



## **Form-Focused Instruction Evaluated by Actual Stakeholders: Isolated, Integrated, or Both?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study presents the evaluation of a form-focused instructional program offered to the intensive English classes of an English-medium university in Turkey. The evaluation, intended to be utilization-based, realistic, and socially constructed with the actual stakeholders, was conducted with the teachers and students that actively participated in the program. The study analyzes the program with regard to instructional methods, materials and exams. It is also the first language program evaluation research where the findings are explored on the basis of Spada and Lightbown (2008)'s form-focused instruction framework. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the teachers and open-ended questionnaires given to the students and thematically analyzed. According to the findings, the teachers mainly implement isolated form-focused instruction particularly due to heavy reliance on coursebooks, yet there is a necessity for an increase in meaning-based practices and a program where both isolated and integrated form-focused instruction are practiced in a balanced and complementary way. The study has significant implications regarding program design for form-focused instruction in L2 teaching contexts and suggests that program designers and teachers use their own initiative to avoid overdependence on coursebooks and utilize different types of instruction, materials, and tasks focusing on both form and meaning.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study focuses on the program evaluation of form-focused instruction given to the intensive English classes of an English-medium state university in Turkey. The approach adopted in this kind of evaluation is utilization-based, realistic and social constructivist since it aims at shedding light on the actual process through the real life experience of the active participants of the program, the teachers and learners. The evaluation is intended to give a comprehensive portrayal of the situation displaying the positive aspects and problems and propose practical solutions for the issues.

#### **Utilization-based evaluation**

The focus of language program evaluation in applied linguistics has followed a trend of change from summative and product-oriented evaluations to formative and process-oriented assessments since the 1960s (Lynch, 1996). The concern, therefore, has shifted from an exclusive focus on program outcomes to what is happening inside the program. This concern has also caused the evaluators to make more use of naturalistic methods. That is, there has been

a shift from the positivistic paradigm, involving traditional, controlled, and experimental methods to the naturalistic paradigm where observing, describing, interpreting, and understanding how events take place in the real world are emphasized. In the latter, the tendency is towards defining educational programs as continuously changing processes rather than stable, invariant treatments. As defined by Pawson and Tilley (1997), an evaluation becomes realistic when it explains why certain mechanisms produce certain results in certain contexts. Thus, there cannot be any generalized theories in evaluation, but rather one can devise theories out of a program in action on the basis of the views, values and norms of the stakeholders. According to Mark, Henry and Julnes (2000), a realistic evaluation should be based on the examination of different elements in the program, hence, the analysis should involve causes, recipients, setting, time and outcome variables.

This study adopts the utilization-based evaluation model developed by Patton (2008), which suggests it is necessary to be in constant collaboration with the active stakeholders of the program in the evaluation process. According to the model, it is *the intended use* which program evaluation should aim at and evaluation can be effective if only it is made with the engagement of intended users rather than by solely an outsider or anyone else. In line with this view, this evaluation has been made by the teachers and learners who have actively been involved in the program. Patton (2008) defines his model as utilization-focused, realistic and social constructive. In this approach, stakeholders dynamically participate in the evaluation process as evaluators and facilitate its development through engagement. The emphasis is on testing the users' own reality, i.e. their own experience and interpretations. As a result, this study has questioned the learning milieu through the views of the actual stakeholders, the teachers and learners, with regard to form-focused instruction.

### **Form-focused instruction**

Form-focused instruction (FFI) refers to attracting the learners' attention to given features in the target language. FFI is deemed as an essential component of communicative and content-based curricula today as it is shown by empirical research to be of help to learners to use the language accurately and fluently (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2001; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Spada, 1997). It is also an established fact that communicative and content-based learning should not only be limited to content objectives but also involve linguistic objectives (Lyster, 1998; Pica, 2002). Now whether learners should receive FFI or not is not a subject of debate; the main concern is rather how and when to give such form of instruction. Spada and Lightbown (2008) have focused their attempts on the types of instruction that aim at teaching specific language forms within content-based and communicative educational frameworks. For this purpose, they have defined two types of FFI; isolated FFI and integrated FFI. Both isolated and integrated FFI are intended to attract learners' attention to linguistic aspects in L2 teaching, yet the difference between these instructional methods lies in *when* and *how* they draw learners' attention to language forms.

