

**TRACKING THE SOCIOCULTURAL PRINCIPLES IN ENGLISH
CLASSROOMS**

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ÖZ

Mevcut çalışmanın amacı sosyokültürel teori açısından devlet okullarındaki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin sınıflarında nasıl uygulamalarda bulunduğunu ortaya çıkarmak, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Programına devam eden öğretmen adaylarının, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ve İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin sosyokültürel teoriye dönük algılarını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Mevcut çalışma, ayrıca öğretmenlerin sınıftaki uygulamalarıyla müfredatın önerdikleri arasındaki çelişen ve çelişmeyen noktaları bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma nitel araştırma desenini benimsemiştir. Öğretmenlerin sınıf uygulamalarını bulabilmek için araştırmacı tarafından bir gözlem formu geliştirilmiştir. Ayrıca öğretmen adaylarından haftalık kompozisyonlar yazmaları istenmiş ve İngilizce öğretmenleri ve öğrencilerle görüşmeler yapılmıştır. İngilizce dersi müfredatı da sosyokültürel yapılar bakımından incelenmiştir. Verilerin analizi İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, öğretmen adaylarının ve öğrencilerin sosyokültürel teorinin ilkelerini savunduklarını fakat İngilizce öğretmenlerinin derslerinde teorinin bütün boyutlarından faydalanmadıklarını göstermiştir. Öğretmenlerin bazen geleneksel yöntemlerden faydalandıklarını göstermiştir. Bütün bulguların analizi öğretmenlerin sınıftaki karar verme süreçlerini açıklayan yeni bir model ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler : sosyokültürel teori, sınıf uygulamaları, ingiliz dili eğitimi
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ABSTRACT

The motive behind this current study is to find out the practices of English language teachers teaching in state schools regarding sociocultural theory, the perceptions of student teachers attending the last classes of English Language Teaching program, the perceptions of teachers and learners in terms of sociocultural theory. Furthermore, the current study aims at revealing the congruencies and incongruences between the practices of teachers and the suggestions of the curriculum. This study adopts qualitative research design. An observation scheme was developed by the researcher to find out the teachers' classroom practices. In addition, the student teachers were asked to write weekly essays, and interviews were conducted with the learners and teachers as well. Also, the English curriculum was analyzed in terms of sociocultural constructs. The analyses revealed that the English language teachers, student teachers and learners are in favor of sociocultural principles, but English language teachers do not practice its every aspect. They sometimes seem to prefer traditional methods in their classes. The overall analysis of the findings reveal a new model explaining the process of teachers' decisions in the classroom.

Key Words : sociocultural theory, classroom practices, English language teaching
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As echoed in the psychology and second language acquisition literature, educational psychology has undergone a drastic shift because of the changes and trends in the field, and some of those trends have had more effects on classroom practices (Williams & Burden, 2000).

In order to explain briefly the revolution mentioned above in the educational psychology, following statements will be beneficial. Behaviorism was the dominant learning theory in the first half of the 20th century; however, the mental part was missing in this learning theory, since learning was only associated with behavioral outcomes. And, this missing part caused a paradigm shift in educational psychology from behaviorism to cognitivism which gives importance on learning in terms of cognition and mentality. The limitations of cognitivism have led to another theory which is constructivism focusing not only cognition but also on the individual who experiences learning and the social environment where learning occurs (Jonassen, 1991). Williams and Burden (2000) have also added humanistic thought which regards the human as whole person. On the other hand, this research study will just focus on the constructivist theory, spesifically social constructivist/sociocultural theory considering the current principles behind the curriculum of the country where this research study will be conducted whereas it will set other educational theories apart.

Turkey where English is learnt, taught and used as a foreign language (EFL), the history of English language in Turkey dates back to the 19th century when the Robert College was founded (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011; Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998). English language was important when the Republic of Turkey was founded, but the real proximity of English language and Turkish society was observed during the 1950s and 60s (Dogancay-Aktuna,1998). The relationship between English language and Turkey has resulted in some radical curricular movements to improve the proficiency of the English learners in the country. One of them was implemented

in 1997, and this curriculum innovation not only introduced Communicative-Oriented Curriculum (COC) but also English classes were started to be taught from the 4th grade. Kırkgöz (2008) shows how Turkish government adopted COC after the need for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for young learners especially in Turkey and several Asian countries. In addition, she sees the adoption of COC as an innovation, because it is a shift from teacher-centered education to learner-centered education in Turkish education system (Kırkgöz, 2008).

The other most drastic innovation in terms of curriculum occurred in 2005, and the Ministry of National Education (MNE) started to implement a new program for the whole national educational system and which was a turning point from behaviorist approach to constructivist approach for the Turkish education system. This approach also affected the curriculum of English course.

Constructivism is an umbrella term for a wide range of ideas; however, they all seem to meet in common ideas. First of all, the general idea behind constructivism states that “learning is an active process of constructing rather than acquiring language”, and the second idea posits that “instruction is a process of supporting that construction rather than communicating knowledge” (Cunningham & Duffy, 1996, p. 171). In constructivism, the educator is not a disseminator but a provider so that students can construct their own knowledge (von Glasersfeld, 2005).

The research studies centering on understanding learners during the second or foreign language learning process have attracted many researchers’ attention in the second language acquisition field (McCafferty, 1994). Especially the social constructivism/sociocultural theory has been investigated by different researchers in different contexts (Ableeva & Lantolf, 2011; Antoner, McCormick, & Donato (1997); Cleghorn & Rollnick, 2002; Foster & Ohta, 2005). Although there is a great many research studies on sociocultural theory in educational psychology and applied linguistics in terms of interaction in second language acquisition/learning regarding Zone of Proximal Development (Antón, 1999; Dixon-Krauss, 1995; Donato, 1994; Reichert & Liebscher, 2012), Activity Theory (Coughlan & Duff, 1994; Donato & McCormick, 1994), Dynamic Assessment (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Poehner, 2007, 2011; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002) in order to understand the effectiveness or implications of the social constructivism/sociocultural theory, what really happens in English language classrooms where English is taught as a foreign language is still an uncharted territory in terms of all aspects of social constructivism/sociocultural theory. In this respect, this research study focuses on this issue through qualitative data collection instruments.

Statement of the Problem

Constructivism dates back to Jean Piaget (von Glasersfeld, 2005), whereas Phillips (1995) claims that there are several authors who can be considered as constructivists, such as Immanuel Kant and John Dewey. Constructivism does not have a long history in Turkish educational system. Behaviorism was the main learning theory behind the all practices before Turkey adopted ‘progressivism’ as educational philosophy and ‘constructivism’ as learning theory in 2004. The latest curriculum which was started to be implemented in 2005-2006 school year was based on ‘progressivism’ and ‘constructivism’. This was an important shift for the English courses since the educational theory was behavioristic even the English curriculum was based on ‘CLT’ before 2005. Following this drastic change, new books and materials were designed by the prominent academicians of the country. Teachers have been supposed to use the course books and adopt classroom activities regarding the curriculum which is based on constructivism. Following this, the aim of this study is not only to show the perceptions of the student teachers, teachers and students toward sociocultural theory but also to describe the classroom practices of the Turkish EFL teachers in terms of sociocultural theory and to analyze the compliance between the classroom practices and English Language Curriculum in specific contexts.

Sociocultural theory is based on the genetic method. The genetic method was developed by Vygotsky to examine how higher forms of mental behaviors and thinking develop. Vygotsky believes that humans and human psychology require ‘social practices’ and ‘cultural artifacts’ to be mediated (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Humans are observed for a long time to find out suitable evidences, as it is believed that development requires time, however; there are also some studies showing the development in a short time span, (e.g. Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1992; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Even though this study seeks for some evidence in terms of sociocultural theory in EFL contexts, it is not purely based on the genetic method, as examining how learners acquire English via a sociocultural way is not a motive for the current research study, but the drive is rather to explore the evidence in English classrooms and to unravel the perceptions of student teachers, teachers and learners regarding the sociocultural theory.

The literature on constructivist practices regarding English language teaching (ELT) offer experimental studies to find out the effectiveness of the theory (Simsek, 2007; Rassaei, 2014). This research study is descriptive in nature, therefore; it focuses not only on classroom practices of the teachers but also the English language curriculum and the perceptions of the students. In addition to the abovementioned statements, there is no available research study investigating

perceptions of students, student teachers and teachers, and a gap in the literature is addressed via the present research study.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to show not only the macro-level Turkish state policies in terms of the sociocultural theory and Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) but also the classroom practices of the teachers and the perceptions of the students toward those implementations at the micro-level.

Firstly, the reasons behind the examination of the curriculum of English course and CEFR are apparent. The policy should be analyzed not only to mark out the sociocultural framework in the policy but also to compare the actual practices of the teachers with the principles and suggestions in the curriculum based on the sociocultural theory, and the curriculum for English classes was prepared based on CEFR; thus, it should also be examined to understand the essential rationale behind the national implementations which is the curriculum and to find out the sociocultural elements in it.

Secondly, perceptions of the student teachers are quite important as they attend practicum in their last year of a five-year program with the preparatory program, and these students will become teachers, who will be the main executor of the system. In their first semester, student teachers visit the primary or secondary schools to observe the teachers and their classes so that they might have an idea of the provisions in English classes. For this research study, their perceptions have much importance as there is no available research study in terms of sociocultural theory and student teachers' perceptions toward it to the best of the researcher's knowledge. And if the learning of teaching constitutes the central mission of second language teacher education, then as a field, it must be articulated an epistemological stance that enables us to justify the content, structure, and processes that constitute L2 teacher education (Johnson, 2009).

Thirdly, one of the postulations of sociocultural theory is that teachers interact with the students and the learning process rather than just transferring the knowledge to the students so that the students can construct their own learning. Following this statement, this research study focuses on the real practices of English language teachers in Turkey. Also, the teachers' perceptions have a great importance for this research study because the perceptions of the teachers are known to exert certain impact on their classroom behavior and instructional choices.

Research Questions:

1. How do Turkish EFL teachers in Turkish state schools make use of the principles of sociocultural theory in their classrooms?
2. How do Turkish EFL student teachers, teachers and learners perceive the sociocultural theory?
3. Do the practices of the Turkish EFL teachers comply with the English Language Curriculum in terms of sociocultural theory?

Importance of the Study

Social constructivism theory or sociocultural theory in terms of applied linguistics is the prominent theory currently investigated by the researchers (Lantolf, 2006; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Those researches believe in the positive effects of the scaffolding, mediation, activity theory, and the dynamic assessment. However, the researchers have generally focused on one or two components of the research study (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005). On the other hand, this study combines different concepts of sociocultural theory, as this research study will get its data from a wide variety of sources.

Furthermore, researchers in Turkey have started to focus on this leading trend, as Turkish education system has experienced a “Wind of Change” because of radical curricular amendments (Dönmez, 2010; Kırkgöz, 2008; Simsek, 2007). These changes and sociocultural practices have been studied by the researchers, but these studies have generally approached to the issue from the perspective of teachers and the learners or only from the view of student teachers. However, the current study tries to reflect about the sociocultural theory covering different angles which are teachers, learners, student teachers and the documents, i.e. the curriculum for English, CEFR. This is an indicator that this study will fill in a gap in the current literature to the best of the researcher’s knowledge.

Assumptions of the Study

This research study was designed to reflect the sociocultural practices of the teachers, not only perceptions of the student teachers but also students and the teachers. The study will take place in two state schools in Ankara, and while one of them is a lower secondary school and the other one is an upper secondary school which is an Anatolian upper secondary school. The total numbers of the students in these lower and upper secondary schools are 1.826 and 1.150,

respectively. These numbers are close to the average student numbers in state schools of Turkey.

Additionally, the Secondary Education Monitoring and Evaluation School Report (2013) has indicated that the number of students in per class in an upper secondary state school has fallen down to 31, and the classrooms of the upper secondary state school selected for this research study include 30 students in average. Also, the same case is observed in the lower secondary school which acts as the sample for this research study. Therefore, it can be assumed that the schools included in this research study will represent the universe of the study, both lower and upper secondary schools.

