



**A Research on Grammar in Educational Materials  
and the Impact of an E-book in Learning**

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**Abstract**

It is a fact that the place of grammar in language teaching varies according to the theory of language and language teaching methodology. While Communicative Language Teaching has led to some misconceptions as to the negligence of grammar, the post methods era has left an open space for teachers to move freely in line with the needs of the learners. Therefore, this approach has introduced a wide range of applications, one of which might be stated to deliver grammar through skills and using tasks that improve the linguistic competence of the learner. Such an approach as a compromise between the two margins towards grammar teaching has presented innovative ways and techniques that can be applied to classroom environments. This study aims to illustrate an effective grammar teaching technique by using cartoons and to show that it is possible to teach grammar through skills. At the end of the experimental study, the results after the treatment show that the experimental group has benefitted from this type of teaching to a large extent. As a conclusion, it can be said that instead of neglecting grammar for the sake of learner fluency, teachers should become acquainted with new tools for grammar teaching in context through skills. In addition, the fact that digital learning has introduced learner autonomy enables learning in all contexts. Web 2.0 tools such as E-Books designed in the light of SLA cross-linguistic research can be used as ideal sources for grammar teaching.

**Keywords**

Teaching EFL grammar  
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## **Eğitim Materyallerinde Dilbilgisi Öğretim Yöntemleri ve Web 2.0 Araçlarının Dilbilgisi Öğrenmede Etkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma**

### **Özet**

Dilbilgisinin dil öğretiminde yerinin dil kuramına ve dil öğretim yöntemine göre değiştiği bilinen bir gerçektir. İletişimsel Yaklaşım dilbilgisini yok saymaya dair birtakım yanlış anlamalara yol açarken, yöntemler sonrası dönem öğretmenlere öğrencilerinin gereksinimlerine paralel olarak rahatça hareket edebilecekleri bir alan bırakmaktadır. Böylece, bu yaklaşım çok sayıda uygulamaları beraberinde getirmiştir; bunlardan birisi de dilbilgisini dil becerileri ile birlikte ve öğrencinin dil yetisini geliştireceği şekilde, görev odaklı çalışmalar yolu ile öğretmektir. Dilbilgisi öğretiminde iki ayrı uçta yer alan farklı yaklaşımlar arasında bir uzlaşma getiren bu yaklaşım sınıfta uygulanabilecek yenilikçi yollar ve teknikleri de beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu çalışma, karikatür ve E-Kitap kullanarak etkin bir dilbilgisi öğretme tekniğini tanıtmayı ve dilbilgisi öğretiminin beceri temelli çalışmalarla mümkün olduğunu göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Deneysel çalışmanın sonunda sonuçlar deney grubundaki öğrencilerin bu tür bir uygulamadan büyük ölçüde yararlandıklarını göstermiştir. Sonuç olarak, dilbilgisini öğrencinin akıcı olabilmesi uğruna ihmal etmek yerine, öğretmenler dilbilgisi öğretimini bağlamsal olarak, beceriler üzerinden yapabilecekleri yeni araçlar ile tanışmalıdır. Buna ek olarak, çevrimiçi öğrenmenin öğrenci özerkliğini beraberinde getirmesi öğrenmeyi her ortamda mümkün kılmaktadır. İkinci Dil Edinimi Araştırmaları ışığında tasarlanan eğitim materyalleri dilbilgisi öğretiminde ideal kaynaklar olarak kullanılabilir.

### **Anahtar Kelimeler**

İngilizce dilbilgisi öğretimi

E-kitap

İkinci dil edinimi araştırmaları

Eğitim materyalleri

Öğrenci özerkliği

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## Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that in Communicative Language Teaching, the place of grammar has changed course, at times, with some misconceptions which placed more emphasis on fluency by ignoring mistakes. Therefore, grammar has lost its prestige recently to such an extent that theoreticians and practitioners alike have started arguing whether or not grammar should be incorporated into language teaching, and as an extension to it, language testing. However, considering the nature of mistakes in EFL, one can see that the frequency of the distribution is intense on grammar, which leads to a lack of accuracy in linguistic production. Furthermore, recent related research in EFL and ESL settings around the world have implications that teachers and students feel the need for the knowledge of grammar or the use of grammatical terminology (Borg, 1999; Borg, 2006; Borg & Burns, 2008; Burns, 2009) for a better, more sound linguistic competence.

