A case study of Turkish teachers’ perceptions and practices regarding Communicative Language Teaching in English

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to gain an insight into how teachers work practically with the Communicative Oriented Curriculum in English and what factors that could influence the teachers’ methodology. The investigation partially replicated a study by Kırkgöz (2008). The study was conducted at three state elementary schools in Turkey by using multidimensional qualitative research procedures, including classroom observations and interviews. Results demonstrated that all participants showed attributes identified to an Eclectic-Oriented teaching approach placing them in the middle of a continuum from Transmission to Interpretation-Oriented teachers. The results were later compared with the original study displaying both a satisfying and unsatisfying outcome depending on a qualitative or quantitative comparison. Findings also indicated that a holistic perspective must be considered in order to interpret and understand the results.

Keywords

Communicative Language Learning (CLT), Communicative Oriented Curriculum (COC), European framework, Teaching English to young learners (TEYLs) in Turkey,
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1. Introduction

During the past 10 years there has been a significant curriculum change in elementary and secondary school in Turkey. In 2004 the reform was introduced at elementary level and during the following years most of the subject courses at elementary and secondary level were renewed (Öztürk, 2011). Even though the changes varied depending on subject there were several features and characteristics that were common to all subjects. The transition mainly involved a movement away from a subject/teacher-centred approach towards student-centred teaching activities with a diversity in teaching methods and materials, including encouragement to learn through research and self-experience and pair and group work activities (ibid).

The contributing factors to the curriculum reform were suggested to be the low overall results shown in the international assessment programs PIRLS and PISA but also a reformist tendency to facilitate accession in order to enter the EU (Akşit, 2007). Even if education scholars, teachers and the public welcomed the curriculum reform, it has been criticised, mainly because of its implementation. Research shows that there has been a scarcity of material support, sources and material, opportunities for teacher training and weak technological infrastructure as well as physical facilities (Kırkgöz, 2008b; Korkmaz, 2008). It is also argued that the involvement of NGOs and the universities concerning the preparation for the new curriculum programs and pilot studies has been limited (Akşit, 2007).

To get an insight in how the teachers work practically in the classroom and to understand what factors can influence teachers’ methodology within the Communicative Oriented Curriculum, there is a higher possibility to make a transformation in the educational system concerning Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) that will be more beneficial for both teachers and students (Kırkgöz, 2009: Koc et al, 2007).

The issue will be investigated through interviews and observations inspired by the original study made shortly after the curriculum reform (Kırkgöz, 2008a), to which the results later will be compared. The study is possible to apply in any country irrespective of location since the focus is to give an insight into how teachers’ familiarity with COC, former education and experience affect their methodology in the classroom.

1.1. Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to describe and analyze how teachers' understanding, prior education and experience affect their working methodology concerning the COC principles in a TEYL context, as well as how the analysed data correspond to the results in the original study made after the curriculum innovation 1997. The results will be of great importance, not only for the opportunity of realisation among teachers, principals and other education reformers, but also to obtain an indication whether there has been an improvement concerning the educational programs for English Language Teaching (ELT) for young learners since that period. The aim is approached by asking the following research questions, of which the first and second are taken directly from Kırkgöz (2008a):
• What are the teachers’ familiarities with the COC principles and to what extent do they implement those principles in TEYL?
• What role does teachers’ prior training experience play in their implementation of COC and TEYL?
• How does the outcome correspond to the results in the original study made by Kırkgöz (2008)?

2. Background

The background section begins with discussing communicative language learning in a social-cultural learning environment. Next, the European Framework is discussed and finally an overview of Turkey’s Communicative Oriented Curriculum is given and how it has affected pupils in primary school as well as working teachers and teacher education.

2.1. Theoretical background

2.2.1 Communicative Language Learning in a social cultural learning environment

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is usually considered as an approach to language teaching where communication is the primary function of the language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Communicative competence is the primary goal for the learner, which stimulate real-life situations that necessitate communication. CLT is therefore not a special method that identify teaching routines, syllabus or content, nor any single model that is generally applicable as imperative (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The definition of communicative competence is described as the ability to interpret and establish a suitable social behaviour where the learner is expected to be active in the process to utilize the target language (Hymes as cited in Brandl, 2007). Such a conception encompasses a broad scale of abilities including linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse- and strategic competences.

CLT has, therefore, opened for a great variety of methods and techniques and uses methods and materials that are suitable to natural context of learning. The theories come from areas as cognitive science, educational psychology and second language acquisition (SLA) (Brandl, 2007) and adopts and conciliates several different approaches that gives varying perspectives about teaching and language learning, which create meeting with proficiency-oriented goals as well as accommodate different needs and preferences of the learner (ibid).

Even though the lack of generally applicable models, there has been discussions regarding the qualities to legitimise the label CLT, mainly that the activities among learners should be more frequent
and interactive with also other participants, to solve problems and exchange information. That genuine texts and communication activities connected to experiences in real life shall be used, emphasizing links across written and spoken contexts, and by using a learner-centred approach where learners’ backgrounds, language needs, and goals are taken into account (Weschke & Skehan, 2002).

The education within a social-cultural learning perspective, therefore, closely resembles the relationship between a master and his apprentice, where the apprentice first observes his master before he, with some support, tries to manage the task on his own (Jönsson, 2012). This can be explained as Vygotskij’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) where every individual in a given situation has a potential development zone, where support from others with a higher understanding and knowledge can lead to development that exceeds the individual’s current level of understanding (as cited in Wertsch, 1991). Vygotskij argued that an individual’s development and understanding cannot be separated from the social context within which we live. People are born and socialized into a historical-cultural context and the relationship to the outside world always goes through other people. Since established social activities and general rules of behavior already exist in the world, we do not impartially explore the world around us. Bourdieu’s (1930) sociological concept Cultural capital is described as raising the social mobility outside economical assets and non-financial social means (as cited in Broady, 1998). Learning within a socio-cultural perspective is therefore to become involved in, or socialized into the way of creating meaning within the already existing human activities (Rogoff, 1990; Säljö, 2005; Wertsch, 1991, 1998). Therefore, the role of language becomes prominent in the learning process when it occurs in a social context. The language becomes, so to speak, both ends and means - which may involve a risk concerning the perception of the oral language skills. By looking at the language simply as a medium can consequently mean a risk of decreasing its progression potential.

2.2.2 European Framework

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) is the outcome of more than twenty years of research by the Council of Europe and The Language Policy Unit in Strasbourg, and is a framework of reference for language learning. The framework was designed to obtain a coherent, transparent and comprehensive foundation to work within the language syllabuses and guidelines of the curriculum, as well as the structure of teaching and learning materials and the judgement of foreign language proficiency (Council of Europe, 2014).

According to the CEFR, language proficiency is described at six levels; A1-A2, B1-B2 and C1-C2, with three defined “plus” levels (A2+, B1+, B2+) in three categories: understanding (listening, reading), speaking (spoken interaction-/ production) and writing. The scales are followed by a detailed analysis of communicative themes, contexts, tasks and purposes, in addition to scaled descriptions of the competences we use when we communicate (ibid). However, the CEFR does not adhere to ready-made solutions and can always be adapted to different contexts. The assigned levels make the schemes possible to compare across national boundaries and provide a foundation for recognising language qualifications and to ease education and occupational activity across national boarders (Council of Europe, 2001). It is mainly used in Europe, but has now dispersed to other continents since the material is available in 39 languages. A survey among Council of Europe (2014) member states carried out in 2006 shows that CEFR is used more frequent than before in the development of teaching materials, teacher education as well as reforming language curricula.
The CEFR’s aim is to reassure all practitioners in the language field to consider which questions are relevant to language learning, and to facilitate the communication between practitioners concerning their needs to achieve their goals and the how they will proceed to do so. It is clearly mentioned that the practitioners can use the framework in any way they wish, as with any other publication since the scheme enables them to describe and define the objectives clearly and exhaustively (Council of Europe, 2001). The CEFR does, therefore, not tell any practitioner what to do or how to do it, since the idea is to raise questions, not answers, and thereby assist the practitioner’s own decision-making. Even so, the Council of Europe is not indifferent; a lot of work and effort has been put into the practice over the years in teaching, language learning and assessment, partly to improve the standard of communication among Europeans of different cultural and language backgrounds, which consequently will lead to more contact and better understanding and collaboration between countries (ibid). The method of learning and teaching also encourage learners to develop different qualities as knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to become more autonomous in thought and action, but also more cooperative and responsible in their learning process in relation to other people.

