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A SURVEY ON CLASSROOM FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS OF 4TH CLASS ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IN SOCIOECONOMICALLY DIFFERENT PRIMARY STATE SCHOOLS

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ARTICLE INFO	**ABSTRACT**

The importance of language learning is increasing day by day and for this reason Turkey national education ministry carries out extensive studies on English language programme. In consequence of these studies, there are regulations in the programme. With these regulations, English language learning starts at the 2nd level of primary school, it uses communicative language learning method, it focuses on listening and speaking skills and the schools need technology. The aim of this study is to research the implementation of English language learning programme in socioeconomically different schools, to decide its practicality and to state the factors affecting implementation in classrooms. In accordance with this aim, students in the 4th level of primary school and their English teachers in three socioeconomically different schools participated in the study. The data set was obtained by qualitative methods. It was revealed that socioeconomically good and avarage schools could implement English language learning programme thanks to the factors in classroom. However, socioeconomically inadequate schools could not implement the programme effectively due to inadequate classroom factors. This means most of the schools in the research implemented English language learning programme effectively however; it could not obtain the whole success.

INTRODUCTION

The world has become globalized and the necessity of communication internationally, interculturally and intersocietally have taken an important dimension in the 21st century. As a result of these developments, language education has become the goal of modern education systems to bring up succesful individuals in the globalized world. In Europe when developments about English Language Programme and methods are examined, the beginnings of 1900s are called reforment age because communication and communicational methods get important(Smith and Howatt, 2014). In the issue of language education in primary school most European Union countries started English language education in primary school in the year of 1990's (EURYDICE, 2001). When the situation in Turkey is examined, Turkish education system adopts the principle of teaching a foreign language for every student. English is taught as a foreign language in school programmes because it is accepted as the language of many areas such as science, technology and working. (Kırkgöz, 2010).

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English Language Programme in Turkey has become important since 1980 and changed, developed in accordance with government policies. In the education year of 2012 and 2013, Turkey passed to the system called "4+4+4" with a radical change. One of the general characteristics of English Language Programme in 2013 is its focus on listening and speaking skills (MEB, 2013). These skills are the basic point of primary school programmes because young learners learn by listening to songs, playing and doing activities after listening (Cameron, 2001). With 4+4+4 education system, the two hours English education in a week in 2nd, 3rd and 4th classes is decided to be given by branch teachers (MEB, 2013). Krashen (1982) puts forward that learners who have been engaged with language learning since childhood are usually more succesful than adults in second language learning. Another characteristics of the programme is that visual and audial materials are used as much as possible in classroom to create a real life learning environment (MEB, 2013). Vocabulary learning programmes, computer based softwares, exercise programmes and internet create a suitable environment in language learning for learners. Throughout the language learning process thematic teaching and spiral structure are among the goals (MEB, 2013).

The Socioeconomical Status of Schools in Turkey

Socioeconomical status is the level of a group, structure or person's education, economical income and profession. This socioeconomical status affect student's success at school. The learner who is in lower socioeconomical status is face to face a lot of difficulties such as the shortage of sources. As a result of this, lower socioeconomical level causes lower academical performance (Caro, 2009). Studies in the last years put forward that there is a meaningful relation between socioeconomical root and school success of a learner (Fındık and Kavak, 2013). The effective implementation of 2013 year's English Language Learning Programme is related to sociocultural and socioeconomical situations of schools. Schools in Turkey are various in sociocultural and socioeconomic aspects. The socioeconomic status of schools shows differences in the same city, province or even region. This research aims to search the implementation English Language Learning Programme in socioeconomically different schools in the 4th level and to state the factors affecting implementation in classrooms.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Qualitative research technique is used to investigate the implementation of the 4th level English Language Teaching Programme in socioeconomically different schools and the factors affecting this situation. Research model is stated as case study. Case study is analyzing a sample or fact totally (Merriam, 2009). A spesific situation in its natural environment is investigated by observation technique to decide about the implementation of English Language Teaching Programme. Learrner and teacher interviews are done.

Participants

Schools which we can get the most reliable results are stated by interviewing with branch directors in Küçükçekmece ministry of national education, ministry staff and school directors. The school which is located in Atakent district is stated as socieconomically high school. Socioeconomically avarage school is in Halkalı district. The school in Kanarya district has inadequate socioeconomic status when compared with other schools. Three schools in Atakent, Halkalı and Kanarya district in Küçükçekmece in İstanbul, 6 English teachers teaching at these schools and 24 students participated in the study.

Instruments

Observation is a data gathering instrument to see the action directly when there is a spesific research question and to produce more reliable results (Merriam, 2009). Implementation of the programme and the factors affecting this are stated by observing the teacher in the education environment, learner and lessons. The researcher observed the environment in the role of participant researcher. Observation was done for two lesson hours and in breaks in every schools. Observation form was used in the observation stage. Observations are told by "descriptive observation notes" one by one. What each action means about English Language Learning Programme is stated by "reflective observation notes". The experiences, thoughts, senses and reactions of person's were stated by interviews with learners and teachers. Observation form was used during observations.