The second assumption is about the student teachers who attend Gazi University ELT program, which is one of the prominent ELT programs in Turkey, and the student teachers of this university are placed to the department with quite high results. Also, the participants of this research study are the student teachers who are studying the last year of their study, so it is assumed that the observation sheets and essays will be easily understood by them.

The third assumption is related with the sincerity of the student teachers while filling in the observation sheets and writing weekly essays. The observation sheet was piloted, and student teachers responded consciously and honestly. It is assumed that they have kept their honesty while they are filling the sheets.

There is another assumption on the same line which is about the honesty and sincerity of the teachers and students while answering the interview questions. The researcher has contacted with them to provide “prolonged engagement” which is the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes (Lincoln & Guba, 1999, p. 407). Following this technique, it is assumed that the teachers and students will answer the interview questions honestly and sincerely.

Limitations of the Study

“Sociocultural theory clearly rejects the notion that thinking and speaking are one the same thing. It also rejects what some now call the communicative view of language, which holds that thinking and speaking are completely independent phenomena, with speaking serving only as a means of transmitting already formed thoughts. Sociocultural theory argues that while separate, thinking and speaking are tightly interrelated in a dialectic unity in which publicly derived speech completes privately initiated thought” (Lantolf, 2006, p. 7).

Considering the English language curriculum is communicative oriented, this can be a limitation, but the aim is not to find out the communicative elements of in the curriculum or the classroom, so this limitation will not cause so many problems.

The research design of this study is a case study in which the researchers explore mainly the people but also the situation which can be a program, a society or an institution (Dörnyei, 2007). The research design can cause a limitation since it is criticized in terms of representativeness and generalizability. Purposeful sampling was used in selecting state schools in order to overcome this limitation.

Another limitation is that student teachers may not want to write weekly essays because of their busy program. The researcher has given a short talk on the necessity of sharing their thoughts on these issues and has improved warm relationships in order to get reliable and honest essays from the student teachers.

Definitions

Zone of Proximal Development: Vygotsky (1978) states that "it is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as capable peers" (cited in Johnson, 2003, p. 25).

Social Constructivism: "Knowledge is constructed utilizing earlier experience as the foundation for building or reconstructing knowledge within an interactive and interdependent environment which results in growth of the individual and social environment" (Johnson, 2003, p. 19).

Mediation: "... higher level cultural tools serve as a buffer between the person and the environment and to act to mediate the relationship between the individual and the social-material world" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 202-203).

Regulation: "... subordination of the child's actions and thinking to adult speech lifts the child's mental and physical activity to a new, and qualitatively higher, stage of development... By subordinating their behavior to adult speech, children acquire the particular language used by the other members of a community (usually adults and older children) and eventually utilize this language to regulate their own behavior" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 203).

Internalization: "... is a negotiated process that reorganizes the relationship of the individual to her or his social environment and generally carries it into future performance" (Winegar, 1997, p. 31).

Imitation: Vygotsky (1987) states that “development based on collaboration and imitation is the source of all the specifically human characteristics of consciousness that develop in the child” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, pp. 203-204).

Scaffolding: “... a term coined by Jerome Bruner and his colleagues nearly three decades ago, ... refers to any type of adult-child (expert-novice) assisted performance” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 209).



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term sociocultural has been germane to more than one discipline, as anthropology, psychology, applied linguistics and education have used it with various applications and meanings in their research literature, but “the epistemological stance of a sociocultural perspective defines human learning as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and is distributed across persons, tools and activities” (Johnson, 2009, 237). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) state that there has been an ongoing debate about the meaning, owner and epistemological stance of the term sociocultural theory because of the abovementioned use of the term by various research communities. They continue with the different terminologies, such as socio-cultural, and cultural-historical to label the theory, however; they prefer using this term because of its common use in applied linguistics research. In the current study, the researcher also uses the sociocultural theory following the researchers in applied linguistics (e.g., Appel & Lantolf, 1994; Donato, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, 2007).

The sociocultural theory is based on the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) offering that humans can control behaviors, learning and development via suitable mediating tools, such as physical or symbolic tools when they are in culturally specified activities (Lantolf, 2005; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, 2007; Martin, 2008).

Indeed, SCT is not a competing theory of language acquisition, but a theory of mind or perhaps more accurately, a theory of person, which argues that in conjunction with our biology we are shaped through cultural-historical activity contexts by our interacting with one another and with cultural artifacts within the cultural-historical activity structures that make up our lived experience (going to school, conversing at the family dinner table, going online), although this activity also includes all that actually happens within any concrete activity frame as well as being an abstract template (embodiment in the larger sense). Human activity, from this point of view, then, has a direct impact on how language learning/acquisition unfolds (Haught & McCafferty, 2008, p. 142).

Components of Sociocultural Theory

The main components of sociocultural theory include mediation, zone of proximal development, scaffolding, imitation, regulation and internalization. This study also centers on these issues, and they will be detailed in the following sub headings.

Mediation

Lantolf (2006) states that psychological processes of human beings need three essential cultural elements to be organized. These are activities, artifacts and the concepts. The activities are the things that humans do and need in their whole lives, such as education, employment, care and art. The artifacts include physical tools, such as books, kitchen equipment, technological tools etc., and symbolic tools, such as language, numbers, songs, and paintings etc. which help people fulfill the activities. Last factor is the concept which can be explained as the “the understandings that communities construct of the personal, the physical, the social and mental worlds, religion, etc” (Lantolf, 2006, p.69). The researcher continues that all three elements can be evaluated separately, but they are interrelated in human behaviors, as to understand the physical, social or psychological world the humans implement some activities via some tools whether physical or symbolic. Those factors mediate the relationships between the people and the world or among the people, as Vygotsky believe that there is dualism in learning and behavior regulation of human beings, which means not only biological endowment but also culture, which is the social interactions, help people learn as the biology offers the relevant functions and humans regulate those functions thanks to culture.

Furthermore, the researchers claim that there are categorizations related to mediation offered by Vygotsky, such as explicit and implicit (Wertsch, 2007) and metacognitive and cognitive mediation (Karpov & Haywood, 1998). Explicit mediation is introduced by the individual herself or somebody else (significant other) intentionally during the activity whereas implicit mediation is not something which is “artificially and intentionally introduced into ongoing action’ (Wertsch, 2007 p. 180). Wertsch (2007) states that the issue regarding implicit mediation is related to the relationship between speaking and thinking.

Mediation is also a theory proposed by Feuerstein, and he states that as soon as a child births, important adults form his learning with assistance and intervention. For Feuerstein, those important adults are called as ‘mediating adults’ or the ‘mediators’. The child’s cognition is developed thanks to this interaction process (Feuerstein, Rand, Hoffman, & Miller, 1980).

There are twelve characteristics of mediation to Feuerstein: 'significance', 'purpose beyond the here and now', 'shared intention', 'a sense of competence', 'control of own behavior', 'goal-setting', 'challenge', 'awareness of challenge', 'a belief in positive outcomes', 'sharing', 'individuality', and 'a sense of belonging'. The first three features are crucial for all learning tasks, but the rest can change according to the tasks for Feuerstein. For 'significance', the teachers should convince the learners to believe in the importance of the learning task so that the learners engage with the task in his not only micro but also macro world. 'Purpose beyond the here and now' is related with learning should not occur to save the day, but it is related with future time and places. What the learners have acquired will be beneficial for them in their lives. And, lastly the 'shared intention' is about expressing the intention of the task or the lesson to the learners by the teachers. If the learners know about the reason behind the task, they will be more willing to be included in the tasks (Williams & Burden, 2000).

Gesture

Gestures generally can be understood in two different meanings: one is the movements occurring when the human beings do not speak, and the other is gestures occurring with speech. There are some studies regarding the latter one. The studies generally include picture telling and finding evidence for the indicators of gesture whether they are for the individual words or just the verb or the preposition. The researchers examine whether the learners show the gestures of the target language or they still maintain the gestures of their native language while talking in the second or foreign language (McNeill & Duncan, 2000; Negueruela, Lantolf, Jordan, & Gelabert, 2004; Talmy, 2000).

McCafferty and Ahmed (2000) also investigated gesture acquisition of immersion learners of American English and found that gestures play a crucial role in learning of a target culture and the learners immersed in the culture of America were more successful in using their abstract gestures like natives compared to learners who only have formal instruction of language.

Lee (2008) focused on gesture use and private speech of Korean L1 speakers of L2 English learners enrolled in a biology class. The study attempted to find out their private speech and use of gestures while learning the terminology in English. The study found that the learners' private speech was in the form of social even they studied alone. This speech was in the native language of the learners, but the learners used also English while they were learning the terminology for the first time. And, they also used the gesture of the target language.

Unlike abovementioned studies, the current study takes gesture as a paralinguistic feature and behaves the gesture as a scaffolding and mediating element which teachers use during their stage performance. As it is not possible think that language is separated from the paralinguistic features. Furthermore as Donald (2001) states that the mimesis are very helpful to form the meaning and they show our identity related to the culture we live in, at the very basic level. He defines mimesis as “an analogue style of communication that employs the whole body as an expressive device. It manifests itself in pantomime, imitation, gesturing, sharing attention, ritualized behaviors, and many games” (p. 240).

Even it is possible to see how interlocutors can get along with through gestures even though they do not have a lingua franca. The study of DaSilva Iddings, Haught and Devlin (2005) can be regarded as an example for the above statement. The researchers indicated that two elementary school girls in the same classroom shared and imitated their drawings, finally they had common semiotic means which help them build and improve their friendship.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Zone of Proximal Development means “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined thorough problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86, cited in Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Contrary to Piaget’s learning and teaching path, Vygotsky states that "the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 188, cited in Lantolf, 2005), and, this indicates the ZPD.

ZPD is a common concept used in educational psychology as it disseminates a positive message to the educators that there is a way to help the learners when they think that they cannot go further (Williams & Burden, 2000). Ohta (2000) states that according to ZPD, no development occurs if the expert provides too much support or the task is too easy for the learner’s capacity. Ohta (2000) conducted a research study related to ZPD to explore the language learning competence of learners during social interaction. She worked with two Japanese learners, one of them really needed assistance during the tasks, in a classroom environment with different tasks, such as a role-play task, a translation task and a communicative interview task. During the tasks, the expert learner assisted the novice learner, and the cooperation between the peers promoted the novice learner’s language development and that learner could perform the task without assistance which she needed help before that cooperative interaction.

Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) entered on scaffolded feedback regarding error correction. Furthermore, Nassaji and Swain (2000) conducted a study to confirm what Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) found in their study. Their study was experimental, and they found that the learners who got feedback gradually according to their ZPD were most successful in terms of learning articles to the learners who were given feedback randomly.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a term coined by Bruner and his colleagues, and it indicates any types of support provided by an adult or expert to the child or novice (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007).

Foley (1994) provides a brief excerpt on scaffolding and lists the essential scaffolding types which can be summarized as follows. Bruner believes that interaction is a must for learning to take place. Children learn from their caregivers thanks to that social interaction including suitable contexts for children which is familiar for the children and can be developed by the caregiver.

Following Bruner some researchers used the term but categorizing and differentiating it in different contexts. Cazden (1983) divides scaffolding into two which are 'vertical' and 'sequential' scaffolding. 'Vertical scaffolding' means the lengthening the language of children with the questions of adults while 'sequential scaffolding' is a scaffolding type occurring in game times of children at dinner, bath so and so forth. Another scaffolding type is related to formal instruction called as 'instructional scaffolding' by Applebee and Langer (1983). In this type of scaffolding, learners are supported by modelling the language, asking questions or using authentic materials or objects to make the learners autonomous. The other scaffolding types are 'conversational scaffolding' (Long & Sato, 1984). This is about how adults/experts assist the child/novice during conversations in terms of linguistic development. Another scaffolding type is Donato's (1994) 'collective scaffolding', and it is related with how peers cooperate with each other during a task or project.

