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## ÖZGÜN İNGİLİZCE DİL BİLGİSİ DERS KİTABI YAZIMINDA DERLEM KULLANIMI: TÜRKİYE ÖRNEĞİ

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### Özet

*Bu çalışmanın amacı, öğrencilerin dilbilgisi yeterliklerini geliştirmek için daha özgün İngilizce dilbilgisi ders kitapları geliştirmede derlem kullanımını incelemektir. Bu çalışma için amaçlı örneklem seçilmiş olup derlem çalışan üç katılımcı bu çalışmaya katkıda bulunmuştur. Araştırmacılar tarafından yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme rehberi hazırlanmış ve toplanan veri üzerinde içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Çalışma bulguları, Türkiye'deki çoğu İngilizce dilbilgisi ders kitabının Milli Eğitim Bakanlığının belirlediği geleneğe uyumlu yazıldığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra, bu çalışma kitapların merkezi dil sınavına yönelik, çok yapay ve öğrencilerin dilbilgisi yeterliklerine sınırlı katkıda bulunan sözdizimi tabanına sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca bu çalışma, doğal özgünlüğünden dolayı derlemin Türkiye'deki İngilizce dilbilgisi ders kitabı yazımında önemli bir kaynak olabileceğini ve ders kitaplarındaki özgünlük eksikliğini telafi edebileceğini ortaya koymuştur.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Derlem, Özgün İngilizce, İngilizce Dilbilgisi, Dilbilgisi Ders Kitapları

## USING CORPORA IN WRITING AUTHENTIC ENGLISH GRAMMAR TEXTBOOKS: THE CASE OF TURKEY

### Abstract

*The aim of this study was to explore the corpus use in developing more authentic English grammar textbooks to enhance students' grammatical competence. For the present study a purposive sampling was chosen. Three participants who are engaged in corpus studies contributed to the study. A semi-structured interview schedule was prepared by the researchers and the data obtained was analyzed through content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that most of English grammar textbooks in Turkey were written in line with a convention which is specified by the Ministry of National Education. In addition to this, the study indicated that the books are central language examination-oriented and syntax-based grammar books which do not reflect real-world language use, and thus have limited contributions to students' grammatical competence. The study also presented that with their authentic nature corpora could be a substantial source for writing authentic English grammar textbooks and compensate for the lack of authenticity in the textbooks used in Turkey.*

**Key Words:** Corpora, Authentic English, English Grammar, Grammar Textbooks

### Introduction

Corpus linguistics, like in many other domains of the language pedagogy, has been a matter of increased interest in the teaching of grammar in recent years. There have been a considerable number of research studies illuminating the contributions of corpora to grammar teaching, each treating different aspects (e.g. Aston 2000; Hewings and Hewings 2005; Biber and Conrad 2006; Mindt 1997 etc.).

Corpora, that are collections of language texts stored on computers, have been available for forty years and as a primary element of corpus linguistics, they have considerably affected language pedagogy. Particularly, the early 1990s witnessed a boost of interest in applying corpus-based research findings to language pedagogy; therefore, a plethora of studies (e.g. Wichman et. al., 1997; Burnard and McEnery, 2000; Kettleman and Makro, 2000; Aston 2001; Hunston, 2002; Sinclair 2004b) on corpora and language teaching have been done (Hewings and Hewings, 2005).

When the potentials that corpus provides for language teaching are considered, it becomes clear why so much importance is attached to the results of corpus-related studies. As McEnery and Xiao (2009: 1) suggest, corpora is widely used in almost all branches of linguistics such as 'lexicographic and lexical studies, grammatical studies, language variation studies, contrastive and translation studies, diachronic studies, semantics, pragmatics, stylistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, forensic linguistics, and language pedagogy'. The importance of corpus lies in the revolutionary effects it brings to such areas. Grammar is also one of the areas that have been introduced to many corpus-related innovations. For instance, different characteristics of corpus such as register-specific data, authentic samples and frequency data have been taken as a reference point in designing grammar books and instructional materials. In addition, descriptive corpus-based grammar books that are based on the real use of language have been published (e.g. Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language by Quirk et. al., 1985; Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English by Biber et. al., 1999) as opposed to traditional prescriptive grammar books. The present study also aims to deal with the contributions of corpus to authentic grammar textbook writing. This is of vital importance, since as the findings of this study also testify the grammar books that are used in Turkish educational settings lack authenticity to a great extent. This naturally causes Turkish students to have inadequate grammar competence and prevents them from being able to use the language efficiently. Thus, we believe writing corpus-based grammar books which mirror the real language use will be a remedy to that problem.

