



An Evaluation of Second Grade English Language Teaching Program of Primary School: Tokat Case *

Ebru ÇİFTÇİ CİNKAVUK**, Kürşat CESUR***

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Abstract

This research study was carried out in Tokat province with 101 active English language teachers in 2nd grade primary state schools in 2016-2017 Academic Year in order to analyse the active English language teachers' opinions on the 2nd grade English language teaching program in primary state schools focusing on its general characteristics, content, objectives and assessment aspects. Mixed research method was used in the study. As a quantitative data collection technique, "Teachers' Program Evaluation Questionnaire", which was formed by the researchers based on the relevant review of the literature, was conducted. As for the qualitative data collection, interviews were done with 10 active English teachers teaching students at the 2nd grade primary state schools in Tokat. The quantitative data were analysed by using descriptive statistics through SPSS 22. Additionally, content analysis was applied to analyse the qualitative data using Microsoft Excel. According to the findings of the study, participant teachers' opinions are undecided about the general characteristics, content, objectives and assessment aspects of the program. They neither agree nor disagree that the program is effective in general. They also believe that the program has some deficiencies to be revised and supplemented. Further suggestions were provided to improve the program.

Keywords: English language teaching programs, 2nd grade eltp, program evaluation.

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** Ministry of Education, İğdır Secondary School, Tokat, Turkey; ebiru_ciftcii@hotmail.com

*** Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Faculty of Education, English Language Teaching Department, Çanakkale, Turkey; kursatcesur@comu.edu.tr

İlkokul 2. Sınıf İngilizce Öğretim Programının Değerlendirilmesi: Tokat Örnekleme*

Ebru ÇİFTÇİ CİNKAVUK**, Kürşat CESUR***

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Öz

Çalışma Tokat ilinde devlet okullarında görev yapan 101 İngilizce öğretmeni ile 2016-2017 eğitim-öğretim yılı içerisinde gerçekleştirilmiştir ve 2. sınıf İngilizce öğretim programının genel özellikler, içerik, hedefler ve değerlendirme boyutları hakkında İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin görüşlerini incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Çalışmada karma araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu kapsamda, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin İngilizce öğretim programının genel özellikler, içerik, hedefler ve değerlendirme boyutları hakkındaki görüşlerini ortaya çıkarmak için ilgili alan yazın taramasına dayanılarak araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilmiş olan "Öğretmen Program Değerlendirme Anketi" kullanılmış ve Tokat ilinde hâlihazırda 2. sınıflara İngilizce öğretimi veren 10 İngilizce öğretmeni ile röportaj yapılmıştır. Nicel veriler betimsel istatistik tekniği ile SPSS 22 programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Öte yandan nitel veriler kodlama yapılarak içerik çözümleme tekniği ile Microsoft Excel kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğretim programının genel özellikler, içerik, hedefler ve değerlendirme boyutları hakkındaki görüşlerinin kararsız olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Programın eksiklikleri olduğu ve bu eksikliklerin programı kullanan paydaşların görüşleri göz önüne alınarak gözden geçirilmesi ve tamamlanması gerektiği belirtilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonunda programın geliştirilmesi için öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: İngilizce öğretim programları, 2. sınıf İngilizce öğretim programı, program değerlendirme.

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**^{ID} Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, İğdır Ortaokulu, Tokat, Türkiye; ebiru_ciftcii@hotmail.com

***^{ID} Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, İngilizce Dili Eğitimi, Çanakkale, Türkiye; kursatcesur@comu.edu.tr

1. Introduction

Many developments and changes have blossomed in our modern world day by day. In parallel with cultural and socio-political transmissions among cultures and desires of modernisation, English language learning has gained importance increasingly throughout the history of Turkish Education system (Arslan & Eraslan, 2003). In this respect, considering English language teaching, Ministry of Education (MoNE) has created, analysed and changed many teaching programs up to now. In each period, teaching philosophies formed bases for different programs; also, syllabus and curriculum changes have been conducted along with teaching programs. Unfortunately, a permanent, up to mark, and current teaching program has not been created and launched despite of many attempts and efforts (Kırkgöz, 2008). The results of analysis about the reasons of the failures in education systems showed that failures have emerged because of some factors such as inefficient evaluation of outcomes and implementation processes of the programs, lack of positive or negative feedback on the programs, inefficiency of cooperative studies with all shareholders of the system especially school administrators and teachers as implementers and end-users of the programs, and also unsuitable features of the programs considering the needs of the learners and economic, political and social needs of the country (Çankaya, 2015). Among all factors that caused failures in implementing processes of teaching programs, the greatest common factor is evaluation. It is a must to evaluate all teaching programs in order to analyse its effectiveness (Brown, 1995) and appropriateness to reach the goals that are expected at the end of the process by providing feedback to all shareholders of the program.

