



Review Article

Form-focused Foreign Language Teaching in Agglutinating Languages: The Case of Turkish

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ABSTRACT

There are on-going research studies and discussions on concepts such as “focus on form”, “focus on forms”, and explicit and implicit instructions in foreign language teaching. Basically, foreign language teaching methods and techniques show similarities in teaching different languages, but it is considered beneficial to take into account the typological features of the languages while the concepts are being discussed. This study covers form-focused foreign language instructions and language typologies in order to evaluate and discuss the concept of focus on form in terms of languages featuring distinct typological features and emphasizes that more effective and productive learning environments can be created with form-focused instruction in teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

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Statement of Publication Ethics

Conflict of Interest

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Committee approval is not required.
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Introduction

The developments and changes in foreign language teaching methods and techniques are shaped by the classroom practices of researchers, as well as theories in two fields: linguistic theories and learning theories. Linguistics studies led to a shift in the perspectives on language from prescriptive approaches to descriptive approaches and to the emergence of research based on such studies as functional grammar and discourse grammar. The shift in learning theories from behavioral learning theory (behaviorist approach) to cognitive learning has also been reflected in methods and techniques for language teaching. In the light of these developments, a large number of studies have addressed focus on form, focus on forms, and explicit and implicit instructions especially in grammar teaching while discussing methods and techniques in language teaching and the superiority of any method, or more accurately, whether there is a method superior to others (Harley, 1989; Scott, 1989; Carroll & Swain, 1993; Robinson, 1996; de Graaf, 1997; Leow, 1997; Sanz & Morgan Short, 2004; Laufer & Girsai, 2008; Spada & Tomita, 2010; Shintani, 2013; Nassaji, 2015; etc.). These discussions take place largely on the teaching of English as a foreign language.

When language typologies are considered, languages exhibit differences and similarities in terms of formal and syntactic features, and distinct categories have been created within the framework of these features. The features of English, which is an inflectional language, differ from *isolating/analytic*, *agglutinating*, *inflectional/fusional*, and *polysynthetic/incorporating languages*. Although foreign language teaching methods and techniques share similarities in the teaching of each language in terms of basic principles, evaluating and discussing the concept of focus on form in terms of agglutinating languages is thought to be of utility with a view to developing new perspectives. In this context, this study poses the following questions:

- How can the concept of focus on form be evaluated in teaching Turkish, an agglutinating language, as a foreign language?
- How can grammar teaching be undertaken within the framework of the features of Turkish, an agglutinating language?
- How can preliminary studies be conducted in order to carry out focus on form activities in the field of teaching Turkish, an agglutinating language, as a foreign language?

Within the framework of these questions, the study aims to evaluate form-focused grammar instruction in the field of foreign language teaching within the framework of Turkish, which is an agglutinating language.

In this study, the section Conceptual Framework includes a review of the literature on form-focused language instruction and the typological features of languages, as well as some examples from Turkish in order to discuss the implications of typological differences on language teaching. The section Evaluation of Form-focused Language Instruction in the Context of Turkish as a Foreign Language discusses the focus on form in terms of teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

Literature review

Form-focused Language Instruction

Studies on grammar teaching are linked to studies that reveal how a language is learned. Evaluating second/foreign language learning, Fotos (2001) states that language learning basically takes place in three cognitive steps: (1) *input*, (2) *information processing*, and (3) *output*. Input is necessary to start information processing. For specific linguistic units that are targeted in teaching, the learner is provided with inputs through activities related to skills such as listening, watching, and reading. In order for the input to be processed and transferred to the long-term memory, the learner should carry out linguistic productions. These productions provide output for the hypothesis-testing process to run. While inputs approved for accuracy are stored in the course of processing, instances of incorrect usage allow for the repetition of processing as they are fed back into the process. In order for this process to work in language teaching, the learner needs to be provided with inputs and possibilities of production.

When we look at the studies on language teaching in general, they are observed to discuss subjects such as linguistic skills, individual differences, and language education. In addition, Ur (2011: 507) states that grammar teaching is at the center of research on language teaching. There are both theoretical and practical studies on how grammar teaching should be carried out. The development of linguistic theories and learning theories has found reflections in grammar teaching, and a new emphasis has been placed on the importance of designing activities to complete information processing rather than teaching focused on translation and rote teaching (Fotos, 2001). It is stated to be necessary to concentrate on function in grammar and to understand the importance of corpus-based studies that focus on meaning and usage (Widdowson, 1990; Long, 1991; Piber, et al., 1999; Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Ellis, 2005; Carter & McCarthy, 2006;). Long (1991) argued that in grammar teaching, an independent focus on forms will not lead to success and the primary focus should be on meaning; he added the concept of form-focused instruction to the literature. Within the framework of the concept of focus on forms, addressing forms independently of meaning and function and aiming only at teaching the target structure creates challenges for learners in their subsequent use of the language.

