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MASTER'S PROGRAM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR IN L2:
A CORPUS-BASED STUDY**

BY

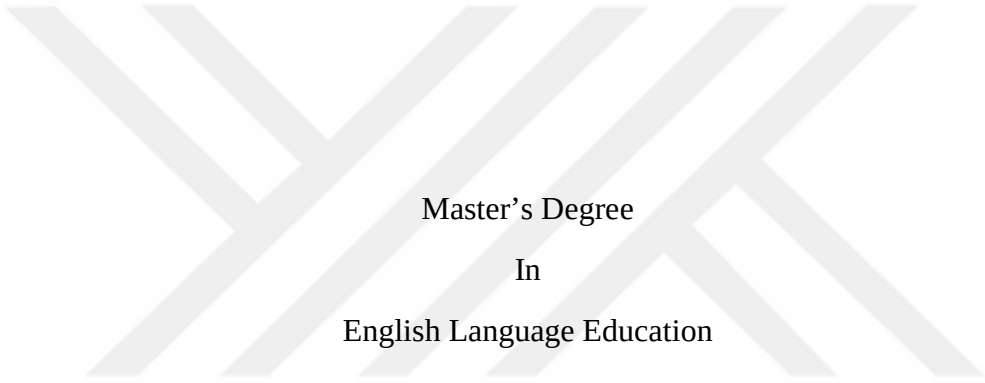
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İSTANBUL, 2021

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR IN L2:
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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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Dedication

In remembrance of my late father Savaş Özyoldaş, with gratitude and love.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ELT: English Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

SE: Standard English

COCA: The Corpus of Contemporary American English

BNC: The British National Corpus

GJT: Grammaticality Judgement Task

DN: Double Negation

NC: Negative Concord

ÖZET

YABANCI DİLDE DİLBİLGİSİ ÖĞRETİMİNDE BETİMSSEL YAKLAŞIMIN

ÖNEMİ: BİR DERLEMBİLİM ÇALIŞMASI

Standart/Ölçünlü İngilizcede kuralcı dilbilgisi yaklaşımları tarafından doğru/yanlış kabul edilen buyurucu kullanımlar ile İngilizce anadil konuşucularının kullandığı güncel İngilizce arasında yer yer tutarsızlıklar dikkati çekmektedir. Bu durum, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten öğretmenler için, sınıfta dilbilgisi öğretimi yöntemlerinde bir ikiliğe yol açmaktadır. Bu çalışma temel olarak, ayırık mastar kullanımı, tümce sonunda ilgeç kullanımı, tümce içerisinde ikili olumsuzluk biçimi kullanımı, ve ‘gibi’ anlamına gelen *like* sözcüğünün bağlaç olarak kullanımı gibi, kuralcı dilbilgisi uzmanları tarafından dilbilgisine aykırı olduğu iddia edilen dört yapının gerçek güncel kullanımını araştıran bir derlem çalışmasıdır. Ayrıca, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin Standart İngilizce kavramı hakkındaki görüşleri araştırılmaktadır. Türkiye’de bir vakıf üniversitesinde, anadili Türkçe olan 33 tane İngilizce öğretmenin, İngilizcenin güncel kullanımına ilişkin farkındalıklarını ölçen bir anket yapılmış ve 10 katılımcı ile de dilbilgisi öğretimlerinde kuralcı normlara mı yoksa çağdaş kullanımlara mı öncelik verdiklerini araştıran bir röportaj yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, yukarıda bahsedilen yapıların İngilizcedeki doğal kullanımlarını göstererek, betimleyici dilbilgisinin gerçekliğini ve böylelikle üstünlüğünü kanıtlamak, İngilizce öğretmenlerini, derlem araştırması yoluyla ilgili yapıların güncel kullanımları hakkında bilgilendirmek, öğretim uygulamalarında derlem yardımıyla kendilerini güncel tutarak İngilizcenin çağdaş kullanımı hakkında daha fazla farkındalık kazanmaya teşvik etmek ve derlem çalışmalarının dilbilgisi eğitimindeki önemini ortaya çıkarmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kuralcı Dilbilgisi, Betimleyici Dilbilgisi, Standart İngilizce, Yabancı

Dil Olarak İngilizce, Derlem

ABSTRACT

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR IN L2: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY

There is often a discrepancy between what is considered grammatically correct under prescriptive rules of Standard English (SE) and how native-speakers use English contemporarily, resulting in a dichotomy in grammar instruction choices for English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in the classroom. This study is basically a corpus study which investigates the actual use of certain English structures considered ungrammatical by the prescriptive grammarians, i.e. split infinitives, preposition stranding, double negatives, and *like* as a conjunction. In addition, it explores EFL teachers' views about the notion of SE. 33 Turkish EFL teachers in a foundation university in Turkey were surveyed in terms of their awareness of the contemporary use of English and 10 of them were also interviewed in order to understand their prioritization of whether prescriptive norms or contemporary usage of the language in their grammar instruction. The main aim of this paper is to show the superiority of descriptive grammars through the natural uses of the above forms in English and to inform EFL teachers about the contemporary usage of the relevant constructions through corpus research and encourage them to integrate greater awareness of the present-day English by keeping themselves up-to-date with the help of corpora in their teaching practices.

Key Words: Prescriptivism, Descriptivism, Standard English, English as a Foreign Language, Corpus

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Grammar instruction has been a matter of debate among English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers for a very long time due to the disparity between what is considered grammatically correct under the traditional prescriptive rules of Standard English (SE) and what native speakers of English actually use contemporarily. This leaves EFL teachers with a dilemma: What should they teach in the classroom? So, EFL teachers are often faced with the decision of whether to present a grammatical form according to prescriptive rules or teach students how native speakers use it in everyday speech and natural contexts.

The present study has two main purposes. First, the contemporary usage of certain English structures which are considered ungrammatical by the prescriptive grammarians and introduced as incorrect usage in various grammar books, style and usage manuals (e.g. The Gregg Reference Manual: A Manual of Style, Grammar, Usage, and Formatting by William A. Sabin, A Short Introduction to English Grammar by Robert Lowth, The King's English by H. W. Fowler, Strictly English: The Correct Way to Write and Why It Matters by Simon Heffer, The Elements of Style by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White, The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century by Steven Pinker) have been researched through corpora in order to show how frequently they are used by the native speakers in the present-day English. The forms that have been researched in the study are listed as follows:

- 1- split infinitives (e.g. *She agreed to quietly leave the room.*)
- 2- preposition stranding (e.g. *Who did she give the letters to?*)
- 3- double negation (e.g. *I cannot go nowhere.*)
- 4- *like* as a conjunction (e.g. *Like they say, there's someone for everyone.*)

On the basis of the corpora research (The British National Corpus and The Corpus of Contemporary American English) and literary references to descriptive grammar books (An Introduction to the Grammar of English by Elly van Gelderen, Collins COBUILD English Grammar, Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English, A comprehensive Descriptive Grammar of English by Renaat Declerck), the usages of the above structures in all aspects of contemporary use of English – in both British and American English, and in both written and spoken forms – will be presented in order to show that the prescriptive rules of English may not transparently reflect native speakers' natural linguistic patterns.

Additionally, the study aims to better understand what EFL teachers prioritize in situations where traditional grammar sources may not closely resemble the native speaker norms. So, the study aims to explore EFL teachers' knowledge on the contemporary use of the above structures which are traditionally considered ungrammatical and to investigate their views about Standard English to gain an insight into their attitudes towards prescriptivism and descriptivism in their grammar instruction.

Finally, the study argues for the necessity of the integration of native speaker norms, which parallels the descriptive grammar, into teaching English grammar. One way to integrate native speaker norms in teaching practices is the use of corpora in both language teaching and the production of curriculum, classroom materials and exams. In order to teach English in a way that is more representative of real language use, corpus research should play a larger role in EFL teachers' teaching practices rather than relying on prescriptive grammar rules. Thanks to detecting the natural, descriptive rules, some old prescriptive standards could be replaced by the rules of current, modern and natural forms. There is no doubt that language teachers' conceptions of the prescriptive standards should evolve and comply with these replacements, too. My advice to EFL teachers who prioritize standard norms in their grammar instruction is that they should disengage from their prescriptive approach to teaching grammar. This

disengagement requires corpus studies and correct sources, i.e. descriptive grammar sources, to be incorporated in their teaching practices, which in the end will definitely make them both correct users and correct teachers of English.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

English teachers who have been exposed to the culture of prescriptivism, which advocates only one correct form of English, have dedicated themselves to error correction in their students' oral and written production. Many EFL teachers have adopted the role of language guardians by fostering standard norms of English in their students' speech and following the writing conventions of traditionally approved style guides (Metz, 2017). However, the contemporary use of English may not coincide with prescriptive grammar rules those teachers embrace. In that case, some English structures may face the risk of being considered ungrammatical structures which need to be avoided despite being widely used by the native speakers of English.

I think that teaching grammar rules which are not compatible with the contemporary use of English is likely to constitute a problem: Such a grammar education is a fallacious, and thus, an inadequate one. In this regard, the current study has attempted to investigate certain structures through corpora to show whether the traditional prescriptive rules set up for those structures reflect what native speakers of English actually use contemporarily, namely, how English normally works. I aim to answer the following question regarding this: Should EFL teachers stop fostering prescriptive norms in their classroom practices? To answer this question, this study not only discusses how EFL teachers define their grammar instruction and why, but also suggests a more modern and realistic point of view towards grammar instruction which suits present-day and natural English. This should be taken into consideration by any instructor who wants to help their students prepare for real-world interactions.

1.2. Aim and Significance of the Study

The purpose of the study is not only to prove that English language is constantly evolving, and its grammar is subject to change in time, but also to assert that the prejudice towards the use of prescriptively incorrect forms of English should change. Based on this assertion, the study aims to inform EFL teachers about the actual use of the English language to some extent, and help them make more informed decisions on their teaching practices.

The study lays emphasis on the significance of the incorporation of native speaker norms with the development of classroom materials and curriculum, the choice of textbooks, language assessment and most importantly, language instruction in the EFL contexts by promoting the use of corpora, in order to create a teaching and learning environment that adheres more to actual language usage with a descriptive approach, rather than counting solely on prescriptive sources.

What makes this study important is that it aims to raise awareness in EFL teachers about their perceptions of grammar and grammaticality and their attitudes towards prescriptive and descriptive forms of English grammar in the light of the results that the corpus analysis provides. It is also expected to motivate the EFL teachers to think deeply about which of the two teaching philosophies (prescriptive and descriptive) they tend to prioritize in their grammar instruction in the classroom, and make them reconsider the classroom materials they employ making the necessary changes in the implementation of the materials accordingly before introducing target grammar points.

The findings which are intended to be shared with colleagues in the institution where the surveys were implemented (Kadir Has University) will provide valuable information not only for the ELT practitioners but also for the members of curriculum, material development, and assessment units in the institution. Furthermore, it is hoped that the suggestions made in the light of the data gathered in this study will be taken into consideration by the authorities of

the institution, and necessary revisions will be done in the English Preparatory Program in accordance with the findings of the study. It should be emphasized that the issues faced in all English language teaching contexts are likely to be similar, which implies that the suggestions made at the conclusion of the study could be applicable in other language teaching contexts, too.

1.3. Research Questions

Considering the dynamic nature of English like any other language, this study aims to explore how Turkish EFL teachers are aware of this fact, which can be achieved by investigating their knowledge on the contemporary use of certain English constructions and their views about the Standard English. Investigation of their views on the notion of SE and their preference on prescriptive or descriptive approach to teaching English grammar is important since their views are very likely to influence their instructional activities. In a way, whether they prefer imposing prescriptively correct constructions to up-to-date use of English in their classes is determined by their knowledge and attitude towards prescriptivism or descriptivism as an approach to grammar teaching.

In line with these aims, the following Research Questions are addressed in the study:

1. How frequently are certain structures that are considered non-standard (see split infinitives, preposition stranding, double negatives, *like* as a conjunction) used by the native speakers of English?
2. Are EFL teachers aware of the contemporary use of these English structures?
3. Are EFL teachers aware of descriptive grammar in contrast to prescriptive grammar?
4. What are EFL teachers' views about the notion of "Standard English"?

5. Do these EFL teachers favor standard written forms of English over the contemporary use of English by its native speakers in terms of their grammar instruction in EFL classrooms? If so, what induces them to teach such prescriptive forms?
6. Do these EFL teachers have a corpus-based approach to language teaching? Are they competent in using corpus? If not, would they like to learn how to use corpus?

1.4. Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following terms will be described as follows:

English as a Foreign Language: “English as taught to people whose main language is not English and who live in a country where English is not the official or main language” (Cambridge Academic content dictionary)

Standard English: Standard English is a dialect of English that is the only non-localised dialect of global currency with no major variance, widely recognized as the acceptable educational aim of teaching English (Strevens, 1981).

Descriptivism: Descriptivism, or the descriptive approach, entails presenting descriptions of the language structure and its application. This approach has three main characteristics: (1) it is objective in that it portrays the language as it is, (2) it is synchronic in that it usually encompasses the current day, and (3) it is specific in that it deals with a specific language (Prčić, 2010).

Prescriptivism: Prescriptivism, or prescriptive approach, is the practice of making decisions for how to use a language structure. It is concerned with the laws, standards, and tendencies of use that are based on standard language norms (Prčić, 2010).

Corpus: Corpus is “a collection of written or spoken material stored on a computer and used to find out how language is used” (Cambridge Academic content dictionary)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, literature on the notion of Standard English and the two approaches towards grammar instruction are presented. This chapter focuses on what Standard English is, and explains what prescriptivism and descriptivism is. In other words, this is the chapter that discusses the core terms on which the present study has been based and shows the starting point of the researcher.

2.1. Standard English

Many studies have been carried out to determine what the standard form of a language is and what the perceived benefits and drawbacks of teaching the standard form of a language are (e.g. Strevens, P. (1981); Milroy, J. (1999); Trudgill, P. (1999); Milroy, J., & Milroy, L. (2012); Curzan, A. (2014); Metz, M. (2017)). Although the word “standard” implies that we all have a common understanding of what it means, it is difficult to define. It appears as if there is not only one accurate definition of the word *standard*. Starting with the dictionary definitions, The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (Hornby, 2010) defines *standard* as ‘believed to be correct and used by most people’. In the same way, MacMillan English Dictionary (Rundell & Fox, 2002) defines *standard* as ‘generally used or accepted as normal’. As can be seen in the dictionary definitions above, when defining standard language, generally a benchmark is used as a basis to emphasize that standard language is correct, or universally accepted as normal. Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines *standard language* as ‘Language described as standard is the form of that language which is considered acceptable and correct by most educated users of it’. This definition isn’t specific enough as a description because there can be many other varieties of a language, which are equally acceptable, correct and used widely by its educated speakers.

So, what do we mean by Standard English (SE), then? Strevens (1981) defines SE “as a dialect of English that is the only non-localized dialect of global currency with no major variance, widely recognized as the acceptable educational aim of teaching English” (Strevens, 1981, p. 2). It is also sometimes referred to as “Proper English”. However, SE is in fact only one of many dialects, and it is neither better nor worse than any other sociolinguistically. It is just a prestige dialect. Since the speakers who are the nearest to actually speaking SE are found at the top of the social scale, SE is considered the most prestigious variety (Trudgill, 1999).

What linguists mean by the word *standard* is actually the process of language standardization in which standards are set for a language and any other variations which don't conform to those standards are not welcomed. In *Standard English: The Widening Debate*, Milroy (1999, p. 16) explains how and why the standardization process of languages started in history: “Many major languages such as Latin and Greek, which have a long history, and subsequently English, Spanish, French and some others, are thought to exist in “standard” or “classical” forms. They have all been studied extensively and their elegance, sophistication, expressiveness and richness have been praised. In fact, many of these languages have been spread by fire and sword across the world. Their success derives from their speakers' ability to conquer, not from the supremacy of their grammatical and phonological systems over other languages. Their success comes from their large number of native speakers and their broad dispersal. As a result of their popularity, these languages, including English, have experienced the complicated process of standardization.” Languages that have gone through the standardization process are expected to have some stereotypical styles and rules from the past. However, it should not be forgotten that the language is a phenomenon that is constantly changing and the standard language must keep up with the changes over time. In support of this idea, Milroy (1999, p. 17) states that it must be taken into account that although speakers of these languages believe in the existence of a standard type, the language tends to differ and

evolve all the time. Therefore, what is referred to as Standard English in linguistic accounts is not the English language, which is a far more variable and unpredictable phenomenon. Linguistic change and variability are hampered by standardization. Standardization may hinder the variability in a language, but it cannot completely hinder linguistic evolution. (Milroy, 1999, p.17).

Strevens (1981) also took another approach to defining SE. He emphasized the importance of defining what SE is not as well as what it is. One of the negative assumptions he made about what SE is not is that as it is not statistically the most frequently and commonly used form of English, *standard* for him does not imply ‘most frequently heard’. In a similar vein, Trudgill (1999) also believes that giving a more clear definition of SE is only possible when we also explain what it is not besides what it is. He states that SE is sometimes referred to as Standard Language; however, it is clear that it is not a language in any practical sense. SE, whatever it is, isn’t really a language because it is only one of several varieties of English.