### **Isolated form-focused instruction**

Isolated FFI involves focus on language forms separate from the communicative practice. Thus in isolated FFI, attention is given to forms and they are isolated from content-based and communicative activities, but this does not mean that FFI is exclusively distinct from what is being done in communicative practice. The former is conducted always in a meaningful relation to the latter.

In isolated FFI, the linguistic forms are taught isolatedly, often *in preparation for* a communicative activity or *after* a communicative activity where learners are found to have

experienced problems with a specific language feature. It is significant to note that isolated FFI takes place as a part of a program that includes communicative language teaching, particularly content-based instruction. Thus, it is different from the grammar-translation method or any other forms of grammar-focused language instruction such as Long's (1991) focus on forms, which is centered on the instruction of language forms through a structural syllabus without any context. In grammar-based instruction, the instruction is never directly connected to a genuinely communicative practice. It rather highlights language drills done without any concerns for meaning and does not necessitate learners to engage in content-based and communicative activities. Nevertheless, isolated FFI is concerned with the application of content-based and communicative activities *before* or *after* the instruction of language forms and such focus on language forms is separated from the content of the communicative activity. As Spada and Lightbown (2008) suggest isolated FFI implies intentional learning and explicit instruction.

### **Integrated form-focused instruction**

Integrated FFI takes place in classroom activities in which the main emphasis remains on meaning. In those activities, brief explanations and largely implicit and sometimes explicit feedback are offered to help learners express meanings more accurately (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). In integrated FFI, learners' attention to language forms is drawn *during* communicative and content-based instruction. Integrated FFI can be planned or incidental. In the former, the focus on form, which emerges during communicative activities may have been anticipated and planned by the teacher beforehand and s/he may attract the attention of the learners to the relevant point/s during communicative activities. Besides, it is also likely to come across language features and instruct them incidentally during such activities. Spada & Lightbown (2008) state that it may be difficult to make a choice between these two types of form-focused instruction, i.e., the isolated and the integrated, and the best way to apply is preferring the suitable one depending on the language feature to be learned, characteristics of the learner and the learning conditions.

### **Research on isolated and integrated form-focused instruction**

Isolated and integrated FFI have been a part of few comparison studies with mainly experimental designs. Elgün-Gündüz, Akcan & Bayyurt (2012) investigated the influence of isolated and integrated FFI on the vocabulary, grammar, and writing development of primary-level foreign language learners in two different classes in Turkey. The findings showed that the learners receiving integrated FFI performed better than those provided with isolated FFI in all measures. In addition, integrated FFI was preferred more by the learners. Spada, Jessop, Tomita, Suzuki & Valeo (2014) also compared two groups of adult learners of English as a second language who received integrated or isolated FFI on the 'passive' construction and explored their progress on a written grammar test and an oral communication task. The findings revealed no significant differences between the instructional groups. It was stated that as long as learners receive a synthesis of form- and meaning-based practice, differences in the timing of FFI may matter less. The results were also said to imply that isolated FFI is advantageous compared to integrated FFI with respect to learners' explicit L2 knowledge, and integrated FFI has an advantage over isolated FFI in terms of the development of learners' implicit L2 knowledge. In another experimental study conducted by Irají & Gholami (2018), integrated FFI was found to be more effective for teaching forms than isolated FFI. It was also observed that motivation increased when the learners were involved in purposeful activities integrating content and language learning.