There is a wide range of research in sociocultural theory focusing on interaction from different perspectives, such as focusing on scaffolded feedback in terms of error correction (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). However, some researchers like Rassaei (2014) focused on recast and scaffolded feedback. When teachers make recast, they only rephrase the wrong utterance in the correct way. However, when teachers use scaffolded feedback, there should be dialogical construction between the teacher and the learners. The teacher does not provide the correct form

immediately, instead he uses clarification requests, points the attention of the learners to the error, tells the rule explicitly to the learners, shows a model for the learners, tells the rule and shows the model by integrating, and finally if the learner still experience the problem, the teacher gives more examples and explanations.

Rassaei (2014) implemented his study on error correction, feedback and the second language development from a sociocultural perspective. The researcher's motive was to integrate cognitivist and interactionist perspectives for his research study which means he focused on recasts and scaffolded feedback. Using two testing instruments which are untimed grammatically judgment test and an oral production task, he worked with 78 Persian EFL learners within an experimental research design including one control group and two experimental groups. The learners in three groups were given some tasks, and the control group did not take any feedback, but the experimental groups were given either recast or scaffolded feedback and the study showed that scaffolded feedback contributed more than recasts to the development of learners.

Another study regarding scaffolding is about the negotiation of meaning occurring in an ESL classroom during a story telling task. Ko, Schallert and Walters (2003) asked a group of students to tell an embarrassing story about themselves to two or three learners and their teachers by locating them to different parts of the classroom. Then, the learners were relocated and asked to retell their stories to the learners who did not hear before. The purpose behind this move was to indicate the contribution of negotiation of meaning to the improvement in the second telling of the story. Data analysis provided different factors affecting the improvement, such as willingness to retell the story, to answer the questions, and the scaffolding of the teachers by paraphrasing the questions when the story tellers did not understand or encouraging the learners to ask questions about the incomprehensible points, but the most important factor affecting the improvement is scaffolding's operating in two ways. The authors state that the scaffolding can work when the less knowledgeable person is ready to get what the more knowledgeable person offers to assist him.

Dynamic Assessment

Dynamic assessment is "an approach to understanding individual differences and their implications for instruction [that] embeds intervention within the assessment procedure (Lidz & Gindis 2003, p. 99, cited in Poehner, 2005). He continued by contrasting dynamic assessment with traditional, or static, approaches to assessment. The terms static assessment and dynamic

assessment are related to assessment procedure not related to assessment instruments. The assessment becomes dynamic when there is intervention from the teacher (Poehner, 2005).

Swain's (2001) study is related to testing of proficiency of the language learners. He discusses that language testers should find a way to explain the language that emerges during interaction when they assess the proficiency of the learners.

Activity Theory

Activity theory is based on thoughts of Vygotsky about how humans improve their behaviors. (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). According to activity theory the goals frame the humans' activities which means what kinds of activities the learners want to be involved is a key to decide on the activities to be chosen. Social and contextual/institutional factors are also important in the activity theory (Donato, 1994). Vygotsky's original ideas were clarified by Leontiev (1978) in his activity theory in which activity means doing something that is driven by a need which can be biological or intellectual. The 'needs' of humans should address to an object so that their needs become their 'motives'. Moreover, the 'motives' are recognized via 'specific actions' orienting the aims and performing under specific 'conditions' and via suitable 'mediational means'. This indicates that an activity has three levels: 1) the level of motivation, 2) the level of action and 3) the level of conditions. Even though the activities are observed at the third level, this does not show that the same observed activity are totally the same, as their motive and action levels can totally be different. (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007)

The activity theory developed by Wertsch is related to the development of individuals, social interaction and the activities in that social context (Donato, 1994). A study by Sirisatit (2010) focusing on the activity theory designed a task-based course regarding activity theory aiming at developing the competences of business English learners. The researcher used different data collection instruments, such as a pre-test, an immediate post-test and a delayed posttest after one month of the treatment, a questionnaire, stimulated recall interviews, observation, post-task interviews and the final interview. The results of the study showed a significant difference between the scores of the pre-test and the post-test indicating that there was an improvement in English competence of the learners in six tasks. The researcher also found a significant difference between the scores of the post-test and the delayed post-test indicating that not only the retention of the learners but also their competence in English improved in the researched group (Sirisatit, 2010).

Vygotsky's activity theory has evolved over three generations. The first generation focused on the notion of mediation. It was about the individual who have to be understood within the cultural means of the individual; and the society which have to be understood with the agency of individuals who both utilize and produce tools. Vygotsky also modelled this. The first generation's limitation which is considering only individual has led the second generation to appear with Leontiev. And, he focused on 'collective activity' in his famous 'primeval collective hunt'. However, this also started to be questioned, as there are variety between traditions internationally, and this cause to birth of third generation. "The third generation of activity theory needs to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogue, multiple perspectives, and networks of interacting activity systems" (Engeström, 2001, p. 135).

Sociocultural Theory and Language Teacher Education

It is quite difficult to expect that there will be no innovation and implementation in training language teachers while drastic alterations occur in language teaching methods and techniques. Johnson (2006) also has the same thoughts and concerns about the teacher education. She starts with how the research about teacher cognition has changed dramatically over 40 years which means educational research has affected teacher cognition, but over the years the research on teacher mentality have started to shape the educational research (Beach, 1994; Borg, 2001, 2003; Woods, 1991).

The human sciences started to proceed toward sociocultural turn, which means learning is a dynamic social process occurring in all life planes which are physical and cultural among people, activities and tools. Johnson (2006) continues that there have been always some challenges concerning the matters for teacher education whether practice or theory. For sociocultural theory, knowledge does not just come from the books which shape the theory, it also emerges in the experiences of teachers which are always dynamic and open to dialogical collaboration.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CEFR) will be expressed briefly, because the curriculum of English is based on CEFR. Learner-centered approaches in language teaching aims at fostering learner autonomy,

requiring the learners to take own decisions regarding the aims, content and methods of learning. Those approaches also focus on the self-assessment of the learners (Little, 2005).

The approach adopted in the CEFR, is ‘an action-oriented’ one, because it approaches users and learners of a language as ‘social agents’ which means the members of a society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) in a specific environment and a particular field of action.

CEFR gives importance on the interaction of the members as it focuses on communicative view of language. It is stated in the CEFR that language learner/user’s communicative language competence is activated when the learners perform different language activities, involving reception, production, interaction or mediation. (Council of Europe, 2001). What CEFR offers about language has common points with the sociocultural theory, because CEFR also supports interaction, mediation and self-regulation.

Recent Research Studies

One dimension of the current study is related with the student teachers, therefore, it will be beneficial to give the recent studies regarding socio-cultural theory and teacher education. In the research study of Rueada and Monzo (2002) thirty-two bilingual, Latino paraeducators were participated. The study took place in two large public elementary schools in California. The major foci of the study was mediation and collaborative relationship between the teachers and the paraeducators. The researchers made use of longitudinal-observation which took nearly one month, and interviews to get rich data. The whole process of the research study took two years. The research team used coding techniques of Miles and Huberman (1994) and Glaser (1992). The findings of the study revealed three roles for paraeducators in the classroom which are clerical support, directed teaching, and apprentice, but the apprentice role was much less common compared to other roles. Furthermore, the study showed the power inequality between the teachers and the paraeducators. Another finding was that paraeducators and teachers rarely found time alone to discuss instructional issues or concerns about students.

In another deep research study conducted by Cross (2010) had a nonnative teacher of Japanese as a foreign language in Australia as a participant, and genetic-analytic method of Vygotsky has been benefited for the analysis of the data. Different types of data collection instruments have been used and they constituted different types of data. The data types that have been mentioned are actually the domains of genetic-analytic method. The cultural-historic domain is the largest domain among all, as it centers on the macro factors, i.e. the education policy; the

ontogenetic domain investigates the individual deeply, that's mean how the personal and educational background, and the experience of the individual bring him/her to the system. Lastly, the microgenetic domain indicates how the individual interacts with his/her immediate environment which is sociocultural in terms of concrete activities. The data types were cultural historic data, the ontogenetic data and microgenetic data, and the instruments were a survey of policy, the audio-recorded sessions and stimulated-recall data, respectively for each data type. The findings of the study indicated that the participant's new form of cognition was based on not only the previous knowledge and experience of the participants but also the broader macro factors which are social, political, and cultural.

In the research study of Warford (2011) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in terms of teacher education was the main focus, and the researcher proposed a model for teacher education programs regarding ZPD; he called it as Zone of Proximal Teacher Development (ZPTD) (2011, p. 254). The researcher gave the stages for ZPTD which are 'self-assistance', 'expert other assistance', 'internalization' and 'recursion'. He explained the stages in the following way: the 'self-assistance' stage is the stage II in ZPD, the 'expert other assistance' stage is the stage I in ZPD whereas 'internalization' is 'automatization' and the 'recursion' is de-automatization. The researchers propose assessment ways for each model from two perspectives which are sample interventionist DA and sample interactionist DA. The researcher concludes that genetic method should be followed for the teacher education programs.

Feryok's research study (2012) centered on Activity Theory, agency and particularly Galperin's 'orienting activity' by taking an Armenian English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher as a participant. The researcher used e-mail interviews, oral interviews and classroom observations as data collection instruments. The researcher provided the participant's very early experiences with English and her teacher as a learner and she stated that those experiences helped the participant develop her agency sense in her individual actions as a student language teacher, English language teacher and a teacher trainer. The early experiences mediate later development because they form the basis for orienting to individual action.

Recently, Golombek (2015) studied with one teacher educator and four student teachers in an internship in undergraduate TESOL Program in USA. The researcher used student teachers' journals, teacher educator's comments, e-mail exchanges, retrospective interviews. Mediation and regulation was the main foci of the study; the reflection journals' role in the learning to teach process. The analysis indicated when the teacher educator recognized her emotional disharmony and its effect on her mediation assisted the teacher educator to reframe her

understanding of student teachers as a learner. Finally, the researcher concluded that there is a need to redefine language teacher cognition in terms of between the interaction between the student teachers and teacher educators by taking into account relationship between the emotion and cognition in instructional experience.



CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, firstly, research design of the study is discussed to have clear information on the current study. Secondly, universe and sample of the study are told to give information about the participants and the context. Furthermore, selection criteria which are taken into consideration for the universe and sample will be given in this part. Which instruments will be used for the data collection, and how the data collected and analyzed are expressed in this chapter.

Research Design

The aims of the research and the information which the researchers seek for determining the research approaches, whether it is qualitative, quantitative or mixed have a clear and neat research design (Taylor, 2005). In a qualitative study, the researcher approaches to the study holistically to give the logic of the study and collects the data “from the inside” (Wolcott, 1992). Qualitative research helps researchers explore what is going on in the natural settings, grasp the main problems of the research setting, reach deeper understanding of the phenomena, and offer flexibility when the unexpected things show up (Dörnyei, 2007). To this end, the current research was designed as a qualitative study.

Yin (2003) states that when the researchers use case studies when the context is believed to be an important factor to reach relevant answers for the research questions. The current research study was designed a case study which is one of the research designs categorized under qualitative research as it was aimed to offer a holistic, detailed description of the learners in their natural learning setting (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

The first step in this research was to design an observation scheme called as ‘Sociocultural Classroom Observation Scheme’ (SCOS) for the classroom observation because one of the research questions of the study was to unravel the sociocultural practices of the teachers. Dörnyei (2007) states that observation is different from self-report data collection instruments as it provides direct information, thus it is essential for the research studies. The development of the observation scheme will be detailed in ‘Sociocultural Classroom Observation Scheme’ of the data collection instruments. The next step was the piloting stage of the scheme. After piloting period, the student teachers observed the classrooms for four weeks via ‘Sociocultural Classroom Observation Scheme’. The researcher also observed the classrooms for two weeks with the student teachers because the researcher wanted to become familiar with the research environment and to tackle with the Hawthorne Effect (Dörnyei, 2007). The researcher not only used the SCOS but also she kept a researcher journal not to miss any naturally occurring data.

The student teachers were asked to write essays regarding student, teacher, and interaction in and outside the classroom for seven weeks. They stated both the present situation and their hypothetical practices for the future in those essays.

After the observation period, the researcher conducted interviews with the teachers and the students as another data collection tool. The interviews were semi-structured and they were implemented face to face aiming at revealing their perceptions towards the classroom practices. All data were analyzed and coded not only by the researcher but also two independent researchers.