The prescriptivists (e.g. Robert Lowth, H. Ramsey Fowler, William A. Sabin, Simon Heffer and some others) go against some constructions such as split infinitives, stranded prepositions, double or multiple negatives in the same clause. This objection underlies the belief that these usages are not a feature of standard or prestigious English. The concept of “prestigious English” partly results from the influence of Latin. According to Milroy and Milroy (2012, p.15), language guards have employed logic, mathematics, and etymology arguments in addition to arguments based on Latin grammar (e.g., ‘never use a preposition at the end of a sentence’). In the eighteenth century, for example, a mathematical argument (‘two negatives create a positive’) was used to criticize the double negative. Another example of the arguments against the use of abovementioned constructions is that Latin has neither split infinitives nor stranded prepositions, so English should have none. This is a very influential claim. It has been so influential that there are many speakers that avoid splitting infinitives, using the prepositions

at the end of a sentence or having double negatives in their speeches just because they have been taught so at school. Furthermore, for many of them, avoiding those constructions is a sign of wisdom. Despite its influencing power, this claim is not based on a grounded theory because it is unable to provide scientific explanations or natural grammatical reasons. It just depends on the common belief. Another weakness of this claim is that there are no sources cited when it is mentioned, therefore the attributions to Latin is no more than “part of the folklore of linguistics” as Bailey (2006) expresses.

The spread of linguistic realities will hopefully erode speakers’ reliance on this long lasting prescriptive tradition and the real usage of the language by its native speakers in present day will affect language teachers’ approach towards how to teach English. In the rest of this study, I will provide answers to the insightful concerns of EFL teachers to make the case for accepting the real contemporary version of English spoken by its natives livingly and teaching this most up to date version to their students. My hope is that English teachers would understand the inutility of teaching the claimed prescriptive forms as the proper use, and work toward incorporating more linguistic study into their teaching to widen their perspective on the teaching of English Language.

2.2. Prescriptivism vs. Descriptivism

Before discussing the two approaches to grammar - prescriptivism and descriptivism - let’s first understand what the exact meaning of grammar is, which is taught in foreign language classes all over the world. To find an answer to this question, it would undoubtedly be necessary to refer to Chomsky and to understand his theory thoroughly, which I feel will enable us to better understand our job as EFL teachers in the classroom.

Hall (1993), in *"Who's Afraid of Noam Chomsky?"*, summarizes the current status of Chomskyan linguistics in order to make the complicated topics more understandable to English instructors with the aim of highlighting the philosophy of language and mind, which he believes will assist instructors have a better sense of what they're attempting to achieve in the classroom. Hall (1993) states that language is primarily a social skill for most people, including many teachers: a set of acquired norms for communication. Chomsky, on the other hand, believes that language is primarily mental rather than social, and that it is utilized for both internal representation of knowledge and communication with others. Chomsky believes that in order to comprehend its usage in social situations, we must first comprehend the nature of what we are using, i.e., what information we must have stored in our minds in order to generate and interpret meaningful utterances. According to Chomsky (2002), every speaker's intuitive linguistic knowledge, which directs his or her language conduct, is a complex and rich system. To build and understand linguistic expressions, every speaker subconsciously masters a highly complex and exact set of formal procedures. This mechanism is continually employed, in an automatic and unconscious manner, to create and interpret new phrases, which is a regular feature of everyday language usage. Chomsky embarked on a thorough investigation of English syntax, relying on speakers' assessments of which sentences were grammatical and which were not. But what exactly is meant by grammatical? According to Chomsky, grammatical sentences are ones that are part of a person's native language. Chomsky, like many other linguists, does not discuss proper and incorrect usage, as traditional grammar books or usage and style guides. Chomsky believes that problems like whether or not to place a preposition at the end of a phrase or whether or not to split an infinitive are more about style and social conventions than linguistics. There's a distinction to be made here between prescriptive and descriptive grammar (Hall, 1993). Language is mental for Chomsky, and that what is grammatical is what is in people's heads. Grammar is an explanation of what we know (subconsciously) about our

language, i.e., part of a theory of mind, not merely a list of rules in a book, as Chomsky (2006) claims.

I would like to point out that, inspired by Chomsky's theory, I believe that whether the structures in a language are grammatical or not can be decided by only the speakers of that language. I aim to inform other EFL teachers, like myself, about the distinction between the two grammar approaches – prescriptive vs descriptive – through this study in order to encourage them to include more linguistic research into their teaching philosophies and to be more aware of the actual use of the English language by its native speakers adopting a descriptive approach, rather than counting solely on prescriptive sources.

Now, let's discuss what prescriptive and descriptive grammar mean. As Prčić (2010) states, once the standards are set for the prestigious variety of a language, it undergoes the process of stabilization through prescriptive resources such as grammar books, usage manuals, dictionaries and handbooks. As a matter of fact, prescriptivism elevates certain uses in SE to the status of proper language or correct usage and considers all other uses and so-called non-standard varieties incorrect usage. Therefore, the prescriptive approach is the practice of making decisions for how to use a language structure. It is concerned with the laws, standards, and tendencies of use (Prčić, 2010).

Bourke (2005) states that prescriptive grammar, which is prevalent in traditional grammar, establishes the rules for Proper English, laying down the “dos” and “don'ts” for the correct usage. It is very dogmatic and it distinguishes between “good” and “bad” grammar. He also claims that prescriptive grammar is often inaccurate and arbitrary, and it frequently overlooks real use. It overlooks the fact that a living language is always changing. Therefore, prescriptive grammar rules don't always correspond to present-day English use. A language's grammar does not exist in books, but in the minds of its speakers as Chomsky (2006), among other mental grammarians, highlight. To illustrate, typical prescriptive rules include never

splitting an infinitive. Split infinitives aren't explicitly discouraged in 21st century grammar books and style guides. They are, however, introduced as a construction which should be avoided if possible in various online blogs and forums. The rule dates back as early as the 1900s. Fowler (1908, p. 319) states: “The split infinitive is an ugly thing, as will be seen from our examples below; but it is one among several hundred ugly things, and the novice should not allow it to occupy his mind exclusively.” (Fowler, 1908, p. 319)

In contrast to the common belief and Fowler’s claim above, in real life conversations, native speakers of English often split infinitives to avoid confusion in their utterances, e.g. in the very famous TV series Star Trek “to boldly go where no one has gone before”. More examples of split infinitives from native speakers’ utterances can be found in 3.3.1.

Another well-known prescriptive rule is never using double negatives. As a reference to a more recent source, Sabin (2011, p. 345) explicitly states that using double negatives is grammatically wrong: “A double negative is wrong if the sentence is intended to have a negative meaning. Remember, two negatives make a positive.” (Sabin, 2011, p. 344).

He also states:

“To preserve the negative meaning of a clause, follow these basic principles:

- a. If the clause has a negative verb (a verb modified by not or never), do not use an additional negative expression, such as nor, neither . . . nor, no, none, no one, or nothing. Instead, use the corresponding positive expression, such as or, either . . . or, any, anyone, or anything.”

He gives the following example to clarify his claim:

“I have not invited anyone. (WRONG: I have not invited no one.)”

(Sabin, 2011, p. 345).

On the contrary, many native speakers double negate in their utterances even when they don't intend a positive, e.g. in the lyrics of a Rolling Stones song "I can't get no satisfaction". More examples of double negative constructions from corpus can be found in 3.3.3.

Another incorrect and improper usage according to prescriptivists is using *like* as a conjunction. Strunk and White (1999, p. 51) states in their book *The Elements of Style*: "*Like*. Not to be used for the conjunction *as*. *Like* governs nouns and pronouns; before phrases and clauses the equivalent word is *as*." (Strunk & White, 1999, p.51)

In their book, the authors' prescriptive and judgmental statements also draw attention:

"*Like* has long been widely misused by the illiterate; lately it has been taken up by the knowing and the well-informed, who find it catchy, or liberating, and who use it as though they were slumming." (Strunk & White, 1999, p.52)

In a relatively more recent source which is also prescriptive, Sabin (2011, p. 389) states:

"*Like* is correctly used as a preposition. Although *like* is also widely used as a conjunction in colloquial speech, use *as*, *as if*, or a similar expression in written material."

He gives the following examples:

"As I told you earlier, we will not reorder for six months.

(NOT: Like I told you earlier, we will not reorder for six months.)"

(Sabin, 2011, p. 389).

On the other hand, native speakers frequently use *like* as a conjunction not only in their daily conversations but also in the written discourse, e.g. "don't treat us like we were their parents". More examples from formal language containing conjunctive use of *like* can be found in 3.3.4.

Despite the fact that these prescriptive rules and many others exist in the sources, such as Fowler's *The King's English* (1908), Sabin's *The Gregg Reference Manual* (2011), and Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* (1999), which are claimed to parallel the standard variety of English, many English speakers do not always follow these rules and they are not

even bothered by the violation of them in someone else's speech. Prescriptivists provide no explanations for such cases. Instead, they simply argue that grammar dictates things based on prescriptivism without providing any proof to back up their point. Hence, the problem with prescriptivism is that certain forms which are claimed to be wrong are in fact quite frequent and acceptable in natives' daily speeches and should be considered grammatically correct in spite of being non-concurrent with the prescriptive norms.

Scholars such as Huddleston and Pullum (2002), in their detailed "descriptive" grammar book, point to the goals of prescriptivism (e.g., attempting to impose one formal style as "grammatically correct") in their discussion of the problems with the logic behind many prescriptive rules. Has prescriptivism achieved its goal, or can it ever achieve it?

Crystal (2006, p.105), in his book *The Fight for English*, states:

"The error of the prescriptive grammarians is that they adopted a normative stance about usage. They assumed that one variety of language - the standard, as seen in formal written English - was the only variety worth using, the norm for everyone. They asserted that the rules of that variety were the only ones which could be called correct. Everything else was rubbish - informal writing, informal speaking, regional speaking or writing."

(Crystal, 2006, p. 105)

The fact is that all attempts to shape a language by setting rules, which normally do not exist in the language, have proven unable to succeed since English, like other languages, is too dynamic and has too many native speakers to be shaped in one fixed form (cf. Crystal, 2006). In a similar vein, Curzan (2014) draws an analogy between the language and prescriptivism. She imagines a living language as a river which is constantly on the move, and considers prescriptivism the effort to build a dam which will stop the river in its path. However, linguists claim that a river being dynamical in its nature has got such strength, greatness and creativity that it runs over any dam.

Descriptivism or the descriptive approach to grammar, on the other hand, entails presenting descriptions of the language structure and its application. This approach has three main characteristics: (1) it is objective in that it portrays the language as it is, (2) it is synchronic in that it usually encompasses the current day, and (3) it is specific in that it deals with a specific language (Prčić, 2010). Namely, the main aim of descriptivism is to objectively describe how speakers generate language. Descriptive linguists believe that language change is a normal and unavoidable part of every living language. So, descriptive grammar defines language in its current state rather than how it should be. It is objective since it is based on a large corpus of real English, both spoken and written, and it recognizes several constructs that prescriptive grammar either ignores or only briefly discusses (Bourke, 2005).

What distinguishes between prescriptive and descriptive approaches to grammar is that while prescriptivism sets out guidelines on what speakers can or cannot do with language, descriptivism focuses on what speakers actually do with language based on empirical evidence. In this regard, descriptive linguists stand in opposition to prescriptivists since prescriptive grammarians react to language change with the intent of fixing the language in the sense of holding it stable (Curzan, 2014).

The descriptive approach to language, in contrast to the prescriptive approach, aims to capture the variety of ways in which speakers of a language interact with one another through systematically constructed and meaningful utterances. From a descriptive perspective, these utterances are accepted as possible, correct, well-formed utterances because they are generated by the speakers of that language in their daily conversations frequently. Corpus allows us to examine constructions in various settings, demonstrating how language users communicate on a daily basis. Corpus grammar claims to represent real English since the examples it provides are drawn from real-life situations rather than being made up like prescriptive grammars.

Some non-native EFL teachers may think that they should teach prescriptive traditional grammar as the correct language when they start teaching and put up resistance to adopting a descriptive approach towards teaching grammar since they were also taught prescriptive rules in their language education. Some others may impose prescriptive rules because of their institutional authority. After all – whatever the reason is – some English teachers dedicate themselves to teaching their students to speak and write “correctly” and eliminating all the prescriptively incorrect features from their students’ written and spoken output. Those teachers adopting such kind of an approach to language teaching and eliminating the features they consider “incorrect” may also be eliminating a valuable source of linguistic variety (Lindblom, 2005). English teachers should stop insisting on teaching only written formal English and standard norms. Instead, they should include spoken forms of English in their instruction and value them too, which helps improve the language learners’ command of English, makes them keep up with most up to date occurrences of certain features of the language and enhances their communicative competence in the outside world. The job of an English teacher should be teaching students the language as it works in real life by opening up their classrooms to the daily use of the language by its actual speakers. This means showing them that traditionally/prescriptively “incorrect” features can also be valid and might be used vivaciously by its natives in today’s English. Instructors’ pedagogical grammar expertise strengthens their presentation of grammar rules by including numerous examples of real use from corpora. The study of structures deemed basic and essential to successful English communication in everyday situations is also the focus of pedagogical grammar. Thus, an EFL teacher’s approach to teaching language should represent native speakers’ tendencies and preferences of usage instead of conceptions of correctness or standard norms. Such an approach can only be taken with the help of corpus evidence, which can significantly improve the objectivity, credibility and validity of classroom practices.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore:

1. How frequently are certain structures that are considered non-standard (see split infinitives, preposition stranding, double negatives, *like* as a conjunction) used by the native speakers of English?
2. Are EFL teachers aware of the contemporary use of these English structures?
3. Are EFL teachers aware of descriptive grammar in contrast to prescriptive grammar?
4. What are EFL teachers' views about the notion of "Standard English"?
5. Do these EFL teachers favor standard written forms of English over the contemporary use of English by its native speakers in terms of their grammar instruction in EFL classrooms? If so, what induces them to teach such prescriptive forms?
6. Do these EFL teachers have a corpus-based approach to language teaching? Are they competent in using corpus? If not, would they like to learn how to use corpus?

This chapter presents how the abovementioned queries are answered. It starts with the design of data collection. Then, what instruments are used and what procedures are followed in the process of data collection are presented. I divide the data collection into two parts. The first part (Part A) gives the results of the corpus research on certain forms that are considered non-standard but livingly used by the native speakers of English (see split infinitives, preposition stranding, double negation, *like* as a conjunction). After the corpus analysis of these structures, the second part of the data collection (Part B) deals with the ELT implications. This part presents how the questionnaires and interviews for EFL teachers have been designed and how they serve to answer the research questions of the study. Finally, the chapter gives the analysis

of the data gathered through questionnaires and interviews, and presents the limitations of the study.

3.1. Design of the Study

Data collection consists of two parts. The first part gives the results of corpus research on the investigated structures. After the corpus analysis of these structures, the second part of the data collection deals with the ELT implications. The data come from two main sources: (a) The British National Corpus (BNC) and The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), and (b) a Grammaticality Judgement Task (GJT) for Turkish EFL teachers. There are also interviews with some of them.

The occurrences of the investigated structures have been examined in both British and American English with the help of the corpora. As mentioned above, the BNC and the COCA have been used to collect data. The findings of the corpus study, which are presented and discussed in the first part of the data collection, are of high importance since they can be attributed greatly to the futility of EFL teachers' resistance to changes in the English grammar, which is aimed to be proved by the results of this study. Another purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of EFL teachers' awareness of real-life language usage with the help of the data gathered through the Grammaticality Judgement Task for Turkish EFL teachers. Finally, the study also aims to address EFL teachers' preferences on the two grammar philosophies (prescriptive or descriptive) in their grammar instruction, and their perceptions of SE, which was achieved with the help of the interviews. All the data gathered from the Corpus Analysis, Grammaticality Judgement Task, and the interviews will shed light on the decision whether it is advisable to prioritize the prescriptive rules in grammar instruction or not, specifically the ones against the so called incorrect/ ungrammatical structures that I mentioned above (i.e. split infinitives, preposition stranding, double negatives, *like* as a conjunction).

The purpose is not to generalize or study any relationships, but rather to explain the frequency of occurrences of the above constructions, as well as the participants' perspectives on English, teaching English grammar, and the role of the two grammar approaches in ELT. Therefore, a descriptive survey design was used to delve into the way EFL teachers conceptualize prescriptivism and English grammar.

The results will contribute greatly to the field of ELT, but it needs to be clarified that the study will not serve as guidance on specifically how to teach grammar in EFL classrooms. Instead, it aims to discuss adopting a descriptive approach and that it is a better choice for an EFL teacher rather than a prescriptive approach in grammar instruction in light of the data gathered from the corpus analysis, and promoting teacher training on corpus use in order to make language teachers internalize the descriptive approach on the language use and teaching.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Corpora

For the investigation of the first Research Question - as seen below - two corpora were used for the data collection.

(1) How frequently are certain structures that are considered non-standard (see split infinitives, preposition stranding, double negatives, *like* as a conjunction) used by the native speakers of English?