As an important constituent of a teaching program, program evaluation holds all components together, gives meaning to each of them because it is the heart of the curriculum design and accepted as a starting point to professionalize the teaching program; therefore, it is the most important point within the structure of teaching program (Peacock, 2009). It is an ever-growing and complicated process that provides findings about the failed parts, deficiencies of the program, and makes recommendations to fill the deficiencies and, by this means, improves the quality of the program (Brown, 1995; Karataş & Fer, 2009; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004).

Finally, considering all the needs and deficiencies, the MoNE has revolutionised in English language teaching field with a new English Language Teaching Program (ELTP hereafter). New curriculum claimed to blow the cobwebs away and bring some changes in English language teaching field. Lowering English language learning age to 2nd grade has been one of the most important improvements (Gürsoy, Korkmaz, Damar; 2013). In parallel to these improvements, some research studies were carried out regarding the evaluation of these changes in the curricula of different grades.

1.1 Literature Review

Though there have been research studies on the evaluation of primary 3rd grade (Çankaya, 2015), 4th and 5th grade (Er, 2006) ELTPs, 2nd grade ELTP attracted the attentions of many researchers. As children start learning English at the 2nd grade, the curriculum of this grade was newer and needed much more importance to be attached when compared with those of others. Therefore, different researchers aimed to evaluate the 2nd grade program both at national and local levels.

Alkan and Aslan (2014) evaluated the 2nd grade English language curriculum by considering 163 volunteer teachers' opinions from different regions. They utilized a quantitative methodology by collecting data using a questionnaire. Similarly, İyitoglu and Alci (2015) collected the qualitative data from 14 teachers working at ten different state primary schools in five different cities of Turkey. Different from these two studies, most of the research studies evaluating the 2nd grade ELTP were carried out at local level. Firstly, Yıldırım and Tannriseven (2015) aimed to identify English teachers' views on the English language curriculum of the 2nd grade of primary

education in their qualitative study conducted with seven primary school English teachers who teach English in six different public schools in Tarsus, Mersin. Similarly, Bulut and Atabey (2016) evaluated 2nd grade ELTP using semi-structured interview technique together with the participants in Diyarbakır. In the same year, Özüdoğru and Adıgüzel (2016) used the illuminative evaluation model in their study and they collected the data from 21 English teachers teaching 2nd grade classes in Uşak through semi-structured interviews. Finally, Kandemir and Tok (2017) made use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools to evaluate all the components of the 2nd grade ELTP. They administered the survey to 104 English teachers who were working and teaching 2nd grade English courses in the primary schools of Pamukkale and Merkezefendi districts of Denizli province. Though there have been some similar results from these studies, each district has yielded different results to be discussed. Thus, the researchers decided to carry out the study in a different setting, Tokat province, where there were nearly 135 English teachers who teach English to 2nd grades to see what the outcomes of the current practices are.

1.2 Problem Statement

MoNE and Tokat provincial directorate of national education supported the curriculum change and provided schools with needed audio-visual materials and teachers with training in need in order to create a positive atmosphere for young learners in local. Especially, for the 2nd grade students, they supported both the teachers and the school administrators. Their effort should be evaluated; therefore, this study was also supported in the Tokat province to see the reflections of the curriculum change.

There have been many research studies on evaluating the 2nd grade curriculum as mentioned above. Being another local study on the 2nd grade curriculum, this study sheds light on the current practices in a different setting. To see the advantages and disadvantages of the practices implemented in the Tokat province and to evaluate the efficiency of these supports and the reflections of the current practices, the researchers determined to conduct this study on 2nd grade curriculum considering its general characteristics, content, objectives, and assessment aspects in the opinions of the English language teachers. Furthermore, the study aims to find out the advantages and disadvantages of the program, the problems faced during the implementation process of the program, and what the teachers suggest to improve the program.

2. Methodology

The mixed research method was used in the study in which quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, and approaches are combined (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The study focuses on assessing and analysing the primary 2nd grade ELTP regarding its general characteristics, content, objectives, and the assessment aspects by taking active teachers' opinions into account in the light of the following research questions:

1. What are the active teachers' opinions on the general characteristics, content, objectives, and the assessment aspects of primary 2nd grade ELTP (2013)?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the program?
3. What kind of problems do the teachers face during the implementation process of the program?
4. What are their suggestions to improve the program?

2.1. Setting and Participants

“Purposeful sampling requires access to key informants in the field who can help in identifying information-rich cases” (Suri, 2011: 66). Therefore the researchers made use of purposeful sampling both in the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. During 2016-2017

Academic year, nearly all of the 135 English teachers who were teaching to primary 2nd grade students in Tokat state schools were reached; however, 101 of them attended the study. Participants' general characteristics are presented in terms of their gender, academic degree, and teaching experiences in primary 2nd grade in the following Table.