Within the framework, it is of fundamental value to define, clearly and explicitly, the learners’ needs as well as their characteristics, resources and cultural context in order to organise the language learning. Many parties, not only teachers, but educational authorities, examiners and textbook writers are concerned about the organising part (ibid), mainly because they need to strive towards the same objectives in order to work coherently, even if quite divided, to assist the learners to reach the set requirements. The CEF’s overall objective is therefore to accomplish a substantial unity among its participants by adopting an ordinary action in the cultural field (ibid).

2.2.3 An overview of Turkey´s COC and challenges posed by the COC curriculum

Globalization has made a significant effect on multidimensional sides of human life, including the language policies of many countries (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). Turkey is strategically situated in an important section between Europe and Asia and holds a great significance to the region as well as to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and as an associate member to the European Union (Kirkgöz, 2009). Due to Turkey’s strategic and geopolitical location, the global influence of English from the Western world opened up for international communication and technical development. The nation’s wish to modernize and preserve stronger ties with the West consequently helped influence the foreign language teaching policy, thus increasing the propagation of English Language Teaching (ELT) in the line with the norms of the European Union (ibid). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was in 1997 a major curriculum innovation project in Turkish primary education and introduced as a part of the Ministry of Education Development Project (Kirkgöz, 2008a).

The teaching style in Turkey traditionally has been based mostly on a teacher-centred approach with a transmission of information (Öztürk, 2011). However, the new curriculum innovation sought to develop an understanding by creating a balance between knowledge and skills and by student-centred learning, which encouraged teachers to develop the learners’ communicative performance in English (Kirkgöz, 2008a). The major proposals of the COC document for teaching English in primary schools were to encourage pupils’ consciousness of a foreign language and raise a positive attitude towards the learning of English language, as well as encourage the pupils’ motivation and interest towards the
English language (Kırkgöz, 2009). The curriculum also suggests that the pupils’ acquisition of fundamental communicative capacities for daily communication could be developed by the foundation of classroom situations using games and dialogues so that pupils could play while learning English (Kocaoluk & Kocaoluk, 2001). The teacher has the role of a facilitator in the learning process whereas the pupils should take an active role through various pair and group-work activities (Kırkgöz, 2008a). Textbooks based on the principles of communicative approach followed the curriculum reform and were issued by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MNE).

Due to the major curriculum change, which also meant that English was introduced to the lower grades in primary school, the Teacher Education Department were redesigned in order to extend the duration of teaching practice periods and increase methodology courses in the field of ELT (ibid). Furthermore, a new course Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) was introduced into the curriculum of the ELT Departments of the Faculties of Education with the purpose of developing the prospective teachers’ understanding and practical skills to meet the needs of young learners, as were other TEYLs courses and various seminars offered by the teacher educators to provide the required support (ibid).

However, the implementation of the curriculum innovation has been criticized, mainly because it was implemented without piloting, which created complex problems across the country (Kırkgöz, 2005, 2007). Kırkgöz (2008a) describes three areas that had a potential effect on curriculum innovation, namely Cultural, Teacher-related -and Contextual factors, which describe the potential problems of the Turkish teachers working culture and the realities of the state primary classroom context in relation to the requirements for the COC proposal. The result showed that there was a significant gap between the current practises of most Turkish teachers and the COC framework.

The fast implementation furthermore resulted in that teachers educated for teaching English to older pupils or adults now had to teach younger learners even though they were not intimate with the teaching techniques (ibid). Carless (2001) defines teacher culture as “the culture of those within the teaching community, encompassing their values, beliefs and attitudes, which are apparent in their classroom behaviour” (p 264). Young and Lee (1985), describe the same phenomenon as a continuum from transmission-based to interpretation-based teaching where Turkish English teachers mostly display a educational culture equivalent to the transmission-based spectra (Wedell, 2003). The rhetorical change of the curriculum, mainly inspired by an interpretation-based culture from a Western-borrowed educational spectra, taken from a completely different cultural environment, therefore caused a considerable change in the conception of Turkish teachers involved in TEYLs (Kırkgöz, 2008a).

Even though the innovation did not need great resource input, some sort of satisfactory teaching and learning assets was needed in order to perform it successfully, even so, many Turkish state primary schools did not have the requisite infrastructure amenities (ibid). Carefully planned published material was another infrastructural aspect that would have had a positive effect on the innovation process due to its ability to transform the innovation from something conceptual to concrete (ibid).

In conclusion, the time span needed for such a nationwide curriculum innovation should have been long and extensive rather than intensive to allow teachers to adapt to the new ideas and have enough time to try and implement them to their own teaching situation (ibid). Curriculum planners were not aware of the extent of cultural change they wanted teachers to make, or of the contextual factors required to implement if successfully, which made the curriculum innovation revolutionary rather than evolutionary (ibid).
3. Method

This study is a partial replication of the case study made by Yasemin Kırkgöz in 2008 (A case study of teachers’ implementation of curriculum innovation in English language teaching in Turkish primary education). As mentioned by Mackey and Gass, replicating previous studies is one of the foundation stones of the scientific method because it helps avert errors and evaluate validity. If the replication supports the results of the original study, there is a higher possibility that the original have external validity (2012). The design has, however, due to time limit, been partially revised in order to suit this study. Kırkgöz ’s study was performed during a two-year period and the interviews were spread during the whole school year. Since this study was based on an eight-week period, the interviews were conducted during a four-week period and addressed three teachers instead of thirty-two. One research question from the original study has been excluded due to the time frame. Hence, the present study is not as extensive, and cannot provide equally enriched results as the original study, but it can give insight into and an impression of whether the results collaborate or counteract.

As mentioned in Kırkgöz (2008a), two ethnographic data collection tools were used for the study comprising classroom observations and interviews to give an emic perspective (Bailey & Nunan, 1996). In this way, more awareness was put into exploring the subjective realities of teaching (Richards, 1996). Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992) also indicate that classroom observation gives a chance to have an immediate availability into teachers’ real instructional practises and to observe them in action when they are using their knowledge in a classroom setting (as cited in Kırkgöz, 2008a).

As Kırkgöz’s model shows (Fig.1.) the research process was divided into four cycles, each cycle representing one observation with pre and post interviews. However, a few alterations have been made in order to suit this study, mainly that it contains three cycles instead of four and that it excludes the pre-observation interviews and observation transcriptions (Fig.2.). The baseline interview, post observation interview and the summative interview are however in alignment with the original study´s construction.

The observations suited the nature of the first research question which investigated to what extent the teachers’ implemented the COC principles in the classroom, whereas interviews were chosen to supplement information gathered from teachers’ practice, as well as the teachers’ familiarities with the principles and prior education/working experience. All the collected data was then analysed to distinguish patterns, and thereafter compared to the result in study.

By using multidimensional qualitative research operations including comprising classroom observations, teacher interviews and field notes, an idea evolves of how three teachers implemented COC.
3.1. Informants

The study was conducted at three state elementary schools located in Turkey. All the interviewed teachers were native Turkish speakers and had a four-year university degree including *Teaching English to Young Learners* (TEYL).

The first school, located on the outskirts of a larger town, consisted of a kindergarten and the grades one to four and had a total of 397 pupils. There was one English teacher appointed who taught grades 2-4 with a total of 27 teaching hours a week. Fatima (pseudonym) is 26 years of age and graduated from the English Language Teaching department in 2010. She worked her first three years with the grades six to eight but has four months’ teaching experience in this particular school with grades 2-4.

The second school hosted approximately 1,500 pupils from grades 4-8 and was located in the city centre. Seven English teachers were appointed and the interviewed teacher taught grades four 4-5 with a total of 25 hours a week. Amir (pseudonym) graduated from the English Language Teaching department in 2007 and is 29 years of age. He has eight years of working experience with the ages 10-18 and four months’ teaching experience in this school with teaching grades 4-5.

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1. The English Language Teaching department in Turkey is equivalent to the Swedish "Lärarutbildningen med inriktning engelska för yngre åldrar" concerning the courses English Language Learning for Young Learners, pedagogy and didactics (Author’s interpretation).
The third school, also situated in a central part of town, was a secondary school and hosted grades 5-8 with a total of 450 pupils. There were two English teachers appointed. The interviewed teacher taught grades 5-7 with a total of 28 hours a week. Karim (pseudonym) is 26 years of age and has been working for six months since he graduated from the English Language Teaching department in June 2014.

