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Sentence Analysis Method in Mother Tongue Teaching

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to evaluate which method could provide more effective and permanent learning in the mother-tongue teaching process by indicating the place and importance of Turkish mother tongue teaching in language skill development. For this purpose, 225 studies about the teaching method of reading and writing conducted between 1997 and 2020 were evaluated with meta-analysis method in terms of the study year, study type, type of skill in language teaching, subject, method style, results and suggestions. The present study, which was created as a result of the literature review, focused primarily on mother tongue teaching methods and its effect on basic language skills. Afterwards, language teaching methods and principles were specified, and even though it does not have a direct effect, experienced problems in basic language skills for future periods were included. Comprehensive research was conducted on mother tongue teaching at the primary education level, and some suggestions were developed by discussing the obtained information. As a conclusion, the effects of the language teaching method applied in mother tongue development on language development were stated and it was determined that the sentence-based language teaching method together with function-oriented teaching provided more forward-looking, effective and permanent learning. Although it does not have a direct effect on language skills, it is necessary to prefer an effective language teaching method in order to fulfill the goals of mother tongue development.

Keywords: Mother tongue, Turkish education, language teaching, sentence analysis method.

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Introduction

Mother tongue is a language developed at the first stage from the family, then through interaction with the close environment and other people, forming strong bonds of the individual with society, conveying his/her feelings and thoughts in the most effective way. The mother tongue is the most important tool that the individual learns from the family and the environment from birth and enables them to be able to express themselves easily in all communication environments. Although the language learning process, which starts from birth, is shaped by interacting with the environment with natural methods, it is difficult to say that this learning reaches the competence in the formation of language awareness. The process is supported with formal education from the primary education period. Mother tongue teaching has the main objectives of providing individuals with language skills that enable them to communicate clearly, understandably and effectively. Mother tongue lesson practices help individuals to improve their understanding and expression skills. Önkaş (2010) stated in the study that mother tongue courses are more a lesson gaining skills and habits than a lesson in knowledge. Moreover, it was emphasized that while four language skills are being taught in mother tongue development, grammar rules can be transferred by the functional language teaching method. Studies in the literature draw attention to the findings that language teaching is not carried out adequately and scientifically planned and implemented (Aydın, 1997; Larsen- Freeman, 2003; Newmeyer, 2003; Knapp&Watkins, 2005; Öztürk, 2007; Kurudayıoğlu, 2014; Arslan, 2017).

One of the main features of the language is that each language has a unique grammatical structure. However, Turkish education should not be perceived as a process in which the structure of the language is taught. Because grammar in the language teaching process should be considered as a tool, not a goal. Grammar is a field that concerns and comprises all of the four basic skills of the language, listening, reading, writing and speaking (Aytaş and Çeçen, 2010). The four basic skills have an intertwined spiral structure, and grammar functions as a tool in the learning of each of these areas.

The individual shapes the mother tongue that he/she acquires through natural methods in primary education, which is the first step of formal education. This situation is one of the most important factors affecting the use of mother tongue and competence in language skills in the future life of the individual. Thus, the teaching process of reading and writing in acquiring language skills of the individual in the primary education process should be done by making use of correct methods and practices. In the mother tongue teaching process, awareness of the use of language-specific rules is increased with qualified texts. Furthermore, the usage styles and functions of the language structures in the text are explained and adapted to skill areas. Besides, the adaptation of functions specific to language structures in textual teaching to various language skills contributes to the competence of the student in using language. Reading and writing teaching method in primary education is one of the factors affecting the mother tongue teaching process, mother tongue competence and language use competence (Canbulat, 2013; Bekleyen, 2015). In addition to the selection of qualified text that plays a leading role in shaping the language teaching process, it is necessary to determine the teaching method that supports correct, effective and permanent learning.

When the historical process of mother tongue teaching is examined, it is seen that language-specific rules were prioritized until the 19th century (Engin and Uygun, 2011; Öztoprak, 2014; Güneş, 2019). Today, the role of grammar in language acquisition is questioned more (Bahar, 2015). In Turkey, the first reading and writing education is carried out in Turkish lessons in the first grade of primary education.