### Literature Review

The scope of literature published on corpora and language pedagogy is very wide. A myriad of studies have dealt with different aspects of language pedagogy and the contributions of corpora to these areas. For instance, in recent years there have been studies regarding compiling corpus-based dictionaries. One such study

was conducted by Kosem and Khrishnamurty (2007) with the aim of creating a suitable corpus upon which a dictionary of academic English could be built. Pointing out to the lack of such a dictionary in the market, the researchers set out to compensate this lack through the help of corpus. Reporting the differences between the general and academic English, they draw attention to the need for specialized academic English dictionary. They also mention the problems that stand in the way of using English for Academic Purposes (EAP) corpora (e.g. inaccessibility, the limited range of texts the accessible corpora accommodates, the small size of the accessible corpora). They claim that such reasons hinder compiling an EAP dictionary; thus, they pinpoint the importance of creating new EAP corpora. The researchers introduce the Aston Corpus-Network Project (ACORN) carried out by the Aston University. This project they report aims to design an EAP course for lexicographic, research and pedagogic purposes. They state that data existing in an EAP corpus contains four dimensions: domain, mode, genre and level. They add that the existing EAP corpora cover two or three of those dimensions, but the ACORN EAP will attempt to cover all four dimensions. They go into detail about these dimensions and state that this project could provide the basis for a corpus-driven academic English dictionary.

Another such study conducted by De Schryver and Taljard (2007) focuses on the lexicogrammatical use of corpus and reveals how a corpus-based dictionary grammar could be compiled. After giving a short introductory information about how to compile a corpus-based dictionary (e.g. frequency, lemmatization, homonyms, part-of-speech etc.), the researchers who took part in the project move on to explain the mini-grammar project carried out in the Northern Sotho context. Not being able to give detailed information about the project since it is still under embargo, they suffice to say that the project aims to create a bidirectional Northern Sotho-English dictionary for a junior target user group and also advanced users. The researchers (2007: 39) state that very few pages (8 pages) are devoted to the mini-grammar section both for Northern Sotho and English (4 pages each). They also clarify the distinction between the fully corpus-based grammar books (e.g. Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English by Biber et. al. 1999) and the mini-grammar stating that the latter does not need to contain hundreds of pages and is intended to be an integral part of another product rather than a stand-alone one. After that they present the components of the dictionary under the main categories introduction, articles, nouns, nominal suffixes, verbal suffixes, verbal prefixes, negative verbs, agreement system, adjectives, pronouns, demonstratives, locative particles, and tone.

The strand of corpus-related studies that extends to the teaching of grammar, which is the main concern of this paper is not to be underestimated either. Studies that relate to the applications of corpus in grammar vary from grammatical comparisons of two languages to the frequency data of different grammar structures. In a corpus-based study he carried out on English grammar,

Mindt (2000) signals that a new approach to grammar has been launched by him. He (2000: 91) states that the new grammar proposed by him has two characteristics: (1) it is fully corpus-based; (2) it gauges the requirements of English Language Teaching (ELT). Based on fully machine-readable corpora with an access of 240 million words of English towards the end of the study, the study does not take the traditional verb system as a departure point. Rather, it leads to 'a new structural description of the English verb phrase' and 'a novel distinction of finite and non-finite verb phrases'. He adopts an inductive approach, uses authentic examples and utilizes frequency data, all provided by the corpus. The data obtained from the corpus leads him to describe verb forms under six patterns (e.g. be, have, put etc.), which he labels as 'a new paradigm'. He also classifies verbs and provides a new model of the verb phrase by presenting the categories such as main verbs, modal verbs, cat native verbs, auxiliaries and do.