There is little research on the opinions of teachers and learners on isolated and integrated FFI. Valeo and Spada (2015) developed and validated teacher and learner questionnaires related to FFI and investigated the preferences of teachers and learners concerning isolated or integrated form-focused instruction in two research settings, in an ESL and an EFL context. Quantitative and qualitative analyses of the questionnaire data showed that both teachers and learners in the ESL and EFL groups expressed preference for integrated FFI. At the same time the participants did not disregard the significance of isolated FFI. Particularly ESL learners and teachers reported that isolated FFI may sometimes be necessary over the other as an option depending on pedagogic variables. Accordingly, Valeo and Spada (2015) stated “isolated instruction may be particularly useful in promoting the acquisition of language features that are difficult to notice in the input (e.g., third person singular *s* in English), whereas integrated FFI may be of particular benefit in the development of fluency and the automatization of language features for effective communication” (p. 16-17). In another study, Üstünbaş (2016) investigated learners’ and teachers’ preferences for isolated and integrated form-focused instruction through questionnaires. According to the findings, both EFL learners and teachers were found to mainly prefer integrated FFI.

This study aims to evaluate a form-focused instructional program given to the intensive English classes of an English-medium state university. The evaluation is based on teachers’ and learners’ opinions. The study analyzes the program by shedding light on the instructional method/s applied, the perceived effectiveness of instructional method/s, materials and exams as well as the perceived benefits and problems of the overall program along with suggested solutions. More specifically, the study aims to highlight which type of FFI is applied in the program, isolated, integrated, or both with respect to Spada and Lightbown (2008)’s FFI framework and related views on the effectiveness of the instructional model. There are few studies on teacher and learner views on isolated and integrated FFI and they focus on the personal preferences of the participants about FFI, thus there is no research on the evaluation of a specific language program with regard to isolated and integrated FFI. This is the first language program evaluation study where the results concerning a form-focused instructional program are analyzed with respect to Spada and Lightbown (2008)’s isolated and integrated FFI framework and the pertinent merits and challenges are accordingly explored. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How did the teachers instruct forms in their lessons within the program: in an isolated way, in an integrated way, or in both ways?
2. What do the teachers think about the effectiveness of the instructional method/s they applied within the program?
3. What do the teachers and learners think about the effectiveness of the form-focused materials and exams used within the program?
4. What are the benefits of the form-focused instructional program according to the teachers and learners?
5. What are the problems of the form-focused instructional program according to the teachers and learners?
6. What solutions are suggested by the teachers and learners for the problems concerning the program?

## METHODOLOGY

### Context

The study was conducted in School of Foreign Languages of an English-medium state university, responsible for the English language education of intensive English classes in Istanbul, Turkey. The learners start the academic year in classes at four levels: beginner, pre-intermediate, intermediate and advanced, and it is the form-focused instruction of pre-intermediate classes, which the study aims to explore. The pre-intermediate level classes were chosen since they were the most populated learner group of the institution and as low level learners, they are normally thought to have immediate needs for FFI. In the form-focused instruction program of pre-intermediate classes, the forms are mainly instructed through a series of coursebooks and grammar books, defined to be for pre-intermediate and intermediate level learners. Until the second half of the second term, the pre-intermediate and intermediate level coursebooks in the same series are used in FFI together with the grammar books sharing the same defined level.

The coursebooks used in the program are published by a British publishing company and they aim to teach forms through contextualized grammatical explanations, followed by grammar exercises and communicative activities respectively. Two supplementary grammar books belonging to the same series are used to support the instruction with coursebooks. They are published by another British company. The grammar books consist of decontextualized grammar explanations and extensively drilling-based exercises.

As for communicative activities, in the first term and in the first half of the second term, the learners are exposed to a limited number of communicative activities, most of which belong to the coursebooks. Then, in the second half of the second term, when the coursebooks are completed, the classes start a curriculum fully focusing on content-based and skills-focused communicative practices via the materials prepared by the institution.

The learners are tested about the forms three times a term by achievement tests. The proficiency exam given at the end of the academic year at the institution is intended to test reading, listening and writing. The targeted English proficiency level of the learners at the end of the academic year is defined to be 'advanced'.

### Sampling

The data were collected from a conveniently available pool of respondents via convenience sampling. Efforts were made to represent the target group with an appropriate sample size. The total number of pre-intermediate teachers was 20 at the time of the study. 10 out of 20 teachers were interviewed, thus half of their population was represented. Moreover, the total number of learners was 386 and the total number of pre-intermediate classes was 20. From each class, 5 learners were chosen. As a result, 100 learners were given questionnaires.

