Grammar Instruction for EFL Learners: Comprehension-Based or Production-Based?

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Abstract: This study aims at probing the answers to two main questions about “how” grammar should be taught: “How do two different types of instruction; namely, traditional, production-based versus comprehension-based instruction affect the acquisition of the target problem causing structures?, and “To what extent are the proficiency gains obtained from these two different types of instruction maintained over time?” It was hypothesized that comprehension-based instruction, in which grammar interpretation tasks are given, enables the learners to acquire the selected problem grammar structures as well as production based instruction does; yet, the proficiency gains obtained from comprehension-based instruction are maintained to a greater extent over time when compared to production based instruction.

The findings of the study suggested that comprehension-based instruction in which grammar interpretation tasks have been used, helps L2 learners with their comprehension and production as well as traditional instruction does. As for the durability of the proficiency gains obtained from two different types of instruction, it was found that the production scores of the subjects in comprehension-based instruction group were maintained to a greater extent over time when compared to the ones in production-based instruction group.

Key words: Explicit grammar instruction, comprehension-based grammar teaching, production-based grammar teaching, retention.


Çalışmanın sonucunda hem anlama­ya hem de üretimye dayalı öğretim önceden belir­lenen hedef bilgisi yapının ediniminde yara­rılı yaklaşımlar olduğu görülmüştür. Diğer tarafın, anlameya dayalı öğretim grubundaki deneklerin “anlama” açısından, üretim­ye dayalı öğretim grubundaki deneklerden farklilaşmadığı, ancak “üretme” açısından edinimlerinin daha kalıcı olduğu saptanmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Açıklamalı dilbilgisi, anlameya dayalı dilbilgisi öğretimi, üretmeye dayalı dilbilgisi öğretimi, kalıcılık.
1. INTRODUCTION

The question "how second language (L2) learning takes place in a classroom" has attracted the attention of many researchers in the field of second language acquisition. This is not an easy question to answer because as Sharwood Smith (1993) notes, in exposing learners to the second language, we are engaging a whole battery of different processing mechanisms. One of those mechanisms is the acquisition of grammar which has been the subject of controversy within the recent history of language teaching. "Should grammar be taught?" has been a major concern in the second language pedagogy. Some -like Krashen (in Ellis,1993) and Prabhu (1987) - adopted a "zero position" for grammar and maintained that grammar has only a minimal effect on the acquisition of a second language. They believe that providing the learners with opportunities for meaningful communication in the classroom, grammar will be learned naturally and automatically. In contrast to those, some others -like Rutherford and Sharwood Smith, (1988); Ellis (1990)- claim that some focus on form may well be necessary for many learners to achieve accuracy as well as fluency in their acquisition of a second language. Today, there is agreement in existing second language research about the role of grammar instruction: It is needed to promote advanced levels of target language attainment (Long, 1983; Pica, 1983, 1985 in Ellis, 1994, and Long, 1991).

1.1. Statement of the Topic and the Problem

Together with the approval of formal grammar instruction, people in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) are confronted with another concern: the nature of the relationship between knowledge of grammatical forms and the ability to use these forms accurately is not clear. The present study was prompted by this concern: Many thousands of EFL learners enroll in Turkish schools to learn English. They get plenty of exposure to English but it is observed that most of them have problems with "grammar" in particular. One specific example would be the learners in Anadolu University, Education Faculty, ELT Department. Most of these students have a one-year preparatory program with regular grammar lessons in it. In the following four years, the students have either compulsory or elective grammar classes. These students are trained to be English language teachers. Despite this intensive exposure to grammar, one can still detect frequent grammar mistakes, even when they are fourth year students. Turkish learners are commonly taught explicit rules of grammar but often fail to apply them in written or spoken language. That is, they keep making grammatical mistakes in the structures they have already been taught. To have a better understanding of grammar acquisition, how input turns into intake should be known. For language teachers and language learning researchers, it is important to recognize that language proficiency either develops as a response to input or fails to grow despite that input. The main question is "what kind of grammar teaching will work best for transforming input into intake?"

Ellis (1993) and Van Patten and Cadierno (1993) have made a case for supplementing activities designed to focus learners' attention on message conveyance with activities
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that also require a focus on form. They point out that traditionally, grammar has been taught by means of activities that give learners opportunities to produce sentences containing the targeted structure through pattern-practice drills or situational grammar exercises in which the target structure is contextualized. Ellis (1995) believes that this approach is problematic because asking learners to produce difficult grammatical structures and then correcting them when they make mistakes may increase their anxiety and be discouraging. As opposed to that approach, he proposes an alternative one to grammar teaching. He explains his approach as:

"...designing activities that focus learners' attention on a targeted structure in the input and that enable them to identify and comprehend the meaning(s) of that structure. This approach emphasizes input processing for comprehension rather than output processing for production, and requires the use of what I have termed interpretation tasks to replace traditional production tasks" (p. 88).

In this approach, particular emphasis is given to "input processing" which is concerned with the inversion of input into intake. The notion of form-meaning connection is involved in that processing; i.e. the strategies and mechanisms that promote form-meaning connections during comprehension. Van Patten and Cadierno (1993) suggest that if acquisition is to take place, the internal processor(s) must attend to "how the propositional content is encoded linguistically" (p. 227). Intake, then, is that subset of the input that a learner comprehends and from which grammatical information can be made available to the developing system. This point brings us to the significance of comprehension. Terrell (1991) suggests that comprehension strategies are the processing principles used by the learner to make sense of the stream of target language forms in the input. Comprehension involves assigning an "interpretation" to an utterance. Terrell uses the term "binding" to refer to psycholinguistic linking of meaning to a new form in the target language. The learners' task in the acquisition process is to use the input to posit and store correct meaning-form relationships.

The idea behind that—and also behind Ellis' alternative approach—is emphasizing the role of comprehension in the acquisition process, thereby exposing the students to more comprehension-based tasks rather than encouraging them to produce the explicitly taught grammatical forms, which is mostly the case in traditional grammar lessons. Comprehension-based instruction is suggested to facilitate the acquisition of grammar structures in terms of both comprehension and production of those structures (Van Patten and Cadierno, 1993). Van Patten and Cadierno suggest that rather than manipulating learner output to effect change in the developing system, instruction might seek to change the way that input is perceived and processed by the learner. This relationship is made obvious in Figure 1.1.

\[ \text{input} \rightarrow \text{intake} \rightarrow \text{developing system} \rightarrow \text{output} \]

\[ \text{processing mechanisms} \]

\[ \text{focused practice} \]

Figure 1.1. Processing Instruction in Foreign Language Teaching (Van Patten and Cadierno, 1993 p. 227)
Considering the fact that the students who are exposed to traditional, production-based grammar instruction fail to use certain grammatical structures in different tasks later on, another point presents a significance: retention. One of the questions this study considers is: What type of explicit grammar instruction is more beneficial for long term accuracy; the comprehension-based or the production-based one?