Ellis (2001) divides form-focused instruction into two areas, namely, focus on planned forms and focus on incidental forms. It is possible either to focus on formats in an enriched and planned manner in the form of an input flood or to focus on formats randomly emerging during communication activities depending on the needs and questions of the learners. Ellis et al. (2009: 237) evaluated the studies undertaken by Ellis in 1998, 2001, and 2008 and reported that these studies presented four distinct groups under the concept of focus on form, namely, *input-based options*, *explicit options*, *production options*, and *corrective feedback options*. In the *input-based options*, the inputs are pre-organized for learners. Enriched input may be applied with different techniques including enhanced input and structured input and through the organization of both explicit and implicit learning activities. *Explicit options* cover both directly explicit instructions and indirect instructions that offer learners room for self-discovery. *Production options* are

employed to generate utterances for target structures. *Corrective feedback options*, on the contrary, are shaped around the goal of assessing learners through their own productions. Feedback may be explicit or implicit, the latter involving metalinguistic instructions (Ellis et al., 2009: 237). Ellis (2016) compared the concepts of “focus on form” and “focus on forms” in his article reviewing the available studies on focus on form and emphasized that experimental studies should be conducted to determine which of the two approaches, i.e., focus on form and focus on forms, provides for better teaching.

Nassaji (2015) compiled studies on form-focused instruction (FFI) and discussed the viewpoints that could be considered as mutual opposites in foreign language teaching, classifying the studies in the literature under the headings given in Table 1.

Table 1. (Nassaji, 2015) Timeline: Form-focused Instruction and Second Language Acquisition

A. Theoretical and background issues	
B. Definition of constructs	
C. FFI versus no instruction	
D. Types of instruction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explicit versus implicit 2. Isolated versus integrated 3. Deductive versus inductive 4. Input enhancement 5. Processing instruction 6. Interactional or corrective feedback 7. Consciousness-raising tasks 8. Incidental FonF
E. Factors affecting the use and/or effectiveness of instructional strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learner characteristics/Individual learner differences 2. Feedback characteristics 3. Types of tasks 4. Linguistic target 5. Linguistic/Developmental level
F. Learners' perception/Noticing	
G. Learners' and/or teachers' belief	
H. Context of instruction/interaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Second language 2. Foreign language
I. Context of research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom 2. Laboratory 3. Computer-assisted
J. Narrative reviews and/or meta-analysis of research	

As can be seen in Table 1, the studies in the literature cover FFI versus no instruction, explicit versus implicit instruction, isolated versus integrated instruction, deductive versus inductive instruction, input enhancement, processing instruction, interactional or corrective feedback, consciousness-raising tasks, and focus on incidental forms (incidental FonF). Studies such as Long (1983), Ellis (1984), Lightbown and Spada (1990), Day and Shapson (1991), and Spada and Lightbown (1993) are reported to examine cases of no instruction against FFI. The studies in which the explicit versus implicit instruction was discussed are in the first category under “D. Types of instruction” and include studies implemented by such authors as Harley (1989), Scott (1989), Carroll

and Swain (1993), Robinson, 1996), de Graaf (1997), Leow (1997), Sanz and Morgan Short (2004), Laufer and Girsai (2008), Spada and Tomita (2010), and Shintani (2013). The difference between *explicit learning* and *implicit learning* is based on cognitive psychology studies. *Implicit learning* takes place without the need for attention and does not require any explicit awareness, while *explicit learning* occurs consciously and with the learner being aware of the learning (Ellis, 2009:7). The differences between these types of learning and instruction have been discussed in numerous studies (Doughty and Williams, 1998; DeKeyser, 2003; Doughty, 2003; Ellis, 2005; Gass and Selinker, 2005; Isemonger, 2007; Ellis and Loewen, 2007). *Linguistic awareness* is defined by Crystal (1992: 215) as “an informed, sensitive, and critical response to the use of language by oneself and others” Schmidt (2001) mentions two types of awareness, namely, *perceptual noticing* and *metalinguistic awareness*, involving analysis. For implicit learning, it is argued that learning takes place without metalinguistic awareness and the author defines implicit learning as learning without metalinguistic awareness. Implicit instruction entails providing instructions to learners in a way that enables them to infer the meaning of the rules without awareness, and as a result, to internalize them without focusing on a structure explicitly (Ellis, 2009:15).

