integrity when the need arises. Students must not find the knowledge effortlessly. The knowledge and rules must be conveyed to students under the guidance of teachers by keeping the curiosity of students vivid through the discovery learning approach where investigative studies

are conducted. In functional grammar teaching, the topics and rules must be taught through practices such as sensing the rule, induction, comprehension of the grammatical structure/rule, and, finally, producing a definition by enriching the content with tangible examples (Göçer, 2015).

Even though the related literature indicates that many instructional methods and techniques can be used in grammar, it was emphasized in the literature that methods and techniques that are appropriate for the discovery learning strategy must be prioritized. In addition, it was underlined that the inductive method would be more effective in the discovery comprehension and functional grammar perspectives. The inductive method helps develop scientific thinking instead of memorization because it is based on observation, experiment, and research. It also enables students to make generalizations based on tangible phenomena and examples. This method has a significant place in Turkish grammar teaching (Aşılıoğlu, 1993; Kavcar et al., 2004).

As in the development of language skills, in the grammar teaching activities that are led with functional grammar and the discovery-learning mentalities, texts are the most effective tools. The most accurate way of language analyses and comprehension of grammar topics is through examinations based on the text or comprehending the topics (Sağır, 2002, p. 35). The quality of language teaching is due to the notion that (language lessons) are not knowledge-based, but rather skill-based lessons. The most common tool used to reach the goals of the language education process is the wide array of texts. Grammar rules are the most apparent in written and spoken texts that are the most obvious application areas of the language. Based on this, focusing on the texts would also mean that instruction suitable for the emergence systematic of grammar rules is given (Temizkan, 2012, pp. 134-135). This instruction, which is referred to as text-based grammar teaching, is an instruction where grammatical topics/rules are taught based on the texts used in the receptive and productive practices. Teachers must teach grammatical rules and topics through the texts in which receptive and productive skills are practiced, not through bland and artificial examples that are disconnected from the text, therefore the context (Aslan, 2017).

In text-based grammar teaching, while the teacher guides the student with questions and clues, the student can conclude about the grammar that they sense and comprehend functionally. Thus, instead of defining the grammar subjects themselves in the first place, the teacher will make the students find it with the guidance they will make in the activities and enable the students to discover the rule.

The texts to be used in grammar teaching should reflect the power, expressive potential, richness, and subtleties of the Turkish language. After the work on reading and understanding the text is done, the teacher should draw the attention of the students to the grammar topic or rule to be covered and should make students think about what these structures add to the text and what functions they assume in the text. Problems that may be encountered in case the structure in question is not used in a written and oral expression or if the rule is not followed should be shown through examples.

The topic should be reinforced by additional studies on other quality texts (Aslan, 2017).

The fundamental purpose of the language education given at schools is to develop students' reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills and enable them to use them effectively. Therefore, grammar instruction must aim to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to reach this fundamental purpose. Unfortunately, the related literature addresses many problems indicating that grammar instruction activities in Turkish lessons are not designed to serve this purpose. Some of these problems are as follows: teaching grammar as if it was a lesson distinct from the Turkish lesson, teaching based on definitions/rules-examples that requires memorization, failing to teach grammar topics functionally, rules given through examples based on words and phrases, perception of the grammar instruction as the objective of the Turkish lessons instead of an instrument (Aslan, 2016; Göçer, 2015; İşcan & Kolukısa, 2005; Kavcar et al., 2004; Kurudayıoğlu, 2012; Sağır, 2002; Sever et al., 2008; Temizkan, 2012).

The curiosity to determine whether these grammar instruction problems experienced in Turkish lessons in formal education over the years have also existed in distance education was what motivated this study. The reason for this curiosity was because distance education greatly supports and even is the equivalent of formal education in current times.

