

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON THE TEACHING STRATEGIES AND CLASS APPLICATIONS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS WHO TEACH ENGLISH IN TURKEY AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Nowadays, whichever position the individuals work in, they feel the need to learn a foreign language even a second foreign language. In parallel with the need for a foreign language, the importance of the foreign language teaching increases. In language teaching, conditions such as the facilities of the environment, learner's features, the social dimension of the learning environment, benefiting from the technological materials in language teaching, teacher qualities, etc. hold great importance. Careful determination of the strategy and the method which will be followed during the learning and teaching process, and making the environment interesting for the students can be shaped with the knowledge and experience of the teachers. For that purpose, the pedagogical background of the teachers holds a great importance in language teaching.

In this study, it is aimed to determine the language teaching strategies and class applications of the teachers who teach English as a foreign language in Turkey. Problem (sentence): How are the teaching strategies and class applications of the teachers who teach the English in Turkey as a foreign language? Method and results: In the research, interview and observation methods have been used in the scope of qualitative approach, and it has been tried to obtain certain results.

Keywords: Teaching English as a foreign language, language teaching strategies, methods and techniques.

Introduction

The first and the most important thing to do in language education and teaching is to evoke interest, desire and positive attitude in the students towards the target language. The viewpoint that is to be given to the students on the importance of the foreign language learning will directly affect the efficiency of the teachers in the language teaching activities. The teachers who have taught their students the importance of learning a foreign language will be more advantageous than the other teach-

ers in terms of continuing their activities in accordance with the objectives. The continuance of the learning and teaching process in accordance with the objectives is dependent on the outlook, knowledge accumulation and occupational experience of the teacher. The teachers who make a good communication with their students; prepare their materials to be used beforehand; and act more professionally in determining the strategies, methods and techniques to be used are the ones who can perform their occupations consciously.

With this understanding, the teachers who give importance to the physical infrastructure of the classroom and make the learning environment interesting for the students will be able to achieve their goals in a short time.

The strategies which determine the methods and techniques to be used by the teachers in the class activities affect the success of the language teaching activities and accordingly the efficiency in education. There are basic principles which can assist to the strategy development, methods and techniques application studies in foreign language teaching. These principles can be listed as follows:

- Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills must be taught together when teaching to use the language as a communication tool.
- The visual and auditory tools make the teaching more effective in foreign language teaching. They attract the attention of the students to the lesson; create dialog environments for the students to use the learned language more effectively; and assist in forming the natural environment in the classroom.
- Using the mother language in the classroom must not be a taboo. It must be used when necessary, but the students must hear and use the learned language more in the foreign language lessons.
- How the information taught in the classroom is used in the daily communication must be showed to the students. In order for the class learning to become permanent, the examples must be given from daily life, and students must be given the opportunity to

use what they learned.

- Individual differences must be taken into account (Demirel, 1993, p. 23-27).
- Before starting each lesson, the students must be informed on the objectives about what will be learned in that lesson, and they must be motivated for learning.

The most important factors that guide the learning and teaching process and enable the students to gain acquisitions in accordance with the determined goals are the class and non-class applications. The application pattern emerges with the *approaches, methods, techniques and tactics* which are followed in the process. The approach (strategy) is actualized with the methods, and the methods are actualized with the techniques and tactics. *The strategy is existent between the methods and techniques. According to this hierarchical order, there is a relationship in which the techniques actualize a method and this method is consistent in accordance with an approach* (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 14-30).

The learning patterns formed by using the methods and techniques which are appropriate to the preferred strategy create an environment for the learning of different student masses. Forming skill earning environments for the acquisitions by using different approaches, methods and techniques, and presenting different learning styles for the students who have different features is also important for the equal opportunity in education. Applying different learning styles for the students who have different learning features is dependent on the strategies to be followed.

Some strategies and the methods, techniques and learning styles which are appropriate to these strategies are applied in language education and teaching which will be given from the first day in which the students step into the school.

There are some basic principles which can shed a light upon the determination of strategy, method and technique to be followed in the language teaching studies. Demirel arranges these principles in the following order: developing the four basic skills, teaching from the simple to the complex, using the audio-visual tools, presenting a single structure at a time, enabling students to participate in the lesson more actively, taking into account of individual differences, etc. (Demirel, 1993, p. 23-26). In accordance with these principles, foreign language teaching is actualized in the framework of structural, functional, and interactive language theories (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 14-30). The aforementioned principles and language theories require the implementation of cognitive, communicational, social, social-emotional, auditory-lingual, auditory-visual, functional-conceptual, natural approach and some techniques coherent to these approaches (Chamot & Kupper, 1989, p. 14; Demirel, 1993, p. 31-84; Demircan, 1990, p. 192-240).

There are three types of strategies, namely metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective. Cognitive strategies are steps or operations used in learning or problem solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Communicative-experiential strategies, such as circumlocution, gestur-

ing, paraphrasing or asking for repetition or explanation are techniques used by learners so as to keep a conversation going. Interpersonal strategies are those strategies learner use to monitor their own development and evaluate their own performance. According to Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of language learning strategies, namely memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Within the metacognitive category were those strategies which involve knowing about learning and controlling learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating learning activity, cognitive strategies included those strategies involving manipulation or transformation of the material to be learned, while social/affective strategies mainly involved the learner in communicative interaction with another person, for example, collaboration with peers and teachers in the learning process (Wong, 2005, p. 246-252).

There is a growing appreciation for the contribution of such variables as learning style and learning strategy to language learning success in recent EFL classroom research. Compared with learning strategies, learning styles are relatively stable characteristics which learners bring to the learning situations. Learning styles embody unconscious individual learner traits while learning strategies are specific behaviors selected by the learner to make learning more efficient. Whereas learning styles are internally based traits, often not perceived or consciously used by students to facilitate their learning (Jie and Xiaoqing, 2006,

p. 68).

