The Analysis of the Views of English Teachers about 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum[*]

Fatma Özüdoğru[1]
Oktay Cem Adıgüzel[2]

Abstract:

From the 2012-2013 academic year on, Ministry of National Education (MoNE) initiated twelve-year compulsory and progressive education instead of eight-year non-stop compulsory education. During this implementation, MoNE started English language teaching in 2nd grade rather than 4th grade. This study aims to determine the views of English teachers about 2nd grade English language teaching curriculum. The illuminative evaluation model was used in this study. The data were collected from 21 English teachers teaching 2nd grade classes in Uşak through semi-structured interviews during the spring semester of the 2013-2014 academic year. The interviews were coded and themed through both descriptive and content analysis. 30% of the transcripts were given to two foreign language field experts for coding. The agreement was calculated according to Miles & Huberman (1994) and found .88 and .90 between experts and the researcher and .85 between two researchers. The findings were gathered under five themes: "Basic Dimensions", "Problems", "Strengths", "Weaknesses" and "Recommendations". Research findings indicated that teachers found the strengths of the 2nd grade English language teaching program as benefits of English teaching in the 2nd grade, applicability to the 2nd grade students, focus on listening and speaking skills and the learning-teaching process whereas they found applicability of the program in different learning contexts to be the weakness. In addition, it was found that teachers had problems due to teaching at the 2nd grade for the first time and not getting any in-service training about the program.

Keywords: ELT Curriculum, Young Learners, English Teachers, Illuminative Evaluation Model

Suggested Citation

Özüdoğru, F. and O.C.Adıgüzel (2016). The Analysis of the Views of English Teachers about 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum, *E-International Journal of Educational Research*, 7(2), 16-35. DOI: 10.19160/e-ijer.12341

İkinci Sınıf İngilizce Öğretim Programına İlişkin Öğretmen Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi

Fatma Özüdoğru[1]
Oktay Cem Adıgüzel[2]

Özet:

Araştırmanın amacı İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ilkokul ikinci sınıf İngilizce öğretim programına ilişkin görüşlerinin ortaya çıkarılmasıdır. Çalışmada aydınlatıcı değerlendirme modeli kullanılmıştır. Araştırma verileri 2013-2014 eğitim öğretim yılı bahar döneminde Uşak ilinde ikinci sınıflarda görev yapan 21 İngilizce öğretmeninden yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme yoluyla toplanmıştır. Görüşmeler hem betimsel hem içerik analizi kullanılarak kodlanıp temalaştırılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin ilkokul 2 sınıf İngilizce öğretim programına ilişkin görüşlerinin genel olarak programın erken yaşta dil öğrenimine olanak sağlaması nedeniyle olumlu olduğu söylenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizce Öğretim Programı, Genç Öğrenenler, İngilizce Öğretmenleri, Aydınlatıcı Değerlendirme Modeli

Önerilen Atıf

Özüdoğru, F. and O.C.Adıgüzel (2016). İkinci Sınıf İngilizce Öğretim Programına İlişkin Öğretmen Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi, E-Uluslararası Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi 7(2), 16-35. DOI: 10.19160/e-ijer.12341

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Problem:

2012-2013 öğretim yılından itibaren uygulanmakta olan 8 yıllık kesintisiz zorunlu eğitim yerine, 12 yıllık zorunlu kademeli eğitim uygulaması getirilmiştir. Bu uygulamayla ilkokul 4'de yabancı dil eğitimine başlama uygulamasının iki yıl daha öne çekilerek ilkokul 2'den itibaren başlamasına karar verilmiştir. Bu araştırmada İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ilkokul ikinci sınıf İngilizce öğretim programına ilişkin görüşlerinin ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmaktadır.

Yöntem:

Çalışmada aydınlatıcı değerlendirme modeli kullanılmıştır. Araştırma verileri 2013-2014 eğitim öğretim yılı bahar döneminde Uşak ilinde ikinci sınıflarda görev yapan 21 İngilizce öğretmeninden yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme yoluyla toplanmıştır. Görüşmeler hem betimsel hem içerik analizi kullanılarak kodlanıp temalaştırılmıştır. Görüşmelere ait dökümlerin %30'u iki uzmana sunulmuş ve uzmanlar ve araştırmacı arasında kodlamalar üzerinde görüş birliği oranı Miles ve Huberman'a (1994) göre hesaplanarak kodlamalar üzerinde araştırmacı ve iki uzman arasında .88 ve .90, iki uzman arasında ise .85 düzeyinde görüş birliğine varılmıştır.

