

Cartoons as a Teaching Tool: A Research on Turkish Language Grammar Teaching

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of teaching by utilizing cartoons on student success in the Turkish language courses in primary school secondary level students. Working group of the study consists of 54 students studying in primary state school in Sakarya province Hendek district. In the study, the 'Rule and Concept Test on Sound Knowledge' was used with Cronbach α value of .72. Mann Whitney U Test and Wilcoxon Test were used in analysis of the data. Moreover, an interview was conducted with the experimental group students. The QSR NVivo 7 program and content analysis were used in analysis of qualitative data. In the research, it is determined that teaching students with caricatures increases the Turkish language success; helps motivate them in the course; and increases participation, compared to the traditional method. Some suggestions are proposed on the use of cartoons in Turkish language grammar.

Key Words

Turkish Grammar Instruction, Cartoons.

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Language grammar courses explain the prevailing rules of his/her language to students. The main goal of the grammar rules is to provide individuals effective and efficient oral/written expression activities. According Sagir (2002), the greatest deficiency in the language teaching is the lack of methods. A language grammar education teaches via concrete examples by performing comparisons via combining the form with the function, not with a method emphasizing the form. Rather than abstract design and concepts, the topics should be explained by utilizing entities and concepts which students have perceived through their sensory organs. Students enter through the mental thinking process via visual elements in cartoons.

Grammar course describes a student the dominant rules of the language arrangement that he/she uses. The main objective of the modern language teaching of the 21st century is to combine a strategic viewpoint, which would make learning language enjoyable, in theory and practice; to offer the ways of learning strategy that would lead students to think; and in this manner, to teach more much things about language (Gogus, 1978; Grenfell, 2000; Riegel, Pellat & Roul, 1994).

Recently, linguistics theories and psycholinguistics studies put forth different approaches regarding language learning, and consequently, the concepts of context & text; and the concepts of function & form came into prominence (Nunan, 1998). The objective of language teaching in line with the modern developments is to raise subconscious structures of students to conscious level; to take them to usage area; and to transmit the operation system of language to students (Demirel & Sahinel, 2006).

According to the cognitive learning approach, learning is realized by individuals' experience of cognitive processes such as perception, recalling, and thinking (Cuceloglu, 1991). Studies on learning indicate the fact that individuals can record images and words in their memories and in case of necessity, they can recall them in image and/or word forms. However, learning from texts and visual learning are seen different from each other. Humans can keep images in their memories for a short time and can create schemas for long term memory, by using them in different ways (Farah, 1988 quote; Akyol, 2006) Caricatures are visual images as well (Acikgoz, 2008; Delp & Jones, 1996).

Learning is based on the abstraction process performed via experience obtained from concrete materials (Egan, 1988). Cartoons, which

are consisted of abstract visual symbols, attract and keep interest on the topic as being abstract representatives of the reality (Cilenti, 1984; Demirel, 2004; Fisher, 1995; Gairns & Redman, 1986; Hesapcioglu, 1992; Orlich, Harder, Callahan & Gibson, 2001; Robb, 2003). They help to teach events, facts and objects in a simple and explanatory manner. Cartoons, which present visual learning possibility to students, provide observation and discussion possibility to them (Greenberg, 2002; Keogh & Naylor, 1999; Kucukahmet, 1997; Roesky & Kennepohl, 2008; Sewell, 2002), and develop their critical thinking skills (Hakam, 2009; Chin & Teou, 2009; Ozden, 1997; Song, Heo, Kmumenaker & Tippins, 2008; Thomas, 2004). Cartoons concretize teaching, raise motivation levels of the students, and add variety to teaching process (Chin & Teou, 2009; Palacios & González, 2005; Madden, Chung & Dawson, 2008; Thomas, 2004).

Research studies (Cox, 1999; Greenberg, 2002; Hakam, 2009; Madden, Chung & Dawson, 2008; Nehiley, 1991; Sartore, 1994; Vogler, 2004) on caricatures' usage of the various language skills have seen in different countries, whereas their usages in the field of language teaching have not been seen. When examining the related literature in Turkey, it is clear that research on usage of caricatures in social sciences teaching (Gokkaya, 2006), history teaching (Koseoglu, 2008), science education (Balim, Inel & Evrekli, 2008; Kabapınar, 2005; Oluk & Ozalp, 2007), course of written expression skill in Turkish Philology (Ustun, 2007), and mathematics education (Ugurel & Morali, 2006) are available.

No research has been found in related literature in Turkey, on using cartoons in teaching rules and concepts of Turkish language grammar. The purpose of the research in this context is to determine effect of using cartoons in teaching rules and concepts of Turkish language grammar on student success and course performance in second level of primary school.

Method

Model

The research was performed to determine effects of the traditional method and cartoons in learning Turkish language grammar rules and concepts by sixth graders. In the research, the 'multiple method' has been used, where quantitative and qualitative research techniques are handled together. Since multi-method reveals many different aspects

of any incident, it is seen in educational research too often (Silverman, 2000). Quantitative data have been collected via the 'Rule and Concept Test on Sound Knowledge'; and qualitative data have been obtained via the interview form. On the other hand, the study has a nature of experimental study, and the experimentation model with preliminary test –final test control group (Buyukozturk, 2001; Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Karasar, 2000) has been used from the real experimentation models.

Participants

Study group of the research consists of the 54 students studying in the 2007-2008 school year, in the classrooms 6/A and 6/B in a state elementary school located in Hendek district of the city of Sakarya. Since the acquisitions regarding 'Voice Knowledge' have been realized during the sixth grade in the Turkish Course Program of Elementary Education (2006), the application is carried out on the sixth grade students. 50% of the students (27 people) were in the experimental group, while the other 50% of the students (27 people) were in the control group.