In the language teaching studies, the ability of the teachers to prepare an environment for the functional learning by acting with the strategies which will make the learners effective is important. The teacher must not only direct the students to the information source, but also form the environment in which the students transform the information reached by themselves into the skill which means using this information in real life. Such a functional learning environment enables the process to advance dynamically with the students embracing the role of an active learner. Conducting the activities of acquiring and developing language skills in an environment in which the students who interact with each other are active is more beneficial than conducting these activities in environments enriched with very different materials but in which the individuals who are in learner positions are not active. It is certain that the students who participate in the activities will gain significant advantages in taking responsibility, acquiring knowledge, sharing the acquired knowledge and transforming this knowledge into skill. In this respect, language teaching must be implemented in a process which continues with the learning styles that put the students into the center and enable them to become more active in the interactive social environments.

Mentioning about the teaching studies via the activities to be actualized in the classroom, Çakır has stated: The use of various activities in the classroom to teach a foreign language has a great impact on learners. Particularly, young learners would

love to learn by means of activities as such kind of attempts encourage them to explore something, which is quite stimulating, motivating and interesting. Types of activities that can be used in the classroom can be a project work, drawing, colouring, cutting out, making things, solving problems, recording information ...etc. The reason behind such activities is that learners learn by doing, by being actively involved in their learning; and it creates opportunities for them to use their imagination and creativity. In conducting these activities learners get involved in the learning process and become aware of learning how to learn, which is quite important for them. The following table lists some of the major activities that can be implemented in the EFL classroom (2004, p. 105). Language learning success depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom (Wong, 2005, p. 246).

In the language learning and developing studies, foreign language teachers can apply many methods, techniques or learning styles which may be beneficial to the students. Among these methods and techniques, we can list translation method, unprepared talking, listening and writing activities, free reading activity, group discussion, dialog activities, pair work, ket preparation, dictation, game, songs, gap fillings, vocabulary drills, etc. These methods and techniques are important in terms of both increasing the vocabulary of the students and for the functional grammar learning by constantly making the learned subjects and rules dynamic so as to form

a basis for the new learning by using these methods and techniques effectively. Shaping the learning environment by implementing such different methods and techniques is among the applications required by the constructivist learning strategy.

Almost all teachers who perform the duty of teaching English as a foreign language in Turkey are the teachers whose mother tongue is Turkish. A qualified teacher can surely earn the students all language skills about the target language whether this language is his/her mother language or a language that he/she learned as foreign language. The following qualities must be present in a teacher who wants to continue his/her studies in accordance with the objectives:

- Good knowledge of the social and cultural features of the society in which the target language is spoken.
- Competency in reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills which are the basic language skills and the grammar learning area which ensures the use of these skills functionally.
- Having a pedagogical competency and occupational experience.
- Understanding and interpreting the conversations and writings which belong to the target language.
- Loving the art and the literature.
- Knowledge of human psychology, the learning features of the individual and the development of the individual.
- Benefiting from the technological tools in language education and teaching.
- Causing the taught subjects and rules to be comprehended and actualizing activ-

ities which will provide permanent learning.

- Aiming to earn the students qualities such as responsibility awareness, self-esteem, reading habit, etc...

Problem

How are the teaching strategies and class applications of the teachers who teach the English in Turkey as a foreign language?

Sub-problems

1. Do the teachers who teach English as a foreign language use modern teaching strategies, methods and techniques in the learning and teaching process?
2. Is the physical environment in which the language teaching activities are performed and the social dimension of the environment (class interactivity and the use of the language) appropriate for the development of the language skills?
3. What kind of a feature do the foreign language lessons show in terms of features such as interest, desire, asking questions, talking, participating in the discussions, taking responsibility, etc.?

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to conduct a case assessment about the teachers who teach English in Turkey as a foreign language and to offer the language lecturers their strategies, methods, techniques and class activities which are considered efficient and used in the learning and teaching process.

Universe and Sample

In Turkey, English is taught as a foreign language in all education levels from primary school to the university. English is taught as a foreign language in state high schools and private high schools with nearly a rate of 100%. The universe of this research is composed of the foreign language (English) teachers who work in the state high schools and private high schools in Niğde and Kayseri provinces which is located in the center of the Turkey. 26 of the teachers in the different socio-cultural environment (inner city, affluent suburban and average suburban) within the universe have been determined as the sample with a random method.

Limitedness

The research is limited to 2007/08 education year, 26 teachers which have been stated in the sample, 11 questions from interview form among the data collection tools to be asked to the teachers, and 5 observation dimensions stated in the observation form.

Abbreviations and definitions

ÖSS: (For the universities) Student Selection Examination

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

Method (Collection and analysis of the data)

In the research, interview and observation methods have been used in the scope of qualitative approach. 11 questions in the interview form have been asked to 26 teachers who teach English as a foreign language and the answers have been noted

down and subjected to the content analysis. In the scope of the research, 2 teachers have been observed in the class environment. The important points related to the qualities and applications of the teachers who have been observed in 5 dimensions of observation within the *observation form* have been noted down. Noteworthy data obtained with interview and observation method have been firstly classified, put into the tables, and made ready for the content analysis. Processed data have been coded with content analysis understanding and it is attempted to obtain some themes. In the last stage of the analysis, definition and interpretation studies have been conducted in accordance with the codes and themes which have been obtained through data.

Coding is an initial and major process for the analysis gravitated towards discovering the content of the data in the qualitative analysis (Punch, 2005, p. 193). The understanding of the content of documents is dependent on the determination of the content of words and sentences in the texts with content analysis (Yaman and Erdoğan, 2007, p. 242). Content analysis is to bring together the similar data in the content analysis in the scope of certain concepts and themes, and to interpret these data by arranging them in a comprehensible order (Yildirim and Simsek, 2005, p. 227).