Distance education is the delivery of learning-teaching activities by teachers and students in different physical places with various communication technologies to provide education services to large masses and to ensure equality of opportunity in education (Yalın, 2001). The main purpose of distance education is to provide education and training opportunities to people with systems that can keep up with the developing technology by eliminating the obstacles related to place and time that disrupt education, and contribute to human education without being affected by time and space (Kaçan & Gelen, 2020, p. 3). According to the conditions of the age we live in, the opportunities of distance education have been used for a long time in the transfer of different courses and educational content, including language lessons, for various reasons.

To realize the digital transformation in education in Turkey, it was aimed to strengthen the internet infrastructure of schools, install smart boards in the classrooms, and distribute smart devices to teachers and students within the scope of the Increasing Opportunities and Improving Technology Project in 2011. In addition, the Ministry of National Education took action to prepare and present content suitable for these technologies and the Education Information Network (EBA) was established. EBA started its broadcasting life in 2012 by the Directorate General for Innovation and Education Technologies affiliated with the Ministry of National Education to achieve the goal of providing and managing e-content.

EBA contains materials such as supplementary videos, interactive applications and games, worksheets with multiple choice questions, digital editions of coursebooks, and

practice tests (Altın & Kalelioğlu, 2015). EBA is one of the most important platforms for educational institutions within the MEB. This platform is widely used as it provides opportunities for teachers and students to enrich and support learning processes with in-class and extra-curricular activities, especially access to e-content. It is known that formal education has to be suspended in many countries, especially due to the global pandemic, and distance education is compulsory. Along with the epidemic process, Turkish lessons, like many lessons at primary and secondary school levels, were compulsory between 23.03.2020 and 19.06.2020 through distance education over EBA. In Turkish teaching, there is a need for qualified grammar teaching as well as activities for the development of basic language skills. In this context, it is worth investigating whether qualified grammar teaching is carried out in Turkish lessons in the distance education process, free from the teaching problems experienced in formal education in the past. In this study, grammar teaching studies in Turkish lessons, which are carried out through EBA, in the second half of the 2019-2020 academic year, were examined in the context of their suitability for teaching.

İstenilen bilgileri buraya yazınız. The purpose of this paper is to investigate and evaluate the grammar teaching in the Turkish lessons on the Education Informatics Network (EBA) which is used by the Ministry of National Education as a distance education tool. To serve this purpose, answers were sought for the questions below:

1. Do the Turkish lessons which are run on EBA include activities where the rules are found based on sense and induction methods in teaching grammar?
2. What are the structures of the samples (words, phrases, sentences, etc.) used in teaching grammar topics?
3. Are grammar works included in the lessons supported with comprehension and expression activities integrated with basic language skills?

METHOD

Research Design

This study that aimed to investigate grammar instruction activities in the elementary school (5th-8th grades) Turkish lessons run on the EBA used the case study design as a qualitative research design. A case study is a type of research in which how phenomenon or phenomena indicate a problem or a subject, and it can contain a single phenomenon or multiple phenomena (Creswell, 2017a, p. 268; Stake, 2005). In case studies where the main objective is not to reach a general conclusion, describing and interpreting a person or phenomenon in the natural environment is emphasized (Paker, 2017, p. 120). Therefore, in such research, the person, phenomenon, or institution is investigated thoroughly (Seggie & Bayyurt, 2017, p. 119). For a meticulous investigation, it is crucial to define the case and set the boundaries in case studies (Yin, 2018). This study which investigated the grammar instruction in the Turkish lessons run on the EBA is limited to the Turkish lessons delivered via the EBA TV and to the period during which the lessons were run in the spring semester. Additionally, the criterion sampling method was

used for the selection of the sample. In criterion sampling, all cases which meet certain sets of predetermined criteria are involved (Patton, 1987). In the case of this research, the 5-8th grade grammar topics were identified with reference to the Turkish lesson curriculum and they were each taken as a criterion. Subsequently, the 5-8th grade Turkish lessons that included grammar topics were selected out of EBA Turkish lesson video recordings published during the three-month hiatus.