On the other hand, with the suggestions of the post methods era, teachers in this age feel that they can shape their instructions as it is required by their unique classroom settings, which will act as an agent for the contribution to the achievement of their learners. In line with this tendency, the place of grammar in language teaching has gained impetus and has started to reclaim its precedence over the other components of language. This has introduced a wide range of applications, one of which can be stated to deliver grammar through skills and tasks that improve the linguistic competence of the learner in terms of grammar. Such an approach as a compromise between the two margins towards grammar teaching has presented innovative ways and techniques that can be applied to classroom environments.

## Literature Review

Throughout the recent decades, numerous efforts have been made to utilize technological tools for grammar teaching contexts. Bikowski (2018, p. 1) states, "Many of the technological affordances for grammar instruction are made possible through the ability to analyse grammar in the context of larger discourse as well as through expanded opportunities for learners to engage in the negotiation of meaning." Thus, combined with new theories, approaches, techniques and classroom activities, grammar teaching can be realized via technological tools including the learner on the stage, with the teacher at more impassive roles. This can be done by using various means, also including materials developed with Web 2.0 tools thanks to the Internet, which eases the learning experiences to a great extent. According to the research conducted with adult learners by Eyüp (2012), teaching through computers to the university students led to an increase in the achievement levels. As additional, complementary tools, the developed software, to be used as extracurricular activities, bring about the philosophy of blended learning (Neumeier, 2005; Banados, 2006; Sharma & Barrett, 2008), which combines classroom learning with that of the computer. As a support for the previously mentioned research, Mehrgan (2012) points out that the grammatical abilities of the students develop thanks to the grammar teaching software.

It is a fact that the learner should be treated as anybody who can determine the needs and who can construct the learning conditions and the timing through self-decision. Under the circumstances, if technology is used, learning can take place in more flexible environments and times which are determined by the learner. In this sense, development of learner autonomy comes to stage, fostered through each experience of learning (Morgan, 2012). The basic concern of using the computer either through Web 2.0 tools or through the software programs in language teaching should be how to set the ideal learning environment and the ideal learning tools for an effective learning environment both in the classroom and after the classroom. In the same vein, Roh & Kim (2019, p. 242) suggest,

“Incorporating CALL and MALL tools is recommended for foreign language educators in their given teaching contexts to empower students not only with the tools, but also their affordances.”

However, it should be borne in mind that nothing can replace the real classroom teaching and the environment, which is further supported by Akkoyunlu & Soylu (2009) who have come to the conclusion, based on a research, that face to face interaction needs to be compulsory. They further remark that despite the highly rated blended learning and the appreciation of the usage, there is a need for the social environment to support it.

Taking the related literature into account, the present study aims to illustrate an effective grammar teaching way by using cartoons and E-books in line with the requirements of contemporary learning systems. The study also aims to show that if applied in the right way, grammar can be taught overtly, embodied in skills, thus forming a firm foundation for the production of a language.

Research questions of the present study are as follows:

1. How do educational materials teach Present Perfect Tense and “since/for”?
  - 1.1. How do online materials teach Present Perfect Tense and “since/for”?
  - 1.2. How do traditional grammar books teach Present Perfect Tense and “since/for”?
2. Is there a significant difference between the achievement levels of the students who studied “since/ for” with/without E-Books?
  - 2.1 What is the achievement level of the students who studied “since/ for” with E-Books?
  - 2.2 What is the achievement level of the students who studied “since/ for “without E-Books?

## **Methodology**

The rationale behind this application is that in EFL settings, course hours are limited, and once the learners get out of the class, they are left to themselves and their own efforts to keep in touch with the language itself. Therefore, the quality of the input and the nature of the content available on the Internet is not always reliable, for any person, not necessarily a teacher or someone from the world of education, could upload courses, videos, materials, etc. onto digital platforms. However, considering that language learning experience should not be limited to the classrooms and that the digital world could be utilized for the purpose of input provision as extra-curricular applications, one can design courses through these web-based applications, flowing in line with the curriculum. Thus, teachers are there, out of the classroom, and they still have a long-lasting impact even after the learners go home.

As for the research procedure, the application has been conducted according to the principles of PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) (Larsen-Freeman, 2009). Participants of the research have been identified in line with the purposive sampling principles; they are at the same linguistic level and the same age group. The participants of this research are 30 students (aged between 18-25) who were attending a private language course during the education year, 2017-2018.