In the research, the findings obtained with personal knowledge, interview and observation forms used as data collection tools have been classified in two categories. The first one is the findings related to personal knowledge and the second one is the

findings obtained with the interview and observation forms.

1 Statistical analysis

Findings related to personal knowledge: Defining analysis related to variables such as the gender, occupational seniority, graduated educational institution, teaching program, etc. of the teachers has been conducted.

Analysis has been performed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 11.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA).

2 Data analysis (The findings obtained with interview and observation forms)

a In the qualitative approach based content analysis of the data obtained with interview questions, the following process has been followed: Firstly, the data which have been obtained from the answers of the reference people via the questions in the interview form have been put into the tables. Then, the study of assigning themes has been conducted by coding based on noteworthy answers. Finally, deductions have been made by interpreting codes and themes, and some results have been attempted to be put forward.

In the analysis process of the data obtained with interview;

$R_1, R_2, R_3 \dots$: Defines the questions of the researcher,

$T_{1,2,3} \dots$: Defines the reference people whose opinions have been taken (Teachers who teach English as a foreign language),

$[^1], [^2], [^3] \dots$: Defines the noteworthy answers (the number of words, sentences

or paragraphs).

b The observation data analysis process conducted in order to reveal the teaching strategies and practices presented by the teachers who teach English in Turkey as a foreign language is as follows: The processing of the qualities related to the extents of observation, assigning themes by coding based on noteworthy answers, defining and interpreting in accordance with codes and themes.

In the analysis process of the data obtained with observation;

$E_1, E_2, E_3 \dots$: Defines the extent of observations taken into account,

$T_1, T_2, T_3 \dots$: Defines the reference people observed (Teachers who teach English as a foreign language),

$[^1], [^2], [^3] \dots$: Defines the number words, sentences or paragraphs that determine the noteworthy qualities and practices.

Table 1

Distribution of Teachers According to		
Their Genders	<i>f</i>	%
Woman	12	46.00
Man	14	54.00
Total	26	100.00

Table 2

Distribution of Teachers According to			
kind of school	<i>f</i>	%	
State	Profession high school for girls	2	7.69
school	High school (simple)	8	30.77
	Anatolia high school	8	30.77
Private	Science high school	5	19.23
school	Anatolia high school	3	11.54
Total		26	100.00

Table 3

Distribution of Teachers According to		
their Seniority Status	<i>f</i>	%
1-5 year	3	11.50
6-10 year	8	31.00
11-15 year	6	23.00
16-20 year	6	23.00
21 year and surplus	3	11.50
Total	26	100.00

Findings and Comments

1. Findings related to personal knowledge

As it is seen in Table 1, a total of 26 teachers (12 female and 14 male) have participated in the research. Female teachers

constitute 46% of the total participants while male teachers constitute 54% of the total participants.

In Table 2, the distribution of the teachers in accordance with the school types in which they work is seen. When the distri-

Table 4

Educational Institutions of Graduation	<i>f</i>	%
Faculty of Education	17	65.00
Faculty of Arts and Sciences	8	31.00
Faculty of Language and History,	1	4.00
Total	26	100.00

Table 5

Department of Graduation / Education Program	<i>f</i>	%
English Language Teaching	16	61.50
English Language and Literature	9	34.50
German Language and Literature	-	-
French Language and Literature	-	-
Linguistics	1	4.00
Total	26	100.00

bution in accordance with the state school and private school is observed, it is seen that 2 teachers work in state girls' vocational school, 8 teachers work in the state Anatolian high school. In our sample, 5 teachers work in the private science high school and 3 teachers work in the private Anatolian high school.

In Table 3, the distribution of the number of years that the teachers perform the duty of teaching English as a foreign language is seen. The number of the teachers who have 1-5 years of seniority is 3, and their ratio is 11.50%. The number of the teachers who have 6-10 years of seniority is 8, and their ratio is 31%. The number of the teachers who have 11-15 years of seniority is 6, and their ratio is 23%. The number of the teachers who have 16-20 years of seniority is 6, and their ratio is 23%. The number of the teachers who have

21 years or more of seniority is 3, and their ratio is 11.50%. According to the distribution, a great deal of the English teachers is in the 6-20 year seniority range.

When the distribution of the teachers in accordance with their educational institutions of graduation is observed, it is seen that there are 17 people (65%) who graduated from the Faculty of Education, there are 8 people (31%) who graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and there is 1 person (4%) who graduated from the Faculty of Language, History and Geography.

It is seen that 16 of the teachers (61.50%) are graduates of the Department of English Language Teaching, 9 of the teachers (34.50%) are graduates of the Department of English Language and Literature, and 1 of the teachers (4%) is a graduate of the Department of Linguistics.

Table 6

Variety of School / Course Center	f	%
State School	18	69.00
Private School	8	31.00
Total	26	100.00

Table 7

R ₁ : What are the factors that affected you in deciding to perform the duty of teaching English as a foreign language?	Assigning Themes by Coding
T _{1,3,5,7} : My fondness for English has been effective [¹].	Love
T _{2,4,8,10,11,17,19,22,24,25,26} : My interest in and skill for the language [²].	Interest and ability
T ₆ : The good level of my English education in the high school [³].	
T ₉ : My family's wish, the low number of work hours and the idea of being more comfortable have been effective on my choosing the job of teaching English as a foreign language [⁴].	Family wish Comfortable and
T ₁₂ : I had an interest in a foreign culture. The flexibility, variability, and interesting feature of the language lesson activities and their corresponding to my personality [⁵].	interesting working environment
T _{13,23} : The use of English in the entire world. English's allowing me to improve myself [⁶].	Foreign culture
T ₁₄ : The fact that I liked my English teacher and his/her lesson very much has been effective [⁷].	Personal development
T _{15,20} : My love for English and teaching, the pleasure I take from teaching a foreign language [⁸].	Teacher effect
T ₁₈ : The reason why I chose this branch is the exam system [⁹].	Exam system

The fact that a great deal of the teachers in the sample is a graduate of the Department of English Language Teaching of Faculty of Education is evaluated as a positive condition for the quality of foreign language teaching in Turkey.