Apart from the studies mentioned above, several studies have revealed the different uses of corpora in grammar teaching, which have significant implications for the present study. For instance, in his study, Aston (1997) proposes that corpora can be exploited in materials/syllabus design and also data-driven learning. He cites the following well-known quote by Tim Johns -the originator of the data-driven learning approach- and highlights the importance of this approach in granting students autonomy:

What distinguishes the data-driven approach is the attempt to cut out the middleman... and give direct access to data so that learner can take part in building up his or her own profiles of meanings and uses (Johns 1991: 30).

Aston (1997) proposes that corpus provides a sound basis for this approach and he adds that students have the opportunity of challenging their teachers by utilizing the data offered by corpora. By exploring the language themselves through corpus, students get the chance to challenge their teachers' knowledge about the use of language. The study of Cheng, Warren and Xun-feng (2003), in which learners are labeled as 'language researchers' corroborates with the study above in that it reports the role of corpora in encouraging data-driven learning. In another study, Aston (2000: 8) states that '[...] traditional language teaching syllabuses and materials ignore many linguistic features which are frequent in native-speaker data and emphasize ones which are relatively rare'. He also supports Clear's argument that '[...] grammar is to a large extent dependent on lexical choice', which is why many traditional grammar textbooks fail to converge with actual language use.

Some of the corpus-based grammar studies focus on the mismatch between some of the structures as they are represented in traditional grammar books and as they occur in real language. One such study by Klages and Römer (2002) focuses on the 'noticeable imbalance between the use of certain modal verbs or specific modal meanings and their actual occurrences in a corpus of contemporary spoken English'. In their study, Klages and Römer utilize corpus and exploit frequencies and

concordances of the British National Corpus (BNC) spoken corpora to find out which modals are the most important, and thus, should be prioritized in the EFL classroom context.

Two additional studies that focus on the ‘misrepresented’ and ‘real’ use of modals were conducted by Mindt (1997), who wrote the corpus-informed grammar book *An Empirical Grammar of the English Verb: Modal Verbs* and by Biber and others (1999) who wrote *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. As the name of his book suggests, Mindt dealt with the corpus-based use of modals and took the ‘authentic’ use as a departure point while writing the book. Biber et al. have also utilized corpus-findings in writing their book, thus were able to provide a more realistic representation of actual language use.

Following the trend of comparing traditional and actual use of language structures, Römer (2004a) investigated the differences between the way conditional if is represented in traditional grammar books and how it really occurs in authentic language. With the aim of collecting data for the study, Römer (2004a) analyzed spoken data (i.e. interviews and dialogues) that are presented in two of the most commonly used English textbook-series in German schools: *Green Line New* (Klett) and *English G 2000 A* (Cornelsen). She also collected two random sets of if instances. One hundred in total, these instances were retrieved from the ten million-word spoken and from the 90 million-word written component of the BNC. In order to determine the norms of conditional if followed by German learners, four sets of conditional if instances, also each comprised of 100 sentences, were obtained from two learner corpora: the *Cologne-Hanover Advanced Learner Corpus* (CHALC) and the *German part of the International Corpus of Learner English* (GICLE). The study showed that EFL textbooks tend to distinguish between three types of if conditionals: type 1 for ‘real or open conditions’, type 2 and 3 for ‘unreal conditions’. Two hundred and eleven conditional instances were retrieved from the textbook series and all of them were shown to exemplify if-clause types 1, 2 and 3. Mixes of types 2 and 3 which were titled as ‘other combinations’ were shown to be very peripheral. Instances that were retrieved from BNC on the other hand, revealed that many of the if-clause combinations occurring in real language data were the ones summarized under ‘other combinations’. However, they were not covered in EFL textbooks sufficiently. In addition, the most widely used type according to the BNC written and spoken occurred rarely in the textbook series used. As a result, Römer (2004a: 362) came to agreement with the previously mentioned studies in that textbook English does not reflect authentic language and stated that ‘[...] there are some deviations between the teaching norm and usage norm’.

In her study, Tsui (2005: 337) suggests that corpora enable the incorporation of structures that have previously gone unnoticed. She also mentions a website (Telenex) supported by a team of language specialists at the Teachers of English Language Education Center (TELEC) of the Faculty of Education. This website Tsui

(2005) states, provides teachers with answers about their long-standing assumptions regarding language use and helps them have a better grasp of the structures that are neglected by traditional grammar books. Needless to say, the website provides the answers based on corpus data.

