



İngilizce Dersi ve Dil Bilgisi: Tutumsal İlişkilerin ve Farklılıkların Bazı Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi

English Course and Its Grammar: Discovering Attitudinal Relationships and Differences in Terms of Some Variables

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngilizce hazırlık öğrencilerinin İngilizce dersine ve dil bilgisi öğrenimine yönelik tutumlarını bazı değişkenler bakımından ortaya koymak, ve bu tutumlar arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemektir. Araştırmanın örneklemini, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinde İngilizce hazırlık eğitimi alan 202 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Verilerin toplanmasında, Kazazoğlu (2013) tarafından geliştirilen İngilizce dersine yönelik tutum ölçeği ve Akay ve Toraman (2015) tarafından geliştirilen İngilizce dil bilgisi tutum ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Toplanan veriler SPSS 23 programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Yapılan istatistikî analizler, genel itibarıyla, öğrencilerin İngilizce dersine dair tutumlarının olumlu olduğunu, ve de İngilizce'nin dil bilgisinin öğrenimine yönelik ılımlı düzeyde tutumlara sahip olduklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, yaş, cinsiyet ve bölüm değişkenlerinin, öğrencilerin İngilizce dersine ve dil bilgisi öğrenimine olan tutumlarını anlamlı düzeyde etkilemediği görülmüştür ($p>.05$). Katılımcıların İngilizce dersine yönelik tutumları yalnızca algılanan öz yeterlik değişkeni bakımından anlamlı farklılık gösterirken, dil bilgisi öğrenimine olan tutumları sadece okul dışında haftalık dil bilgisine ayrılan zaman değişkeni açısından anlamlı bir farklılık göstermiştir. Son olarak, öğrencilerin İngilizce dersine ve dil bilgisi öğrenimine yönelik tutumları arasında düşük düzeyde ve pozitif bir korelasyon olduğu belirlenmiştir ($p<.01$; $r=.319$).

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to reveal tertiary EFL learners' attitudes toward English course and learning grammar based on some variables, and to discover the relationship between these attitudes. The research participants were 202 EFL students enrolled in the preparatory school of a state university in Turkey. The data were collected through two quantitative tools: The Scale of Attitudes Toward English Course (SATEC) developed by Kazazoğlu (2013), and The Students' English Grammar Attitude Scale (SEGAS), developed by Akay and Toraman (2015). The obtained data were input into and analyzed via SPSS 23. The statistical analyses revealed that overall, the students have positive attitudes toward English course, and moderate attitudes toward learning its grammar. It was also found that age, gender and department variables did not create significant differences in learners' attitudes toward English course and learning grammar ($p>.05$). The participants' attitudes toward English course differed significantly in terms of self-perceived proficiency variable only, while attitudes toward learning grammar showed a significant difference only according to weekly grammar study hours. Lastly, the students' attitudes toward English course and learning grammar correlated positively ($p<.01$) and slightly ($r=.319$).

Anahtar Kelimeler

yabancı dil olarak İngilizce
dil bilgisi
tutumlar
inançlar
hazırlık sınıfı öğrencileri

Keywords

English as a foreign language
grammar attitudes
beliefs
tertiary EFL learners

1. Introduction

As an essential component of a language, grammar has been subject to much debate in the body of several theoretical arguments with regard to its role and position in the teaching of foreign languages. These arguments included some opposing views from the ineffectiveness of grammar in aiding L2 acquisition (Krashen, 1981) to evidence-based convictions that support the effectiveness (Norris & Ortega, 2000), and thus the teaching of grammar (Ellis, 2006). More recent endeavours have sought answers to how and to what extent grammar should be taught rather than whether it should be an occupant of formal instruction. In Turkey, learning the English language has been increasingly popular over the years now, and mere focus on its grammar has often been in the spotlight and held responsible for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' failure to master productive and communicative skills. Such a resort to grammar in practice, moreover, can exacerbate students' negative attitudes toward English course in general, which probably emerged on "the first day the student walks through the door of the FL[foreign language] classroom" (Smith, 1971, p. 84). With such a perspective, it is important to figure out the interaction and relationship between EFL learners' attitudes toward English course and learning its grammar, especially in an expanding circle context which provides students with the necessary knowledge of language including grammatical structures, alongside the communicative functions of language.