The COCA and The BNC were used for searches to access utterances containing the certain construction from both British and American English. The COCA and the BNC are the only broad, well-balanced English corpora that are publicly accessible, and they complete each other well. The BNC has a greater coverage of casual, daily communication, while the COCA is far broader and recent, which has important impacts on the total quantity and consistency of results. At www.english-corpora.org, both corpora can be used with the same interface. There

are, however, some differences between the two corpora, which may result in a great gap between the numeric results of the searches in both corpora. The purpose of using both of them is to provide evidence for the usages of the certain structures in both American and British English, which are standard dialects, rather than comparing the usages in the two dialects. After all, it would be comparing apples and oranges to some extent as it means comparing a much broader and continually updated corpus (the COCA) with the one that is a generation old now (the BNC). Therefore, please be aware of the differences while comparing the results coming from both corpora and the fact that the COCA is a more modern corpus and that any construction which has started to be used recently has the potential to appear more frequently in American English. The basic differences between the two corpora are listed as follows:

- a) The COCA (with 1 billion words) is way larger than the BNC (with 100 million words). As a consequence, it sometimes provides data for lower-frequency occurrences which the BNC does not.
- b) In the BNC, 10% of the corpus is spoken and 90% is written, while in the COCA, the corpus is almost equally divided (20 percent in each genre) into spoken, fiction, magazines, newspaper, and academic language.
- c) The COCA shows much more up-to-date occurrences. The BNC ends almost three decades ago, in the early 1990s, while the COCA continues until today.

3.2.2. Grammaticality Judgement Task (GJT)

To investigate the second Research Question of the study - as seen below - a Grammaticality Judgement Task (GJT) for Turkish EFL teachers was used.

(2) Are EFL teachers aware of the contemporary use of these English structures?

In the GJT, four grammar points, which were analyzed through corpus and whose usage by native speakers in the present-day English does not correspond to prescriptively correct

usages, were represented by pairs of sentences, one prescriptively correct sentence and one comparable sentence, which is considered prescriptively ungrammatical but common in native speakers' utterances. Participants were asked to determine whether the given sentence was grammatically correct or not, the first two options. There is a third option, "I'm not sure", in case the participants cannot decide if the sentence is grammatically correct or incorrect. The COCA and the BNC were used to verify that the prescriptive and descriptive forms of these grammar points were common in both American and British English. The GJT sent to the participants can be found in Appendix A.

3.2.3. Interviews

As for the third, fourth, fifth and the sixth Research Questions - as seen below - semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Turkish EFL teachers.

- (3) Are EFL teachers aware of descriptive grammar in contrast to prescriptive grammar?
- (4) What are EFL teachers' views about the notion of "Standard English"?
- (5) Do these EFL teachers favor standard written forms of English over the contemporary use of English by its native speakers in terms of their grammar instruction in EFL classrooms? If so, what induces them to teach such prescriptive forms?
- (6) Do these EFL teachers have a corpus-based approach to language teaching? Are they competent in using corpus? If not, would they like to learn how to use corpus?

Semi-structured interviews were preferred because it allows the interviewer to rephrase questions, include prompts when necessary, explain points as needed, and respond to any questions that participants may have. The questions asked to elicit ideas from the participants about the target inquiries are as follows:

Q1: What do you understand from "Standard English"?

Q2: Do you think there is sometimes a difference between how native speakers use the English language and what some English grammar books that we use introduce as correct usage?

Probe: Why? Can you give an example?

Q3: As an approach to teaching grammar, do you base your teaching techniques on native speakers' tendencies and preferences of usage or the conceptions of "correct usage" and standard norms?

Q4: How important is it to you that your students should learn standard written forms of English while learning grammar?

Probe: Why?

Q5: Please tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement:

"As an English teacher, my main goal is to teach my students Proper English and correct usage following the standard norms in English grammar."

Probe: Why do you agree? / Why do you disagree?

Q6: Please tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement:

"As an English teacher, my main goal is to teach my students to sound like a native speaker in how they use grammar."

Probe: Why do you agree? / Why do you disagree?

Q7: What is your level of knowledge on corpus? Do you ever use corpus for your teaching practices?

Probe: You can choose any of these:

- a) I have no idea.
- b) Not much, I've just heard it.
- c) Moderate, I've used Corpus a few times before.
- d) Advanced, I often use Corpus for various purposes.

(If the participant's answer is "a" or "b" for question 7)

Q8 - a. Would you like to get training on how to use corpus? Why?

Probe: Why? / Why not?

(If the participant's answer is "c" or "d" for question 6)

Q8 - b. For what purposes have you used corpus?

Probe: Have you ever used corpus ...

- a) To check frequency patterns of words and grammar constructions.
- b) To check collocations.
- c) To check the use of a grammar construction before presenting in class.
- d) To check the use of a grammar construction in the process of giving feedback to students' written & oral production.
- e) To access authentic data in designing classroom materials.
- f) To access authentic data in designing exams.

The interview protocol form can be found in Appendix B.

3.3. Data Collection Part A: Corpus Study

3.3.1. Split Infinitives

A split infinitive, also known as a cleft infinitive, occurs when a word or phrase, commonly an adverb, interferes with the infinitive marker *to* and the bare infinitive form of a verb (McArthur, 1998). For instance, *to better understand*, *to just be*, *to really get*, *to still be*, *to always be*, *to actually do* are some of the most common examples of split infinitives found in corpora.

As an interesting example, a split infinitive got on the stage in one of the most famous TV series of all time, *Star Trek* on September 8th, 1966 (Mikulova, 2011). The last words of Captain's Oath were "*to boldly go* where no one has gone before". In this example, the adverb *boldly* intervenes between the infinitive marker *to* and the verb *go*. Was it an improper or

ungrammatical use of the infinitive structure? No, it wasn't. This structure might have surprised some people obsessed with the standard norms in English, but we have to admit that it just showed up as a natural outcome of language (and language change if any). The occurrences of split infinitives, of course, predate Star Trek. The split infinitive is not a usage that has recently emerged in the language. Evidence from literature reveals that the early occurrences of split infinitives actually date back to the 13th century (Visser, 1972: 1049-55, as cited in Johansson, 2014). Apparently, the legitimacy of the rule against split infinitives has been up for debate for more than seven hundred years (Gelderen, 2010).

Some grammarians claim English should follow the Latin norm and maintain the infinitive as a closed unit. The argument in favor of the rule states that the infinitive is a unit, therefore nothing should intervene between *to* and the bare verb (Stevenson and Lindberg, 2010; Walker, 2005; Aarts, Chalker and Weiner, 2014). However, this argument is unable to give convincing grammatical explanations. Besides, there are some others like Trask (1996), who claim that the marker *to* is not even a part of the infinitive. Overall, the view that the English infinitives cannot be split is prescriptive, and it does not provide scientific explanations and it needs more evidence grounded on linguistics.

Now, let's have a look at the arguments against this rule, which are supported by grammatical and scientific explanations. One of the arguments against the rule is that splitting infinitives might help us avoid ambiguity in our sentences, and make us sound more natural. For instance, in the Handbook of good English, Johnson (1991) claims that the use of a split infinitive is sometimes necessary to avoid ambiguity in the sentence. Placing the modifier between the infinitive marker *to* and the verb in order to use it naturally in the sentence helps us preserve clarity. He exemplifies this with the following sentence which contains a split infinitive:

"It was impossible to completely follow his logic". (Johnson, 1991, p.71)

He argues that building the sentence as “*It was impossible to follow completely his logic*”, or “*It was impossible completely to follow his logic*”, just for the sake of not splitting the infinitive, would cause to sound ambiguous and unnatural. Therefore, it is a good idea to split the infinitive rather than using the modifier ambiguously and in an unnatural way in sentences (Johnson, 1991, p. 71).

Quirk et al. (1985, p. 497) also state that avoiding splitting an infinitive may cause ambiguity. They illustrate their claim with the following example:

“*His hardest decision was to not allow the children to go to summer camp.*”

(Quirk et al., 1985, p. 497)

According to Quirk et al. (1985, p. 497) if this sentence had not split the infinitive and if *not* had preceded *to*, it would be difficult to hinder the misinterpretation, as ‘allowing the children to go to summer camp was not his hardest decision.’

Furthermore, according to Davidson (2001, Splitting infinitives: a needless fear, as cited in Koivistoinen, 2012) splitting an infinitive to emphasize the adverb or avoid awkward language is advisable. Hence, he encourages to split infinitives for natural rhythm in language. Another argument against the prescriptive rule is based on the natural position of the adverbial in a sentence, which is just before the verb. Quirk et al. (1985, p. 496) claim that the place of the adverbial is immediately before the main verb. They support their claim with the following example:

“ [1] *She ought to seriously consider her position.*” (Example [1], 1985, p. 496)

If the verb phrase had been perfective in the example above, the adverbial would be just before the main verb, as “[1a] *She ought to have seriously considered her position.*” (Example [1a], 1985, p. 496) Therefore, they claim that the place of the adverbial should be considered as equally natural and acceptable in the former example as in the latter, whether it is perfective or not (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 496)

Bernstein (1965, Split infinitives, as cited in Koivistoinen, 2012) also encourages the use of split infinitives stating that the natural place of adverbs is before the verb it modifies and after the infinitive marker *to*. Bernstein (1977, p. 113) supports his claim with the following statements; “If we do not boggle at *He favors really eliminating discrimination*, why should we boggle at *He wants to really eliminate discrimination?*” Likewise, Close (1987) corroborates his claim through the analogy with other verb phrases. He states if it is acceptable that adverbs can split the verb and the auxiliary as in “*I do not really want*” or “*She did not actually talk to him*”, what prevents us from accepting that adverbs can split an infinitive? He posits that we should be allowed to “apply a pattern found in verb phrases that are not infinitives to those that are” (Close, 1987, p. 220).

Some other remarks in favor of the controversial construction are as follows: Objections to split infinitives are dubious claims (Stevenson and Lindberg, 2010); the judgement against the split infinitives is a superstition (Allen, 2008); it is a misnomer, and in fact nothing is split because the marker *to* is actually not a part of the infinitive and not even a constituent in the English language, and thus, placing the adverbial somewhere else leads to unnaturalness (Trask, 1996).

In this part of the study, I aim to provide corpus-based data showing the frequency of the split infinitive usage in both British and American English in the present-day. First, I will show the split infinitive cases in which an adverbial intervenes between *to* and the verb. After that, I will also present some examples having the negation marker *not* as a splitter. In the corpus searches, the symbol [r*] representing all adverbs was used between *to* and the symbol [v?i] representing the bare infinitive form of verbs. The same symbols were used for searching the split infinitive examples with the negation marker *not* i.e. *to not* [v?i].

Adverbials are considered the most common splitters since they give us relatively more freedom in terms of their position in a sentence, as mentioned above. Adverbials can have

initial, medial and/or end position in a sentence. Split infinitives are one of the occurrences of the medial position of an adverbial in a sentence (Quirk et al. 1985). According to Quirk et al. (1985), as a variant of medial position of an adverbial, split infinitives are quite common with subjuncts of narrow orientation. When an infinitive is split by an adverb or an adverbial phrase, it is so to strengthen the focus. To achieve this, the most effective way is placing the subjunct as closely as possible to the verb itself in the sentence.

Similarly, in his article, Mitrasca (2009) argues that subjuncts achieve a very important communicative function, which is giving speakers the chance of indicating how the verb is to be interpreted in their sentences. This function is achieved efficaciously when the adverbials are placed between *to* and the verb. In his article, Mitrasca (2009) also describes the most common adverbial splitters as follows:

1. adverbs that mark completion, e.g. *actually, really, completely*
2. adverbs that mark inclusive or exclusive relationship with other possible occurrences, e.g. *even, simply, only*
3. adverbs that go with occurrences taking place sooner or later along a time scale, e.g. *suddenly, finally, gradually*
4. adverbs that modify a gradable verb, e.g. *totally, thoroughly*

To begin with, the following examples from the COCA illustrate split infinitive constructions with an adverb between the particle *to* and the verb. The search command for this search is **to [r*] [v?i]**.

- (1) “...and the American people must hear from Special Counsel Robert Mueller in person **to better understand** his findings...”
- (2) “...It doesn't make sense for you **to just be** sitting around at a hospital when you can be in school...”

- (3) “...and we really support their efforts **to really get** the truth out there,...
- (4) “...Peter doesn't feel the need **to actually do** anything to meet such lofty ambitions,...
- (5) “...Noveck and Reboul (2008) argue that in order **to fully understand** an utterance the addressee needs to be sensitive to the communicative...”
- (6) “...Hey. It's a pleasure **to finally meet** you...”
- (7) “...isn't fun however to me it's like drinking oil. It allows me **to actually move**, stand and walk...”
- (8) “...in the past. But from a historical point of view, it's important **to properly assess** the past so we learn something from it. In that spirit,...

To see the most frequent combinations of adverbs and verbs in split infinitive occurrences in COCA, please see the following table.

Table 1. The most common adverbial splitters in the COCA.

COCA	<i>frequency</i>		<i>frequency</i>
1. to better understand	2119	11. to actually be	535
2. to just be	1094	12. to actually get	517
3. to really get	839	13. to fully understand	514
4. to still be	791	14. to finally meet	505
5. to just go	768	15. to just sit	500
6. to just get	710	16. to just let	475
7. to always be	694	17. to even think	470
8. to really be	609	18. to really make	447
9. to actually do	558	19. to just take	429
10. to just say	546	20. to finally get	422

The figure below shows the distribution of genres and frequencies of split infinitives with an adverb as a splitter in the COCA.

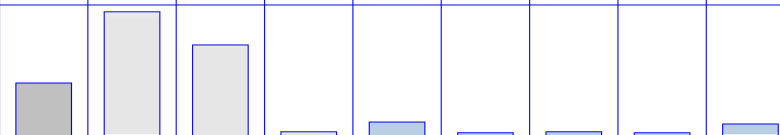
SECTION	ALL	BLOG	WEB	TV/M	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD
FREQ	22140	11474	8107	230	1150	10	225	87	857
WORDS (M)	993	128.6	124.3	128.1	126.1	118.3	126.1	121.7	119.8
PER MIL	22.30	89.21	65.25	1.80	9.12	0.08	1.78	0.71	7.15
SEE ALL SUB-SECTIONS AT ONCE									

Figure 1. Frequency of the *to-Adv-V* form in the COCA.

Based on the data gathered from the COCA, I obtained the following numbers. There are 22,140 tokens of split infinitives (22.30 tokens per million) 1150 of which are actually in spoken English, which makes 1380 tokens of split infinitives in total together with 230 more examples in the subtitles of TV and movies, whereas there are 20,760 tokens of split infinitives in total of six different genres in written English (i.e. blogs, web pages, fiction, magazines, news, and academic texts). We clearly see that split infinitives are much more common in written discourse than they are in spoken discourse. In written English, they are used most frequently in blogs (89.21 tokens per million), other web pages (65.25 tokens per million), and least frequently in fiction (0.08 per million).

Besides adverbials, the particle *not* may also split an infinitive. The following examples from the corpora illustrate split infinitive constructions with the negation marker *not* between the particle *to* and the verb. The search command for this type of constructions is **to not [v?i*]**.

(9) "...How are you? Okay. You know it's okay **to not be** okay. I know, I just..."

(10) "...We are giving people the ability **to not be** forced to be participants in a union..."

(11) "...Out of the six friends, Chandler is the only one **to not have** any siblings. Rachel has two sisters, Monica and Ross are brother and..."

(12) "...The officer told the woman, " **to not do** that again because... she was stealing from me..."

(13) “...What can we do **to not make** it feel like we're repeating a formula?...”

(14) “...yesterday in class we were talking about how **to not let** our anger, which a lot of this is not only bringing up...”

(15) “...It isn't an option **to not use** current levels of technology for students and their needs...”

(16) “...As I said in my last comment, I was really sorry **to not take part**...”

(17) “...I wonder if that final rock shelf might turn out **to not be** as sloping as we think it is...”

(18) “...that they had enough news sense **to not make** any more mistakes than most layout people do on newspapers...”

(19) “...It's the same sort of factor that allows anybody who smokes a lot **to not get** cancer and not get bronchitis and live,...”

To see the most frequent verbs (infinitive forms) that are split by the negation marker *not* in the COCA, please see the following table.

Table 2. The most common verbs split by *not* in the COCA.

COCA	<i>frequency</i>		<i>frequency</i>
1. to not be	2503	11. to not use	232
2. to not have	1345	12. to not see	210
3. to not get	546	13. to not feel	185
4. to not do	414	14. to not allow	179
5. to not let	315	15. to not think	166
6. to not make	311	16. to not want	164
7. to not take	310	17. to not look	147
8. to not go	296	18. to not pay	123
9. to not give	257	19. to not talk	111
10. to not know	241	20. to not worry	106

The Figures (2) and (3) below show the distribution of genres and frequencies of split infinitives with *not* as the splitter in both the COCA and the BNC.

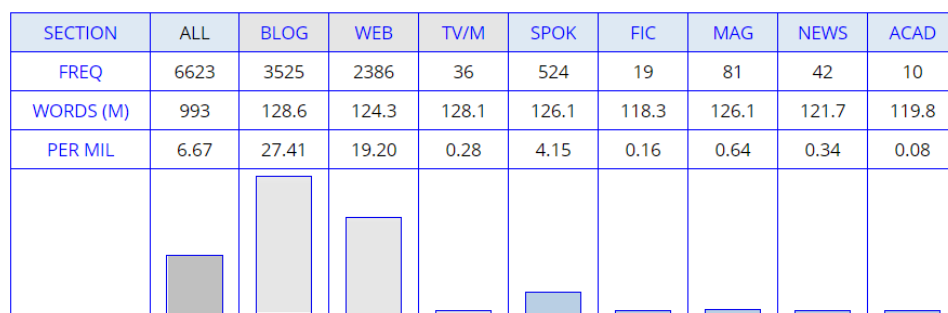


Figure 2. Frequency of the *to-not-V* form in the COCA.