It is seen that among the teachers who participated in the research, 18 of them (69%) work in the state schools and 8 of them (31%) work in private schools.

2. The findings obtained with interview and observation forms

a. The qualitative approach based content analysis of the data obtained with interview questions

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

Most of the teachers emphasized that their interest in and ability for the English and their love of foreign language have been effective in their choosing the foreign language teaching. One teacher has mentioned about the effect of the interest in learning the foreign cultures on choos-

Table 8

R ₂ : Did you get a special education for teaching English as a foreign language? Did you attend any course or seminar for that purpose?	<i>Assigning Themes by Coding</i>
T _{1,5} : I attended English teaching methods course [1].	<i>Language teaching</i>
T _{2,3,4,6,8,9,10,11,13,14,17,18} : No, I did not [2].	<i>courses</i>
T _{12,14,26} : I participated in the book publicity and lesson lecturing seminars (Teaching Training) of Oxford Publications [3].	<i>Teacher training</i>
T ₁₆ : I attended many courses related to my branch. After my undergraduate education, I went to USA for practice and effective talking. I worked as an English teacher in European countries such as England and Germany [4].	<i>In-service training</i>
T _{19,21,25} : I attended various certificate programs related to language teaching [5].	
T ₂₀ : I attended the courses and seminars of Cambridge Esol, TKT Modules, Preparation to Toefl, London Meriddron College, etc. at home and abroad [6].	

ing the foreign language teaching. Two teachers have mentioned about the effect of the language education taken in the high school and his/her English teacher on choosing the foreign language teaching. One teacher has stated that the fact that English is used in the entire world and the idea that English will allow his/her personal development has been effective. One teacher has stated that the reason why he/she chose this branch is the exam system. As it is seen here, almost all English teachers chose their branches fondly and willingly. The fact that more than half of the samples are graduates of English Language Teaching (Table 5) confirms this opinion.

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

In response to the question "Did you take any special education for the duty of teaching English as a foreign language?", two teachers have stated that they attend-

ed English teaching methods course; three teachers have stated that they attended various certificate programs related to language teaching; four teachers have stated that they attended book publicity and lesson lecturing seminars (Teaching Training) which were organized by the publishers of the books which they use in their lessons. A great deal of the teachers (12 teachers) did not participate in any in-service activity other than the undergraduate education. However, the foreign language education which requires a pedagogical competency necessitates following modern language teaching strategies, methods and techniques.

Table 9

R ₃ : Do you give your lessons in specially designed language classrooms or in normal classrooms?	<i>Assigning Themes by Coding</i>
Ö _{1,2,3,4,5,7,9,10,11,17,18} : I give lessons in a normal classroom [¹].	
Ö _{6,12,13,14,16,19,20,21,22,24,25,26} : I give lessons in a normal classroom; however, sometimes I give lessons in technology/language classroom where there are a-beam appliance, smart board, etc. [²].	<i>Normal classroom</i> <i>Specially designed</i>
Ö ₂₃ : There is kobinet application in our school. I give lessons in my own classroom [³].	<i>language</i>
Ö ₁₂ : I give lessons in normal classrooms. I believe that it is of no use to give lessons in language laboratories [⁴].	<i>laboratory</i>

Table 10

R ₄ : Do you follow the lesson and student practice books specially prepared for teaching English as a foreign language?	<i>Assigning Themes by Coding</i>
Ö _{1,4,5,10,12,13} : Yes. I use state books (The books of the Ministry of National Education) [¹].	<i>State books</i>
Ö ₂ : Yes. I use New Bridge to Success set. I also use Betty Azar – English Grammar [²].	
Ö _{3,14,16,17,18,26} : Yes. I use the books of Oxford, Longman Publications [³].	
Ö _{7,9} : Yes. I use Correct Your English Grammar (Spring Publishing) and New Inside English Grammar - Elementary / Intermediate (Nova Press – Publication) [⁴].	<i>Specially prepared</i>
Ö _{8,11} : Yes. I use English Workshop (J. Clark – Akademi Publication) [⁵].	<i>book sets</i>
Ö _{20,21,22,23} : Yes. I use English in Mind (Cambridge) and New Bridge to Success [⁶].	
Ö _{24,25} : Yes. I use Thomson Heink Cause and Effect Reading. English File series [⁷].	

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

The half of the teachers in the sample has stated that they give lessons in normal classrooms; some teachers have stated that they give lessons in specially organized language classrooms with a-beam appliance, smart board, etc. It has been found significant that one teacher has stated he/she believes that it is of no use to give lessons in language laboratories. Giving lessons in the language laboratories which have technological equipment is impor-

tant for earning and developing language skills.

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

In English teaching as a foreign language, specially prepared lesson books are used. As it is seen in Table 10, we can list Correct Your English Grammar (Spring Publishing) and New Inside English Grammar - Elementary / Intermediate, New Bridge to Success, English Grammar (Betty Azar), English Workshop (J. Clark),

Table 11

R ₂ : Do you think that grammar subjects within the program applied by you are so intense that they prevent the development of language skills?	<i>Assigning Themes by Coding</i>
T _{1, 19, 24, 26} : Grammar is difficult in some subjects. I don't teach grammar as much as possible [1].	
T _{2, 6, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22} : Yes, lessons are usually related with grammar. Sometimes, the grammar subjects that will never be used are included in the curriculum. We cannot make 'speaking' lessons because we have to complete the grammar subjects [2].	<i>Grammar subjects</i>
T _{3, 4, 11, 13, 14, 21, 23} : No, I don't [1].	
T ₅ : Yes, but it is easier to teach grammar in the classroom environment [4].	<i>Development of the</i>
T _{7, 8} : Yes, grammar subjects are difficult. The knowledge level of the students is low and the number of lesson hours is fairly low. It is hard to teach English under these conditions [1].	<i>basic language skills</i>
T ₁₆ : No, the low number of lesson hours is a more difficult obstacle for me [4].	
T ₂₅ : No, I don't. Learning a language is a whole process; of course, 'speaking' is important, but grammar must also be given without going through the details apart from the 'speaking' [7].	