Data Collection

Audio-visual materials are among various data collection sources in case studies (Creswell, 2017b, p. 192). The primary data source of the study is the content of elementary school Turkish lessons which were run on the EBA as distance education between the dates 23.03.2020 and 19.06.2020 and presented grammar topics. Similar to many countries, Turkey put formal education on hold due to the global pandemic and enforced the delivery of Turkish lessons through distance education on the EBA between the dates of 23.03.2020 and 19.06.2020 just as many lessons at primary and elementary school levels. The reason behind selecting the lessons between these dates as the data collection source was the thought that the lessons which could not be supported with face-to-face education within this time frame due to the hiatus in formal education had possibly more impact power. In this sense, 29 Turkish lessons in total were observed/listened. Five of these lessons were at the 5th-grade level, nine at the 6th-grade, seven at the 7th-grade, and eight at the 8th-grade. Video recordings of the lessons were accessed on the eba.gov.tr website. All grammar-related videos for each grade level published between the said period were watched/listened to.

To avoid loss of data in the investigation of the lesson content delivered to the students as video recordings, an evaluation rubric was created with the consideration of the purpose of the study and the sub-problems. The content of the videos was examined according to the rubric, and notes based on the sub-problems of the study were taken by the researcher.

Data Analysis

The data obtained through watching/listening to the video recordings were analyzed with the content analysis method. The purpose of the content analysis is to combine similar data under certain concepts and themes and organize and interpret them in a way that readers can understand. To serve this fundamental purpose, initially, main categories and sub-categories must be identified and described as units of analysis; subsequently, the contextual units for which the analysis will be run (words, sentences, paragraphs ...) must be selected (Balci, 2009; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). In this study, the analysis category was "Grammar Instruction" while the sub-categories were determined as "State of Utilizing Sense and Induction Methods in Grammar Instruction", "Structure of the Examples Used in Grammar Instruction",

and "State of Supporting Grammar Instruction Activities with Comprehension and Expression Skills". As for the contextual unit, sentences were selected, and the sub-categories were investigated in terms of frequency of use and how they were included.

To ensure the validity of the study, 5th-8th grade Turkish lessons in which grammar topics were involved were all investigated without excluding any sections. Moreover, the reliability and validity of the study were constructed based on the agreement among the coders. The inter-coder agreement is the comparison of the results to determine the agreement rating of the coders after multiple coders have analyzed and coded a qualitative data set (Creswell, 2017b). For the reliability of the study, parts of the lesson recordings were coded separately by the researcher and a scholar in the field of Turkish education in another institution. Upon comparison of the analyses, it was found that two coders reached a 100% agreement/consensus. A minimum of 70% agreement is considered necessary among the coders (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). Since the study reached an agreement percentage above this value, it can be stated that the data were analyzed reliably.

FINDINGS

Findings Regarding the First Sub-Problem (Do the Turkish Lessons which are Run on EBA Include Activities where the Rules are Found based on Sense and Induction Methods in Teaching Grammar?)

Considering the findings of the first sub-problem, codes for the category of using the sense and inductive methods in grammar teaching in the 5th-8th grade Turkish lessons were as follows: "pointing out the rule/defining and giving examples", "giving examples and pointing out the rule/defining", and "enabling students to find the rule through examples and questions". Findings regarding these categories and codes are presented in Table 1.

Considering the information in Table 1, in the course recordings of all classes that were watched, the method of pointing out the rule/defining and giving examples was the most preferred code, and it was found that the method of "giving an example and pointing out the rule/defining" and "enabling students to find the rule through examples and questions" were used only a few times. Based on this, it can be said that the practice of teaching grammar in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade Turkish lessons was given little place to sensing and induction methods. Instead, it was observed that teaching through the presentation, which is considered to be an immense problem in grammar teaching, was employed and rule teaching was given an emphasis. Excerpts of this outcome are presented below:

In the 8th-grade Turkish lesson titled the Parts of the Sentences, the teacher defined the sentence as an introduction by saying "First, we will start with the definition of the sentence.". Next, the teacher defined the "part", listing what to be careful about when finding the parts of a sentence. The teacher, then, pointed to the rule that "parts of the sentence are divided into two as basic parts and