The data collecting methods were explained to teachers only even if observations included student involvement in order to observe the teachers in a practical classroom environment.

### 3.2. Material

In order to gather data for the present study two qualitative methods of data collection have been used, namely interviews and observations. Firstly, a baseline interview was carried out in order to collect relevant demographic data about the participants, such as age, gender, teacher training and prior training experience (Appendix 1 and example in Appendix 2). The information was used to be able to compare former education and knowledge with the teachers’ practical approach. The post-observation interview mainly provided an opportunity for the teachers’ voices to be heard in addition to their approaches and activities (Appendix 3). Lastly a summative interview was held with each teacher to discuss main issues arising from the observed lessons (Appendix 4). The interviews were recorded by using a recording application for Android device, and later transcribed and translated into English in order to analyse the material without filtering the data while taking notes. The interviews were carried out in the language the informants felt most comfortable with to reduce the probability of misunderstanding or the possible inability of expressing oneself linguistically. A Turkish translator who had a Bachelor of Arts in English Language Teacher Education was present at all times in order to assist the work during the study.

A lesson observation schedule (Appendix 5) was used in order to guide the systematic collection of data. As in the original study, the schedule was in alignment with in the frame of research on TEYLs (Slattery & Willis, 2001), and adapted from O’Sullivan (2004) and Lee, Lam and Li (2003). A number of items based on a COC curriculum framework were also added by Kirkgöz’s (2008a), in order to be relevant for the study, namely items concerning “use of pair and group work” and “use of variety”. The observation schedule consisted of three main categories: instruction, management and climate, each area subdivided in order to supply more specific sub-items and to catch significant aspects of the classroom practises (Kirkgöz, 2008).

The main objective of the lesson observation was to collect qualitative data. The quantified observation scheme was supplemented by observation notes to expose feasible useful data on the instructional practises of the teacher and to reveal the classroom atmosphere. These were shaped as classroom observation summaries (Appendix 6). The summaries, observation schedule and the translated interviews made it possible to identify patterns within the responses and practices, which made the two methods work as a complement to one other (Johansson & Svedner, 2010).

Criticism of the qualitative approach points to that the circumscribed results and restricted number of participants has a negative impact on the generalizability and representatives of society (Möller, 2012). It is, however, argued that even though the data is not representative for the whole research field and only accurate for a few participants, the data is still valuable since it is rich in detail and depth. The
objective is therefore not to compare how ordinary an event is but rather describe a phenomenon in close detail (Langemar, 2008). Subsequently, this study will not necessarily enable generalizations concerning every teacher’s familiarities and implementation of the COC principles in TEYLs, but it can decidedly state something about the teacher that were involved in the study and how it probably could be for others.

3.3. Procedure

This study was carried out during an eight-week period in the autumn term of 2014. Three teachers in three different Turkish state primary schools were interviewed and observed during this period while teaching grades two, four and five. The research schedule has been borrowed from the original study made by Kırkgöz (2008a), although alterations have been made to suit the purpose of this study.

Each observation established one link in a 3-part observation cycle. In each link, as stated in Fig 2, classroom observations were directed for one consistent lesson lasting approximately 30-40 min, totalling three observed lessons per teacher in three separate cycles of observation during an eight week period (Kırkgöz, 2008a). This resulted in a total of nine observations to be processed and analysed. On each occasion an observation schedule was filled out to collect details and catch important aspects of the classroom practises. In order to expose possible available data on the instructional practices of the teachers, the quantified observation schedule was supplemented by observation notes taken by the researcher. The significance of a systematic observer is “learning how to write descriptively; practising the disciplined recording of filed notes; knowing how to separate detail from trivia /.../ and using rigorous methods to validate observations” (Patton, 1990, p 201). Since the main idea of the lesson observations was to get qualitative data these sources were later combined and summarised into classroom observation summaries.

Each cycle of observation was scheduled in two phases: observation and post-observation interviews. The post-observation interviews, lasting approximately 10 minutes, were carried out directly after each observation occasion in order to gain information whether the teachers wanted to add, explain or change anything about their past lesson.

Before the observations, either one day in advance or earlier the same day, a baseline-interview was carried out, lasting approximately 10-20 minutes in order to collect relevant demographic data about the participants. Summative interviews were held after the 3-hour session with each teacher to discuss main issues occurring from the classroom observations, as well as questions related to teaching approaches and ideal teaching, lasting around 15 minutes. The stimulated recalls were held either the same day or one day after the last observation. Summarizing three baseline-interviews, nine post-observation interviews and three summative interviews, totalling fifteen interviews to transcribe, translate, process and analyse.

The data gathering was done in a private room, in order for the verbal interviews to be carried out without interruptions or distractions, and in the classrooms during the observations. The teachers were given the option to perform the interviews in either Turkish or English, whichever they felt most comfortable with. Two out of three teachers chose to do all the procedures in Turkish, while the third participant responded to the interviews using both languages. The questions asked were easy to
respond to since they were based on the teachers’ concrete experience and practices (Johansson & Svedner, 2010). During the session, the researcher and translator were seated opposite the teacher with the interview question and the recording device placed on the table located between them. The teachers were given encouraging nods to keep talking or were asked relevant connecting questions in order to answer the given questions for the study. During the observations the researcher and translator were seated at empty desk at the back of the classroom in order to interfere as little as possible during the lessons.

The qualitative data obtained by the interviews and observations became the database for the following analysis.

3.4. Validity and reliability

The reliability of a study is a statement of how dependable the resource is while validity is whether the information you collect gives you the right measurements of the data you intend to measure (Johansson & Svedner, 2010). Validity can be divided into three different types consisting of internal, external and construct validity, where the last refers to how appropriate the instruments are in measuring the specific aim of your research (McKay, 2010). Since the research questions consist of background information and the teachers’ familiarities and implementation of the COC principles in a TEYL context observations and qualitative interviews were chosen as data-gathering instruments (Johansson & Svedner, 2010). Internal validity is associated with how trustworthy the findings are, which goes hand in hand with the study’s reliability, while external validity refers to whether the study’s observations can be generalized or transferred to other people or situations (McKay, 2010). In consequence with the arguments above, this study cannot be considered to have external validity since the data is gathered from a limited number of teachers. This study is, however, not representative for all Turkish teachers and the lack of external validity is therefore not a major issue. It is instead described as having a naturalistic inquiry (McKay, 2010) which means that the findings are not necessarily representative of all teachers, but it is nevertheless a true and valid report based on the individuals that contributed to this research (Langemar, 2008).

3.5. Ethical considerations

According to Vetenskaprådet’s (2002) regulations the interviewees were informed of that no names of the teachers, students or the school would be mentioned in the research, and all participants can at any time leave the interview without any negative consequences. The required confidentiality was fulfilled by handling the received information with serious care and anonymity (ibid). The collected data were exclusively collected to gather information in order to attain the aim of this study and not to distribute or use for any personal advantages. A Turkish translator was present since interviews should be performed in the language the interviewees felt most comfortable with to reduce the probability of misunderstanding or the possible inability of expressing oneself linguistically (Ogata el al, 2001). The interviewees were also informed that the study was a part of a Minor Field Study administered by the
Swedish Council for Higher Education and financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, in order to raise the level of knowledge and interest in international cooperation, understanding and global knowledge in the field of English education.

3.6. Methods of analysis

A two-stage data analysis was performed in coherence with the original study made by Kırkgöz (2008a). At the first stage, each teacher was treated as a case itself by designing a general explanation based on the data gathered from the interviews, field notes, observation schedule and lesson summaries. The analysis in qualitative research is, according to Wiersma & Jurs, “a process of successive approximation toward an accurate description and interpretation of the phenomenon” (2005, p 206) and to interpret and categorize the findings (McKay, 2010). These individual cases were then used in a cross-case analysis (second stage) leading to generalizations about the instructional practices of the teachers, as well as their understandings and effect of their training on their teaching behaviours Kırkgöz (2008a).

The multiple forms of collected data were used to triangulate the findings to study the phenomenon from different perspectives in order to support the reliability of the data collection (Jönsson, 2012) where the interviews foremost allowed the teachers’ voices to be heard.