To conclude, based on the alternative approach to grammar teaching proposed by Ellis, this study intends to compare traditional, production-based grammar lessons to comprehension-based lessons (processing instruction) in which the learners are given grammar interpretation tasks.

There were two groups involved in the study: 1) traditional instruction group, 2) interpretation task group. To see the difference between these two groups, the subjects were given pre/post tests concerning the target structures explicitly taught. They were also given the follow-up test to answer the question about "retention" above.

The following questions were asked at the outset of the study:

1. How do proficiency gains -in comprehension and production- produced by intermediate level EFL learners who perform sentence level grammar interpretation tasks compare with the gains achieved by intermediate level EFL learners who are given traditional, teacher-fronted grammar lessons -with production tasks?

2. To what extent are the proficiency gains obtained from these two different types of treatment maintained over time?

Following these two main questions, specific research questions that follow were also asked in order to see the progression or regression (if any) within the groups as well as the differences between the two groups:

1. Is there a difference between the pre-test, post-test and follow-up test scores obtained from the subjects in the interpretation task group?

2. Is there a difference between the pre-test, post-test and follow-up test scores obtained from the subjects in the traditional instruction group?

3. Is there a difference between traditional instruction group and interpretation task groups in terms of comprehension post-test scores?

4. Is there a difference between traditional instruction group and interpretation task groups in terms of production post-test scores?

5. Is there a difference between traditional instruction group and interpretation task groups in terms of comprehension follow-up test scores?

6. Is there a difference between traditional instruction group and interpretation task groups in terms of production follow-up test scores?
1.2. Definitions

Production-based instruction: In this study, production-based instruction is used to refer to the type of instruction in which a grammatical structure is explained and then followed up by many practice and production activities, i.e. the learners are provided with opportunities to produce sentences containing that targeted structure. It refers to what is called "traditional" -teacher fronted- grammar teaching that focuses on the manipulation of learner output.

Comprehension-based instruction: In this type of instruction, the goal is to enable learners to comprehend rather than to produce the items within the input. That instruction provides activities that enable learners to (a) hear/read sentences containing the structures being taught and (b) identify the specific functions performed by the features (i.e., to establish form-meaning relationships) (Ellis, 1993).

Problematic grammar structures: In this study, the problematic grammar structures have been selected by examining samples of the learners' output, and by giving the students a Grammaticality Judgment Test including the observed problem structures. A structure has been labeled as "problematic" if the form is being used incorrectly, because its target function has not yet been acquired. That is, they are the structures with which the students are familiar, but which still lead to errors in production.

Grammar Interpretation Tasks: Throughout the study, these type of grammar tasks have been used to refer to the activities that have been used in comprehension-based instruction. Grammar interpretation tasks, basically, require interpretative comprehension of input containing the correct usage of the target form. As pointed out in Fotos (1994), these type of tasks are Consciousness-Raising (C-R) because the learners' attention is focused on the nature of the required target structure. Their aim is "to manipulate the meaningful context to draw learners' attention to problematic grammatical features" (Fotos, 1994 p. 325).

To put it rather crudely, an interpretation grammar activity is a listening activity as opposed to a production grammar activity. There are a number of general principles, suggested by Ellis (1995), for the design of interpretation tasks in general. These are:

1) Learners should be required to process the target structure, not to produce it.

2) An interpretation activity consists of a stimulus to which learners must make some kind of response.

3) The stimulus can take the form of spoken or written input.

4) The response can take various forms (e.g., indicate true-false, check a box, select the correct picture, draw a diagram, perform an action) but in each case the response will be either completely nonverbal or minimally verbal.

5) The activities in the task can be sequenced to require first attention to meaning, then noticing the form and function of the grammatical structure, and finally error identification.
6) As a result of completing the task, the learners should arrive at an understanding of how the target form is used to perform a particular function or functions in communication.

7) Learners can benefit from the opportunity to negotiate the input they hear or read (e.g. they can ask the teacher to repeat a particular sentence).

8) Interpretation tasks should require learners to make a personal response (i.e., relate the input to their own lives) as well as a referential response.

9) As a result of completing the task, learners should become aware of common learner errors involving the target structure as well as correct usage.

Interpretation grammar teaching requires the provision of immediate and explicit feedback on the correctness of the students’ responses (i.e. input enhancement).

**Proficiency gains:** In this study, proficiency is defined as gain in grammatical knowledge at the sentence level. It has been used to refer to learners’ use of the selected grammatical structures accurately in the production and comprehension tasks given. The learners were expected to acquire those structures by making form-meaning connections.

In brief, students’ increased accuracy of the problematic structures at the sentence level (i.e. sentence comprehension and sentence production) has been taken into consideration.

1.3. Variables of the Problem

**Dependent Variable:** Increasing comprehension and accurate production of the selected problematic grammar structures.

**Independent Variable:** The type of grammar instruction; i.e., comprehension-based and production-based instructions.

**Control Variables:** Age and the L2 proficiency level of the subjects.

1.4. Statement of the Hypotheses

There are two directional hypotheses tested in this study:

1. Comprehension-based instruction for the problematic grammar structures enables EFL learners to acquire those specified structures as well as production-based instruction does (assuming a positive effect for the latter).

a) The subjects who are exposed to comprehension-based instruction are as successful as the subjects who are given production-based instruction in terms of comprehension of the target grammar structures.
b) The subjects who are exposed to comprehension-based instruction are as successful as the subjects who are given production-based instruction in terms of production of the target grammar structures.

2. The proficiency gains obtained from comprehension-based instruction are maintained to a greater extent over time when compared to production-based instruction.
   a) The proficiency gains for comprehension obtained from comprehension-based instruction are maintained to a greater extent over time when compared to production-based instruction.
   b) The proficiency gains for production obtained from comprehension-based instruction are maintained to a greater extent over time when compared to production-based instruction.

1.5. The Purpose of the Study

Grammar instruction in Turkey is mostly production-based. That is, students are expected to produce accurate forms of structures—written or oral—which they have been explicitly presented with. It is observed that most of the students are unable to use the explicitly taught grammatical structures correctly; the language they produce is full of grammar mistakes. This is one of the main problems with the students in Anadolu University, Education Faculty, ELT Department. Many of the writing teachers in this faculty, for example, observe that—putting the contents of the papers aside—what is noticeable in most, if not all, of these papers is the "inaccurate" use of grammatical structures. Therefore, the question to ask is if grammar is back and if there is an agreement about the value of explicit grammar instruction in the professional literature, why are such students unable to master the grammar of their target language despite an intensive exposure? Broadly speaking, the purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between the nature of explicit instruction and its effects on SLA. Specifically, it aims at examining the possible effects of two different types of grammar instruction—based on Ellis’ (1995) model—on the developing knowledge system of the L2 learners in Turkey; instruction as the manipulation of output (production-based), and instruction as the alteration of input processing (comprehension-based). The study attempts to make comprehension-based interpretation tasks pedagogically acceptable in the communicative classroom as supplementary and remedial activities, particularly for the grammar points that posit problems for most of the students. To do so, it must be shown that task performance is as effective in promoting gains in knowledge of the grammar structure as traditional, teacher-fronted grammar lessons. After all, there is no point in recommending interpretation tasks as alternatives to formal grammar lessons if they fail to produce equally favorable learning outcomes.

