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ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ ÇOCUKLARA DİL ÖĞRETİMİ ALANINDA EĞİTİMİ*

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ÖZET

Çocuklara dil öğretiminin teorik bilgisinin değeri ve önemi göz önünde bulundurularak, TPRS (Okuma Becerileri ve Hikâye Anlatımı ile Dil Öğretimi) yöntemine dayanan "Okuma ve Hikâye Anlatımı" tekniği kullanılarak 30 öğretmen adayına 3 hafta süren yoğun bir çocuklara dil öğretimi eğitimi verilmiştir. Çalışma ön-son test esasına dayandırılarak eğitimlerden önce ve hemen sonra katılımcılara farklı yaş grubundaki (5-8, 9-12, 13+) çocuklara dil öğretimi hakkında bildikleri, bu yaş grubu çocukların öğrenme tercihleri ve kendilerinin hangi yaş grubuna dil öğretmeyi tercih ettikleri ve bu yaş çocuklarla çalışmanın zorlukları sorulmuştur. Ön test ve son test sonuçları kıyaslandığında, verilen eğitimlerin katılımcılar üzerindeki olumlu etkilerini görmek mümkün olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Genç öğrencilerle öğretim, öğretmen adayları, okuma ve hikâye anlatımı, İngilizce öğretimi

TRAINING TEACHER TRAINEES ON TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS

ABSTRACT

Considering the importance of theoretical knowledge on teaching young learners, 30 pre-service English Language teachers were given a three-week intensive training on how to teach English to very young learners using 'Reading and Storytelling' technique, which is based on TPRS (Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling). The study uses a pre-posttest technique and these 30 pre-service teachers were asked before and after the training what they know about the learning characteristics of different age groups (5-8, 9-12, 13+) and which age group they would prefer to teach and the challenges of teaching young learners. When the results of the pre and posttest are compared it is possible to see the positive effect of the training on the participants.

Key Words: Teaching young learners, teacher trainees, reading and storytelling, teaching English.

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1. INTRODUCTION

There is a widespread belief among researchers that adults have difficulty learning a second or foreign, especially after a certain age, while children, exposed to learning at an early age, seem to be more successful than adults (Cook, 1991). A great number of experts in the field support the idea of a critical period in learning a second or foreign language (Lenneberg, 1967; Ellis, 1986; Scovel, 2001).

“In most European countries, students begin studying their first foreign language as a compulsory school subject between the ages of 6 and 9. This varies by country and sometimes within a country, with the German-speaking Community of Belgium – one of the three federal communities of Belgium– starting its 3-year-olds on a foreign language” (Delvin, 2015)

In Turkey, the Ministry of Education (MNE) has recently included English language course into the curriculum for primary schools. In 2012 MNE made some changes and started the course at second grade (at the age of 6.5-7). In this recent situation, we believe that pre and in-service teachers of English need to be familiarised with the basic tenets of teaching very young learners. With this aim in mind, we have included a group of fourth grade pre-service teachers studying at a state university in İzmir and have given them a short course on teaching English to very young learners using ‘Reading and Storytelling’ technique, which is based on Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS). The study group included only pre-service teachers studying at Buca Faculty of Education, Dokuz Eylul University. Therefore, this project aims to introduce pre-service language teachers to teaching English to very young learners using ‘Reading and Storytelling’ technique, which is based on TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling).

1.1. Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS)

Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) is a language teaching method developed by a Spanish teacher Blaine Ray in the 1990s, which aims at teaching the basic structures and vocabulary of the target language, to develop fluency in the language learner, and to make the learner able to express intelligibly in speech what one wants or needs to, without undue difficulty. Ray was inspired by TPR and Krashen and applied its basic tenets to his Spanish teaching classes.

The first theory that builds TPRS is Total Physical Response, TPR. It is a language teaching method developed by James Asher, a professor emeritus of psychology at San José State University. It is based on the coordination of language and physical movement. In TPR, instructors give commands to students in the target language, and students respond with whole-body actions. The method is an example of the comprehension approach to language teaching. The listening and responding (with actions) serves two purposes: It is a means of quickly recognizing meaning in the language being learned, and a means of passively learning the structure of the language itself. Grammar is not taught explicitly, but can be learned from the language input. TPR is a valuable way to learn vocabulary, especially idiomatic terms, e.g., phrasal verbs (Brown, 2007).

Asher developed TPR as a result of his experiences observing young children learning their first language. He noticed that interactions between parents and children often took the form of speech from the parent followed by a physical response from the child. Asher made three hypotheses based on his observations: first, that language is learned primarily by listening; second, that language learning must engage the right hemisphere of the brain; and third, that learning language should not involve any stress. The total physical response is often used alongside other methods and techniques. It is popular with

beginners and with young learners, although it can be used with students of all levels and all age groups (Asher, 2009).

James Asher developed the total physical response method as a result of his observation of the language development of young children. Asher saw that most of the interactions that young children experience with parents or other adults combine both verbal and physical aspects. The child responds physically to the speech of the parent, and the parent reinforces the child's responses through further speech. This creates a positive feedback loop between the parent's speech and the child's actions. Asher also observed that young children typically spend a long time listening to the language before ever attempting to speak, and that they can understand and react to utterances that are much more complex than those they can produce themselves.