A conceptual overview of the literature suggests that the attitude concept involves affective, cognitive and behavioral components. As a case in point, the cognitive dimension may involve one's thoughts and beliefs about the usefulness of learning English in keeping pace with advances in technology. Then there is the affective component, which, as a consequence, may involve the development of positive feelings toward English lessons and learning resources. In this scenario, the final dimension, i.e. the behavioral component would involve acting out the attitude by reading extensively, listening to English songs, engaging in English conversations etc. as a result of the abovementioned appraisals and evaluations. As made clear in this example, positive attitudes are a prerequisite for achievement in a foreign language (Gardner, 1985; de Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2005). This is also made evident by Kiptui and Mbugua (2009), who showed that negative attitudes toward English was one of the reasons for students' poor performance in English. Changing negative attitudes is a sine qua non of academic achievement, which at the first step requires revealing attitudes and then making necessary instructional modifications and methodological improvements (Kazazoğlu, 2013). In this respect, it is essential to uncover attitudes, also because they serve as a needs analysis on the part of students (Are my friends and I really discouraged and indifferent?), practitioners (Are my students negative attitude holders? If so, why, and what can I do as a remedy?), and educational policy makers.

To these ends, the present study sets out to analyze EFL learners' attitudes toward English course and learning English grammar in its specific non-English speaking context, with reference to some demographic variables, students' self-perceived proficiency level, and weekly time allocation for grammar outside the school. This study is rare of its kind in terms of allowing for the examination of learner attitudes toward English course and learning its grammar at one and the same time. This study is further motivated by the curiosity to find out whether students' attitudes toward English course correlate with those toward learning grammar, and if yes, the direction and level of this correlation. Student feedback from such an investigation could lead the practitioners in the research context to revise and fine-tune the methodology and time allocated to grammar instruction in the course of integrated English lessons.

Review of literature

Learner attitudes toward the course and learning of English, and its grammar have been investigated separately in a number of studies in different ESL and EFL contexts, in terms of some different factors, variables and relationships. To begin with, in the study conducted with 154 Chilean EFL students, Gómez-Burgos and Pérez (2015) found that the students had positive attitudes toward English, whereas they held unfavorable attitudes toward learning it as a formal school subject. In a survey study from Pakistan, Hashwani (2008) showed that 8th grade students had positive attitudes and high level of enthusiasm toward both the English language and learning it, with females slightly higher degree of positive attitudes and motivation than males. Similarly, another study by Eshghinejad (2016) in Iranian EFL revealed the university students' positive attitudes toward learning English in relation to the three components of attitude, i.e. cognitive, emotional and behavioral. In contrast, Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi and Alzwari's (2012) study with 180 Libyan secondary school students from basic sciences, life sciences and social sciences departments demonstrated their negative attitudes toward learning English regarding the three components of attitude. In the same study, significant attitudinal differences were also found with reference to gender and field of study variables. As for the research in the local Turkish context, Gökyer and Bakcak (2014) examined 239 Turkish university students' attitudes in terms of different sub-dimensions. Results showed that their attitudes toward the English language are in partial agreement level in interest and trust sub-dimensions, and in completely disagree level in usefulness and teacher sub-dimensions. The study

also reported that the male students have higher attitude scores than females in usefulness dimension, and those who had previous English language learning experience have higher scores than those who did not. In another study, Karataş et al. (2016) found that the university students' attitudes toward learning English are not affected by gender, preparatory language training and proficiency level variables. In the following correlational studies, while Öztürk (2014) reported a significant positive correlation between tertiary EFL learners' attitudes toward learning English and language learning motivation, Anbarlı-Kırkız (2010) and Kazazoğlu (2013) found a significant positive correlation of medium strength between Turkish EFL students' attitudes toward English course and academic achievement.