The Turkish language first level curriculum, which has been implemented since 2005-2006, has developed some important changes for language teaching. One of these changes is the introduction of a new method in the teaching of reading and writing. This method is called the sound-based sentence method (Arslan, Karagöz, Alaçam, Kayıp and Altun, 2014).

The main feature of the sound-based sentence method is that after learning a few sounds enough to form a semantic whole, it is reached from sounds to syllables, from syllables to words and from words to sentences. "The sound-based sentence method is based on the view of constructing new information based on the student's prior knowledge. This method is suitable for constructive approach principles. The sound to be given after the first sound is very important in terms of method. Because, it should be chosen in a way to create a meaningful syllable/word with the first sound, not any sound. For the second sound, as in the first sound, perception studies, interpretation of visual elements, vocabulary studies and writing exercises should be done. In forming this whole, the principle of organizing/structuring previous information and subsequent information of the constructivist approach is taken into account. In the last step of the method, it is necessary to reach the sentence, which is a language unit, in a short time" (Akyol and Temur, 2008: 84).

In Turkey, before the 2005-2006 Turkish lesson first level program, the 1968 primary school curriculum has been implemented and this program was based on the 1962 curriculum. Although some changes were made in 1982, the 1968 program was being carried out. According to this program, language teaching has been carried out with *Sentence Analysis Method*. According to this method in the curriculum used in 1968 and 1982, the first reading and writing should be started with short sentences at a level that students can understand. Then the sentences had to be split into words, the words had to be spelled out, and the teaching had to be provided by breaking down syllables into letters. Students could produce new sentences from the syllables they obtained. "In the sentence method, the natural unit of thought in the real sense is the sentence. The stages of teaching with the sentence method consist of the child's analysis of reading by dividing the sentence into words, words into syllables and syllables into letters over time" (Yaşar and Aktay, 2014).

In the first literacy teaching process, determining the teaching method has been the subject of discussion in many studies (Özcan, 1992; Şahbaz, 2005; Aktürk, 2009; Engin and Uygun, 2011; Şahbaz and Meran, 2016; Polat, 2017; Deniz and Çekici, 2019). In the literature, studies have been conducted on which teaching method provides effective and permanent learning in a shorter time and gain proficiency in language skills, which is the aim of mother tongue teaching. Including correct and appropriate methods, strategies and techniques in the language teaching process are very important for the development of language skills.

On the other hand, the method, which is used in the language acquisition of primary school students who are at the primary reading and writing level, is one of the main factors affecting their advanced education levels and skill use (Öz, 1999). In this study, the practices related to the first reading and writing teaching method in the literature, the problems encountered in the process, and the studies on the teachers' views on the use of the method were examined and the applied language teaching method was evaluated. Moreover, suggestions were made for determining a more useful and effective method for mother tongue teaching by making use of the general curriculum in the literature.

The Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to evaluate the importance of mother tongue teaching in basic language skills development and to evaluate which method improves the most

effective and permanent learning in the first reading and writing in the language teaching process to primary school students.

For this purpose, the studies, which were method-oriented in teaching primary reading and writing at the primary education level in Turkey between 1997 and 2020, were determined by using the concepts determined in relation to language teaching. The studies conducted between these years were evaluated in terms of four categories: study type (book, thesis, article, etc.), language skills or learning area in mother tongue teaching (reading, writing, speaking, etc.), teaching method (sound-based, sentence analysis, mixed-method, etc.), findings and results.

Method of the Study

The meta-analysis method was used in this study, which aimed to synthesize the studies in the literature related to the method in the teaching of first reading and writing. "Meta-analysis is a method used to reach a synthesis from the results of the studies by examining the researches made for a specific purpose or subject. In meta-analysis studies, the statistical findings of different studies trying to serve the same purpose are interpreted using special methods and the results are reached" (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2012:18/223). In meta-analysis studies, many studies whose acceptability has been determined are taken into consideration in order to reach generalizable results. With the meta-analysis, the integration and definition of the findings of the study, the general findings on the subject and the deficiencies that can be completed in the field of study are revealed (Bakioğlu and Özcan, 2016).