Oxford, Longman, etc. among the books which are used in teaching. The teachers who use the books of the Ministry of National Education have stated that the books are inadequate and have been prepared without care, and the CD provided with the book and the teacher's book are not coherent with the lesson book, and they want videos for the subjects that are taught.

It is important to use lesson book as the basic material. In addition, the students must be encouraged to read books such as biographies, memoirs, stories, novels, etc. apart from the lesson book in their spare times.

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

In response to the question "Do you think that grammar subjects are so intense that they prevent the development of language skills", seven teachers have given the

answer "No, I don't." A great deal of the teachers whose opinions have been taken think that there are unnecessary and difficult grammar subjects in the curriculum and they cannot make 'speaking' lessons because they have to complete these subjects. Four teachers have stated that they avoid teaching grammar subjects as much as possible.

Grammar teaching is important for a systematic language teaching. However, the important thing is to use the rules of the language functionally in practice (while speaking and writing in daily life). On this matter, Tosun (2006, p. 85) says: Although students have sufficient grammar knowledge, they do not know how to use this knowledge. To help them on how to use this knowledge for communication purposes, new approaches are required which are prepared directly for language learning and teaching. It must be understood that

Table 12

R ₆ : Which approaches and methods must be followed in order for students to act more freely and to develop their language skills? (Searching: invention, interactive, structuring approach, auditory-lingual, auditory-visual, cognitive, natural, eclectic, etc.	<i>Assigning Themes by Coding</i>
T _{1,16,25} : I apply different approaches and methods according to the subject [¹].	<i>Dictation practice</i>
T _{2,7,8,10,11,17,21,22} : Auditory-lingual, auditory-visual. I use interactive approach more often [²].	<i>Pronunciation exercises Interactive learning</i>
T _{3,12,13,20} : I generally use all approaches and methods [³].	
T _{4,18,24} : I act with presentation, invention, research and constructivist approach, I give activities which present the students' own efforts [⁴].	<i>Using different methods and techniques</i>
T _{5,9,14,19,23} : I use eclectic and natural method [⁵].	<i>Associating the target language with the</i>
T ₆ : I allow the students to talk about any subject they want without a subject limitation [⁶].	<i>mother language</i>
T ₂₆ : Communicative Language Teaching and Natural Approach [⁷].	

Table 13

R ₇ : Do you inform your students beforehand about issues such as the acquisitions regarding the lesson and the learning strategies which you follow while you are teaching English as a foreign language?	<i>Assigning Themes by Coding</i>
T _{1,3,4,8,9,10,11,13,14,16,17,18,22,25} : Yes, I inform them at the beginning of the lesson [¹].	
T _{2,4,7} : No, I do not provide any information [²].	
T _{5,19,21,23,24} : I provide information in some special cases [³].	<i>The Importance of providing</i>
T ₁₂ : At the beginning of the year and during the year, I make necessary explanations on learning [⁴].	<i>information about the goals.</i>
T ₂₀ : Yes, visual [⁵].	
T ₂₆ : I do inform them. However, I constantly receive reactions, because they are used to the lesson model with a classical grammar teaching. They approach in a prejudiced way [⁶].	

language is not only composed of grammar patterns and word list.

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

More than half of the teachers whose opinions have been taken have stated that they act with the presentation, invention, research, constructivist approaches and

eclectic method understanding which is composed of methods such as auditory-lingual, auditory-visual, interactive, question and answer, role play, pair-work, etc. in the framework of these approaches. One of the teachers has stated, "I allow the students to talk about any subject they want without a subject limitation", and six teachers have stated that they use the nat-

Table 14

R ₄ : What do you think about your students' interest levels and skills toward learning English as a foreign language during the language skill acquisition activities that you provide?	<i>Assigning Themes by Coding</i>
T _{1,13,14} : It differs depending on the students and time [1].	
T _{2,3,11,17,18,21} : I do not think that their interest and skills are sufficient [2].	
T _{4,25} : If the teachers make their students like the lesson, if their dialogues with the students are good, then the interest, desire, and participation of the students for the lesson become better [3].	<i>Teacher's approach Desire to learn</i>
T _{5,6,19,22,24} : Due to their worries of ÖSS, students' interests and desires towards English decrease as they advance to an upper class [4].	<i>foreign language.</i>
T ₇ : The students are uninterested and inefficient in foreign language. As a result of this inefficiency, their levels are low and therefore they do not want to learn English [5].	
T _{8,10} : I find their interests to be efficient, yet their skills inefficient. This is because the concerns of students are all about getting prepared for ÖSS [6].	
T ₉ : Generally, I find 70% of the students in the class to be apt at and enthusiastic about language [7].	<i>Purpose of learning foreign language:</i>
T ₁₆ : They are generally interested. The skill, on the other hand, changes from student to student. As the weekly lesson period decreases, the interest and significance attached to the lesson by the students decreases, too [8].	<i>Being successful in the exam or using it daily in social life.</i>
T _{20,23} : The interests and skills of those who do not perceive foreign language as a necessity are not adequate [9].	
T ₂₆ : Their interest and skills are very low. They do not know how to use the language due to the system they were accustomed to in lower classes. Therefore, they have very little interest and fondness [16].	

ural approach.