The results made it possible to place the participants in a continuum reaching from transmission-oriented (least oriented towards COC) to interpretation-oriented (most oriented).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Description of material

The aim of this study was to describe and analyse how teachers’ understanding, prior education and experience affect their working methodology concerning the COC principles in a TEYL context, as well as how the analysed data correspond to the results made by Kırkgöz (2008a).

Two qualitative methods were used to gather data, namely interviews and observations. The observations suited the nature of the first research question which investigated to what extent the teachers’ implemented the COC principles in the classroom. A lesson observation schedule (Appendix 5) consisting of three main categories; instruction, management and climate was used to guide the systematic collection of data. Each area subdivided in order to provide more specific sub-items and to gather significant aspects of the classroom practises. A holistic synthesis summarizing the three observation schedules per teacher was made in order to easier be able to compare and analyse the findings in comparison with the three participants (Appendix 6). As the main objective of the lesson observation was to get qualitative data, the quantified observation scheme was supplemented by
observation notes, later formed into classroom observation summaries, to expose potentially useful data of the instructional practises of the teacher and to reveal the classroom atmosphere.

4.2. Data analysis and results

4.2.1 What are the teachers’ familiarities with the COC principles and to what extent do they implement those principles in TEYLs?

By adopting multidimensional qualitative research procedures, including classroom observations, teacher interviews and field notes, an image was developed of how three teachers implemented COC in their classrooms (Kırkgöz, 2008a). The result showed that all three participants were placed in the middle of the continuum from transmission to interpretation-oriented teaching by using an eclectic methodology. According to Rao (2002) have teachers with an eclectic methodology the inclination to combine the “new” with the “old” and to combine the communicative approach with traditional teaching structures” (as cited in Kırkgöz, 2008a). However, this was shown in various ways, which will be further explained.

"Fatima"

Fatima is 26 years old and has four years of teacher experience, whence four months in the observed school.

Her familiarities with the COC principles are somewhat divided between theory and practice:

İster istemez İngilizce konuşmak çok zor. Mesela ikinci sınıf dediğimiz, Türkçe okuyup yazmayı yeni çözmüş öğrencilere. Bu yaşta öğrenci İngilizce öğretmek hem avantajlı hem mmm... bir takım algılamaları yonünden dezavantajları var. Yalnız olabildiğince en azından classroom rules dediğimiz kısımları... Otur, kalk, günaydın, kapıları kapat gibi ifadeleri öğretmeye çalışıyorım.2

This result shows a tendency to put greater emphasis on the focus on the delivery of knowledge about the language instead on developing their communicative abilities, which also was noted in her choice of language depending on activity;

Evet, tabii ki de yapılan aktiviteler göre değişir. Özellikle konu gramer ise... Genellikle Türkçe işliyorum dersi. Aksi takdirde kuralları öğrenmeyecekler. Bundan hariç tabii ki de classroom language dediğimiz kuralları İngilizce söylüyorum... Böylesi yaparak az az İngilizce konuşmaya çalışıyoruz... örneğin “otur” dediğim zaman bir tepki

2 It is very difficult to speak English in the classroom. For example, a second grade student is having difficulty in speaking and reading Turkish so... teaching English to these students at this age... mmm is not easy... but because there are small they would learn easily if there are exposed to the language but at the same time because they are very small they have problem in comprehending the language. What I am trying to do is at least to teach them classroom rules... sit down, stand up, good morning, close the door... And I try to say it in English first then Turkish translation and to make them understand the word I use body language (Translated).
Even though the target language is not used as much as she wanted, they practised words and classroom rules. Not using the target language was an active choice. She showed awareness over her decision and mentions a deeper purpose of language learning, which has to do with motivation, interest and the joy of learning, also described as the cornerstones in a COC learning environment (Kocaoluk & Kocaoluk, 2001).

The holistic schedule from the observations shows that the students show high enthusiasm, motivation and interest during Fatima’s lessons. It also indicates that there is a nice atmosphere in the classroom, a variety of activities, including games, and that the lessons are not too long in order for the students not to lose concentration. This conforms to Slattery and William’s (2001) description of young learners’ characteristics as they have a short attention span, a need of variety and a passion for play and using their imagination.

She describes the curriculum as flexible and uses the teacher book as a guide when she plans her lessons. She also tries to find alternative activities for the exercises to make them more enjoyable.

Milli eğitim tarafından hazırlanan bir müfredat var ama esnek. Aynen olduğu gibi uygulama gerek yok. Bu müfredat çok çalişkan öğrenciler için hazırlanmış bir şey.⁵

Öğretmenler olarak kilavuz kitaplarımız var, öğretmen kitaplarınız.. Burada yapılacak burda şu yapılacak diye planlı yani. Ayrıca günlük plan yapmıyorum bu onun yerine sayılır. Derse hazırlanırken dersten önce yani o gün hangi sınıflara ders varsa odaya girdiğimde ne yapabilirim diye bir bakıyorum. Aktiviteleri oradan alıyorum oyun varsa özellikle oyunları seçiyor öğrencilere sevindiriyorum.⁶

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³ Yes of course it depends on the activity. Especially if the topic is about grammar I usually speak in Turkish. Or they would not understand the rules. Apart from this of course I use the classroom language in English... paint, cut, glue.. we struggling to speak little little English by doing so... for example if I say “sit down” and I can not see any reaction then I show them... mmm body language... and if they still don’t understand (laughing) then I say it in Turkish (Translated).

⁴ I know that they will not be able speak English very well but I want them to love what we are doing (Translated).

⁵ There is a curriculum prepared by the Education Ministry but it is flexible. I don’t need to apply it exactly as it is. This curriculum is based on very hardworking students.. /.../ (Translated).

⁶ As teachers we have teachers book and student book... so the teacher book guides me. It helps me do the activities. Mmmhh it is considered as daily plan. Before I come to the classroom I have a look at the book and see what I can do. I usually try to find games to teach. Games bring fun to the classroom (Translated).
“Amir”

Amir has eight years of working experience in English teaching, is 29 years of age, and has been working at this particular school for four months.

The holistic synthesis of the lesson observations (Appendix 6) shows that Amir displays skill when it comes to exposing the students to the target language by only using the mother tongue when he describes the homework and gives instructions:

Türkçeyi sadece instructions vermek için kullanıyorum gerisinde İngilizceyi kullanıyorum. İlk başta zorluk çekiyorlar daha sonra jest ve mimiklerle ve vücut diliyle olayı çözüyorlar zamanla yani.\(^7\)

This claim is further supported by Slattery and Willis (2001), who argue that the English teacher is the main source of input for young children since they make it possible for them to acquire the language if they consistently hear it around them.

Another interpretation-oriented approach is his will to adapt the lessons depending on his students to best fit their needs, however the curriculum is not taken so much into account:

\[
\text{Ben genelde sınıfın durumunu temel alıyorum. Açıkçası müfredatta ne olması gerekıyor ona çok bakıyorum. Tatbiki az bir şey bakıyorum ama ona bir temel olarak bakıyorum çok detaylara inmemi sınıfın durumunu dikkate alıyorum.../... / benim için önemli olan onlara nasıl İngilizce öğretirim demek istediğim konușma. Onlara nasıl iletişim kurabiliyor bunu öğretiyorum. Bu öğrencilerle temelden bir şeyler kurabilirsiniz. Ve bunu yapmayı seviyorum.}\(^8\)

He also shows great interest in his profession and the needs of his students in order to find the best suitable teaching approach.

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\(^7\) I only give instructions in Turkish and the rest is in English. At the beginning they have some problems understanding, but I use gestures and mimics, body language and in time they get used to it. We overcome it (Translated).

\(^8\) First I take into consideration the classroom level. I don’t check the curriculum too much. It doesn’t mean I never look at the curriculum at all, sure I check it just to have an idea about it. I decide myself after considering the students level. /.../ I pay attention to teach them English, I mean speaking. I mean, I try to teach them how to communicate. /.../ You can build a fundamental thing about English with these students. And I love doing this. /.../ (Translated).