Table1. The Distribution of Gender, Academic Degree, and Teaching Experience of Teachers

		n
Gender	Female	87
	Male	14
Academic Degree	Bachelor	95
	Master	5
	Doctorate	1
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	69
	6-10 years	17
	11-15 years	11
	16 and more	4

2.2. Data Collection Procedure

This study was conducted in the primary state schools because many private schools have already started teaching English to young learners, but teaching English to young learners is a new attempt in state schools; and compared to private schools, state schools have disadvantages such as materials and suitable learning environment; therefore, official permission in order to implement the Teachers' Program Evaluation Questionnaire was asked. After written permission was taken, all primary state schools in Tokat district were visited. Then, the researchers met English language teachers and explained the aim of the research study. 3 weeks later, researchers visited the schools again in order to get the answers back. In addition to the Teachers' Program Evaluation Questionnaire, 10 participants attended the interview voluntarily. Their answers were kept as anonymous. The interviews and their transcriptions took nearly 3 weeks to be completed. As a result, data collection process took about 2 months as some schools were visited more than twice to collect the data.

2.3. Instruments

In order to reveal the active teachers' perceptions on the primary 2nd grade ELTP mixed research method was used in this research study. In order to collect data, "Teachers' Program Evaluation Questionnaire" which was developed by the researchers was conducted. The first part of the questionnaire aims to gather personal information about the participants. The second part intends to collect information about general characteristics, content, objectives, and assessment aspects of the primary 2nd grade ELTP with 71 items. 5 point Likert scale was used in the study to allow the individuals to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement. While constructing the questionnaire, studies on program evaluation and development were reviewed by the researchers (Alkan & Arslan, 2014; Erdoğan, 2005; Erkan, 2009; Güneş, 2009; Hismanoğlu, 2013; İnam, 2009; Küçük, 2008) and an item pool was formed. Considering the sample questionnaires and the item pool, an initial version of the "Teachers' Program Evaluation Questionnaire" was designed. In addition, one expert from Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University and one expert from Uludağ University were consulted. By taking the expert ideas into consideration, some items were left out and necessary arrangements were done. Finally, some techniques such as back translation technique were used in order to assess the accuracy of translation and increase the validity and reliability of the instrument (Lin, Chen & Chiu, 2005; Khosrovani & Dastjerdi, 2013). A final version of the questionnaire (see Appendix) was formed and it was found that the questionnaire is highly reliable with the Cronbach's alpha coefficients $\alpha = .952$. On the other hand, an item pool was formed for interview questions and some studies about different curricula were analysed (Gürsoy, Korkmaz & Damar, 2013; Hismanoğlu, 2013; İnam, 2009; İnceçay, 2012; Kırkgöz, 2011; Küçük, 2008). Common questions

were revealed. Later opinions of two experts' from Uludağ and Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Universities were received and final version of the interview questions was formed.

All participants were asked to attend the interviews but 10 of the participants would like to join an interview at the end of the questionnaires to explain further and clarify the results gathered from the questionnaire. The interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. They were recorded and transcribed later on. The four interview questions are as in the following:

1. What are the advantages of the program?
2. What are the disadvantages of the program?
3. What kind of problems do you face during the implementation process of the program?
4. In order to improve the program, do you have any suggestions? If yes, what are they?

2.4. Data analysis

The data gathered by conducting questionnaire were analysed using SPSS 22. In order to find answers to the first research question, mean values and the standard deviation of the items were calculated and presented. To analyse the data more precisely, the scale was divided into five categories ranging from 1.00–1.79 = strongly disagree, 1.80–2.59 = disagree, 2.60–3.39 = neutral, 3.40–4.19 = agree and 4.20–5.00 = strongly agree (Hemmati & Mojarrad, 2016).

As for the analysis of the qualitative data, responses to each open-ended question were analysed with the help of content analysis. The researchers followed the set of analytic activities proposed by Lune and Berg (2017) while analysing the data collected through interviews. Firstly, data were collected and made into text. Then, codes were analytically developed and identified in the data. Later, codes were transformed into categorical themes. Finally, participants' answers were sorted by these categories, identifying similar phrases, patterns, and relationships. In other words, after the close reading of each interview transcript, the researchers created a worksheet at Microsoft Excel program and coded in large "chunks" with each participants' responses in one column and the researchers' interpretations to them in the next column (Meyer & Avery, 2009). Lastly, data were categorized into meaningful and reasonable items in order to reveal common themes.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings Obtained from the Questionnaire

So as to find out the most favoured statements of English teachers on the general characteristics of primary 2nd grade ELTP, descriptive statistics was used. Table 2 displays the mean scores of participants' opinions on the items of the questionnaire.

