

## The Correspondence Between Beliefs and Practices of an EFL Teacher Regarding L2 Grammar Teaching<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This paper presents a case study that explored and compared the stated pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices of Suna, an experienced EFL teacher, with regard to L2 grammar teaching at a preparatory school of a university in Turkey. A qualitative analysis of the data collected through classroom observations, interviews, and reflective notes indicated the key features of Suna's classroom practices and her pedagogical beliefs regarding L2 grammar teaching as well as the correspondence between them. The findings of the study revealed that Suna exhibited, to a great extent, congruence between her stated beliefs and her observed classroom practices regarding L2 grammar teaching. The findings also lend support to the existing literature that highlights the role of contextual factors in mediating the relationship between teacher beliefs and classroom practices such as learner expectations and needs, exams and time constraints.

**Keywords:** English language teaching, teacher beliefs, grammar teaching, classroom practices, case study

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## Yabancı Dil Öğretmeninin Dilbilgisi Öğretimine İlişkin İnançları ve Uygulamaları Arasındaki Uygunluk

### Öz

Bu çalışma Türkiye’de bir üniversite hazırlık okulunda İngilizce öğretmenliği yapmakta olan deneyimli bir öğretmen olan Suna’nın dil bilgisi öğretimine yönelik pedagojik inançlarını inceleyen ve onları sınıf içi öğretim uygulamaları ile karşılaştıran bir vaka incelemesidir. Sınıf gözlemleri, görüşmeler ve yansıtıcı notlar aracılığıyla toplanan veri nitel veri analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları Suna’nın dilbilgisi öğretimine yönelik pedagojik inançlarının gözlemlenen sınıf içi uygulamaları ile büyük oranda tutarlılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, ortaya çıkan bulgular öğretmen pedagojik inançları ile sınıf içi uygulamaları arasındaki ilişkide öğrenci beklentileri ve ihtiyaçları, sınavlar ve zaman kısıtlamaları gibi bazı bağlamsal faktörlerin rolünü vurgulayan literatüre destek vermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İngiliz dili öğretimi, öğretmen inançları, gramer eğitimi, sınıf içi uygulamalar, vaka analizi

### Introduction

Research into teacher cognition has long been acknowledged as a major area of research in the field of second and foreign language teaching. It is widely accepted that “teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs” (Borg, 2003, p. 81). The related literature has shown that teachers’ beliefs have a profound impact on teachers’ pedagogical practices (Borg, 2003; Ng & Farrell, 2003), their instructional decisions (Johnson, 1994; Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Tillema, 2000) and acceptance of new approaches and methods (Donaghue, 2003). Examining earlier theoretical discussions and the large body of empirical work on teachers’ beliefs, Fives and Buehl (2012) identified three functions of beliefs as (a) filters for interpretation (b) frames for defining problems, and (c) guides or standards for action (p. 478).

Despite the existence of a substantial body of research on teachers’ beliefs, a quick glance of literature displays that there is no complete agreement on how the concept of belief is defined. Pajares (1992) notes that beliefs are a “messy construct” because it is difficult to differentiate beliefs from knowledge and it is challenging to interpret research findings as they are clearly linked to the research methods and instruments employed. Another challenging aspect of exploring teacher cognition is that beliefs build a system consisting of core and peripheral beliefs (Pajares, 1992; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Core beliefs are viewed as stable beliefs which filter knowledge and other beliefs. They have a stronger effect on behavior compared to peripheral beliefs that are more context specific. Unfortunately, teacher cognition research has not given close attention to belief sub-systems (Borg, 2006).

Given the importance of the relations between teacher practices and student learning outcomes, numerous studies have investigated the link between teachers’ beliefs and teaching practices in diverse fields of education. Some studies have shown consistency of teacher beliefs and practices (e.g., Beswick, 2005; Johnson, 1992; Mitchell & Hedge, 2007; Kuzborska, 2011) whereas some others have revealed that these two have limited correspondence (Farrell & Lim, 2005; Fung & Chow, 2002) or no correspondence (e.g., Lee et al., 2006; Stipek & Byler, 1997). It has been argued that the

focus of attention should be oriented towards the degree of congruence or incongruence between beliefs and practices rather than whether these two are congruent or incongruent.