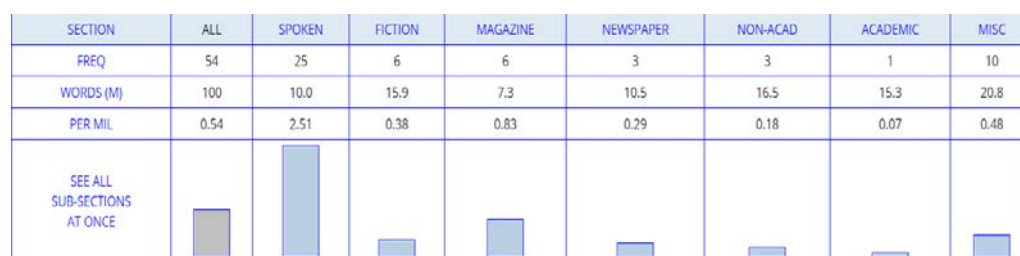


Figure 3. Frequency of the *to-not-V* form in the BNC.

Based on the data acquired via the corpora, we can obviously see that these constructions are quite common in native speakers' utterances. However, constructions split by the negation marker *not* are not as common as the ones having adverbials as splitters.

The number of the tokens of infinitives split by the negation marker *not* is 6.623 in total in American English, while it is 54 in British English (6.67 tokens per million in the COCA, and 0.54 tokens in the BNC). We can conclude that such constructions are quite more frequent in American English than British English. As for the analysis of the distribution of the frequencies according to genres, it is obviously seen that it is used in blogs and other web pages most frequently according to the COCA. There are 3,525 tokens of split infinitives with *not* in blogs (27.41 tokens per million), and 2,386 tokens in other web pages. In the BNC, on the other hand, it is spoken discourse in which the construction is most commonly used. The occurrence of such a construction is quite rare in written discourse in British English.

As a result, we can deduce that native speakers have a natural propensity to split infinitives. As data from the corpora reveal, they don't seem to mind using such constructions to achieve speech clarity or other grammatical or pragmatic reasons.

3.3.2. Preposition Stranding

Starting with the definitions of the terms, a preposition is a part of speech that expresses a relationship between two entities; prepositions are links that regulate another entity in the clause with which they are syntactically and conceptually associated (Yáñez-Bouza, 2007, p. 16) Meanwhile, the word *preposition* is derived from the Latin word *praeponere*, which means 'to put in front' (Greenwood, 1711:93, as cited in Yáñez-Bouza, 2007). Prepositions are normally put before the word they govern, literally in pre-position. However, prepositions may not always exist in this literal sense of being pre-posed, which is one of the most prominent and oldest peculiarities of the word order in English.

According to Biber et al (1999: 105), if a preposition is not preceded by its complement or, where the preposition is attached to a preceding verb, by the prepositional object, a preposition is said to be stranded. So, preposition stranding can be defined as placing the preposition at the end of a sentence. Here, I would like to add another definition which will be discussed together with preposition stranding in this section. Pied-piping, on the other hand, is placing the preposition before the wh-question word in interrogative forms. Dimitriadis (2007) claims that according to some grammar books, the place of preposition in the sentence affects the degree of formality of the sentence, e.g. "*Who did she give the letters to?*" is an informal usage as it has preposition standing while "*To whom did she give the letter?*" is the formal one as it has pied-piping.

The rule against using a preposition at the end of a sentence as in "*Who did she give the letters to?*" or "*I have found the book which I was looking for.*" is usually considered a kind of

prescriptive rule. The construction of preposition stranding is one of the most commonly criticized usages besides splitting infinitives and double negation.

This section aims to provide new insights into the attitudes towards preposition stranding, both in terms of how it was conceptualized by prescriptive grammarians and in terms of how it was discussed in a variety of works. My analysis of the data extracted from the corpora will shed light on the contemporary usage of preposition stranding in English.

According to Biber et al (1999), interrogative clauses and relative clauses are the most common examples of constructions where prepositions are stranded as can be seen in “What do you attribute this to?” and “a person who you’re thankful for”. In these examples, it is also possible to put the preposition before its complement, as seen in “*To what do you attribute this?*” & “*a person for whom you’re thankful*”, the so called pied-piping. However, it is not always possible to choose freely whether to strand or pied-pipe a preposition. In certain cases, preposition stranding is preferred, and pied-piping may seem odd to a native speaker. In case the preposition is part of a phrasal verb, for example, stranding is preferred according to Huddleston and Pullum (2002), who also state that there are no rules for this preference as it depends on the verb and preposition. They say that some always occur with a stranded preposition just because they are fossilized.

Biber et al (1999: 105), in the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English, state that according to prescriptive grammarians, stranded prepositions are inappropriate and should be avoided; however, in many cases, there is no other choice. Furthermore, even when the speakers are given an option, they frequently choose the form with a stranded preposition.

Here are a few examples from the corpora that have phrasal verbs and stranded prepositions. Each stranded example is followed by a pied-piped version, which is less common and sounds weird. For this search, the search command is “[v*] [i*] .” in which the symbol [v*]

represents all forms of verbs, followed by the symbol [i*] that represents all prepositions, and the period at the end shows that the preposition is placed at the end of a sentence.

(20) ... *I have no idea what you're **talking about**.*

I have no idea about what you're talking. (sounds unnatural)

(21) ... *it depends on what relationship you are **looking for**.*

it depends on for what relationship you are looking. (sounds unnatural)

(22) ... *that's not who I am. That's not where I **came from**.*

that's not who I am. That's not from where I came. (sounds unnatural)

(23) ... *but this isn't the first emergency that I have to **deal with**.*

but this isn't the first emergency with which I have to deal. (sounds unnatural)

To see the most frequent verbs with stranded preposition in the COCA and the BNC, please see the following table.

Table 3. Most frequent verbs with stranded prepositions in the COCA and the BNC.

The COCA	Frequency	The BNC	Frequency
1. talking about.	13569	1. talking about.	420
2. looking for.	4935	2. looking for.	228
3. talk about.	3568	3. dealt with.	185
4. came from.	3371	4. came from.	167
5. deal with.	2924	5. deal with.	166
6. begin with.	2811	6. look at.	133
7. looks like.	2716	7. cope with.	127
8. look like.	2420	8. think about.	116
9. think about.	2176	9. talk to.	113
10. work with.	2051	10. talk about.	111

As found by searching the BNC and the COCA, it is commonly preferable to use stranded prepositions.

Prepositions can also be stranded when the sentence ends with a relative clause or a noun clause. Below are some examples from the corpora that include relative clause or noun clause with a stranded preposition.¹

- (24) “...*The King wanted to know what the gun was used **for**.*”
- (25) “...*He was doing things I'd never even read **about**. And it was for my benefit...*”
- (26) “...*I really thought you were the guy I was suppose to go out **with**.*”
- (27) “...*Well, we have to find someone who he will engage **with**. You'd better find them...*”
- (28) “...*I got a Cuisineart 7-speed hand mixer for my wedding, which I am happy **with**.*”
- (29) “...*we did well and we have a lot of things that we can learn **from**.*”
- (30) “...*I'm sure there are plenty of hotels I can stay **at**. Okay, let's just cut to the chase...*”
- (31) “*Mrs. Feboldson squinted her eyes until she could see what Febold was pointing **at**.*”

Bergh and Seppänen (2000) report that English wh-relatives have undergone a syntactic shift in their prepositional use over time: After originally occurring only with pied-piped prepositions, they currently accept preposition stranding as an alternative pattern. In a similar vein, corpus searches reveal that relative clauses with a stranded preposition are common constructions in both American and British English, except in academic texts. Such constructions are mostly found in conversation and fiction. Preposition plus wh-word, in other words pied-piping, is preferred predominantly in the written discourse.

Stranded prepositions may also occur at the end of an interrogative clause. For this search, the search command is “[i*] ?” in which the symbol [i*] represents all prepositions, and the question mark at the end shows that the preposition is placed at the end of an interrogative clause. Here are some examples of such constructions:

- (32) “*How long does it go on **for**?*”

¹ Stranded preposition examples could not be given separately as only within the relative clause or only within the noun clause. Since the command for such syntax would be too long and complex to search for these uses in the COCA and the BNC interfaces, the [prep .] command was used; therefore, the results and numeric data are valid for all possible sentences ending with a preposition.

(33) “What are they looking **for**? What do they think of the service they receive? The best way of answering...”

(34) “What is it you want to talk to us **about**?”

(35) “Which one do you want to start **with**?”

(36) “And who is this girl you speak **of**?”

To see the most frequent prepositions that are stranded at the end of an interrogative clause, please see the following table.

Table 4. Most frequently stranded prepositions at the end of interrogative clauses.

COCA	Frequency	The BNC	Frequency
1. about?	28155	1. for?	1801
2. for?	24207	2. to?	894
3. from?	13300	3. about?	860
4. to?	12992	4. from?	804
5. with?	8254	5. on?	581
6. of?	6734	6. in?	490
7. at?	6710	7. with?	435
8. in?	5624	8. of?	349
9. on?	5087	9. at?	293
10. by?	1813	10. against?	196

Given all this, in contrast to the traditional belief that using prepositions at the end of a sentence is something to be avoided does not match up with the native speakers' preferences. Some strict prescriptivists may claim that a different verb that doesn't need a preposition should be preferred in such cases for the sake of abiding by the rule against ending the sentence with a preposition e.g. “Why did you do that?” instead of “What did you do that for?”, or “This is the book I mentioned.” instead of “This is the movie I told you about.”. However, avoiding stranded prepositions strictly may result in sentences that sound awkward and unnatural such as Winston Churchill's iconic reaction to this rule by saying “*This is the sort of tedious nonsense up with which I will not put*” after being criticized for using a preposition at the end of a

sentence. As a consequence, preposition stranding may be more appropriate than pied-piping or even necessary in some situations as the evidence from the corpora reveal.

Börjars and Burridge (2010, p. 113) in their book *Introducing English Grammar*, also stress that such rule should no longer exist by the following statements:

“Prepositions, according to prescriptive grammarians, should not be left at the end of a sentence. Since so many native speakers of English are happy to leave a preposition at the end of a clause, we assume that if there ever was a rule forbidding prepositions left at the end of clauses, then that rule is now rapidly losing ground.”

(Börjars & Burridge, 2010, p. 113)

3.3.3. Double Negatives

As Zeijlstra (2004) suggests, in most cases, two negations in the same clause cancel each other out, yielding an affirmative statement. This is called Double Negation (DN). On the other hand, Negative Concord (NC) can be contrasted with double negation constructions. Negative concord is found in constructions where two negation markers can convey an interpretation that is identical to sentences with a single negation marker. The two negative markers in negative concord constructions combine to form a single semantic negation (Zeijlstra, 2004).

Zeijlstra (2004) states that in Universal Grammar, languages are either NC or DN. Under this claim, speakers of DN languages are not expected to use NC. Standard English is known as a DN language. Therefore, many prescriptivists claim that NC does not exist in standardized English, and NC constructions in English are considered grammatically wrong in this respect. However, corpus research, both in British and American English, shows that NC and DN coexist in English and native speakers of English who use DN also use NC in their utterances in present-day English.

Biber et al. (1999) also claim that two or more negative forms can sometimes co-occur in the same clause creating a negative meaning. They support this claim by providing corpus evidence in their book *Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. They categorize double negative constructions in two types: the dependent type, in which the negative forms co-occurring in the same clause convey a single negative sense (e.g. “We opened the door and we didn't see nothing. It was real dark.”), and the independent type, in which the negative forms have independent negative forces, i.e. in cases of repetition or reformulation (e.g. “Won't eat any veggies you know, none.” or “No, not tomorrow, she said”) – in both cases negative forms are not combined under the same clause. The corpus searches in this study include the former type – the dependent type – which is the one that is socially stigmatized due to the pressure of the prescriptive approach.

Sentences with two negation markers can be ambiguous in some linguistic contexts since they might have both a DN and a NC interpretation. This ambiguity might occur when the negation marker in the sentence is paired with another negative word which is mostly an “n-word” like *nothing*, *nobody*, *nowhere*, etc. (Giannakidou, 2005). The following example shows a potentially ambiguous statement with *nothing* as a negative pronoun following the negation marker *not*.

I didn't eat nothing yesterday.

There are two meanings that we can infer from this example:

- (a) There is something that I ate yesterday. (DN)
- (b) There is nothing that I ate yesterday. (NC)

Speakers of Standard English can easily interpret such a construction as NC even though they may not produce such constructions. That might be because of the fact that they have been abundantly exposed to NC constructions in the media (e.g. the lyrics of the famous song of Rolling Stones “I can't get no satisfaction”). Additionally, Blanchette (2013) and Zeijlstra

(2004) propose a different explanation for this. They claim that English is intrinsically a NC language.

In this section of the study, I aim to show how native speakers of English use NC constructions in the present-day English through the current corpus research. I have tried to classify the types of the double negative combinations in the corpus in order to syntactically describe them and demonstrate their usage and context. The data was retrieved with the help of Part of Speech Tags tool provided by the BNC and the COCA. This tool helped me to search for different negatives in various syntactic structures. The searches for the constructions having two negatives include the following items: *nothing* and *nobody* as pronouns, *no* and *none* as determiners, and *nowhere* as an adverb. In English, *not* is the prototypical marker of polarity. Therefore, in the corpus searches, with the help of the tool “Part of Speech Tags”, the symbol [x*] representing all variations of the negation marker - *not* / *n’t* - was used followed by the symbol [v*] representing all verbs since *not* is actually a part of the verb phrase. To illustrate, the search command for the combination of the negation marker *not* and the adverb *nowhere* is [x*] [v*] nowhere.

The form *ain’t* as a negative form of *am*, *is*, *are*, *have* and *has* together with *not* is also included in the data gathered via the symbols [x*] [v*]. While *ain’t* is commonly considered non-standard, it is still widely used by native speakers of English. It applies to all persons and refers both to *be* and *have*. The double negative constructions with *ain’t* aren’t used in academic texts unless it occurs in quoted speeches, but it is very common in everyday conversations, and it is fairly common in dialogues in fiction, too.

Different types and combinations of double negatives were searched in the corpora in order to show their use, meaning and frequency. The analysis of the data is mainly qualitative and no sociological variables were examined since they stay out of the scope of the present

study. However, at times, distinctions between American and British English and also spoken and written discourse were presented.

To begin with, the following examples from the corpora illustrate NC constructions with the negation marker *not* and the pronouns *nothing* and *nobody*. The search commands for these combinations of negatives are as follows:

[x*] [v*] nothing & [x*] [v*] nobody

- (37) "...Take some cooking classes. Exactly. Excuse me? I **didn't** say **nothing**. You didn't marry me for my cooking, now did you..."
- (38) "...Just to check it out. We opened the door and we **didn't** see **nothing**. It was real dark..."
- (39) "...I wan na rob that bank. - We just did one. - Let's do one more! We **don't** know **nothing** about that bank. Okay? We don't know who's working, where the alarms are. All right? This is crazy. I'm not doing it..."
- (40) "...And put your wallets on the table. I **don't** want **nobody** cheating..."
- (41) "...I don't trust you kids. I **don't** let **nobody** come to my house' cause something always coming up missing..."
- (42) "...I **ain't** telling **nobody**. I **wouldn't** tell **nobody**. - You promise? - I promise. Only me and you know this..."

The most frequently used constructions of such combinations - *not* & *nobody/nothing* - include *n't do nothing* (775 tokens), *n't know nothing* (650 tokens), *n't say nothing* (475 tokens), *n't got nothing* (465 tokens), *n't have nothing* (303 tokens), *n't seen nothing* (251 tokens), *n't mean nothing* (213 tokens), and *n't want nobody* (130 tokens), *n't let nobody* (99 tokens), *n't tell nobody* (94 tokens) in the COCA. As can be seen from the context, in all above examples, the meaning is NC meaning.

To see the distribution of genres and frequencies of double negative constructions with the negation marker *not* and the negative pronouns *nothing* and *nobody* in both American and British English, please see the figures (4), (5) and (6):

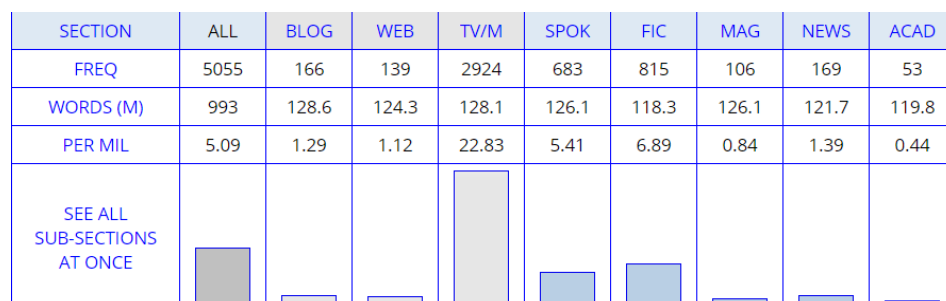


Figure 4. Frequency of *not* & *nothing* in the same clause in the COCA.



Figure 5. Frequency of *not* & *nothing* in the same clause in the BNC.