Table 2. Mean Scores of Teachers' Opinions on the General Characteristics of the Primary 2nd Grade ELTP

Overall Characteristics	\bar{X}	SD
State schools have problems during the implementation process of the program such as deficiency of materials (Item 10)	4.55	.805
Program gives learners the opportunity to form a positive attitude towards learning English (Item 8)	3.69	.924
Teachers are kept informed of the program adequately (Item 7)	2.19	1.10
Weekly course hours are suitable in order to implement the program (Item 13)	1.70	1.00
Total mean value of the 13 Items	3.30	.585

As can be inferred from Table 2 above, participants are neutral about the general features of the new primary 2nd grade ELTP with the mean value of 3.30. Secondly, teachers report that

program gives learners the opportunity to form a positive attitude towards learning English (\bar{x} item 8 = 3.69) which reveals that program has the ear of learners. On the other hand, participants strongly agree that deficiency of the materials is the biggest problem in their teaching practices (\bar{x} item 10 = 4.55). They also believe that they are not kept informed about the program adequately (\bar{x} item 7 = 2.19). They have difficulties to plan the lessons in the prescribed time (\bar{x} item 13 = 1.70).

Table 3. Mean Scores of Teachers' Opinions on the Content of the Primary 2nd Grade ELTP

Content	\bar{X}	SD
The content suggests learners stress-free and amusing learning environment (Item 21)	3.60	.938
The sequence of the content is well designed (Item 35)	3.60	1.02
The content includes activities that are easily implemented in crowded classes (Item 28)	2.35	1.13
The content gives students the opportunity to use integrated four skills (Item 15)	2.29	1.09
Total mean value of the 24 Items	3.24	.593

Considering the total mean value of the participants' opinions related to the content of the new primary 2nd grade ELTP, it can be stated that the participants are again neutral (\bar{x} total= 3.24) about the content of the new primary 2nd grade ELTP. When the items are analysed one by one, the participants believe that the content suggests learners stress-free and amusing learning environment (\bar{x} item 21 = 3.60) revealing the fact that content supports learners with interactive and entertaining games and activities in learning process. Additionally, participants believe that the sequence of the content is well-designed (\bar{x} item 35 = 3.60). However, participants believe that the content does not include activities that are easily implemented in crowded classes (\bar{x} item 28 = 2.35) and they do not agree that the content gives students the opportunity to use integrated four skills (\bar{x} item 15 = 2.29) showing that the content cannot develop learner's all skills together.

Table 4. Mean Scores of Teachers' Opinions on the Objectives of the Primary 2nd Grade ELTP

Objectives	\bar{X}	SD
Objectives of the program are based on Multiple Intelligence theory (item 48)	3.53	.933
Objectives of the program enhance creative thinking (Item 43)	3.44	.994
Objectives of the program meet students' English learning requirements (Item 44)	2.85	.983
Total mean value of the 13 Items	3.24	.593

As can be inferred from Table 4, the participants neither agree nor disagree that the objectives of the program (\bar{x} total = 3.24) have been set clearly. They believe that objectives of the program are based on Multiple Intelligence theory (\bar{x} item 48 = 3.53) showing that students' other development areas are not underestimated in the program. Similarly, teachers think that objectives of the program enhance creative thinking (\bar{x} item 43 = 3.44). Notwithstanding, teachers neither agree nor disagree that the objectives of the program meets students' learning requirements (\bar{x} item 44 = 2.85).

Table 5. Mean Scores of Teachers' Opinions on the Assessment Aspect of the Primary 2nd Grade ELTP

Assessment	\bar{X}	SD
The program assesses listening skill (Item 57)	3.74	.934
Assessment and evaluation techniques are in accordance with the objectives of the program (item 51)	3.48	.770
Activities are in designed considering classroom environment (item 68)	3.42	.909
The program assesses writing skill (Item 55)	2.29	1.00
The program assesses speaking skill (Item 56)	2.22	.998
Total mean value of the 21 Items	3.01	.527

As Table 5 reveals, again teachers are neutral about the assessment aspect of the program (\bar{x} total = 3.01). Considering each item related to assessment aspect of the primary 2nd grade ELTP, the participants believe that the program assesses listening skill (\bar{x} item 57 = 3.74). Similarly, they think that assessment and evaluation techniques are in accordance with the aims of the program (\bar{x} item 51 = 3.48). However, the results of the items 55 and 56 show that teachers do not believe that the program assesses writing skill (\bar{x} item 55 = 2.29) and speaking skill (\bar{x} item 56 = 2.22).

3.2. Findings of the Interview Questions

The results of the interview questions which were prepared in order to gather further in-depth data and have healthier results regarding teachers' opinions from various aspects are presented in this part. Three different headings based on the first question of the interview were formed according to the teachers' answers. Six of the participants' opinions revealed that early start to English is the most important advantage of the program. Similar to Cameron (2003), they suggest that younger is better. Some of the responses of the participants are as follows:

T2- Considering all the grades, it is an undeniable fact that the younger students are better than the others. They are eager to learn something new. Especially funny and cute activities attract their attention and they try to learn all the topics in the shortest time.