Bulgular:

"Temel Boyutlar", "Sorunlar", "Güçlü Yönler", "Zayıf Yönler" ve "Öneriler" olmak üzere beş tema altında toplanmıştır. İlkokul 2. sınıf İngilizce öğretim programına ilişkin 2. sınıfta görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin görüşleri incelendiğinde, öğretmenlerin kelime öğrenimine yönelik kazanımları öğrencilerin bilişsel seviyesine uygun görmelerine rağmen, cümle kurmaya yönelik kazanımları (like/don't like, can/can't gibi) öğrencilerin seviyelerinin üzerinde gördükleri belirlenmiştir. Öğretmenler programda önerilen iletişimsel yöntemin öğrencilerin seviyelerine uygun olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Bunun yanı sıra, programda bu yaş grubu için onları aktif kılan öğrenci odaklı yöntemlerin önerildiğini belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğu programın temel olarak dinleme ve konuşma becerisine odaklanmasını doğru bulmasına rağmen, programda yazma ve okuma becerilerine odaklanılmasını savunan öğretmenlerde bulunmaktadır. Bunun yanında, öğretmenlerin ilk defa ikinci sınıf seviyesinde görev yapmanın sonucunda öğrencilerin seviyelerine ineme me, programa ilişkin bilgilendirilmeme, hizmetiçi eğitim almama, ders kitaplarının okullara zamanında gönderilmemesi, ders saatlerinin yetersiz olması ve ders kitaplarının yetersiz olması gibi sorunlar yaşadıkları saptanmıştır. Öğretmenler programın güçlü yönlerine ilişkin olarak en çok 2. sınıfta İngilizce öğretiminin faydalarına ilişkin görüş bildirmişlerdir. Öğretmenler programın zayıf yönü olarak en çok programın farklı öğrenme ortamlarında uygulanabilirliğine ilişkin olumsuz görüş belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğu programın teknolojik donanım olmayan ortamlarda ve kalabalık sınıflarda uygulanmasının zor olduğunu belirtmişlerdir.

Sonuç ve Öneriler:

Öğretmenlerin ilkokul 2 sınıf İngilizce öğretim programına ilişkin görüşlerinin genel olarak programın erken yaşta dil öğrenimine olanak sağlaması nedeniyle olumlu

olduğu söylenebilir. İlkokul 2. sınıf İngilizce öğretim programının etkili uygulanması için yapılan öneriler şöyledir: Türkiye'de tüm bölgelerdeki okulların fiziki imkânları iyileştirilmelidir. Öğretmenlere ilkokul ikinci sınıf İngilizce öğretim programının uygulama esasları, genç öğrenenlere yabancı dil öğretimi ve Diller İçin Avrupa Ortak Başvuru Metnine ilişkin nitelikli hizmetiçi eğitim fırsatları sunulmalıdır.

INTRODUCTION

In European Union (EU) countries, it is seen that compulsory foreign language teaching practices at an early age take place (Enever, 2009). When curriculum development studies in foreign language teaching in Turkey are analyzed, it is seen that compulsory foreign language teaching practices at an early age are applied in parallel with EU countries. In the Turkish education system, the "Eight- Year Basic Education Reform", implemented in 1997, increased compulsory education from five years to eight years, enabled foreign language teaching to start from the 4th grade in elementary schools and started an elective second foreign language from the 6th grade of elementary schools (Haznedar, 2010).

Curricula which began to be implemented in 1997 introduced the term 'communicative approach' in English language teaching. This term, from the Ministry of National Education (MNE), is defined as the development of communicative competence in order to provide students learning a foreign language with opportunities to use the target language for communication purposes. Another effect of the curricula was moving from a teacher-centered approach to active learning which is learner-centered. The role of the teacher was seen as a guide and facilitator and the role of the student became active participant in the learning process organized by the teacher (Kırkgöz, 2009a; Kırkgöz, 2009b).

In order for Turkey to both keep up with EU foreign language teaching standards and to improve the quality of foreign language teaching, new foreign language teaching curricula were developed in 2005. The new curricula, developed within the framework of a constructivist approach, is communicative and learner-centered as with the 1997 curricula, but was designed more comprehensively (Kırkgöz, 2009a; Kızıldağ, 2009). Through the decision of the MNE Board of Education and Discipline, according to the curricula implemented in the 2005-2006 academic year, the main objective of foreign language education is to improve students' speaking skills on issues needed in daily life by utilizing English. In this framework, it is recommended to use topics such as mathematics, geography, and music in the topic-based curricula to make foreign language learning more effective (MNE, 2006). In addition, the English course books were revised and weekly teaching hours were increased from two hours to three hours in 4th and 5th grades.

In Turkey, twelve-year compulsory and progressive education was initiated instead of eight-year non-stop compulsory education starting from the 2012-2013 academic year and the twelve-year education was organized as four years of primary school, four years of middle school and four years of high school. Through the law known by the public as 4+4+4, the elementary school period was changed to 6-13 years old and children who had completed 5,5 years old by the end of September 2012 were given the chance to start primary school. Another change with this law has been in foreign language education starting in the 2nd grade of primary school, which previously started in 4th grade (MNE, 2012). Therefore, upon starting to learn foreign language at an earlier age instead of at 11 years old in the old system, a need to develop new curricula for the new target group arose. This need made it compulsory

to take the target group's needs into consideration when developing new foreign language curricula, its aims, content, activities, teaching technologies, materials and measurement and assessment tools.

Moreover, in the new foreign language curricula, implemented since the 2013-2014 academic year, a level system has been applied. Language skill levels were classified as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 and it was aimed to use common framework with EU countries in language use. The language levels in the new foreign language curricula stem from 'The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages' (CEFR) (MNE, 2013). Via the CEFR, it is aimed to improve collaboration between educational institutions of different countries as well as to set up common standards in language skills (MEB, t.y. p. 4).