One by one interviews were done with 6 teachers. Focus group interviews were done with 24 learners.

Data Analysis

The datas in this study were analysed with content analysis. In content analysis, the data in hand gives a meaning, the data is divided into sections and sections are labelled with codes. These codes are controlled, eliminated and larger themes are found. Finally the data is explained in a detailed way by these themes (Creswell, 2012). Interviews were evaluated in this sequence according to the content analysis; Firstly all interview data is written, then it is reviewed and divided into meaningful sections. After that this meaningful sections were defined and codes were produced. Codes are gathered under categories and thus themes are formed. Themes are explained and presented. Observations are done to support the interview data. The programme is evaluated in a detailed way to make the research more valid. Interview questions and observation points are evaluated with a proffesional. Objective datas are gathered. The steps of the research are explained in a detailed way. Interview data is varied as learner and teacher interviews to ensure the reliability of the research. It is also supported with observation data.

RESULTS

Four themes emerged as a result of examining the implementation of English Language Programme in the 4th classes in state schools and the factors affecting this. These themes are divided into categories and results are gathered.

Theme 1: English Language Programme

Six categories in the name of "Listening Activities", "Book Activities", "Active Lesson Process", "Evaluation", "Lesson Duration" and "Materials" are obtained. When the datas under the title of "Listening activities" and "Active Lesson Duration" were evaluated, it revealed that listening activities were done and lessons were active in schools in Atakent and Halkalı regions. It was stated that the activities could not be done due to lack of materials and crowded classes in the school in Kanarya region. The lessons were grammar based and they were not active in the school in Kanarya region. Making listening activities, student centered lessons, active lessons in most research schools increase the implementation of the programme. However whole success is not obtained in this category. When looked at the data about evaluation category, all research schools adjusted the evaluation processes the same as in English Language Learning Programme. This data shows that the programme is totally succesful in programme evaluation. About lesson duration category the teachers and learners in all research schools agreed about the inadequate lesson hours. The duration was inadequate in observations too. The English Language Learning Programme is not practicable in this aspect. About "materials" category all of the participants said that English Language Programme could be implemented only if there are materials such as computers, internet, audio system and projector. In the lack of these materials, programme loses its practicality. When the datas about "book activities" were evaluated it appeared that the book was used effectively in schools in Atakent and Halkalı district. Doing the "book activities" in most schools increases the practicality of the programme.

However there is a school that can not practice "book activities" and content of the book. This reduces practicality of the book.

Theme 2: Characteristics of the class

Six categories are obtained under the title of "there are materials", "Heat, Light and Cleaning", "the view of classes", "classroom size", "Peer Support" and "Language Class" in the theme of "classroom characteristics". All the necessary lesson materials were present in schools in Atakent and Halkalı district about "there are materials" category. There was not enough materials to have an active lesson in the school in Kanarya district. Having lesson materials in most research schools increases the practicality of the programme. However the total success can not be obtained. Having suitable physical conditions in all research schools increases the practicality of the programme about the "Heat, Light and Cleaning" category. In most research schools, the appearence of classrooms support language learning about "classroom view" and thus it is practical. However teacher views and observation results indicates some problems too.

It is stated that "classroom sizes" were suitable and practical for English Language Programme in Atakent and Halkalı districts. However the classroom sizes in Kanarya district are crowded. About this, while the programme can be implemented in most schools, there are schools which can not implement the programme effectively due to classroom sizes. About the category "peer support", it is stated that there was peer support in langauge learning process in schools in Atakent and Kanarya regions. The students in school in Halkalı district said they could not have peer support. These datas show that "peer support" can be practicle in most research schools however the total success can not be reached. There was a language classroom in school in Halkalı district about the "language classroom" category. Having a language classroom in only one research school is a negative factor to implement the programme effectively.

Theme 3: Teacher's Characteristics

"Teacher's Characteristics" theme consists of six categories under the titles "the native language of lesson is English", "our teacher does listening activities", "interactive lessons", "the lessons are not grammar focused","the most used technique question-answer" and "teacher experience". It is stated that the teachers do listening activities in Atakent and Halkalı districts about "our teacher does listening activities" category.

category. The practicality of the English Language Programme is not enough because English is not used as a native language in lessons in most research schools. The teachers in schools in Atakent and Halkalı distiricts provide teacher and student interaction about " Interactive lessons" category. The teachers in school in Kanarya district can not provide an interactive environment. Providing interactive lessons in most research schools increases the practicality of the programme however total success can not be obtained. The teachers in schools in Atakent and Halkalı districts use communicative methods instead of grammar methods in "the lessons are not grammar focused" category. The teachers in school in Kanarya district uses grammar methods. Using communicative methods in lessons in most research schools increases the practicality of the programme however the total success can not be obtained. Five teachers in six teachers who participate in the research state that they have more than 5 years experience when the "teacher experience" category is evaluated.