10 teachers responsible for the form-focused instruction of the pre-intermediate classes participated in the study. All of them were experienced teachers with teaching tenure ranging from 9 to 22. The data were also collected from 100 pre-intermediate level learners as the active stakeholders of the program. They were both male and female learners aged between 18 and 22. All the participants were informed about the study, voluntarily participated in the research and signed consent forms.

## Data collection

The main data were collected by semi-structured interviews with the teachers and open-ended questionnaires given to the learners. The data collection was performed towards the end of the academic year. The teachers were asked to describe how they taught forms. Relevant questions were asked to discover the type of FFI applied, i.e. isolated, integrated, or both. The teachers were also asked to state their opinions about the effectiveness of their instructional method/s and the materials and exams within the current form-focused instructional program and define the benefits as well as the problems of the program along with their suggested solutions.

The data of this study were also gathered by the open-ended questionnaires given to the learners. In the questionnaires, the learners were asked to tell their opinions about the effectiveness of the instructional materials and exams and identify the benefits and the problems of the form-focused instructional program together with their suggested solutions.

## Data analysis

The data were thematically analyzed through multiple readings and iterative analyses (Creswell, 2013). The common features of teachers' utterances in the interviews were thematically analyzed with respect to the methods to teach the forms, their views on their methods, the materials and exams as well as the benefits and problems of the form-focused instructional program of the institution along with suggested solutions. The learners' opinions about the materials and exams as well as the benefits and problems of the pertinent program and their suggestions were also meticulously analyzed and thematically refined with relevant categorizations.

# RESULTS

## Results of teacher interviews

The first two research questions of this study address how the teachers in the research setting instructed forms in their lessons and what they think about their instructional method/s. According to the results, the teachers in general reported that they taught forms in an isolated way. That is, when they followed the coursebook series, all the teachers instructed the form/s before the communicative practices, which refers to an isolated form of instruction. However, there were also a few teachers who said that they used integrated FFI to a limited extent when the coursebook studies were over. That is, in the period when the classes were supposed to cover only the communicative materials of the institution, some teachers said they occasionally instructed the form/s incidentally and implicitly in an integrated way. However, integrated FFI was not planned and systematic as is the case in isolated FFI. Therefore the teachers were found to mainly follow a common pattern of instructing the given forms within the program and this pattern involved a comprehensively isolated pattern. In this pattern, the teachers said they moved from contextualized presentation of grammar points to explicit instruction of rules, followed by grammar exercises, as instructed in the coursebook series. Then after the form-focused instruction was over, the teachers said they again followed the order in the coursebook series, that is, they did the relevant communicative activities to practice the given forms in their books. On the other hand, the teachers who stated they also implemented integrated FFI said that they did so by highlighting complex forms and/or making mini form-focused explanations during the communicative practices and this form of FFI was performed spontaneously when

the learners failed in comprehending a sentence or a structure or when the teacher deemed it was necessary to highlight a form.

It was reported by the teachers that it was the design of the coursebooks that made them apply extensively isolated FFI as the flow of units derived them to present and practice form-focused parts in an explicit and isolated way before communicative practices. Also all the teachers were seen to believe that this form of instruction was helpful for low level learners in the beginning stages of learning a foreign language and presented a safe and sound way to ensure that the forms, particularly the difficult ones, and relevant rules were understood and learnt before conducting communicative practices with them. The teachers who used integrated FFI also found it a beneficial way to focus on grammatical structures. The use of immediate and meaningful contexts in such form of instruction was praised, but it was generally deemed that integrated-only form of instruction may cause vagueness and/or confusion among low-level learners and the grammatical forms may remain not understood or misunderstood as the context in this type of instruction involves both meaning and form and the learners' attention may get distracted by this two-way focus as well as the communicative elements likely to surround them within the context (e.g. classroom talks about the given reading/listening) and all these may prevent them from acquiring sound knowledge, thus it should be used when learners become more proficient. Thus the teachers were seen to support both forms of FFI and suggested for their pre-intermediate classes that isolated FFI be performed in the initial stages to focus on the basics of the language and integrated FFI be implemented in the later stages when the learners' proficiency gets improved to focus on the details of the learnt forms or highlight novel complexities and subtleties within the language.