From his experiences, Asher outlined three main hypotheses about learning second languages that are embodied in the total physical response method. The first is that the brain is naturally predisposed to learn language through listening. Specifically, Asher says that learners best internalize language when they respond with physical movement to language input. Asher hypothesizes that speech develops naturally and spontaneously after learners internalize the target language through input, and that it should not be forced. Total physical response is an example of the comprehension approach to language teaching. Methods in the comprehension approach emphasize the importance of listening on language development, and do not require spoken output in the early stages of learning. In total physical response, students are not forced to speak. Instead, teachers wait until students acquire enough language through listening that they start to speak spontaneously. At the beginning stages of instruction students can respond to the instructor in their native language. While the majority of class time in total physical response is spent on listening comprehension, the ultimate goal of the method is to develop oral fluency. Asher sees developing listening comprehension skills as the most efficient way of developing spoken language skills. Lessons in TPR are organized around grammar, and in particular around the verb. Instructors issue commands based on the verbs and vocabulary to be learned in that lesson. However, the primary focus in lessons is on meaning, which distinguishes TPR from other grammar-based methods. Grammar is not explicitly taught, but is learned by induction. Students are expected to subconsciously acquire the grammatical structure of the language through exposure to spoken language input, in addition to decoding the messages in the input to find their meaning. This approach to listening is called codebreaking. Total physical response is both a teaching technique and a philosophy of language teaching. Teachers do not have to limit themselves to TPR techniques to teach according to the principles of the total physical response method. Because the students are only expected to listen and not to speak, the teacher has the sole responsibility for deciding what input students hear.

1.2. Input hypothesis

The second theory behind TPRS is The Input Hypothesis, proposed by Dr. Stephen Krashen (2003), which suggests that language development is a function of the input received by the learner. Krashen asserts that there are two distinct ways of learning language: language "learning" and language "acquisition". Language "learning" is learning that takes conscious effort on the part of the learner. It is characterized by learning grammar rules, memorizing vocabulary lists, and performing speaking drills. Language "acquisition" is learning that is subconscious and takes little or no effort on the part of the learner. It is characterized by listening and understanding to messages, reading

interesting books and articles, and other enjoyable activities that take place in the language being learned. According to Krashen's theory, the only thing that can lead to fluency in the language is language "acquisition". Language "learning" can only be used as a way to consciously edit speech or writing, and it is never the cause of spontaneous, unrehearsed speech or writing. In light of this theory, TPRS teachers spend the vast majority of their class time on input-based activities. The activities that include a language learning component all take up a relatively short amount of class time. On the other hand, the pure acquisition activities take up large amounts of time. For typical TPRS classes, the ratio works out at about 5% of time spent on learning and 95% of time spent on acquisition.

1.3. TPRS

TPRS lessons use a mixture of reading and storytelling to help students learn a foreign language in a classroom setting (Hedstrom, 2012). The method works in three steps:

In step one the new vocabulary structures to be learned are taught using a combination of translation, gestures, and personalized questions; in step two those structures are used in a spoken class story; and finally, in step three, these same structures are used in a class reading.

Throughout these three steps, the teacher will use a number of techniques to make the target language comprehensible to the students, including careful limiting of vocabulary, constant asking of easy comprehension questions, frequent comprehension checks, and very short grammar explanations known as "pop-up grammar". Many teachers also assign additional reading activities such as free voluntary reading, and there have been several easy novels written by TPRS teachers for this purpose.

Proponents of TPR Storytelling, basing their argument on the second language acquisition theories of Stephen Krashen, hold that the best way to help students develop both fluency and accuracy in a language is to expose them to large amounts of comprehensible input. The steps and techniques in TPR Storytelling help teachers to provide this input by making the language spoken in class both comprehensible and engaging (Pippins & Krashen, 2015; Dziedzic, 2012). In addition, TPR Storytelling uses many concepts from mastery learning. Each lesson is focused on just three vocabulary phrases or fewer, enabling teachers to concentrate on teaching each phrase thoroughly. Teachers also make sure that the students internalize each phrase before moving on to new material, giving additional story lessons with the same vocabulary when necessary (Watson, 2009).

TPR Storytelling is broadly divided into three steps, with each being regarded as essential for a successful program (Ray & Seely, 1997).

Step one: establish meaning: In this step the students are introduced to the new vocabulary phrases for the lesson. There is no set number of new items to be introduced in a given session; however, three is generally considered the maximum number that can be effectively taught in a lesson. Limiting the phrases like this allows the teacher to focus on them and provide lots of repetitions for the students. This emphasis on thoroughly learning new material is designed to give the students a feeling of confidence and to provide sufficient repetitions to facilitate acquisition (unconscious control in recognition and output) of the new items.

The three phrases (structures) are written on the blackboard, or another place where the students can easily see them, and are translated into the students' native language if a

shared native language is available. If students forget what a phrase means, they can glance at the board and check the meaning at any time.

The teacher may elect to practice the new phrases using gestures, in a style modeled after traditional TPR. This gives the students the chance to get used to how the phrases sound before hearing them in context. It is also intended to keep the atmosphere of the class relaxed and conducive to learning. Then the teacher asks questions about the students using the target phrases. These questions are known as Personalized Questions and Answers (PQA). To ensure these questions are comprehensible to the students, the teacher uses a variety of techniques and comprehension checks. Depending on the responses from the students and the atmosphere of the class, these questions might lead into a scene or skit often referred to as extended PQA. The details discovered by the teacher from PQA are often used as the basis for the class story (Varguez, 2009).