T9- I think, the biggest advantage of the program is starting learning English at primary 2nd grade because I can honestly say that the younger is the better considering my teaching experience for 3 years. If they have a teacher who is skilful, lovely, hardworking, and devoted to working for children, students, who wants to learn more and open to new ideas and information, love English and have more fun during lessons and also look forward to the next English lessons.

In addition, participants stated that the activity choices are well-designed considering students' readiness level and age. In a general sense, students are at 6 or 7 years old; therefore, they are keen on games and colourful activities similar to the ones in the new primary 2nd grade ELTP. Some of the comments can be seen as in the following:

T5- Especially, listening activities and various funny and energetic activities in the course get students love English. We integrate drama and role play activities into the lessons and students look forward to simple drama activities.

T7- In my opinion, activities, songs and games in the program are like warm-up for the other English language courses in the future. My students imagine that English language teaching class is a magical world and think there must be a charmed forest in the magical world; so, they wait for a rabbit to get in their magical world.

Another advantage mentioned by a participant is that the program is appropriate to the standards of CEFR (Common European Framework Reference of Languages) which are seen as basic standards around the world considering language education. These results are in the same line with the results of the Teachers' Program Evaluation Questionnaire. The analysis of the items 29, 31, 32, 47, and 59 that is about the appropriateness of the program with CEFR reveals the similar results. Therefore, considering students' readiness level, emphasizing listening and speaking skills rather than writing and reading are logical as stated by Council of Europe (2001) that the focus is on spoken interaction with simple statements. Besides MoNE (2015) suggests that students do not need notebooks at primary 2nd grade; that is why, developing writing and reading skills are not among the objectives of the new primary 2nd grade ELTP. On the other hand, the focus is on listening and speaking skills. Students should learn the words or lyrics of the songs by listening and repeating. In addition, portfolio assessment which is supported by CEFR is a need in the whole program. Here is the comment of a participant:

T1- In parallel with CEFR standards, students' speaking and listening skills are more emphasized considering students' readiness level. Most of the students are not ready to

write in English. Therefore, beyond teaching all the topics of English to students, the most desired objective is making students love English. Also, we, as teachers, should use portfolio assessment in order to assess learners' development period.

The analysis of the second interview question revealed 3 headings about disadvantages of the new primary 2nd grade ELTP. The first disadvantage is curriculum intensity. The analysis of item 12 and item 20 in the questionnaire support the results of the interview question. Some statements of the participants are below:

T9- The curriculum is so intense that English courses are slid into chaos.

T1- The intensity of the curriculum tires me most of the time, I cannot even think my little students' thoughts.

T4- Because of intense grammar topics we have difficulty. Students cannot acquire the grammar topics easily so teachers have to spend more hours to teach the students the same the topic more than the allocated time in the curriculum.

Besides, as revealed by the analysis of item 13 of the Teachers' Program Evaluation Questionnaire, inadequate course hours are accepted as another disadvantage. In primary 2nd grades, there are two hours of English courses in a week and unfortunately it is not adequate in order to handle with all the objectives. A participant verifies this fact in his/her statement:

T3- I have trouble with course hours. Time never suffices. We have lots of activities to do during the lessons, but unfortunately we have to leave them for another course.

The last disadvantage mentioned by the participants is material inadequacy. Some participants stated that the program cannot be implemented around the country considering the income level and equipment of schools. Statements are as follows:

T4- In addition to the intense curriculum, we lack convenient materials. As a teacher, I have difficulty while doing the activities.

T10- I work in a village school and we do not have most of the materials in order to do the activities with my students. At least, we need a slide projector and a computer. However, unfortunately, we have none of them. From this point of view, we can say that the program is not appropriate to be used in every parts of Turkey.

Finally, two of the participants stated that the program has no disadvantage.

The opinions of the participants about the third interview question are coded thematically and it was found out that there are four main problems pointed by the participants. One of the problems is the "inadequacy of materials such as technological devices". Most of the state schools in Turkey suffer from lack of materials to use in lessons such as technological devices, visual and written materials, and this result was corroborated by the results of the item 10 of Questionnaire (\bar{x} item 10 = 4.55). A participant verifies this by stating:

T4- I want to mention about material deficiency. I am in a village and handling an activity perfectly as planned is impossible in our class environment. Because of the material deficiency, I have difficulty in doing the listening activities.

Another problem commented by the participants is "individual differences". Children starting from 56 month-old are set to start to elementary schools. Therefore, in classes nearly half of the students differ from each other in age level. As a result, individual differences cause problems in classes as stated with the result of item 27 in the Teachers' Program Evaluation Questionnaire. Comments are as follows:

T7- The main problem is students' cognitive, physical and social-emotional developmental differences. They are all different from each other. Therefore, I have problems and difficulties while preparing an activity or trying to do an activity in class environment.

T10- Creating a material for each student tires me as they are so different from each other. Individual differences caused by emotional, cognitive, and psycho-motor developments create big disparities among students.