Research has shown that the absence of correspondence between beliefs and practices may be related to some factors operating individually or in groups (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Beliefs and practices may not necessarily correspond due to various internal and external factors. For instance, teachers' beliefs about the value of communicative work may not be reflected in their classroom practices due to contextual factors such as lack of time and collective targets (Nishimuro & Borg, 2013). The lack of congruence between beliefs and practices may also be attributable to the existence of belief sub-systems. For example, beliefs about the use of L2 in the classroom may be conflicting with beliefs in another system about student factors (Graden, 1996). There can be tensions between peripheral and core beliefs that may lead to a noncorrespondence between beliefs and practices (Phipps & Borg, 2009). A further possibility concerns the developmental changes in belief sub-systems which may contribute to the incongruence between beliefs and practices during the transition period (Richardson et al., 1991). Additionally, it has been generally accepted that methodological issues may have an impact on the findings of research on belief-practice correspondence. Simply put, quantitative studies that rely on small sample size and explore correlations between beliefs and self-reported practices and qualitative studies which involve a limited period of classroom observation time pose problems of validity.

Overall, although the belief-practice relationship has generated interest over the last years, examining the correspondence between teacher beliefs and practices is still worthy of investigation as further research is needed to uncover the possible internal and external factors that support or hinder teachers' enactment of their beliefs. The present study, a part of a doctoral dissertation, is one attempt at exploring the relationship between the pedagogical beliefs and observed classroom practices of an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher of the second language (L2) grammar teaching. The part of the dissertation reported in this article aimed to explore the correspondence between stated beliefs and observed classroom practices of Suna, a non-native EFL teacher, with a particular focus on the following research questions:

- 1) What pedagogical beliefs does Suna hold regarding L2 grammar?
- 2) What are her classroom practices regarding L2 grammar?
- 3) What is the relationship, if any, between her stated beliefs and observed classroom practices regarding L2 grammar?

### **Methodology**

The study was carried out in the form of a case study because a case study design provides a deep understanding of what is to be studied in its real-life context (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Leading scholars in the related field have employed similar case study methods in their studies that share similar aims (e.g., Clair, 1998; Farrell, 2008; Farrell & Ives, 2015; Tsui, 2003).

### **The Participant**

Suna (a pseudonym), a female EFL teacher with six years of teaching experience in total, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English language teaching. At the time of the

study, she had been teaching English to young adults at a preparatory school of a university in Istanbul, Turkey for two years. Suna is a native speaker of Turkish with native-like fluency in English. She decided to become an English language teacher quite early in her life and thus after primary school, she attended one of the Anatolian Teacher High Schools designed to prepare students mainly for the Faculties of Education.

At the start of the study, I contacted with the head of the preparatory school at which Suna was working and without revealing the aim of the study, I asked her to identify English language teachers working at her school with the following criteria: (a) having at least three years of teaching experience (b) holding a degree in English language teaching (c) having personality traits of being responsible, whole-hearted and reflective and (d) teaching an L2 grammar course. The head of the school gave me a list of three teachers. During my informal interviews with these three teachers, Suna volunteered to take part in the study claiming that she was keen on her own professional development and she viewed participation to the study as a means to reflect on her own teaching.

### **Context**

This case study was carried out in Suna's pre-intermediate level L2 grammar lessons of a preparatory class that consisted of 20 students in a Turkish university. The preparatory class was compulsory for the students of the faculties of which the medium of instruction would be in English. The one-year intensive English language program was designed to develop students' language proficiency in grammar and four skills. The total number of English language instruction per week was 28 hours. 10 hours of instruction was devoted to L2 grammar teaching specifically. During the academic year, students took three written and three oral examinations. At the end of the academic year, a final examination was administered to determine students' eligibility to begin their departmental studies.