It should be highlighted that this study by no means claims that the alternative approach to grammar teaching under investigation is the one that should replace all other existing grammar instruction.
In conclusion, this study intends to shed light upon "grammar instruction" in an EFL setting. The theory this study is based on, and most of the related studies cited is ESL oriented. This study, in this sense, is expected to make a significant contribution by considering some implications for grammar instruction in an EFL setting.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Definitions of the Structures Used in the Study

With regard to the choice of grammar structures used in the research, a distinction should be made between the two meanings of grammar acquisition: 1) acquisition as the internalization of the new forms, and 2) acquisition as the increase in control over the forms that the learners have already been exposed to but have not internalized completely. The second sense of acquisition has been taken as the basis for selecting the structures used in the study.

The previous experience of the researcher in the writing lessons she had taught for about 6 years at Anadolu University, Education Faculty has shown that English Noun Clause structures pose an acquisition problem for EFL learners. It was noticeable that the students were unable to use this particular structure correctly because they had not "acquired" it, despite the extensive exposure they had received. This problem was particularly salient in the construction of Noun Clauses with questions. The students could be observed to produce ill-formed NC sentences as in the following:

*I don’t know where are we going to go?
*He asked Mary if you go to bed early.
*We want to learn how can we learn to use a computer.
*Joe asks Tim why didn’t you finish your homework etc.

As can be seen in these examples, the learners are unable to apply the required transformations like word order, tense and pronoun changes. In order to confirm ideas about that "problem" area, a "Grammaticality Judgment (G-J) test" was designed and given to the subjects. The results of this test indicated that Noun Clause structures were really a problem for the students (for the details of the G-J test see Appendix A).

As a result, "Noun Clauses" have been selected as the target structures in the study. Since "Noun Clauses" is a rather broad subject in English grammar, only the Noun Clauses derived from questions (not the ones derived from statements) were taken into consideration throughout the study:

1) Noun Clauses (NC) with Question Words

a) NC in subject position

* What he is planning to do is not known.
b) NC in **object position**
e.g. I will ask him **what he is planning to do**.

2) **Noun Clauses with If/Whether**
a) NC in **subject position**
e.g. **Whether she will tell the truth** is not known.
b) NC in **object position**
e.g. Nobody knows if/whether she will tell the truth.

In brief, "indirect questions" have been the focus in the research. Since "indirect" questions were tackled, various transformations like tense changes and pronoun changes, together with word order changes, were presented and particularly emphasized for "reported" questions.

**Example:**

1) Direct Question: "How many words per minute do you type?"

Indirect (Reported) Question: -The interviewer wanted **ed** to know **how many words per minute I typed**.

\[ \text{NC} \]

- The interviewer wants to know **how many words per minute I type**.

\[ \text{NC} \]

2) Direct Question: "Have you ever used a word processor?"

Indirect (Reported) Question: -The interviewer asked Sheila if/whether she **had ever used** a word processor.

\[ \text{NC} \]

- The interviewer asks Sheila if/whether she **has ever used** a word processor.

\[ \text{NC} \]

**2.2. Setting and Subjects**

The study was conducted in Eskişehir Anadolu University, Education Faculty, Department of English Language Teaching in the spring term of the academic year 1996-1997. Four first year classes were selected for inclusion (103 females-47 males). That is, the treatment and the tests were given to 150 upper intermediate level students (n=150). These four groups of first year classes were randomly assigned to each one of two treatment groups: The students in two of the classes formed the "interpretation task" group (50 females-27 males; total 77 students); and the other two formed the "traditional instruction" group (53 females- 20 males; total 73 students). The age range of all the subjects in both groups was 18-24.
b) NC in **object** position

e.g. I will ask him what he is planning to do.

**2) Noun Clauses with If/Whether**

a) NC in **subject** position

e.g. Whether she will tell the truth is not known.

b) NC in **object** position

e.g. Nobody knows if/whether she will tell the truth.

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Among the 150 students, there were 42 repeating students (19 students in the interpretation task group, and 23 students in the traditional group). That is, they were actually second year students when the study was conducted; and they were repeating their grammar course which they had failed when they were first year students. These students -as second year students-had had different types of classes and a possible further amount of exposure to the target structures in the study. Therefore, they were eliminated from the study. The remaining number of subjects was 108 (n=108).

As for the "learner absenteeism", the subjects were supposed to attend 12 class hours (3 concurrent hours a week, during a 4-week period). 28 subjects who missed more than 2 hours were also eliminated from the study. This was decided upon by the researcher. It was thought that up to 2 hours of nonattendance was acceptable and would not change the overall performance of the subjects.

As a result, the number of remaining subjects was 80 (n=80, n=40 in the interpretation task group -27 females, 13 males; n=40 in the traditional instruction group -32 females, 8 males). The scores of the pre/post/follow-up test obtained from 80 subjects only were taken into consideration in the analysis of the data.

### 2.3. Instructional Packets and Instructional Procedures

Two packets were constructed for use during instructional treatment. These packets reflected two different approaches to the teaching of the target structures. The first approach consisted of traditional grammar teaching and output practice while the second, grammar interpretation approach, involved teaching the subjects to process input sentences without letting them produce them.

#### 2.3.1. Traditional Instruction

It was a teacher-fronted grammar instruction. It basically involved presenting the subjects with explanations concerning the form and meaning (examples and rules) of Noun Clause structures with question words and with whether/if; and then giving them practice in how to make sentences with those structures.

In the presentation stage, the students were given detailed grammatical explanations and example sentences about the nature of target NC structures.

In terms of practice, traditional group subjects were exposed to different types of (from mechanical to communicative) written and oral practice activities. At all times the traditional instruction focused the learners on producing the targeted items.

- An example of a written practice follows:

  **Instruction:** Change to indirect speech. Observe the sequence of tenses and make the necessary changes in pronouns.
Example: He asked me, "Does the train always arrive late?"

He asked me whether (or if) the train always arrived late.

1. He asked me, "Will the report be ready soon?"

2. He asked me, "Has anyone found the missing dog?"

3. He asked me, "What is your name?" etc.

- An example of oral practice activity follows:

**Instruction:** You will have interviews with each other. One of you will be the interviewer and the other will be the candidate for Miss./Mr. World. The interview is just before the contest. The interviewer will ask 5 Yes/No questions using the expressions on the board, and the other will answer.