Collection of Data

A multiple-choice knowledge test consisting of 25 questions intended for measuring the knowledge of the students regarding 'Voice Knowledge' has been formed. The knowledge test has been composed of the questions containing the subjects of 'Voice Knowledge', which had been used in the OKS (Student Selection and Placement Exam) and SBS (Level Determination Exam) exams, because of that their reliability had been tested before. Help has been received from three area experts with intent to enhance the reliability of the knowledge test; reliability of the test has been tested, and Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients has been calculated as α : 0.721.

By the interview form used in the research, it has been intended to determine the opinions of the experimental group students regarding use of caricature. Final form of the interview form that had been prepared beforehand has been created by receiving the opinions of the three Turkish education experts. In terms of structure, a 'standardized open-ended interview' has been used in the study.

Data Analysis

SPSS 13.0 package program was used in analysis of quantitative data. Mann Whitney U test and Wilcoxon test were applied on the data. The 'categorical analysis' was used in analysis of the data obtained from interview records. Content analysis is the process of data identification, coding and upgrading category (Patton, 1990). In the category based analysis, first, data have been coded (Robson, 2001). Codes are the symbols used for classifying or grouping word groups; and are the concepts in relation with the research questions. In this context, codes undertake the function of turning independent components into full and meaningful groups (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Afterwards, the categories (themes) that explain the codes at a general level have been determined and the findings have been interpreted (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005). Also the "QSR NVivo 7", which is a computer aided qualitative data analysis program, was utilized in analysis and modeling of the data.

Findings

The order average (34.04) of experimental group students' last test scores, where cartoons were used, is higher than the order average (20.96) of control group students' last test scores ($U = 188,000$, $p < 0.01$). This results show that cartoons increase success in the language grammar learning. The use of cartoons seems significant ($z = -3705$, $p < 0.01$) in favor of the last test, in learning language grammar concepts by experimental group students before and after the application. According to these results, it can be stated that cartoons have a significant impact on development of students' language grammar concepts. The use of traditional method had presented no significant difference ($z = -992$; $p > 0.05$) in learning language grammar concepts by control group students before and after the application. This result shows that language courses performed with traditional methods don't increase students' success in a statistically significant level.

In qualitative findings of the research, students have assessed cartoons positively on added fun to the course, ease of learning, providing permanence, reduction of repetition, handling classes without need for textbooks, ease of remembering, development of creativity skills, concretization of teaching, and increasing motivation to the course.

Discussion

In the research, it has been determined that teaching Turkish language grammar via cartoons increases student success ($p < 0.01$) compared to the traditional way of teaching Turkish language grammar. Since it had been observed that the use of cartoons which states their message via humor, was fun for the students; this supports the relevant literature findings (Dougherty, 2002; Fischman, 1998; James, 2008; Kauffman, 1997; Klavir & Gorodetsky, 2001; Lewis & Nieuwoudt, 1995; Nehiley, 1991; Ozer, 2005; Rhodes, 2005; Rule, Sallis & Donaldson, 2008; Rule & Schneider, 2009; Sadowski, Gulgoz & LoBello, 1994; Sartore, 1994; Tanaka & Simon, 1996; Thomas, 2004; Torak, McMorris & Wen-Chi, 2004; Warburton & Saunders, 1996). The basic purpose of language grammar courses, which are based on teaching some abstract rules and concepts, is to give intuition on the language used by the students, and to contribute so development of their written and oral expression skills by this way. In this context, the cartoons undertake an important function in concretization of abstract rules and concepts of the language grammar.

In the research carried out by Yaman and Yildiz (2008) and Yaman and Yilmaz (2008), it has been ascertained that the language education being carried out by use of the materials based on visual elements enhances the student success. The finding of the research indicating that caricature can be used in Turkish grammar education and the findings of the abovementioned research support each other.

In the qualitative findings of the research, the finding indicating that caricature supported Turkish grammar education makes learning easier that had been stated by the students is compatible with the literature findings (Delp & Jones, 1996; Morris, Merritt, Fairclough, Birrell & Howitt, 2007; Refaie, 2003). In a study carried out in Turkey (see Ozalp, 2006; Oluk & Ozalp, 2007), caricature has been evaluated as an important course material in teaching global environment problems, in terms of attractiveness, engrossingness, enriching learning atmospheres and making them effective and economic.

In the qualitative findings of the research, positive review of the students regarding the events of learning with caricature, in terms of facilitating recollection as well supports caricatures' nature that makes recollection easier (O'Neill, 1998; Mackey, 1969; Nehiley, 1991).

Caricatures are also effective in forming a positive classroom atmosphere intended for learning. The finding indicating that caricature enhances the motivation for course, which has been obtained by means of the interviews conducted with the students, matches up with the findings in the literature (Chin & Teou, 2009; Dougherty, 2002; Keogh, Palacios & González, 2005; Madden, Chung & Dawson, 2008; Naylor, de Boo & Feasey, 1999; Rule & Schneider, 2009; Thomas, 2004).

In performed researches (Calp, 2001; Ozbay, 2003), it had been stated that language grammar teaching could not reach the goals enough. And, “students cannot create a learning strategy on language grammar teaching” was presented as one of the causes of this case. Also in quantitative findings of the study, the experimental group’s success average in Turkish language grammar course, where cartoons were used, was higher ($p < 0.01$) than the control group, where the traditional method was used, and this states that cartoons can be utilized in Turkish language grammar education. On the other hand, also in qualitative findings of the research, it has been observed that students exhibit a positive approach on utilization of cartoons in Turkish language teaching. In this context, drawing cartoons on different aspects of Turkish language grammar and using them as teaching material can be suggested for teachers’ use.

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Ek 1:

Araştırma Sürecinde Kullanılan Karikatürlerden Bazıları