As it is seen, the basic changes in foreign language teaching curricula aiming students to learn foreign language starting from the second grade and determining students' foreign language proficiency by level system have required these curricula to be evaluated as well. Program evaluation studies provide the evaluation of the effectiveness of a program in line with the aims, finding out the strengths and weaknesses and improving the program in this way. Therefore, it is of great importance to evaluate the new curriculum in terms of its practicality. There are a variety of approaches and models for program evaluation. Parlett and Hamilton (1977) rejected evaluation models measuring educational outcomes in program evaluation studies and offered the illuminative evaluation model (IEM) which sees the program as a whole and requires in-depth program analysis. The goal of the IEM is to enable program participants to illuminate the critical processes of the program through detailed descriptions. Also, it seeks to find out the problems met in the implementation of the program and the important and meaningful issues for participants.

There are limited studies about primary school 2nd grade English lesson and language teaching curriculum (Alkan and Arslan, 2014; Ekuş and Babayiğit, 2013; İyitoğlu and Alcı, 2015; Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın, 2014; Süer, 2014). Ekuş and Babayiğit (2013) investigated the views of English and classroom teachers on having an English lesson in the 2nd grade. Alkan and Arslan (2014) collected data via questionnaire from 163 teachers by using program evaluation based on four components and Süer (2014) administered a program evaluation scale to 144 second grade English teachers working in Diyarbakır. In addition, İyitoğlu and Alcı (2015) implemented semi-structured interviews with 14 teachers using an ethnographic method while Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın (2014) collected data though structured interviews about the 2nd grade English language teaching curriculum. Therefore, this study, which conducted semi-structured interviews and utilized the framework of the illuminative evaluation model to collect data, differs from the other studies.

The aim of this study is to determine the views of English teachers on the 2nd grade English language teaching curriculum. Through this investigation, the problems met and other vital issues in the implementation of the English language teaching

curriculum, applied for the first time in the academic year of 2013-2014, can be possible to illuminate from the views of teachers working in the 2nd grade and therefore to evaluate the general characteristics of the program.

METHOD

Research Model

This research seeks in-depth analysis of teachers' views about the 2nd grade English language teaching curriculum was designed as descriptive survey research. In the research, a semi-structured interview, a qualitative data collection tool, was used to collect data. Semi-structured interviews are used in order to elicit data grounded in the experience of the participant, which may not be possible to find out via other research tools, by incorporating open-ended questions (Galletta, 2013).

Participants

The participants of the study are 21 English teachers who were teaching 2nd grade classes in Uşak and attended the study on a voluntary basis, during the spring semester of the 2013-2014 academic year. 2 of the teachers are male and 19 of them are female. The experience of the teachers varies from 4 to 18 years.

Data Collection Tool

The semi-structured interview form was prepared by taking the two important concepts 'instructional system' and 'learning milieu' from the illuminative evaluation model into consideration. Within the framework of instructional system, five questions were prepared about the aims, content, learning-teaching process, measurement and assessment process and language skills of the program. For the learning milieu, three questions were formed about the applicability of the program in different learning contexts, problems met in the implementation of the program and possible factors affecting the success of the program. In addition, five questions were prepared about the change in language learning level, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and general characteristics of the program such as strengths, weaknesses and recommendations.

In order to ensure content validity, the draft interview form was presented to three experts: two experts from the educational sciences department and one expert from the foreign language education department. After receiving feedback from experts and excluding similar questions from the form, the draft interview form was finalized. Furthermore, an interview was piloted to check the duration and clarity of the interview questions.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analyzed through both descriptive and content analysis. Descriptive analysis allows the data to be organized according to the themes obtained from the research questions and to be presented by taking the questions asked in the interview into consideration. Themes are generally hidden in the research questions or formed in the mind of the researcher during the

process (Denscombe, 2007; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). Content analysis can be defined as the summary of a text with smaller content categories via coding (Büyüköztürk, Cakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel; 2010).

Within the framework of this study, first the raw data were prepared and organized. 695 minutes of recording from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed into 152 pages. The transcriptions were revised and spelling mistakes were checked. All the data were read again after being organized according to the research questions and a general understanding about the views of participants and the depth, plausibility and use of data was obtained. One of the researchers coded the data through both descriptive and content analysis. In order to ensure reliability of the coding, 30% of the transcripts were given to two foreign language field experts for coding and an agreement between the codings was calculated according to Miles and Huberman (1994) which was found .88 and .90 between experts and the researcher and .85 between two researchers. Then, themes were formed in relation to the codings. The themes were commented on and explained by relating to the research questions (Creswell, 2009).

FINDINGS

After having analyzed the data, five themes as 'Basic Dimensions of Primary School 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum', 'Problems in Relation to Primary School 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum', 'Strengths of the Primary School 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum', 'Weaknesses of the Primary School 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum' and 'Recommendations in Relation to Primary School 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum' were determined.