**USEFUL EXPRESSIONS**

I would like to know ------------------

Would you mind telling me ------------?

Can I ask you ----------------------?

Do you mind if I ask you -----------? etc.

Answers could also include Noun Clauses,

e.g. A: Do you mind if I ask you whether you have boyfriend?

B: Whether or not I have a boyfriend should not be your concern.

**2.3.2. Interpretation Instruction**

The presentation stages of the lessons in the interpretation task group were the same as the ones in the traditional instruction group, i.e. the students were given detailed grammar explanations of important points to keep in mind about the selected NC structures as well as the learner difficulties of those features. Students just listened to their instructor as she presented.

The practice part, on the other hand, was rather different. For "practice", students were given various grammar interpretation tasks suggested by Ellis, 1995. The primary objective of so-called "interpretation tasks" is to increase students consciousness for comprehension. In the interpretation task group, the students were given tasks which had the following three main goals:

1. To enable learners to identify the meaning(s) realized by the specific grammatical feature.
2. To enhance input in such a way that learners are induced to notice a grammatical feature that otherwise they might ignore. These activities have C-R function, they are analytic and are designed to facilitate noticing.

3. To enable learners to focus their attention on the difference between the correct way of using the target problem structures and the incorrect way. That is, they are encouraged to notice the gap between correct and incorrect forms through a cognitive comparison. This is mostly fostered by drawing the students' attention to the kind of errors that learners typically make (Ellis, 1995).

Interpretation tasks, in this study, were devised as sequences of activities that reflect these three operations. First, the students were required to comprehend input that had been specially contrived to enable them to attend to the meaning of the structures. That was followed by a task that made students pay careful attention to the important properties of the target feature, and finally, by a task which encouraged a kind of cognitive comparison between the input and the students' output. Between the second and the third tasks, the students were given another task that encouraged them to give a personal response. That task required attention to both the target form and the meaning of the sentences. At no point did the interpretation task lesson involve the production of target structures by the students.

The following are the examples of the interpretation task instructions given in this study:

**Example 1 (COMPREHENDING)** - Instruction: There is a murder. Lord Chomley was shot last night. The 'perfect detective' Piers is investigating that murder. Below you see the answers of several suspects, which they gave to the detective. Listen to the detective's questions carefully and try to match the questions with the answers.

Sentences to be listened to:

1) Detective asked whether he had heard anything unusual at the time of murder. 
   Answer: Yes, I heard three shots as soon as I left the house.

2) Detective wanted to learn if he had been at home when the murder happened. 
   Answer: No, I wasn't. The murder happened after I left the house. etc.

**Example 2 (PAYING ATTENTION)** - Instruction: Read the following passage and underline all the Noun Clauses with whether/if. Then for each sentence you have underlined;

a) indicate the inversion using arrows,

b) indicate the tense change by putting a tick to the changed part, and

c) circle the pronouns that have changed.

**Example 3 (RESPONDING PERSONALLY)** - Instruction: Indicate whether or not each statement that you will listen to applies to you by checking "true" or "not true".

Sentences to be listened to:
1) I don’t mind telling everybody if I attempt to cheat during exams.

2) Whether I will get married before I graduate or not is my, not my parents’, decision.

This activity requires attention to both the target form and the meaning of a set of sentences. This is a learner-centered activity in which the students are asked to reveal something about their personal responses.

**Example 4 (NOTICING THE GAP) - Instruction:** You are going to read an extract from a court case. The speakers are a policeman and a prosecutor. They are talking about Mrs. Jones, the accused. Identify the errors in the policeman’s sentences and correct them.

In summary, both groups received explanation about the form and meaning of the target NC structures. It could be said that both groups received the same amount of practice and both utilized similar vocabulary. The instruction mainly differed in the following way: the traditional group did not practice interpreting sentences, and the interpretation task group did not practice producing sentences. In short, the fundamental difference between the two treatments involved the "type of practice" the students received.

Another point which should be made is that the instructor used target NC structures as frequently as possible in the interpretation task group during class hours. That was a kind of ‘positive evidence’ (Yipp, 1994) exemplifying the NC constructions with questions. Put differently, use of the target NC structures was rather intensive in the teacher’s input. That was thought to enable the learners to hear the correct uses of the target structures.

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**2.4. Pre/Post/Follow-Up Test**

The pre/post/follow-up test used in the study was developed by the researcher. The test consisted of both interpretation and production tasks. Interpretation tasks were presented first, and then production tasks followed. In order to distract the students’ attention from the target grammar structures, a distraction task consisting of writing answers to questions unrelated to and not containing the grammatical items under study was given between the interpretation and production tasks. The same procedure (interpretation-distraction-production) was used in Van Patten and Cadierno’s study (1993). In brief, the test had three parts: interpretation, distraction, and production. In order to prevent students from answering the interpretation and production parts one after another, and answering the distraction part at the end, each part of the test was distributed and completed separately.
2.4.1. Interpretation Part

For the interpretation part of the test, subjects were required to select the correct alternative depending on what they had heard. This was done in order to check their comprehension of the target Noun Clause structures. It was thought that if a subject was able to identify the direct (original) question after hearing its indirect/reported form with the target structures, that would mean s/he could comprehend the structure. That is to say, that part of the test was mainly a "listening" test.

2.4.2. Distraction Part

In this part of the test, the subjects were given 5 questions about the passive structure. The subjects were all supposed to do this part after the interpretation part of the test (Part A) had been completed. In this part of the test (Part B), the instruction given was:

"Complete this text with the correct tense and form of the verbs given in parentheses". This part of the test was not taken into consideration later in evaluation because it was irrelevant to the focus of the study. This part of the test was included to serve as distraction for the subjects of the study.

2.4.3. Production Part

The production section of the test was a simple sentence-level written task based on activities used in traditional instruction. It included 10 items, each of which consisted of an incomplete sentence. The subjects' task was to complete the sentence according to the visual clues (drawings of people and things) as well as the direct questions presented either as single items or within a very short dialog between two people. That is, each item in this part was accompanied by a drawing that depicted the content of the sentence. This was thought to give more visual input to the students so that they could understand what transformation they needed to perform.(For the original test see Appendix B.)

2.5. Data Collection Procedures

Subjects in the two different instructional treatments received instruction during class time in their regular program. For both groups, explicit grammar instruction consisted of one day a week - 3 consecutive class hours, 45 minutes each- with no homework.

The steps of data collection were as follows:

1) All the students in the first year grammar classes were given the placement test followed by the Grammaticality Judgment test. At this stage, the students were told that these tests were given to them in order to find out the proficiency level of all first year students, and to identify some of the "problem areas" in English grammar. These tests took about 3 class hours.