The second research question of the study concerns what the teachers think about the effectiveness of the form-focused materials and exams. As stated above, there were two coursebooks used in the program, the pre-intermediate level coursebook and the intermediate level coursebook, which were published by the same company and belonged to the same series and they were supported with graded supplementary grammar books at the same levels, i.e. pre-intermediate and intermediate, published by another company and provided in series. According to the findings, all the teachers were found to be in favor of using a coursebook and a supplementary grammar book in teaching the basic forms in the beginning of the academic year. They said coursebook-based studies form the necessary groundwork for the learners to effectively use English. Especially the first coursebook for the pre-intermediate level learners was thought to match the learners' level and seen as an aid to have the learners get accustomed to English use and smoothly move towards the meaningful use of skills. However, there were varying opinions about keeping or abandoning the intermediate level coursebook.

The pre-intermediate level coursebook was generally defined to give meaningful contexts and interesting topics to practice the forms. The explanations were in general perceived to be clear and accurate. On the other hand, one of the major complaints about the coursebook series was centered on the inadequacy of production-based activities. Most of the teachers pointed out that the books supplied too many controlled and mechanical exercises presented as decontextualized items and they indeed needed materials with more production-based tasks.

Moreover, most teachers were found to support the idea of keeping the pre-intermediate level coursebook and eliminating the intermediate level coursebook since the latter mostly revised the points in the former. It was also suggested the pace of the pre-intermediate level coursebook be made lot faster so that the classes can move on to full-time content-based and skills-focused practices done with the institution's materials as soon as possible. The teachers think in addition to learners' learning the basics of the forms via coursebooks, it is also necessary to have them get deeper insights into the use of forms in varied contexts and this can be possible by supplementing the guided coursebook practice with communicative, meaning-

based, and skills-focused activities supported with authentic materials right from the beginning of the academic year.

As for exams, almost all the teachers were found to be satisfied with the achievement exams taken during the academic year, which aimed to test the forms learnt until then through a separate part. The main point of the exams perceived to be positive was testing the forms contextually through meaningful texts rather than discrete items isolated from each other. The exams were thought to be parallel to the content of the curriculum and thus valid. The main complaint of a great majority of teachers, however, focused on the lack of materials in conformity with the exams. Most of them stated they needed materials which test the forms via a context rather than discrete items.

The teachers were also asked to state the benefits and problems of the form-focused instructional program applied within the institution along with the ways they suggest to deal with the challenges. All the teachers said that the program was extensive and covered all the forms likely to be necessary for advanced level of English. The scope of the program was also deemed to be adequate in forming a sound basis for essay writing. Also the form of instruction applied through coursebooks was said to offer the advantage of in-depth comprehension of the basic details of the given structures.

Among the problems, a common problem mentioned was the inadequacy of production-based activities following form-focused instruction. The teachers stated that they spent most of the form-focused lessons in the first term doing decontextualized, mechanical exercises and that speaking and writing were limited. This was said to affect the learners' performance in productive skills negatively by delaying their improvement. Thus, the teachers suggested the use of more production-based materials to teach and practice forms in the first term.

The other emphasized problem was about the coursebooks. Most of the teachers said that the coursebook-based form-focused instructional program of the institution should be completed as quickly as possible and meaning-based studies with institutional materials should start much earlier. To illustrate, some teachers pointed out that especially three months after the term began, towards the end of the first term, they observed a certain decline in the motivation level of the learners due to following a similar pattern in the lessons that extensively included isolated FFI via coursebooks and this repetitive nature of the lessons together with inadequate amounts of content-based and skills-focused practices made the learners demotivated. Some other teachers mentioned that there was a big gap between the level of the coursebooks and that of the proficiency exam so within the program, a quick transition to the meaning-based studies is necessary to make the learners get accustomed to complex materials.

The main focus of the suggestions at this point was about the intermediate level coursebook. A great majority of teachers suggested it be eliminated. A few teachers said it should be kept, but most parts of it should be skipped since it revises most of the forms covered in the pre-intermediate level book. Thus a great majority of teachers thought that after the first coursebook, the pre-intermediate level coursebook, is over, they must move straightforward to meaningful and contextualized skills-building practices through the materials of the institution.