Referring to attitudes toward grammar, Zhou (2009) examined adult ESL learners' reflections on improving grammar and vocabulary in their writing for academic purposes. She reported that the students were motivated to improve grammar and vocabulary in their writing, but lacked the knowledge and resources to make a considerable improvement. The thesis by Pradana (2016) showed that Indonesian foreign language learners considered learning grammar enjoyable, important and conducive to the development of self-confidence in using English. On the contrary, in Brigandi-Michael's (2010) thesis, Ghanaian high school students found grammar difficult, especially because of the multitude of the rules to learn and apply appropriately. In the first of the three comparative studies, Loewen et al. (2009) examined 754 L2 students' beliefs with regard to their status as ESL or EFL learners, revealing their varied beliefs about grammar instruction and error correction. Besides, a cross-cultural comparison study by Schulz (2001) reported the American and Colombian students' strong belief that explicit grammar instruction and corrective feedback are facilitative of foreign language learning. In another cross-cultural study (Eickhoff, 2016), 108 English language learners and teachers in the United States and China were surveyed. All the groups reflected a higher preference of prescriptive grammar in writing than in speaking. The two following studies investigated attitudes toward grammar in the Turkish EFL context. İnceçay and Keşli-Dollar (2011) explored the ELT student teachers' belief that grammar is an important component of the language and that it should be taught in a more communicative way. In the latter, Akay and Toraman (2015) surveyed with 293 tertiary EFL students, indicating no significant differences in the attitudes toward grammar in terms of some demographic variables, time spent on learning English, and proficiency level.

Research questions

1. Are there any significant differences in EFL learners' attitudes toward English course according to their age, gender, department, self-perceived proficiency level, and weekly time spent on English grammar outside the school?
2. Are there any significant differences in EFL learners' attitudes toward learning English grammar according to their age, gender, department, self-perceived proficiency level, and weekly time spent on English grammar outside the school?
3. Do EFL learners' attitudes toward English course correlate with those toward learning English grammar?

2. Method

Participants

In this descriptive survey study, the participants were tertiary-level EFL learners enrolled in the English preparatory program of a state university in central Anatolia in Turkey. They were selected by random sampling method, representing almost half of the whole population. A total of 202 participants completed The Scale of Attitudes Toward English Course (SATEC) and the Student' English Grammar Attitude Scale (SEGAS). The distribution of the participants in relation to their age, gender, future department, self-perceived proficiency level, and weekly time allocation for grammar is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the participants with regard to the variables

Variable		N	%
Gender	Female	93	46.04
	Male	109	53.96
	Total	202	100.00
Age	17-20	181	89.60
	21-25	21	10.40
	Total	202	100.00
Proficiency level	Low	40	19.80
	Medium	153	75.74
	High	9	4.46
	Total	202	100.00
Weekly study hours for grammar	Not at all	49	24.26
	1-2 hours	107	52.98
	3-5 hours	29	14.35
	6-10 hours	17	8.41
	Total	202	100.00
Department	Inter. relations	46	22.77
	Civil avi.	63	31.19
	Aeronautical eng.	26	12.87
	Mechanical eng.	20	9.90
	Tourism	12	5.94
	Industrial eng.	27	13.36
	Energy sys. eng.	5	2.48
	Environmental eng.	3	1.49
Total	202	100.00	

Data collection instruments

Data for this study were collected via two attitude scales, one for measuring attitudes regarding English course, and the other for attitudes toward learning English grammar. Both scales were originally developed in the Turkish EFL context in Turkish language, and administered to the present research participants in this way.

The scale of attitudes toward English course (SATEC): The SATEC was developed by Kazazoğlu (2013) with a sample of 844 high school students. The final version included 27 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, with a Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient of 0.73 for the overall scale. In the development process of the scale, Bartlett’s test of sphericity and the KMO index (Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin) were applied to check the appropriateness of the scale for factor analysis and to generate factors. KMO index was measured as .75 and Bartlett’s test of sphericity had a significant value ($p < .01$), leading to explanatory factor analysis. The cut-off value for factor loadings was set as .40. As a result of the factor analysis, out of an 32-item pool, five items were removed, and the final version came up with 27 items.