The research involved the experimental group and the control group. In the experimental group, the teacher started the lesson with a warm up activity through which the students had a chance to listen to a song including lines with Present Perfect Tense. As the next step, the teacher introduced a context that uses Present Perfect Tense (particularly, the differences between the structures “for/since”) with the Web 2.0 tools in the form of cartoons, comics and electronic books that had been previously prepared and loaded electronically for the utilization in the classroom. The context was the

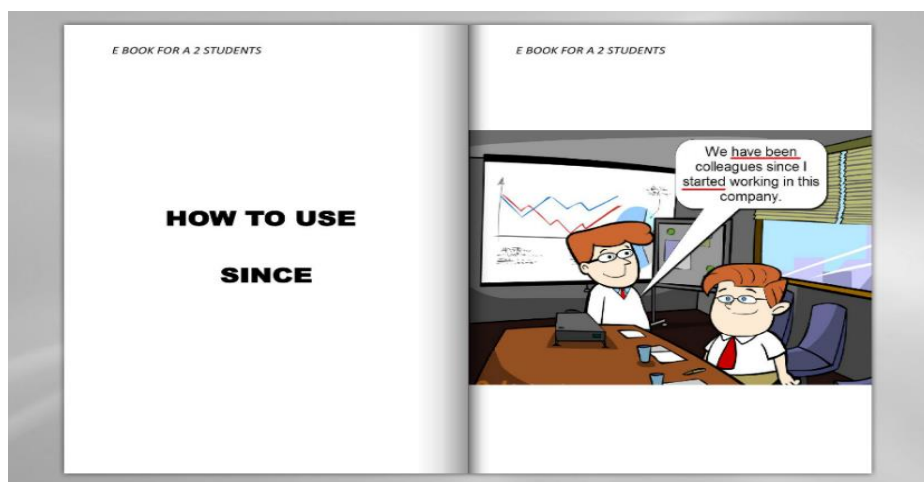
fragment of a script written for the needs and levels of the learners. The students studied “since” and “for” with the electronic book prepared by the researcher. On the other hand, the control group continued the program with traditional methods. They went on learning the differences between “for/since” through the overt traditional ways, with the help of coursebooks. They did not have a chance to use any technological materials to study grammar items. Figure 1 and Figure 2 below show the use of “since” in the video form as follows:

**Figure 1.** *The screenshot from the video for teaching “since” (see the References)*



Figure 1 illustrates a screenshot from the video for the grammar item, “since” This video has been used to teach the difference between “since” and “for” in line with the book. The experimental group had the chance to use this video both inside and outside the classroom atmosphere; thus, it can be said that the items can be presented twice thanks to the technological opportunities.

**Figure 2.** *The screenshot from the e-book for the revision of ‘since’ (see the References)*

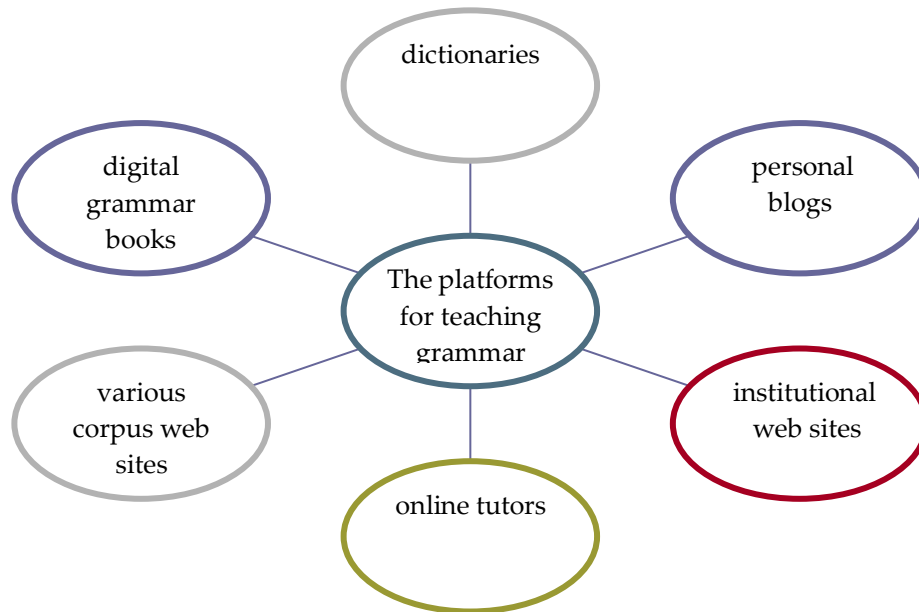


Furthermore, a screenshot from the electronic storybook for emphasizing the grammar item, “since” has been used. The electronic storybook has been designed so that grammar items can be focused by underlining them. The participants of the classrooms studied the grammar items either with or without these tools. The experimental group had the chance to practise the items by paying attention to the form which was the centre of focus. After the treatment at intervals, another test with the same content has been given to both groups.