Biber and Conrad (2006) provide insightful information and illustrative examples about the use of corpus in grammar teaching in their short article titled *Corpus Linguistics and Grammar Teaching*. They point out to the fact that, most of the teachers and students around the world believe textbook writers rely on their intuitions in writing their books. Biber and Conrad (2006: 1) state that although '[...] authors' intuitions, anecdotal evidence and traditions about what should be in a grammar book play major roles in determining the content of textbooks', no such source of information really exists. They argue that the intuitions or traditions remain inadequate in specifying the content of a grammar book and add that authors should consider many things (i.e. sequencing the content, determining the content, presenting the content, providing suitable examples and contexts etc.) while writing a book. In seeking answers to their questions about the process of writing their books, Biber and Conrad (2006) suggest that writers consult to corpus data. They list the most important three uses of corpus data as: (1) providing frequency information, (2) register comparisons, and (3) lexicogrammar (i.e. associations between grammatical structures and words). They also present the mismatch between the long standing assumptions of English teachers and/or learners and the data provided by corpus. For instance, they state that writers tend to focus on the progressive aspect (the present continuous) as one of the most common choices in conversation while according to corpus findings simple present aspect is more than 20 times as common.

The findings of the studies reported last have important implications for the present study since the traditional grammar books used in Turkey were also shown to bear similar features. As Biber and Conrad (2006) suggest, corpus can provide a very reliable source for textbook writers in overcoming such problems and in writing authentic grammar books that portray the real language use.

### **Methodology**

#### ***Participants***

Since the number of the people engaged in corpus studies in Turkey is rather small, purposeful sampling was followed. Three people who are involved in corpus studies in one way or another were interviewed. One of the participants is a teacher of English with a ten-year professional experience. That participant was first acquainted with corpus during his MA studies and he holds an MA in the field of corpus linguistics. Another participant, who is still an MA student, was first introduced to Corpus Linguistics in 2007 during a student exchange programme she had attended in third grade and has been interested in corpus since then. The last participant who is a teacher of English was a remote interviewee. That participant

also had been interested and engaged in corpus studies for a long time (seven years).

#### ***Data Collection Instrument***

As a result of the review of related literature, a semi-structured interview schedule was designed and developed. This data collection instrument helped the interviewer both keep track of the interview and also add alternative questions and probes that emerged during the interviews.

As the scope of the study was specified in the light of the guidance provided by the instructor of the course Qualitative Research Methods in Education, the interview schedule was prepared and revised three times till it gained its last form.

The interview schedule consisted of three main parts: (1) introduction, (2) body and (3) closure. In the first part, the interviewer introduced herself. Then, the purpose of the study with its rationales and the importance of the participants' contributions to the study were stated. After that, the permission for recording the interview was asked and the issue of confidentiality was mentioned. In the second part which consisted of two sections, demographic questions related to the participants and twelve questions aimed at gathering more detailed information about the research were included. The participants' views regarding the importance of authentic language in second language instruction, their considerations regarding the design of traditional, corpus-based and ideal grammar books along with their characteristics, their ideas on the reliability of corpus-based grammar books as opposed to the unreliability of traditional grammar books, their considerations regarding the process of editing a traditional grammar book, and their views about the difficulties involved in using a corpus-based grammar book were elicited. In the final part, the main points of the interview were intended to be summarized, thanks were offered to the participants and the interviewer reminded the participants to contact her lest they had anything else to add.

#### ***Data Collection Procedure***

Before the face-to-face interviews, all the measures regarding possible technical problems (e.g. spare batteries) were taken by the interviewer. In addition, attention was paid to carry out the interviews in an environment isolated from distractions. Prior to the interviews, the interviewer asked for the permission of the participants in order to record the interviews. The interviewer also explained the confidentiality issues and ensured that the participants' identities will on no account be revealed. After permission was granted, the process began and the interviews were conducted at the schools that the interviewees are working. One of the real time interviews took approximately 35 minutes and the other lasted for almost one hour. As for the remote interview, the interviewer prepared an interview schedule and sent it to the participant via e-mail due to time and financial constraints. The responses were sent through e-mail, too.