Language Typologies and Turkish as an Agglutinating Language

Özgen and Koşaner (2020) state that there are approximately 6000 languages, although there is no definitive consensus on the exact number of languages in the world. A review of morphology and syntax studies shows that languages are classified according to their common features. Commonalities in languages are called language universals (Uzun, 2006:107). Uzun (2006: 108) addresses languages in the following five basic categories in terms of their morphological characteristics: *Isolating/analytic*, *agglutinating inflectional*, *flectional/fusional*, and *polysynthetic/incorporating languages*. Some languages have been assessed with all their features and some languages with their dominant features to be placed under these categories. With respect to the similarities and differences of languages, The World Atlas of Language Structures Online (WALS) offers frequently updated findings.

Isolating languages are defined as languages that do not have bound morphemes and use free morphemes for each function. Languages in this category do not feature affixes (Uzun, 2006: 110). Crystal (2008:254) explains that all vocabulary items are immutable in isolating languages, and syntactic relations are determined according to word order, and exemplifies Vietnamese, Chinese, and many South-East Asian languages as isolating languages. In this type of language, there are no bound morphemes and there are versatile rules in syntactic sequence due to the absence of any affix-based signification (Uzun, 2006: 110).

Inflectional languages are languages in which the distinctions between roots and affixes and the root cannot be identified distinctively through an examination of formal changes (Uzun, 2006: 112). Languages such as English are among inflectional languages.

In *flectional/fusional languages*, it is impossible either to distinguish roots from affixes or to analyze free morphemes. In languages such as Arabic, which is typical in its

features, grammatical categories are demonstrated through flexion (Uzun, 2006: 113). Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyman (2009:526) establish the differences among languages with statements similar to the following for fusional languages: “Many Indo-European languages are of this type, such as Spanish. In “hablo, hablan, hablé”, meaning “I speak, they speak, I spoke,” the affixes carry a fusion of the meanings “person” and “number,” and “tense” so that -o means “first person, singular, present,” -an means “third person, plural, present,” and -e means “first person, past, singular. The affixes themselves cannot be decomposed into the individual meanings that they bear.”

Polysynthetic/incorporating languages, where Eskimo is cited as an example, employ obligatory bound morphemes, and here, words are added together in a manner similar to affixes. Many North American Languages fall into this category, such as Mohawk, Cherokee, and Menominee. For example, the expression “pahtāwāēwesew” in Menominee means “He is heard by higher powers” (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyman, 2009: 526).

Agglutinating languages are languages that feature a large number of bound morphemes and generally employ one morpheme for each function. Here, many affixes are used in derivational and inflectional terms and these affixes may overlap (Uzun, 2006: 111). Languages such as Turkish and Japanese are shown as examples for these languages. When Turkish is evaluated in terms of its most basic features, word order is a subject–object–verb (SOV) language and is based on an agglutinating and regular case-marking system (Erguvanlı, 1984: 5). In order to establish the features of agglutinating languages more clearly, it would be appropriate to include some of the descriptive examples specified for Turkish with significance for language teaching.

Stating that one of the most important features that distinguish a language from others is vowel and consonant harmony, in other words, its sound system. Ergenç (2002: 18), indicates that assimilation occurs among the phonetic features of Turkish, which is categorized in the group of agglutinating languages. The vowel in the primary syllable carries its feature on to the next syllables in terms of the site of the origin and the style of articulation. This feature is among the subjects of morphophonology for Turkish and is of great importance in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. A review of phonology studies focused on all phonological features indicates that they also address prosodic features, such as intonation and accent, i.e., suprasegmental phonology. In Turkish, the last syllable carries the accent of the *basic or unmarked* word. Generally, the accent assumes the functional role in cases where morphemes with the same phonology, i.e., homonymous with each other, but with distinct functions are employed (Göksel & Kerslake, 2008: 26).

Example (1)

(1a) Öğret**m**enim → (ben öğretmenim) “I’m a teacher.”