English Language Curriculum for Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary Schools, and the course books studied in the classroom which were observed by the student teachers were analyzed as secondary data collection instruments. They were analyzed to get more information about place of the socio-cultural theory in the official documents which guide the teachers, as well as the procedures in the classrooms all over the country. Another reason behind analyzing these documents was to be able to compare the real practices and the practices offered by the English Language Curriculum which was prepared based on CEFR and the course book used in the classroom.

Universe and Sample

The present study comprises three different groups of participants. A lower secondary state school including the primary school and an upper secondary state school in Ankara and Gazi

University English Language Teaching program constitute the universe of the present thesis. The 4th and 5th grades at one primary school, 7th and 8th grades students from one state lower secondary school, 10th and 11th grades students from one state upper secondary school and 4th grade student teachers from two classes comprised the sample of this research study. Actually, two types of sampling methods, which are random and nonrandom, were benefited. Researchers in applied linguistics generally make use of ‘non-probability’ or ‘nonrandom’ sampling for their research studies (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005). In qualitative research designs, this type of sampling does not seem to create any problem, but it may create a problem for the quantitative designs (Dörnyei, 2007). This study is qualitative and therefore, this sampling method does not cause any problem. Among common ‘non-probability sampling’ methods convenience sampling will be made use of in this study. This sampling type is used when the researchers have difficulty in getting ‘a true random sample’ (McKay, 2006). And, for the upper secondary school, 12th grades will not be included as they just focus on the Transition to Higher Education Examination which includes very busy and important period.

For the selection of the state schools, purposeful sampling was used. “Purposive sample is frequently used with the technique, where the researcher selects a case or cases which he/she believes can yield sufficient data to address the research questions” (Taylor, 2005, p. 104). The schools were selected considering the contextual factors as the goal also was to reflect the characteristics of teachers and students in Turkey even though the cases have their own peculiarities. The details related to contextual factors of the schools are discussed in the ‘Demography’ part.

Demography

Participants were 53 student teachers, who were enrolled in ‘School experience’ course during the 2014 fall semester, from two classes at Gazi University ELT program. Forty five female and 8 male student teachers comprised the sampling of the study. The student teachers’ ages ranged in 22-24 ($M = 22.56$, $SD = 0.56$). The sampling method used for the selection of this study was first purposeful then random sampling. It was purposeful as one group of students had day instruction whereas the other group had evening instruction, but the classes were chosen randomly.

The student teachers were enrolled in 2010 or 2011 and they were among the 4.500 students in language part of transition to higher education exam. They have completed all required courses which are linguistics, approaches, special teaching education, language teaching skills, teaching

English to young learners and some educational sciences courses to be able to attend practicum course.

The second group of participants are eight English language teachers and learners. The experiences of teachers are between 15-20 years. And, three of them have Master's Degree in educational sciences, and one of them follows his PhD in educational sciences.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through multiple instruments which are primary and secondary data collection tools. Brown (1988) state that primary data collection instruments are the researchers' own data gathered during the research study whereas the secondary data are other resources, such as literary works, political documents and pamphlets on which the researchers comment and interpret the data.

Primary data collection tools are the observation sheet, essays, semi-structured interviews and the researcher's journal. Dörnyei (2007) states that the most frequently used qualitative data collection instruments include observations and interviews to have thick and rich data, and to explore the situation. Different types of data collection methods have been used to triangulate the data.

Triangulation means grasping human behavior not just from one perspective but from different perspectives. Triangulating the data helps the researchers to reach more credible data as the researchers have a chance to 'cross-validate' the data. Denzin (1978) divided triangulation into four which are 1) 'data triangulation', 2) 'methodological triangulation', 3) 'theory triangulation', 4) theory triangulation (Brown & Rodgers, 2002).

In this current research, firstly, three sources of information which were student teachers, teachers and learners were used, secondly, interviews, observation schemes, essays, curriculum and researchers' journal were used for the data collection and thirdly, not only the researcher but also two independent coders analyzed the data, which show data triangulation, methodological triangulation and methodological triangulation, were used respectively.

The regulations of Ministry of National Education require a consent form to implement a research study in the schools. The researchers state their aims, research questions, data collection instruments, as well. Then, they present it to the committee of the Ministry of National Education. Following this procedure, the researcher of the current study got the required consent and implemented her study.

Table 1

Data Collection Instruments for the Research Questions

Research Question	Data Instruments	Collection	Analyzed Aspect
RQ 1	Observation Scheme Researcher's journal		What?, How?
RQ2	Essays Interviews		How?
RQ3	Curriculum Observation Scheme Interviews		What? What?, How? Why?

Sociocultural Classroom Observation Scheme (SCOS)

Observation is a basis for a research study, therefore the observation scheme was developed by the researcher. There are two basic traditions for the classroom observation which are 'Bellack tradition' and 'Flanders tradition'. The former is associated with the recording the classroom sessions and transcription of it while the latter is related to noting down the practices while they are happening. The Flanders system includes the use of fixed categories to observe the classroom (Wallace, 1991). Following the Flanders tradition, the researcher developed a scheme so that the student teachers could observe the classroom.

Four experts in ELT reviewed the observation scheme for two times and the researcher rewrote some questions or she omitted them from the scheme. They also categorized the questions according to factors without knowing the researcher's categorization, and they all reached the same categorization.

The observation scheme is composed of three parts. The first part is used to get information about the practices of the teachers and the students whereas the second part is central to the characteristics of the assignments and activities which are asked by the teacher. And, the third part of the observation scheme asks the opinions of the student teachers to get more information about the activities in the classroom. The third section is prepared, because it is not possible to foresee every possible actions in a classroom. The student teachers are asked to write any actions occurred in the classroom, they also need to state and discuss their views in terms of sociocultural practices. Their perceptions toward sociocultural theory become apparent through the scheme. There are three columns for the first two parts of the observation scheme which are 'Yes', 'No' and 'Evidence'. If the questions are observed in the classroom, the student teachers not only put a tick to the 'Yes' column but they also need to write the evidence of the question.

This evidence is helpful for two ways. Firstly, it provides the researcher the concrete data to analyze, and it also indicates the perceptions of the students and teachers towards sociocultural theory, because the classes are observed via the student teachers and it depends on how they observe the classes.

The constructs behind the observation scheme were determined via the literature of the sociocultural theory (Foley, 1994; J. P. Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Poehner, 2005). Scaffolding types, which are vertical scaffolding, sequential scaffolding and conversational scaffolding, imitation, regulation, ZPD and mediation were specified as the factors. Please see Appendix 1 for the SCOS.

Essays

The student teachers observed the classrooms within their practicum course in the first term of last year in the education faculties of universities in Turkey. They took some notes or use an observation scheme during observations. The researcher asked the student teachers to write weekly essays to triangulate the data and reach a comprehensive data via this way.

The essays of the students comprised of seven main themes which were the classroom environment, teacher, learners, activities and materials, assignments, assessment and general evaluation of the whole term, respectively for seven weeks. Each main theme included leading questions so that the student teachers could write their essays within the scope of the current research design. The themes and the leading questions were reviewed by four experts in ELT, and the researcher reworded some questions based on the comments.

Interviews

Interview is one of the data collection methods used in qualitative research design. There are three types of interview which are structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In structured interview, the questions are prepared before the interview and only those questions were asked, in semi-structured interviews, there are questions prepared by the researcher but the researcher also asks different questions on the course of interview, and thirdly, in unstructured interview, there is not any question prepared by the researcher beforehand, the questions are asked during the interview (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005). The researcher conducted interviews with 15 learners and eight teachers from the primary and lower secondary school while 18

learners and four English language teachers from upper secondary school. The interviews with the students took 10 minutes, and the duration of interviews with teachers was 15 to 20 minutes.

Interviews with teachers

The researcher conducted one interview with eight teachers after the observation period, as the researcher's goal was to reveal what the teachers really think about their practices and whether their practices and perceptions are congruent or not. The duration of the interviews took nearly 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Interviews with learners

The learners attending primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools were randomly selected and interviewed. The total duration of the interviews is around 3 hours. They were asked questions about the present practices of the teachers, the activities done in the classroom, assessment types and their expectations related to English class to find out their perceptions in terms of sociocultural theory.

English Language Curriculum

The English language curriculum of Turkey has been started to be implemented in 2005. The curriculum is crucial as it provides the basics of English language teaching all over Turkey, and the teachers follow the same sequence offered in the curriculum.

The curriculum not only offers the sequence but also it gives a detailed explanation about the characteristics of the target group and it offers activities, evaluation ways, assignments, games to be used in the classes. The curriculum is based on Common European Framework Reference, therefore it centers on interaction.

The curriculum is crucial to be analyzed regarding contrasting the suggestions of the curriculum and the practices of the teachers. The curriculum was analyzed qualitatively to find out certain codes and themes.

Researcher's Journal

The researcher is also a participant in the study to take relevant notes. The researcher took her notes when she visited the classrooms for observation and during interviews. Those notes were taken to support the data.

Reliability and Validity

Researchers in the positivist paradigm criticize the researchers implementing qualitative methods in terms of reliability and validity.

However, qualitative research can also be designed and analyzed to ensure reliability and validity while following the requirements of qualitative research design. In qualitative research design, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are tried to be achieved. The following table shows some techniques to ensure the abovementioned areas.

Table 2

Techniques to Ensure Reliability and Validity in a Qualitative Research Design

Criterion Area	Technique
Credibility	1) Activities in the field that increase the probability of high credibility a) Prolonged engagement b) Persistent observation c) Triangulation (sources, methods and investigators)
Transferability	2) Peer debriefing 3) Negative case analysis 4) Referential adequacy 5) Member checks (in process and terminal)
Dependability	6) Thick description
Confirmability	7a) the dependability audit, including the audit trail 7b) The confirmability audit, including the audit trail
All of the above	8) The reflexive journal

Note. Taken From *Qualitative Research: Vol. 3* p. 430, by Y. Lincoln & E. Guba, in A. Bryman & R. G. Burgess (Eds.), 1999, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.

Data Analysis

The data collected during the thesis process were examined by using qualitative techniques. The data gathered from observation sheet were analyzed qualitatively. Glaser and Strauss' (1967) Constant Comparison method were employed to create specific categories under different themes for the qualitative data. The third part which was prepared to reveal not only

the unforeseen practices in the classroom but also the perceptions of student teachers, and it was analyzed qualitatively.

The essays and interviews were analyzed via Constant Comparison Method to get certain themes whereas researcher's journal will be used to support the data gotten from the other primary data collection tools. Researcher kept a journal when she visited the classrooms where the student teachers observed.

The curriculum of the lower and upper secondary schools were analyzed through content analysis.

The coding process

How the researcher conducted coding process will be given in the following section.

Open coding

The observation schemes, the essays and the interviews which were transcribed were started to be read with an experienced researcher to assign the sentences or the phrases into a category. The open coding process lasted longer for the essays comparing the other data collection methods.

Axial/theoretical coding

In this stage, the researchers attempt to reach higher-order constructs for the categories. The researchers try to form categories which cover subcategories (Dörnyei, 2007). In this research, the researcher created larger categories and reached more concrete categories.

Cross-checking of the codes

Another researcher was asked to review and analyze the data so that the coding process could progress. The independent researcher also reached the same categorizations. And, this opened the way for the last stage which is selective coding.

Selective coding

After reaching the larger codes, the researchers need to need to select some codes to reach a theory. To this end, the researcher selected some codes and formed the tables.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

This chapter centers on the findings and interpretation of the collected data. After giving a brief information about the pilot study, the findings of the Sociocultural Classroom Observation Scheme will be detailed in three subheadings which are ‘Sociocultural Classroom Observation Scheme in Primary School’, ‘Sociocultural Classroom Observation Scheme in Lower Secondary School’, ‘Sociocultural Classroom Observation Scheme in Upper Secondary School’. The findings of the essays, interviews and the curriculum will also be given and interpreted within this chapter.