“Classroom management, especially in crowded classes” is one of the main problems faced by the participants during courses. Some of the participants’ comments are as follows:

T8- Because of their age, students easily lose attention. Also, my classes are very crowded. Therefore, handling an activity in the classroom is nearly impossible.

T2- In my classroom, there are 42 students. In addition to individual differences caused by students’ special needs, we do not have enough time to handle an activity such as a role play or drama activity with each student. Therefore, we have to choose different students to do activities in each lesson.

The last problem faced by the participants is the “teachers’ experience level”. Teachers must be ready to work in every class environment and teach English curriculum to students at each grade. Some of the comments of the participants are below:

T3- I have been teaching English for 15 years. I did not attend to any Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) course at the university; therefore, I have not realised that children are very different from the students in middle school. We are working with a new graduated English teacher this year and under favour of him, I have learned lots of new techniques and how to approach to a young English language learner. His most significant contribution to my career is that I learned game-based teaching and now I know how to teach English by using games and activities which are appropriate to my students’ level.

T10- Teachers do not implement the program in the same way. I had a TEYL course at university, and attended to some seminars on the new ELTP at the beginning of the academic year. I use different materials such as videos, games, songs in addition to course book; however, some of our colleagues just follow the course book.

The analysis of the last interview question revealed that participants’ suggestions strike a balance on four headings. The first one is all language classes around the country should be provided with the necessary materials. The following statement exemplified this view:

T4- In order to make the curriculum effective all around the country, firstly differences among the schools, countries and classes must be effaced. I work in a village school with lots of problems without parents’ help, but another English teacher works in a school in downtown with the luxury of various materials and parents’ help. Only then, can we share our ideas about the advantages and disadvantages of the available curriculum.

Another opinion as a suggestion to develop the program is that teachers should be supported with in-service teacher-training courses or seminars about the program at the beginning of the year as seen in the following quotation:

T9-... I had TEYL course at university, but most of the English teachers have not. Thus, we look from different perspectives to even a simple topic about how to implement the program or how to approach to primary 2nd grade students in order to make English appealing to students and make students love English. At least, they should be provided with a seminar or in-service training on teaching English to young learners and the new education system.

The course book should involve more games and activities because students are at childhood and they can play whole day without a break is the third suggestion stated by the participants.

T7- ... the more games we have, the happier the learners are in English classes. More enjoyable and target-driven games and activities should be added to the curriculum.

The last suggestion is that course hours should be increased to at least three hours. The following script revealed these views:

T8- When I consider the course hours and the curriculum, in order to implement the whole program in the given time is nearly impossible because our students' attention span is so short that in a forty-minute lesson they can focus on the course and the same activity about 15 minutes. Then, we play games with the whole class.

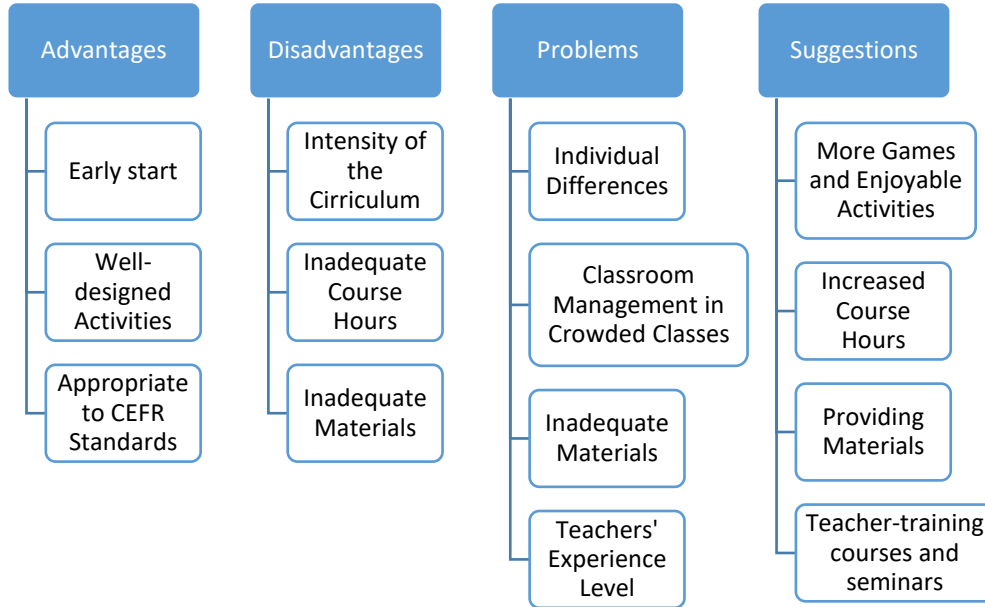


Figure 1. The Results of the interview Questions

In brief, as seen in the Figure above, participant teachers provided some suggestions for each disadvantage and problem they expressed.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