(1b) Öğretmen**i**m → (benim öğretmenim) “My teacher”

In Example (1), “*öğretmenim*” has different meanings in (1a) and (1b). In fact, -(y)Im in (1a) is the personal suffix added as a copula, and -(I)m in (1b) is a possessive suffix. In Turkish, it is possible to drop the pronoun. In other words, personal and possessive pronouns are not used in cases where there is no change in subject or when

there is no comparison and special focus (Kornfilt, 1997: 281-285). In this case, the difference between examples (1a) and (1b) in verbal production emerges only within context and with accent.

In Turkish, which is an agglutinating language, there are phonetic harmonies for both vowels and consonants with respect to affixes. Affixes change according to the root to which they are added (Yavuz, Balcı & Turan, 2000: 51-55). In Example (2), it is seen that the verb added by the {-DI} morpheme, which is termed the past tense suffix, has eight possible appearances depending on the last sound of the verb and the vowel in the last syllable.

Example (2): {-DI} (past tense suffix)

Verb	{-DI} (past)
yaz- (to write)	yazdı (He/she wrote...)
gel- (to come)	geldi (He/she came...)
gör- (to see)	gördü (He/she saw...)
oku- (to read)	okudu (He/she rea...)
at- (to throw)	attı (He/she threw...)
iç- (to drink)	içti (He/she drank...)
yut- (to swallow)	yuttu (He/she swallowed...)
düş- (to fall)	düştü (He/she fell...)

In Example 2, the {-DI} past tense suffix is only exemplified for the 3rd person singular. The suffix is used in the form of {-dı/-tı} if the vowel in the last syllable is /a/, /ı/, {-di/-ti} if the vowel in the last syllable is /e/, /i/, {-du/-tü} if the vowel in the last syllable is /o/, /u/, and {-dü/-tü} if the vowel in the last syllable is /ö/, /ü/. In addition, when the last sound is /ç/, /f/, /h/, /k/, /p/, /s/, /ş/, /t/, it is suffixed as {-tı/-ti/-tu/-tü}, while it is used as {-dı/-di/-du/-dü} for vowels or any other consonants in the last sound.

Morphological features are considered independently as the knowledge of morphemes and the knowledge of the rules in sequencing morphemes (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2009: 83). There are varying uses and rules of use for morphemes in languages. For example, in English, an affix is not used to derive a noun from a verb. As can be seen in the examples of “I like to dance” and “There’s a dance or two in the old dame yet,” “dance” can be used in the same form both as a noun and a verb (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2009: 84). However, derivations such as noun from verb, verb from noun, verb from verb, or noun from another noun are possible in Turkish. In Example (3), there are derivations from verb to noun and from noun to verb.

Example (3)

(3a) dur-	(verb)+ak	durak (noun)
(3b) kara	(noun)+la	karala- (verb)

From the point of view of morphological features, in Turkish, a noun may be combined with several affixes including plural, possessive, and case-marking affixes, whereas a verb may be affixed with a voice, a negative marker, a tense, an aspect, a

modality, or a person marker (Göksel & Kerslake, 2000: 41-116). In Turkish, more than one morpheme may be added to a root and to a stem formed by the addition of a suffix to a root.

Example (4) (Yavuz, Balcı, Turan, 2000:67)

kitap

kitap-lık

kitap-lık-lar

kitap-lık-lar-ı-m

kitap-lık-lar-ı-m-da

Example (5) provides an example of the reciprocal action voice in Turkish. While the phrase “each other” is used for reciprocal action in English, this function is provided with morphemes in Turkish.

Example (5)

(5a) bak- (to look) bakış- (to look each other)

(5b) anla- (understand) anlaş- (understand each other)

Just as a morpheme has multiple functions, multiple morphemes are used for a function. Example (6) provides examples of the different uses of the -Abil morpheme in Değer, Çetin, Oflaz-Köleci (2021:4).

Example (6) -Abil (Değer, Cetin, Oflaz-Köleci, 2021:4)

(6a) *suggestion* *Baloda giymek için mor elbise alabilirsin.* (You can buy a purple dress to wear at the ball.)

(6b) *ability* *Matematik sorularını artık rahatça çözebiliyorum.* (Now, I can easily solve mathematics questions.)

(6c) *request* *Pencereyi açabilir misin?* (Can you open the window?)

(6d) *probability* *Dikkat edin, yolda taş düşebilir.* (Be careful, stones may fall on the way.)

(6e) *permission* *Bugün erken çıkabilirsin.* (You can leave early today.)
Yeterince çalıştın. (You've worked hard enough.)

Example (7) shows different morphemes used for a single function.