Also, the teachers in general implied that they prefer a program where isolated FFI and integrated FFI are applied together. That is, they suggested the basic forms be learnt through isolated FFI mainly through coursebook practices. Moreover, most teachers also demanded a planned form of integrated FFI within the institution through the use of meaning-based activities focusing on the subtleties and complexities of the given forms. As one teacher said

The coursebooks form the basis of grammar, but the learners should also be thinking with listening-speaking and reading-writing activities. They shouldn't be spoon-fed all these rules. They should also think of the rules and derive them from the context with the help of the teacher whenever necessary.

All in all, the most emphasized suggestions by teachers are itemized as follows:



- (1) At least one of the coursebooks or some parts of the coursebook/s should be eliminated,
- (2) There should be more meaning-focused practices in the program displaying a variety of content-based, skills-focused, and production-oriented activities, and
- (3) Forms should be taught and improved through not only isolated but also integrated FFI.

### **Results of open-ended questionnaires responded by learners**

In the open-ended questionnaire, the learners were first asked what they thought about the effectiveness of the form-focused materials and exams. Concerning materials, there were two varying opinions about the coursebooks. One group said that thanks to coursebooks they gained their basic knowledge about English since they formed the first step to help them understand the grammar rules and witness their use in relevant contexts and utilize these learnt items in meaningful activities. However, among those learners, most of them considered that coursebook studies took a lot of time and stayed behind the level of English they were expected to have after a certain time in the academic year due to simplified texts and repetitive tasks. Thus, they reported they should be given more complicated reading, writing and listening and speaking activities much earlier in the curriculum, not after completing the coursebooks, but together with the coursebooks and that coursebooks should be completed as soon as possible. Thus, lack of variety in texts and exercises as well as the slow pace of the coursebook program were mentioned as negative aspects of the coursebooks. On the other hand, a great majority of learners were found to favor the grammar books emphasizing particularly their grammar explanations. Yet, several of them criticized their exercises based on drilling and rote-learning. The learners in this group, in general, suggested keeping the coursebooks and grammar books and supporting them with contextual, meaning-based and skills-focused exercises. The other group of learners said the coursebooks and supplementary grammar books must completely be eliminated since they were simple and insufficient and must be replaced with thematically and linguistically rich materials. Some learners added even if the institution continues using those coursebooks, they must be supplemented with high level skills-building materials encouraging production. As for the exams, the learners usually expressed that they had no problems with the form-focused parts of the exams except for not having sufficient materials to get prepared for them.

The learners were also asked to express their views about the benefits and challenges of the form-focused instructional program implemented in the institution. Most of the learners mentioned that they were satisfied with the comprehensive scope of the form-focused program. A few of the learners added they were pleased with the order of the forms and gradual rise of the level. Also, some learners praised their teachers and said that they learnt the subjects well due to their teachers' clear and accurate explanations supported with examples. The problems mentioned by the learners include excessive amount of time allocated to coursebooks and mechanical exercises and insufficiency of content-based and production-oriented communicative practices. It was reported that recalling the rules and putting them into implementation in language production practices is easier when the rules are learnt through meaningful contexts. This was nicely expressed by a learner as follows:

When we learn grammar rules through reading or writing, they become more permanent. We don't forget them.

Thus, like teachers, the learners' reports displayed a need for an increase in meaning-focused activities as well as integrated FFI.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research has aimed to evaluate the form-focused instructional program given to the pre-intermediate level intensive English classes at an English-medium university in Turkey via the utilization-focused evaluation model of Patton (2008), which suggests it is necessary to be in constant collaboration with the active stakeholders, the intended users of the program, to effectively design or redesign programs. In line with this view, the evaluation has been made by the teachers and learners who have actively participated in the program.