Teachers' Views in Relation to the Basic Dimensions of Primary School 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum

Most of the teachers stated that goals for vocabulary teaching were appropriate for students' levels; however, goals for sentence making were above their levels.

> *"Goals are suitable for them and simple, so students do not have difficulty in learning them. I think they are appropriate for students' cognitive and physical development."(T8)*
> *"Students sometimes get confused. Before they learn 'can' fully, they have to learn sentences such as "elephants can't jump or rabbits can jump" because they take place in the curriculum." (T15)*

Teachers mostly told that they found it right to focus on listening and speaking skills, which are the basic skills aimed, instead of reading and writing skills in the curriculum.

> *"In terms of age level, of course we should focus on listening and speaking skills. Children have just learnt reading and writing in Turkish. Therefore, if we focus on reading and writing in English, they will be confused. Of course, listening and speaking must be before the other skills. Young learners will first*

listen and speak and learn in this way. Reading and writing must be later in order not to confuse them." (Ö9)

"It is right not to focus on reading and writing. They have difficulty in reading, they should learn by listening. It is also good not to focus on writing because their muscles are not developed enough and they get bored with writing. When I say that we will write something when their attention and curiosity at the highest they get bored a lot." (Ö16)

Contrary to these ideas, seven teachers supported the view that writing skill needed to be focused on as well without making students bored in order to ensure permanent learning.

"In my opinion, it is not right not to focus on writing. We are doing writing because permanent learning does not take place without writing. Some writing should be done without making students bored." (T18)

Teachers found the content interesting and sufficient in general. However, some teachers stated that the content was too loaded, there were some problems regarding the content order and the content was not organized according to spiral content organization.

"What can you teach to an eight-year old child? Colors, animals, numbers…They were all in the curriculum. Content was appropriate." (T21)

"I think there mustn't be a very loaded content for second graders. However, we finished the content earlier; there could have been some other topics such as family, days, seasons, weather." (T10)

"In terms of attracting attention, of course the content was appropriate…Topics such as colors, fruits and animals were fun." (T11)

"It was the first time I met that the units started with 'words' unit. It is wrong, I think. 'Words' unit is always given in the following units in other grades, as well. First, meeting, family, introducing oneself would be better. Without knowing anything, the vocabulary and words don't work." (T2)

"The first unit stays in the first unit and the second unit stays in the second one. I mean, there is no spirality between the units. If there was repetition and connection between units, children would remember much better." (T20)

Teachers expressing opinions about the learning and teaching process pointed out the importance of using learner-centered methods and techniques for young learners. Furthermore, teachers believed that the activities offered in the curriculum were appropriate for students' age levels but insufficient.

"We need to make students active all the time according to the curriculum, learner-centered not teacher-centered. We need to use visual and audial materials a lot. Also, we need to create an active learning environment where the children are active, not passive." (T17)

"We were offered role-plays, which was necessary for children. Also, dramatization is very important. I distribute roles. I tell one student that s/he is a teacher, tell 'good morning' to the class. These should certainly be made in the classroom. It should be as a theatre; especially it should be related to daily life." (T19)

"All the activities were designed well. They are appropriate for students but very insufficient. There could be different crosswords and puzzles." (T20)

Teachers also stressed the importance of using visual and audial tools in terms of attracting young learners' interest and attention as well as making teaching easier.

"We use visual materials and tools such as pictures, reflector and computer. Without them, learning doesn't take place permanently." (T14)

Most of the teachers also depicted that the information given on measurement and assessment dimension was insufficient and especially written exams were inappropriate for second grade students.

"Measurement and assessment dimension was a bit problematic. There wasn't enough information about it. Since it was the first time the curriculum was applied this year, we were astonished about how we would evaluate and mark students." (T4)

"Since we don't focus on writing, we don't have any written exam for measurement purposes. Exams are not suitable for this age level." (T15)

Besides, all teachers told that they did not have any information on the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages."

Teachers' Views about the Problems in Relation to Primary School 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum

Teachers mostly mentioned their own professional qualifications regarding the problems they met in implementing the 2nd grade English language teaching curriculum. Teachers stated that they had problems in teaching appropriate level because of teaching second grade students for the first time and difficulty in attracting young learners' attention through various activities.

"Children are very active and they don't sit for a long time. You have to make them busy all the time. This is easy for older students but it is hard for younger ones. I had difficulty in the first one or two months." (T17)

"I had never thought even fourth graders. I always taught seventh or eighth graders. When I first started to teach in second grade after higher grades, I had hardships in the first months in teaching properly for their level. My behaviors, movements and even tone of voice changed since they are second grade." (T5)

12 teachers stated that they had problems resulting from planning. Teachers had problems about planning such as not being informed about the curriculum, not receiving in-service training, untimely provision of the course books and lack of teaching hours.

"Training about the curriculum should have been designed at the beginning of the year. Even if it is short, we could have been informed about how to behave to second grade students." (T6)

"We didn't receive our second grade books on time and we taught one and a half month without books. We were searching on the Internet about what we

would teach, we should do, if we should start with the alphabet or not. We were confused and nothing was clear." (T1)
"Teaching hours must be increased, we can't do a lot in two hours. Children are very active and distracted easily." (T7)

11 teachers stated they had problems resulting from children in implementing the curriculum. Teachers reported problems related to students such as short attention span, not getting used to a second teacher after their classroom teacher and low readiness level to learn a foreign language.