Pilot Study

The data were collected via qualitative ways to ensure the credibility and the trustworthiness of the study a pilot study was implemented. The following indicates the questions needed to be responded in the pilot study.

- Is the observation scheme clear enough for all student teachers to grasp the questions and take down relevant notes?
- Is the observation scheme feasible enough for all student teachers to observe the classroom and take down notes simultaneously?
- Does the observation scheme look for the evidences which are relevant for the scope of the current research study?

Before the pilot study, the researcher contacted with four experts in ELT field and asked their opinions and relevant alterations were fulfilled. Also, a group of student teachers were contacted for the face validity of the observation scheme.

The student teachers were informed about how they would fill in the observation scheme and which points they would need to consider in 30 minutes of a session however; a pilot study for a week was fulfilled to answer the above questions two weeks before the actual study. Student teachers applied the observation scheme in the classrooms and brought them to the researcher after the observation session. The student teachers were asked some questions, such as *“Have you experienced any difficulty in filling in the observation scheme?”*, *“What have you felt when you have had a scheme during the observation session?”* and *“What is the most relieving and challenging part of the having an observation scheme to be filled in?”*.

Moreover, the answers of the student teachers were written down by the researcher immediately to make relevant alterations regarding the observation scheme. However, the student teachers did not make any negative comments about the form, and they continued to use it for four weeks in their observation period.

Codes

Taking Yeşilbursa (2008) as an example, the data are analyzed under different categories. These are 1) Role Categories, 2) Sociocultural Concept Categories, and 3) Content Categories. In this part, how the meaning of the codes is expressed.

Role Category

The data were collected via three sources of data, so there are three data sources which are teachers, learners and student teachers, T, L and ST will be used respectively.

Sociocultural Concept Category

This category includes the main constructs of the sociocultural theory which are mediation, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), scaffolding, regulation, other regulation, object regulation, self-regulation and imitation.

Content Category

The content category includes the pedagogical areas examined. Each category will be specified in the following section.

Teacher language

This category is related to the language the teacher uses in the classroom for the instructions teacher gives before the activities or the tasks or he uses before. For example, the following statement is related with instruction taken from an essay written by a student teacher observing 7th grade *“Teacher gave the instructions directly and the teacher did not check the instructions during the lesson.”* This category is also related with the use of target language or native language. For instance, *“The teacher uses both L1 and L2 in the class. He generally starts with the target language and often uses it, but while she mentions about grammar, she uses L1.”* The extract taken from an essay about the teacher written by a student teacher observing 10th grade.

Input

This category is related to whatever teachers do to promote the development of learners. For instance, *“We studied this topic last week, so you know how to answer to this question.”* taken from an observation scheme of 5th grade.

Classroom Environment

This category is about anything affecting the interaction in the classroom, such as the roles of the teachers and learners in the classroom, the peripheral learning activities, the seating arrangement in the classroom. For example, *“The desks are designed back to back forming and they are too narrow for the students. Because the class is not very crowded, it doesn’t pose a very important problem. However; when they are making a group activity, they can’t concentrate on very well because they sit uncomfortably to see each other.”* is an extract from an essay of student teacher observing 10th grade.

Error Correction

This category is related to how the teachers correct the errors of the learners, whether the learners correct their errors immediately or not, whether any objects are used to correct the learners’ errors, whether the errors are corrected by the peers of the learners or not. For example, *“L1: I can tennis. L2: No, I can play tennis.”* is an extract from the observation scheme of 4th grade showing scaffolding and other regulations.

Activity/Task

This category is related to any activity/task done in the classroom. For example, the extract was taken from essay of student teacher observing 5th grade learners *“Students are good at doing matching, fill in the blanks activities. But when they are doing for example pair work activities they have some difficulties.”*

Materials

This category is about what kinds of materials are used during the lesson. For instance, a student teacher observing 10th grade wrote in his essay *“I have been to the classroom once a week for four hours and as far as I have seen, teacher only uses course book’s materials for learners’ learning.”*

Assignment

This category relates to the assignments given to the learners, i.e. whether they are performance-based, course book based or requiring the learners come together and study. For this category, nearly all of the student teachers noted that the assignments are given individually.

Assessment

This category addresses the assessment methods used in the English classrooms. The types of questions used in the exams are also related with this category. For instance, a student teacher observing 4th grade wrote *“The learners took an exam last week. The questions were in the form of translation to Turkish, matching and filling in blanks.”*

Paralinguistic features

The category is related with all gestures and mimics done by the teachers to help the learners understand when they need assistance or the teachers’ specific characteristics doing with his mimics and gestures. For example, *“The teacher used his gestures to teach ‘wash face’”* was taken from an observation scheme of 4th grade.

Findings of the Sociocultural Classroom Observation Scheme (SCOS)

The SCOS consists of three parts asking questions about practices of teacher and students including the activities and the materials, assessment types and the student teacher' comments for the class. The findings related to SCOS will be given in three parts, i.e. the results of primary school, lower secondary school and the upper secondary school.

Table 3

The Most Frequently Occurring Sociocultural Factors in Primary School

Role Categories	Sociocultural Concept Categories	Content Categories	Evidence
T	Scaffolding Mediation ZPD	Teacher language	-Paraphrasing -Translation (4 th grade)
T	Regulation Other regulation Imitation	Error Correction	L: "I can drive a bike." T: "Ride." S: "I can ride a bike."
T	Gesture	Paralinguistic features	"T: "I want you to write them in your notebooks." He shows "write" with his gestures.
T	Scaffolding	Input	"When a learner says a correct sentence, he says 'Very good, well done!'"
T	Scaffolding ZPD Mediation	Materials	"The teacher uses course book, worksheets and flash cards."
L	Mediation Regulation	Error Correction	"The learners correct themselves when their teacher corrects.", "The students are corrected by their peers."
L	ZPD Scaffolding	Activities	"The learners are willing to participate in the activities. During the tasks, the learners help each other."

The table shows the most frequently occurring sociocultural factors in the primary school. "The learners in this group are quite energetic and willing to participate in the classroom even they make mistakes" (Researcher's Journal, 2014). The problematic area for this group is assessment part as the learners are assessed via written exams including translation, fill in the blanks and writing short answers for the questions. They also do not have a group work activity outside the classroom. The teachers also accepted this situation in the interviews and one stated that *"It is*

quite challenging to assemble learners out of the school hours, because they all come from different places to the school.”

Table 4
The Most Frequently Occurring Sociocultural Factors in Lower Secondary School

Role Categories	Sociocultural Concept Categories	Content Categories	Evidence
T	Scaffolding Mediation ZPD	Teacher language	-Paraphrasing -Translation -Instruction check
T	Regulation Other regulation Imitation	Error Correction	L: “She like football.” T: “She likes football.” S: “She likes football.
T	Gesture	Paralinguistic features	“The teacher maintains eye contact to be effective in the classroom.”
L	Mediation Regulation	Error Correction	“The learners try to say it again when the teacher says the correct pronunciation.”
T	Mediation Regulation Other Regulation	Input	“When the learners give the correct answer, the teacher says “You are right. Thank you.”

“In lower secondary school, the learners are not so willing to participate in the activities. They show less interest compared to primary school learners.” (Researcher’s Journal, 2014).

The teachers assess the students via multiple choice questions and one of the teacher state the reason in the following extract: *“The learners take TEOG (Transition from Basic Education to Secondary Education) exam, and the parents want their children to be placed in prestigious schools, the administration also asks the same, so we just focus on improve their English for TEOG. We ignore the other areas.”*

Table 5

The Most Frequently Occurring Sociocultural Factors in Upper Secondary School

Role Categories	Sociocultural Concept Categories	Content Categories	Evidence
T	Scaffolding Mediation ZPD	Teacher language	-Paraphrasing -Using body language (10 th grade) -Translation (11 th grade) -Instruction check
T	Regulation Other regulation Imitation	Error Correction	S: "Ali go to home." T: "Ali goes to home." S: "Ali goes to home."
T	Gesture	Paralinguistic features	Gesture
L	Mediation Regulation	Error Correction	"The students correct themselves when they are corrected by the teacher."
T	Mediation Regulation Other Regulation	Error Correction	"Pronunciation mistakes are corrected by the teacher immediately."

The table shows that there are more categories about teachers in terms of sociocultural concepts. And, this is also obvious in the interviews of the students. The learners want to learn from their teachers even though they sometimes have a group work activity, they see the teacher as the authority, the knower, so they want to learn from him. There are some extracts taken from the learners' interviews:

R: Well, which one teaches you most? Group work or the teacher?

L: The teacher

R: Ok., the teacher, what is the reason?

L: He tells what we do not know, I think the teacher is more knowledgeable.

R: Well, do you bother if your friend corrects your errors?

L: No, I don't, but I ask to my teacher to be sure.

It seems it is not possible to see different types of scaffolding, mediation or other constructs in all content areas. In upper secondary schools, the observations revealed that the learners have their assignments only from their workbooks as mechanic activities. The students do not have an opportunity to work together outside the classroom. And, the assessment type is product based.

In the error correction categories, it can be seen that all teachers in different group of schools use recast not scaffolded feedback (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994), the teacher directly corrects the learners' errors rather than supporting the learners via different strategies. However, it is still categorized under a sociocultural construct which is regulation and the imitation, because the learners immediately correct themselves.

Findings from the Essays

The student teachers wrote weekly essays for seven weeks related to classroom environment, teacher, learners, activities and materials, assignments, assessment method and general evaluation.

Table 6
Findings of the Essays

Present situation	Expected situation
-Traditional classroom design	-Different classroom design suitable for group works
-Object regulation	-Self-regulation
-Monolithic tasks and activities	-Variety in the tasks and activities
-Product based assessment	-Performance based assessment
-Washback effect	
-Limited scaffolding	-Expanded scaffolding

The essays written by the student teachers showed two general headings which are present situation and expected situation. For student teachers, there are some problematic areas in the classrooms and they think they harm to the language learning process. They also need to offer some recipes which were given under the expected situation.

Findings of the Interviews

The interviews were conducted with the teachers and learners to reveal their perceptions toward English and sociocultural principles. The interviews have indicated that all teachers are aware of the importance of collaboration, group work, different assessment methods, error correction

ways and time, but they generally do not implement what they know because of some reasons. Some extracts were given from the interviews of the teachers below to show how they think.

“In this age group, the learners need games, so we play games in the class, but it is not possible to play games and sing songs all the time. We also follow the curriculum, so we use our course book.” (A teacher from primary school).

“The learners take TEOG (Transition from Basic Education to Secondary Education), and we need to prepare for that exam. We assign a great proportion of our time to TEOG.” (A teacher from lower secondary school).

“Group work can be important for the students, but they do not use target language during the task, they talk in the native language, therefore I don’t make the students group in my class.” (A teacher from upper secondary class).

The teachers also stated some reasons why they do not practice every aspect of the curriculum offerings. The factors can be summarized as the instruction time, lack of guidance from the Ministry of National Education, and teacher preparation time.

However, the teachers also think that the learners should be engaged with English, so they advise films and web sites to the students. And, this activity is quite common in upper secondary school.

The interviews with the student have shown that if students like English, they try to add extra things on what they learn during class. However, if their English is weak during class, they do not want to do anything related to English.

The learners also want to have group activities during class session, and they confirm that they can learn from their friends even though they feel more secure in terms of knowledge when they learn from their teachers.

Findings of English Language Curriculum

In this part, the English Language Curriculum of Turkey is analyzed in terms of sociocultural concepts to find out the answers for Research Question 3 which tries to explore the congruencies and incongruences between the curriculum and the practices and perceptions of teachers. In Turkey, the education system is divided into three as 4+4+4, so 3 curricula which are Primary School, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary School Curricula for English courses are reported here.

The syllabus designed for English courses is a mixed syllabus which means it integrates different syllabus types, and those are ‘the grammatical/structural syllabus’, ‘the situational syllabus’, ‘the topical/theme-based syllabus’, ‘the notional/functional (communicative) syllabus’, ‘the procedural/task-based syllabus’ and ‘the skills-based syllabus’.