### **Procedure, Data Collection, and Analysis**

Data for the study came from (a) semi-structured interviews (b) lesson observations (c) stimulated recall interviews and (d) reflective notes. The details of data collection tools and procedures are as follows.

Five semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to elicit Suna's beliefs regarding L2 grammar teaching. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to an hour. They were all audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thus, data were transferred from spoken to written form to facilitate analysis. The first interview aimed to elicit background information such as Suna's educational background and her current job status. The other four semi-structured interviews aimed to get Suna to talk about her beliefs regarding the nature of language, the definition, and role of grammar and L2 grammar teaching.

I carried out 43 hours of classroom observation in total. As a non-participant observer, I sat at the back of the classroom and did not interfere with the lesson and social communication taking place in the classroom. In time, as I became a regular member of the class, I was able to easily observe the class activities and interactions. During my observations, I kept descriptive and non-evaluative field notes. Two class

hours of the classroom observations were video recorded for the purposes of stimulated recall interviews.

Two post-observation stimulated recall interviews that lasted 35 minutes to 45 minutes were carried out. Both interviews were unstructured with no planned questions to be asked. The purpose of these interviews was to discover Suna's own interpretation of her classroom practices in relation to her beliefs about teaching and learning L2 grammar. For the purposes of analysis, both interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. During the data collection phase, Suna also volunteered to take reflective notes that documented her introspection regarding her L2 grammar teaching and her students' progress. This data collection technique enabled me to gain an insight into Suna's own interpretation of her teaching practices.

Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to analyze data. Initially, I read each data set (i.e., interview transcripts, field notes, etc.) several times to get the sense of main ideas being expressed by the participant. Then, I coded statements that were relevant to each research question. Once the coding phase was completed, I cross-checked different sources of data to identify recurring themes. Later, the assigned codes were analyzed to reduce data into themes/categories.

### **Research Trustworthiness**

It is of utmost importance to ensure rigor in qualitative research through the implementation of certain measures for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981). The following steps were taken in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the present study.

In order to increase internal validity, triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple data sources such as interviews, observations and reflective notes. In this respect, the findings showed parallelism across data sets. Another measure implemented in the design of the study was prolonged engagement. The study was conducted for three months, a sufficient period of time in order to obtain an adequate representation of the participant's meaning-making. The time devoted to observation was sufficient enough to explore how the participant herself constructs and perceives her own realities concerning L2 grammar teaching. In total, 43 hours of classroom observation was made. Devoting such considerable time to lesson observations allowed me to identify characteristics of Suna's grammar teaching routines.

Some tactics were applied to ensure the honesty of the participant in reflecting what she genuinely believed about the matter under investigation. The participant was informed on the consent form that she had the right to withdraw from the study at any point. Before the interviews, I notified her in advance that I had no expectations and that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions. During the interviews, iterative questioning was employed so that I had the opportunity to elicit detailed data and return to issues previously raised by the participant if necessary. Moreover, in order to encourage the participant to act naturally and not think about my presence in her classroom, I informed Suna about not making any special preparation as I was not looking for any particular behavior.

To ensure transferability, thick descriptions were provided about the participant, data collection procedures and findings. Additionally, direct quotations were included to portray the findings of the study. An in-depth description of

methodology also ensured the dependability of the study as thorough reporting of the research process enables other researchers to replicate the study in different contexts. It should also be noted that the present study is a part of a dissertation. Therefore, it received constructive feedback from a group of eminent academics through the research process, which is one of the most important factors in achieving credibility in research.

### Findings

This section presents the findings as answers to the three research questions followed by a discussion.

#### What Pedagogical Beliefs Does Suna Hold Regarding L2 Grammar?

Suna defined grammar as “the foundational knowledge base of language and language use”. While attaching key importance to grammar, she viewed grammar teaching only as a means to develop language skills. Suna remarked that “the reading, listening and writing skills of my students are much more important to me. In fact, I view grammar only as the base”. In this line of thinking, Suna held the belief that students at low levels of language proficiency should master grammar as quickly as possible to become expressive in the target language.