The goal of the teacher during step one is to provide as many spoken repetitions of the new structures in context as possible. This lays the foundation for student recognition of the structures during the storytelling time.

Step two: spoken class story: In step two, students hear the three structures many times in the context of a spoken class story. This story is usually short, simple, and interesting, and will contain multiple instances of the target structures used in context. The number of times the structures are heard is further increased by the circling questioning technique. TPRS teachers aim to say each new structure at least 50 times in the course of a story, and it is not unusual to hear those structures 100 times.

The teacher does not so much tell the story as ask the story. The teacher will usually use a skeleton script with very few details, and then flesh the story out using details provided by the students in the target language, making a personalized story for each class. Using the circling technique, teachers can ask for these new details while still keeping the target language completely comprehensible. Advanced TPRS teachers are able to improvise, creating stories solely based on student answers to questions about the day's vocabulary structures. The focus is always on the target structures, allowing the details to support those structures (Beal, 2011).

The actions in the story may be acted out by volunteers from the class. The teacher will usually try to select actors who won't be intimidated to keep the atmosphere as relaxed and fun as possible. When the teacher makes a statement that advances the story plot, the actors will act out that statement and then wait while the teacher continues with the circling questions. Ideally, the actors will act in a humorous, emotional, or otherwise memorable way. This helps students to make visual and emotional connections to the new language structures they are hearing.

The story will often take place in distinct locations. The main character in the story may start off in one location with a problem that they need to solve. They may move to a second location, where they try to solve the problem, but fail. Then they may move to a third location where they resolve the problem. This narrative device is used to maximize the repetitions of the target structures, to make the story easy to understand, and to make the target phrases easy to remember. "Keeping space", or having students or the teacher physically move to locations in the classroom that represent the various locations in the story, is an aid to students in understanding the action and language they are hearing.

After the story has finished the teacher may retell it in briefer form, retell it with errors having students correct them, or ask the students to retell the story, allowing them to use

the structures they just learned. This can be in pairs, in groups, or one student retelling in front of the class.

Step three: reading: Step three is where the students learn to read the language structures that they have heard in steps one and two. A number of reading activities are used in TPRS. The first, and most common, is a class reading, where the students read and discuss a story that uses the same language structures as the story in step two. The next most common activity is free voluntary reading, where students are free to read any book they choose in the language being learned. The other activities are shared reading and homework reading. For shared reading, as in first-language literacy activities, the teacher brings in a children's picture book, and reads it to the students in class, making it comprehensible through circling and other means. Homework reading, as the name implies, means assigning specific reading for students to do at home. All readings in TPRS are comprehensible to the students, which mean a very low ratio of unknown words (if any).

Class reading: The class reading is the most common type of reading activity in TPR Storytelling. TPRS teachers will typically include a class reading as part of every TPRS lesson sequence. This reading is based on the story that the students learned in step two - sometimes it can be the same story, and sometimes it uses the same language structures but with different content. Ideally, the story should be structured so that students will be able to understand most of the story on first view.

The teacher will often begin the class reading by reading aloud the story, or a portion of the story, then having the students translate it into their first language. This translation could be done with individual students, or chorally by the whole class. Translation is utilized selectively in this way as a direct method of ensuring an accurate understanding of the language meaning. As the students have already dealt with the language structures in steps one and two, they can often do this at a natural speed. If necessary, the teacher can help them translate any words they don't know. This process aims to ensure that all of the students understand all of the words in the reading, as well as the meaning of the reading as a whole.

Next, the class will discuss the reading in the target language. With the goal of making the discussion 100% comprehensible, the teacher will use the same TPRS techniques as in step two. Also, the teacher may make use of the pop-up grammar technique, where grammar points contained in the reading are explained very briefly - in 5 seconds or less. A limited number of grammar points are focused on in any particular reading and they are "popped up" frequently to enhance student retention. The discussion can touch on a wide range of topics related to the reading. Usually the teacher will ask questions about the reading itself, and about the students and their lives. Comparing and contrasting the material in the reading to the PQA and the story gives extra repetitions of the target structures. Discussions of culture and even history are possible, depending on the content of the reading and the level of the students.

Free voluntary reading: Many TPRS teachers include free voluntary reading (FVR) in their foreign language programmes. The research for FVR is very strong, and has consistently shown that FVR is as good as or better than taught language lessons. Free voluntary reading can be done in the classroom or at home, but many teachers prefer to focus on spoken stories in class, as it is hard for students to get listening input outside school. However, TPRS teachers often educate students about FVR in class, introducing books for them to read, and giving advice on good reading practices.

Shared reading: Shared reading, often called "Kindergarten Day", refers to the practice of the teacher reading a children's picture story book to the students. The name is intended to conjure up the image of being read to as a child, but the activity can be done with any age group. The teacher reads to the students, showing them the pictures, asking them questions, and generally making the story comprehensible.

Homework reading: As the name implies, this is a specific reading that is assigned to all students for homework. The teacher can give a quiz on the reading when the students get back to class. This can be used to prepare students for a class discussion, but it is usually only used with advanced students as at home the students may have no one to turn to if they get stuck.

1.4. Techniques

Many smaller teaching techniques are key to the success of TPR Storytelling. They range from the simple, such as speaking slowly or paying close attention to the students' eyes, to the complex, like the circling technique of asking questions. These techniques all have the same basic aim of keeping the class comprehensible, interesting, and as efficient as possible for language acquisition (Ray & Seely, 1997).