Example (7) suffixes for future reference

Yarın geleceğim. (I will come tomorrow.)

Yarın geliyorum. (I am coming tomorrow.)

Yarın gelirim. (I come tomorrow.)

Syntax deals with the rules governing the sequencing of phrases and clauses (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams 2009:118). Marked and unmarked sequences are seen in the syntax. An unmarked phrase is the syntax most commonly used by native speakers, which does not have a pragmatic purpose and does not feature special marks (Whaley 1997: 106). Among the world languages, there are six word orders, namely, SOV, SVO, VSO, VOS, OVS, and OSV, and Turkish takes its place among the SOV languages (Dryer, 2013).

Syntax deals with the rules governing the sequencing of not only sentences but also words. These are addressed in categories such as noun phrases, verb phrases, and preposition phrases and the sequence changes between languages that have head-initial and head-final features in phrase structures. In addition, it is normal to see prepositional phrases in a head-initial language and postpositional phrases in a head-final language (Özgen & Koşaner, 2020:15-16). Turkish is a head-final language and employs postpositional phrases.

Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2009) point out the examples of “The President nominated a new Supreme Court justice” and “*President the new Supreme justice Court a nominated” in English, stating that the first sentence is grammatical because the syntax is correct, but the second sentence is ungrammatical because the syntax is incorrect. They thus demonstrate the connection between grammar and syntax in subject–verb–object (SVO) languages such as English. The basic syntax of Turkish is SOV. However, as the words are marked in terms of their functions through suffixes, there may be variations in the syntax. The word order in the phrase shows that in languages with more flexibility in syntax, such as Turkish and Russian, tasks such as subject and object are marked with inflectional suffixes (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2009: 348). As seen in Example (8), words can be marked in terms of their function to be moved to other positions in a sentence. Erguvanlı (1984) exemplified the scrambling in the syntax with the sentences in Example (8), stating, however, that there are certain preconditions.

Example (8)

(8a) Ahmet yedi yumurtayı. (SVO) (Ahmet ate the egg.)

Ahmet eat-pst egg-acc

(8b) Yumurtayı Ahmet yedi. (OSV) (Ahmet ate the egg.)

Egg-acc Ahmet eat-pst

(8c) Yumurtayı yedi Ahmet. (OVS) (Ahmet ate the egg.)

Egg-acc eat-pst Ahmet

(8d) Ahmet yumurtayı yedi. (SOV) (Ahmet ate the egg.)

Ahmet egg-acc eat-pst

The direct object does not leave its position in front of the verb. Erguvanlı (1984) illustrates this case in Example (9).

Example (9)

(9a) Murat kitap okuyor. (Murat is reading a book.)

Murat book read-prog

(9b) *Kitap Murat okuyor.

book Murak read-prog

As the object is not marked in Example (9b), the sentence is ungrammatical and is not acceptable as a sentence.

In subordination, clauses may be formed to assume the functions of a noun, an adjective, or an adverb, and subordination is also structured through morphemes and the

transfer of features of harmony. Example (11a) features a noun clause (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005: 423) and (11b) a relative clause (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005: 442), while in (11c), there is a clause with an adverbial function, stating a cause (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005:472).

Example (11) clauses formed with -DIK and their functions

(11a) [Orhan'ın bir şey yap-ma-**diğ-i**] belliydi.

Orhan-GEN anything do-NEG-VN-3SG.POSS

It was obvious [that Orhan was not doing/hadn't done anything].

(11b) [Fatma-nın doku-**duğ-u**] halı

Fatma-GEN weave-PART-3SG.POSS rug

the rug [that Fatma is/was weaving/wove/has woven]

(11c) Sen [cumartesi burada ol-**ma-diğ-in** için] Mehmet'le henüz tanışmadın.

You Saturday here be-NEG-Cv-2SG.POSS for Mehmet-COM meet-NEG-PSB-PF-2SG

[As you were not here on Saturday] you were not able to meet Mehmet.

As seen in the examples, especially bound morphemes are of great importance and affect the meaning in Turkish.

Evaluation of Form-Focused Language Instruction in the Context of Turkish as a Foreign Language

Answering and deliberating on the following questions is of significance in the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language: “Considering the features of Turkish, an agglutinating language, how can grammar teaching be undertaken? Is it more appropriate to teach grammar explicitly or implicitly?” or “How can the concept of focus on form be evaluated in teaching Turkish, an agglutinating language, as a foreign language?” There are also further questions underlying the questions above such as “Should typological differences between languages reflected to language teaching materials?”, “Do the observations and conclusions frequently formed for English teaching in the literature also apply for Turkish, an agglutinating language?” or “Is it appropriate for the Turkish language to focus on forms and use explicit grammar teaching practices?”.