When asked about the most effective way of teaching L2 grammar, Suna replied that she had a preference for Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) which is an instructional model that offers a three-step teaching sequence. The common understanding of the model posits that teachers first teach the target structure and later show how they are used in context and finally make their students produce the target structures on their own. Unlike this traditional view, Suna’s own understanding of the model was based on having two sub-stages at the presentation stage. She passionately believed that in the first half of the presentation stage, the teachers should set up a situation or give students a task that models and elicits the target structure. She also said that the activities planned for the presentation stage should be communicative activities that enable students to induce what the structure means in real life. She expressed that during the communicative activities she certainly aimed to use the target structure several times while making students talk.

As to the second half of the presentation stage, Suna held the belief that explicit grammar instruction should be given. Suna’s justification of dividing the presentation stage into two sub-stages was that she believed young adults and adults expected explicit grammar instruction because explanation on the teacher’s part made them feel confident. She stated: “After leading in stage, it is time for the explanation stage because I believe students at this age feel confident with explicit grammar instruction. Teachers should explain the structure clearly”.

According to Suna, when the presentation stage that involved both inductive and deductive components was over, it was time for the practice stage which should involve controlled grammar activities to help students practice target structures mechanically. Suna stated that “there should definitely be guided or controlled practice. I believe in the value of written exercises. I do not underestimate their use in learning grammar”. With regard to the controlled grammar activities, Suna was aware of the criticisms that tightly controlled, and teacher-fronted approach to practicing structures received. Yet, she held the belief that after the presentation was done,

teachers should plan mechanical exercises such as fill-in-the-blanks or sentence drills to support reinforcement of the newly presented structures. She expressed:

After the presentation is done, exercises through which students would see target structures explicitly have to be done. I mean exercises which we call one-shot. I mean fill-in-the-blanks, sentence drills... From outside, they may seem boring, but I believe in order to reinforce a new structure, controlled practice is needed at this stage.

With regard to the practice stage, Suna expressed her belief in encouraging students to use the target language freely in communicative activities. Though she stressed the importance of free production stage, she reported that she could not pass through all three stages from presentation to production. She said that most of the time she could engage students in the first two stages but could not provide them with sufficient opportunities for free production due to time limitations and syllabus constraints.

In relation to error correction, Suna stated that making mistakes is the part and parcel of the language learning process. According to her, the issues of whether errors should be corrected, what types of errors should be corrected and what effects come out of error correction are all decided by the teacher through a consideration of affective factors. She said that her major concern for error correction is how learners would feel and react to the particular error correction techniques. She explained:

For example, the student has formulated a sentence in the past perfect continuous tense. I show him or her that I am satisfied even if the sentence s/he uttered has an error, but I correct his/her error in time. I do not approve the error. I show him/her that s/he is understood. I mean I do not want to reduce his/her motivation. Yet, it depends on the student. I mean if the student takes the floor a lot and participates to the lesson, I view the use of immediate correction techniques appropriate. Such students do not get offended or demotivated. There are psychological and humanistic factors in my decision.

With respect to the use of metalanguage, Suna said that she did not believe in focusing overtly on grammatical terminology to develop a metalanguage which students could use to discuss L2 grammar consciously. Yet, she explained that it is better if students could be familiar with a minimum degree of grammatical terminology as they use and come across to some terms in grammar reference books and school examinations. She pointed out that the key factor in her decision of teaching a grammatical term is the frequency of the use of that term. She claimed that she used terminology which she believed to be of use and relevance in the exams.

Regarding the teaching of L2 grammar, Suna acknowledged exemplification as the most useful instructional strategy. During interviews, she repeatedly expressed the importance she attached to exemplification as providing students with contextualized examples about how a structure works was essential for learning to occur. The examples, Suna argued, should be clear and illustrative enough of the grammar points being discussed. She repeatedly mentioned that clear, understandable, illustrative and applicable examples appeared to be effective for foreign language learning. She stated that "examples given should be able to make the student say "yes, that's it!"