\(^9\) The main problem is courage. It is harder to ask questions to a stranger in class. For example, they made too much noise etc.. The main point is I think change courage. That’s important. It is not just in English. In every class in every lesson it is important I think. The main problem as far as I know, and as far as I see, the main problem in Turkish classrooms students are not able to say what they think and I want to change this. Therefore I am shouting at my students while they are making noise but I am not shouting at them. I don’t say hejjj ohh sit down, don’t talk... just small warnings (Translated).
However, even though he promotes the pupils’ communicative proficiency he is rather restricted to the form-focused textbook speaking activities, which sometimes could make the lessons monotonous, even though the activities varied during the lesson. He often maintained classroom management with authority and by raising his voice. These factors resulted in some pupils losing interest and motivation and the entertaining part of the language learning (Appendix 6). According to Slattery and Williams (2001) the teaching can be more efficient and less frantic if teachers have a broad variation of activities that are enjoyable for young learners and rich in natural language opportunities (as cited in Kirkgöz, 2008a).

According to Öztürk (2011) many teachers excessively rely on the curriculum and the textbooks in their teaching activities since curriculum programs and textbooks appears to be the most essential tools in the process of instructional planning. These transmission-oriented features are accurate for Amir, even though he does not specifically use the curriculum, the work-textbooks mainly control his teaching activities (Appendix 6).

Even though work-textbook are frequently used Amir uses visual support to complement the other material, which is highly appreciated by the students.

/.../ Sunumlar hazırlıyorum. Çocukları elimden geldiğince ses ve görüntüleme maruz bırakıp dili öğretenmek istiyorum. Bilgisayarı çok kullanıyorum. Özellikle bu okulda çalışmamı tercih ettim çünkü projektorlar var.  

"Karim"

Karim (pseudonym) is 26 years old and has been working for six months since he graduated from the English Language Teaching department in June 2014.

Karim described the challenges of COC as:


Notwithstanding the somewhat difficult situation, the holistic synthesis and lesson observation summaries suggest that Karim has the ability to engage pupils in a respectful, sympathetic way. He tries to encourage them to speak and mixes workbook exercises with spontaneous questions relevant to the topic in order to vary the form of communication and to clarify the meaning (Council of Europe, 2014).

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10 /.../ I prepare power points. I try to expose students to audio-visual materials. I use computers a lot. I especially preferred this school because it has projectors in the classrooms (Translated).

11 Speaking English in the classroom is very difficult for the students. They don’t understand me if I speak English. That’s why I don’t speak English. The students’ mother tongue is Kurdish. They aren’t even able to speak Turkish very well. I try to use English as much as I can but it is very difficult to communicate. (Translated).
The children showed great joy when they understood the instructions, which created a loud working environment, even though it was based on interest and enthusiasm. Some students were not participating, which could be a consequence of the sound level, even so, during the observations the teacher tried to spread the word equally among his students so that everyone had the opportunity to speak.

Karim solely plans his lesson by using the workbooks administrated by the Ministry of Education;


Karim’s teaching therefore shows the same features as Amir when it relates to using the text –and workbooks as the most influential tool in process of instructional planning.

However, he displays another understanding in relevance with the target language structure, which is the connection and relevance to one another and an ability to compare sentence structures and their differences/similarities in an understandable context. He connects the spoken words to the written by writing a variety of sentences on the white-board, that makes it possible for the students to understand the meaning behind the sentence since it is portrayed and repeated in various ways (Council of Europe, 2014).

### 4.2.2 What role does teachers’ prior training experience play in their implementation of COC and TEYLs?

The cross-case analysis showed clear features that all the participating teachers graduated from the English Language Teaching Department with the knowledge of ELT and the requirements to teach English to young learners. They were all under 30 years old and had graduated within an eight-year time span from 2007-2014. Even so, they showed various levels and understanding of COC, which were portrayed in their implementation of English teaching in the classrooms. Their teaching methods varied, even though they had the same education and were placed on the same eclectic-oriented sphere on the continuum.

A reason behind their differences could be explained by Cultural, Teacher-related -and Contextual factors, earlier mentioned in the background, which described the potential problems of the Turkish teachers working culture and the actualities of the state primary classroom context in relation to the requirements for the COC proposal (Kırkgöz, 2008a). Carless’s (2001) defined teacher culture as a

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12 *When the students do the activities they speak in English of course. I give the instructions in Turkish though. After they understand what they should do, they do the activity in English (Translated).*

13 *The plan is completely.... mmm I am dependent on the book. The book that is provided for teachers is curriculum. We follow the book as plan. The book is our guide. I personally take the curriculum into consideration. But sometimes I can go beyond it. I am not fully dependent on the curriculum (Translated).*
culture of those within a teaching community, including their attitudes, values and beliefs, which become apparent in the classroom behaviour. This implies that there are more factors in their prior education than the university studies, which have affected them during their “training”. Tentatively their own experiences in primary schools, teachers at university, teacher colleagues and other teaching-related events.

Another identification of the phenomenon is Cultural capital; a sociological concept first articulated by Bourdieu (1930) and direct to the non-financial social means that raise social mobility outside economical assets (As cited in Broady, 1998). In other words, cultural capital funds are both inherited and acquired and recognized as important within a social context. As mentioned earlier their is a strong history of transmission-oriented teaching in Turkish history, which automatically lives on in the teacher cultural context, which could have been an influential factor to some of the transmission-oriented features.

4.2.3 How does the outcome correspond to the result in the original study made by Kırkgöz (2008)?

As explained earlier, the original study was performed over a two-year period with interviews and observations spread during the whole school year, whereas this study was conducted during an eight-week period and addressed three teachers instead of thirty-two. Therefore this study is not as extensive, and cannot provide equally rich results as the original study.

The result displayed both satisfying and unsatisfying results depending on how they are compared. A quantitative comparison can be generalized to other contexts and determined through statistical procedures whereas a qualitative approach strives to understand why the findings show a particular result (McKay, 2006). The collected data implies a satisfying development if focusing solely on the generalizability and the quantitative numbers portrayed in the figures below, comparing to the original study that was carried out 2003-2005. Three out of three teachers, that is to say 100% of the participants are placed in the eclectic-oriented field whereas a major percentage of the teachers in the original study were placed on the transmission-oriented sphere of the continuum. The figure of the original study thereby shows that 50% of the participants were transmission-oriented, 31% eclectic-oriented and 19% interpretation-oriented, which gives an overall picture that there has been a development (Kırkgöz, 2008).

However, these numbers will be unsatisfying if you make a qualitative comparison and take the teachers’ education into consideration. The background information showed that all the sixteen teachers on the transmission-oriented sphere did not have any TEYL training at university and that 5 of 10 eclectic-oriented teachers only had attended English teaching conferences and read about TEYL in English teaching journals (Kırkgöz, 2008a). Last but not least, results showed that 5 of 6 interpretation-oriented teachers had learned TEYLS at university, which is a setback since all participants in this study had the same university background.

Nevertheless, there are a lot of factors that have not been taken into account while making the comparison, and the result does not represent all Turkish teachers, but it can make an indication of some English teaching practices today.
4.2.4 Underlying results relevant to the study

In this section data and relevant background information will be presented that have a holistic relevance for the research questions and the presented results later portrayed in the discussion.

According to Fretwell and Wheeler (Akşit, 2007) Turkey has the most centralized education system among the OECD member states, which can be noticed in many areas of the education system comprising curriculum development, consent and choice of textbook and other instructional materials, ruling and inspection of schools, employment of teachers (Yıldırım, 2003), that restrict the capacity and autonomy of the schools in the management and decision process (Öztürk, 2011).

The education system in Turkey is distinguished by crowded classrooms and many students that link their studies in English with the entrance exams a university, which emphasizes vocabulary and grammar understanding that can lead to stress reading (Cetinavci, 2012). Amir gives one example of how the teaching approach changes when the students reach higher grades:


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14 I am teaching differently for different grades. The 7th and 8th grade in every school in Turkey has two exams throughout the year and it is a test, multiple-choice exam. They have to pass this exam, then we cannot focus on communication, speaking and listening, we just focus on multiple-choice tests (Translated).
The reason and the underlying factor for learning English has therefore significantly changed from using communicative language skills to only focusing on memorizing grammar structures and answer multi-choice questions, in order for the students to be accepted to University, which is a well-known reality in the teaching community.