"Children couldn't get used to me. Since they were used to seeing their classroom teachers all the time, they couldn't accept me first." (T2)
"In the first stage, it was hard to attract students' attention frequently. I had to design various activities. They want to learn through games all the time and get rewarded." (T13)

8 teachers complained about school and classroom based problems such as lack of technological infrastructure and overcrowded classroom. 6 teachers reported problems about the course book such as the quality of exercises and its size.

"It was a problem for me not to be able to show the visual materials via the projector. Allegedly, the curriculum is based on visual methods but we couldn't do so." (T7)
"I had problems related to lack of materials. Other than that, my classes were overcrowded. A classroom of 23 students was crowded for that age level." (T3)
"The reason for my problem was the lack of examples and activities in the course book." (T20)

4 teachers stated that the content of the curriculum was not appropriate for students' level. Also, 3 teachers told those parents' negative attitudes towards English and not supporting their children affected the success of the curriculum adversely.

"I had problems regarding the content of the curriculum. The topics seemed easy but there were very hard sentences we had to teach word by word in every unit. I wasn't sure whether to teach them or skip.
They could be easier. The number of topics may also be increased because we finished earlier." (T10)

Teachers' Views about the Strengths of the Primary School 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum

All teachers expressed many benefits of English teaching in the 2nd grade.

"I think English in the second grade has many benefits because of the critical period. It is getting harder to learn a foreign language after the age of 11 . Children learn easier and faster in second grade." (T21)
"…they find English more enjoyable and they learn very effectively." (T14)

In addition, 20 views expressed the strengths of language skills. Teachers told that listening and speaking skills, the core aims of the curriculum, enabled students to communicate and gain the skills they would need in daily life.

"It is communicative focusing on listening and speaking. The curriculum improves students' communication skills a lot." (T20)

In addition to language skills, 19 views expressed the strengths of the learning-teaching process of the curriculum. Teachers emphasized that various methods and techniques and activities offered in the curriculum attracted students' interest.

"Drama is a very good idea. This age group likes drama." (T4)
"We can do different activities as pair work, group work…" (T13)
"…topics are supported by songs." (T15)
"…children can learn through games." (T11)
"Visuals are very important in the curriculum, which is the strength of the curriculum. Activities are interesting and make students like English. Students don't get bored." (T7)

Furthermore, teachers came up with 9 views regarding the strengths of the content. Teachers said that the content moved from easy to more difficult and included daily life topics that attract students' attention.

"…interesting topics…" (T14)
"Themes are well-classified and appropriate for students' age. They go from easy to more difficult." (T9)

Besides the content, teachers also expressed 6 views related to the strengths of the aims. Teachers stated that both cognitive and affective aims were suitable for students' level.

"The curriculum enables students to have positive attitudes towards English. Even a smallest child thinks s/he can succeed. It starts with simple topics. That's why students like it." (T4)

Teachers' Views about the Weaknesses of the Primary School 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum

Teachers have mostly reported negative opinions regarding the applicability of the program in different learning contexts. The vast majority of teachers displayed consensus in the view of the hardships for the program to be applied in non-technological, crowded classrooms, different learning environments as well as in regions with different socio-economic features in Turkey.

"It is hard to apply this curriculum in classrooms where there is no technological infrastructure. You have to attract students' interest frequently since they are distracted easily. In classrooms where there is technological infrastructure, learning takes place easier and children like these classes more so teachers can apply the curriculum easily." (T7)
"Second grade students are small and make too much noise. It is hard to handle them and teach English. In non-crowded classrooms it is easier for them to learn. (T14)
"…for example in the unit 'at the playground' students can practice playground vocabulary such as 'swing', 'slide' by doing these activities in

school's playground. However, in our school we didn't have this opportunity so it was hard to teach this vocabulary in class." (T20)

"In my opinion, the biggest problem is that it is hard to find good opportunities, which are found in central schools, in villages. It is hard to apply this curriculum in village primary schools or in regions with different socio-economic features. It is necessary to make village schools equal with central schools." (T6)

Besides, 13 views were expressed regarding the weaknesses of the learning-teaching process. Teachers asserted that the activities were insufficient, listening texts were hard for students and the technological tools that the curriculum required to use made it hard to implement the curriculum.

"Activities are few and insufficient. Children are so eager that they are ready to do everything." (T10)

"We couldn't make students listen to the listening texts. Students cannot understand them because they are above students' level. Dialogues are also hard." (T21)

"It isn't applicable in every different classroom environment in Turkey since it requires technology use." (T13)

In addition, 9 views were expressed in relation to the weaknesses of the content. Teachers stated that the content was not spiral and the order did not move from easy to difficult.

"There is no repetition of a unit in the other one. They are all disconnected from each other." (T20)

"If research had been made, maybe the first unit wouldn't have started with 'words' unit. It was very difficult for the beginning." (T19)

Moreover, some teachers stated that the vocabulary included in the curriculum was hard for students' level.