The evaluation firstly aimed to investigate how the teachers instructed forms in their lessons within the program. The data revealed that the teachers implemented extensively isolated FFI as a great deal of the form-focused instruction process was devoted to the coursebooks in the curriculum and it was the design of the coursebooks which was said to cause the teachers to make use of isolated FFI comprehensively. In addition to the format of the coursebooks, the teachers also found isolated FFI useful for low level learners who are in the beginning phases of L2 learning and whom they believed required form-focused explanations before they started communicative practices to gain a sound understanding of the related linguistic features. Also isolated FFI was thought to be beneficial in the instruction of difficult structures.

Apart from isolated FFI, some teachers were also found to use integrated FFI while doing the skills-based practices of the institution. However, this type of FFI was not planned unlike the isolated FFI. It rather occurred as a spontaneous action when the learners did not understand a sentence or a structure or when the teacher felt a need to clarify a form. According to the data, despite the fact that isolated FFI mainly governed the teachers' FFI program in practice, in reality what the teachers seek is a balanced combination of the isolated and the integrated FFI. That is to say, a great majority of teachers reported that the academic year may start with extensive implementation of isolated FFI via the pre-intermediate coursebook to acquaint the learners with the basic forms. Several of them added after covering the pre-intermediate level book, it would be effective to move straight away to skills building practices characterized with extensive exposure to meaning-based activities and they deem that it is integrated FFI which should be a natural part of these practices to learn about the details of forms and advanced structures. Thus, the teachers were found to support both isolated and integrated FFI and define isolated FFI as a means to accustom the learners to the basics of the language learning process and integrated FFI as a vehicle to deal with the subtleties and complexities of linguistic forms.

This approach indeed also reflected the general stance of the teachers about the form-focused materials. The teachers found the coursebooks useful as long as they provide meaningful contexts and interesting topics to teach forms and make clear explanations. However, because the level of coursebook series was found to be low and the content inadequate compared to the intended proficiency level of the institution which is supposed to be advanced, it was suggested that the time allocated to the coursebooks be kept minimum. Accordingly, one common recommendation was that the pre-intermediate level book should be supported with extra academic reading, writing and listening and speaking materials right from the beginning and the following coursebook at the intermediate level should be eliminated. On the other hand, some teachers stated that only the parts of the intermediate level book which instruct the same subjects in the previous book should be skipped.

The books, both the coursebooks and the grammar books, were criticized with regard to being restricted in terms of activity variety since they were said to supply the learners with mostly drilling-based, mechanical exercises lacking contextualization. The teachers expressed their concerns for the lack of meaningful, purposeful and contextualized practices and asked for extra materials to cover this gap.

As for the form-focused sections of the exams, the teachers in majority appreciated those parts and thought that they matched the content taught in the classes. Also testing the items in a context was deemed to be meaningful. However, there was also a constant emphasis on the need for contextualized materials for exam practice.

Despite these problems, when asked about the positive aspects of the form-focused program, all the teachers stated they were satisfied with the extensive scope of the program, which comprises all the subjects they think are necessary for the advanced level. However, since the teachers considered the pace was slow due to the inclusion of two coursebooks and more time was needed for communicative practices, they reported the coursebook scope can be narrowed down. In this framework, a common emphasis of the teachers was on the suggestion that there should be more meaning-focused practices and they should start in the program as quickly as possible.

The learners were also found to criticize the coursebooks due to the great amount of time devoted to them and the mismatch of the levels of the books with the high level of proficiency expected by the institution. There were also complaints about the inadequacy of the books with regard to communicative practices of the given forms. On the other hand, most learners reported the pre-intermediate level book and supplementary grammar book as well as their teachers' explanations were useful in their form-focused improvement. The learners also thought that implementation of coursebooks helped them to acquire detailed knowledge about forms but this was done at the expense of intense improvement in skills so they also mentioned their concerns for inadequacy of meaning-based studies. They suggested an increase in meaning-based activities as well as starting the skills-focused studies earlier. Several of them also recommended that teaching practices be implemented together with the communicative activities. Consequently, the learners in general were found to be in favor of isolated FFI practices, but they also demanded integrated FFI to be practiced with isolated FFI throughout the program. All these refer to the urgent need for engaging the learners more actively in learning the forms through meaningful contexts. Accordingly, the program evaluation in this study signals the fact that the current isolated FFI-governed curriculum in the research setting should be changed into a one that devotes more time and practice to meaning-focused activities and integrated FFI. As a result, there is a need for a program that synthesizes isolated and integrated FFI in a balanced and complementary way.