Table 1. The sense and inductive methods in grammar teaching at the 5th-8th grade levels

Codes	5 th Grade	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade	Total
Pointing out the rule/defining and Giving Examples	4	7	7	8	26
Giving examples and Pointing out the rule/defining	2	1	-	-	3
Enabling students to find the rule through examples and questions	-	4	-	-	4

auxiliary parts.”, showing them in a diagram with their sub-headings. Under the title of the basic parts, the teacher initially listed the features of the verb and showed the verbs in sentence examples. Until this point (the first five minutes of the lesson), the lesson only included definitions and explanations of the rules without any examples. Continuing the lesson, the teacher defined the subject and listed the features of the subject, saying, “*One of the fundamental elements of a sentence is the subject. Now, let’s define it.*”. Then, the teacher screen cast four example sentences and showed the subjects of those sentences. Following these, real subject, null subject, and pseudo subject as subject types were defined and shown within sentential examples. At the end of the lesson, multiple-choice questions related to predicates and subjects. Based on this, it can be said that teaching by presenting was generally adopted in grammar teaching in the lesson examined, and teaching the rules was more important.

In the 5th-grade lesson titled Phonology, the teacher started the lesson by saying “*we will learn Consonant Assimilation, Excrescence, and Consonant Devoicing*” under the title “*What We Will Learn*”, then shared the text “*Çitlenbik*” in the screen, saying “*You already know this text from your books*” and read the text aloud. Four words were bolded in the text. For this, the teacher said “*You see some bold words in the text. Some phonetic occurrences happened in these words. Let’s see them.*” and divided the words into suffixes and showed the changes in the voices. Next, the teacher explained the rules of these phonetic occurrences in examples. Hence, the teacher partially used the induction method in the activity where the rule was explained based on the word examples in the text.

In the 6th grade Turkish lesson in which the subject of pronouns was taught, the teacher started by saying, “*Today, we will talk about a type of word that we have encountered many times in our writings and speeches.*”. This way, by associating the verbal and, even though it was limited, speaking skills with the grammatical subject, the teacher guided intuiting. Then, saying “*Let’s start the lesson with an example sentence.*” The teacher shared the sentence “*The teacher was coming towards the classroom, laughing.*” on the screen. After asking them to find the words that are nouns in this sentence, the teacher underlined these words (the teacher and towards the classroom) and asked, “*What can we replace it with?*” and replaced these words with the words “*He*” and “*here*” and said that there was no distortion in the meaning of the sentence. Then the teacher said, “*Now, we call these words pronouns.*” defining the pronoun. Thus, the teacher used the methods of induction and intuition, both by starting from the example and by guiding the students with questions.

Findings Regarding the Second Sub-Problem (What are the Structures of the Samples used in Teaching Grammar Topics?)

The category of the structures of the examples used in grammar teaching topics contained the codes as the following: giving examples through words and phrases, giving examples within a sentence, and giving examples through multiple sentences within a context. Findings regarding these codes are presented in Table 2.

According to Table 2, the examples used in grammar teaching in the lesson records that were watched were mostly given “*within a sentence*”, followed by the examples in the form of “*words and phrases*”, and the least used example in all grade levels was “*giving examples through multiple sentences in a context*” which is among the important features of text-based grammar teaching. It is known that merely using the words and phrases to give examples must be avoided to display how the grammar rules function in activating the text-based grammar teaching principles and effective use of intuition and induction methods. Indeed, the most effective way is to give examples at least within a sentence, ideally within contexts involving multiple sentences. From this point of view, it can be said that the principles of text-based grammar teaching were not fully followed in terms of the structure of the examples and the way they were given in the grammar teaching practices in the lesson records. Below are some excerpts concerning this outcome:

In the 5th-grade lesson titled Synonyms, Antonyms, and Homonyms, the teacher started the lesson with the definition of the word and gave the words “*cup, desk, window, to see, to love, with, however*” as examples. Then, she said, “*What is a synonym? What is an antonym? What is homonymy? We will learn these.*”. She defined the synonym and listed the examples “*prize-gift*”, “*response-reaction*”, etc. without using them in sentences. During the lesson, all three topics were taught in word examples, not in sentences. Surprisingly, homonymy was taught by showing the differences between two words with homonymy in pictures instead of using them in sentences to make the students make intuitions about their meanings. In the end, the teacher concluded the lesson with four multiple-choice questions. What was noteworthy here was that the teacher asked students to find synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms in three of these questions even though no example sentences were given during the lesson.