Theme 4: Learner Characteristics

"Learner Characteristics" theme consists of six categories under the titles "I am happy in English lessons", "I prefer learning English by listening", "Positive change in Learner success", "Positive change in Learner interest"," Cognitively ready students" and "Emotionally ready students" .   It   is cleared that %92 of students are happy in english lessons when the category "I am happy in English lessons is investigated. This result is one of the factors that increases the practicality of English Language Teaching Programme. It is stated that most of the learners taking part in the research in "I prefer learning by listening" category don't prefer listening method. This result reveals that although they love learning by listening, they haven't given up grammatical methods yet.

It is stated that learners are cognitively ready for English lessons in schools in Atakent and Halkalı districts and learner success increases as programme is implemented in classes in "Learners cognitively ready" and "Positive change in learner success" categories. The learners in school in Kanarya district are not ready cognitively for the lessons, they have some shortages and the learner success does not increase as they can not implement the English Learning Programme effectively. The results show that the programme is succesful in these categories in most schools but total success can not be reached. It turned out that most of the students who took part in the research about "Positive Changes in Learners' Interest" and "Emotionally Ready Learners" categories, were emotionally ready for English lessons and had a rising interest.

Table 1. General Result Table Arranged for All Topics

The Research Schools	"English Teaching Programme" theme	"Class characteristics" theme	"Teacher characteristics" theme	"Learner characteristics" theme	General Result
The school in Atakent district	+	+	+	+	+
The school in Halkalı district	+	+	+	+	+
The school in Kanarya district	-	-	-	-	-
General Result	+	+	+	+	+

The teachers can not do listening activities in kanarya district. Doing the listening activities in most research schools increases the practicality of the programme however total success can not be obtained. It is stated that the native language of lessons is English only in school in Atakent district about "the native language of lessons is English"

This data showed that the programme prepared students for lessons emotionally and was successful in drawing their interests. "Table 1" is the general result table which all the topics in the research presented. When the practicality of the 4th class English Language Teaching Programme in socioeconomically different primary schools was searched

with themes in "Table 1", It is stated that the schools in Atakent and Halkalı districts implemented the programme effectively. In both schools the necessary conditions were provided for all the topics to carry out "English Teaching Programme" and it was carried out equivalent to the Ministry of National Education Programme. It was stated that "the English Teaching Programme" wasn't carried out effectively. When all the topics are analyzed, the implementation success of the English Teaching Programme is proved to be inadequate due to the deficiencies.

DISCUSSION

According to the qualitative findings of the research, it is observed that the English Teaching Programme of the 4th graders was successfully carried out in 2 of 3 socioeconomically different schools in Atakent and Halkalı regions. The programme isn't implemented effectively in the school in Kanarya region. This result means that the English Teaching Programme is applicable in most of the research schools, but at the same time it has some deficiencies.

In the English Teaching Programme topic, it is observed that at the most of the research schools, the listening skill is the focal point of the lessons. Tok and Arıbaş (2008) assert that in the European Union countries, the listening and the speaking skills are taught in the first place at the the beginning of a foreign language teaching. It is conferred that the duration of the lessons is inadequate. This data is parallel to the previous research results. Tanrıseven and Yıldıran (2015) assert that two class hour per week is inadequate to carry out the programme. The active learning process, which the programme aims, can be achieved through sufficient instruments. Instrument efficiency provides communication in foreign language, creates real-like surroundings and make the students active (Warschauer, 1996).

When "Features of Classroom Environment" is analysed, it is proved that all the research schools has sufficient lighting, heating and sanitary conditions. At that point, Uludağ and Odacı (2002), put forward that the factors such as attendant number of the students, the appearance of the classroom, heat, lighting and cleanliness of the classroom are important features of classroom environment. Başar (1999) makes it clear that there is an intense relation between the success and the low numbers of attendance, and as the number of attendance increases, this relation become more apparent. In the research, it is seen that while the programme is successfully carried out in classes with 25-30 students, the programme isn't implemented effectively in Kanarya region within the classrooms of 40 students. The research shows that various class equipments are required to implement the programme. Studies in English Teaching field show that effective english teaching can be achieved through the use of technology and so, the necessary equipments are needed (Steep-Greany, 2002; Klimova, 2015; Gezegin, 2014).

These results are obtained from "the Teachers' Characteristics" theme: Being able to use the methods appropriate for teaching process and ensuring the students to speak English properly and comprehensible, are among English teachers proficiencies (MEB, 2015). In most research schools, teachers obtain the necessary proficiencies specified in the programme. According to "Learners' Characteristics" topic, the learners are cognitively and emotionally prepared to the English lessons which have communicative methods.

This result has the support of the previous studies. Merter, Şekerci and Bozkurt (2014) indicate that to begin teaching English in primary schools is suitable for students cognitive readiness and the reason is "critical period process" in learning foreign language. Yıldıran and Tanrıseven (2015) state that the students develop positive attitudes towards language learning through current programme and they point out the books, the songs and the teacher's role are reason to this attitude. The critical period term can explain the conclusion that there is a positive change in the students' success. The critical period is the biological age limit to learn the language easily and permanently, and when the learning occurs in the critical period, the success increases (Krashen, 1982).

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