Circling

Example of circling "Dave wants a Ferrari."

Statement

Teacher: Class, Dave wants a Ferrari!

Students: Ooooh!

"Yes" question

Teacher: Does Dave want a Ferrari?

Students: Yes.

Either/Or question

Teacher: Does Dave want a Ferrari or a Mini Cooper?

Students: Ferrari.

"No" question

Teacher: Class, does Dave want a Mini Cooper?

Students: No.

"Wh" question

Teacher: Class, what does Dave want?

Students: Ferrari.

"Circling" is the practice of asking a series of simple questions about a statement, all in the target language. It is intended to provide repetition of the target vocabulary in context and enable students to learn the vocabulary, grammar and phonology of their new language in a holistic way. There are four basic types of circling questions: "yes" questions, "no" questions, either/or questions, and "wh" questions such as what, where, when, and how many. There are also more advanced circling techniques which teachers

can optionally include, such as the "three for one" and false statements. The teacher expects a response from the students after each statement or question, to check whether they have understood. If the teacher says a statement, then the students show that they understand by responding with an expression of interest such as "Oooh!" or "Aaaaah". If the teacher asks a question, then the students answer the question.

The students can answer the questions with just one or two words. The point of asking these questions is not to force the students to speak; rather, the questions are a method of checking comprehension while simultaneously repeating the target vocabulary in context. Therefore students need not worry about speaking in full sentences, and indeed this would detract from the process of concentrating on the input provided by the teacher. By answering using single words or very short phrases the students can keep their attention focused on the words to be learned.

Circling questions are always about content that has already been established. If a question is about something not yet established, then it is not considered a circling question. Consider the example on the right, "Dave wants a Ferrari." The following questions all ask for details not already established in the statement "Dave wants a Ferrari", and so are not examples of circling questions:

Teacher: Why does Dave want a Ferrari?

Teacher: How many Ferraris does Dave want?

Teacher: Where does Dave want to drive his Ferrari?

Staying in bounds

Staying in bounds means only using words that the students understand. Words that are in bounds are: Words that all the students have already learned, cognates and proper nouns that the students know.

Any words not in the list above are considered "out-of-bounds". Teachers must be on constant alert to keep their language in bounds. If a teacher does say something out-of-bounds, then the solution is to make it comprehensible, by writing it on the board and translating it immediately. If a teacher can stay in bounds all the time, and can speak slowly enough for the students to understand, then their class will be 100% comprehensible. This helps the students become confident in their language abilities and motivates them to succeed.

Slow

Even if students know the words that the teacher says, they will not understand if the teacher speaks too quickly. By speaking slowly, teachers give students more time to process the language and therefore they have more chance of understanding. When students first hear vocabulary or grammar, the necessary gap between each word can be as long as two full seconds. As students get used to the language structures, the teacher can slowly increase the speed.

Comprehension checks

The most direct way of finding out if students understand the language is to ask them what it means. In TPR Storytelling, teachers check comprehension early and often. There are a few ways of doing this.

Pop-up grammar

"Pop-up grammar" is the practice of making very short grammar explanations about the specific vocabulary students are learning at that moment. This technique is most often used in the class reading of step three, but it can be used at any time. The teacher draws the students' attention to a grammatical feature of one of the sentences they have been learning in the story, and explains it in five seconds or less. This brevity is intended to keep focus on the meaning of the language as much as possible.

Personalization

Personalizing the language class is a key way to make the target language interesting and meaningful for students, and personalization is used extensively in TPR Storytelling. A personalized message is much more likely to be comprehensible and interesting than one that is not personalized. Using this in classes can be as easy as asking students simple questions about their lives in the target language. Other good personalization techniques are the use of celebrities or of other characters the students know.

Teach to the eyes

Teaching to the eyes is a way of connecting with students while talking to them in the foreign language. More importantly, looking the students directly in the eyes while speaking gives the teacher a good indication of whether or not they understand what is being said. As the name suggests, doing this, teachers will look into the eyes of individual students while they teach. Teachers are encouraged to choose one student and talk to them directly. After they have finished talking to that student, they can pick another student in a different part of the room to talk to. Focusing attention on individual students like this helps teachers to assess student comprehension levels, and also keeps the teacher's intonation conversational and interesting. It is also helpful in preventing problems with discipline. Students' eyes will reveal if they understand or if there needs to be more clarification.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This is a quasi-experimental study in the sense that 30 pre-service teachers were given a semi-structured interview questions as pretest before the sessions of training and the same test was given as a post-test after the trainings.

2.2. Study Group

The research aims to gain insight about the effectiveness of the TPRS trainings given to the third year 30 pre-service teachers; therefore, the following research question has been formulated:

- Is there a difference in pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading through storytelling following the training sessions?

2.3. Training Sessions

The training sessions started on February 23 and lasted till March 10, 2017. Every Thursday pre-service teachers took 5 hours of training, in total 3 weeks after each they continued to study and practice for another 5 hours every Friday. Therefore, the participants took 15 hours of theory and 15 hours of practice courses on how to teach to

very young learners. The first week pre-service teachers were given a semi-structured questionnaire in the first hour. Then they learned the differences between teaching very young learners, teaching young learners and teaching teenagers and adolescents. TPRS tenets were introduced with thorough examples. After the theoretical framework was set up, two examples were conducted in the second week: Barbie story (adapted from Marge Piercy) and Richard Cory's story in the form of poetry (Edwin Arlington Robinson).