## Findings

Research Question 1 asks how educational materials teach Present Perfect Tense and “since/for”. According to the search on the web as an answer to research question, 1.1, which asks how the grammar item in focus is represented on digital platforms, many sources for learning a language as shown in Figure 3 have been identified:

**Figure 3.** *Platforms for teaching grammar*



Research Question 1. 2, asks how Present Perfect Tense and its components are introduced in grammar books. Thus, this documentation research covers the description of this tense in ten English grammar books currently available for the learners. Didactic explanations given are almost similar in all the books and the ones on the web alike:

Ex.1. “We sometimes use Present Perfect Tense to say how much we have done so far.”

Ex.2. “We use the Present Perfect for actions which happened at an unknown time in the past.  
The time is not stated, because it is not important.”

Ex.3. “The Present Perfect tense tells us about a situation now. We can use this tense for new happenings.”

In line with the research findings, the main problem is that some explanations use the tense itself (Ex.1). If a learner does not know the meaning and the use of Present Perfect Tense, how can (s)he understand this detailed information about the tense?

Moreover, there are some vague explanations: If the time is not mentioned as stated in Example 2, it is not because the time is not important, but because we are still in the same time span; therefore, we do not need to refer to it. On the other hand, though Ex. 3. makes a simple explanation, it is not enough to describe the meaning of the tense itself.

All in all, most descriptions in the books and those on digital platforms do not meet the needs of the Turkish EFL learners, for they have been designed for the global use. However, if materials are designed in light of SLA cross-linguistic research, which consider the pitfalls Turkish learners might come across (e.g. Present Perfect Tense), the learning may become easier and more pleasurable. Besides, instead of making such long descriptions that learners may not understand, it is better to provide a context of situation to illustrate the use of the tense.

Research Question 2 asks if there is a significant difference between the achievement levels of the students who studied “since/ for” with/without E-Books. The results after the application show that the experimental group has benefitted from this type of teaching to a large extent, and there is a significant difference between the success rates of the two groups. This can be interpreted as that visuals play an important role in teaching grammar, and that the use of audio-visual materials; particularly, those developed by means of new generation software or the internet are sure to help the language teacher while presenting a new grammar item which will make the foundation of the linguistic competence. Obviously, the implications of this study and the others to follow will ease the job of the teachers if used appropriately.

**Table 1.** *The pre-test scores of both groups*

Pre-test scores	Test	$\bar{X}$	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Control	13.582		
	Experimental	14.245	-0.383	.795

Table 1. highlights the difference between the two groups at the beginning of the study. According to the results, there is not a significant difference between the pre test scores ( $p > 0.05$ ,  $p = .795$ ). Thus, it can be said that the achievement levels of the students are not different at the beginning of the study.

**Table 2.** *The post test scores of both groups*

Post test scores	Test	$\bar{X}$	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Control	16.694		
	Experimental	13.854	3.296	.001

Table 2. shows the post test scores of both groups. Based on the means of the control group ( $M = 16.694$ ) and experimental group ( $M = 13.854$ ), it can be said that there is a significant difference ( $p = 0.001$ ) between the achievement levels at the end of the study.

**Table 3.** *The pre-post test scores of the experimental group*

Pre-post test scores	Test	$\bar{X}$	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Experimental	Pre-Test	14.245		
	Post Test	16.694	4.964	.000

Furthermore, according to the results shown at Table 3, the pre and post scores of the experimental group are also remarkable. The means scores in pre test ( $M = 14.245$ ) and post test ( $M = 16.694$ ) points out this difference; furthermore, there is a significant difference ( $p = .000$ ) between these two scores.

**Table 4.** *The pre-post test scores of the control group*

Pre-post test scores	Test	$\bar{X}$	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Control	Pre Test	13.582		
	Post Test	13.854	-0.537	.694

On the other hand, the pre test ( $M = 13.582$ ) and post test ( $M = 13.854$ ) scores do not show a difference. Hence, it can be said that there is no difference ( $p > 0.05$ ) in the control group who studied grammar in traditional ways.