Another factor essential for implementing and using a COC structure is the involvement and directives from the principal:

"Müdürler hiçbir talimat vermiyor bunun nedeni de İngilizce hakkında pek bir bilgileri yok. /.../
Genelde çoğu İngilizce bilmezler. Diğer hocalara kıyasla biraz daha özgürüz."\(^{15}\)

"Bir seferinde müdür sınıfta girdi ve aslında İngilizce bilmiyor. Bana öğrencilerle İngilizceyi konuşmayı demek istedi. Onlara konuşmayı öğretmemi istedi. Gramerin çok önemli olmadığını bunun yerine onlara nasıl iletişim kurmaları gerektiğini öğretmemi tavsiye etti. Onların telafızlerine yoğunlaşmamı istedi. Müdür mufreddatan geriye düşmenin çok önemli olmadığını, öğrencilerle İngilizceyi öğretmemin önemli olduğunu söyledi."\(^{16}\)

The organisation of the educational system and the directives in the teacher community naturally affect the teachers’ attitudes and practices regarding the curriculum development and planning (Öztürk, 2011). The interviews also showed that meetings for language teachers in the schools were very rare, varying from two-three times a year.

Teacher autonomy is described as the independence to decide the best treatment for their students (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006:44) and has a significant role for the recognition of the teacher profession. However, certain contextual factors help teachers in their COC activites in the classroom. The participating teachers expressed a lack of audio-visual aids in relation to the question if they were given the right conditions to teach;

"/.../ Her sınıfta projeksiyon olsun isterdim öğrenciler maksimum yararlanırlar diye... Bildiğin gibi gorsel efekler çok önemlidir. Ne yazık ki her sınıfta projeksiyon yok ve her yapmak istedidim yapamıyorum.../.../\(^{17}\)

"Materyal olarak sadece kitap var. Projeksiyon yok. Ses sistemi yok."\(^{18}\)

\(^{15}\) The principals don’t give any directives because they don’t have any knowledge. /.../ in general principals do not know enough English. Most of them do not know English. And we are a bit more free when we are compared with the other teachers (Translated).

\(^{16}\) Once the principal entered my classroom and actually he doesn’t know any English. He just said to me I should try to make the students speak English. He suggested that I don’t focus too much on grammar. Instead he advised me that I make them speak. He said that I should correct their pronunciation. The principal suggested that it is not very important if I fall behind the curriculum as long as the students can speak and learn English (Translated).

\(^{17}\) /.../ I like to have projector in every classroom so that students can benefit maximal ... as you know visual aids are very important. Unfortunately we don’t have it in every classroom so I can´t do everything I want to do.../.../ (Translated).

\(^{18}\) We have only the book as material. We don´t have a projector and we don´t have any sound system (Translated).
The description of the physical characteristics of the classrooms mainly showed that there was little physical material to access and that the classrooms consisted of tables and chairs, a notice-board, whiteboard and hangers for the pupils’ outer garments (Appendix 6). Results also displayed that their request for the right teaching conditions were consistent with their conception of the ideal teaching situation:

Öğrencileri çok rahat ve özgür yapmak istiyorum. Çok önemli olduğunu inanıyorum. Ve tabi ki de öğrencileri görsel ve işitsel öğelerle maruz bırakmak istiyorum.¹⁹

Benim için ideal öğretme ortami ses sistemi, projeksiyon, internet, akıllı tahta gibi gerekli şeylerin mevcut olduğu bir ortamın olması ve en önemlisi sınıfın fiziksel özellikleri ısıtma Sistemi, ışık...

Öğrencilerin rahat olmalarını çok isterim.²⁰

This raises the question how their teaching approach would change with the right conditions.

### 4.3. Results discussion

The findings displayed interpretable results due to the holistic view that needs to be taken into consideration. Thus, the results suggests that the teachers in the present study could be placed on the eclectic-oriented sphere and had a tendency to use the language as a “form” rather than “meaning”, contradictory to the suggested distinction of CLT that meaning is given primacy over the form (Brown, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). However, the teachers displayed many strong attributes, varying between raising the children’s motivation and awareness and use of target language, also found to be among the major proposals of the implemented COC document by the Ministry of Education (Kırkgöz, 2009). However, in order to build communicative competence pupils need to have the capacity to interpret and enact suitable social behaviour, which need active commitment of the learner in the production of the target language (Brandl, 2007).

Earlier results showed that the teachers did not particularly use the curriculum and thought of it is as a flexible, optional steering document formed to suit “hard working” students. This can be interpreted as the teachers being given the option of freely deciding how to plan their lessons. However, the result in this study also showed that text and workbooks, developed by the National Ministry of Education, are the most influential tool in process of instructional planning, which somewhat contradicts towards the theory of the teachers’ free choice. According to Öztürk (2011), a big challenge for the Turkish policymakers is the discrepancy between the objectives of the curriculum reform and the set-up of the educational system where the Ministry practise a severe control over the school curriculum.

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¹⁹ I would like to make the students feel very relaxed and free. I believe it is very important. And of course then I would like to expose the students to audio-visual materials (Translated).

²⁰ The ideal teaching situation for me is when the classroom have the necessary things like sound system, projector, Internet access and smart board of course, and the most important that physical conditions of the class such as heating system, light... I would like the students to feel comfortable and relaxed (Translated).
Evidence indicates that regardless of the eminent role that English has in the Turkish education system, mainly from the government’s planned language policy, problems still exist at an instructional level, mostly due to the way in which English has multiplied (Kırkgöz, 2009). The somewhat unsatisfying results when comparing the teachers’ educational background in the figures do not solely depend on the teachers themselves, but also to values and attitudes on the teacher community that they are exposed to, including the strong governmental control over the educational systems and the provided workbook material and directives from the principal. Contextual factors such as visual and audio aids are most desired and are referred to as a prerequisite for ideal teaching. However, the CLT and the European framework does not adhere to one particular theory or method. It can be applied to any content, syllabi and curriculum, since it is based on communication skills and frequent interaction including a wide range of abilities (Council of Europe, 2001: Richards & Rodgers 2001). Therefore, visual and audio aids are no necessity in order to use an interpretation-based approach although its a good tool and most appreciated by both teachers and students. Thus, the curriculum planners mentioned the benefits of visual and audio aids during the innovation 1997, and it can be questioned why the classrooms are still not equipped accordingly, since it most likely has the effect of joining the gap between the needs of the national curriculum and the actualities of the classroom.

There is yet another factor that has evolved from the results and the holistic understanding to what factors can influence teachers’ methodology within COC, that are supported in all three categories mentioned in the background, namely Intercultural communicative competence. The concept is described in the CEF as “the overall aim to achieve greater unity among its participants’ by adopting a ordinary action in the cultural area by improving the quality of communication, which consequently leads to a better comprehension and closer collaboration between countries” (Council of Europe, 2001). It is also referred to in CLT as genuine texts and communication activities connected to “real-world” experiences (Wesco & Skehan, 2002). As the curriculum was mainly inspired by an interpretation-based culture from a Western-borrowed educational spectra from a totally different cultural environment, was there a major shift in conception (Kırkgöz, 2008a). Even if the conception about communicative language teaching has been coherent and linguistically adapted, communication may not be adequate unless it is followed by multidimensional cultural knowledge, and a common platform to interact with different cultures (Guilherme 2000, as cited in Cetinavcı 2012).

Akalin (2004) examined the English textbooks used in Turkey and propose that textbooks for particular young learners should firstly be grounded on the basis from Turkish and local culture and thereafter slowly move to the target culture so that students would not feel restrained.

The lack of recognition in relevance to the students’ own cultural context is explained by one of the interviewees:

Bir seferinde 5. Sınıflara dersim vardı ve resimde gördükleri şeyleri isimlerini yazmalarını isteyen bir aktivite yapıyordu. Ben bile o gördüğüm şeylerı bilmiyorum çünkü bizim aşına olduğumuz şeyler değil. Resimlerden bir tanesi Londra Külesi.21

The curriculum innovation was implemented by a top-down approach by political and bureaucratic authorities most likely unaware of how they should implement it using their own cultural context

21 Once I had a class with the 5th grade students and there was an activity which asks the students to write the name of the things they see in the pictures. Even I can’t write the names because they are not familiar with them. One of the pictures was London Tower (Translated).
Findings indicate that language learning must have a clear "receiver" and a clear purpose beyond multiple-choice questions and university admission, but for a communicative purpose with other people and cultures. Even though the principals and Ministry of Education control the education system and contextual factors, teachers still have a personal responsibility to search and strive for language development and progress.