Foreign language teachers benefit from their mother language for many reasons (Tercanlıoğlu, 2000, p. 326). With this matching or comparison performed via the mother language in the foreign language teaching, the students learn the foreign language not with a memorization method but with a method of understanding consciously (Mehmedoğlu, 2000, p. 155). For that reason, a suitable environment must be

prepared for the students who learn the target language (English) to learn the words, subjects and rules by associating them with their mother tongue, and permanent and functional learning must be aimed with activities such as pronunciation, dictation, etc.

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

As examined in Table 13, it is seen that

Table 15

R ₉ : Do you give all of the lessons aimed for the basic language skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) in teaching English as a foreign language along with the field of grammar learning or have you specialized on any of these fields?	<i>Assigning Themes by Coding</i>
T _{1,5,6,8,10,11,13,14,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26} : I give all the lessons related to all skills [¹].	<i>Whole language education</i>
T ₂ : I give all lessons related to each skill. However, I think that I am better on the subject of reading [²].	<i>application</i>
T ₃ : I give lessons related to speaking and reading skills [³].	<i>Specialization in</i>
T ₇ : Such a specialization is not considered necessary within the secondary education institutions [⁴].	<i>skills</i>
T ₉ : I give all the lessons related to each skill. However, I feel that I am more adept in the field of grammar [⁵].	

half of the teachers within the sample have informed the students at the beginning of the lesson about the activities to be done and that two teachers provided information to the students at the beginning of the education year. Several teachers stated that they were unable to inform their students due to inadequacy of time and because of the fact that the students approached the teacher's information in a prejudiced way and reacted since they were accustomed to the classical grammar oriented lesson model. Students' considering such explanations as unnecessary and their demands from the teacher to quickly start the lesson can be thought as a natural result of the education which is based on memorization. Before starting the activities, it is useful to inform the students by explaining the objective.

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

According to teachers, the level of students to learn English as a foreign language

differs depending on such variables as students' tendency and willingness to learn language, whether they intend to have a goal of learning a language, low number of weekly lesson hours, students' approach to and perception of the language, teachers' competence, and the communication of teachers with the students. For teachers, students' main purpose of learning a language is not to use it in their social lives, but to pass their exams and classes. Several teachers associate the reason of this to students' worries of getting prepared for the universities, their not considering the foreign language as a necessity and the failure of the education system to fulfill its function. (see Table 14 [6], [9], [10]).

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

As it can be seen in Table 15, majority of the teachers stated that they give all the lessons related to the field of grammar learning which provides basic language skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing and an efficient use of these skills.

Table 16

R ₁₆ : Are you able to attach equal importance to all of the language skills and spare equal time for each of them in the activities?	<i>Assigning Themes by Coding</i>
T _{1, 4, 6, 11, 12, 14} : All of them are equally significant, yet I can not spare equal time for all of them [1].	
T ₂ : I allocate less time for the listening and writing skills [2].	<i>Four basic</i>
T ₃ : I am trying to spend more time on the speaking skill [1].	<i>language skills</i>
T _{5, 8} : I allocate more time for grammar subjects [1].	
Ö ₁ : The writing skill is being neglected. Speaking skill stands as a more important issue [1].	<i>Efficiently using the time</i>
Ö _{9, 10, 21} : No, I am not able to attach equal importance and not able to allocate equal time. [2].	
T _{11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25} : Yes, I attach equal importance to each skill and spend equal time for them [4].	
Ö ₂₆ : Writing and reading remain deficient [1].	

This means that there is no specialization in a language skill. Such conditions as the low number of lesson hours, the perspective of teachers, the failure of the education and teaching system in Turkey to encourage specialization in one skill can be considered the reason of this.

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

Almost half of the teachers have stated that they attach importance to each skill and allocate equal time in order to improve the language skills [6]. Two teachers have stated that they spend more time on the grammar subjects, two have stated that they neglect the writing and listening skills, whereas six teachers have pointed out that they give equal importance to all the language skills. Teachers, especially, pointed out that the low number of lesson hours, the fact that it takes a very long time for

the students to practice what they learn eliminate the preference of allocating equal time to skills, cause an obligation to allocate less time for the practice and lead to a difficulty in efficiently using the time. In order to earn students the language skills and improve them, it is important to attach necessary importance to and allocate adequate time for each skill in coordination.

Table 17

R ₁₁ : What are the measurement and evaluation activities that you conduct in order to determine the students' acquisition and development levels of language skills?	<i>Assigning Themes by Coding</i>
T _{1, 6, 8, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26} : I give written exams and pop quizzes and observe the students' participation in class activities (pair work, speaking, listening etc.) [¹].	<i>Determination of</i>
T ₂ : I make assessments through dialog activities, texts in which I explain grammar subjects, tests, and question & answer activities [²].	<i>post-course student success</i>
T ₄ : I check the student performance in the applications such as games, songs, gap fillings, vocabulary drills which I use in the learning and teaching process activities [³].	<i>Oral exam,</i>
T _{5, 10} : Due to low number of lessons, the assessment is limited to written examinations [⁴].	<i>homework and written exam</i>
T ₉ : Written exam, oral exam and student presentation works [⁵].	
T ₁₂ : I give separate exams for each skill [⁶].	<i>Post-topic tests</i>
T _{13, 17, 24} : Success tests, quizzes, tests, post subject tests [⁷].	
T ₁₆ : I am trying to measure the speaking skill sometimes with a discussion and sometimes by observing the natural atmosphere, and to measure other skills I use different methods [⁸].	<i>Test type and classical written</i>
T ₂₂ : 10-15 times a year, I give quizzes, tests, dialogs, speaking, reading, writing, ket preparation, dictation, etc. [⁹].	<i>exams</i>
T ₂₃ : In order to determine the improvement of student success, we apply the European language system filing and monitoring system (Portfolio) [¹⁰].	