2) After the groups were established, and after the pilot test results were obtained, the subjects were given the "pre-test". Before the pre-test was administered, they were told
that this was a test of how well they comprehended and produced several grammar structures. They were also told that this test was being given to them to check their current knowledge of certain structures; and the results of this test would be compared and contrasted with the results of the same test which would be given some time later. They were not told that this test was aimed at testing their comprehension and production of Noun Clause structures.

In order to control for familiarity of vocabulary, Turkish meanings of the new words (if any) were provided prior to testing. As well as this, instructions in each part of the test were repeated in Turkish, and clarified when the problems (about what to do in each section) arose. The test took about 20-25 minutes. Students did not have any time limitation.

3) Treatment was given to two groups during 4 weeks.

4) At the end of the fourth week, the subjects were given the post-test; i.e. the pre-test was given as the post-test which again took 20-25 minutes.

5) In order to test the second hypothesis of the study regarding the maintenance of the acquired knowledge over time, about 8 months later, the same pre/post test was given to the subjects as the follow-up test.

2.6. Scoring Procedures

Raw scores for each subject were calculated for both the interpretation task and the production task. With respect to the interpretation task, each correct response to 10 items was given a score of 1 with a possible maximum total of 10. Correct responses consisted of choosing the correct alternative depending on what they had heard. Incorrect responses received a score of 0.

For the production task, again, each correct response was given a score of 1 point. Correct responses consisted of appropriate word order, tense and pronoun changes in Noun Clause sentences. If a subject had failed to change any/all of the word order, tense and pronoun -where necessary- s/he got the score of 0. Only the answers without any mistakes of that nature were considered correct.

In the end, there were two sets of data: interpretation and production. For each subject in the study, there were 6 types of data:

1) interpretation scores obtained in the pre-test
2) production scores obtained in the pre-test
3) interpretation scores obtained in the post-test
4) production scores obtained in the post-test
5) interpretation scores obtained in the follow-up test
6) production scores obtained in the follow-up test
3. RESULTS

In order to find out the changes in production and comprehension scores of the subjects during treatment it is important to make sure that the subjects in both groups were similar at the beginning of the treatment. Independent t-tests conducted on the comprehension and production pre-tests alone revealed no differences between the two groups before treatment (p = .28 for comprehension and p = .17 for production). The results of the test can be seen in the Tables 3.1 and 3.2. These results indicate that any comparative effects due to treatment are not related to prior knowledge or ability of any one group.

Table 3.1

Results of t-test for Independent Samples for Comprehension Pre-test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE of Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Inst.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.7250</td>
<td>2.219</td>
<td>.351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Task</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.7750</td>
<td>2.506</td>
<td>.396</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Difference = .9500
F = 1.157
P = .285

Table 3.2

Results of t-test for Independent Samples for Production Pre-test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE of Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Inst.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.7750</td>
<td>2.465</td>
<td>.390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Task</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.4000</td>
<td>2.772</td>
<td>.438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Difference = .3750
F = 1.846
P = .178

In order to compare the difference between the means for comprehension and production within each group a "one-way analysis of variance" was used. The ANOVA results are reported in the following tables.

Table 3.3 shows the ANOVA results for the Interpretation Task group comprehension scores obtained from the pre-test, post-test and follow-up tests. Results reveal a statistically significant difference (df= 2, F=49,109, p= .0000).
Grammar Instruction for EFL Learners: Comprehension-Based or Production-Based?

Table 3.3
Results of One-way ANOVA for Interpretation Task Group Comprehension Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>D.F</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>F Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>345,3167</td>
<td>172,6583</td>
<td>49,1091</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>411,3500</td>
<td>3,5158</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>756,6667</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0001

After finding a significant difference among the means for comprehension, a post hoc Scheffée Test was administered to determine which test caused the difference. Table 3.4 reveals the results of the Scheffée Test. According to these results, it is seen that the post-test and follow-up test are significantly different from the pre-test. This suggests that students in the study exhibited a significant improvement in their comprehension of the target structures.

Table 3.4
Results of the Scheffée Test for Interpretation Task Group Comprehension Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>4.7750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>8.5250*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up test</td>
<td>8.2000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* ) indicates significant difference

The ANOVA results for Interpretation Task group production scores are seen in Table 3.5. A statistically significant difference is observed in pre-test, post-test and follow-up test mean scores (df=2, F=25,626, p=.0000).

Table 3.5
Results of One-way ANOVA for Interpretation Task Group Production Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>D.F</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>F Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>234,5167</td>
<td>117,2583</td>
<td>25,6266</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>535,3500</td>
<td>4,5756</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>769,8667</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0001
The post hoc Scheffe Test reveals that post-test and follow-up tests are significantly different from the pre-test in terms of production. This suggests a significant improvement in the production of target structures after treatment. Results of the Scheffe test can be seen in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6
Results of the Scheffe Test for Interpretation Task Group Production Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>5,4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>8,5250*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up test</td>
<td>8,1750*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same statistical procedures were applied to the Traditional Instruction Group. The ANOVA applied for comprehension in this group also revealed a significant difference in pre-test, post-test and follow-up tests suggesting a positive effect for treatment (df=2, F=15,161, p=.0000). Table 3.7 illustrates the results of ANOVA.

Table 3.7
Results of One-way ANOVA for Traditional Instruction Group Comprehension Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>D.F</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>F Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>82,7167</td>
<td>41,3583</td>
<td>15,1619</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>319,1506</td>
<td>2,7278</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>401,8667</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0001

Table 3.8 illustrates the results of the post hoc Scheffe test for comprehension in the Traditional Instruction Group. As in the Interpretation Task Group, the subjects are seen to improve during treatment in their comprehension of target structures, because the mean scores of post-test and follow-up tests are significantly different from the pre-test mean score.

Table 3.8
Results of the Scheffe Test for Traditional Instruction Group Comprehension Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>5,7250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>7,6750*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up test</td>
<td>7,2000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The last ANOVA conducted for the Traditional Instruction Group production mean scores also revealed a statistically significant difference between pre-test, post-test and follow-up tests (df=2, F=25,401, p=.0000). It is seen that the students improved in their production of the target structures after treatment. The results are seen in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9
Results of One-way ANOVA for Traditional Instruction Group Production Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>D.F</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>F Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>156,8167</td>
<td>78,4083</td>
<td>25,4016</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>361,1500</td>
<td>3,0868</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>517,9667</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0001

Table 3.10 shows the results of the post hoc Scheffe test for production mean scores in the Traditional Instruction Group. It is seen in this table that post-test and follow-up mean scores are significantly different from the pre-test mean score, which means the subjects in this group exhibited an improvement in their production of target structures after treatment. Besides, as can be seen in the table, the post-test mean score is also significantly different from the follow-up test mean score. This suggests that the subjects in this group were unable to produce the problem target structures correctly after an 8-month period -without instruction- which took place between the post-test and follow-up test. It is seen that the mean score for the follow-up test is lower (m=7,2000) when compared to the post-test mean score (m=8,5750).