The findings of this research are similar to Elgün-Gündüz et al. (2012), Üstünbaş (2016) and Valeo and Spada (2015) in that it has revealed positive attitudes towards integrated FFI. As in Elgün-Gündüz et al. (2012), in this research, these attitudes were said to stem from having a meaningful purpose in a given context and increase in motivation when engaged in meaning-based activities. Likewise, in this study it was indicated it is easy to recall and implement the rules learnt in an integrated fashion rather than in isolation. However, one may not be advantageous over the other as shown in this study as either method was thought to have their own advantages. In this study isolated FFI was the default implementation, but the participants expressed preference for both types of instruction. As in Valeo and Spada (2015), in this study isolated FFI is said to have benefits like being beneficial in the acquisition of difficult structures and integrated FFI is implied to promote the accuracy and fluency in language use. Additionally, in this study isolated FFI was thought to be a feasible option to teach learners, particularly those at low proficiency levels, the basics of a form with the assumption that the focus would be on solely the form, which would possibly lead to an in-depth comprehension of the rules and it was suggested integrated FFI can be applied as a complementary step to teach the learners the details, the subtleties and complexities, of the given forms, and strengthen accuracy and fluency.

This study has significant implications for form-focused instruction in tertiary contexts. It is a fact that isolated and integrated FFI may present their own advantages. Isolated FFI may

bring along the benefit of acquiring in-depth knowledge about forms. In integrated FFI, it is possible to make implicit and indirect deduction of rules or receive explicit instruction or feedback within communicative contexts in meaningful and purposeful ways. As suggested by Spada et al. (2014), isolated FFI presents advantages regarding learners' explicit L2 knowledge, and integrated FFI is more likely to contribute to the development of learners' implicit L2 knowledge. One may be preferred over another or they may be used together in a curriculum. In the research context, isolated FFI was favored and dominantly applied, however this also led to complaints about the inadequacy of integrated FFI. The data therefore revealed a requirement for their balanced co-utilization. As suggested by the data, isolated FFI may be used in the beginning stages of learning the basics of the given forms since it is reported to raise one's awareness of the rules and provide in-depth knowledge. As isolated FFI does not eliminate communicative practice, this form of practice could be useful for learners. On the other hand, making use of the given contexts and activities to give on-the-spot instruction may also help learners to directly witness and implement the authentic use of language. This could contribute to the improvement in accuracy and fluency in L2 use. This means that integrated FFI can also be a part of the curriculum and if this becomes the case, enough space and time should be allocated to it. By doing so, learning would occur by focusing on both form and meaning with varying timing choices in instruction.

As for the use of standard coursebooks in form-focused instruction, the study has important implications as well. One implication is that the content and organization of course materials can contribute to the way the forms are taught as seen in this study. Due to the content and organization of the coursebooks, the teachers were seen to heavily use isolated FFI in this research context. Another implication is that the institution, with its own initiative, can avoid overdependence on coursebooks and interrogate their effectiveness and choose not to be bound with their being displayed in series and avoid automatic implementation of the given contents. That is, program designers and teachers must think critically about the contents of the coursebook series and if time is limited, the given coursebook series must be used as efficiently as possible by eliminating some books or skipping repetitive parts according to the learners' needs. There may even be institutional additions to the coursebook contents depending on the conditions. As a result, institutional decisions concerning coursebooks should be made in a selective manner in concordance with contextual requirements.

The study concludes the current program in the research setting where isolated FFI is dominantly used should be changed into a one that allocates more time and practice to meaning-focused activities and integrated FFI. Accordingly, based on the needs and levels of learners and the complexity of the grammatical items, L2 program designers and teachers should integrate isolated and/or integrated FFI into instructional processes through appropriate resources with the awareness of their own advantages and challenges in foreign language learning. Further studies may focus on the evaluations of foreign language teaching programs where both isolated and integrated FFI are intentionally and systematically implemented in a complementary manner.

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