4.4. Method discussion

The idea of making a study in a foreign country is exotic, but challenging, especially when all arrangement and information is done in a language that you do not understand. Several factors have affected the data gathering and changed the time plan during this period, mainly involving the spoken language and cultural differences. The main issue arising from cultural divergence involved planning that resulted in last minute changes, which could not have been taken into account before the study. However, this phenomenon was quite natural in Turkey, which also showed people’s ability to quickly adjust to the situation. Therefore, the study was warmly welcomed and supported by the principals and the observed teachers even though it had not been prepared a long time in advance.

An issue regarding the use of language was encountered during the first observation, since the observed teacher rarely spoke in English. The intention of recording and transcribing the lesson observations as in the original study was for this reason modified in order to use a more relevant data gathering method for the findings. Observation transcriptions were therefore changed to field notes relevant to the lesson sequence, which was later complemented by the observation schedule and the lesson summaries.

By having the interviews in a language that was unknown, as well as observing lessons partly in an incomprehensible language created a feeling of losing control. However, the Turkish translator had a Bachelor of Arts English Language Teacher Education and was invaluable in the sense of knowing the school system, working culture, both the L1 and L2 and the designated aim for the study. Even though the results would be slightly different if the researcher had been familiar with the spoken language, the translator had the ability to connect all factors in order to create a comprehensive picture for everyone involved.

A lot of data have been gathered and a selection had to be made in relevance to the research questions. As mentioned earlier were his study, due to the shorter time period, not as extensive as the original study which could not provide equally rich results. However the gathered data did show other interesting features regarding cultural differences in the school system that would be of interest to compare to the Swedish school traditions.

5. Conclusion

As a conclusion, the emerging findings showed that all teachers that participated in the study were placed on the eclectic-oriented sphere of the continuum and thereby combined the “old” with the “new” teaching approach. The results demonstrated both a positive and a negative correlation
depending on a qualitative or quantitative comparison with the original study. Hence, the information must be interpreted from a holistic perspective since there are many factors that influenced the teachers, such as cultural, teacher-related -and contextual factors including directives from principals, teacher culture and the realities of the classroom. The strict governmental control also affects the learning atmosphere due to the textbook material that is based on a Western transmission-oriented approach that do not cohere with the Eastern tradition and culture. The time span needed for the nationwide curriculum innovation should have been long and extensive rather than short and intensive to allow teachers to adapt new ideas and to have enough time to try and implement them into their own teaching situation. In conclusion, Turkey is still in the time-span of adjustment, not only to the COC but to find an alignment between COC and their own cultural context. If and when they do, it will be revolutionary.
Letter of gratitude

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- Translator: Mehmet Kara, Bachelor of Arts English Language Teacher Education
- Local supervisor: Kürşat Öğülmuş, Research Assistant, Necmettin Erbakan University Special Education Department
- The interviewed teachers and the principals at the observed schools in Turkey
- All other people that somehow were involved in this project
References


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Appendix 1

Baseline-interview questions:

1. How old are you?
2. What kind of degree do you have?
3. When did you graduate?
4. How many years have you been working as a teacher? With what ages? Subjects?
5. How many years have you been working as an English teacher? With this grade?
6. What are your familiarities about speaking English (communicative language learning) in the classroom? For you as a teacher? For the student?
7. How do you use Turkish and English in the classroom? Does it vary depending on activity?
8. How do you plan your lessons?
10. What are the directives from the principal concerning English Language Education and using English in the classroom?
11. Have you attended any other courses/seminars concerning ELT? If yes, which? How many? When?

1. Kaç yaşındasınız?
2. Ne mezunusunuz?
3. Ne zaman mezun oldunuz?
5. Ne zaman dan beri İngilizce öğretmeni olarak çalışıyorsunuz? Bu sınıf ile kaç yıldır?
6. Sınıf içerisinde İngilizce konuşturma yöneliminiz nasıl? Sizin açınızdan? Öğrenciler nasıl zorluk çekiyor mu?
7. Sınıf içerisinde İngilizceyi ve Türkçeyi nasıl kullanıyorsunuz? Yaptığınız aktiviteye göre değişir mi?
8. Dersinizi nasıl planlıyorsunuz?
10. Müdürün İngilizce derslerinde İngilizcenin kullanılmasına yönelik talimatları nelerdir? İngilizce eğitimine yönelik talimatları nelerdir?
Appendix 2

Baseline interview – “Fatima”

Muhabir: Kaç yaşındasınız?

Fatima: 26 yaşındayım.

Muhabir: Ne mezunusunuz?

Fatima: İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü, Selçuk Üniversitesi

Muhabir: Ne zaman mezun oldunuz?


Muhabir: Kaç yıl öğretmen olarak çalışıyorsunuz? Hangi yaş grupları ile? Hangi dersler?

Fatima: 4 yıl bitti. Bu benim beşinci yılım. Şu an için 2., 3. ve 4. sınıflara giriyorum

Muhabir: Bu güne kadar hep ilkokulda mı çalıştırınız?


Muhabir: Hep İngilizce öğretmeni olarak mı çalıştırız?

Fatima: Tabi ki de ben branş hocamın bunun için bugüne kadar hep İngilizce öğretmeni olarak çalıştım.

Muhabir: Ne zamandan beri İngilizce öğretmeni olarak çalışıyorsunuz? Bu sınıf ile kaç yıldır?

Fatima: İngilizce öğretmeni olarak… 2010’dan beri. Bu sınıflarla, bu okulda 4 ay oldu. Öğrencilerle yavaş yavaş isimiyoruz.

Muhabir: Sınıf içerisinde İngilizce konuşma yönelimini nasıl? Sizin açınızdan? Öğrenciler nasıl zorluk çekiyor mu?


Muhabir: Classroom language demek istiyorsunuz yani?

Fatima: Aynen öyle ve ilk önce İngilizce söylemeye çalışıyorum daha sonra Türkçe karşılığını söyleyorum ve kelimeyi anlamaları için beden dilini kullanıyorum.

Muhabir: Sınıf içerisinde İngilizceyi ve Türkçeyi nasıl kullanıyorsunuz? Yaptığınız aktiviteye göre değişir mi?

Muhabir: Dersiniz nasıl planlıyorsunuz?


Fatima: Milli eğitim tarafından hazırlanan bir müfredat var ama esnek. Aynen olduğu gibi uygulama gerek yok. Bu müfredat çok çalışkan öğrenciler için hazırlanmış bir şey. Şehir merkezlerinde bu müfredatı olduğu gibi uygulayabileceğiniz çok iyi okullar var. Fakat öğrenciler çalışkan olmaksızın zaman, seviyeleri diğer okullardaki öğrencilere kıyasla düşûk.

Muhabir: Müdürin İngilizce derslerinde İngilizcenin kullanılmasına yönelik talimatları nelerdir? İngilizce eğitimine yönelik talimatları nelerdir?

Fatima: Bu okula ilk atındığında, müdür beni odasına çağırdı ve öğrenciler İngilizceyi nasıl öğreteceğiz diye sordu. Öğrencilerin İngilizceyi öğrenmelerini istiyor ama bildiğiniz gibi müdürlerde İngilizce bilmiyor bu yüzden branş hocalarının fikirlerini soruyorlar. Milli eğitim bakanlığı uluslararası projeler düzenliyorum ve Milli eğitim tarafından sağlanan başka bir olana da öğrencilerin evdeken yararlanabilecekleri “daynet” internet sitesi. Site ücretsiz. Öğrenciler 4 dildeki 4 beceri dediğimiz okuma, yazma, konuşma ve dinleme becerilerini geliştirebilirler.

Muhabir: bugüne kadar ELT ile ilgili kurs ve ya seminere katıldınız mı?

Fatima: Evet, her yeni atanan öğretmen devlet tarafından her hafta sonu hazırlanan kurslara katılmak zorunda. Fakat bu seminerler sifır İngilizce ile alakalı değil. Öğretmenlik ile alakalı genel meselelerin ele alınması seminerler oluyor. Bu uygulama bir yıl sürør ve katılmak zorunludur. Ve 5 günlük süren bir seminere katılır belge aldım. Özel bir organizasyondu. Çok yararlıydı. Halen şimdi derslerimde öğrendiğim metot ve teknikleri kullanıyorum.

Muhabir: Tamam. Çok teşekkür ederim.
Appendix 3

Post-observation questions:

1. Is there any particular situation that you want to talk more about regarding the observed lesson?
2. I observed this:………. Can you tell me more about the situation?
3. Is there anything you would like to do differently in the classroom? Please describe.