The students’ English grammar attitude scale (SEGAS): Akay and Toraman (2015) developed the SEGAS with 655 tertiary EFL learners. KMO test, Bartlett test of sphericity, varimax rotation, anti-image correlation, Cronbach Alpha coefficient, and confirmatory factor analysis were conducted in order to identify the validity and reliability measures. KMO value and Bartlett test result were .905 and $p < .01$, respectively, lending the scale to exploratory factor analysis. After the factor analysis, six items were excluded from the scale. The final version of the SEGAS included 16 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, and had an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.874.

The implementation of these scales in the present study yielded Alpha reliability coefficients of .839 for SEGAS, and .68 for SATEC.

Data analysis

The obtained data were input into and analyzed through SPSS 23.0. The items in the scales were scored between 1 and 5 (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The negative items in the scales were reverse coded. The results regarding the students' attitudes were evaluated within the following categories: "Very negative" (1.00 – 1.79), "Negative" (1.80 – 2.59), "Moderate" (2.60 – 3.39), "Positive" (3.40 – 4.19) and "Very positive" (4.20 – 5.00).

Before conducting statistical analyses on the data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were utilized to find out whether the data sets show a normal distribution. It was seen that the data sets were not normally distributed ($p < .05$). A p value bigger than .05 means that the scores do not deviate significantly from normal distribution (Büyüköztürk, 2012). Therefore, in the statistical analyses, non-parametric tests were used instead of parametric tests. Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed to determine the occurrences of differences, and Mann-Whitney U tests were used for pairwise comparisons to find the source of differences. Spearman's correlation was also performed in order to determine whether there is a significant correlation between the students' attitudes toward English course and learning grammar.

3. Results

Table 2 shows the mean scores and the students' overall attitude levels in relation to English course and learning grammar. The table reveals that, overall, the participant students have moderate attitudes toward grammar, whereas they hold positive attitudes toward English course.

Table 2. Overall attitudes toward learning grammar and English course

	N	\bar{x}	Level of attitudes
Overall attitudes toward learning grammar	202	3.20	Moderate
Overall attitudes toward English course	202	3.64	Positive

"Very negative" (1.00 – 1.79), "Negative" (1.80 – 2.59), "Moderate" (2.60 – 3.39), "Positive" (3.40 – 4.19), "Very positive" (4.20 – 5.00)

Attitudes toward English course according to age and gender

Mann-Whitney U tests were executed in order to determine whether the students' age and gender create a significant difference in their attitudes toward English course. The results are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of the attitudes toward English course in terms of age and gender variables (Mann-Whitney U)

		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	U	p
Age	17-20	181	99.36	17984.00	1513.0	.126
	21-25	21	119.95	2519.00		
Gender	Female	93	108.83	10121.50	4386.5	.099
	Male	109	95.24	10381.50		

As shown in Table 3, when the mean ranks are considered, the older group (21-25) has more positive attitudes toward English course than the younger group (17-20), and the female students have more positive attitudes than the males. However, these differences are not statistically significant ($p > .05$ in both cases).

Attitudes toward English course according to proficiency level, weekly time for grammar and department

Kruskal-Wallis tests were used so as to find out whether the students' attitudes toward English course differ according to their proficiency level, the amount of time spent weekly on grammar outside the school, and their future department. In cases when these analyses showed a significant difference, Mann-Whitney U was performed to reveal the source of differences.

