



Instructor Comprehension In Grammar Learning: A Report Of Turkish EFL Vocabulary

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ABSTRACT

This Language Instructor Comprehension (LIC) study primarily explores language Instructors' beliefs and practices about a common Advised Second Language Procurement (ASLP) construct: Grammar Learning (GL). This study also aims to investigate to what extent Instructor beliefs and practices compromise with each other and cognitive and contextual factors behind their comprehension. The data were collected through interviews, observations, and stimulated recall with the Instructors. The findings after a cross-case analysis revealed that course book-based beliefs, experience-based beliefs, lack of theoretical knowledge and inclination for communicative activities influence what Instructors believe about GL. There are both congruent and incongruent relationships between beliefs and practices varying from one Instructor to another due to the effect of experiential knowledge, unconscious decisions, and some contextual factors. The findings can contribute to the integration of LIC into ASLP studies, and to LIC framework by exploring the effects of many variables on Instructors' decision-making processes.

KEYWORDS

Language Instructor comprehension (LIC), grammar learning (GL), Instructor beliefs(IB), Instructor practices(IP).

INTRODUCTION

Language Instructor comprehension studies drew substantial attention especially in the last 25 years, and the number of studies conducted in this research domain has

dramatically increased. Instructor comprehension as a theoretical framework refers to a complex combination of knowledge, beliefs and thoughts hold by

language Instructors regarding their instructional decisions and actions (Borg, 2006). It is also foregrounded that this complex cognitive activity of Instructors has its roots from their experience-based, personalized and context-sensitive perspectives and attitudes (Farrell & Lim, 2005). On the basis of this complexity, the relationship between Instructors' beliefs and their instructional practices has been the interest of many studies in the field of Language Instructor Comprehension (LIC).

There is lack of generalizability in L2 learning studies in terms of the outcomes because of several factors including learning styles, individual learner differences, power relationships, gender identities, religious beliefs and more (Long, 2017). Hence, the problem of generalizability requires examining other confounding variables such as Instructors, their beliefs and their learning more closely to have a deeper understanding of each instructional context and specific instruction that is implemented in that context. The inclusion of Instructor comprehension into grammar learning studies can be beneficial in that Instructors' epistemological beliefs shape the way they teach grammar, and it may be unlikely to change these beliefs with Instructor education or research findings without creating an awareness and reflection opportunity to revise the aforementioned beliefs (Basturkmen, 2007; Borg, 2011). Thus, this study will offer a learning context to be analysed on the basis of grammar learning to bridge the gap between ASLP and LIC.

METHOD

Research Participant and Data Collection

This study was conducted at a preparatory school of an English medium instruction university in Turkey. The preparatory school where the study was carried out hosts more than 1000 students. The lessons, 24 hours per

week, include integrated skills taught under the title of main course, which means all skills including reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and vocabulary are taught by means of a course book and complementary packs. 24 main course lessons are shared by three Instructors for each class, and these Instructors are expected to keep up with each other and complete the requirements of the weekly and monthly lesson plans. Additionally, these Instructors complete 24 hours of learning in a week in different classes.

INSTRUMENTATION

Selection of a small sample consisting of particular units of analysis and the aims of the study led me to use a qualitative case study methodology by employing cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Case study methodology was chosen because it provides a chance for in-depth investigation of a contemporary social phenomenon within the context where the phenomenon and context are bounded (Yin, 2018). Likewise, case study methodology helps researchers to collect data considering the need for in-depth analysis of the multi-faceted aspect of the reality that is related to the context itself (Yin, 2018). For this reason, descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory research questions constitute the skeleton of this study in order to meet the requirements of case study methodology, which aims to have a holistic and naturalistic perspective towards individuals, group practices, and institutional processes and policies (Yin, 2018).

FINDINGS

The findings inform about these four EFL Instructors' beliefs, practices and contextual factors influencing their beliefs and practices of grammar learning in accordance with convergences and divergences among them. This cross-case analysis aimed to provide a more comprehensive framework that can enable us to compare what the Instructors

working in the same institution believe and practise, and to what extent contextual factors affect these beliefs and practices.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study aimed to provide a particular perspective towards what language Instructors believe concerning L2 grammar learning, how they perform considering their stated beliefs and cognitive and contextual factors influencing their instructional decisions in order to contribute to the growing body of research conducted both in SLA and in LIC. This study also intended to bridge the gap between SLA and LIC by providing a reflection of how theoretical knowledge is perceived by language Instructors and to what extent their implementations are aligned with what SLA suggests. As a possible contribution LIC, this study aimed to offer a comprehensive framework to have a better understanding of Instructor comprehension rather than relying on a single variable. In this sense, I paid attention to consider the variables studied in the literature such as learning experience, previous language learning experience, and educational background. Selection of participants within the scope of these variables enabled me to compare and analyse the effects of these variables together compared to the studies focusing on the impact of a single variable.

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