Primary School Curriculum of English Course

The Primary School program is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CEFR) like other two programs for English course. This new type of curriculum supports that language learning should be in a communicative environment where the learners are not supposed to focus on language as a topic. And, it combines more than one approach and methods as it is stated that just one methodology will not be suitable for all types of students. It supports the view that the teachers should maximize the interaction among students. The following table shows the content categories, sociocultural concept categories and the examples taken from the curriculum.

Table 7

Analysis of Primary School Curriculum of English Course Regarding Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Categories	Concept	Content Categories	Examples
Activity Theory Scaffolding Mediation		Classroom Environment Input	“The new curricular model emphasizes language use in an authentic communicative environment “The new curriculum strives to foster an enjoyable and motivating learning environment where young learners/users of English feel comfortable and supported throughout the learning process.” “...Learners/users engage in activities which require actual communication between peers or between students and their teacher, such as creating a game as a group and then playing it with classmates, rather than rehearsing prepared material.”
Dynamic Assessment		Assessment	In addition to self-assessment, formal evaluation will be carried out through the application of written and oral exams, quizzes, homework assignments and projects in order to provide an objective record of students’ success.

Mediation Activity Theory	Input	“Enjoyment of language learning is fostered through activities such as arts and crafts, TPR, and drama.”
Scaffolding Mediation	Input	“L1 usage is not prohibited or discouraged, but it should be employed only as necessary (i.e., for giving complex instructions or explaining difficult concepts).”
Regulation	Error Correction	“Errors are not addressed during communication, so as not to disrupt the flow; problem areas are noted by the teacher and addressed at a later time through practice and reinforcement.”
Imitation Mediation	Input	“Teachers are present in the classroom mainly for communicating in English (and, if necessary, in Turkish).”
Scaffolding ZPD	Input	“Students frequently encounter materials that have previously been covered in order to reinforce what they already know.”
Mediation ZPD	Input	“Students develop high motivation for learning by completing challenging, yet achievable activities.”
Mediation Scaffolding	Interaction	“Parents are encouraged to be part of the process and are kept up-to-date on their child’s learning through parent-child meetings.”
Scaffolding ZPD	Input	“Go from the familiar to the unfamiliar.”
Scaffolding ZPD	Interaction Cooperation	“Talk to parents and suggest that they learn what their children learn at school. They should sing together for fun or use the expressions they learn at school during their time at home.”
Scaffolding	Input	“Use drama and gestures as you read. Change your voice as appropriate, especially to voice a different character.”
Dynamic Assessment Scaffolding	Assessment	“Suggested assessment types for all stages: project and portfolio evaluation (student-teacher cooperation), pen and paper tests (including listening and speaking skills), self-peer evaluation, teacher observation and evaluation”

Lower Secondary School Curriculum of English Course

Table 8

Analysis of Lower Secondary School Curriculum of English Course Regarding Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Categories	Concept	Content Categories	Examples
Scaffolding		Cooperation	“Unless a teacher gets support from the parents, he is bound to tackle with lots of problems.”
Scaffolding Mediation		Interaction	Students need “Variety of grouping in class i.e. work on own, in pairs, in group, as class.”
Activity theory Dynamic Assessment		Assessment	“It is a known fact that students have very different approaches to learning and have distinct preferences and interests. A project work can ensure all are satisfied. They can work at their own pace and do what they feel more suitable for them.”
Scaffolding ZPD Gesture Scaffolding		Input	“Pace yourself carefully and try to use the same language frequently. You will need to use a lot of body language and facial expressions.”
		Instruction Input	“... you should not switch to the mother tongue finding excuses for your doing so (such as, the instruction is too long and difficult so I can give it in Turkish). You can simplify the language; if not, you can demonstrate or give examples.”
Mediation		Activities	Games can provide not only purposeful contexts in which to use language but also stimulate interaction, provide competition and are fun – as long as rules are clear and clearly followed by all participants. The teacher should make use of cognitively challenging games for this age group.
Regulation		Output	“Students copy familiar words and short phrases e.g. simple signs or instructions, names of everyday objects, names of shops and set phrases used regularly.”
Activity theory Mediation		Input	“Adolescents / teenagers like to be seen as cool and up-to-date, so bring in topics of current interest from sports, entertainment and media, and English-speaking cultures that is personally relevant to your learners.”
Regulation Self-Regulation		Output	“Part of growing up is taking responsibility for one's acts and, in school, for one's learning, so a measure of learner autonomy and individual choice can be helpful for adolescents / teenagers.”
Scaffolding		Interaction	“Employ pair work and group work.”

Regulation	Input	“Do everything to maximize STT and minimize TTT.”
ZPD Mediation	Input	“Progress gradually from interdependence to independence.”
Dynamic Assessment	Assignments Assessment	“Give the students projects to do outside the classroom.”

Upper Secondary School Curriculum of English Course

The curriculum designed for upper secondary schools aims at creating enjoyable learning environments for the learners to motivate them. Furthermore, it is also stated that stakeholders in education, people in the administration stage, teachers, course book and material designers and the learners should work cooperatively for the curriculum to reach its aims.

Table 9
Analysis of Upper Secondary School Curriculum of English Course Regarding Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Categories	Concept	Content Categories	Examples
Regulation			“Students are encouraged to be autonomous in their own language learning inside and outside the classroom.”
Scaffolding		Interaction	“Teachers use a variety of interaction types (individual work, pair work, group work, whole class) during the lessons.”
Scaffolding ZPD		Input	“Teachers present unfamiliar topics in English by building on what is familiar for students.”
Regulation		Error Correction	“Teachers overlook students’ mistakes or slips of the tongue during speaking activities and model the correct use of language instead or take notes to work on the mistakes later on as a whole class without referring to students’ identities.”
ZPD Mediation		Verbal immediacy	“Teachers use praise and positive reinforcement in class to nurture the willingness and motivation for language learning.”
Scaffolding		Materials	“Materials are authentic in design and content as much as possible.”
Mediation ZPD Activity Theory		Materials	“Materials are supported with multimedia and instructional technology tools as much as possible to immerse students in authentic use of language.”
ZPD Scaffolding		Assessment	“Assessment enables to assess authentic use of language with an emphasis on tools

ZPD
Scaffolding
Regulation

Assessment

such as portfolios, projects, and/or communicative activities more than traditional assessment tools such as multiple choice, true/false, and/or fill-in-the blanks.”
“Assessment allows the involvement of multiple feedback providers for different assessment tasks (self, peer, teacher, computer-mediated, and/or parent evaluation).”

Comparison of the Teachers’ Practices and Suggestions of Curriculum of English Course

In this part, what the teachers practice in their classrooms are compared to what the curriculum offers to the teachers to explore the congruencies and incongruences.

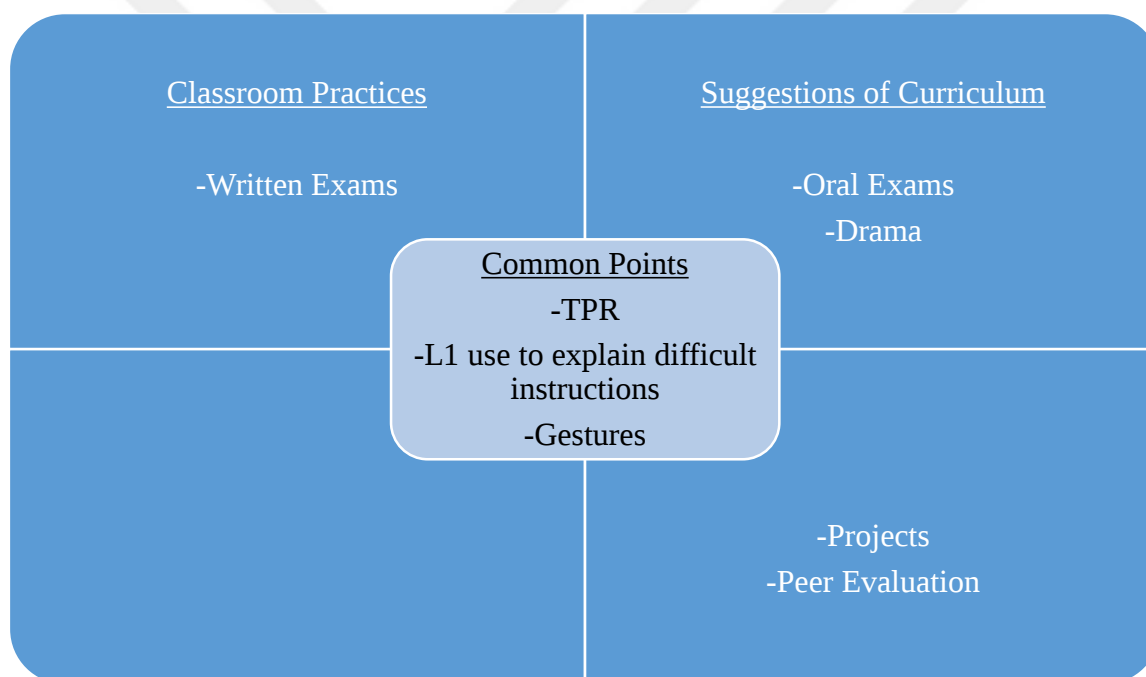


Figure 1. Comparison of primary school classroom practices and curriculum

When the classroom practices of the teachers are contracted with the curriculum, it is clear that the problematic area is assessment ways of the teachers. While the curriculum suggests different evaluation ways, such as projects, peer evaluation, self-evaluation, the teachers in primary schools just use written exams.

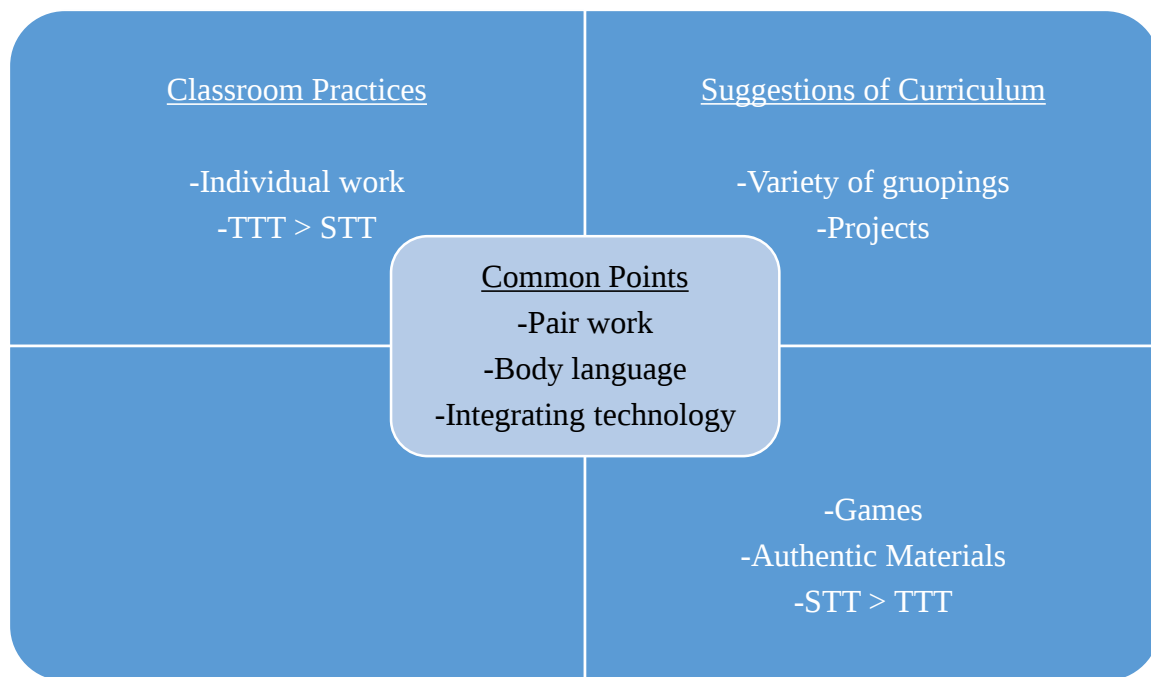


Figure 2. Comparison of lower secondary school classroom practices and curriculum

When the lower secondary curriculum of English is compared with the curriculum suggestions, it is seen that the teachers have problems in varying the activities and the students. The learners only have individual activities which limits them to develop their language skills with their peers.