Table 4. The effect of proficiency level, weekly time for grammar and future department on the attitudes toward English course (Kruskal-Wallis)

Source of differences (Mann-Whitney U)		N	Mean rank	X ²	p	
Proficiency Level	Low (A)	40	77.14	9.251	.01	A<B p=.004
	Medium (B)	153	106.67			
	High (C)	9	121.94			
Weekly study hours for grammar	1-2 hours	107	98.69	6.788	.079	None
	3-5 hours	29	108.47			
	6-10 hours	17	133.12			
Department	Not at all	49	92.54	8.189	.316	None
	Inter. relations	46	103.28			
	Civil avi.	63	107.95			
	Aeronautical eng.	26	79.63			
	Mechanical eng.	20	95.15			
	Tourism	12	95.79			
	Industrial eng.	27	102.59			
	Energy sys. eng.	5	115.00			
Environmental eng.	3	161.00				

As presented in Table 4, Kruskal-Wallis test results reveal that proficiency level is the only variable under which there is a significant difference between the students' attitudes toward English course ($X^2 = 9.251$; $p < .05$). Mann-Whitney U tests were further utilized to determine between which groups there are significant differences. The results showed that a significant difference was found only between Low & Medium proficiency groups ($U = 2160.5$; $p < .01$). Although the group with high level self-perceived proficiency has more positive attitudes than those with medium and low level as understood from the mean ranks, these differences are not statistically significant ($p = .053 > .05$ for A-C; and $p = .425 > .05$ for B-C).

Despite the fact that there appears to be an increase in the positive attitudes in parallel with the increase in the time spent weekly on grammar outside the school, there are not any statistically significant between-group differences under this variable ($p > .05$). Likewise, the students' attitudes toward English course do not differ significantly according to their future departments ($p > .05$).

Attitudes toward learning English grammar according to age and gender

Mann-Whitney U tests were performed in order to find out whether the students' age and gender pose a significant difference in their attitudes toward learning grammar. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Comparison of the attitudes toward learning grammar in terms of age and gender variables (Mann-Whitney U)

	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	U	p
Age	17-20	181	102.11	1789.5	.661
	21-25	21	96.21		
Gender	Female	93	104.65	4776	.480
	Male	109	98.82		

As can be seen in Table 5, by taking into account the mean ranks, it can be commented that the younger group (17-20) has more positive attitudes toward learning grammar than the older group (17-20), and the female students have more positive attitudes than the males. However, these differences are not statistically significant ($p > .05$ in both cases).

Attitudes toward learning English grammar according to proficiency level, weekly time for grammar and department

Kruskal-Wallis tests were this time oriented toward finding out potential significant differences in the attitudes toward learning English grammar with regard to the students' proficiency level, weekly time spent on grammar outside the school, and their future department.

Table 6. The effect of proficiency level, weekly time for grammar and future department on the attitudes toward learning grammar (Kruskal-Wallis)

Source of differences (Mann-Whitney U)		N	Mean rank	X ²	p	
Proficiency Level	Low (A)	40	91.94			
	Medium (B)	153	105.96	4.897	.086	
	High (C)	9	68.17			
Weekly study hours for grammar	Not at all (A)	49	83.09		A<C p=.000	
	1-2 hours (B)	107	95.27		A<D p=.004	
	3-5 hours (C)	29	135.55	21.780	.000	B<C p=.000
	6-10 hours (D)	17	135.71			B<D p=.007
Department	Inter. relations	46	109.53			
	Civil avi.	63	93			
	Aeronautical eng.	26	106.04			
	Mechanical eng.	20	99.42	4.375	.736	None
	Tourism	12	108.33			
	Industrial eng.	27	94.54			
	Energy sys. eng.	5	122.80			
Environmental eng.	3	131.17				

As is evident in Table 6, Kruskal-Wallis test results show that the students' attitudes toward learning grammar do not significantly differ according to self-perceived proficiency level and department variables ($p > .05$ in both cases). The weekly time spent on grammar outside the school is the only variable which poses a statistically significant difference in their attitudes. ($X^2 = 21.780$; $p < .001$). From none to 6-10 hours, as the weekly time spent on grammar increases, there seems to be an increase in the positive attitudes as evidenced from the mean ranks. However, significant differences do not exist in all pairwise comparisons. Mann-Whitney U test results revealed the between-group significant differences as follows: Not at all & 3-5 hours ($U = 368,5$; $p < .001$), Not at all & 6-10 hours ($U = 222,0$; $p < .01$), 1-2 hours & 3-5 hours ($U = 895,0$; $p < .001$), 1-2 hours & 6-10 hours ($U = 535,5$; $p < .01$).