Table 3.10
Results of the Scheffe Test for Traditional Instruction Group Production Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>5,7750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>8,5750**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up test</td>
<td>7,2000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) indicates that the follow-up test is significantly different from the pre-test

(**) indicates that the post-test is significantly different from both the pre-test and the follow-up test

All the ANOVA and the post hoc Scheffe tests conducted served to reveal the progression within each of the Interpretation Task Group and the Traditional Instruction Group. As for the comparison of comprehension and production scores between these two groups, independent t-tests were used.
Tables 3.11 and 3.12 present the independent t-test results for the comparison of two groups in terms of comprehension and production post-test scores. It is seen that there is not a significant difference between the two groups immediately after treatment (p=.65 for comprehension and p=.09 for production).

**Table 3.11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE of Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Inst.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.6750</td>
<td>1.248</td>
<td>.197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Task</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.5250</td>
<td>1.467</td>
<td>.232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Difference = -.8500
F=.208
P=.650

**Table 3.12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE of Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Inst.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.5750</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Task</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.5250</td>
<td>1.710</td>
<td>.270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Difference = .0500
F=2.871
P=.094

The results of the t-test for comprehension and production follow-up test scores are shown in Tables 3.13 and 3.14. No significant difference is observed between the two groups regarding the comprehension and production follow-up test scores (p=.69 for comprehension and p=.67 for production).

**Table 3.13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE of Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Inst.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.2000</td>
<td>1.305</td>
<td>.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Task</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.2000</td>
<td>1.454</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Difference = -1.0000
F=.161
P=.690
Table 3.14
Results of t-test for Independent Samples for Production Follow-up Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE of Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Inst.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7,3500</td>
<td>1,929</td>
<td>0.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8,1750</td>
<td>1,767</td>
<td>0.279</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Difference = -0.8250
F= 0.177
P= 0.675

3.1. Discussion

The following is the discussion of the findings in terms of proficiency gains of the subjects in the study and retention.

3.1.1. Proficiency gains in comprehension and production in groups

According to the data analyses, the answer to the first and the second research questions is yes. There is a statistically significant difference between pre, post and follow-up test scores obtained from the subjects in the Interpretation Task Group as well as the ones in the Traditional Instruction Group, as can be seen in the Tables 3.3, 3.5, 3.7 and 3.9. These tables signify that the subjects in both groups increased their proficiency gains in comprehension and production of the selected NC structures. The post hoc Scheffe tests (see Tables 3.4, 3.6, 3.8 and 3.10) revealed that the post and follow-up test scores were significantly different from the pre-tests in each group for both comprehension and production.

The results of the analyses made for the first and the second questions related to the differences between pre/post/follow-up tests in the groups concern the improvement within each group. The answer to the third question (see 1.1) is no. There is no significant difference between the two groups in terms of comprehension post-test results, as suggested by the independent t-test results in Table 3.11. In short, processing instruction was no better than traditional instruction on the comprehension task and vice versa.

The answer to the fourth question is also no, because no significant difference was found between the two groups in terms of production post-test scores (see Table 3.12). Again, no group was better than the other group for the increased proficiency gains in production. The comparison of the Traditional Instruction Group and the Interpretation Task Group post-test scores in terms of comprehension and production of the selected
NC structures indicate that both the processing instruction and traditional instruction given in two different groups were effective in increasing the subjects' proficiency gains in comprehension and production of the target structures.

As for the comparison of the follow-up test results in the two groups, the answer to the fifth and sixth research questions is no. The follow-up test was given to the subjects in two groups after an 8-month period following the treatment. The independent t-test results, which appear in the Tables 3.13 and 3.14, show that the subjects' performance had not changed dramatically in terms of both interpretation and production of the NC sentences. In other words, after an 8-month period, there was, again, no significant difference between the two groups in the study.

Depending on the analyses above, the first main question of the study can be answered by considering the first hypothesis and its sub-hypotheses. The question was: how do proficiency gains -in comprehension and production- produced by intermediate level EFL learners who perform sentence level grammar interpretation tasks compare with the gains achieved by intermediate level EFL learners who are given traditional, teacher-fronted grammar lessons with production tasks? In the statement of the first hypothesis-relating to that question- there was an assumed positive effect for the production-based instruction, and it was hypothesized that comprehension-based instruction was not superior over production-based instruction. Data analysis justifies that particular hypothesis and the related sub-hypotheses. It was found that comprehension-based instruction for the problematic grammar structures enabled EFL learners to acquire those specified structures as well as the production-based instruction did. More specifically, it was observed that the subjects who were exposed to comprehension-based instruction were as successful as the subjects who were given production-based instruction in terms of comprehension of the target grammar structures (see hypothesis 1a). They were also as successful as the subjects in the Traditional Instruction Group in terms of production of the target grammar structures (see hypothesis 1b).

3.1.2. Retention

The second research question of the study was about retention: To what extent are the proficiency gains obtained from two different types of treatment maintained over time? Related to that question, it was hypothesized that the proficiency gains obtained from comprehension-based instruction are maintained over time to a greater extent when compared to production-based instruction (see hypothesis 2). According to the results of data analysis, that particular hypothesis has been partially justified. The reasoning under this "partial justification" lies in the consideration of the sub-hypothesis about retention.

According to the first sub-hypothesis (see hypothesis 2a), the proficiency gains for comprehension obtained from comprehension-based instruction are maintained over time to a greater extent when compared to production-based instruction. However, it was found that there was no significant difference between the post-tests and follow-up tests in the two groups for comprehension. This could be observed in the post hoc
Scheffe tests for comprehension. Table 3.4 illustrates no significant difference between the post-test and the follow-up test scores in the Interpretation Task Group. Similarly, Table 3.8 illustrates no significant difference between the post-test and the follow-up tests. This finding suggests that the subjects in the two groups were able to maintain their proficiency gains for comprehension over time. To put it in a different way, they could all perform the same sentence level interpretation task successfully after a period of 8 months. In short, the first sub-hypothesis about retention has not been justified.

In the second hypothesis, it was hypothesized that, the proficiency gains for production obtained from comprehension-based instruction are maintained to a greater extent when compared to the production-based instruction. Data justifies this hypothesis. The post hoc Scheffe test - in Table 3.6 - shows that there was no significant difference between the post and follow-up tests for the production scores in the Interpretation Task Group. That is to say, the subjects in this group could maintain their proficiency gains for production of the target structures over time. Therefore, they were able to perform the same sentence level production tasks successfully after an 8-month period. The subjects in the Traditional Instruction Group, on the other hand, were found unable to maintain their proficiency gains for production of the target structures. The post hoc Scheffe test - in Table 3.10 - illustrates a significant difference between the post and follow-up tests given in this group. The production task scores obtained from the subjects in this group in the follow-up test were observed to be lower when compared to the production post-test scores. This means that the subjects in this group were unable to perform the sentence level production tasks after an 8-month period. That is, the comprehension-based instruction was better for "production" over production-based instruction.