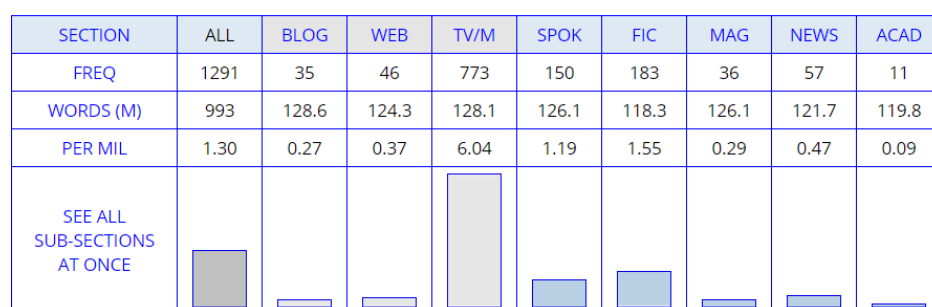


Figure 6. Frequency of *not* & *nobody* in the same clause in the COCA.

As the figures above show, the double negative constructions with the pronoun *nothing* is much more common than the ones with the pronoun *nobody* and it is a little more frequent in American English with 5.055 tokens in the COCA in total (5.09 tokens per million in the COCA, and 3.49 in the BNC). Both usages are frequently used in the spoken discourse such as

TV and movie subtitles, dialogues in fiction and daily conversations while they are quite rare in the written discourse in both British and American English.

Besides the constructions with negative pronouns, combinations of the negation marker *not* and determiners *no* and *none* were also examined. The search commands are as follows:

[x*] [v*] none & [x*] [v*] no [nn*]

- (43) "...calm down. We're from out of town and we **don't** want **no** trouble, OK? What's your name?..."
- (44) "...Listen, Floyd, he **didn't** mean **no** harm, man. He just a fan, that's all..."
- (45) "...I **don't** need **no** help! Thanks..."
- (46) "...She cheated on you? **Can't** make **no** sense of that..."
- (47) "...I **don't** want to meet you **nowhere**. No, **don't** want **none** of your time..."
- (48) "...Here, drink this. It'll wake you up. You **don't** need **none** of that spicy food..."
- (49) "...Cause you **don't** know **none** of the guys who are playing. It's just a bunch of nobodies running..."

To see the most frequent collocations occurring with the combination of *not* and *no* in both the COCA's and the BNC's frequency lists, please see the following table.

Table 5. Most frequent collocations used together with *not* and *no* as double negative constructions in the COCA and the BNC.

Collocations with double negatives including <i>no</i> in the COCA		Collocations with double negatives including <i>no</i> in the BNC	
1. n't make no sense	114	1. n't got no money	18
2. n't got no money	103	2. n't take no notice	13
3. n't want no trouble	92	3. n't make no difference	12
4. n't make no difference	70	4. n't want no money	5
5. n't get no respect	47		
6. n't got no business	38		
7. n't mean no harm	38		

In addition, the most frequent occurrences with the combination of *not* and *none* in the COCA include the constructions *n't want none* (100 tokens), *n't got none* (32 tokens), *n't get none* (21 tokens), *n't need none* (19 tokens), and *n't matter none* (18 tokens).

To see the distribution of genres and frequencies of the double negative constructions with the negation marker *not* and the negative determiner *no* in the COCA and the BNC, please see the following figures:

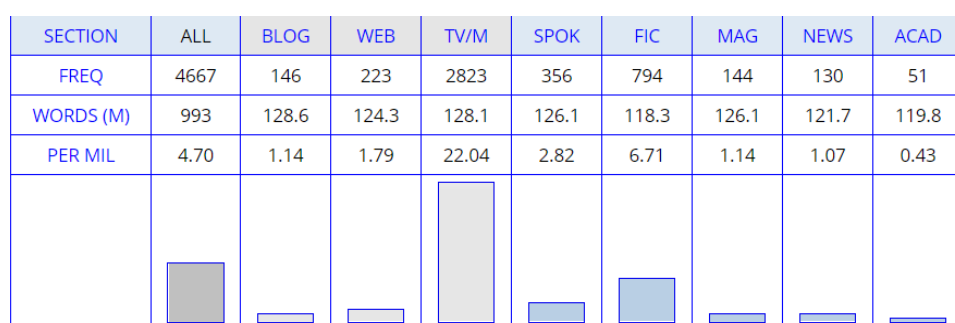


Figure 7. Frequency of *not* & *no* in the same clause in the COCA.

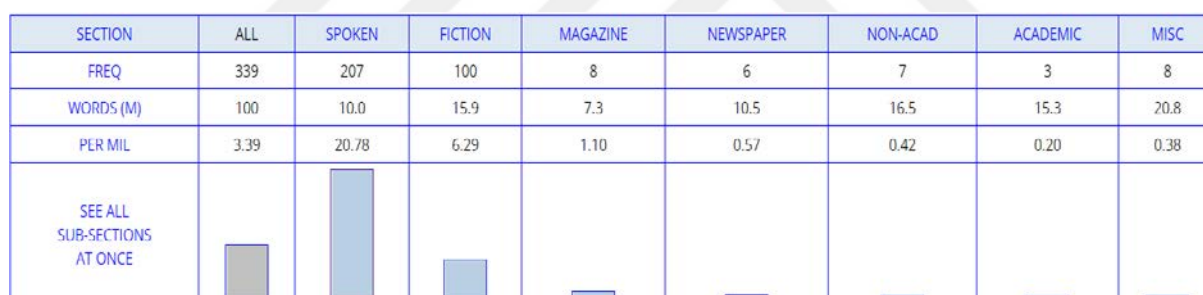


Figure 8. Frequency of *not* & *no* in the same clause in the BNC.

As seen in the figures above, double negatives are quite frequent in the spoken discourse in both American and British English. Based on the data gathered from the corpora, I obtained the following numbers. There are 4,667 tokens of this type of constructions in total in the COCA, 2,823 tokens of which are from the subtitles of TV and movies whereas there are 339 tokens in total in the BNC, 207 of which come from spoken discourse. We can also see that such constructions are used twice as frequently in American English than in British English (7.70 tokens per million in the COCA, and 3.39 in the BNC). These occurrences are much more

common in the spoken discourse than they are in the written discourse. It may surprise one to see that fiction follows TV and Movies with 794 tokens in the COCA, but these examples are mostly the dialogues in the fiction. As for the other written discourse genres like magazines, news and academic texts, the examples mostly show quoted speech.

NC constructions can also be formed with the negation marker *not* and the adverb *nowhere*. The search command for this combination of double negatives in the same clause is as follows:

[x*] [v*] nowhere

(50) “...Thank you for driving. You know I **can't** drive **nowhere**. My license ain't right...”

(51) “...Shut it down right now, son! **Don't** go **nowhere**, where you going? Where you going?...”

Evidence from the COCA and the BNC reveal that the most frequent occurrences with such a combination include the verb *go* i.e. *n't going nowhere* (266 tokens), *n't go nowhere* (101 tokens), *not going nowhere* (48 tokens) in the COCA. There are also 27 tokens of *n't got nowhere* as the fourth most frequent construction on the frequency list. Similar to other double negative combinations, the constructions having the negation marker *not* together with the negative adverb *nowhere* are commonly used in the spoken discourse rather than written English as we can clearly see in the figures below.

SECTION	ALL	BLOG	WEB	TV/M	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD
FREQ	544	20	13	334	72	71	16	18	0
WORDS (M)	993	128.6	124.3	128.1	126.1	118.3	126.1	121.7	119.8
PER MIL	0.55	0.16	0.10	2.61	0.57	0.60	0.13	0.15	0.00
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Figure 9. Frequency of *not* & *nowhere* in the same clause in the COCA.

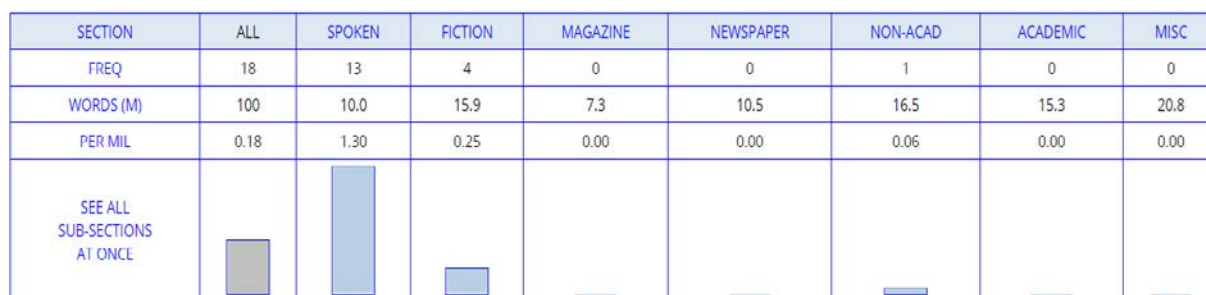


Figure 10. Frequency of *not* & *nowhere* in the same clause in the BNC.

As the figures reveal, constructions having *not* and *nowhere* in the same clause are not as frequent as the ones having combinations of *not* & *nothing* and *not* & *no*. Yet, there are 544 tokens in total in American English and 18 in British English (0.55 tokens per million in the COCA, and 0.18 in the BNC).

According to the prescriptive approach, in Standard English, the constructions above from (37) to (51) should consist of the negation marker *not* followed by a non-assertive negative form such as *any*, *anything*, *anyone* and *anywhere* (e.g. for (38) I didn't say anything, for (41) anybody, for (45), I don't need any help! Thanks, and for (51), Don't go anywhere). However, the examples gathered from the corpora show that the NC constructions with the negation marker *not* followed by the negative pronouns *nothing*, *nobody*, the negative determiners *no*, *none* and the negative adverb *nowhere* actually exist in native speakers' speech. All the examples from (37) to (51) belong to the spoken discourse. Double negative constructions are much more common in daily conversations than in the written registers. One reason for negative concord to be stigmatized in the written discourse might be that it occurs frequently enough in the vernacular for writers to endeavor to eliminate it from their language. So, native speakers may hesitate on the use of negative concord even if it sounds natural to them. The reasons of this hesitation could reflect sociolinguistic factors such as level of education, age and the speaker's area of living. Double negatives are still being noticed in vernacular speech and judged as vulgar. We might infer that these kinds of double negatives are still embedded in lower class dialects.

3.3.4. *like* as a Conjunction

In English, the word *like* is used for several purposes with its various grammatical properties. It can act as a noun, an adjective, an adverb, a verb, a preposition, and a conjunction. While all the other forms of *like* are accepted as standard forms, the conjunctive use of it has been a matter of debate among traditional grammarians for a long time. A well-known example of such debate was in 1954, when the use of *like* as a conjunction was discussed publicly. In 1954, Winston launched a slogan for its cigarettes in one of its advertisements. The slogan was “Winston tastes good like a cigarette should.” According to prescriptivists, this slogan was ungrammatical due to the use of *like* as a conjunction, and the proper use must be with *as* instead of *like*. Although such uses of *like* are frequently preferred by native speakers of English, they are considered to be improper uses by prescriptivists. Therefore, *like* as a subordinating conjunction is used mostly in colloquial language. Since there is no agreement on its formal status, cultured speakers and authors tend to favor *as* or *as if* instead of *like* (Whitman, 1974).

On the other hand, Fries (1940, as cited in Whitman, 1974) states that conjunctive use of *like* exists in both colloquial language and Standard English. Although the conjunctive *like* has a limited level of use in Standard English, he points out that it has been used in this way for over 400 years. He also claims that based on historical considerations, *like* as a conjunction should be considered equally appropriate to the conjunction *as*. The old form was *like as*. This old form could have easily been simplified to *like*, but *as* turned out the one which was preferred and most commonly used. The appropriateness of such uses of *like* is still disputed. We can see this dispute in dictionaries. For example, some dictionaries such as the Cambridge Dictionary and Collins gives the conjunctive use of *like* with a footnote indicating that this usage exists in informal contexts only and it is considered incorrect by many traditional grammar books. There are, on the other hand, dictionaries that accept *like* as a conjunction without needing any explanation regarding its grammaticality such as the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary

and the Macmillan Dictionary. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary shows that *like* has got a conjunctive use and makes no comments on the acceptability or grammaticality of the usage. What's more, the Macmillan Dictionary shows the conjunctive use of *like* in its online dictionary together with one of the video series called "Real Grammar" by Michael Rundell, the editor of the Macmillan Dictionary, attached to the definition. Rundell, in his video, explains the prejudice against using *like* as a conjunction by stating the common belief that *like* is a preposition while *as* is a conjunction. In contrast to this traditional belief, he refers to plenty of corpus data supporting that *like* is frequently used as a conjunction in the place of *as*; therefore, *as* and *like* are both correct uses, they can both be used as conjunctions, and they can be used interchangeably.

As and *like* are both used to show similarity. As Rundell states, the traditional grammar asserts that *as* is a conjunction, therefore, it can be followed by a clause (a subject and a verb), whereas *like* is a preposition, which means it governs nouns and pronouns but not verbs or clauses. Also, when *as* is used to describe resemblance, it is not followed by a noun or pronoun. For example, according to traditional grammarians, "*I want to speak English as she does.*" is grammatically correct, "*I want to speak English like her.*" is also grammatically correct, but "*I want to speak English like she does.*" and "*I want to speak English as her.*" are considered incorrect. *As*, on the other hand, can be followed by a noun when it refers to a task or job. In this meaning, *like* cannot replace *as*. For example,

"*As a teacher, she taught me math and grammar.*" (= she is a teacher)

"*Like a teacher, she taught me math and grammar.*" (= she is not a teacher, but she taught me math and grammar in a similar way to a teacher)

Burchfield (1996), in "New Fowler's Modern English Usage", examines *like* as a conjunction in depth by providing contemporary examples to explain its various uses. According to Burchfield, there are four main conjunctive uses of *like*. First, it is used as a

conjunction in the meaning of “in the way that”, which is the most common use of it. In this usage, the main clause's verb is repeated in the clause after *like* as in the lyrics of the famous Beyoncé song “*They don’t love you like I love you.*” Second, it is used in the place of *as if* or *as though*, which is frequent in American English, but less frequent in British English as in “*The rest of us nodded like this was true because we were required to do that.*” Third, it is used interchangeably with *as*, which is widespread and can be found in every English-speaking country in the world as in “*Well, like they say, there's someone for everyone.*” The fourth conjunctive use of *like* is mostly employed when a comparison is made, which is, according to Burchfield, more preferable abroad than in the States or Britain. It has the meaning of “in the manner (that)” or “in the way (that)” as in “*She constantly changes boyfriend like she changes her underwear.*”

Burchfield states that the conjunctive uses of *like* can be found in a variety of written and spoken English. However, it is still struggling to find its place in standard norms. The long-standing opposition to the use of *like* as a conjunction takes effect in formal and traditional contexts, despite its increasing use and acceptance by the native speakers.

In this section of the study, I aim to show how frequently native speakers of English use *like* as a conjunction in the present-day English through the corpus research. The data was retrieved with the help of the Part of Speech Tags tool provided by the BNC and the COCA. Thanks to this tool, I was able to search *like* as a conjunction with the search command **LIKE.[c*]** in which the symbol [c*] representing the conjunction as a part of speech limits the word *like* (with a period in between) to its conjunctive uses. The following examples from the corpora illustrate the conjunctive uses of *like* in both American and British English:

(52) “... I feel **like** I did a good job on my application and I did a good interview,..”

(53) “... In the pictures of them, they look **like** they're funny people,..”

(54) “...I'm not going to sit here and pretend **like** I know how you're feeling, okay,..”

(55) “...Yeah. It's **like** you said, I have to go after what I want, and if I...”

(56) “...She stands **like** she's been frozen to the ground...”

(57) “...No one chooses to live **like** she does...”

(58) “...He felt **like** he couldn't breathe properly. **Like** there wasn't enough air in the room, or the shirt was too tight..”

(59) “...What can we do to make it look **like** we care about the unemployed?..”

(60) “...She likes to cover up the truth **like** she covers over the naked light.”

According to the present corpus research, using *like* as a conjunction is very common with 127,828 tokens in the COCA and 2,452 in the BNC in total (128.73 tokens per million in the COCA, and 24.52 in the BNC). The most frequently used constructions of *like* as a conjunction is with the verbs *look* and *feel*. To see the distribution of genres and frequencies of such constructions in both American and British English, please see the figures (11) and (12) below:

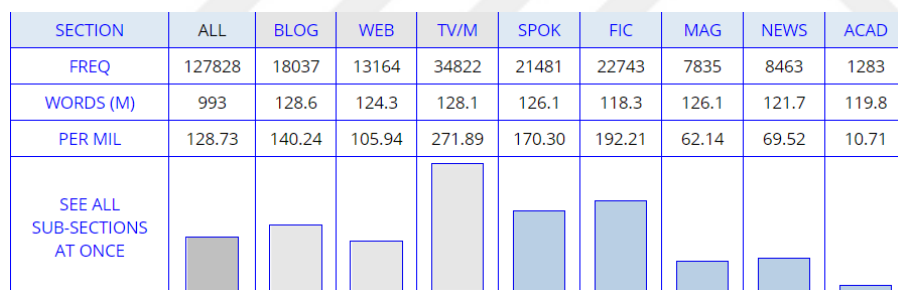


Figure 11. Frequency of *like* as a conjunction in the COCA.