In the 5th-grade Turkish lesson titled Meaning in Words, the teacher defined the “*literal meaning*” concept and showed words that were used in their real meanings in example sentences. Then, she defined the concept of “*figurative meaning*”, warning the students by saying, “*Words receive different meanings depending on the sentences they are used in.*” before going on with the examples, emphasizing

the importance of using words in a sentence. The words that were used in their literal meanings were presented in sentences in which their figurative meanings were used. Therefore, the teacher could at least meet the requirement to use examples in a sentence in grammar teaching due to the topic being suitable for this.

In a 6th-grade lesson in which nouns were taught, the teacher started the lesson by creating an example situation. She stated, “If you put the thing on the desk, let’s start.”, and enacted a situation where students asked her “What?” and she kept saying “The thing.”. She explained that unless a noun replaced “the thing”, the conversation would continue forever. This way, the teacher made an introduction, promoting intuition within a context where there was a dialogue about nouns.

Findings Regarding the Third Sub-Problem (Are Grammar Works Included in the Lessons Supported with Comprehension and Expression Activities Integrated with Basic Language Skills?)

The findings regarding whether the grammar activities in Turkish lessons were integrated with basic language skills were classified under the codes “integration with receptive skills (reading and listening/watching)” and “integration with productive skills (speaking and writing)”, and presented in Table 3.

According to Table 3, it was seen that the teaching of grammar subjects in a total of 12 lessons was associated with receptive and productive skills. It can also be said that the practices in grammar teaching were mostly associated with reading and listening/watching skills. However, in this association, it was determined that the examples related to the grammar subject were mostly shown in the reading and listening/watching texts and that the grammar teaching practices were not integrated with the reading and listening/watching receptive activities. In addition, studies on integrating the grammar rules with the speaking skills that required students to use in their speech and writing were included as homework in only two courses. One of the reasons for this situation may be that the distance education environment made over EBA TV did not allow simultaneous communication and interaction. Considering that a total of 29-course records were examined within the scope of the research, it can be stated that in more than half of the courses, grammar

was taught, which was detached from the language skills and therefore did not cover the entire Turkish teaching. The excerpts regarding this outcome were presented below:

In the 7th-grade lesson titled Semantic Features of Verbs, the teacher started the lesson with the definition of the verb by saying, “Today, we will learn the semantic features of the verbs. First, let’s define the verb.”. Following this, the teacher explained the titles of action, state, and process verbs in exemplary sentences. Next, the teacher screen shared a reading text by saying, “Now, let’s confirm this knowledge in our text.” and explained the types of the verbs as they found them in the text. With this exercise, the teacher attempted to associate the grammar topic with receptive skills through the reading text even though she did not integrate it with the lecture.

In the 8th-grade Turkish lesson titled Voices in Verbs, the teacher taught the topic by firstly defining the voice under the categories active voice verbs, passive voice verbs, transitive and intransitive verbs, then demonstrating them in example sentences. During the lesson, reading or listening texts were not used and a lesson that was based on mere knowledge transfer and was detached from receptive and productive skills. However, at the end of the lesson, she tried to raise awareness about the topic by telling students “To repeat what we have learned today, you can identify the voices of the sentences in the books that we have read.”.

In a 7th-grade Turkish lesson in which the topic Simple, Conjugated, and Compound Verbs was taught, the teacher taught the subject in the order of definition, exemplifying in a sentence, and solving problems, and gave the students homework at the end of the lesson. She told them, “Now, I will play a song (a children’s song called Little Girl) for you. I want you to find the verbs in this song and categorize them according to their types.”. Even if it was as homework, she managed to associate the grammar topic with receptive skills by using a listening text.