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

Teachers attempt to determine students' acquisition levels of language skills by using different applications. Teachers commonly use quiz, classical written exam and post-topic tests within their assessment. Secondly, they use process evaluation method in determining the class and general performances of the students. With these applications, students' participation in activities such as dialog, question-answer, pair work, speaking, listening, reading, writing, ket preparation, dictation, game, songs, gap fillings, vocabulary drills,

and discussion are observed and determined. This application ends with the examination of the Portfolio (student work selection file) documents in which the works exhibited by the students through the process are saved, and with the grading of students.

b The observation data analysis conducted in order to reveal the education strategies and the class practices of the teachers who teach English as a foreign language

Table 18 Findings on the qualities and the practices of the teachers that are observed

T _{1,2} :	School: Private Hisarcklihađlu Science High School	<i>Assigning Themes</i>
Lesson: English	Date: 22 / 05 / 2008 Classroom: High school 1/3	<i>by Coding</i>
<i>E₁: Physical environment</i>		
T _{1,2} : The illumination and wall color of the class is good and there is a quiet and noise free environment [1]. T _{1,2} : In the class desks are aligned in a "U" pattern, the use of technological materials are very good. Smart touch-board is used in the class [2]. T ₂ : Walls are designed with such materials as pictures, plates, student Works [3].		<i>Motivation, Technological equipment of the class</i>
<i>E₂: The social extent of the environment and the interaction</i>		
T _{1,2} : Teacher's entrance in the class, communication with the students and the way the students are motivated are really good [1]. T ₂ : The teacher sometimes asks questions to call their attention and creates an environment for them to participate in the lesson [2]. T ₁ : Students ask questions and speak about the domestic and world problems [3]. T _{1,2} : Teachers and students establish a communication and express their feelings and opinions [4].		<i>Communication, Teaching understanding of the teacher, Democratic class environment</i>
<i>E₃: Classroom activities and the use of language</i>		
T _{1,2} : Activities of language skills acquisition is achieved through the texts [1]. T _{1,2} : A sufficient amount of time is allocated to reading, listening, speaking and writing activities, and students are asked to talk on current issues [2]. T _{1,2} : In order to develop the vocabulary of the students, application works are carried out regarding the word, word group, idiom, etc. [3]. T ₂ : Students are asked questions about the text listened, the play watched, etc. and asked to make comments [4]. T ₁ : With this way of speaking and behaviors, the teacher encourages students and prompts them to participate in the lesson [5].		<i>Non-verbal behaviors Learning and teaching through the text, Improving the vocabulary</i>
<i>E₄: Measurement and evaluation</i>		
T _{1,2} : Students' acquisition levels regarding the activity carried out are measured [1]. T ₁ : In the process of learning and teaching; the questions are asked with a candid behavior and in a chatting style and the students understand the questions the first time they are asked [2]. T _{1,2} : During the lesson, the students are observed in terms of such points as listening and participation in the lesson, and put into record by the teacher [3]. T _{1,2} : The questions are asked to all the students within the classroom. There is a 20-40 seconds waiting period in order to receive answers [4]. T _{1,2} : The lesson is directed by taking into account the feedbacks from the students in such activities as text reading, listening, play watching [5].		<i>Effective Student profile The level of skill acquisition, Asking method and understandability of the questions</i>

Defining and interpreting the data in accordance with the codes and themes

Physical environment: The student desks in the classroom are aligned with a 'U' pattern. The lessons are conducted in a noiseless environment and no de-motivating noise is felt within the classroom. The walls are designed with such student activity sheets as pictures and plates related to the lesson. The infrastructure of the lesson is achieved through technological equipments such as the smart touch board. It is well known that these types of facilities provide great advantages to teachers and students for the acquisition and the improvement of the language skills.

The social extent of the environment and the interaction: The communications of the teachers with the students and accordingly their efforts to make the students participate in the lesson have been observed. In a democratic class atmosphere, students are provided with such an environment so as to enable them to ask questions and describe their feelings and suggestions.

Classroom activities and the use of language: Within the lesson, a sufficient amount of time is allocated to the reading, listening, speaking and writing activities with the help of texts, and in order to improve the vocabulary of the students, application activities are carried out related to word, word group, idiom, etc. Students are asked questions on the subject that is taught and it is attempted to improve their language skills by asking them to speak and make comments. It has also been observed that the inadequacy of the students to participate in the lesson and

to learn the target language de-motivate the teachers.

Measurement and evaluation: With the help of lesson-start (attendance), interim and lesson-end evaluations, it is attempted to determine the students' levels of acquisition following the activity. The questions asked to the students by the teacher with a candid manner are perceived by the students the first time they are asked, and an average of 20-40 seconds waiting period is provided in order to receive answers to questions. In cases where the questions are not understood, clues are provided or the questions are asked in a different way so as to ensure that the students understand them. The students are observed during the lesson, and the results regarding this observation are noted by the teacher in the student observation book. The lesson is directed in line with the feedbacks acquired from the students in the activities.

Learner qualities: These characteristics can be understood by examining the activity types of the students, the control levels of the learners on the learning, interaction levels among the learners and whether the students undertake such roles as implementation, application and problem solving (Richards ve Rodgers, 1986, p. 14-30). Despite the efforts shown by the teachers, students in the learning – teaching process do not efficiently participate in lesson activities such as reading, listening, speaking, writing, asking and answering questions. Students are unable to describe their feelings, opinions and contemplations accurately and completely while answering the questions. This incompetence

prevents the students from taking responsibility and participating in the discussions and social activities with self-esteem. It has been observed that students generally act with the purpose of passing their classes rather than learning the target language.

Results

It is seen that majority of the 26 foreign language teachers (English) participating in the research, eight of whom work in private schools and 18 of whom in state schools are in 6 - 20 year seniority range.