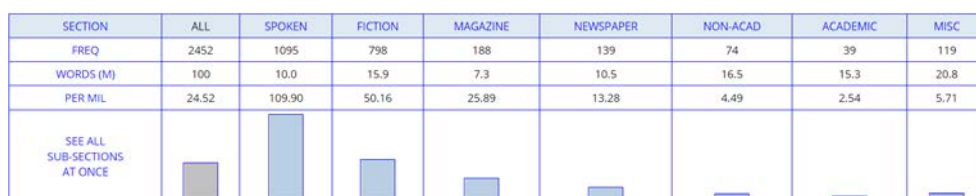


Figure 12. Frequency of *like* as a conjunction in the BNC.

As the figures above show, it is clearly seen that the conjunctive use of *like* is most frequent in the subtitles of TV/Movies (271.89 tokens per million), fiction (192.21 tokens per

million) and daily conversations (170.30 tokens per million) according to the COCA. Similarly, the construction is most commonly used in spoken discourse (109.90 tokens per million) in the BNC. The occurrence of the *like* as a conjunction is less frequent in written discourse in both American and British English. Still, the numbers showing the frequencies in the genres that feature formal language like magazines (63.14 tokens per million in the COCA), news (69.52 tokens per million in the COCA) and academic texts (10.71 tokens per million in the COCA) cannot be underestimated. The following examples are from academic texts:

- (61) “...*a different self, a younger self with an accent, a self that sounded **like** they were from somewhere and therefore belonged somewhere...*”
- (62) “...*when there is a story that we may have problems with,... we feel **like** we've got a strong enough relationship that we can share our concerns...*”
- (63) “...*so long (Riggs 1966 and Jackson 1978). As it did not look **like** it would be easy or possible to eliminate many of these practices, it is...*”
- (64) “...*anybody by doing so, unless, they can figure out a way around it **like** they have in certain areas. So, that is really a problem which needs...*”
- (65) “...*don' t love us and don t obey us and don t treat us **like** we were their parents. They have other ways of thinking. So, those...*”

We can conclude that English native speakers use *like* like *as* or *as if* / *as though* quite frequently in informal contexts. Apparently, in formal contexts, using *as* and *as if* is a way more common preference, but according to the corpus evidence we see that native speakers don't seem to strictly avoid using *like* like *as* or *as if* in written discourse either.

3.4. Data Collection Part B

3.4.1. Participants

The participants of the study were Turkish EFL teachers in İstanbul, Turkey. All participants were working as EFL teachers in the English Preparatory Program of the same institution which is an English-medium foundation university in İstanbul, Kadir Has University. 33 of them (female: 25, male: 8) were tested with the GJT, and 10 of them were interviewed about their beliefs and views about SE and prescriptivism. Their ages ranged from 30 to 64 years old. In terms of their educational background, 13 teachers have graduated from English Language and Literature, 11 of them are from English Language Teaching, 8 of them completed their BA in American Language and Literature, and 1 participant studied Translation Studies. None of the participants studied Linguistics. As for their level of education, 4 participants have a BA degree, 22 of them have an MA degree, 4 of them are still MA students, 1 participant completed PhD, and the remaining 2 are still PhD students. Participants were recruited via personal correspondence and volunteered to participate in the research. All participants were informed that the information they provided would be used solely for research purposes and that their identities would be kept secret and confidential.

3.4.2. Procedure

Prior to the administration of the GJT, the statements in it were examined by two native speakers for content validity. Finally, revisions and necessary changes were made in the GJT based on the natives' feedback. It was conducted online in the form of a questionnaire for the benefits of a simpler application process and to get results faster. The questionnaire including the GJT was converted on an online survey via Google forms and the link of the survey was sent to the participants via e-mail. They were given a week to complete the survey. The analysis of the data gathered through the GJT is descriptive, presenting the findings in the form of frequencies showing how aware the participants are of the contemporary use of the certain

structures. 10 of the participants were interviewed individually after the completion of the GJT. The interviews focused on how the participants conceptualize Standard English, how often they refer to the standard norms in SE in their teaching practices especially in grammar instruction, how this shapes their approach to grammar instruction in their classes, and how informed they are about the use of corpus. All interviews were done after getting participants' consent to participate in the interviews. All interviewees were informed about the purpose of the study beforehand. The interviews were conducted in Zoom meetings and they were recorded. After that, interviews were transcribed by myself. In terms of length, each interview lasted, on average, 15 minutes.

The data analysis of the interviews were done by following Creswell's (2002) six steps for inductive qualitative analysis. Therefore, the analysis of the data gathered through the interviews with the Turkish EFL teachers underwent six stages: (1) organizing the data, (2) transcription of the interviews, i.e. transforming zoom meeting recordings into text data, (3) analysis of data by coding, (4) describing themes from the data, (5) reporting findings, and (6) interpretation of the findings. The data coming from GJT and the interviews were collected during Summer, 2021.

3.4.3. Limitations

The study's biggest shortcoming is that it is based solely on one university English Preparatory Program. As a result, the outcomes of this study solely represent the knowledge and attitudes of the language prep program instructors of Kadir Has University. The information obtained from this group of participants may not be representative of a comparable group of instructors in other institutions in Turkey. If the demographics of the subjects had been altered, the findings may have been different. Also, because the researcher and the participants worked in the same institution, the participants may have been hesitant to discuss their teaching methods and classroom applications genuinely with their colleague during the interviews.

3.5. Results

A structured questionnaire and semi structured interviews were used to gather data for the discussion of the following research questions:

- (2) Are EFL teachers aware of the contemporary use of these English structures?
- (3) Are EFL teachers aware of descriptive grammar in contrast to prescriptive grammar?
- (4) What are EFL teachers' views about the notion of "Standard English"?
- (5) Do these EFL teachers favor standard written forms of English over the contemporary use of English by its native speakers in terms of their grammar instruction in EFL classrooms? If so, what induces them to teach such prescriptive forms?
- (6) Do these EFL teachers have a corpus-based approach to language teaching? Are they competent in using corpus? If not, would they like to learn how to use corpus?

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part contained items about the participant's personal information, and the second part contained the grammaticality judgement task including 12 pairs of sentences which show one prescriptively correct usage and one comparable usage, which is considered prescriptively ungrammatical but common in native speakers' utterances. The four grammar points targeted in the corpus analysis were represented by pairs of sentences, and the participants were asked to determine whether the given sentence was grammatically correct or not. They were also given a third option "I'm not sure", in case they cannot decide if the sentence is grammatically correct or incorrect. In order to investigate Turkish EFL teachers' attitudes towards grammar instruction - whether they have a prescriptive or descriptive approach to teaching grammar - interviews were conducted with 10 of the participants where they were asked to express their own opinions and thoughts on the topics. The interviewees were selected randomly and on a voluntary basis. Both the questionnaire and the interviews were conducted online to make the application process easier and to generate

faster results. The questionnaire was transformed into an online form using Google Forms, and the participants were given the link to the questionnaire by e-mail and WhatsApp.

The data gathered via the questionnaire and the interviews were classified into four sections based on the research questions as, a) knowledge on the contemporary use of certain structures, b) perceptions of Standard English, c) approaches to grammar instruction: prescriptive or descriptive and d) knowledge on corpus. My analysis was descriptive in nature, with data in the form of frequencies, as well as quotes by participants who took part in the interviews.

3.5.1. Knowledge on the Contemporary Use of Certain Structures

Research Question 2 asked whether or not EFL teachers are aware of the contemporary use of certain English structures that are believed to be prescriptively incorrect, and whether they perceive a difference between prescriptively correct English and the way many native speakers talk. The second part of the survey, the grammaticality judgment test, was used in order to investigate this issue. The findings of the GJT containing the four grammar points targeted in the corpus analysis are presented in figures according to participants' answers to each sentence in the task. The participants determined whether the given sentence was grammatically correct or not. They chose the third option "I'm not sure" when they couldn't decide if the sentence is grammatically correct or incorrect. The summary of the answers to the GJT will be presented in Appendix 1, which shows where participants put their marks in the task, and some of the results will be discussed below.

Judgements towards Split Infinitives:

Figures 13 and 14 presents the judgements of the participants towards the use of split infinitives.

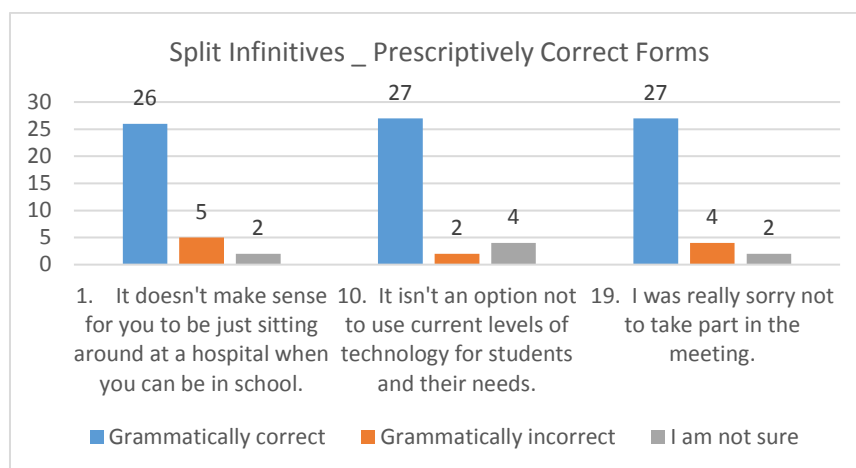


Figure 13. Judgements towards split infinitives _ prescriptively correct forms.

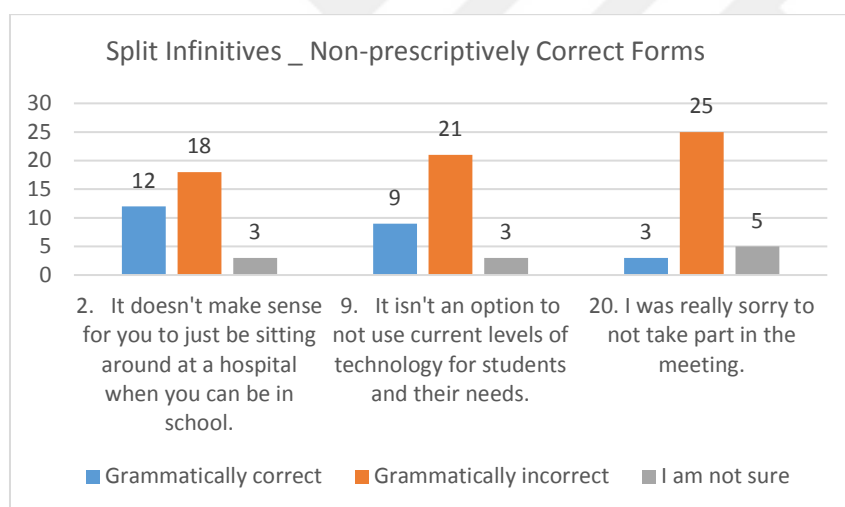


Figure 14. Judgements towards split infinitives _ non-prescriptively correct forms.

As can be seen in Figures above (13 & 14), the prescriptively correct sentences which don't split the infinitives were considered more grammatically correct than the comparable sentences splitting the infinitives. The number of the participants who considered both usages of infinitives (split and not split) equally correct is lower than the ones who marked split infinitive structures as grammatically incorrect.

Judgements towards Preposition Stranding:

Figures 15 and 16 presents the judgements of the participants towards the use of stranded prepositions.

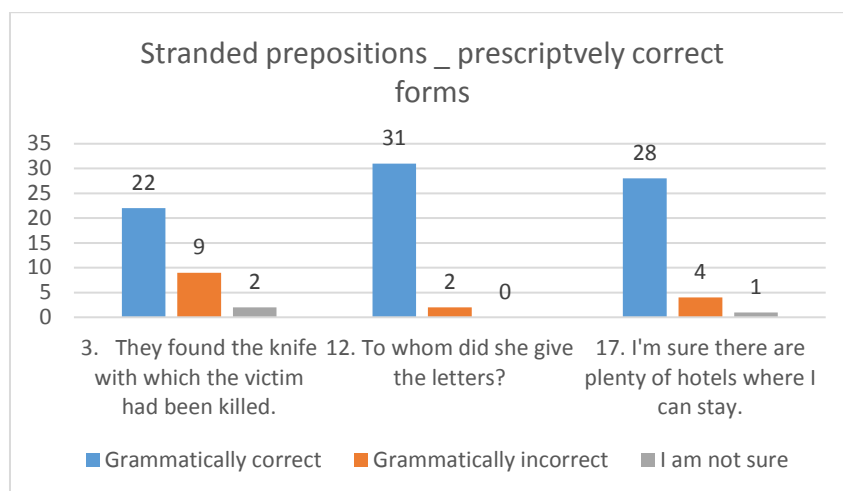


Figure 15. Judgements towards stranded prepositions _ prescriptively correct forms.

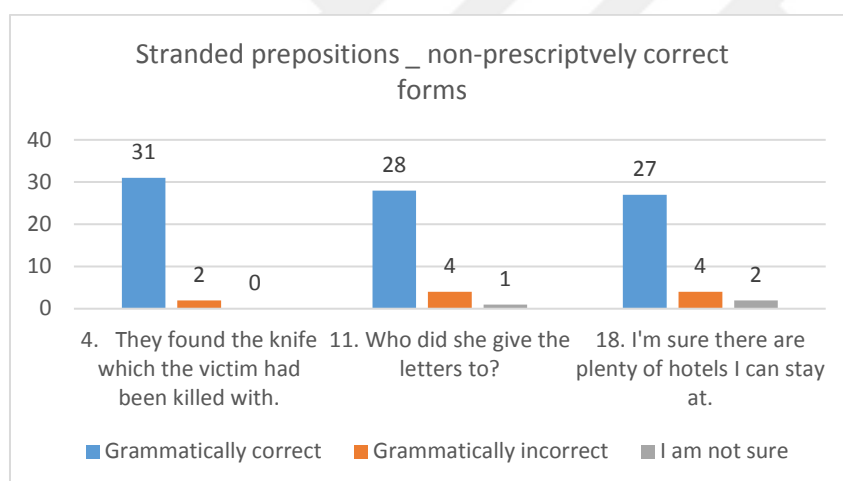


Figure 16. Judgements towards stranded prepositions _ non-prescriptively correct forms.

Figures 15 and 16 reveal that most of the participants considered either variety of the grammar point regarding the place of the preposition in the sentence (stranded and not stranded) are grammatically correct and rate them similarly. In this case, it is difficult to say whether they favor a certain form or not. However, we can deduce that the participants are well aware of how

frequently prepositions are used at the end of sentences and that they don't have a prescriptive approach to using this structure.

Judgements towards Double Negatives:

Figures 17 and 18 presents the judgements of the participants towards the use of double negatives.

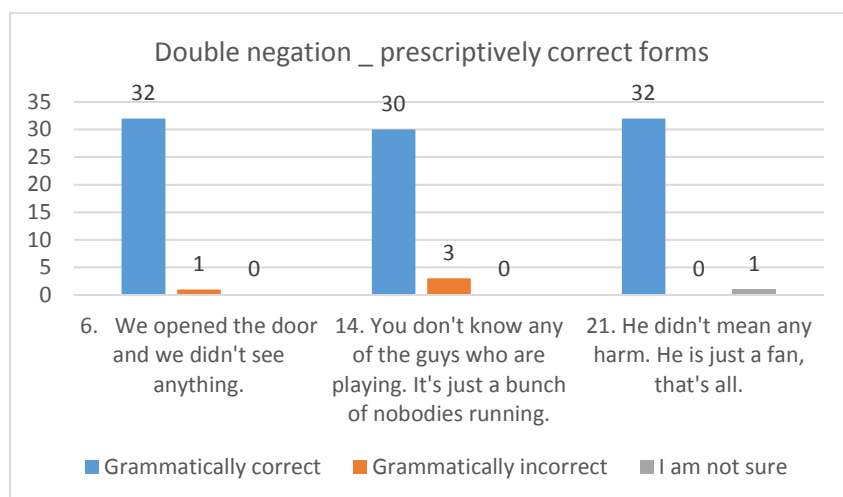


Figure 17. Judgements towards double negation _ prescriptively correct forms.

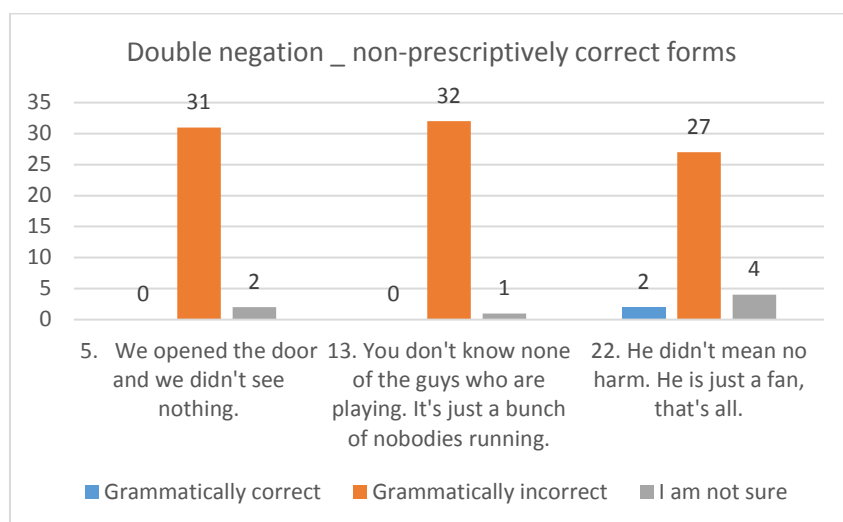


Figure 18. Judgements towards double negation _ non-prescriptively correct forms.