The relationship between the attitudes toward English course and learning English grammar

Spearman's rho correlation analysis was performed in order to find out whether there is a relationship between the students' attitudes toward English course and learning grammar.

Table 7. The correlation between the students' attitudes toward English course and learning grammar (Spearman's rho)

Relationship	r	p	N
English course-Learning grammar	.319	.000	202

As shown in Table 7, a significant positive correlation of slight strength was found between the students' attitudes regarding English course and learning grammar ($r = .319$; $p < .01$).

4. Discussion

First and foremost, this study revealed the EFL learners' favorable attitudes toward English course in its specific context ($\bar{X} = 3.64$ out of 5.00, at positive level), while on the other hand this indicates a level well behind the maximum potential. These attitudes are the potential predictors of learners' achievement in English language in the sense that there is an indisputable link between learners' positive attitudes toward English course and their achievement level as reported in some local studies (e.g. Selçuk, 1997; Altunay, 2004; Anbarlı-Kırkız, 2010; Genç & Kaya, 2011; Kazazoğlu, 2013). This inference is also supported by the specific finding of the present study which showed that as the students self-perceived higher levels of proficiency, they got higher mean scores of positive attitudes. No doubt, as a complex construct

with several considerations, attitudes can be leveraged with the amalgam of cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements. However, as reported in some studies in the Turkish EFL context (Aydın et al., 2009; Anbarlı-Kırkız, 2010), the affective side of foreign language learning is often marginalized by English language teachers, and instead, cognitive factors are foregrounded. The importance of the affective component derives from the fact that it helps students internalize the target language (Kazazoğlu, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary for foreign language teachers to adopt multiple roles which include teaching the language on the one hand, and helping students' personal development by serving as a role model and including emotions on the other (Aydın et al., 2009). Such an embracement of several attitudinal aspects to develop positive attitudes might be possible through more individualized instruction, individual evaluation in terms of individual aptitudes and motivations, curricular broadening (Smith, 1971), and integration of up-to-date materials and supplementary resources in addition to coursebooks (Abidin et al., 2012). This is because the methods of teaching, physical environment and the educational setting also impact on attitudes toward learning English (Ibnian, 2017).

Another finding of this study showed that the students' attitudes toward English course do not differ significantly according to age, gender, grammar study outside the school, and department variables ($p > .05$ in all cases). Still, for a better portrayal, the present study results should be explained with the company of the additional data which demonstrated that the older group (21-25) got more positive attitude scores toward English than the younger group (17-20), and the female students got higher scores than the males. Some of these findings are both in keeping and in contradiction with some local research findings. For example, in Çakıcı's (2001) parallel results, 1st year university students' attitudes toward compulsory English course did not differ significantly according to gender, while contrary to the present study results, Genç and Kaya (2011) and Öztürk (2014) found that age has a significant effect on tertiary EFL and university students' attitudes toward learning English. Moreover, it is also necessary to note that as the students in the present study reported having spent higher periods of grammar study outside the school from none to 6-10 hours, they were observed to get higher attitude scores toward English course. Regarding the students' future departments, there were some differences among international relations, tourism, civil aviation and different engineering departments in terms of level of attitudes, but they were statistically insignificant.