While expressing her beliefs about L2 grammar teaching, Suna also revealed a network of beliefs regarding learning and teaching in general. Suna fully adhered to a humanistic approach to teaching with a great emphasis on creating a positive learning environment in which students would feel free to be engaged in the lesson and feel comfortable enough to go through trial and error processes of their learning. According to Suna, a teacher's personality and style matter more than the methodology s/he uses. While elaborating on this issue, she expressed that a teacher may be equipped with the most recent methodological knowledge but if the teacher's personality does not foster a relationship based on love and respect, the learning processes of her students would be hindered. Claiming that there is a bond in the mind between feelings and learning, Suna commented:

I definitely try to take students' expectations, interests, and their attention into consideration as much as I can and as much as the program and time are appropriate. I mean while planning my lessons or let's say while teaching grammar, I seriously take students' reactions into account.

As a component of showing attention to students' feelings, Suna believed that creating love and interest in the subject was a key element in the teaching of any subject matter as a way of motivating students and keeping them interested in the lesson. She also held the belief that the use of humor was effective with regard to students' remembering processes of the newly acquired structures. She highlighted that she considered herself teaching L2 grammar through a methodology that complied "her principles, student expectations, and needs". Suna's espoused belief on the importance of learner needs had a major impact on her instructional decisions. Commenting on the importance she attached to learner expectations and needs, Suna said:

My job is with their minds. If they are not open to learning, continuing the lesson for the sake of just continuing it would make me a fool. I would be in a funny situation and it would indicate that I miss the point of teaching. When I take students' needs into consideration, I feel that I get credits in their eyes.

### **What Are Suna's Classroom Practices Regarding L2 Grammar?**

In her typical lessons, Suna begins grammar presentation through contextualized examples followed by explicit rule explanation with visual support such as writing on the board, drawing timelines or tense charts. In line with these techniques, the instructional strategies routinely used by Suna are exemplification, explanation and using visual aids.

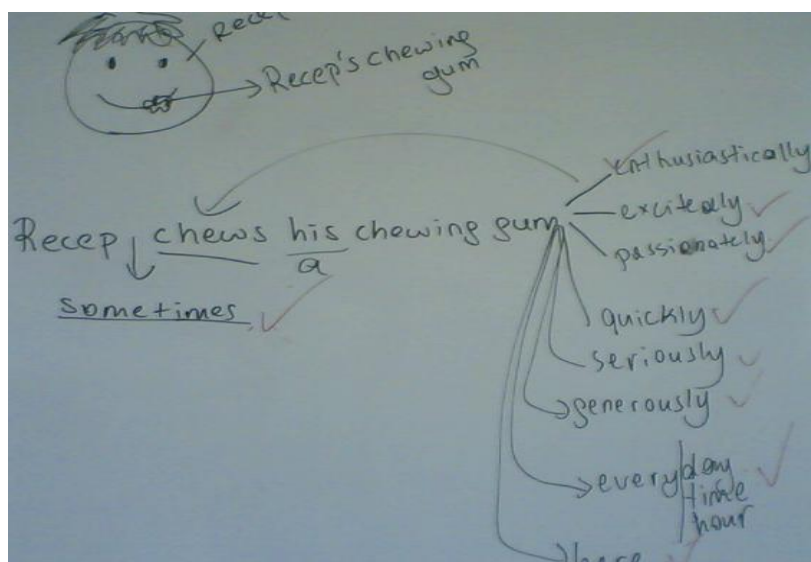
There is a clear preference for providing students with examples of the target structure through communicative tasks rather than through decontextualized sentences. She has a tendency to carry out prediction tasks which required students to use the target structure under her guidance. It was observed that most of the times the examples which Suna creates or elicits from students are about herself or about her students. She also gives examples related to popular media icons, characters of television series and headlines of the world news. For instance, in one of the observed lessons, Suna asked one of her students to draw a picture of another student, Utku, when he is 45 years old. After drawing was completed, Suna encouraged students to speculate about Utku's future life based on the drawing. She remarked: "Class, looking at this perfect drawing, tell me about Utku's future life." Students began calling out



sentences such as “He will have three children” and “He will be homeless”. Suna modeled the target structure with the help of the drawing by saying “He will be homeless. He will be living on the streets”.