In the 6th-grade lesson titled Conjunctions, Transitions, and Cohesive Devices, the teacher told the students at the end of the lesson, “My friends, practice what you have learned. I mean, we have learned the statements of transition and cohesion and the conjunctions. You can write a story or a text at home by using these statements.”, asking the students to associate the grammar topic they learned with writing skills.

Table 2. Structure of the examples used in grammar teaching at 5th-8th grade levels

Codes	5 th Grade	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade	Total
Giving examples through words and phrases	4	8	5	-	17
Giving examples within a sentence	4	9	7	8	28
Giving examples through multiple sentences in a context	1	2	2	-	5

Table 3. The state of support provided with receptive and productive activities for grammar teaching practices at 5th-8th grade levels

Codes	5 th Grade	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade	Total
Integration with receptive skills (reading and listening/watching)	2	5	2	1	10
Integration with productive skills (speaking and writing)	-	1	1	-	2

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Grammar is a field that shows the rules, functions, and structure of a language, and grammar teaching has an important place in first language teaching as well as developing basic language skills. Therefore, as in formal education, it is necessary to include effective and qualified grammar teaching following the principles of first language teaching in distance education processes. In this study, which aims to investigate and evaluate the quality of grammar teaching in elementary school (5-8th grades) Turkish lessons conducted over the EBA, certain conclusions were reached. First of all, it was concluded that induction and intuition methods, which have an important place in grammar teaching in lessons, were rarely used.

It was determined that almost all of the Turkish lessons examined were taught with a flow of describing the grammar topic/rule, giving examples about the topic, and solving multiple-choice questions about the topic. Based on this, it can be said that teaching by presenting was generally adopted in grammar teaching in the lessons examined, and teaching the rules was more important. However, the important thing in grammar teaching is not to highlight definitions and rules, but to make students sense and comprehend the place of these rules in use, and thus enable students to acquire similar skills and behaviors. (Sağır, 2002). Therefore, the structure, function, and rules of the language should not be taught by memorization, and it should be ensured that the students reach the rule by themselves based on the rules in the text, the examples provided, and the teacher's covert directions. In the lessons examined in the research, the rules were commonly defined and examples were given later, and the intuition and induction methods were given little place, which can be interpreted as a habit from the past that continues today in formal education and the distance education process. This can be deduced since among the most prominent problems regarding grammar instruction in the literature was the mentality of teaching based on definitions/rules/examples delivered through rote learning (Aslan, 2016; Göçer, 2015; İşcan & Kolukısa, 2005; Kavcar et al., 2004; Kurudayıoğlu, 2012; Sağır, 2002; Sever et al., 2008; Temizkan, 2012).

It was determined that the examples used in grammar teaching practices within the scope of the research did not completely comply with the principles of text-based grammar teaching in terms of their structure and way of delivery. It was seen that the examples used in the examined lessons were mostly given in a sentence, followed by the examples in the form of "words and phrases", and the least used way of giving examples was "giving examples through multiple sentences within a context". It can be accepted as a positive feature that the examples were mostly given "in a sentence". Because our thoughts are expressed as sentences and shaped as sentences. Therefore, all grammatical problems should be handled in sentences, not as a standalone process (Göğüş, 1978). However, the contemporary understanding goes beyond the sentence as the expression unit, prioritizing the text (Aslan, 2017). The largest language unit where the functions of the language are concretized is the text (İşcan & Kolukısa,

2005). Therefore, grammar teaching should be conducted through texts and the examples used should be given in a context because there is a very strong connection between meaning and context. Meaning emerges only in a context. The meaning of a word, on the whole, is largely determined by the context. The more context a word has, the more meaning it has (Temizkan, 2012, p. 138).