"In the units vocabulary such as kimono takes place, which second graders may not know even in Turkish. It would have been if vocabulary from our culture had been used." (T10)

Besides, 7 teachers found the curriculum weak in terms of not focusing on reading and writing skills.

"There is no focus on reading and writing, which should have been. Reading and writing should take place in order to practice because second graders want to read and write." (T3)

"It is necessary not to divide the four skills. There are some teachers who make students write frequently, which I am opposed to. Even if little, writing must be done in the curriculum. Unwriting is not right" (T7)

Findings about Teachers' Recommendations in Relation to Primary School 2nd Grade English Language Teaching Curriculum

Teachers mostly made recommendations about the learning-teaching process of the primary school 2nd grade English language teaching curriculum. Teachers stressed the importance of learning for children via games and songs and recommended focusing on these types of activities more and increasing such activities and simplifying listening texts and songs for students' level.

> *"It will attract students more if there are more games and songs." (T16)*
> *"Activities may be increased…Songs may be revised because they are really hard and we can't teach. More simple songs may be included…More listening activities may be prepared, but simple listening, because stories are challenging so students can't understand." (T12)*

In addition, teachers recommended the content to be widened, simplified andappropriate for students' level and the content to move from easy to more difficult.

> *"A few units may be added because students sometimes wonder other things. For example, students ask about family members." (T5)*
> *"Content needs to be simplified, it is hard for students." (T12)*
> *"The order of the units could be different; from easy to more difficult. Easy topics may be moved to the first semester and harder topics may be in the second semester. For instance, "in the classroom" unit was so loaded. After the students had just learnt the alphabet, this unit became a problem for them." (T15)*

Moreover, teachers recommended learning contexts to have technological infrastructure and not to be overcrowded. Teachers also recommended being informed about the curriculum more and to be provided with course books on time.

> *"Technology is a must because the curriculum requires technology use. Curriculum also requires visuals and audial. In order to do this, we certainly need technology, a computer and a reflector." (T12)*
> *"The ideal classroom size is 20 and if it is fewer, it will be more effective. I don't think that the curriculum will be effectively implemented in classrooms with 30 or 35 students." (T6)*
> *"We didn't receive any training on the new curriculum. At university we got a course called 'Teaching Young Learners". However, this course addressed fourth grade students not the second graders…I am also teaching young students for the first time. As I observe them, I decide on what to do but we could have been provided with seminars and training." (T9)*
> *"At the beginning of the year, the course books were sent three or four weeks late. It was known that the curriculum would be applied last March or April. Therefore, the course books and other sources should have been sent earlier." (T6)*

Some teachers also made recommendations for starting to learn English at an earlier age.

> *"In my opinion, English learning should start earlier not in the second grade even in kindergarten level because the earlier, the better. I think 2nd grade is late but still it is a good step." (T19)*

8 teachers recommended focusing on reading and writing skills. 3 teachers also made recommendations for teachers. They recommended teachers to teach in appropriate level and use suitable methods and techniques for young learners.

> *"Four skills need to be focused on at the same time. I make students write because the sooner students start writing, the better they learn." (T7)*
> *"Teachers must certainly teach in appropriate level for students." (T18)*

Some teachers also recommended assessment scales or listening and speaking tests to be provided by the Ministry of National Education in order to ensure standardization in measurement and assessment.

> *"I wish there were evaluation scales or something standard because I may evaluate in a different way, another colleague may do in another way." (T15)*

Furthermore, two recommendations were made for parents to support their children and collaborate with the teacher.

> *"There are three important sources in education; parents, student and teacher need to work together. It is important for the parents to follow what the teacher has taught on that day." (T10)*

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

When second grade English teachers' views on 2nd grade English language teaching curriculum were analyzed, it was identified that teachers found that goals for vocabulary teaching were appropriate for students' cognitive levels; however, goals for sentence making (such as like/don't like, can/can't) were above students' levels, which is similar to İyitoğlu and Alcı's (2015) research finding that teachers found the program positive on vocabulary teaching. Similarly, in Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın's (2014) research, 67% of the second grade English teachers found that the aims of the program were appropriate for students' mental and social development. Furthermore, teachers displayed consensus in the view of the content to be interesting, which is similar to Alkan and Arslan's (2014) research finding that showed the content was highly interesting according to teachers' views. As for the order of the content, it was found that the first unit 'words' and the second unit 'in the classroom' were very hard for students' level and that the order of these units must be changed. Within this framework, it can be recommended that the content must go from easy to more difficult and that the order must be revised. In addition, most of the teachers stated that the program was not designed by taking spiral content organization into consideration. Therefore, it can be suggested that the content be reorganized according to spiral content organization and that students are provided with the opportunity to revise the previous topics. In the curriculum, some vocabulary such as kimono, xylophone take place, which second graders may not know even in Turkish. As Mezzi (2012) stated, factors such as the frequency of use of

vocabulary, the suitability for students' ages and needs and easiness for learning and pronouncing are important to pay attention to since the amount of vocabulary that a young learner may learn is limited.