The following example illustrates how Suna uses humor in her lessons. In order to introduce adverbs, Suna provided students with the following example. First, she drew a face on the board (See Photo below) and asked whose face it was. Students easily figured out that it was a drawing of Recep as this student was famous for chewing gum constantly in Suna’s lessons. Suna used this drawing in eliciting the target structure. She said: “Class, we watched Recep chewing gum many times. Can you give me adjectives that describe this?” Students began to utter adjectives and Suna wrote them down on the board in the form of adverbs. While noting down the examples, she also directed some guiding questions to elicit more adverbs as follows: “Recep, what about time? Do you chew gum every day, every hour?”

Though Suna’s grammar presentations were observed to begin with



**Figure 1.** An example of the use of humor in Suna’s teaching contextualized exemplification, they were always followed by a detailed explanation of grammar rules followed by decontextualized grammar practice. It was observed that during grammar explanations Suna uses grammatical terminology and visual support to aid comprehension and memory such as writing on the board, drawing timelines and tense charts. It was noted that the grammar terminology she uses in her explanations is mostly the ones frequently used in the course book exercises and exam rubrics. For instance, the extract illustrates how Suna approached the analysis of question tags. While sharing an amusing anecdote, she used several examples of question tags in her speech. Then, she started to explain the rules of forming question tags by saying “Class, this is the basic form. Question tags. So, what are the rules? We use auxiliary verbs plus subjects. If your sentence is positive, the question tag is negative. If your sentence is negative, the question tag is positive”. During the practice stage, the exercise types frequently used are sentence transformation, sentence completion and open cloze. It was also observed that Suna used various types of error correction such as teacher correction (direct and recast), student correction (self and

peer correction) and no correction. Yet, a closer look at the analysis revealed that the most utilized correction type by Suna was a direct correction.

It was observed that Suna established a peaceful classroom environment in which students felt secure, respected and loved. She took students' feelings into consideration while making instructional decisions. In some cases, she directly asked students how they felt and what type of activity they wanted to do for the rest of the class. Before lunch, she always dismissed class on time by saying that no one can pay attention to the lesson if s/he is hungry. It was also observed that she never began introducing a new target structure in the last lesson of a school day. The use of humor which was a salient feature of Suna's teaching also contributed to the establishment of a positive learning environment. For example, to begin a revision lesson on making future predictions, Suna said:

Class, if you remember, the last term we had an activity. I made you write some sentences about the future. One of you, Utku, wrote his guesses about me. I still keep it. He wrote "I'm sure you will be the head of the English Language Department" Sometimes, at nights I read that note. I keep it under my pillow.

### The Congruence Between Suna's Pedagogical Beliefs and Observed Classroom Practices

The stated beliefs of Suna are checked against the observational data to explore the relationship between Suna's stated beliefs and actual classroom practices. The stated beliefs are grouped by the following themes: grammar, L2 grammar teaching and learning, and learning and teaching in general. Each stated belief is compared to whether it was observed during classroom observations. As Table 1 outlines, Suna's teaching exhibited, to a great extent, congruence with her beliefs regarding L2 grammar teaching.