Sentences including double negatives like *didn't* and *nothing*, *don't* and *none*, *didn't* and *no*, are perhaps the constructs that participants most confidently considered are incorrect among the others. The figures above show that there was a significant difference in the ratings of the

prescriptively correct forms and the corresponding forms that are also correct non-prescriptively. The ratings as grammatically correct for double negative structures are significantly lower.

Judgements towards Conjunctional Use of *like*:

Figures 19 and 20 presents the judgements of the participants towards the use of *like* as a conjunction.

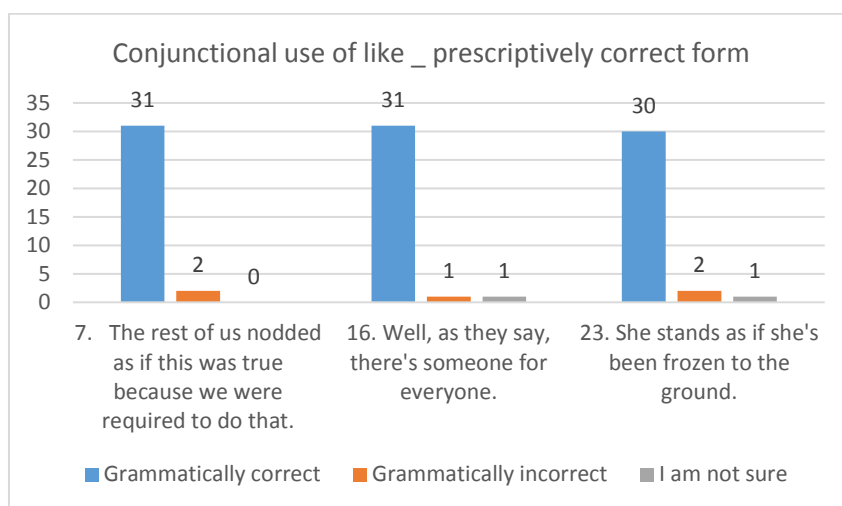


Figure 19. Judgements towards conjunctional use of *like* _ prescriptively correct forms.

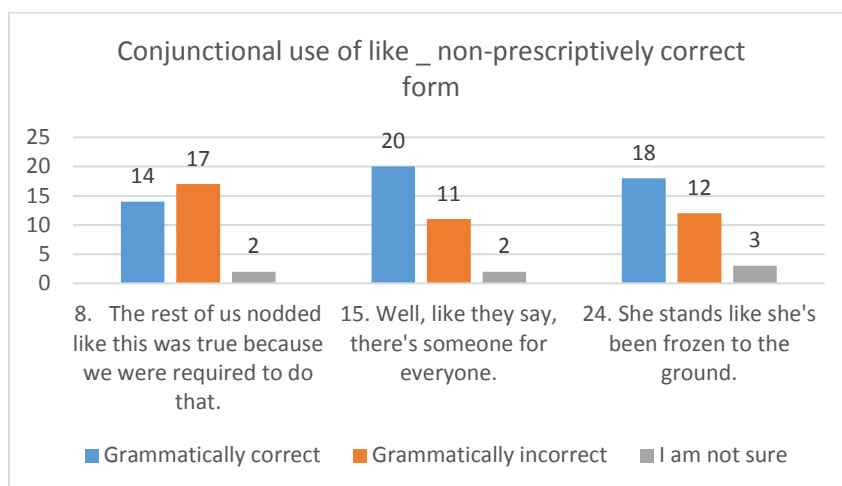


Figure 20. Judgements towards conjunctional use of *like* _ non-prescriptively correct forms.

As the Figures above show, we can observe that the participants do not strongly object to the use of *like* as a conjunction. Although there are quite a few participants who think that using

like as a conjunction is grammatically incorrect, we can say that most of them accept this common usage as correct.

3.5.2. Perceptions of Standard English

The first question of the interview with Turkish EFL teachers was about what Standard English (SE) meant to them, i.e. their perceptions of the notion of SE. The responses to this question reveal that the majority of the participants (6 out of 10 participants) conceptualize SE as the proper/correct version of English. 5 of them also emphasized that SE is the version that is taught at schools. Another conceptualization of SE in participants' minds was related to being understood by any speaker. They stated SE has to follow a set of rules so that any speaker could understand it. Two of them (P1 and P2) also stated that it is suitable for written discourse. Below are the remarks coming from these participants:

P1: It might be a kind of English which is used universally. It is mostly used in written discourse. It is the correct variation of English. This is what I understand from this phrase.

P2: As much as I know, Standard English is the type of English that is suitable for written form of English. It is proper American English or British English. It helps you to get the message clearly because it doesn't have some slang words. We teach Standard English in our curriculum as well. Standard English may also be referred to as the correct English and it follows grammatical rules.

P3: I think Standard English is the correct use of English. It is not, you know, colloquial. There are some kind of criteria for The Standard English so that it will be standard, so that everybody can understand it.

P5: Standard English is the English that everyone can understand. It shows the proper use and follows a set of rules so that everybody speaks the same English. It is the version of English we are aiming to teach at school. But, there are some

varieties of Standard English. It can be British English, Australian English and American English and I think they are not the same.

P8: It is the language which is taught in schools, it's the standard version of English. It shows how English should be used. Standard English should be used universally but not the other local versions of English so that any English speaker could understand.

P9: Standard English is the language that is explained and described in grammar books. We teach Standard English. English is spoken all around the world, but there is only one version of Standard English. It should have rules. For example, in a BBC channel, Standard English is spoken because its audience can be from all around the world and they should speak English in a way that can be understood by people from different parts of the world.

P10: It is the English that we have been teaching and learning for years, I guess. It doesn't serve for any specific purposes. It shows the proper usage of the language with its rules. It is the version of English which is taught at schools.

Two of the participants (P4 and P7) associated SE with the native speakers' use of language. They considered it the version that is widely accepted and mostly used by the native speakers of English. They made the following remarks:

P4: I understand that Standard English is, you know, the English generally spoken. The version of English spoken by the native speakers. It's not specifically academic or, you know, particular to a specific context. I think it is a version of English that most natives use today.

P7: Standard English means the English that has been widely accepted by the speakers of English. That's what I understand from Standard English. You know,

English has got different accents, but Standard English is the widely accepted version of English by the native speakers like British or American people.

One participant (P6) associated SE with British English stating “It is British English, I think. English is spoken all around the world. There are different accents. The standard version is the British English”.

The comments made on the notion of SE were not really surprising since many dictionaries (e.g., The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary and Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary) refer to correct or proper English in their definitions of SE. Also some scholars (e.g., Strevens, 1981) point out that it is the variation which is widely recognized as the acceptable educational aim of teaching English while talking about the standard variation. The participants' comments on the concept of SE alone are not sufficient as an indicator of how EFL teachers approach language teaching. My main aim here is to find out whether they approve of the existence of some prescriptive norms within SE or not. It must be taken into account that the language, and hence standard variation, tends to differ and evolve all the time as Milroy (1999, p. 17) stated. Therefore, what is referred to as SE may differ in time depending on linguistic evolution. Whether EFL teachers favor prescriptive norms in SE over the real usage of the language by its native speakers in present day specifically in their grammar instruction will be discussed in the light of following interview questions.

3.5.3. Approaches to Grammar Instruction: Prescriptive or Descriptive

The discovery of Turkish EFL teachers’ approaches towards grammar instruction, in other words whether they are prescriptive or descriptive in teaching grammar, will be presented in three sub-headings: (a) grammar books vs. native speakers, (b) teaching standard written forms in grammar instruction, and (c) standard norms or native speakers’ tendencies.

a) Grammar books vs. Native Speakers:

The participants were asked if they think there is a difference between how native speakers use the English language and what some English grammar books that they use introduce as correct usage. All of them stated without hesitation that they differ. Some of them also shared their personal experiences regarding the issue. Here are some examples from the participants:

P2: For example, sometimes I use songs in my classes. I remember that the lyrics of a song had a construction like *ain't nothing* or something like that, but it is not grammatical. The correct form should be *haven't got anything* of course. My students asked me why there was such a construction in the song. I told them that it is not grammatical and sometimes native speakers may not follow the grammar rules in the song lyrics. You cannot see such ungrammatical constructions in the grammar books.

P3: For example, "*Have you any idea?*". That structure doesn't sound grammatical, and an English grammar book never introduces such a construction. However, British people use this. We, as teachers, do not say, or we do not teach "*Have you any idea?*". We teach "*Have you got any ideas?*" or "*Do you have any ideas?*".

P4: I have experienced this myself at school. There was a grammar rule in the book. I don't remember exactly, but it could be about past modals. There was a rule about the usages of two past modals in the book and we were discussing the difference between the usages in the office with my colleagues. One of my colleagues who is a native speaker told us that it doesn't matter, there is no difference between those modal verbs. I think it was *can't have done* and *couldn't have done*. What he told us was different from what is written in the grammar book. But of course, in the

end, I chose to teach what the book says because my students could be expected to know the difference in their exams.

P5: For example, the usages of *must* and *have to*. Books generally give a difference between the two like *must* is stronger than *have to*, or *have to* is used when the obligation is coming from an external source. I've discussed this before with a native speaker. Native speakers may sometimes suggest something else than what grammar books do. In that case, I teach the usage in the book because the students will have an exam from that book. I cannot teach what the native speakers say, I can only inform my students about native speakers' usages. I mean, I don't want to take the risk when there is an exam.

P6: My students sometimes ask me questions like you explain it this way in the lesson, but I have encountered otherwise. I explain them that how native speakers use the language especially in colloquial language form is so different from how English grammar books present the grammar. Because, you know, native speakers play with the language and it may not be the correct usage. And I actually prefer to teach how English grammar books present the grammar because at the end of the day, students are tested on the rules. As you know, we assess them on their knowledge of grammar. And this grammar is basically based on the rules that are presented on grammar books.

P8: I often encounter such things. Especially in high level grammar books, we see such examples more often because some grammar points are presented in a very detailed way. I remember my native colleagues saying "this grammar book is crap, we don't have such rules".

What I understand from the remarks above is that these Turkish EFL teachers are definitely aware of the fact that some grammar books and usage manuals may not reflect native

speakers' actual use of language. As they got deeper into the subject during the interview and when they were asked what could be the reason for such a difference, their claims revealed interesting findings. Most of them do not consider native speakers reliable sources in terms of grammaticality and that they are hesitant to teach native speakers' constructions in their grammar lessons. They seem to have an unconditional trust in grammar books in that they always teach the correct usage. When they encounter a difference between the books' and the native speakers' way of using a structure, they mostly tend to prefer what the books suggest. Some remarks from these participants are as follows:

P1: Native speakers do not follow strict grammar rules and they sometimes use ungrammatical structures. However grammar books introduce a kind of language which is accurate in all terms and more clear and precise than any colloquial use.

P2: Sometimes native speakers may not follow the grammar rules. You cannot see such ungrammatical constructions in the grammar books. Grammar books always give the correct usages. When I teach grammar in the classroom, I introduce the rules in the grammar books, not native speakers' constructions of course.

P4: Natives usually do not care as much as English instructors do about the grammar rules. They are more flexible and they make mistakes. But I think language teachers, grammar book writers and grammarians are a bit stricter. That's why there are such differences. I don't believe that the native speakers care as much as we do about grammar.

P5: Native speakers sometimes do not even know the correct grammar rule.

P6: Because, you know, native speakers play with the language and it may not be the correct usage.

P10: One reason can be that native speakers are just acquiring English as their first language, and they learn it in an informal way. But the books always teach languages in a formal way with rules and correct usages.

On the other hand, three participants thought that this difference is due to the fact that some grammar books may not show real usage and may not be up-to-date. They drew attention to the fact that language is alive and changes constantly. They stated that:

P7: Language is something that evolves and changes in time, and in a grammar book, maybe from 80s or 90s, there are some rules which are not contemporary. In the daily language, the usage of some grammar structures can be different and only natives can know that. Maybe some structures are not used anymore, but we still teach them. So I think we can say that language is something alive, and it changes constantly, so grammar books should be updated accordingly, too.

P8: We should be careful about choosing an updated grammar book. Language is a living thing and it is changing quite fast. We should be aware of the changes. But I think such changes are not very welcomed, or let's say not accepted very easily by the language teachers.

P9: Some books may not be teaching or using authentic materials. To teach a grammar point, even if the book uses native speakers' utterances, they try to adapt them depending on the levels and needs of the learners, so they change its authenticity.

b) Teaching Standard Written Forms in Grammar Instruction:

The participants were asked how important it is for them to teach standard written forms of English in their grammar lessons. The responses they provided revealed that all the participants, except one (P7), have similar viewpoints with respect to the rationale behind

teaching standard written forms in their grammar lessons. They hold the belief that the learners must be equipped with certain standard forms, in that; this is what they need in their faculties to write academic papers in the target language. Also, some remarks from the participants lead to the conclusion that most of them believe knowledge on standard written language is an indicator of a good command of English and a criterion to assess their success in learning the target language. The participants' comments are as follows:

P1: It is important because our students are reading lots of texts in the form of academic English. While learning grammar it is important that they learn this kind of usage in order to understand those texts and also in order to write academic texts with correct grammar and correct style, which is actually required in their studies when they go to their departments.

P2: It is important. While evaluating students' writing exams, for example, grammar is an important part of our rubric. They should use the language grammatically correctly in their writings. So, I teach standard written forms in my grammar lessons.

P3: Well, it is important, of course, very important. I urge them to stick to the correct grammar. They are not learning the language in a foreign country. They are learning it at school. Schools teach standard norms. It's an important part of English.

P4: Yeah, it's important. They should know standard written English when they are learning grammar, I gave a lot of importance to this. Their use of written language with the correct grammar is really important. It shows that they have, you know, a good command of English. Written language is the biggest proof of that.

P5: I would say yes, because it shows how much English you know. Students must know some types of written forms and structures to be able to pass proficiency exam in the prep school or to pass an English course at their faculty. So, teaching standard

written language is important because you cannot write like you speak, right? There is a standard for written English that they have to obey. If I were a teacher, just teaching English to a student who doesn't need to take a test, then I might be more flexible in that point.

P6: It is important to my students and it is important to me because, you know, this is the School of Foreign Languages at a university. Our students' aim is to pass the proficiency test. The written forms of English and grammar are also assessed by, you know, some standard rules, let's say. When my students use the written standards wrongly in their portfolios, I always give them feedback saying that it is not acceptable in academic writing.

P8: Yes, it is important. In the exams, what we expect from students is to present a good use of standard written English, and also for their future studies they need it in the academy. Well, I tell them that they don't need to care about style while texting their friends for example. But if they are in school, if they're producing a written text in school, I warn them not to use certain usages. For example, I often remind them not to start a sentence with *and*. This is one of the standard norms that I'm obsessed with.

P9: It's important. It is important for them to know the standard written language. They also need to know the difference between registers, formal and informal usage of language. In their writing assignments, they need to use formal language. Our aim is to teach academic English so we need to focus on these standard forms.

P10: I think yes, of course, they are important. It actually depends on the students' needs. In the prep school we teach English for academic purposes. So, they should learn standard written forms of English. They need them in their faculties to write papers.

Analyzing and understanding the needs of the preparatory program EFL learners to prepare them for their departments where the medium of instruction is English is a must. As these students will be extensively engaged in English in their departments, their needs must be properly identified first, and the Preparatory Program of the university with its curriculum, teaching materials, and assessment criteria should be shaped according to these needs. There seem to be a common belief among the interviewees that they feel bound to teach standard forms to their students driven by the urge to meet the needs of their students. Most of them associate standard norms with being formal and academic English. So, is this really so? Do the professors in the departments really expect their students to know these standard norms? The issue of whether a comprehensive needs analysis has been carried out in the institution where the participants work is not the scope of this study. This may require further research. However, it should be noted that it is critical that the administration clearly determines the needs of the students based on interviews with departments and informs the teachers about this issue.

There was only one interviewee (P7) who thinks that students need something else rather than learning academic and formal written language. That participant stated that “Actually not, because our aim is to make them to be able to speak and write what they think, just to communicate. Even with the higher levels, while teaching essay writing I never urge them to follow a specific format or style. I don't think that we need to focus on standard forms in grammar.”

c) Standard norms or Native Speakers' Tendencies:

As I stated in the introduction of this paper, the disparity between what is considered grammatically correct under the traditional prescriptive rules of SE and what native speakers of English actually use contemporarily may leave EFL teachers with a dilemma: What should they teach in the classroom? So, EFL teachers are often faced with the decision of whether to present

a grammatical form according to standard norms or teach students how native speakers use it in everyday speech and natural contexts. As can be seen in the remarks of the interviewees, most of them seem to rely on standard norms in their grammar instruction.

The participants were asked whether they prioritize native speakers' tendencies and preferences of usage, or the conceptions of "correct usage" and standard norms in their grammar instruction. When they were asked to make a choice between the two, all of them stated they prefer to teach correct usage based on standard norms. So, what induces them to teach such standard forms? The reasons given for this preference are quite predictable; curriculum and assessment. Below are some thoughts by the participants:

P1: I actually try to base my teaching techniques on curricular needs. We are teaching English in an academic setting so we usually need to rely on those rules that form the correct usage and standard norms.