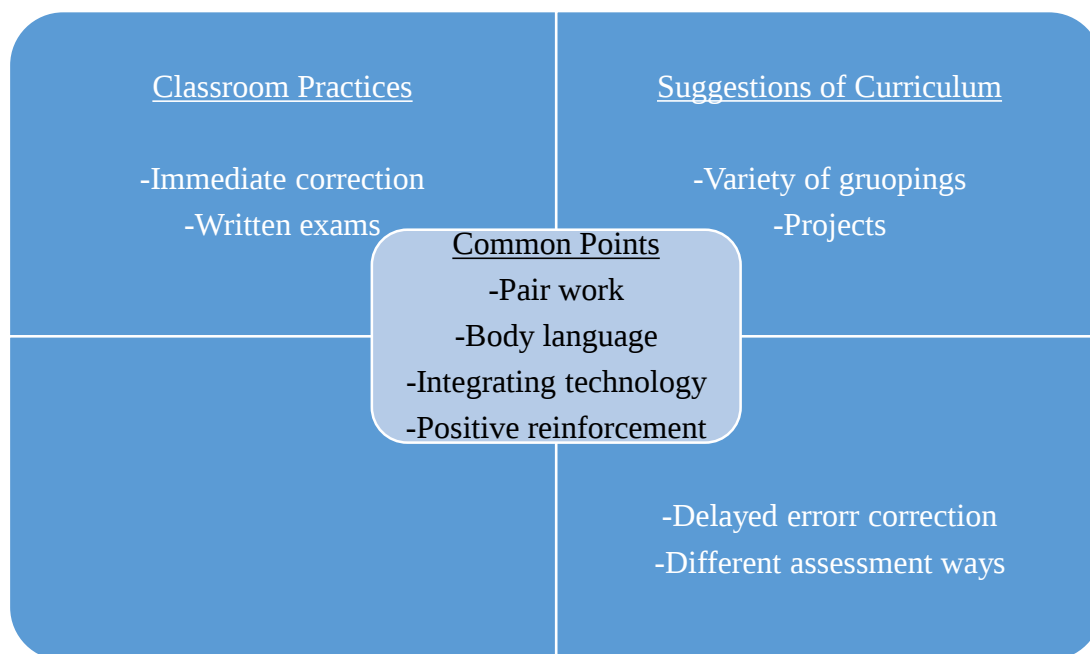


Figure 3. Comparison of upper secondary school classroom practices and curriculum

In upper secondary schools, the teachers make use of their body language, technology even if it is only smart board used in the classroom and they also give positive reinforcement. All of them are the common points with the curriculum and they are useful to mediate the learners. However, the teacher uses immediate correction even though the teachers know sometimes they just need to wait and note down the errors. They also have problems having a variety in the assessment methods.

Overall Findings

The overall analysis of the observation scheme, essays, interview and the curriculum revealed a model which will be helpful to understand the current situation. The model has got four dimensions which are awareness, knowledge, barriers and practice.

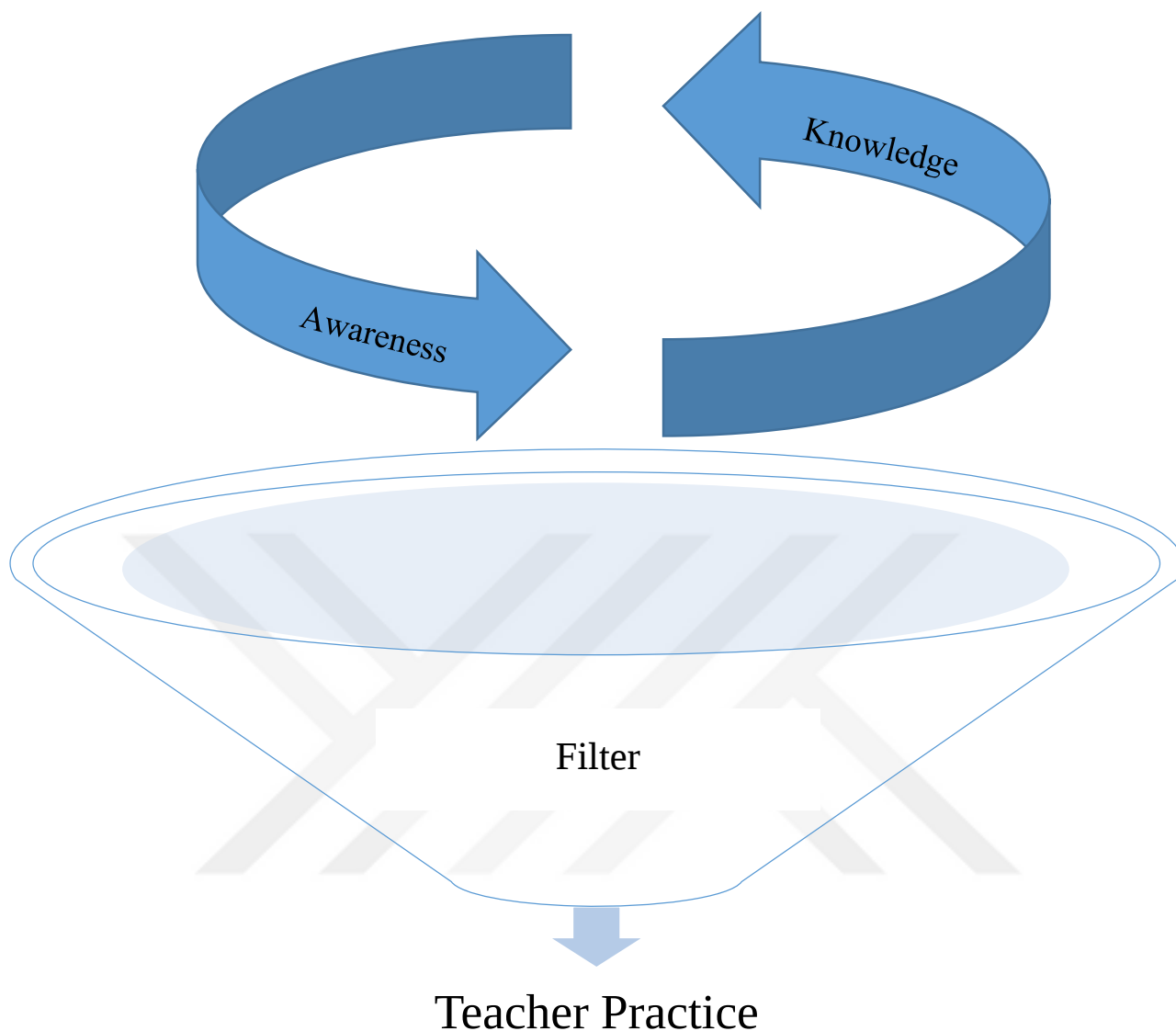


Figure 4. Teachers' classroom practice model

Everything starts with awareness, and it is quite obvious from the interviews and the essays, each party is aware of the situation, importance of the relevant tasks and activities. Awareness can be stimulated with knowledge or the socioeconomic, socio-cognitive factors. Teachers are equipped with the relevant professional knowledge during their initial education and via continuing professional development. Teachers can get knowledge from other sources to develop themselves if they have got the awareness, as well. Furthermore, the teachers become more aware person and professional thanks to the knowledge they acquire. Therefore, awareness and knowledge are seen in a reciprocal relationship in the model.

However, there are some barriers, such as macro or micro, objective or subjective affecting the practices of the teachers even though they are aware and they have the knowledge, the barriers are the basic decision-makers. The findings have indicated that the macro barriers are related with the problems occurring in the institutionalized level, such as the examination system whereas the micro barriers are the problems either resulting from teachers themselves, such as not believing in the importance of pair/group work, rejecting the use of technology or the problems affecting the teachers, such as the economic issues, stress of the parents or the teachers' work load. Those barriers, which are socioeconomic and socio-cognitive, cause a clash among what teachers know, what they want to do, what the system, i.e. the Ministry, the curriculum, the examination system, expect from the teachers, what teachers believe, what parents ask from the teachers and what the learners anticipate from the teachers. That's why, teachers have a filter which affect their practices. The filter helps the teachers to give decisions about their practices. The abovementioned model indicates the process of teachers' decision about their practices.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the research questions will be discussed with the data analysis via literature and the study will be concluded. Also, suggestions will be given for the future research.

Discussion of the Research Questions

The current research asked three research questions to find out the sociocultural practices in English language classrooms and perceptions of the teachers, students and student teachers.

Discussion of the First Research Question

The first research question is “How do Turkish EFL teachers in Turkish state schools make use of sociocultural theory in their classrooms?” This research question tries to find the answers for ‘what’ and ‘how’. Therefore, the observation scheme and researcher’s journal were used and analyzed.

The observation scheme revealed interesting results in terms of sociocultural practices. While the learners are quite willing to participate in the primary school. The learners in the lower secondary school and upper secondary school, especially in the 11th grade, the learners are quite indifferent to the course. Lantolf and Frawley (1984) designed a narration task and found that the intermediate learners of foreign language are object-regulated. The task is more important rather than the speakers. The researchers also claim that the learners’ self-regulation is problematic because of the classroom climate. This is congruent with the findings of the present study. The learners are indifferent to the learning environment and learning English. They prefer dealing with their mobile phones or other courses.

The learners in the primary school have high level of self-regulation whereas the learners in the lower secondary and upper secondary schools are other regulated learners. This can also be related with having variety in their learning. Compennolle and Williams (2012) conducted a research study about how self variation can help learners improve their academic skills over a term. They examined two learners of French and find out two different language oriented people. While one of them uses variation in the course for her academic achievement. The other learner perceives this learning process as another identity development for her future life and approach the language in that way.

This is in line with the results of the learners' self dedication. When they think that English is not just a course, but a language which will be beneficial to them for their future life they engage in the learning language more eagerly.

The analysis of observation schemes revealed that the teachers sometimes use their native language. When the students do not understand the instructions or complex topics, the teachers switch to L1. Antón and DiCamilla (1999) state that the use of L1 is helpful for language learning, because it provides an effective collaborative dialogue environment for learners and the native language acts like 'a critical psychological tool'.

The teachers generally use recast to correct the learners' errors rather than using scaffolded feedback. If the teachers had used scaffolded feedback, more scaffolding would have been observed and it may have been more helpful for the learners, because the studies on scaffolded feedback have revealed that it has higher effects on language development of the learners (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1992; Rassaei, 2014).

The teachers generally make use of traditional methods while teaching even if they use technology for their classes. This situation can be related to what Prensky (2001) called those teachers as 'Digital Immigrants'. As, the professional experience of those teachers are between 15-20 years, keeping up the learners of this age can create a barrier for them Also, Borg (2003) states that the teachers generally tend to teach how they are taught. Therefore, they may keep using those techniques.

Discussion of the Second Research Question

The second research question asks "How do Turkish EFL student teachers, teachers and learners perceive the sociocultural theory?" To answer this research question, essays and interviews were employed.

While the essays showed the ‘how’ question, the interviews answered ‘how’ and ‘why’. The student teachers, learners and the teachers support having different activities requiring the students come together and work as a group. However, the present situation shows that teachers do not practice those activities. Furthermore, they talk about the hard part of the bringing the students out of school hours.

The student teachers complain about the classrooms’ seating design, as it is quite important for grouping the students. However, for one term, the teachers never changed the seating arrangement for the students.

Another interesting point for the student teachers is that there is not any peripheral learning which engage the learners in the classroom even though the teachers stated that the teachers should help the learners as learning a language is quite tough job.

The interviews with the students have showed that the students who are good at English are more willing to do activities related to English. In addition, the learners who are weak just focus on passing the course, but ignore extra activities related to English. This finding is congruent with the findings of Lantolf and Genung (2002). In their study, they analyze the experiences of a doctoral student enrolled in a Chinese classroom to meet the requirements. The findings show that at first, the learner was quite enthusiastic about learning Chinese, but the instructor’s practices did not meet the learner’s expectations. What is more, the student just focused on passing the course.