Data Collection and Analysis

In the present study, a list of studies on the first reading and writing instruction on written sources and the internet was created. During the scanning process, journals in the Ulakbim database, publishing houses, Turcademy, and National Thesis Center Database of Council of Higher Education of Turkey were used. The study consisted of 122 articles, 42 books, 37 theses and 24 papers in journals published between 1997 and 2020, selected with the purposeful sampling technique and allowed to be accessed in the indexed databases. Within the scope of the study, a purposeful sampling technique was used in determining the studies since the publications related to the method were examined in the first reading and writing teaching process. Purposeful sampling, "allows in-depth research by selecting information-rich situations depending on the purpose of the study" (Büyüköztürk et al. 2012: 90). The obtained studies on the subject are coded and listed in the computer.

Results and Discussion

When the studies on the method in the teaching of first reading and writing between 1997 and 2020 are examined, the following results were reached:

Table 1

Features of method-oriented studies in the teaching of first reading and writing

	Study type	Book		Thesis		Article		Paper		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Years	1997-2000	1	2.38	3	8.1	3	2.46	2	8.33	9	4.0
	2001-2005	2	4.77	7	18.93	6	4.92	2	8.33	17	7.56
	2006-2010	5	11.91	14	37.85	29	23.77	7	29.18	55	24.43
	2011-2015	10	23.8	6	16.21	48	39.34	5	20.83	69	30.68
	2016-2020	24	57.14	7	18.91	36	29.6	8	33.33	75	33.33
	Total	42	18.66	37	16.44	122	54.24	24	10.66	225	100.0

	Study type	Book		Thesis		Article		Paper		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
The distribution of the studies according to the subjects and the language teaching method emphasized in the conclusion	Sound-based teaching method	34	32.69	23	32.39	83	38.8	11	19.3	151	33.85
	Sentence analyzing method	37	35.58	17	23.94	61	28.5	9	15.78	124	27.8
	Other method suggestions etc.	7	6.73	2	2.82	8	3.74	2	3.52	19	4.27
	Problem and solution-oriented studies	18	17.3	5	7.04	12	5.6	14	24.56	49	11.0
	Program and constructivist approach	4	3.85	13	18.31	7	3.28	3	5.26	27	6.05
	Studies on teachers' views	-	-	9	12.68	34	15.88	17	29.83	60	13.45
	Studies on students with learning difficulties	4	3.85	2	2.82	9	4.2	1	1.75	16	3.58
	Total	104	23.32	71	15.92	214	47.98	57	12.78	446	100.0
	Reading	38	31.5	29	28.43	91	35.27	17	35.42	175	33.09
	Writing	38	31.5	31	30.4	86	33.33	17	35.42	172	32.51
Language skills and learning field	Listening	4	3.3	2	1.96	-	-	-	-	6	1.13
	Speaking	6	4.96	7	6.86	2	0.78	1	2.08	16	3.02
	Grammar	35	28.92	33	32.35	79	30.62	13	27.08	160	30.25
	Total	121	22.87	102	19.28	258	48.77	48	9.08	529	100.0

When the types of studies conducted between 1997 and 2020 in the teaching of first reading and writing indicated in Table 1 were examined, it was observed that 42 book studies were conducted and the number of studies increased until today, however, 37 theses were made and 37% of them were studied between 2006 and 2010. It was determined that 39% of the studies were published as articles between 2011 and 2015, and 33% as the paper between 2016 and 2020. When the studies conducted in the teaching of first reading and writing are examined according to their subjects, it is seen that 38% of the studies were mostly made as articles on the sound-based sentence method.

When the conclusion-suggestions and results section of the studies are examined, the teaching method of first reading and writing, the sound-based sentence method, sentence analysis method and various other methods (mixed method, holistic method, four blocks, etc.), encountered problems in the first reading and writing teaching and solution suggestions, teachers' views on method practices in the teaching of first reading and writing, changes made in the first reading and writing teaching method depending on the approach and the curriculum, and the effects of the first reading and writing teaching method on the language development of students with learning difficulties have been studied more frequently.

When the studies on the first reading and writing teaching method, which is another sub-category of the classification, were evaluated, it was found that the effect of language teaching method on reading, writing and grammar has been studied in previous researches. It was observed that studies on speaking and listening skills were dealt with in relation to other language skills on issues such as the harmony of verbal and written language and spelling mistakes due to the similarity of heard sounds. Moreover, in terms of language teaching method, it was determined that the development of speaking and listening skills has been less studied than other skill areas.