The third week, pre-service teachers were familiarized with the stimulus based techniques and personalization and they worked on the ways to tailor the story into the needs of the primary school kids and alternative ways for pre, while and post reading tasks.

2.4. Data Collection

4 questions were posed to 30 pre-service teachers as pre and posttests. These are:

- Which age group are you better at teaching, 5-8, 9-12, 13+? Why?
- What are the learning characteristics of these age groups?
- What are the challenges of teaching young learners?
- Would you love to teach young learners? Why? Why not?

3. RESULTS

Table 1.

Gender of the Participants

Gender	Pretest	Posttest
Female	23	20
Male	7	6
TOTAL	30	26

As can be seen in table 1, there were thirty students in the pretest (23 females and 7 males) but four of them did not take part in the posttest, so the number reduced to twenty six (20 females and 6 males).

Table 2.

Which Age Group they are better at

Age groups	N (pretest)	%	N (posttest)	%
5-8	8	26,6	6	23
9-12	8	26,6	9	34,6
13+	14	46,6	11	42,3
TOTAL	30	100	26	100

As we can see in table 2, the percentage of trainees who think they are better at teaching young learners (5-8) has dropped after the training. This is surprising because we have expected to raise their efficacy and confidence in teaching this age group with our training. With the age group (9-12), the percentage has increased. In contrast, with the age group thirteen and above, the percentage has decreased. As a result, we can say that even after the training, the trainees still had some doubts about their proficiency in teaching young learners

Table 3a.*The reasons for their age preference (pretest)*

Reasons	5-8	9-12	13+
Easy and fun to teach	5	8	8
Eager to learn	4	3	
The best age to acquire language	4		
Easy to talk to			10
Abstract thinking skills		3	

When we analyze the reasons in table 3a (pretest), the most striking point is that ten trainees prefer to teach the age group 13+ because they are easy to talk to and eight of them prefer that age group because it is easy and fun to teach them. However, eight trainees have given the same reason for the age group 9-12 and five of them for the age group 5-8. Other reasons mentioned for preferring the age group 5-8 are because they are eager to learn and that it is the best age to acquire language.

Table 3b.*The reasons for their age preference (posttest)*

Reasons	5-8	9-12	13+
Easy to teach	6	4	5
The best age to acquire language		1	
Easy to talk to / communicate		1	
Abstract thinking skills		1	
Eager to learn	4	1	1
Easy to make motivating lessons due to varied interests	1	3	1
Use games, drama and physical activities	2	3	

In table 3b (posttest), the trainees have mentioned more reasons but not necessarily for the age group 5-8, which was the focus of our training. However, more trainees have mentioned the reason that it is easy to prepare motivating lessons and use games, drama and physical activities. This result is a positive development because in the training they were shown the benefits of games, drama, etc. and how to prepare motivating lessons.

Table 4a.
Learning characteristics of the age groups (pretest)

	5-8	9-12	13+
Activities	20		
Games	18		
TPR	8	2	
Kinesthetic	5	6	
Motivated	2	2	6
Energetic	2		
Music	3		
Concretization	3		7
Confident	2		
Pair work	1		
Reading and Writing			5
Visual		4	
Creative Tasks		3	
Autonomy			7

In table 4a, we see the learning characteristics of the age groups. The trainees have mentioned ten different points for the age group 5-8: activities, games, TPR, kinaesthetic, motivated, energetic, music, concretization, confident and pair-work. Among these, activities and games are mentioned the most but only one (concretization) is problematic for very young learners. The trainees have mentioned five points for the age group 9-12: TPR, kinaesthetic, motivated, visual and creative tasks and only four points for the age group 13+: motivated, concretization, reading and writing, and autonomy.

Table 4b.
Learning characteristics of the age groups (posttest)

	5-8	9-12	13+
Activities (fun)	10	5	3
Games	13	8	2
TPR	8	2	
Kinesthetic	8	4	2
Music and songs	3	2	
Pair work, group work and cooperative learning	1		2
Reading and writing		1	5
Visuals, realia, pictures, videos	10	7	2
Autonomy	1	2	1
Motherizing	2		
Use of technology and computer games			2
It is challenging to teach		2	4
Memorizing	1		
Open to learning	1		
Stories	1		
Listening and speaking	2	3	2
Vocabulary teaching	1		
Grammar-based	3	3	
Repetition	3	1	
Low attention span	2		

As can be seen from table 4b (posttest), the trainees have written more characteristics in the posttest than they have in the pretest. It is interesting to see an increase not only in the age group 5-8, but also in the other age groups. We believe this is the most significant result of the training. The trainees have included the characteristics of the age group, which was the focus of the training. Some of these are repetition, low attention span, listening and speaking, visuals, realia, pictures, videos, songs, etc.

For the age group 9-12, the trainees have written activities, games, kinesthetic, music, songs, visuals, realia, pictures, videos, listening and speaking, etc. It is good to see that they have thought of using these with this age group as well since it is known that they are good for them too.

Lastly, for the third age group, 13+, they have included reading and writing, activities, games, use of technology and computer games, grammar-based, listening and speaking, etc. It is good to see grammar-based only in this group and also 'challenging to teach' in the age groups 9-12 and 13+, not in the age group 5-8.