In order to be able to discuss the answers to these questions and make an assessment, it would be useful to present the findings from the error analysis studies conducted with productions from learners of Turkish as a foreign language. Uzdu-Yıldız and Çetin (2020) evaluated the error analysis studies undertaken with productions from learners of Turkish as a foreign language at different levels through a systematic review and stated that the errors identified in the studies they discussed were related especially to spelling and punctuation. The spelling mentioned here originates from harmonies, and as harmonies are processed for each suffix, it was observed that learners made numerous errors in this regard. Other error analysis studies also found frequent errors among learners in terms of grammar (see Subasi, 2010; Çetinkaya, 2015; Yılmaz and Bircan, 2015; Çerçi,

Derman, Bardakçı, 2016; Önder and Uzdu-Yıldız, 2017; Gezer and Sliver, 2018; Temizyürek and Ünlü, 2018;). Çetinkaya (2015: 173) conducted an error analysis study, which offers observations concerning the errors made by learners at the B2 level. It is stated in the study that 51.93% of the errors identified are morphological. An example of the uses specified in the study is shown in Example (12).

(12) (...) “Teknolojinin olumsuz yönleri vardır. Söz gelimi zaman kazandık” (“(There are negative sides to technology. For example, we saved time” / should be ‘we are losing time’ (-DIK was used instead of -mAk)”)

In the example, it is seen that -DIK is used instead of the correct nominalizing structure. There may be two reasons for the use of -DIK here: -DI+k may have been used as the 1st plural suffix in the past tense or -DIK may have been used as a nominalizing structure formed with verb+DIK+possessive suffix. As it is not known which of the two structures the learners chose with the use in Example (12), the reason for the error cannot be fully interpreted, but it is seen that the learner made an error in their morphological choice.

Boylu (2014:341) points out to an error of an A1-level learner as in Example (13).

(13) “Ben şirketda ders okuyorum. (şirkette)” (“I am studying at the company” / misspelled suffix after ‘company’)

Example (13) is related to the use of a wrong harmony, and it is not an error arising from use, but from morphology.

Çerçi, Derman, Bardakçı (2016) indicates an error of a C1-level learner as in Example 14.

(14) Bu nedenle hayatımıza çok memnunum ve çok teşekkür ediyorum. (So, I am very happy to our life and I thank very much.)

In Example (14), the dative case suffix -(y)A is used in the word “...hayatımız-a...” (to our life). However, the verb “memnun ol-” (to be happy) needs to be used with the “-DAn” case (from). It is seen that the learner made an error in choosing the right case suffix.

Sonkaya (2019) in their study on the errors made by Turkish learners revealed that learners made the most errors in syntax. They state that syntax errors are especially common among native speakers of English. An error identified in the study is exemplified in Example (15).

(15) " O, onun tek şey dünyada” (“It is only thing for him/her in the world”)

The correct use in Example (15) is expected to be “O, onun dünyadaki tek şeyi” (“It is the only thing in the world for him/her”). The word “dünya” (“world”) is expected to be adjectivized as “dünyadaki” (“which is in the world”) with the suffix “-ki” rather than being used as “dünyada” (“in the world”) and sequenced as “dünyadaki tek şeyi” (“the only thing in the world”). Turkish is a head-final language and the adjective is used before the noun in a noun phrase.

In Turkish as an agglutinating language, there are also restrictions on the successive addition of morphemes. In the use of the word “kitap” (“book”) in the forms of

“kitap, kitap-lık, kitap-lık-lar, kitap-lık-lar-ı-m, kitap-lık-lar-ı-m-da” (“book, bookcase, bookcases, my bookcases, in my bookcases”) in Example (4), the word is observed to be combined with +lık (nominalizing suffix)+lAr (plural suffix) -Im (possessive suffix)+-DA (locative suffix), respectively, and case, plural, and possessive suffixes are functional suffixes in Turkish, which learners encounter frequently. Although this syntax is not demonstrated in the grammatical way, it is useful to consider such formal features in the learning materials and during the relevant instructions in a course.

In order to evaluate FFI in terms of Turkish as a foreign language, an example can also be given with respect to the features of subordination in Turkish. In Turkish, noun clauses, relative clauses and adverbial clauses are commonly used, and suffixes come into play in all of these clauses.