Table 1  
*Congruence between Suna's beliefs and practices*

Theme	Beliefs	Congruence
Grammar	Foundational knowledge	✓
	A means of skills development	✓
L2 grammar teaching	PPP	X
	The importance of examples	✓
	The use of metalanguage	✓
	Error correction	✓
	Contextualized grammar teaching	X
Learning and teaching in general	Consideration of affective factors	✓
	The use of humor	✓

More specifically, Suna's stated beliefs about learning and teaching, in general, correlate entirely with her observed teaching practices. Suna defined grammar as "the foundational knowledge base of language and language use" and her observed classroom practices reflected the importance she attached to grammar as a means to skills development. Consistent with the belief that there is a bond in the mind between

feelings and learning, Suna demonstrated a positive relationship with her students and used some strategies such as the use of humor and consideration of affective factors to keep them motivated and interested in the lesson. It was observed that she took students' feelings and needs into consideration while making instructional decisions. Another area of congruence involved the use of metalanguage. In line with her belief that the use of metalanguage should be restricted to the grammatical terms frequently used in the coursebook exercises and exam questions, Suna was observed to use basic terminology in her explanations and activities.

We again see a convergence between Suna's stated beliefs and classroom practices in relation to the importance of examples. Her interest in exemplification is a recurring theme both in the interviews and classroom data. She stressed the importance of clear, understandable, illustrative and applicable examples for effective language learning. During all her lessons, it was observed that Suna had a tendency to provide students with various illustrative examples related to herself, the students, popular media icons, characters of television series and headlines of the world news. We once again see congruence when we compare Suna's stated belief about error correction with her classroom practices. Suna established the belief that she decides what types of errors should be corrected and what effects come out of error correction through a consideration of the affective factors. In line with her humanistic approach to teaching and learning, her major concern regarding error correction was how students would feel and react to particular error correction techniques. Her error correction techniques showed a repertoire of teacher correction i.e. direct and recast, student correction i.e. self and peer correction, and no correction.

The first area of incongruence was observed with regard to Suna's firm belief about PPP. Suna said that PPP is the best model of teaching L2 grammar. During the classroom observations, it was noted that the last stage which is devoted to free production of the target structures was not evident in Suna's routinized pattern of grammar teaching. Almost during each lesson, Suna was observed doing a presentation and controlled practice activities. However, her routinized teaching did not include the same amount of free production activities. When asked, Suna told that she was aware of the fact that she could not provide students with sufficient opportunities for free production. She reported that her students expected to spend more time on explicit grammar instruction rather than free production as they felt more secure with explicit grammar work. Besides, she explained that she had to take exams into consideration while planning her teaching as students expected to receive instruction which is directly applicable to exams.

Another area of incongruence involved contextualized grammar teaching. Suna's routinized grammar presentation included contextualized grammar presentation but these activities were always followed by decontextualized grammar activities. Although Suna established a belief that the use of contextualized grammar presentation was more effective than decontextualized grammar activities, her routinized teaching did not include the same amount of contextualized grammar activities.

When asked, Suna argued that contextualized grammar activities require a more flexible syllabus that enables more time spent on the production of language rather than accuracy. She explained that though she wants to involve her students with

communicative activities more, the element of time i.e. loaded syllabus and teaching workload inhibits her from doing so. She reported that her students expected to spend more time on explicit grammar instruction rather than free production as they felt more secure with explicit grammar work. Besides, she explained that she had to take exams into consideration while planning her teaching as students expected to receive instruction which is directly applicable to exams.

### Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the correspondence between stated beliefs and observed classroom practices of Suna, a non-native EFL teacher. The analysis of qualitative data revealed that Suna exhibited, to a great extent, congruence between her professed beliefs and her observed teaching practices regarding L2 grammar teaching. Although many of Suna's stated beliefs correspond to her teaching practices, there were some that did not.

More specifically, Suna's stated beliefs about learning and teaching in general i.e. considerations of affective factors and the use of humor totally converged with her observed classroom practices. Also, it was observed that her stated beliefs with regard to grammar i.e. grammar viewed as foundational knowledge and a means to skills development correlated with her teaching practices. Suna's correction of errors, use of metalanguage, and exemplification were observed to be in harmony with her stated beliefs. A possible reason behind the high degree of correspondence between Suna's beliefs and practices could be related to the wide variety of teaching experience she had. In the related literature, it has been acknowledged that experienced teachers' beliefs are more consistently converged with their teaching practices than that of less experienced teachers. Experienced teachers' beliefs and principles become more embedded while they are having a wealth of experience (Breen et.al., 2001) and as teachers gain experience, they may have become more skillful in articulating their reasoning behind their practices (Baştürkmen, 2012).