### **Data Analysis Procedure**

This phase was one of the most challenging ones for the researchers. As in other qualitative studies, this study also involved transcribing, arranging, organizing, synthesizing, understanding the data and presenting the findings. Content analysis which includes the integrated coding approach (involving both inductive and deductive coding) was utilized.

Firstly, all the audio files were transcribed carefully. After the transcription process, the raw data was read and interpreted by the researchers. In order to realize this more reliably and easily, four levels of coding were conducted for each of the interviews. In the first level coding, the important and related remarks of the participants were paraphrased in the mother tongue. In the second level coding these remarks were translated into English. In the third level coding, the data were reduced through interpreting and labeling, and in the fourth level coding, they were synthesized and presented with the inferences of the researchers. After all these steps, a coding list was prepared for each of the interviews and the convergent data were merged under the related theme with the aim of reducing, managing and handling the data more easily.

### **Results**

The findings of this study have important implications particularly for the Turkish educational context. The results that emerged were presented under eight main themes with sub-themes. The main themes are: (1) the importance of authentic language in English teaching, (2) traditional versus corpus-based grammar book writing, (3) the limitations of writing authentic grammar books in Turkey, (4) characteristics of traditional grammar books, corpus-based grammar books, and ideal grammar books, (5) effects of traditional grammar book use on learners, (6) reliability of corpus-based grammar books vs. unreliability of traditional grammar books, (7) considerations in editing a traditional grammar book, and (8) difficulties of using a corpus-based grammar book. Below each of these themes are treated in detail along with their sub-themes.

#### ***The importance of authentic language in English teaching***

##### ***Causes of not using authentic language in English teaching in Turkey***

The data that emerged from the study revealed that several reasons prevented the use of authentic language in English teaching in Turkey. Turkish education system and the purely grammar-based central language exams were shown to be the greatest obstacles standing in the way of using authentic language. The unfamiliarity of authentic English and problems of communication with native speakers for Turks were mentioned as problems resulting from ignoring the authentic language. The findings showed that there was a general tendency to

emphasize the language structure rather than language use in grammar books and lessons, which causes students to be unfamiliar with the authentic language.

*Effects of not using authentic language in English teaching in Turkey*

One of the participants stated that the overemphasis on the language structure and the exclusion of authentic language caused learners not to be able express themselves. He said: 'In our education system language (English) is reduced to mathematical formulas and authentic language is not utilized. Thus, students store language in their mind only as a set of rules and structures and cannot use it communicatively'. In one of her studies documenting the grammar problems of third year Electronic Engineering students at the Zaragoza University, Spain, Pérez-Llantada (2007) refers to this problem as 'inert knowledge problem' (a term coined by Alfred North Whitehead in 1929). She (2007) elaborates on this term by expressing that this problem is caused by the traditional approach to grammar which has proven ineffective. Although students are taught grammar items and patterns under that approach, they were not able to use them accurately in appropriate contexts (as cited in Pérez-Llantada 2009: 41). This calls for the integration of authentic language and tasks, which will support the communicative dimension of the language, too.

*Suggestions for the integration of authentic language*

Two of the participants suggested that the incorporation of the authentic language could solve the 'inert knowledge problem'. Published literature supports this view and as Shrum and Glisa (1994) state 'the use of authentic materials is in tune with the natural communication task'. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) define a natural communication task as one 'where the focus of the student is on communicating an idea or opinion to someone rather than on the language forms themselves. In such situations, the speaker subconsciously uses the grammar rules acquired to convey the message' (as cited in Shrum and Glisa, 1994: 247). This suggests that the use of authentic language or materials can compensate for the lack of the communicative aspect of the grammar books in Turkey, a deficiency criticized by two of the participants. It could help students use their inert knowledge effectively and efficiently. The participants suggested that the incorporation of authentic language would enable learners to have native-like proficiency and solve the problems of communication that stem from the difference between the mother tongue and second language. Researchers define authentic texts as '[...] real life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes' (Wallace, 1992: 145). Thus, they are written for native speakers and include genuine language. They are '[...] materials that have been produced to fulfill some social purpose in the language community' (Peacock 1997), and this means unlike non-authentic texts which have been devised for pedagogical purposes, authentic texts reflect the 'real' language use (Berardo, 2006: 61). This naturally helps learners to grasp the 'feel' of language and use it as it is spoken by natives.