In the literature, it can be stated that the studies related to the sound-based teaching method have been conducted on teachers' opinions, the effect of the applied method on different skills, and the effect of various types of language teaching practices on skill development (Akyol and Temur, 2008; Güneş, 2013; Ateş, Ada and Baysal, 2014; Ayrancı, 2019). In studies, it has been indicated that teachers had a positive attitude in terms of suitability to the structure of the language related to the sound-based teaching method, conformity to the constructivist approach, enhancing the vocabulary, developing listening skills, accelerating the transition to reading and writing, ensuring permanent learning by comprehending without memorization, sparing more time for activities, teaching individual letters easily, and providing the beauty of writing.

On the other hand, teachers stated that this method had some limitations such as slowing down the reading speed, incomplete reading, spelling problems, the perception of the sound by hearing, having trouble understanding the awareness of the symbol of the sound, mixing similar sounds while learning to read and writing, having problems in learning cursive writing, having problems in deriving words, impairment in the development of fine writing in the following years due to italic writing, insufficient reading comprehension skills, only mechanical reading skills, reading very slowly and spelling, not being able to read fluently, showing common reading errors like spelling and making eye turns back, and not being able to create meaningful sentences in written expression (Akyol and Temur, 2008; Durukan and Alver 2008; Tosunoğlu, Tosunoğlu, Arslan, 2008; Aktürk and Taş, 2011; Aydın, 2011; Akman and Aşkın, 2012; Erdoğan, 2012; Koç, 2012; Özcan and Özcan, 2014; Güneş, Uysal and Taç, 2016; Sağırlı, 2019; Ateş, Ada and Baysal, 2014; Maviş, Özel and Arslan, 2014; Ayrancı, 2019).

Besides, teachers stated that the sentence analysis method contributed to improving reading and understanding faster, reading without skipping syllables, preventing misreading, being more rapid in the leap of the eyes, providing fast processing in reading, being able to read by understanding, being able to write more quickly and properly, creating texts more properly, perceiving the whole, creating the beauty of writing and text integrity, using mental and metacognitive skills more actively, facilitating the application in transforming into behavior, constructing the language strings more accurately and permanently, and increasing academic success (Tok, Tok and Mazi, 2008; Turan and Akpınar, 2008; Ateş, Ada and Baysal, 2014; Maviş, Özel and Arslan, 2014; Tiryakiol, Sarıtaş and Benzer, 2018). Regarding the weaknesses of the sentence analysis method, it was observed that the teachers stated that the method caused to slow progress in the time to start reading and a waste of time by trying to memorize sentences. Şahin (2011) revealed that there was no significant difference in reading comprehension skills among students who learn first reading and writing with sentence analyzing or sound-based teaching method.

Table 2

The main differences between sound-based teaching and sentence analysis methods (Maviş, Özel and Arslan, 2014)

Sound-Based Teaching Approach	Sentence Analysis Approach
The speed of transition to reading is higher	The speed of transition to reading is higher However, reading speed and understanding are higher
From piece to the whole	From whole to piece
Fairy tale/game creation is more difficult	The story is easier to tell
Difficulty in writing (cursive and italic writing)	Writing is more accurate and faster
Based on comprehension	Based on memorization

In the studies, it was stated that the teachers had a positive attitude towards the pilot method of sound-based teaching, and they considered this method as a viable method, but they needed in-service training for the method (Demirel, 2006; Gün, 2006; Uğurlu, 2009).

Although 90% of the teachers stated that they used the sentence analysis method, it was observed that they could not fully apply the principles of the method, and they stated that they made use of other intermediate solutions or intermediate methods in the process. One of these intermediate solutions by teachers is sound-based teaching, which they apply periodically to facilitate the transition of students to reading (Tok, 2001; Çelenk, 2002; Şenel, 2004; Yaşar and Aktay; 2014). In another study on the use of methods in language teaching, Göçer (2015) was stated that the method of deduction (analysis) should also be used in order to ensure the permanence, functional use and integrity of any grammatical subject/rule or any grammatical structure taught by the inductive method.