In the classroom observations, it was seen that the teachers do not use group work for the learners. In addition to this, during the interviews the teachers mentioned that the students do not use target language within group activities, but they use their native language. However, Antón and DiCamilla (1999) state that use of L1 during group work is beneficial for language learners, as it improves the collaborative dialogue of the learners. The learners perform three important functions which are ‘construction of scaffolded help’, ‘establishment of intersubjectivity’, and ‘use of private speech’.

Discussion of the Third Research Question

The third research question asked “Do the practices of the Turkish EFL teachers comply with the English Language Curriculum in terms of sociocultural theory?” For this English language curriculum of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools were analyzed, and then compared with the findings of the observation schemes.

The comparison of the teachers' practices and curriculum revealed some common points; however, there are also a lot of lack of points which the curriculum offer, but the teachers do not practice in their classroom. This is congruent with what Kırkgöz (2008) found in her study regarding the Communicative Oriented Curriculum and the practices of the teachers. The study's findings revealed a gap between curriculum objectives and teachers' practices in terms of the curriculum objectives in the classroom.

Previous studies (Büyükduman, 2005; Mersinligil, 2002, Sevinç, 2006) conducted in Turkey concerning the relationship between the suggestions of the curriculum and the practices of the teachers reached a clash between the mentioned concepts. Even though those studies are about the previous curriculum which were being used before 2005, their findings are of great importance in terms of showing the similar findings.

Furthermore, there are aother studies around the world supporting the incongruences between the curriculum suggestions and the teachers' practices (Carless 2003; Holliday, 1996; Nunan, 2002).

Conclusion

The current study aimed at finding the sociocultural practices of the teachers in state schools, and three different school group, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools were taken as a case. Besides this aim, the study tried to find out perceptions of student teachers, teachers and learners toward the sociocultural theory. It also explored the congruencies and incongruences between the classroom practices and the curriculum suggestions.

The analysis revealed that teachers exploited the principles of sociocultural theory, but the portion of it was not so high. Even though the teachers stated the importance of sociocultural practices during the interviews, they stated the difficulty of implementing those in the classroom because of some factors, such as preparation time, instruction time and the lack of guidance.

Student teachers were not happy for all practices of the teachers they observed, and they suggested what they would do if they were the teachers of those classrooms. Furthermore, the teachers and the students supported the use of mediation, scaffolding, dynamic assessment in English classes which the curriculum has already suggested, but the data collection and analysis have showed that the teachers did not implement every aspect of the curriculum.

Implications for Practice

The current research is beneficial in terms of describing the present situation in the English classrooms of state schools. It is quite clear that more research studies are needed in terms of sociocultural theory, especially in countries where English is taught as a foreign language.

The findings of the study have revealed that the teachers should use current teaching methods for the learners and engage them with the lesson. This can be handled via continuous professional development (Johnson, 2006).

In addition, it is quite clear that the student teachers who will become the future teachers should be trained in a detailed way about the sociocultural concepts so that they can be beneficial for their learners.

Suggestions for Future Research

Each research study brings about new research studies, as the findings of the studies will form new research questions for the researchers or the same study can be replicated to see the new results. There are two research suggestions that can be research topics for further research.

Firstly, the student teachers just observed the classes and stated their perceptions in the essays and observation schemes. They can be observed as teachers and compared their practices and perceptions.

Secondly, nearly all sociocultural constructs were analyzed in this research study, classrooms can be recorded with a video tape focusing on just one or two constructs of the theory and analyzed in a detailed way.

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APPENDICES



Appendix 1. Sociocultural Classroom Observation Scheme (SCOS)

School:

Class Grade:

Number of Students:

Seating Arrangement:

Date:

Observer's Name-Surname:

Dear Observer, please tick 'Yes'/'No' section based on your observation, and if your answer is 'Yes', write your evidences, please.

	Yes	No	Evidence
1. Does the teacher paraphrase his/her instructions when the students don't understand?			
2. Does the teacher check the instruction?			
3. Does the teacher simplify his/her language when the students do not understand a specific topic?			
4. Does the teacher provide an example before the tasks?			
5. Does the teacher adopt different roles (e.g., tutor, resource, participant, prompter) to secure the students' learning?			
6. Does the teacher's corrective feedback (e.g., explicit correction, recast, clarification request) lead students to find out the answers?			
7. Does the teacher use positive feedback to support the learning of the students?			
8. Does the teacher make use of his/her gestures/mimics/eye contact in order to be effective in the classroom?			
9. Does the teacher encourage the students' participation?			
10. Does the teacher benefit from authentic materials to support learning environment?			

	Yes	No	Evidence
11. Do the students simplify their language when their friends don't understand?			
12. Do the students produce utterances based on teacher's instruction/input/feedback or their friends' utterances?			
13. Do the students correct themselves immediately when they are corrected by the teacher?			
14. Do the students regulate their language flaws when they are corrected?			
15. Are the students offered props/materials in error correction?			
16. Do the students correct themselves?			
17. Do the students contribute to each other during tasks or pair/group works?			
18. Are the students willing to participate in the activities?			
19. Do the students help each other to accomplish the tasks?			
20. Do the students help improve each others' conversational skills?			

Dear observer,

You need to ask to the students in order to get information for this part of the observation sheet.

	Yes	No	Evidence
21. Are the students assessed with projects to promote their language learning?			
22. Are the students offered pop-quizzes as a part of assessment?			
23. What kinds of exams do the students take (e.g., essay type, multiple choice, short answers)? What do you think about the examinations in terms of their contributions to students' language development?			
24. What kinds of assignments are given to the students? What do you think about their effectiveness?			
25. Do the students do outside-the-class assignments, such as pair/group works, drama works, and projects and so on?			
26. What's the amount of individual and pair/group assignments?			

Please, share your ideas on this lesson and add other points regarding sociocultural principles and practices.

Factors behind the Questions

		Numbers of the Questions	Mediation	Vertical Scaffolding	Sequential Scaffolding	Instructional Scaffolding	Conversational Scaffolding	Immediate Imitation	Other Regulation	Object Regulation	Self- Regulation
Teacher	Instruction	1	X			X					
		2	X	X							
	Input	3	X			X					
		4	X			X	X				
		5	X	X	X	X	X				
	Feedback	6	X	X		X	X				
		7	X			X	X				
	Nonverbal Communication	8	X			X	X				
	Verbal Immediacy	9	X	X	X	X	X				
Students	Output	10	X		X	X					
		11	X			X	X				
		12	X			X	X				
		13	X					X	X		
		14	X			X		X	X		
		15	X					X		X	
		16	X								X
	Pair Work/Group Work	17	X	X	X	X	X				
		18	X		X		X				
	Collaboration	19	X		X		X		X		
		20	X				X		X		
	Assessment	21	X			X					
		22	X			X					
		23	X			X					
	Assignment	24	X			X					
		25	X			X					
		26	X			X					

Appendix 2. Weekly Essay-1

Task 1: What do you think about the climate of the classroom based on your observations you have done so far? Please, discuss your ideas considering the dynamics of the classroom environment of the class which you have been observing. And, state your ideas in an essay format, please. The following questions will lead you while writing your essay.

Leading Questions

- How is the design of the classroom?
- Who is the power in the classroom? How this power affects the students' learning?
- How is the relationship between teacher and students as well as the relationship among the students?
- How do the classroom design affect students' performance and relationship?
- How is the seating arrangement of the classroom? Does it promote the interaction or decrease it?
- Do the classroom climate help students feel secure to express themselves in the classroom? Please specify.
- Are there any evidences of peripheral learning? What kinds of examples have you observed?
- What would you change if you were the teacher of this classroom?

P.S. The essay will have to be at least 1 page in Times New Roman, 12 font size and 1.5 space. And, send your essays to kinikbetul@gmail.com, please.

Thank you😊

Appendix 3. Weekly Essay-2

Task 2: What are your ideas about the teacher, his/her teaching methodology, and instructional strategies? Please, state your ideas in an essay format regarding the practices of the teacher whose classroom you have been observing. You can make use of the following questions while writing your essay, but you can also share your ideas considering the practices of the teacher apart from these questions.

Leading Questions

- What kinds of instructional strategies does the teacher make use of during teaching process?
- Is the teacher enthusiastic or reluctant to teach? How do the students respond to enthusiasm or unwillingness of the teacher?
- Is the teacher's methodology suitable for the students in terms of age and level?
- Does the teacher dominantly use L1 or L2?
- Which aspects are good and bad in terms of his/her teaching style?
- What does the teacher do to increase the amount of interaction among the students?
- What are the roles of the teacher? How do these roles affect students?
- What would you do differently if you were the teacher?

Appendix 4. Weekly Essay-3

Task 3: What do you think of the students in the classroom where you have been observing? Discuss your ideas considering the nature of the students' ages and levels. While writing your essay, make use of the following questions, please.

Leading Questions

- What are the students' roles in the classroom?
- How are the students engaged in the learning process?
- What kind of a relationship exists between the teacher and the students? How this relationship affects the students' learning?
- What kinds of activities are implemented to activate the students?
- Do the students interact with each other during the learning process?
- Are the students interested in the lesson? Please, specify the reasons even if your answer is "No".
- What causes the differences between the weak and strong students in terms of language learning?
- What would be different for these students if they were in your classroom?

Appendix 5. Weekly Essay-4

Task 4: State your ideas about the activities and the materials used in the classroom you have been observing, please. Please, explain the activities, and elaborate them considering their effectiveness on the students. The following questions will lead you while writing your essay.

Leading Questions

- What kinds of activities have been included in the classroom?
- What do you think about the effectiveness of the activities?
- What kinds of materials have been used for the course?
- Is there any dominant material which have been used in the courses? What do you think of it/them?
- Which aspects of the materials/activities support the students' learning?
- Are the activities/materials suitable for the students?
- Which activities/materials would you use if you taught this class?

Appendix 6. Weekly Essay-5

Task 5: What are your ideas about the assignments (homework) given to the students in the classroom you have been observing? State your ideas in an essay format and make use of the leading questions, please.

Leading Questions:

- What kinds of assignments have been given to the students?
- Are the assignments effective for learners?
- Do the assignments require group work or individual work?
- Which aspects of the assignments have been good/bad?
- Have the assignments been presented by the students?
- Have the assignments been checked in the classroom?
- What kinds of assignments would be more suitable for these students?

Appendix 7. Weekly Essay-6

Task 6: What do you think of the assessment methods used in the classroom you have been observing? State your ideas in an essay format, and make use of the leading questions, please.

Leading Questions:

- What kinds of assessment methods have been used in the learning process?
- Are the assessment methods process oriented or product oriented?
- What do you think about the effectiveness of the assessment procedures?
- Are the students happy with the assessment procedures?
- Do the assessment methods contribute to the students' language development?
- Which methods would be appropriate to assess the students' performance?

Appendix 8. Weekly Essay-7

Task 7: What do you think about the students, the teacher as well as the school management in your practicum? In addition, please discuss your observations, ideas and concerns about the policies and current educational practices the Ministry of National Education in terms of English language instruction in the state schools.

Leading Questions:

- What did you think about the factors asked above before your observation?
- What/who is the most responsible factor for the practices in the classroom?
- Have you changed your ideas after your observation period?
- What should be changed in terms of classroom practices?

Appendix 9. Interview Questions for the Teachers

1. What kinds of activities do you use in your classes to promote your students' learning?
2. Do you believe in the effectiveness of group work or pair work?
3. Do you think that errors of students should be corrected immediately?
4. What kinds of assignments should be given to the students?
5. Do you believe in the importance of interaction? How do you secure interaction?
6. Are there any activities you use to support students' learning outside the classroom?
7. Are you content with the course book you are using?
8. What do you think about Turkish National ELT policy? Does it match with the classroom practices you or your colleagues generally apply?

Appendix 10. Interview Questions for the Students

1. Do you like learning English?
2. How do you study English at home?
3. What do you do in your English classes to practice English?
4. Are you happy with the activities you are doing in English classes?
5. What else do you want to be provided in English classes?





GAZİ GELECEKTİR..