The first area of incongruence was observed with regard to Suna's firm belief about PPP. It was observed that the last stage which is devoted to free production of the target structures was not evident in Suna's routinized pattern of grammar teaching. She was observed skipping free production stage in some of her lessons. Another area of incongruence was that although Suna established a belief that the use of contextualized grammar presentation was more effective than decontextualized grammar activities, her routinized teaching did not include the same amount of contextualized grammar activities.

When asked about the reasons behind this incongruence, Suna argued that the element of time i.e. loaded syllabus and teaching workload inhibits her from doing so. She argued that contextualized grammar activities require a more flexible syllabus which gives teachers more time for communicative activities. The lack of time has frequently been reported as a factor in explaining the incongruence between teachers' beliefs and practices in the field (Farrell & Lim, 2005; Nishimuro & Borg, 2013; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). Suna also acknowledged that her students expected to spend more time on explicit grammar instruction rather than free production as they felt more secure with explicit grammar work. Besides, she explained that she had to take exams into consideration while planning her teaching as students expected to receive

instruction which is directly applicable to exams. In the related literature, exams have been noted as a factor that has an impact on teacher beliefs and practices relation (Farrell & Lim, 2005). Likewise, student expectations, needs, and preferences are frequently brought up as relevant factors in seeking to understand incongruence between teacher beliefs and practices (Andrews, 2003; Borg, 1999; Burns & Knox, 2005; Nishimuro & Borg, 2013; Phipps & Borg, 2009, Richards & Pennington, 1998).

Though Suna believed that L2 grammar teaching should involve more contextualized grammar teaching and students should be given sufficient chances of free production of target structures, she also believed that students expected explicit grammar instruction more as it helps students feel more secure in exams. To this end, Suna adopted a holistic approach to grammar teaching which embraces both implicit and explicit teaching approaches. Similar to this study, the findings of Kaçar and Zengin's (2013) study showed that participating pre-service teachers favored a holistic approach to grammar instruction. It is also important that Suna prioritized a humanistic approach to teaching which focuses on students' needs, expectations, and feelings. It could be argued that Suna's core beliefs about learning and teaching in general, and some contextual factors i.e., student expectations, time constraints and exams seemed to be overriding some of her beliefs about L2 grammar teaching. Although she favored contextualized grammar teaching, she also attached importance to what the students expected from her. In line with her humanistic approach to teaching, Suna took her students' expectations at the center of her teaching without paying attention whether their expectations are congruent with her beliefs or not. Phipps and Borg (2009) note that "tensions between what teachers say and do are a reflection of their belief sub-systems, and of different forces which influence their thinking and behavior" (p. 381). While at one level some of her teaching practices do not match with her beliefs, at another level, they are in harmony with a general set of beliefs. This could be viewed as a sign of tension between her different belief sub-systems.

The limitations of the present, as well as suggestions for future research, are worth mentioning. Firstly, this study focuses on Suna's espoused or explicit beliefs i.e. beliefs that she is aware of. Her implicit beliefs are beyond the scope of this study. Secondly, this is a case study so the findings may vary if the study is replicated with different informants in different contexts. Therefore, the study does not aim to make any generalizations. Thirdly, the findings of the study claimed relevance primarily for L2 grammar teaching and learning, though some findings with regard to Suna's generic beliefs about learning and teaching also emerged in the data. Despite the limitations mentioned above, what the findings of this study demonstrate is that there is considerable value in portraying teacher beliefs and practices to enhance our understanding of the complex nature of teacher beliefs and L2 grammar teaching.

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