Table 5.
Learning characteristics of the age groups

	Pretest	Posttest
They get bored easily	2	1
Mother tongue interference	10	2
Mother tongue is different	5	10
They cannot personalize	2	
No motivation	5	4
Low concentration span	4	3
Noise and chaos	4	1
Difficult to manage / discipline	2	3
Difficulty in concentration	5	4
Not serious	3	
Difficulty in learning (grammar, vocabulary, etc.)		6
Very active (learn through games, get bored easily)		4
Need for creative lesson plans		1
No opportunity to practice		1
TOTAL	42	40

When we look at the difficulties of teaching very young learners, in the pretest, they have mentioned ten points for forty-two times and in the posttest, twelve points for forty times. In general, there is no big difference between the two tests. However, when analyze the lists in detail, we can notice some differences. To illustrate, the most important difference is about the mother tongue interference. The number of trainees who think that students' mother tongue would be a difficulty has dropped from ten to two. Another one is about noise and chaos, the number has dropped from four to one, the trainees think they can deal with this issue more easily after the training. The next important result is about the difficulty in learning grammar, vocabulary, etc. Since we have mentioned the importance of teaching grammar implicitly at that age group, and unfortunately, in Turkey we identify teaching English with teaching grammar, they might have panicked. Similarly, since we have focused on the fact that this age group is active and get bored easily, and

learn through games, etc., again the trainees might have considered this a difficulty for them.

Table 6.

Willingness to teach very young learners

	Pretest (n)	%	Posttest (n)	%
Yes (easy to teach)	19	63,3	23	88,4
No, teenagers	6	20	3	11,5
Maybe	5	16,6	-	-
TOTAL	30	100	26	100

As can be seen in table 6, the percentage of willingness to teach very young learners have increased drastically, from 63,3% to 88,4%. The percentage of the unwillingness has dropped from 20% to 11,5%. Lastly, after the training, the number of trainees unsure of willingness to teach very young learners has dropped to zero. Below, we can see the reasons for their preferences mentioned in the posttest. Unfortunately, the trainees have not mentioned any reasons for their preferences in the pretest.

Reasons of answers NO (posttest)

- want to teach more academic topics,
- easy to communicate with adults and motivate them,
- it is difficult because it needs a great deal of responsibility.
- Reasons of answers YES (posttest)
- full of activities, it is easy for them to learn,
- love to spend time with children, know how to teach them,
- children are talented,
- it is fun to teach what I know,
- teach culture, broaden students' viewpoints,
- difficult but young learners are more motivated,
- enjoyable,
- open new doors to children,
- develop students' viewpoints, acquire a new culture,
- teach new things, enjoyable techniques,
- more motivated, eager to learn, curious,
- easy to learn at that age,
- develops them,
- enjoyable, students are eager to learn; games, puzzles, colored materials are nice,
- teaching a language is enjoyable,
- learning new cultures is advantageous,
- difficult but gives students new perspectives,
- it is enjoyable but only for a while, it is difficult to communicate,
- it is my dream,
- teaching is nice,
- difficult but challenging,
- it is enjoyable, students are full of energy and affection.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Because it is believed that “younger equals better”, not only Turkey but almost all countries have included English as a Second Language into their primary school curriculum. Rixon (1999; cited in Yıldırım & Doğan, 2010) suggests that two of the main reasons why countries make this decision are firstly to take advantage of benefits that are connected with the importance of English and secondly, to take advantage of benefits that derive from the nature and needs of children. The real contribution of foreign language teaching in state primary schools to national education in Turkey began with the educational reform increasing compulsory primary education from five to eight years, as defined by the Turkish Ministry of National Education in 1997 (Yıldırım & Doğan, 2010). Alongside with this reform, the compulsory age to start learning and teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) was lowered to grade four (with 10 year olds) in public schools and that decreased even to second grade (6-7 years) later. As a result of this situation, education faculties training future English teachers had to reconsider the “Teaching Young Learners” course and its content since it is not just young learners only but very young learners as well that they need to deal with. Young learners and therefore very young learners have their own unique learning styles and teacher trainees have to be trained accordingly. This study was designed to train pre-service language teachers to teaching English to very young learners using ‘Reading and Storytelling’ technique, which is based on TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling). The researchers hypothesized that the student teachers’ attitude towards teaching to very young learners would change positively after the trainings.

The results of this project are similar with Wei-Pei’s dissertation which she investigated the situation of teaching young learners in Taiwan. Since 2005, it has been government policy in Taiwan to introduce English in Grade 3 of primary schooling (when learners are generally age 9). The overall aim of her research project was to investigate some of the problems associated with the implementation of this policy by combining research involving teacher cognition. A questionnaire-based survey of a sample of teachers of English in Taiwanese primary schools (166 respondents) was conducted, focusing on teacher background and training, views about national and local policies, approaches to course content, methodology and teaching resources, and perceptions of their own proficiency in English and of their own training needs. 41 (25%) reported that they had neither a qualification in teaching English nor a general primary teaching qualification. The teachers did not feel secure to teach young learners as in our case. Our participants also stated that they prefer teaching older kids (+13) since it is easy to communicate with adults and motivate them, and that it is difficult with very young learners because it needs a great deal of responsibility.