At the end of the research study, many significant points about the primary 2nd grade ELTP were revealed. In its broadest sense, it is reported that despite the deficiencies such as inadequacy of the materials and class hours, students develop positive attitude towards learning English under favour of this program which is in line with the findings of Alkan and Arslan (2014), Dinçer (2016), İyitoğlu and Alcı (2015), Küçük (2008), and Yıldırım and Tanrıseven's (2015) studies. Additionally, the results showed that the content of the program provides students with stress free and amusing learning environment. Similarly, Bulut and Atabey (2016) and Çankaya's (2015) studies revealed that the content of the program attracts learners' attention with amusing topics, stress free and enjoyable activities, and interactive and entertaining games. Another result of the study suggests that the content is based on constructivist theory in line with the findings of Alkan and Arslan's (2014) study; however, it is difficult to implement the program in crowded classes as stated in Büyükduman (2005) and Cihan and Gürten's (2013) studies. Also, in the light of MI theory, objectives of the program are designed to enhance creative thinking by supporting students with various viewpoints from different areas and these findings are in correlation with those of Cihan and Gürten (2013) and Küçük (2008).

As to evaluation aspect of the program, in general, alternative assessment techniques that are consisted with CEFR descriptors are suggested in the program. The results of the study overlap with the findings of Büyükduman (2005), Cihan and Gürten (2013), Dinçer (2016), Gürsoy, Korkmaz and Damar (2013), and Kaya and Ok's (2016) studies in which it is suggested that program assesses reading skill. Additionally, evaluation techniques and methods are in accordance with the objectives of the program. Similarly, Alkan and Arslan's (2014) study supports this finding. On the other hand, the findings of Dinçer (2016) and Yıldırım and

Tanrıseven's (2015) studies assert the contrary that assessment and evaluation techniques are not compatible with the objectives of the program and do not assess learners' learning development whether they reach the objectives or not. Moreover, the study suggests that assessment and evaluation techniques of the program do not assess writing skill in the same vein with the findings of Dinçer (2016), Gürsoy, Korkmaz and Damar (2013), Kaya and Ok (2016), Yıldırım and Tanrıseven (2015) as a desired result as mostly speaking and listening skills should be assessed considering students' literacy level and readiness in the 2nd grade.

This study also revealed that state schools have the deficiency of materials; therefore, all classes need to be supported with needed materials in order to put the program into practice effectively which is also in parallel with the findings of Dinçer (2016), Kaya and Ok (2016), Kızıldağ (2009), and Özüdoğru and Adıgüzel's (2015) studies. Moreover, similar to the findings of Alkan and Arslan (2014), Dinçer (2016), Gürsoy, Korkmaz and Damar (2013), Kaya and Ok (2016), Yıldırım and Tanrıseven's (2015) studies, it was found that weekly course hours are insufficient to implement the program.

The findings of the study suggest some implications for all shareholders of the program. First of all, in order to implement the program effectively, in-service trainings or seminars are the most crucial needs. Most of the teachers have not had any in-service training or seminar on the ELTP. Before the program amendments, workshops should be organized by MoNE to give opportunity to all active teachers to share their own ideas on pros and cons of the current program and what kind of changes the current program needs. Additionally, the other shareholders (students, parents and administrators) should also be included in the process.

There are various differences such as classroom size, material deficiency etc. around the country. In order to teach effectively in classrooms, some materials are needed which many classrooms do not have. As an important material, course book is one of the main components of teaching and learning process. Course books should be redesigned and supported with more colourful and practical activities in order to attract learners' attention more. As a basis of communicative teaching method, more suitable teaching and learning environments to communicate and interact with other students from different places in the target language should be supported.

Finally, further research studies on ELTPs should be carried out to support the findings of this study in different regions of Turkey. Further studies should consider opinions of teacher educators, parents, and students and should focus on the opinions of all shareholders on how to enhance the quality of the program rather than analysing the current program.

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Appendix: Teachers' Opinions Questionnaire

Dear Teachers,

This research study is carried out in Tokat province in order to analyse the active English language teachers' opinions on the 2nd Grade English language teaching program.

Thanks for your participation.

How long have you been an English teacher of 2nd grade? _____

Have you ever been to an in-service training course about the new 2nd grade curriculum?