In conclusion, the data shows that there is no difference between comprehension-based and production-based instruction in terms of increasing the proficiency gains for both comprehension and production of the target grammar structures; and that there is no difference between the two different types of instruction in terms of maintaining the proficiency gains for comprehension over time. On the other hand, there was found to be a difference between comprehension-based and production-based instructions, in terms of maintaining the proficiency gains for production over time.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study - the findings about retention in particular - suggest that the EFL learners in the interpretation-task group seemed to perform the comprehension and the production of the target structures (Noun Clauses) better than the ones in the traditional instruction group did. This being the case, it could be concluded that the EFL learners in the processing instruction group "acquired" the language while the ones in the traditional group did not. One tenable explanation for this situation is that the traditional grammar presentation and practice do not enhance how learners process input and that input does not result in intake. Instead, traditional instruction results in a different knowledge system. It provides input for comprehension and production of the grammar structures, but does not result in "intake" for long-term accuracy.
The results of this study confirm the findings in the literature about comprehension: Comprehension is superior to production. It is known that learners perceive more syntactic variation than they actually produce. The learners in this study appeared to have perceived more than they produced as can be concluded from their performance at the sentence-level comprehension task in the follow-up test (see Tables 3.4. and 3.8.).

Interpretation tasks offer teachers the chance to intervene directly in interlanguage development; but they do not guarantee that their intervention will be successful because intake may not become part of implicit L2 knowledge. Nor is it the case that all grammar teaching should be comprehension based. Interpretation tasks are proposed as just one-albeit a highly promising one-of several ways of tackling grammar instruction. The emphasis this study has placed on grammar teaching is not meant to suggest that there is no room for tasks that invite learners to make a free selection from whatever current linguistic resources are available to them (e.g., information-gap tasks). A complete language program will include a variety of tasks that invite both a focus on form and a focus on message conveyance.

4.1. Pedagogical Implications

This study has attempted to emphasize the "comeback" role of grammar in SLA; and it claims that, as Rutherford (in Larsen-Freeman, 1989) would agree, the view that grammar as process should ideally be incorporated into our pedagogical grammar, not replace the view of grammar as product. The most important pedagogical implication this study intends to make is to answer the following question: What considerations need to be taken into account in developing a framework for the integration of grammar within the language curriculum? It is expected that a grammar-learning environment should facilitate the comprehension of how grammar works in the conveying and interpretation of meaning, in the way that Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1985 in Dickins and Woods, 1988) discuss the role of consciousness-raising in grammar teaching. In that sense, this study has important implications for language teachers and syllabus designers who need to determine which grammatical areas should be excluded/included, and how one can assess the effectiveness of grammar learner tasks.

This study also proposes an alternative approach to grammar teaching in the sense of an old idea: "remedial teaching". The concerns mentioned above could be answered by taking the idea of "remedial teaching" into account. Ellis (1993) proposes that a way for organizing the content of a structural syllabus is derived from that particular idea. This might be noteworthy for syllabus designers. The content of a remedial language program is established through the identification and description of learners' errors. As Ellis (1993) suggests, it rests on the simple idea that formal language teaching will be more efficient if it concentrates on what the learner has not learned rather than on teaching the whole grammar. The best candidates for grammar interpretation tasks may be the structures for which the form is known but the meaning(s) realized by the form is not. The findings of the study shed light upon the foreign language teachers and syllabus designers by encouraging them to design remedial syllabuses. These might
constitute a record of the potential deviations, and serve as checklists. Armed with these lists, the teachers would need to observe the learners’ errors in order to establish whether the potential deviations actually occur in their production and, if so, when. The teachers then would devise grammar interpretation tasks to raise the learners’ consciousness about how the target language grammar works. It should be recognized, however, that a remedial syllabus would need to be used alongside some kind of meaning-based syllabus, which is designed to provide learners with opportunities for communicating in the second language.

One last implication that should be made in this part is somewhat more specific. It is related to the sequencing of a typical grammar lesson; to put it more crudely, the stages in a grammar lesson. Traditionally, grammar lessons -like many other lessons- are based on the '3Ps' approach; namely, presentation, practice and production. The practice model in this particular approach has been itself widely discredited (Stern, 1983 in Skehan, 1996). The practice part is the most important one for the type of instruction given in that study, and it is rather different from the understanding of "practice" in the traditional sense. In the input processing approach where grammar interpretation tasks are used, the practice part did not require the learners to practice the target structures by producing them. In other words, the subjects never practiced production; and the findings of the study indicate that in that particular practice model the learners exhibited a successful performance both in terms of comprehension and production. Moreover, this kind of a practice was found to be more effective in maintaining the proficiency gains obtained from the treatment in the study. Considering these outcomes, the sequencing of grammar lessons could be renewed especially in the settings where a remedial syllabus is being followed, and where C-R for comprehension is given priority. The typical sequence would, then be: an explicit presentation of the target problem structures followed by practice activities based on comprehending and responding minimally. There is no room for production in that sequencing. It is important to see that some recently-published textbooks for teaching English are based on the comprehension based approach.

4.2. Implications for Further Research

This study has shown that instruction in processing input transfers to production under controlled conditions. However, it has not shown that it transfers to production under more spontaneous circumstances. Studies in the literature (Tarone, 1985 as a notable example) have indicated that second language learners exhibit a variability in their interlanguage use. It was found that the performance of second language learners on a grammar task varies from their performance when attempting to communicate orally. Similarly, in the studies conducted by Ellis (1984, 1992 in Ellis, 1994), it was seen that formal instruction has an effect on accuracy in planned but not in unplanned production. Again, Kadia (1988 in Ellis, 1994), in her study, concluded that formal instruction seemed to have very little effect on spontaneous production, but it was beneficial for controlled performance.
One more comment is about the nature of the grammaticality judgment test. The test used in that study consisted of isolated sentences; therefore, it might not be regarded as naturalistic as a judgment test which is contextualized. Future research investigating grammar acquisition at the discourse level rather than sentence level could obtain different outcomes using a contextualized G-J test.

The data collection process of this study was somewhat vulnerable to teacher/researcher effects, because the teacher who gave the treatment to the subjects in the study was, at the same time, the researcher of the study. Therefore, there might be a "teacher/researcher effect" on the outcomes of the study. Future studies can avoid this by having a different teacher giving the treatment, one who is not aware of the focus of the activities.