17 of the teachers within the sample are graduates of the department of English Teaching- Faculty of Education, eight of them are graduates of the Department of English Language and Literature Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and one teacher is a graduate of Faculty of Language, History and Geography. When the distribution of the teachers by their graduation departments and education programs are examined, it has been seen that most of the English teachers are graduates of the English Teaching Departments of the Education Faculties which train teachers.

It has been determined that such factors as love for language, interest and gift for English, the most spread language status of English in the world, and the advantages it provides in personal development were influential for most of the teachers to select foreign language teaching as a duty/branch. From these statements, it can be deduced that almost all of the teachers have selected the English branch eagerly and willingly.

Teachers form time to time attend cours-

es and seminars such as English education methods course, certificate programs related to language education, book promotion and lecturing seminars. Several teachers have stated that they did not participate in any in-service activity related to their field except for their undergraduate education.

Foreign language education lessons are mostly conducted in normal classes. Very few teachers give lessons in language classes which are designed with such technological tools as data shows, a-beam devices and smart boards.

Specially prepared text books are utilized in English Education as a foreign language and text books are used as a basic material. The teachers using the text books of the Ministry of National Education point out that the books are incompetently and recklessly prepared and the CD provided with the Book is not coherent with the Teacher's Text Book and they request that videos be provided for the subjects taught.

Majority of the teachers find the grammar subjects to be so dense that they prevent the improvement of the language skills. According to teachers, such factors as students' low interest and perception levels, the unnecessary and difficult grammar subjects within the curriculum and low number of lesson hours complicate the foreign language education.

More than half of the teachers act with the eclectic method understanding which consists of methods such as presentation, finding, research, natural, constructivist approach and auditory-lingual, auditory-visual, interactive question and answer, rope-play and pair-work within the framework of these approaches.

Half of the teachers who are included in the sample inform the students at the beginning of the lesson about the activities they are to conduct.

For teachers, variables such as weekly lesson hours, professional and pedagogic competence of the teachers, their conversation with the students, the approaches and perceptions of the students towards the foreign language determine the students' eagerness for learning English. Students want to learn foreign language not to use it in their social lives, but to be successful in exams and to pass their classes.

Rather than becoming specialized towards one language skill in language teaching, all of the lessons related to the reading, listening, speaking, and writing language skills along with the grammar learning field are given by one teacher. Teachers attach equal importance to each skill, yet are unable to allocate equal time for them due to such reasons as low number of lesson hours and the fact that the activities take a long time.

Teachers determine the language skill acquisition levels of the students with different measurement and assessment methods. In the evaluation, besides the quiz, classical written exam and post-subject test, the process evaluation method is implemented in order to determine the class performances and general performances of the students.

The physical features of the class, the sitting pattern of the students, social aspect of the class environment, the communication of the teachers with the students, the frequency of questions asked by the stu-

dents, their efforts to use the language by means of describing their ideas and suggestions are all realized in a democratic atmosphere. Such competencies of students as implementing what is learnt in class activities, applying them and using them in their speeches and writings are determined with preliminary, interim and final evaluations, and feedbacks and repetitions, etc are conducted depending on the circumstances.

For teachers, the most important reason of the students' lack of interest and desire for the foreign language is the fact that no foreign language questions are asked in ÖSS.

Generally, it can be said that the teachers who teach English in Turkey as a foreign language do not have the necessary competence in terms of the use of modern education strategies, utilization of materials and class applications, etc. The education works towards the improvement of language skills are conducted in normal classes where physical conditions are inappropriate, and the lessons are attempted to be conducted with a traditional teaching approach in which no environment is prepared for the efficient use of the target language. As a natural result of this teaching understanding, the target group is unable to exhibit effective learner characteristics such as interest, desire, question asking, speaking and participation in the discussions.

Conclusion

In selecting the teachers who are going to give the foreign language education in state or private schools, it must be a basic

obligation for them to have graduated from the foreign language teaching programs of the education faculty. It must be ensured that the teachers who are to give language education acquire experience via living abroad which is aimed at the teaching and effective use of the language. In this context, in order for the teachers who will give foreign language education in Turkey to be trained with a proper quality in line with the international norms, teacher training projects must be actualized which include in-service course and seminars that will bring the applications existent in the modern world.

The students must be informed as to the advantages of learning the target language and they must be ensured that they learn the target language not to pass their classes but to use it in their daily lives.

The conditions must be provided so that the foreign language lessons are conducted in language labs specially organized and technologically equipped with data show, a-beam device, smart board, etc.

In addition to observing the specially prepared text-books in the education of English as a foreign language, auxiliary materials such as videos, CD's, Teacher's Book, student work books must be functionally used. In order for the students to improve their vocabulary, to internalize the subjects they learned and to use the target language in their daily lives, it must be ensured that they read book types such as biographies, memoirs and novels which are written in the target language and that they watch TV channels such as BBC, CNN, etc.

In order to attract the attention of the students and to prompt them to efficient-

ly participate in class, information on content must be provided at the beginning of the activity and the students must be informed of the goals. The awareness that the language does not only consists of grammar subjects and word list must be provided to students, and the grammar subjects must not be so densely given in order not to prevent the improvement of their language skills.

All basic language skills and grammar lessons must not be given by one teacher, and teachers must give lessons after becoming specialized in one of the reading, listening, speaking and writing skills or in the field of grammar learning.

The students must be informed as to the advantages of using the foreign language in social life rather than with the purpose of succeeding in the exams and passing their classes. They must be ensured that they see foreign language as a necessity, and their levels of interest and desire to learn English must be increased. With this purpose, the number of foreign language weekly lesson hours must be increased; foreign language questions must be included within the ÖSS exam, thus causing the students to establish a positive attitude towards the foreign language.

In determining the student competence related to their language skills, teachers, in addition to providing classical exams and post-subject test, must use alternative evaluation tools and methods such as portfolio assessment, process evaluation while determining the functionality of the intellectual processes such as interpreting the learned information, forming a cause and effect relation, making an analysis and synthesis.

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