Wei-Pei (2008) conducted a more in-depth survey relating to teacher perception of pre- and in-service training using a questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Although all 10 participants in this survey were officially classified as being trained to teach English in Taiwanese primary schools, the type and extent of their training varied widely and all of them expressed dissatisfaction with that training, noting that they had no confidence in the trainers’ own competence in teaching English to young learners. However, in our case, only one respondent stated that because of the need for creative lesson plans, s/he did not have any confidence in teaching to young learners. So when compared the participants of our study were more confident to teach to young learners.

Listing the difficulties of working with young learners, Hashemi & Azizinezhad (2011) mention that getting bored and losing interest after a short period of time are the most important ones which our participants also mentioned as low concentration span. In order to keep them engaged it is necessary to supplement the activities with lots of brightly colored visuals, toys, puppets, or objects. Using these activities, a language teacher can make the language input enjoyable and comprehensible as well. Using gestures and body language are very effective for young learners to gain understanding of language. Moreover, it is recommended that teachers keep children active and motivated, using a song, story, game, or a teacher- made activity.

To sum up, it is a fact that children have an immense learning capacity and this is what makes teaching English to young learners a demanding task. However, we have to admit that this process is rewarding too. It is obvious that classes for young learners require teachers who can think like children and adjust teaching accordingly in order to enter their world and activate their energy (Sarıgöz, 2003). In this vein, training young teachers on how to teach English to young learners gains importance (Cameron, 2001). These teachers need to adjust the way they think about the language they teach and the classroom activities they use. Nevertheless, we should not forget that knowledge about children's learning is seen as central to effective teaching.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

1. Giriş

Son dönemlerde, Türkiye İngilizcenin ikinci bir dil olarak öğretildiği birçok ülkede olduğu gibi, İngilizce dersleri ve eğitimi ilkököl müfredatına dâhil edilmiştir. 2012 yılında Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından alınan karar doğrultusunda Türkiye’de tüm devlet ilkökullarında ikinci sınıftan itibaren (6,5-7 yaşları arasında) İngilizce öğretime başlanmıştır. Bu süreç, elbette dil öğreniminin erken yaşta başlaması açısından faydalı fakat bu dersleri verebilecek öğretmenlerin alan bilgilerinin yetersiz olabilmesi açısından da erken verilmiş bir karar olarak nitelendirilebilir. Aslında bu karar beraberinde ülkemizde önemli bir sorun olan öğretmen eğitiminin önemini de tekrar gündeme getirmiştir. Çünkü bu genç yaş grubu ile çalışacak öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının bu çok genç diyebileceğimiz çocukluk dönemindeki öğrencilere dil eğitimi konusunda uzman olmaları gerekmektedir. Bu da bu öğretmenlerin öğrenimleri süresince aldıkları “Çocuklara Dil Öğretimi” dersinin içeriğinin yeniden gözden geçirilmesi anlamına gelir. Bu dersin içeriği çok genç diyebileceğimiz bu grubu da kapsayacak şekilde yeniden düzenlenmelidir. Bu çalışma, eksik olduğu düşünülen bu boyutun öğretmen adaylarına sunulmasını ve onların aldıkları bu kısa eğitim sonrasında çok genç yaş grubundaki öğrencilere dil eğitimi konusundaki görüşlerinin değişip değişmediğini test etmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Buca Eğitim Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümünde okuyan 30 öğretmen adayının çocuklara dil eğitimi alanında TPRS (Total Physical Response) (Okuma Becerileri ve Hikâye Anlatımı ile Dil Öğretimi) yöntemine dayanan “Okuma ve Hikâye Anlatımı” tekniği kullanılarak eğitilmeleri ve verilen ön-son testlerle bu konudaki görüş ve tutumlarının ölçüldüğü bir çalışmadır.

İspanyol öğretmen Blaine Ray tarafından 1990’larda geliştirilen Okuma Becerileri ve Hikâye Anlatımı ile Dil Öğretimi (Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Story telling, TPRS) hedef dilin temel yapısını ve kelime bilgisini öğretmeyi, öğrencide akıcılık sağlamayı, herhangi bir zorluk yaşamadan sözlü olarak kendini ifade edebilmeyi amaçlayan bir dil öğretim sistemidir. Özellikle genç yaş gruplarının dil öğrenim sürecini destekleyen bu sistemin bu çalışmada kullanılması dolayısıyla tesadüf değildir. Öğretmen adaylarının bu sistemi kullanarak hedef kitleye ikinci dil olarak İngilizce öğretimi konusundaki görüşlerini almak bu çalışmanın asıl konusunu oluşturmaktadır.

2. Yöntem

Çalışma yarı deneysel bir çalışma olup 30 öğretmen adayına yarı yapılandırılmış sorular eğitimlerden önce ön test ve eğitimlerin hemen arkasından son test olarak verilmiştir. Aslında Okuma Becerileri ve Hikâye Anlatımı ile Dil Öğretimi tekniğinin çocuklara dil öğretiminde ne kadar etkili olduğunun araştırıldığı çalışmada aşağıdaki araştırma sorusuna cevap aranmıştır:

- Öğretmen adaylarının çocuklara dil öğretimi alanında kullanılan TPRS tekniği ile dil öğretme eğitimleri, onların bu alandaki tutumları üzerinde etkisi olmuş mudur?