It was also demonstrated in this study that the students had moderate level of attitudes toward learning grammar ($\bar{X} = 3.20$ out of 5.00). Besides, age, gender, self-perceived proficiency level, and department variables did not seem to have significant effect on these attitudes. Weekly grammar study hours was the only variable that caused significant differences in the attitudes toward learning grammar ($p < .000$). This result reflected that the higher periods of grammar study outside the school the students reported, the higher attitude scores they got toward learning grammar (mean ranks of attitude for Not at all, 1-2 hours, 3-5 hours, 6-10 hours were 83.09, 95.27, 135.55, 135.71, respectively). Significant differences were found between the following groups: Not at all & 3-5 hours, Not at all & 6-10 hours, 1-2 hours & 3-5 hours, and 1-2 hours & 6-10 hours. Sure enough, students' attitudes toward learning grammar need to be addressed together with those of teachers. For, teachers' attitudes and beliefs of the necessity of grammar shape their methodology of grammar teaching, and communicative orientation of grammar activities prescribed by them. In turn, these pedagogical choices significantly impact on students' motivation and attitudes regarding grammar. Concerning teacher attitudes, Değirmenci-Uysal and Yavuz (2015) investigated Turkish ELT students teachers' reflections on several dimensions of teaching grammar. Most of the respondents reported that grammar facilitates language use, and should be taught inductively and implicitly, serving communicative functions. Similarly, Azad (2013) found that Bangladeshi EFL teachers' considered grammar an indispensable part of language teaching and highlighted its facilitative role in language learning. In addition, they favored contextualized teaching of grammar within communicative activities, which could target both form and meaning. Teachers' such reflections concur with Long's (1991) prescription of focus on form (FonF), which involves "draw[ing] students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (Long, 1991, p. 45-46). However, in practice, as shown by Ngoc and Iwashita (2012), teachers' instructional decisions regarding the teaching of grammar may be negatively influenced by their students' lack of motivation to make use of speaking and listening tools, and then this would lead them to focus intensively on linguistic components. Likewise, in Lim (2003), it was mentioned that factors other than teachers' personal beliefs and beyond their control affected their instructional decisions and practices of grammar. Back to the present study results, given these perspectives, an important reason for the EFL learners' moderate (rather than positive) attitudes toward grammar could be their teachers' inadequate addressing of grammar in terms of methodology and communicative course orientations. While this apparently needs robust contextual evidence, in an interactional and reciprocal manner, student-bound factors might also need some investigation in terms of their effects on teachers' attitudes and practices of grammar.

Lastly, this study uncovered a significant positive correlation of slight strength between the students' attitudes of English course and learning grammar. This finding means that as the EFL learners' attitudes toward grammar develop, so

do those toward English course, and vice versa. From a different perspective, this result might have derived from the fact that in the Turkish EFL context, traditional grammar teaching methods were strictly practised (Uysal, 2012) as a result of difficulties applying communicative language teaching, which in a way equated the teaching of English and its grammar in the minds of EFL students and teachers. Such an inference can also be consolidated by Uzun's (2013) study, in which undergraduates reported their belief that learning a foreign language does not occur without formal grammar instruction.

5. Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

Determination of attitudes serves to understand the language process of students, and guides through the process of curriculum development and selection of course materials (Kazazoğlu, 2013). In order for attitudes to positively affect foreign language learning process, they need to be investigated at regular intervals (Anderson, 1988; Jones & Jones, 1998; McLeod, 2003; Selvi, 1996; as cited in Baş, 2012). If students are observed to develop negative attitudes, their causes must be found, and related solutions need to be generated (Altunay, 2004). In this respect, this study set out to investigate tertiary EFL learners' attitudes toward English course and learning its grammar at one and the same time, and the relationship between these attitudes. Results of this study are supposed to inform practitioners about their students' attitude levels, so as to lead to some necessary instructional modifications in terms of promoting attitudes through alternative and holistic approaches to teaching English and its grammar.

Further studies may amalgamate the investigation of teacher and learner attitudes and beliefs in the same context in order to measure to what extent they coalesce. There is also a need to better address the match/mismatch between ELT teachers' pedagogical beliefs regarding teaching grammar and their actual instructional practices, in spite of the availability of some research in this regard. What is more, alongside quantitative scales and surveys, several tools of qualitative research paradigm may also be utilized with a view to getting the story behind the potential changes and developments in learner and teacher attitudes and beliefs. These tools may serve to find answers to questions such as how these constructs were shaped, what factors led them to change in time, and in what ways they affect language learning and teaching process.

6. References

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