As noted in Yip (1994), there might be a correlation between the degree of interest and participation shown by the subjects and their performance in the tests. Some subjects could respond to instruction better than others. They could be more willing to give answers when a question was asked and raise questions of their own. The more one is interested and concerned about the forms in question, hence paying attention to what is presented, the more easily one can internalize the knowledge. The extent to which individual learners attend to linguistic forms is necessarily variable, given the wide range of inherent individual differences (Yip, 1994). In this study, such individual differences, in that sense, were not regarded at all. The study, in the future, can be replicated by taking student interest and participation into consideration, and a correlation between these factors and student performance could be sought.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX A
Grammaticality Judgment Test

Name: Number: Section: Age: Sex:

Aşağıda 25 cümle görmektesiniz. Bu cümlelerin bazılarında bir dilbilgisi hatası bulunmaktadır. Her bir cümleyi dikkatli bir şekilde okuyup;

a) cümlenin doğru olup olmadığını yazın,
b) cümle hatalı ise doğruşunu yazın, ve
c) hatalı olduğunu düşündüğünüz cümlede uygulamamış olan ingilizce dilbilgisi kuralını yazın. Lütfen tüm cevaplarınızı Türkçe yazın. Okuduğunuz cümlenin hatasız olduğunu düşünüyorsanız b ve c şıklarını boş bırakın.

(1) I didn’t go to dinner with them because I had already been eaten. (Azar, 1989)
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

(2) What he does is a secret. (Werner, P.K. & Nelson, J.P., 1990)
   a) 
   b) 
   c)
(3) Husbands cannot understand how can a woman be superior. (Student error-1996/1997 Fall term writing papers)
   a)
   b)
   c)

(4) Whether Harry is happy in his new job not known. (Researcher's Statement)
   a)
   b)
   c)

(5) Mr. Adams insists that we be careful in our writing. (Azar, 1989)
   a)
   b)
   c)

(6) Sam wants to know whether the sound travels faster than light or not. (Azar, 1989)
   a)
   b)
   c)

(7) It is essential that you don't be late. (Azar, 1989)
   a)
   b)
   c)

   a)
   b)
   c)
(9) Ann was handed a menu at the restaurant. (Azar, 1989)
   a)  
   b)  
   c)  

(10) The little boy wants to know whether or not is there a Santa Claus. (Azar, 1989)
     a)  
     b)  
     c)  

(11) I will ask them how are their lives going on. (Student error- 1996/1997 Fall term writing papers)
     a)  
     b)  
     c)  

(12) She demanded that I had to tell her the truth. (Azar, 1989)
     a)  
     b)  
     c)  

(13) I wonder will people be able to communicate with dolphins some day. (Azar, 1989)
     a)  
     b)  
     c)  

(14) I am not sure how many people there are at the meeting. (Drummond, 1972)
     a)  
     b)  
     c)  
(15) I am frustrated by my inability to understand spoken English. (Azar, 1989)
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

(16) Tell the taxi driver where do you want to go. (Azar, 1989)
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

(17) Which of the candidates will get the job will be announced at 3 o’clock. (Researcher’s Statement)
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

(18) Ms. Adams wants to know if will you be in class tomorrow. (Azar, 1989)
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

(19) What does a patient tell a doctor is confidential. (Azar, 1989)
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

(20) I would like to write about several problems I have faced since I came here. (Azar, 1989)
   a) 
   b) 
   c)
(21) It is vital that no one else must know about the secret government opinion. (Azar, 1989)
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

(22) He asked her who had given her the nickname Maya. (Fuch & Bonner, 1995)
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

(23) I recommended that she not go to the concert (Azar, 1989)
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

(24) The city where we spent our vacation was beautiful. (Azar, 1989)
   a) 
   b) 
   c) 

(25) I need to find out how old does a person have to be to get a driver’s licence. (Azar, 1989)
   a) 
   b) 
   c)
APPENDIX B
Pre/Post/Follow-up Test

Name: Number: Section: Age: Sex:

PART A

Instruction: Listen to the sentences including indirect questions read by the teacher and circle the alternative (a, b, or c) indicating direct question.

(1) a) How much time Joe spends on his homework?
   b) How much time Joe did spend on his homework?
   c) How much time does Jose spend on his homework?

(2) a) Can you meet me at the airport?
   b) Could you meet me at the airport?
   c) Can I meet him at the airport?

(3) a) Why had dinosaurs become extinct?
   b) Why dinosaurs become extinct?
   c) Why did dinosaurs become extinct?

(4) a) Do they cancel the last flight?
   b) Will they cancel the last flight?
   c) Will the last flight be canceled?

(5) a) Will you ever quit smoking?
   b) Would you ever quit smoking?
   c) Will I ever quit smoking?
(6) a) Where have they intended to meet?
b) Where do they intend to meet?
c) Where they intend to meet?

(7) a) Did I leave my previous job?
b) Did you leave your previous job?
c) Had I left my previous job?

(8) a) How can we get there?
b) How we can get there?
c) How could we get there?

(9) a) Do you hand your homework?
b) Did she hand homework?
c) Did you hand your homework?

(10) a) How he gets the money?
b) How did he get the money?
c) How does he get the money?

SENTENCES TO BE HEARD

(1) How much time Joe spends on his homework does not concern me.

(2) He wanted to learn whether I could meet him at the airport.

(3) Why dinosaurs became extinct is well worth searching.

(4) Whether they will cancel the last flight will be announced soon.

(5) My mother wonders if I will ever quit smoking.

(6) I haven’t the slightest idea where they intend to meet.

(7) She wanted to know if I had left my previous job.

(8) How we can get there is really a mystery.

(9) Joe asked Mary whether or not she had handed her homework.

(10) How he gets the money is his own affair.
PART B

**Instruction:** Complete this text with each of the verbs given in parenethesis in the correct tense and the passive form.

Have you ever thought about the fact that your home could (1 break into)?

If you live in an inner city for five years, your house is likely (2 burgle) at least once, according to the statistics recently released. What should you do in case of a break-in?

First, if you have any suspicions that burglars are still inside your home, don't go in; phone the police from a neighbor's house immediately. If you open the door to the living room and realize that you (3 burgle), phone the police first and then make a list of everything that (4 take). Try not to disturb anything—the police will ensure that a check (5 make) for fingerprints as soon as they arrive.**

1. -----------------------------
2. -----------------------------
3. -----------------------------
4. -----------------------------
5. -----------------------------

**This text was taken from the textbook “Distribution” (1993, p.47).

PART C

**Instruction:** By looking at the pictures complete the sentences according to the questions given.

(1)

- She wanted to know -----------------------------
Larry: Will they be traveling to Italy soon?
Sally: Yes, next weekend.

- Larry asks Sally

Whom is this man writing the letter to?
Obviously, we can not know that!

- is not known.

The boy on the phone asked

- The boy on the phone asked
Does she enjoy reading the newspaper?

• is obvious in the picture.

Where are these people looking at?

• is very difficult to guess.

Kate: Do you like the food in this cafeteria?
Sally: Yes, I do.

• Kate asked Sally .
(8) Are those expensive shos?

(9) The boy asks the girl

(10) Don: How much money does she make per month?  
Carol: Nobory knows that; it is a mystery.