Eğitimler, 15 teorik 15 pratik olmak üzere toplamda 30 saat sürmüştür. Tüm eğitimler üç araştırmacı tarafından Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Buca Eğitim Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümünde verilmiştir. İlk hafta ön test verildikten sonra öğretmen adaylarına, çok genç çocuklar, çocuklar ve ergenlik dönemindeki gençlerin özellikleri hakkında teorik bilgiler sunulmuştur. TPRS tekniği detaylı örneklerle tanıtılmıştır. Teorik temel atıldıktan sonra ikinci hafta iki örnek üzerinde çalışılmıştır: Barbie hikâyesi (Marge Piercy) ve Richard Cory’nin şiir formunda hikâyesi (Edwin Arlington Robinson). Üçüncü hafta ise öğretmen adaylarına uyaran temelli teknik ve kişiselleştirme tanıtılmış ve kendilerinden verilen hikâyelerin okuma

öncesi ve okuma sonrası aktivitelerinin ilkökul öğrencilerinin ihtiyaçlarına göre uyarlamaları istenmiştir. Bu süreçte adaylar ellerine verilen metinleri bu yaş grubunun temel öğrenme özelliklerine göre yeniden şekillendirip nedenini araştırmacılar ile paylaşmışlardır.

30 öğretmen adayına aşağıdaki 4 soru sorulmuştur.

- Hangi yaş grubuna (5-8, 9-12, 13+) dil öğretmekte daha iyisiniz? Neden?
- Bu yaş gruplarının öğrenme özellikleri nedir?
- Erken yaştaki çocuklara dil öğretmenin zorlukları nelerdir?
- Erken yaştaki çocuklara dil öğretmek ister misiniz? Neden?

3. Bulgular, Tartışma ve Sonuç

Bu çalışmanın ana hedefi, öğretmen adaylarının Okuma Becerileri ve Hikâye Anlatımı ile Dil Öğretimi (Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Story telling, TPRS) kullanarak hedef kitleye ikinci dil olarak İngilizce öğretimi konusundaki görüşlerini ön ve son test destekli bir yarı deneysel çalışma ile almaktır. Sonuçlar gösteriyor ki, katılımcılar dâhil oldukları 30 saatlik eğitimlerden sonra özellikle erken çocukluk dönemindeki öğrencilere dil öğretimi konusunda iyi olduğunu düşünen katılımcıların sayısı azalmıştır. Aslında bu sürpriz bir sonuç çünkü eğitimlerden sonra öğretmen adaylarının bu yaş grubuna dil öğretimi konusunda daha etkin olmaları bekleniyordu. Bunun bir nedeni bu adayların erken çocukluk döneminde olan bu çocuklara dil öğretimi hakkında çok da fazla bilgiye sahip olmadıkları için öğretebileceklerini düşünmüş olmaları fakat sonra eğitimde bu süreç ile ilgili bilgilendikçe aslında bu işin zannettikleri kadar kolay olmadığını anlamaları olabilir.

Çalışmaya katılan otuz öğretmen adayı 13+ yaş grubunu tercih etmelerinin nedenini ise, bu yaş grubundaki öğrencilerle kolay iletişim kurabilmeleri ve onlara dil öğretmenin daha kolay ve eğlenceli olduğunu düşünmeleri olarak belirtmişlerdir. İleri yaş grubuna dil öğretmek her zaman katılımcıların ifadesine göre daha az riskli olarak tanımlanmıştır. 5-8 yaş grubunu tercih eden daha az sayıdaki katılımcı ise bu yaş grubunun öğrenmeye çok hevesli olduğunu ve dil öğrenimi için en uygun yaşta olduklarına inandıklarını söylemişlerdir. Aslında bu var olan bilimsel çalışmaların sonucu ve toplumda yer alan genel kanı da bu yönde olduğu için olabilir. Son test sonuçlarına göre öğretmen adayları daha fazla neden sıralamış ve 5-8 yaş grubu için oyunların kullanımı, drama ve fiziksel aktivitelerden bahsetmişlerdir. Bunlar da zaten eğitimde sık sık değinilen konulardır.

Katılımcıların, erken yaştaki çocuklara dil öğretimi hakkındaki görüşleri arasında ön test ve son test sonuçlarına göre farklılık olup olmadığına bakıldığında görülüyor ki iki test sonucu arasında istatistiksel bir fark bulunmamaktadır. Fakat liste detaylı incelendiğinde yine de bazı önemli farklar tespit edilmiştir. Örneğin, en belirgin fark ana dilin etkisi konusunda olmuştur. Anadilin dil öğrenim sürecine olumsuz etkisi olduğunu düşünen öğretmen adaylarının sayısı ondan ikiye düşmüştür. Diğer bir farklılık ise sınıftaki gürültü ve kargaşa konusunda öğretmen adaylarının azalan kaygıları olmuştur. Ön testte bunu sorun olarak belirten öğretmen adaylarının sayısı dörtten ikiye düşmüştür.

Sonuç olarak, çocukların dil öğrenimi için sonsuz bir kapasiteye sahip oldukları kabul edilen bir gerçektir ve bu gerçek bu süreci öğretmenler için daha da zorlu hale getirmektedir. Fakat bu sürecin olumlu yanları da vardır. Bu sınıflarda ders veren öğretmenlerin çocuklar gibi düşünebilen ve öğretim teknik ve metotlarını ve hatta materyallerini buna göre uyarlamayı bilen kişiler olmaları beklenmektedir. Bu bağlamda, şunu unutmamalıyız ki, çocuklara dil öğretimi hakkında bilgi sahibi olmak, bu yaş grubuyla çalışan öğretmenler için çok gereklidir.