1. Gözlemlediğiniz ders hakkında söylemek istediğiniz başka bir şey var mı?
2. ............................................................................................................ gözlemledim.
   Bunun kakkında biraz daha bilgi alabilir miyim?
3. Sınıf içerisinde yapmak istediğiniz başka bir şey var mı?
Appendix 4

Summative interview questions:

1. Is there any particular situation during the observations that you want to talk more about?
2. (I observed this:………… Can you tell me more about the situation?)
3. Have you during your career changed your teaching approach toward English speaking in the classroom? Or has any changes been commanded from the principle/school board?
4. Does the school arrange any meetings for language teachers?
5. Do you feel that you are given the right conditions in order to teach the way you want?
6. What would the ideal teaching situation be for you? How would you use the target language?
7. How did it feel to be observed?

1. Gözlem yaptığımız bu dersler hakkında ayrıca eklemek veya söylemek istediğiniz bir şeyler var mı?
2. …………………………………………….. hakkında biraz daha bilgi verir misiniz?
3. Kariyeriniz boyunca sınıf içerisinde İngilizcenin daha fazla kullanılması için farklı metodlar denediniz mı?
4. Okulda zümre toplantıları yapılyor mu?
5. İngiizce eğitimini istediğiniz şekilde gerçekleştirmek için gerekli şartların/ortamın sağlandığına inanyor musunuz?
6. Sizin için ideal öğrenme ortamı nedir?
7. Gözlemlenmek nasıl bir duygulu?
## Appendix 5

**Lesson observation schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/class no:</th>
<th>Teacher:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson no:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Observation items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(A) Instruction</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I1. Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2. Revision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3. Questioning/answering questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4. Use of variety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5. Use of audio-visual aids (games, songs, pictures etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I6. Opportunities for all students to be involved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I7. Use of textbook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I8. Use of chalkboard/whiteboard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I9. Use of translation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I10. Use of voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I11. Lesson structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I12. Closure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(B) Management</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1. Maintaining an orderly discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2. Feedback (error correction and praise)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3. Use of pair and group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4. Monitoring the class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(C) Climate</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1. Teacher can arouse student’s interest and motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2. Enthusiasm in class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3. Physical characteristics of the room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 6

### Holistic synthesis of lesson observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(A)</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Fatima</th>
<th>Amor</th>
<th>Karim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Classroom-language in English (sit, down, explanations and instruction in Turkish).</td>
<td>Everything in English.</td>
<td>Classroom-language in English (now are you, sit down), explanations and instruction in Turkish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>In Turkish.</td>
<td>Everything in English.</td>
<td>In Turkish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Questioning/ answering questions</td>
<td>The teacher asked questions to different students using first English and then Turkish. She answered questions in Turkish.</td>
<td>The teacher asked questions in English and answered in Turkish, or if the students asked &quot;Why I speak Turkish&quot;. He only used Turkish to give instructions for homework.</td>
<td>The teacher asked questions in English, if the students did not understand, he tried to explain the words meaning in English before he said it in Turkish. Example: &quot;What does child mean?&quot; &quot;You are children...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Use of variety</td>
<td>Yes – speaking in chorus, writing, drawing, listening, and games.</td>
<td>Yes – speaking in chorus, listening, writing, different workbook activities.</td>
<td>Yes – speaking in chorus, listening, writing, different workbook activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Use of audio-visual aids (games, songs, pictures etc.)</td>
<td>Yes – &quot;Questioning&quot; games in front of the classroom, 6 students were picked out and answered questions related to the topic.</td>
<td>Yes – &quot;Questioning&quot; games in front of the classroom, one pair at the time were picked out, two and two out loud questions related to the topic.</td>
<td>Yes – &quot;Questioning&quot; games in front of the classroom, the students that did not want to speak in front of the class were not active. Speaking turn was divided evenly even though there were a few very active students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Opportunities for all students to be involved</td>
<td>Students mostly say words in chorus. She divided speaking turns evenly between the students that wanted to answer the questions.</td>
<td>All students speak in chorus, the students that did not want to speak in front of the class were not active. Speaking turn was often divided evenly even though there were a few very active students.</td>
<td>All students speak in chorus, the students that did not want to speak in front of the class were not active. Speaking turn was divided evenly even though there were a few very active students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Use of textbook</td>
<td>Not particularly, the teacher looked in the teacher book for support. The students wrote words in a separate writing book.</td>
<td>Almost every activity was based on the textbook.</td>
<td>Almost every activity was based on the textbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Use of chalkboard/whiteboard</td>
<td>Yes – actively. The teacher wrote words, both in Turkish and English.</td>
<td>Yes – sometimes. The students could mostly follow the exercise in their workbook.</td>
<td>Yes – actively. The teacher wrote sentences in English, some words in Turkish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Use of translation</td>
<td>Yes, almost every time.</td>
<td>Rarely, but when it was needed.</td>
<td>Yes, mostly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Use of voice</td>
<td>Good – everyone could hear, used voice/mimics/gestures to clarify.</td>
<td>Spoke with a loud voice. Sometimes to over speak the students. Used his voice to correct students by changing tune and volume.</td>
<td>Spoke with a loud voice to over speak the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Lesson structure</td>
<td>Introduced the topic, “played” with the words to make the students remember them. Short periods to keep the students concentration.</td>
<td>Took attendance, introduced the chapter, went through the workbook exercises in order, finished by explaining the homework.</td>
<td>Started the lesson by English greeting, introduced the topic, went through the workbook exercises in order, finished by intertwining them with spontaneous questions relevant to the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Closure</td>
<td>No particular closure.</td>
<td>Tried to finish by explaining the topic and exercises for homework that they will go through the next lesson (before the bell rung).</td>
<td>No particular closure. Lesson finished when the bell rung.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (B) Management

| M1. | Maintaining an orderly discipline | Yes, in a calm and respectful way. If someone was not concentrating she naturally went slower and asked the student the question again with a nice and calm voice to get his/her concentration back. | Yes, mainly by authority. | Parly, the students were very loud and talked straight out. |
| M2. | Feedback (error correction and praise) | A lot of praise; “you did five”, well done, good etc. The teacher made them repeat the word if they pronounced it wrong. Other short commands; don’t cheat, be quit please, listen to your friends etc. | Feedback; brave, good, thank you etc. Gave the students time to formulate sentences when they answered questions. Asked them to switch the word order if it was wrong or repeat after he said the sentence correct. Short commands; sit down, be quit please, respect your friends, listen to your friends etc. | The teacher mainly used smiles and his body language to give feedback. He let the students repeat after him when they did mistakes. Other short commands: sit down, raise your hands, "uhh". |
| M3. | Use of pair and group work | No. | Yes. Teacher-controlled speaking activities in pairs, two and two out loud in class. | Yes. Teacher-controlled speaking activities in pairs, two and two out loud in class. |
| M4. | Monitoring the class | Yes. She was aware of what they are doing. | Yes. Teacher-controlled speaking activities in pairs, two and two out loud in class. | No. |

### (C) Climate

| C1. | Teacher can arouse student’s interest and motivation | Yes, she had their full concentration and attention by using her voice, body language, mimics and enthusiasm etc. Partly. The activities were relevant to the students (activities on their leisure time, hobbies, likes/ dislikes), which by itself aroused some of the students’ interests. Parly. | The teacher constantly reconected the activities to the students lives in an understandable context. | Yes. The teacher constantly reconected the activities to the students lives in an understandable context. |
| C2. | Enthusiasm in class | Very high. | It differed between very enthusiastic students to very bored and uninterested. | The children were very loud but interested and enthusiastic. Some students were not participating but the teacher tried to spread the word equally. |
| C3. | Physical characteristics of the room | Children-adapted chairs and tables (for two people), tables with cloths, whiteboard at the front, hangars at the back, drawers and pupils works on two noticing boards, light colours, no rugs, shoes on, nice atmosphere, simple but clean. | Children-adapted chairs and tables (singles), scribbles and doodling on the tables and on the walls, whiteboard at the front, hangars at the back, pupils works on two noticing boards, no English words in the classroom. | Children-adapted chairs and tables (for two people), whiteboard at the front, hangars at the back, drawers and pupils works on two noticing boards, light colours, no rugs, shoes on, simple but clean, no English words in the classroom. |