Göksel & Kerslake (2008: 438) exemplify the suffixes used in relative clauses as in Example (16).

(16) a. küçük kız

“the little girl”

b. oyuncaklar-ı-nı kır-an küçük kız

toy-PL-2SG.POSS-ACC break-PART little girl

“the (little) girl who breaks/has broken her toys”

c. her gün okulda gör-düğ-üm kız

every day school-LOC see-PART-1SG. POSS girl

“the girl whom I see at school every day”

d. annesiyle tanış-acağ-ım kız

mother-3SG.POSS-COM meet-PART-1SG.POSS girl

“the girl whose mother I’m going to meet”

e. başında sapka ol-an kız

head-3SG.POSS-LOC hat be-PART-girl

“the girl who has a hat on her head”

As seen in the examples, structures in the forms of verb+An, verb+DIK+possessive, and verb+AcAk+possessive appear in the use of subject relative clauses and object relative clauses. Subordination is structured not with an free morpheme, but through free morphemes.

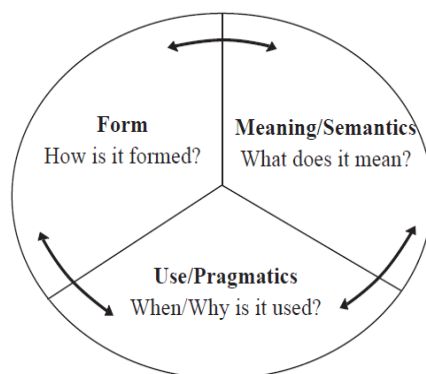
Considering the error analysis studies conducted on productions from learners of Turkish as a foreign language and the typological features of Turkish, it is possible to conclude that FFI will provide a more effective and productive teaching environment. Although the choice of delivering instructions in an explicit or implicit manner is at the discretion of the teacher, who will make this decision with consideration for the individual differences of the learners, it will be useful to offer format-focused sequences with a view to minimize learner errors.

How can preliminary studies be conducted in order to carry out focus on form activities?

The modalities employed for FFI are important. FFI does not represent a teaching style in which the subjects are presented in a random order and everything is introduced one by one and clearly. Functional and use-related features should not be dismissed and form-focused efforts should be arranged in line with the findings arising from discourse grammar studies. Değer, Çetin, and Oflaz-Köleci (2021) state that the aim of grammar teaching is to transfer grammar rules to real life in communication. A morpheme has more than one function in Turkish. Although the context is very important in the selection of the correct morpheme, the primary step should be to address the functions of the morphemes. Discourse grammar approaches can be considered while determining functions. Discourse grammar is a field where grammar is addressed within the framework of its uses in communication (Crystal, 2008:148; Fidan, 2000; Hughes & McCarthy, 1998). The findings from discourse grammar give rise to pedagogical grammar and allow teachers to determine what to teach learners in which context and to which extent. Uzun (2010) also emphasizes that grammar is an indispensable element of language teaching. Its sequencing may vary depending on who is teaching grammar to whom, in which environment, and for what purpose and that corpus-based studies are important for grammar teaching.

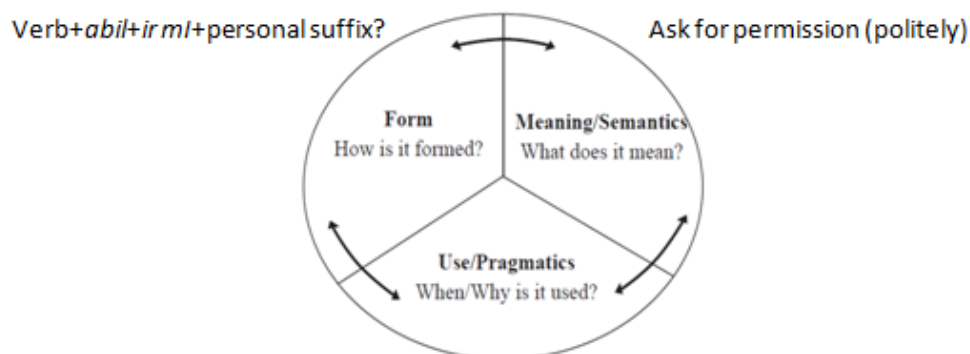
Discourse grammar studies make it possible to formulate curricula by identifying the correct sequences for commonly used structures, as well as the most commonly used functions and contexts. Corpus-based studies should be considered to identify the frequencies of morphemes in use (see Aksan, et al, 2012; Yıldız, Günay, Uzdu-Yıldız, 2014). According to the data obtained from the corpus, the features of the morphemes can be positioned in the form-meaning-use (Larsen-Freeman, 2014:259) scheme.