### ***Traditional versus corpus-based grammar book writing***

Two of the participants mentioned the issues that were considered while writing traditional grammar books and four sub-themes appeared under this theme: (1) salient structures, (2) test techniques, (3) central exams and (4) Turkish Education System. The participants stated that the process of grammar book writing in Turkey was shaped by a convention which was based on the Turkish Education System and central exams, thereby including the salient structures and test techniques needed by the test-takers. One of them said: 'Although I criticize them, unfortunately I am also among those who write syntax-based grammar books because our education system mandates that'. The participants further stated that the needs of the Turkish learners who were preparing for central exams required grammar books to include specific grammatical patterns and test solving techniques that they had to master. It goes without saying that such books remain inadequate in meeting the needs of learners who want to learn and use the language for communicative purposes and the integration of authentic language seems essential.

On the other hand, the two participants stated that checking the use of structures on corpus was one of the issues that should be considered while writing a corpus-based grammar book. According to them, by running certain structures on corpus, textbook writers can check out how those structures are used. They can also distinguish between the common and rare patterns, thus better define the content of their books. The two participants expressed that devising ways of exploiting corpus data, intra class activity development, specification of content according to learners' level and inductive learning were the other issues that should be considered while designing a corpus-based grammar book.

### ***The limitations of writing authentic grammar books in Turkey***

One of the participants mentioned some limitations pertaining to the use and writing of corpus-based grammar books. The participant expressed that since grammar book writing in Turkish educational system and also the central exams required a traditional (syntax-based) approach, consultation to authentic language data would prolong the process of writing the book. The use of such a book would also divert students from the main target (preparation for the central exams) and prolong the process of achieving the learning goals by those students. Thus, they needed grammar books that were generally based on a deductive approach and covered the salient grammatical patterns rather than authentic grammar books that failed to address their needs.

### ***Characteristics of traditional grammar books, corpus-based grammar books, and ideal grammar books***

#### ***Characteristics of traditional grammar books***

All the participants seemed to agree that the traditional grammar books used in Turkey have a syntax-based (structural) and inauthentic nature. They stated

that such books put too much weight on the structure of the language and lack communicative value. One of them elaborated on deficiencies of traditional grammar books and stated that they addressed the needs of only certain learner groups (those who are going to take the central exams). That participant also criticized the way foreign publications were duplicated just on the surface level by Turkish grammar book writers. The participant stated that such books were too complex and cognitively overloaded, did not include meaningful tasks and did not adhere strictly to the original grammar books from which they were duplicated.

*Characteristics of corpus-based grammar books*

The participants stated the following characteristics of corpus-based grammar books, which also account for their strengths over the traditional ones. They expressed that corpus-based grammar books included authentic language instances, frequency data, up-to-date information, and context-specific content, structures that had previously gone unnoticed and different registers. In addition, they represented the flexibility of the language, provided a rich range of texts, addressed different needs, considered prior knowledge of students and were based on the inductive approach. One of the participants also stated that considering the needs of the students who were preparing for the central exams, such books did not address the exam-takers' needs. However, all the characteristics mentioned above suffice to locate such books on a higher plane than the traditional ones and when reviewed many supportive studies are come across.

*Characteristics of ideal grammar books*

Two participants defined the characteristics of an ideal grammar book as (1) addressing the needs of the target audience, (2) having the appropriate methodology for the appropriate learner group, (3) considering prior knowledge, (4) guiding sections for teachers, (5) revision sections and (6) evaluation sections. Williams (1983) also noted the first and fourth items in his study. He stated that since non-native teachers do not have native-like command of the language, guidance as to the intended purposes of the book's writer should be provided to them. In addition, he proposes the needs of the target audience should be catered.

As for the items 5 and 6, similar to Williams' account, the participants state that the teachers need some guidance in order to remember which subjects to cover and also be able to determine whether learners are ready for the next unit or not. With the help of revision and evaluation sections, the teacher can better understand the weaknesses and strengths of her/his students, thus can adjust the instruction according to their own needs.