Yes () No ()

Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1					
General Characteristics					
1- Program is easy to be understood.	5	4	3	2	1
2- Program leads teachers to plan lessons.	5	4	3	2	1
3- Program is student oriented.	5	4	3	2	1
4- Program attracts learners to attend lessons actively.	5	4	3	2	1
5- Program provides guidance for teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
6- Program gives learners opportunity to enjoy English while learning.	5	4	3	2	1
7- Teachers are kept informed of the program adequately.	5	4	3	2	1
8- Program gives learners opportunity to develop a positive attitude towards learning English.	5	4	3	2	1
9- Program leads the learner to be an autonomous learner.	5	4	3	2	1
10- State schools have problems during the implementation process of the program such as deficiency of materials.	5	4	3	2	1
11- It is enjoyable to do the activities of the program for both teachers and learners.	5	4	3	2	1
12- The program is comprehensible for the 2 nd grade learners.	5	4	3	2	1
13- Weekly course hours are suitable in order to implement the program.	5	4	3	2	1

Content					
14- The difficulty level of the content is designed considering learners' cognitive development.	5	4	3	2	1
15- The content gives students opportunity to use integrated four skills.	5	4	3	2	1
16- The topics are attractive to learners.	5	4	3	2	1
17- The content provides teachers and learners with flexible teaching and learning styles.	5	4	3	2	1
18- The content allows learners to learn by experiencing and practicing English.	5	4	3	2	1
19- The content provides learners with realistic activities to transfer learning to practise in real life.	5	4	3	2	1
20- The content provides learners with efficient amount of vocabulary which 2 nd grade students should learn.	5	4	3	2	1
21- The content provides learners with stress-free and amusing learning environment.	5	4	3	2	1
22- The content is designed from simple to complex.	5	4	3	2	1
23- The content is ordered in the sequence of social context.	5	4	3	2	1
24- The content is easily implemented in class environment.	5	4	3	2	1
25- The content builds communicative activities.	5	4	3	2	1
26- The course book is suitable for learners' age and level.	5	4	3	2	1
27- The content is well designed for individual differences of learners.	5	4	3	2	1
28- The content includes activities that are easily implemented in crowded classes.	5	4	3	2	1
29- The content includes enjoyable activities with songs, dramas, role plays and games.	5	4	3	2	1
30- The content is designed considering cultural features of the country.	5	4	3	2	1
31- The content develops learners' speaking skill.	5	4	3	2	1
32- The content develops learners' reading skill.	5	4	3	2	1
33- The content develops learners' writing skill.	5	4	3	2	1
34- The content develops learners' listening skill	5	4	3	2	1
35- The sequence of the content is well designed.	5	4	3	2	1
36- The curriculum can be implemented all over the country.	5	4	3	2	1
37- The content gives learners opportunity to gain the acquisitions of the program.	5	4	3	2	1

Objectives					
38- Aims of the program are designed considering students' cognitive development.	5	4	3	2	1

39- Aims of the program are designed considering students' emotional development.	5	4	3	2	1
40- Aims of the program are designed considering students' psycho-motor development.	5	4	3	2	1
41- Aims of the program help teachers reach to the general aims of teaching English.	5	4	3	2	1
42- Aims of the program vary according to individual differences of students.	5	4	3	2	1
43- Aims of the program enhance creative thinking.	5	4	3	2	1
44- Aims of the program meet students' English learning requirements.	5	4	3	2	1
45- Aims of the program are determined considering student-centred teaching and learning.	5	4	3	2	1
46- Aims of the program are teacher-centred teaching and learning styles.	5	4	3	2	1
47- Aims of the program are determined from known to unknown in accordance with constructivist approach.	5	4	3	2	1
48- Aims of the program are based on Multiple Intelligence theory.	5	4	3	2	1
49- Aims of the program are determined in accordance with principles of CEFR.	5	4	3	2	1
50- Aims of the program are consistent with each other.	5	4	3	2	1

Assessment					
51- Assessment and evaluation techniques are in accordance with the objectives of the program.	5	4	3	2	1
52- Assessment and evaluation techniques of the program are suitable for students' learning levels.	5	4	3	2	1
53- Students' portfolios are assessed in the program.	5	4	3	2	1
54- The program assesses all four skills together.	5	4	3	2	1
55- The program assesses writing skill.	5	4	3	2	1
56- The program assesses speaking skill.	5	4	3	2	1
57- The program assesses listening skill.	5	4	3	2	1
58- The program assesses reading skill.	5	4	3	2	1
59- The program assesses students' English learning process.	5	4	3	2	1
60- Assessment and evaluation techniques are not well-designed.	5	4	3	2	1
61- At the end of the each unit quizzes are implemented.	5	4	3	2	1
62- Quizzes and tests are designed considering individual differences of learners.	5	4	3	2	1
63- The program assesses students' in-class performance.	5	4	3	2	1
64- The program assesses whether objectives of the program are reached.	5	4	3	2	1
65- Activities are in accordance with students' cognitive development.	5	4	3	2	1

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66- Activities are in accordance with students' emotional development.	5	4	3	2	1
67- Activities are in accordance with students' psychomotor development.	5	4	3	2	1
68- Activities are designed considering classroom environment.	5	4	3	2	1
69- Students easily understand instructions of activities.	5	4	3	2	1
70- Assessment and evaluation techniques are determined in order to maintain permanent learning.	5	4	3	2	1
71- Assessment and evaluation techniques give opportunity to give feedback to students.	5	4	3	2	1

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