Teachers believed that the communicative approach suggested in the program was appropriate for students' level. In addition, they said that learner-centered methods which make students active were offered in the program. Furthermore, teachers also believed that the type of activities suggested in the program were appropriate for the students' age level; however, the songs and listening texts were above the students' level. These findings are similar to what Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın (2014) found in their study that 73% of teachers believed the activities, teaching methods and techniques suggested in the curriculum were suitable for students.

Teachers also asserted that visual and audial tools were very important in terms of attracting young learners' interest and attention and that the curriculum required technology use, so when it was unavailable, it would be hard to implement the curriculum. Most of the teachers also depicted that the information given on measurement and assessment dimension was insufficient and emphasized they were not informed about it, which is in line with Alkan and Arslan's (2014) research findings. Contrary to Alkan and Arslan's (2014) research, in İyitoğlu and Alcı's (2015) research it was found that teachers thought measurement and assessment dimension to be positive. In addition, teachers argued that second grade students must be graded through in-class performance and performance assignments instead of written exams. Similarly, in Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın's (2014) research, it was found that 63% of teachers thought the measurement tools, methods and activities were not suitable for the English lesson. Thus, information on measurement and assessment dimension of the program must be made clearer and sufficient. Standards to ensure objectivity must also be determined.

Furthermore, most of the teachers supported the program in terms of focusing on listening and speaking skills basically. However, seven teachers believed that focusing on two skills was right but insufficient and advocated that reading and writing skills also need to be focused on, as well as not making students bored in order to ensure permanent learning. Similarly, in Alkan and Arslan's (2014) research, teachers were seen to have agreed in a relatively low rate with the statements that reading and writing activities must not be done. In 2nd grade, listening and speaking skills need to be focused on. By taking second grade students' age and developmental features into account, reading and writing skills must not be focused on. Similarly, in Ekuş and Babayiğit's (2013) research, avoiding writing skills in second grade and improving positive attitudes towards English are recommended.

All of the teachers interviewed stated that they did not have any information on the 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.' Similarly, in Sülü and Kır's (2014) study, it was found that of the 46 participants working in primary, high schools, private institutions and universities, 82% needed in-service training about the 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages', 67% did not utilize

it in teaching and 89% asked for it to be included in teacher training programs. Based on these findings, it can be recommended that the 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages' can be included in teacher training programs to introduce its principles of use for the prospective teachers. Also, in-service training programs on the framework of reference can be organized for English teachers.

Most of the teachers also expressed problems such as teaching in the second grade for the first time and difficulty in attracting young learners' attention through various activities, which is similar to Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın's (2014) research finding that teachers had problems in classroom management and inexperience in teaching second grade students. In the current study, it was found that teachers also had problems about planning such as not being informed about the curriculum, not receiving in-service training, untimely provision of the course books and lack of teaching hours. Similarly, in İyitoğlu and Alcı (2015), Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın (2014) and Süer's (2014) research, it was found that teachers were not provided with in-service training on the curriculum. It is necessary for teachers to be provided with in-service training opportunities to introduce the principles and essentials for implementing the new curriculum. Besides, prospective teachers need to be provided with courses that provide information and practice opportunities for curriculum development and evaluation for young learners in teacher education programs. Also, similar to the current study, in Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın's (2014) research, it was found that teachers had problems related to lack of teaching hours. Contrary to this, in Ekuş and Babayiğit's (2013) study, both English and classroom teachers were found to be happy with two-hour teaching hours.

In addition, teachers reported other problems related to students such as short attention span, not getting used to a second teacher after their classroom teacher and low readiness level to learn a foreign language. Similar findings regarding students were found in Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın's (2014) research including getting bored easily (21%) and frequently asking for games (15%). Furthermore, teachers complained about lack of technological infrastructure and overcrowded classroom in their learning context, which was also found in the research of İyitoğlu and Alcı (2015) and Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın (2014). Since the program is based on visual and audial methods and techniques and young learners can learn better and permanently via these methods, it is important for learning contexts to have technology and a reasonable number of students.

Teachers also mentioned problems about parents' negative attitudes towards English and not being able to support their children. In this context, various panels, seminars and training programs may be organized in order to inform parents about the importance of English in the second grade and how they can be supportive for their children.

Research findings also indicated that teachers expressed many benefits of English teaching in the 2nd grade. Teachers generally focused on both the cognitive benefits of learning English such as learning easily and effectively and the affective benefits

such as arousing interest and curiosity. Similarly, in Ekuş and Babayiğit's (2013) research, all English teachers and 90% of classroom teachers stated that English in the second grade was beneficial for children. Also, Bozavlı (2013) asserted that the perception of children is more open than adults, they are both eager to learn more and curious. As a result, their learning takes place faster and becomes permanent in children.

Additionally, teachers have mostly reported negative opinions regarding the applicability of the program in different learning contexts. The vast majority of teachers displayed consensus in the view of the hardships for the program to be applied in non-technological and crowded classrooms. Teachers also asserted that it was hard to implement the program in regions with different socio-economic features. In this context in Turkey, to ensure more effective implementation of the program it may be proposed to improve the physical conditions of schools in all regions.