*Effects of traditional grammar book use on learners*

The remote participant touched upon the negative effects of the traditional grammar books on learners. That participant stated that due to the restricted range the traditional grammar books offered and their divergence from authentic language, students became unfamiliar with the variety (real-life English). He said:

‘Learners familiar with textbook English will have difficulty communicating in authentic English because that’s not the ‘variety’ they have learnt’. Mindt (1996) pointed to that issue and warned against the use of artificial language as opposed to authentic language in classes:

There is obviously a kind of school English which does not seem to exist outside the foreign language classroom. As a result, learners who leave their school surroundings very often find it hard to adapt to the English used by native speakers. Learners who communicate with native speakers constantly have to reshape their linguistic behavior in those areas of the language which were not taught properly (as cited in Hwang, 2005: 7).

***Reliability of corpus-based grammar books vs. unreliability of traditional grammar books***

As in one of the previous themes, two of the participants stated that the Turkish education system mandated writing syntax-based grammar books which lacked communicative value and resulted in students’ inability in expressing themselves. However, as the previously mentioned study by Pérez-Llantada (2007) suggests this problem is not inherent in Turks and is common in all educational settings which prioritize grammar over meaning or function. And again, as stated before the remedy to the problem seems to be integrating authentic language in language instruction.

As opposed to the unreliability of traditional grammar books, two participants stated that corpus-based books were more reliable due to helping teachers change their long standing incorrect assumptions regarding the language use. By creating a clash between what was previously known by the teacher and what language is really like corpus leads teachers to question their assumptions about the language and more importantly change them. Thus, participants state, teachers can also correct their constant mistakes about the use of language and deliver more reliable instruction to their students.

***Considerations in editing a traditional grammar book***

This study has an important implication in that it offers valuable guideline as to how to convert a grammar book written for pedagogical purposes into an authentic one. While the remote participant opposed to the idea that a traditional grammar book can be transformed into a more authentic one, the other two participants proposed that this task is actually possible through the use of corpus. They expressed that the purely grammar-based approaches in such a book could be replaced with instances of a more authentic language. In addition, the content could be revised and reorganized according to the frequency data and the needs of the target audience. They also recommended omitting the repetitive sample sentences which are under the influence of the first language and replace them with more authentic, culture-specific examples from the target language.

***Difficulties of using a corpus-based grammar book***

The participants implied that although they revolutionize the teaching of grammar and contribute to it in several ways, corpus-based grammar books pose some problems both for the teachers and learners. The problems that they mentioned and the suggestions provided by them are presented below:

#### *Problems*

According to two of the participants one of whom had used corpus-based grammar books before; one of the greatest problems that could be faced while using a corpus-based grammar book was the difficulty of the authentic language. These participants expressed that due to being used to oversimplified language, learners who were introduced to corpus-based grammar books would have difficulty in understanding the language used in the book. Nunan (1989: 138) states the following about this issue: 'Many low-level learners are traumatized when first exposed to authentic samples of language, and have to be taught that it is not necessary to understand every word for communication to be successful' (as cited in Hubbard, 1995: 15). Other problems that may emerge are the conflicts that may appear due to what teachers or learners had previously been taught about the language. When with the up-to date information it provides, the corpus-based book challenges such misleading assumptions about the language, the teachers and students may feel suspicious about the reliability of authentic books but as they get more acquainted with the real use of language, they may develop a trust in those books.

#### *Suggestions for overcoming the problems faced while using corpus-based grammar books*

Two of the participants suggested that the problems mentioned above could be overcome by exposing learners to authentic language continuously. By being familiarized with the real language, teachers and learners will get used to this new variety (authentic English) and also be able to change their deeply rooted misconceptions about the use of language. Thus, they will have a better command of the language and begin to use it more efficiently. One of the participants warns teachers about not being persistent on their mistakes and also inform their students about the flexibility of the language so that they would not feel very surprised when they encounter a new piece of information which contrasts with what they had previously been taught. She said: 'We should make our students aware of the fact that language is flexible. They should know that one rule that they had previously been taught may be falsified in a different context'.