Emphasizing the importance of applying the holistic language approach, Akyol and Temur (2008) indicated in the study that it was difficult to talk about a single method or approach in learning first reading and writing. In another study, Tok (2001) stated that while determining the method to be used in teaching reading and writing, rather than to teach reading and writing in the shortest time, the method needs to be applied that enables individuals to be correct, productive and understand what they read. Şenel (2004) stated in the study that 67% of the teachers agreed that the sentence analysis method was the only and correct method. On the other hand, it was stated in the study that a single method in language teaching cannot be the most appropriate and accurate method, there may be some weak and strong features of the methods, as well as numerous variables arising from the person or groups.

Since the sound-based teaching method focuses on form-oriented learning, students focus on encoding and analyzing language structures rather than meaning and context in the use of skills. Therefore, the sound-based teaching method causes incorrect use in the adaptation of learned language structures to language skills and encountered situations. The sentence analysis method, which is based on daily language use and prior knowledge, provides identification with context-oriented instruction, and it enables the formation of language structures in the mind more effectively and permanently. On the other hand, the student, who structures the language structures in prior knowledge, context and function-oriented integrity, can also adapt other language skills in an impressive and creative way.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Mother tongue acquisition is shaped by family and environment interaction at the first stage. Formal education is required for the perfect use of naturally acquired language skills. It is aimed to improve students' use of language skills in the formal education process, which starts with the first grade of primary education. The language teaching process is organized to provide students with more effective, accurate, understandable and fluent teaching. The level of development of language skills becomes functional with the language teaching method used in the first stage of primary education. The method used in the mother tongue teaching process in primary education is indirectly effective on students' skills in the progressive education levels. For this reason, language-teaching methods used in the first literacy stage should be designed within the plan and program, and their effect on skills should be evaluated with experimental studies.

Although mother tongue education primarily evokes the teaching of Turkish grammar rules, in the constructivist approach, it is considered as a process of gaining language skills to the individual with a holistic method. Teaching the language with a holistic

approach and functionally with sentence analysis method, contributes to creating permanent and effective learning and behavioral change.

Sound-based teaching and sentence analysis methods have been used in the applications used in primary reading and writing teaching in the first stage of primary education until today. In the literature, it was seen that the opinions of classroom teachers were included more, studies were conducted to determine how much which method affected which skill or how much it had an impact on language development. It was observed that the evaluations on the effect of the language teaching method used in the studies on the development of reading and writing skills have intensified. At the same time, the teachers stated that the sound-based teaching and sentence analysis methods have some characteristics that affect the teaching process both positively and negatively.

Life experience and context-oriented teaching of language structures with sentence analysis method enable more permanent and healthy learning by activating the student's cognitive skills (encoding/analyzing and grouping).

The sentence analysis method contributes to establishing semantic integrity in reading and writing by understanding it with a meaning-oriented teaching approach in language skill development. At the same time, it facilitates the adaptation of sentences/words and syllables learned with function-oriented teaching to different sentences and the effective use of the language regarding skills and improves creativity.

Ensuring the integrity of meaning and function in language teaching makes learning more permanent. In this method, the language structures learned with the effective use of metacognitive processes can be easily adapted to various language skills functionally. Thus, students can realize their learning with a use-oriented approach that creates the integrity of meaning, function, context and track without adopting only the formal coding and analysis approach.

Considering the experience and prior knowledge in sentence analysis method, enriching the teaching with the use of vital language and providing the teaching related to its functional use contributes to the competence of the students in the use of language skills.

Due to the fact that the sound-based teaching method is in practice in the 2019 Turkish curriculum, experimental practices can be included to evaluate the effect of this method on language skill development in higher education levels by taking into account the opinions of teachers. Studies in this direction may help to complete the deficiencies of the language teaching method stated in the literature. Experimental studies aimed at determining the effects of sound-based and sentence analysis methods included in the programs on language skill development may provide to make a better decision about method determination. Furthermore, pre-service and in-service training can be given to teachers regarding the content of the language teaching method in practice, taking into account variables such as age, professional seniority, graduate department difference etc.

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