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## Discussion

Research Question 1 asks about a specific grammar item, Present Perfect Tense and the use of *since/for* in the educational materials. The findings show that there are countless digital materials; and doubtless to say, a big space is allocated for the tense in grammar books. As for the online materials, they are provided by some institutions or some people who share their experiences with others. Unlike traditional grammar books, these materials divert the user to some other links that make further explanations or to the other sites indirectly associated with the first search. Therefore, the learner is informed about many things at one go thanks to the interactive tools created by AI or other possible responses set in advance. As a supportive research finding, Suratno (2007) points out that internet based activities of grammar contribute greatly to the learning of structures when compared with traditional book. As a support for this view, Summerhays (2020) found out that time, feedback and limitless opportunities for practice make learners prefer technology based materials for studying grammar rather than traditional materials. However, despite the practicality and comfort of having access to such information, all these facilities the learner is exposed to also seem to be much too confusing. Therefore, even when you refer to something very specific- in our case, *since/for*- it turns out to be a big deal on such platforms. In addition, the explanations made are too complex in advanced grammar (e.g. the user's level is A2, the teacher in the video is making detailed explanations using many advanced grammar structures at B2 level in order to teach the difference between "*for*" and "*since*"):

"for is used in front of a finished point for the actions that started in the past and either is still continuing or has just finished."

"since is used with a specific point for a period when an activity began in the past and it is still continuing."

To be more precise, if a learner has mastered advanced grammar, but there is need for a detailed information as to the use of a specific item, these online tools could be a help. However, for beginner or elementary levels, didactic descriptions do not work, because some native speakers do not have pedagogy as to gear their instructions according to the level of the learners. In addition, the grammatical terminology seems to make the issue of learning even more complicated:

Ex. "*since* is used as a conjunction, as a preposition and as an adverb"

As for Research Question 2, which asks if there is a significant difference between the achievement levels of the students who studied with/without E-Books, the findings are in line with the expectations of the research. The results show that experimental group benefitted from the application, which is in line with the suggestion by Puspitasari et al. who (2023) pointed out that using websites has been fruitful for studying grammar. It has turned out that e-books are useful for the introduction of overt grammar points. These books can be used as sources in the form of grammar books or textbooks as suggested by Embong et al. (2002) in this blended learning era. On the other hand, when the issues such as autonomy and practicality are considered, web based applications make ideal tools for the learners who wish to learn without the time and place constraints. In that sense, it is crucial to add those materials into agenda of language teachers in order to foster autonomous learners. Moreover, the use of these tools increases communicative abilities of learners if they are designed in line with the principles of learner autonomy, which requires the onset of an initiation. A study in a similar vein, Gunn (2011) highlights that interactive features of Web 2.0 tools contribute to learner autonomy as well as the other research conducted by (Khalil, 2018; Özenç et al., 2020 among others).



To encapsulate, it can be said that learning a language (particularly grammar as the most controversial issue) in the most practical and effortless way calls for the careful planning, conscientious material selection and the right choice of the environment for learning. Needless to say, learner autonomy is the primary factor and directs the whole process. The research shows that the available grammar materials presented to the learner are not always to the point, because the learner types and styles have changed. However, seeing that learners can utilize the web based applications, the focus should be on this issue in order to create materials to teach grammar inductively.

### Conclusion

This study has revealed that if the classroom instruction is strengthened by using technology, it can produce more effective results in terms of grammar teaching. By integrating technology into the traditional sense of language teaching, the researchers have achieved the objectives of the modern language teaching. In other words, the cartoons and electronic books have made it possible for the students to learn the explicit rules of grammar on the one hand, and to use these rules through skills on the other hand. As a conclusion, it can be said that instead of neglecting grammar for the sake of fluency, teachers should become acquainted with new tools for grammar teaching. In this way, the learner will be both fluent and accurate, for these two features of language proficiency are inseparable, and grammar is the key to both of them in the broader sense. In addition, the fact that digital learning has introduced learner autonomy enables learning in all contexts and Web 2.0 tools work as ideal solutions if designed in line with SLA cross-linguistic research.

### Implications

As the implications of the present study, it can be said that the results are promising, and they should be validated with a larger group of participants. Our data suggest that Web 2.0 tools could be exploited in order to create an ideal e-grammar book, in which grammar items are taught via comics, animations and cartoons. An important issue to be resolved for future studies might be related to the attitudes. If more qualitative data revealing the views of all the parties are gathered, the present results might shed light onto the potential adoption of e-grammar books in the future.

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