#### **Conclusion and Implications**

The results of this study were primary in that they revealed the dominance of traditional grammar books and their negative effects on Turkish learners. Due to being taught only the syntactic features of the language and also being presented with an oversimplified, artificial language in their grammar books, Turkish learners cannot use the knowledge they possess efficiently and lack communicative skills to

a great extent. As this study suggests however, authentic language and grammar books that are based on authentic data provide a very substantial alternative. Through the comparison of traditional and corpus-based grammar books, the strengths of the latter became more apparent. In the literature reviewed, it was found out that traditional grammar books are the products of a convention which is shaped by the Turkish Educational System. This system required writing very structural, syntax-based grammar books which were central languages exam-oriented and which did not enhance students' grammar competence much. On the other hand, breaking loose from the conventions of grammar book writing which is based on salient structures and test techniques due to the Turkish Educational System, corpus-based grammar books were found to provide context-specific content, frequency data, and up-to-date information regarding the language, authentic language instances and register specific information. It is evident that all those spice up the grammatical knowledge of learners and increase their competence. Many studies that corroborate with these findings have been carried out and the following quotations provide testimony for the arguments of the participants. In one of his corpus studies, Römer (2001: 186) states the following about the importance of the frequency data:

Frequencies can be very important as they show us which words or structures are central in a language. Thus they can help with decisions about what to include in teaching materials and what not [...].

As for the inclusion of the structures that had been ignored by traditional grammar books, Aston (1997: 8) states:

Analyses of large general corpora of contemporary English have repeatedly shown that traditional language syllabuses and materials ignore many linguistic features which are frequent in native speaker-data, and emphasize ones which are relatively rare.

An important statement testifying the argument of the participants about the context-specific data that corpus provides comes from Biber and Conrad (2006: 2):

Because the corpora are large, covering many different speakers and writers, it is possible to see what is typical for a large group of language users in various contexts. Thus, corpus-based research provides textbook writers and teachers with a new source of information -a data-based source, rather than intuition- to consider when making decisions.

The study also revealed important guidelines about how to edit a traditional grammar book and how to overcome the difficulties involved in using corpus-based grammar books. Here again, the importance of authentic language was put under the spotlight. The findings of the study showed that real language could be used as a reference point to determine the content in line with the target audience's needs. Tsui's (2004: 40) statement verifies this: 'The findings of corpus analysis can be used as a basis for selecting and sequencing linguistic content, as well as for determining relative emphases'.

Authentic language could also be used to minimize the effect of the first language on foreign language instruction by omitting the samples that were written under the influence of Turkish. Instead samples related to the target culture could be integrated and corpus holds a great potential to provide such instances.

As for the problems that may emerge during the use of corpus-based grammar books, the study revealed that students may have trouble in trying to understand the authentic language since it is more difficult than the oversimplified language they used to be exposed to. It was also found out that students and teachers may have conflicts about their previous knowledge of the language use and the new uses offered by corpus data. As a result of being presented with up-to-date information about the language, students and teachers may feel confused. They may also question the reliability of corpus-based books due to their long-standing misconceptions. Still, it would be a great fallacy to abandon authentic language in favor of simplified language which does not get students very far. The importance of authenticity has been acknowledged in recent years and as Widdowson (1990: 97) stated:

It has been traditionally supposed that the language presented to learners should be simplified in some way for easy access and acquisition. Nowadays there are recommendations that the language presented should be authentic.

The findings of the study suggested that constant exposure to authentic language may help learners and teachers get more accustomed to the real language use. Besides, not being persistent on the long standing misconceptions regarding the language use and informing learners about the flexibility of the language were also provided as substantial solutions to problems stemming from authentic language use.

To sum up, the present study provides important implications with rationales about writing authentic grammar books and suggests that such books may compensate for the lacking points of traditional grammar books which are based on a purely syntactic approach. By taking authentic language as a departure point and using corpora as a means to this end, the grammatical competence of students could be increased dramatically. Further research may center on writing authentic grammar books which address the needs of Turkish learners. Authentic grammar books that not only help acquire the language structure but also improve the communicative competence of learners may be developed. This may help increase both the grammar and communicative competence of learners and enable them to have a better command of the language.



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