In the study, the infrequent preference to give examples in a context in the teaching of grammar topic and examples included in the structure of words and phrases may be due to the teaching of a lesson in which teaching by presentation was adopted rather than inductive and intuitive methods and the rules were greatly emphasized. It is particularly important to use the inductive method in teaching text-based grammar. Being aware of the usage and rules in the text and reaching the rule; in other words, reaching the whole from the parts by sensing the rule means that the student comprehends the rule and internalizes it (Aslan, 2017).

In the research, the Turkish lessons in the abovementioned semester were examined, with the thought that the impact power would be more because it was not supported by face-to-face education due to the interruption of formal education due to the global pandemic. However, unfortunately, it was concluded that in most of these lessons, grammar teaching was detached from the text and not associated with receptive and productive skills.

Although some of the lessons tried to establish a relationship between grammar and receptive skills by showing examples in these texts, and using reading and listening/watching texts, these applications were insufficient as they were not integrated with reading and listening/watching receptive activities. In addition, works on integrating the grammar rules with the speaking skills that require students to use in their speech and writing were included as homework in only two of the courses. One of the reasons for this situation may be that the distance education environment made over EBA TV does not allow simultaneous communication and interaction, in other words, the lack of feedback through direct communication with the student.

Grammar is a set of rules that support listening/watching, speaking, reading, and writing skills, which are referred to as basic language skills. Though students need to have knowledge that constitutes the structure of Turkish and defines the rules of operation, the application of these rules in language activities related to speaking, writing, listening, and reading is even more vital. According to Sever (2003), grammar activities aim to achieve functional instruction in which accurate speaking, accurate writing, and accurate comprehension and expression are enabled. The focal point of the instruction must be the text. Grammar-related works must be conducted appropriately for the grade levels, with a mentality to improve the receptive and productive skills of the students as the natural part of Turkish education.

In the study, it was detected that grammar teaching, which has been considered to be a problem over the years, adopted a mindset of presenting the knowledge. Thusly, this led to the continuation of instruction activities detached from basic language skills. Regarding this, Aslan and Çıldır (2020),

in their studies where they evaluated the written expression activities in Turkish lessons conducted on the EBA, stated that the lessons similarly did not include texts on which comprehension-expression activities could be performed. In the same way, in two additional studies on the video lessons in the EBA, it was stated that the teachers used the presentation approach and explained the lessons in an informative manner, and the interaction with the students was limited (Ateş, Çerçi & Derman 2015; Gür-Erdoğan & Ayanoğlu, 2021).

The results of this study indicated that the grammar teaching practices in the distance education process were not aligned with the principles of Turkish teaching and text-based grammar teaching in particular. Based on these insights, some recommendations to increase the quality of grammar teaching in the distance education process are presented below:

It must not be neglected that the fundamental purpose of Turkish education is to develop language skills and that grammar topics are crucial tools to allow for accurate comprehension and expression. Accordingly, these topics should be taught functionally. To achieve this, the lessons should include texts of high quality selected from favorable samples to be used as primary tools in receptive and productive activities.

The examples used in grammar instruction activities to be performed based on text-based grammar teaching principles should be provided at least within a sentence, most preferably within a context, not in words or phrases. Thusly, students should be enabled to establish structure-meaning-function relationships regarding grammar topics.

In grammar teaching, instruction based on presentation must be avoided as much as possible, giving up the mentality of rote learning mostly accompanied by rule definitions, exemplification, and multiple-choice questions. Instead, intuition and induction methods must be preferred to enable students to reach the rules through questions and directions with the help of examples taken from comprehension texts. Additionally, practices that would promote students to use the newly-discovered rules thanks to these methods in their speeches and writings must be included.

The problems encountered in distance education stem from the traditional mindset of the teachers that continues to exist in formal education as well as from the structure of the EBA used by the Ministry of National Education. Therefore, systems/tools/software that would enable a simultaneous and mutual interaction between students and teachers must be used in the EBA. Moreover, teachers must be provided with in-service training programs regarding the effective use of technology in distance education environments (television, the internet, etc.).

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