Figure 1. Three-dimensional Grammar Framework (Larsen-Freeman, 2014:259)



Çetin (2017, 193) presented the use of the question form of the -Abil morpheme as a means of asking permission in the three-dimensional grammar framework and indicated that grammar teaching materials prepared within the framework of the semantic and use-related features of the “verb+Abil+Ir MI+personal suffix?” form of the structure might allow learners to learn the target structure effectively and efficiently and contexts and the same form might also be employed to demonstrate the subjects that need to be addressed during the description of the structure before the preparation of relevant materials.

Figure 2. Demonstration of the “verb+Abil+Ir mI+personal suffix?” Structure in Turkish in its Function of Asking Permission in the Three-dimensional Grammar Framework (Çetin, 2017:193)



- In dialogues between strangers
- In formal and informal settings
- Politely
- Using standard language
- In dialogues
- Alongside phrases including “Sorry, thank you, have a nice day, leave it to me, and good luck!”
- To politely initiate, maintain, and end conversations with strangers

After performing an analysis similar to the one in the example, a teacher may choose a context and move on to an explicit or implicit presentation of the “verb+Abil+Ir mI+personal suffix?” structure for which an input has been provided in communication.

Undertaking similar exercises with all morphemes makes it possible to design functional FFIs.

Conclusion

In the field of language teaching, different approaches and methods appear to have emerged for grammar teaching based on a range of learning theories and linguistic theories. Considering the typological features of languages, there may be variations in perspectives of grammar teaching. Uzun (2013) states that the studies in the field of linguistics should provide sufficient and robust language descriptions for language teaching and indicates that studies on language typologies are among the primary studies that should contribute to language teaching. Aslan-Demir (2018:120) emphasizes that foreign language teachers should also be aware of typological differences.

The present study wishes to emphasize that it is necessary to focus on the forms in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. An extensive number of suffixes are necessary for proper uses, and most functions are marked with bound morphemes, i.e., suffixes. It is appropriate that these suffixes are given to learners in a spiral order and within examples of natural language use. The elements that matter are the functions of morphemes and it is necessary to demonstrate the use of structures in context and to undertake function-oriented studies. Grammar is best taught and practiced in context (Thornbury, 2000: 90).

Stating that learning a language is, in a way, to understand a language, Carters (1995: 12-13) specifies that language awareness will accelerate learning.

Grammar teaching is not the main purpose of language teaching. This is emphasized in numerous studies. However, while considering languages such as Turkish, an agglutinating language, it is impossible to deny the importance of formal features. Grammatical accuracy also has a direct impact on appropriateness and fluency. Awareness of forms is of great importance since being regarded as having learned a foreign language means having achieved competence in discourse, i.e., delivering appropriate productions in appropriate contexts. As stated in Değer, Çetin & Oflaz-Köleci (2021), providing input in an explicit or implicit way is not independently sufficient, and it must be complemented with activities targeting linguistic skills. The “there is no best method” perspective that has become prominent in foreign language teaching emphasizes the significance of individual differences and reveals the concept of “teachers’ sense of plausibility” (Prabhu, 1990). It should be considered that there are differences in terms of languages, as well as in terms of learners, and it is possible to state “There is no best technique/method for grammar teaching” in most general terms.

Within the framework of these ideas, the following general conclusions can be put forward:

- Linguistic awareness is important for proper use.
- The main purpose of language teaching is to develop perceptual and productional skills.
- Formal features are of great importance in agglutinating languages, such as Turkish, for the accuracy and appropriateness of perceptual and productive skills.
- What matters is the delivery of forms in real-life contexts rather than the arrangement of the curriculum with a focus on forms or a focus on meaning.
- In the teaching of morphemes, or in other words, affixes, activities should be carried out to address the functions of forms.
- The form-meaning-use scheme is quite functional for material preparation in teaching agglutinating languages.
- The findings obtained through discourse grammar studies are important in terms of their use in foreign language teaching and in the planning of curricula.

For agglutinating languages, such as Turkish, studies should be conducted to implement explicit and implicit practices and compare their levels of achievement. It is necessary to carry out similar studies for other languages with distinct typological features in order to formulate general comments in the field of foreign language teaching.

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