P3: Of course, the second one, I mean, the correct usage and standard norms because it is the standard, as the name suggests, it is standard. And the standard forms should be taught to students. That's the way I feel. Also, in the exams, they will not be assessed on native speaker preferences.

P4: There's the assessment part and for the assessment part, in the exams, we expect students to answer with the proper grammar as introduced in the grammar books. This grammar may include some traditional rules, as well. So, it depends on the curriculum. So of course, I mean, I don't not base my teaching techniques on native speakers' acceptance, I just base it on the teaching program and the curriculum and how grammar is presented in the books mostly.

P5: Students have a proficiency exam at the end of the prep program, so I cannot really base my teaching on just native speakers' tendencies.

P8: I try to stick to the conceptions of correct usage and standard norms because I don't think we prepare students for a life abroad. We prepare them for their academic studies and for the exams. So I try to teach the standard norms rather than the native speaker tendencies.

P9: Generally the correct usage and standard norms. The materials we use in class have somewhat prescriptive approach I think. So, we basically teach some of these norms, which are dictated by grammar books. For example, I remember a material, it is on relative clauses I guess. It warns not to end a sentence with a preposition. There is a curriculum and materials based on that curriculum, and we just follow it and sometimes we need to teach such rules.

Participants do not completely disregard the tendencies and preferences of native speakers. A few of them mentioned the importance of teaching native speakers' use of English. They say they only do so for communicative purposes in listening or speaking lessons, but not in grammar instruction. Below are some of the ideas expressed by these participants:

P1: Sometimes I also try to let students know native speakers' preferences, too. Only in speaking lessons, not in grammar lessons of course.

P2: So, in my grammar lessons I stick to the grammar book because it always gives the correct form. I introduce to students whatever the grammar book introduces. But maybe in a listening lesson, for example while watching a video, I expose my students to native speakers' utterances.

P3: Of course, I can teach them some colloquial usages, why not? Maybe in speaking lessons, so that they will be familiar with native speaker tendencies as well. But in terms of grammar, what I should teach is basically, the standard usage of the language.

P4: Well, if I taught maybe only spoken English or gave only speaking lessons, I would be more interested in native speakers' preferences. I mean, I would base my teaching techniques on native speakers' usage of the language. But for grammar classes, accuracy is important.

P5: Maybe in speaking tasks, I would show them the native speakers' preferences of some structures, but when it comes to grammar, I usually teach the standard norms that the books suggest. Standard norms are important in writing, too.

Teaching students the daily use of English by its native speakers, in other words informal spoken language, is not a good idea for many of the participants in terms of grammar instruction. This makes sense at some point considering the students' needs. Exposing them to formal written language can also be necessary if needs be. However, focusing heavily on only one of the two, formal or informal use of the language, will definitely affect students' language acquisition negatively. A language teacher's approach to language teaching should not be to simply teach standard norms in formal written language, eliminating everyday speech patterns. It is an undeniable fact that incorporating native speaker norms in language instruction in EFL contexts is the only way to create a teaching and learning environment that is more descriptive of actual language usage rather than relying solely on prescriptive sources. In line with this idea, only one participant (P7) appreciated the importance of teaching the language use of native speakers with the following comment:

P7: I think correct usage and standard norms are not always the same thing. Native speakers' usage may be different from standard norms, but it is also correct. I think students should be exposed to native speakers' utterances and their real language use in daily conversations. I think just because we are teaching English in an academic environment, we need to teach some standard norms, too. But this is

necessary for academic writing. I personally prefer to teach natural language, the daily usages in my grammar lessons because our aim here is to teach them to communicate in English, they will not be English teachers. So, I would prefer both native speakers' way of speaking English and standard norms, you know, for academic writing.

Similarly, another participant (P10) referred to the necessity of a balance between native speakers' preferences of usage and standard norms. This participant's opinion reads as follows:

P10: I think there should be a balance between them. Of course, the standard forms in the books are really important and students should definitely learn those rules, but native speakers' daily use of language should also be taught at schools. So, there should be a balance.

Interestingly, one of the reasons participants' favor standard written forms of English over the contemporary use of English by its native speakers in terms of their grammar instruction is that they don't consider themselves competent in native speakers' preferences and tendencies. Below are the comments from three participants (P2, P6, P10):

P2: I don't know the tendencies of native speakers even though I lived in London for a couple of years. So, I don't feel adequate to teach daily usages. How can I teach native speakers' preferences when even I don't know.

P6: I'm not a native speaker and I actually don't know much about native speakers' preferences. Also, I cannot find a native speaker around me all the time to consult about how they use a grammatical construction.

P10: I teach the correct usage based on standard norms because I also learned English that way. Starting from the primary school to university education, in my educational life, I have been taught the standard norms. That's why I also teach English in this way. This is my safe space. I cannot reflect what native speakers of

English actually use. Even I want to teach grammar in this way, I myself don't know much about the patterns or grammar usages that natives have in their daily language.

These comments may surprise you quite a bit considering the ease of accessing the preferences of native speakers with one click on corpus. Considerations above are very important findings as they confirm the necessity of making teachers aware of the existence of the corpora and promoting the use of corpus in their teaching practices, which is what the present study advocates.

The participants were also asked to decide if they agree or disagree with two statements regarding their main goal as an EFL teacher. The statements and how each participant responded are shown in summary in the following table.

Table 6. How EFL teachers describe their main goal.

	As an English teacher, my main goal is to teach my students Proper English and correct usage following the standard norms in English grammar.	As an English teacher, my main goal is to teach my students to sound like a native speaker in how they use grammar.
P1	I agree with this. Maybe not in spoken language, but in written language I always encourage them to write grammatically correctly within the standard norms.	No, it is not my main goal. They can learn native speakers' structures from the Internet, from social media, but at school this is not my goal.
P2	I agree. It is important to teach the correct written forms in English.	Actually, I disagree. I expect them to use English accurately and native speakers are not using the grammar correctly all the time. Also, in the texts we use in classes we don't teach native speakers' daily speech or the slang.
P3	Well, I mostly agree with this statement. They are not learning the	This is not my expectation, nor is it my goal, really. In terms of grammar I cannot say that

	language in a foreign country. They are learning it at school. Schools teach standard norms.	they should imitate native speakers because native speakers make mistakes. I mean, they have some errors in their sentences although they are native speakers.
P4	Yes, I agree. Sometimes I just mention some different usages, I mean daily usages, as side information. But I must give them the standard norms when I'm teaching.	Partially agree. I mean, daily usages are important, but my goal is also to teach these norms in grammar.
P5	I agree. I am a language teacher and it's my responsibility to show the correct usage.	No, I don't think they have to use the language same way the native speakers do. Here we teach academic English, not native speakers' way of speaking.
P6	Yes, I can say that this is my main goal. It depends on the needs of the students. Our aim is to teach academic English so we need to focus on these norms.	As a language teacher at university, I don't think this is my main goal. Native speakers do not care about correct grammar most of the time.
P7	I partially agree with this. Being exposed to natural usages is also important.	I'm in middle right now, I would like to say I agree as a language teacher. If I didn't have to follow a curriculum, I would definitely say we should teach how natives use the language because they are the people who use this language for their whole life.
P8	Well, I can say yes. They are students, they're in school. As long as they continue their studies, they will need it.	No, I don't agree. But I don't think native speakers always speak with perfect grammar. So why would I trust native speakers' knowledge of grammar?
P9	Yes, I agree. My main goal is to help them to use the language correctly, accurately. It's my responsibility to detect their errors and correct them.	No, I don't think so. Native speakers don't give importance to correctness. I don't teach how the native speakers use the language in grammar classes.

P10	Yes, I think this is my main goal. Proper English and standard norms in grammar make them successful in their academic studies. It is necessary for school.	I disagree. Native speakers mostly don't follow the grammar rules. They don't always speak or write grammatically correctly.
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The table above summarizes the reactions to the statements. 9 participants out of 10 agreed that they aim to teach Proper English following the standard norms in their grammar instructions. The reasons they gave and further explanations they made during the interviews pointed the same issues as presented previously: teaching English in an Academic English setting, which, they claim, requires knowledge of standard norms, using English at school where formal written language and style matter, and aiming to fulfill students' needs which are, they believe, having a good command of written English. Only one participant (P7) partially agreed stating "being exposed to natural usages is also important". When the participants were asked if they aim to teach to sound like a native speaker in how they use grammar, their responses were in line with their responses to the previous statement. None of the participants, except one (P7), confirmed that they need to teach grammar in a way native speakers use the language. The reasons they provided, again, mostly reflected distrust of native speakers' grammar knowledge.

3.5.4. Knowledge on Corpus

As the final query of the interview, each participant was asked what corpus is and whether they ever use corpus for their teaching practices. 2 of the participants have no idea regarding what corpus is. They stated they are not familiar with the word 'corpus'. 6 of them stated that they have heard about corpus before in an article they have read, at a workshop they have participated in, or from a professor in their MA studies. However, none of these participants knew exactly what the corpus serves and had never attempted to use corpus for any

teaching purposes before. All of them stated they would like to learn how to use it and to get training on corpus if they had the chance. There were only two participants who declared that they had a good knowledge on corpus and that they use it frequently. Below are the remarks of these two participants:

P6: I always use corpus. COCA is one of my bookmarks on this computer. I use it for assessment purposes more often than I use it for teaching purposes. You know, I work in the assessment team and when you compare my duties, it is like 70% exam writing and 30% teaching. I don't use corpus for any other teaching purposes, but for preparing exams.

P7: As you know I am working in the curriculum team at prep school. We use corpus in the preparation of our program's curriculum. That's the only purpose that I use corpus. For other purposes like preparing class materials or checking collocations for vocabulary teaching, I guess no, I haven't used it for such purposes.

Both participants have extra duties in the institution: one of them is a curriculum designer and the other is a test writer. Their use of corpus does not cover the purpose of teaching grammar, as they stated. They use corpus for their duties regarding curriculum and assessment rather than for teaching purposes like to check frequency patterns grammar constructions, to check the use of a grammar construction before presenting in class, to check the use of a grammar construction in the process of giving feedback to students' written & oral production, or to access authentic data in designing grammar materials.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

The present study has investigated four grammar points that are considered incorrect prescriptively (i.e. split infinitives, stranded prepositions, double negatives, and conjunctive use of *like*). The investigation of the target grammar points was done through corpus searches, and in light of data obtained from the COCA and the BNC. Each grammar point has proven itself widely used in various contexts in both American and British English. This proof revealed that traditional grammar rules may not be compatible with the contemporary use of English all the time. So, should EFL teachers stop fostering prescriptive norms in their classroom practices? The answer is definitely yes. Teaching grammar rules that are incompatible with modern English usage would be a blunder, resulting in a poor language education. The frequencies of the target structures, as corpus showed, prove that English language is constantly evolving, and its grammar is also changing in time. EFL teachers should be aware of the actual use of the English language, and expose their students to the present-day and natural usages. It is an undeniable fact that incorporating native speaker norms in language teaching by encouraging the use of corpora rather than relying simply on prescriptive sources establishes a teaching and learning environment that is more descriptive of actual language usage.

In conclusion, several educational implications can be taken from the findings discussed thus far. The findings of the GJT and the interviews provide valuable information for the ELT practitioners. First, the results of the GJT showed us most of the Turkish EFL teachers who took part in the questionnaire still hold a prescriptive approach towards constructions such as splitting infinitives and using double negatives although they approach other structures more moderately. The interviews which aim to address Turkish EFL teachers' preferences on the two grammar philosophies (prescriptive or descriptive) in their grammar instruction, also revealed that they give too much importance to written forms of English claiming that this is what

students need. It is definitely necessary to prioritize the needs of the students, but it should be ensured that if this is the real needs of the students. Furthermore, teaching natural structures in native speakers' daily speeches should be one of the objectives of grammar lessons. What I suggest to EFL teachers is that they should rethink what Standard English is, determine whether it should contain prescriptive norms or not in light of the data corpus revealed, and understand that grammar should not be attributed only to formal written language.

Another conclusion driven from the interviews is that most of the teachers are against the teaching of the grammar preferences of the native speakers at school. They have the notion that native speakers don't always have the correct usage. I recommend those colleagues who question the language competence of native speakers to learn more about Chomsky (2006), among others, and his mental grammar theory, which was discussed briefly in the literature review part as well.

All in all, the findings that I obtained from the GJT and the interviews support the significance of the incorporation of corpus-based approach into language teaching. The results of the interviews showed that the usage of corpora in EFL classrooms by the participants of the study is not a common occurrence. One reason for that could be that learning how to use corpora is rarely covered in teacher education programs. Courses on how to use corpora could be included in the general teacher training programs that every English language instructor is required to complete. I recommend that language teachers become acquainted with corpora in language education and take advantage of what it has to offer.

ELT based on corpora is advantageous in a variety of ways. Corpus demonstrates a connection between lexical patterns and registers. Aside from register, it reveals a relationship between lexicon and syntax. This relationship is reflected in frequency distributions of linguistic units in diverse contexts of usage. Furthermore, corpus allows language learners to study the frequency of any lexical item in any register. Corpus-based ELT can be used to learn

a variety of aspects of language. The huge amount of data can also provide language learners and EFL teachers with an infinite number of options for seeing each item in context, fostering the contextual view of language, which might be overlooked by traditional grammar. As a result, corpus-based strategies can help learners improve their vocabulary, contextual comprehension of meaning, phrasal verbs, collocations and grammar in EFL. The most significant advantage of employing corpora in language teaching is that learners will learn the language as it is actually used by its real users and be exposed to the natural characteristics of the target language based on authentic content. To gain this advantage, first of all, Turkish EFL teachers need to be well-versed in the corpus. They should be informed about how they can utilize this source to bring natural grammatical constructions to the classroom, and trained in how to use it so that in time it may become as usual to consult a corpus as it is to seek a grammar structure in a grammar book.

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APPENDIX A

This is a summary of the answers to the GJT. The figure shows where participants put their marks.

	Grammatically correct	Grammatically incorrect	I am not sure
1. It doesn't make sense for you to be just sitting around at a hospital when you can be in school.	26	5	2
2. It doesn't make sense for you to just be sitting around at a hospital when you can be in school.	12	18	3
3. They found the knife with which the victim had been killed.	22	9	2
4. They found the knife which the victim had been killed with.	31	2	0
5. We opened the door and we didn't see nothing.	0	31	2
6. We opened the door and we didn't see anything.	32	1	0
7. The rest of us nodded as if this was true because we were required to do that.	31	2	0
8. The rest of us nodded like this was true because we were required to do that.	14	17	2
9. It isn't an option to not use current levels of technology for students and their needs.	9	21	3
10. It isn't an option not to use current levels of technology for students and their needs.	27	2	4
11. Who did she give the letters to?	28	4	1
12. To whom did she give the letters?	31	2	0
13. You don't know none of the guys who are playing. It's just a bunch of nobodies running.	0	32	1
14. You don't know any of the guys who are playing. It's just a bunch of nobodies running.	30	3	0
15. Well, like they say, there's someone for everyone.	20	11	2
16. Well, as they say, there's someone for everyone.	31	1	1
17. I'm sure there are plenty of hotels where I can stay.	28	4	1
18. I'm sure there are plenty of hotels I can stay at.	27	4	2
19. I was really sorry not to take part in the meeting.	27	4	2
20. I was really sorry to not take part in the meeting.	3	25	5
21. He didn't mean any harm. He is just a fan, that's all.	32	0	1
22. He didn't mean no harm. He is just a fan, that's all.	2	27	4
23. She stands as if she's been frozen to the ground.	30	2	1
24. She stands like she's been frozen to the ground.	18	12	3

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol Form

Interview Questions:

Q1: What do you understand from “Standard English”?

Q2: Do you think there is sometimes a difference between how native speakers use the English language and what some English grammar books introduce as correct usage?

Probe: Why? Can you give an example?

Q3: As an approach to teaching grammar, do you base your teaching techniques on native speakers’ tendencies and preferences of usage or the conceptions of “correct usage” and standard norms?

Q4: How important is it to you that your students should learn standard written forms of English while learning grammar?

Probe: Why?

Q5: Please tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement:

“As an English teacher, my main goal is to teach my students Proper English and correct usage following the standard norms in English grammar.”

Probe: Why do you agree? / Why do you disagree?

Q6: Please tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement:

“As an English teacher, my main goal is to teach my students to sound like a native speaker in how they use grammar.”

Probe: Why do you agree? / Why do you disagree?

Q7: What is your level of knowledge on corpus? Do you ever use corpus for your teaching practices?

Probe: You can choose any of these:

- a) I have no idea.
- b) Not much, I’ve just heard it.

- c) Moderate, I've used Corpus a few times before.
- d) Advanced, I often use Corpus for various purposes.

(If the participant's answer is "a" or "b" for question 7)

Q8 - a. Would you like to get training on how to use corpus? Why?

Probe: Why? / Why not?

(If the participant's answer is "c" or "d" for question 6)

Q8 - b. For what purposes have you used corpus?

Probe: Have you ever used corpus ...

- a) To check frequency patterns of words and grammar constructions.
- b) To check collocations.
- c) To check the use of a grammar construction before presenting in class.
- d) To check the use of a grammar construction in the process of giving feedback to students' written & oral production.
- e) To access authentic data in designing classroom materials.
- f) To access authentic data in designing exams.