This study was limited to 21 teachers teaching English to 2nd graders in the city of Uşak. Therefore, it is impossible to generalize the results. A study with a larger amount of teachers from different cities can be carried out, which may produce different results.

As a result, it can be said that the overall opinion of teachers on the 2nd grade English language teaching curriculum is positive due to the fact that it allows foreign language learning at an early age. The primary school 2nd grade English language teaching curriculum needs to be reviewed and evaluated at regular intervals within the scope of the findings from both this study and similar research. Thus, it will be possible to provide more effective and meaningful language learning opportunities for young learners in Turkey.

REFERENCES

Alkan, M. F. and Arslan, M. (2014). İkinci sınıf İngilizce öğretim programının değerlendirilmesi. *Uluslararası Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Çalışmaları Dergisi, 4 (7),* 87-99.

Bozavlı, E. (2013). Erken yaşta yabancı dil öğretiminin tarihsel süreci ve amaçları. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi, 21 (4),* 1561-1574.

Büyüköztürk, Ş., Çakmak, E.K., Akgün, Ö.E., Karadeniz, Ş. and Demirel, F. (2010). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri.* Ankara: Pegem Yayıncılık.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* London: Sage Publications.

Denscombe, M. (2007). *The good research guide. For small scale social research project.* Finland: McGraw Hill.

Ekuş, B. and Babayiğit, Ö. (2013). İlkokul 2. sınıftan itibaren yabancı dil eğitimi verilmesine ilişkin sınıf ve İngilizce öğretmenlerinin görüşlerinin incelenmesi. *Researcher: Social Science Studies, 1,* 40-49.

Enever, J. (2009). Can today's early language learners in England become tomorrow's Plurilingual European citizens?. In M. Nikolov (Ed.), In *Early learning of foreign languages: Processes and outcomes* (pp.15-29). UK: Multilingual Matters.

Galletta, A. (2013). *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: From research design to analysis and publication.* New York: NYU Press.

İyitoğlu, O. and Alcı, B. (2015). A qualitative research on 2nd grade teachers' opinions about 2nd grade English language teaching curriculum. *İlköğretim Online, 14 (2),* 682-696.

Kırkgöz, Y. (2009a). Globalization and English language policy in Turkey. *Educational Policy, 23 (5),* 663-684.

Kırkgöz, Y. (2009b). Globalization and English language policy at primary education in Turkey. *English as an International Language Journal, 5,* 176- 181.

Kızıldağ, A. (2009). Teaching English in Turkey: Dialogues with teachers about the challenges in public primary schools. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education, 1 (3),* 187-201.

Küçüktepe, C., Eminoğlu Küçüktepe, S. and Baykın, Y. (2014). İkinci sınıf İngilizce dersi ve programına ilişkin öğretmen görüşlerinin incelenmesi. *Hasan Ali Yücel Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 11 (22),* 55-78.

MEB (2006). İlköğretim İngilizce dersi (4,5, 6, 7 ve 8. Sınıflar) öğretim programı. Ankara.

MEB (2012). 12 yıl zorunlu eğitim. Retrieved March 30 2015, http://www.meb.gov.tr/duyurular/duyurular2012/12Yil_Soru_Cevaplar.pdf

MEB (2013). İlköğretim kurumları (ilkokullar ve ortaokullar) İngilizce dersi (2,3,4,5,6,7 ve 8. sınıflar) öğretim programı. Ankara.

MEB (t.y.). *Diller için Avrupa ortak başvuru metni: Öğrenme, öğretme, değerlendirme.* Retrieved August 1 2013, http://abdigm.meb.gov.tr/eski_site/uaorgutler/AK/cefr_Turkce.pdf.

Mezzi, T. (2012). Being young, being adult: The age factor issue for vocabulary in fl education. M. Gonzales Davies& A. Taronna (Eds.), In *New trends in early foreign language learning: The age factor, CLIL and languages in contact, bridging research and good practices* (pp. 12-23). UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis.* London: Sage Publications.

Parlett, M. and Hamilton, D. (1977). Evaluation as illumination: A new approach to the study of innovatory programs. In M. Parlett and G. Dearden (Eds.), *Introduction to illuminative evaluation: Studies in higher education* (pp. 9-29). California: Pacific Soundings Press.

Süer, S. (2014). İlkokul 2. sınıf İngilizce dersi öğretim programının öğretmen görüşlerine göre değerlendirilmesi (Diyarbakır ili örneği). Unpublished Master's Thesis, Dicle University, Diyarbakır.

Sülü, A. and Kır, E. (2014). Language teachers' views on CEFR. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET), 1(5),* 358-364. Retrieved January 29 2015, http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/69

Yıldırım, A. and Şimsek, H. (2011). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri.* Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

1 Dr. Fatma OZUDOGRU
Usak University, Turkey
Foreign Languages Department
fatma2006metu@hotmail.com

2Assoc.Prof.Dr. Oktay Cem ADIGÜZEL
Anadolu University
Faculty of Education
Educational Sciences Department
cadiguzel@anadolu.edu.tr