
The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational & Social Sciences (EPESS), 2017

Volume 7, Pages 123-137

ICRES 2017: International Conference on Research in Education and Science

PRINCIPALS, PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS AND PARENTS' VIEWS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LIFE-FOCUSED FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROGRAM WHICH IS DEVELOPED FOR PRE-SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN

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Abstract: The present study was carried out to determine the views and thoughts of school principals, teachers and pre-school children's parents about the Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program (LFFLAP.) The research was carried out qualitatively. In order to collect the qualitative data, a semi-structured interview form, which was developed by the researcher, was used. The collection of qualitative data was between December 1, 2015 and February 19, 2016. Interviews were done with 38 participants. The participants were as follows: one principal, one assistant principal, four teachers and 32 parents. The qualitative data obtained in the study was analyzed by "content analysis" technique. Word Clouds Program was used to determine the relevant concepts and distributions that emerged during the interviews. As a result of analysis of various data obtained from parents, teachers, and the school principal and assistant principal in the study, positive opinions regarding the Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program were found. The themes that emerged during the interviews are as follows: active foreign language use, active transfer of foreign language, self-confidence in using foreign language, active interest/positive attitude towards foreign language, improvement in self-expression/pronunciation, sharing whatever is learned effectively, making progress actively in the foreign language and multiple experiences in foreign language learning (visual, auditory, etc.).

Keywords: Pre-school, life-focused foreign language teaching, foreign language acquisition.

Introduction

The early childhood period is a time of rapid development for children, in which they display significant mental, physical and language developments. In this period, covering between the ages of 0-6, a child acquires basic knowledge and skills, is best prepared for life and learns to adjust to the community in which s/he lives in (Oktay, 1999). For that reason, through qualitative and quantitative education the children of this age can acquire and practice social values such as beliefs, culture, and citizenship, internalize and pass them to future generations, as well as protect the environment and national values (MNE, 2013).

It is a common belief that children who encountered a foreign language at early ages tend to be more successful at learning and mastering languages (Asher and Garcia, 1969; Kuhl, 2004; Sparks and Ganschow, 1991). It is argued that adults are at a disadvantage regarding native-like speaking proficiency, since they are not exposed to language at very early ages (Gass and Selinker, 1994).

Numerous factors which are effective in the process of second language acquisition should be mentioned. When the literature is examined, it is seen that age, gender, social distance, socio-economic status, motherhood competence, parental education, mental and psychological factors and numerous environmental factors play a decisive role in this process (Demirel, Kaya, Ada, Dađlı, Ergun, Sünbül and Hoşgörür, 2001).

However, an effective foreign language teaching program for preschoolers is not mentioned in research literature. For the study, English is chosen as the target foreign language for the program due to its global

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- Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the conference

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benefits, families' willingness and priorities, as well as their financial support in their children's learning English. The lack of a standard foreign language program and model suggests that it is left to chance.

Education will be more realistic and meaningful for children when the topics required to be taught at pre-school are related to real life. It is even thought that such a program would help children feel more responsible and empowered emotionally. It is thought that a program prepared with such an approach will support the development of intelligence and social skills and the formation of community consciousness. Education is a basic purpose for a better life (Olsen and Clark, 1975).

The intention of the experience-oriented program is to ensure the persistence of knowledge. By making the new learnings meaningful, based on the traces that remain as the result of the individual's interaction with the environment, it makes it easier to establish and learn by associating new information with existing information. Otherwise, learning is ineffective without this framework. Interaction with elements in the teaching and learning environment is possible when the learning curve is over the threshold of experience (Senemoğlu, 2013). According to John Dewey, education is a lifelong process. For this reason, learning by doing and experiencing is the most effective type of learning. It is thus possible to divest from traditional techniques such as a memorizing and presenting information that prevent the child from discovering and thinking (Bender, 2005). The Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program has considered every moment of real life as an educational environment, and everything in the environment serves as fun learning materials.

Teachers and families have important roles in achieving the goals of the Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program. The primary role of the teacher is to get close to the students with a mother's affection and make them feel loved. The second role is to be a good model as a person (Korkmaz, 2012; Dağlıoğlu, 2012). The teacher has significant responsibilities in maintaining the interest of the child, not only with her personality as a role model, but also with her posture, gaze, movements and eye contact with the children (Çalışkan and Yeşil, 2005). Failure to use the target language outside the classroom is a major factor that negatively impacts learning a foreign language. For that reason, family support is important. Information about the child's family is useful in increasing their success. To help their children, it is not a big problem anymore whether families know a foreign language or not. Today, technology offers all the opportunities for language support activities at home—especially for students who want to learn English (Bekleyen, 2016). Research shows that a supportive approach of learning by the family and participation of the family in school activities have an effect on the child's school success. More than half of school success comes from the contribution of the family (Çelenk, 2003).

For this reason, the views of parents and teachers have been consulted to achieve stable outcomes regarding the effects of the LFFLAP process. In this way, foreign language education implemented by centering on the child during the pre-school years, when language development is especially critical, will support all of these aims to contribute to the success of the child's educational future.

The present study was carried out to determine the views and thoughts of school principals, teachers and pre-school children's parents about the Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program. For this purpose, in this research the effects of the LFFLAP on the ability of pre-school children to understand English and to use it actively in life is examined from the perspective of pre-school principals, teachers and parents. In the study, answers to the following questions were sought:

What are thoughts of school principals, teachers and parents on LFFLAP, its effectiveness, and on the ability of pre-school children to learn a foreign language?

What were any problems encountered in LFFLAP?

Method

The present study was carried out to determine the views and thoughts of school principals, teachers and pre-school children's parents about life-focused foreign language acquisition program. For that reason, this study was carried out within the context of the "case study" pattern widely used in qualitative research, and children's "foreign language acquisition" constituted the scope of the study. The most basic feature of a qualitative case study is the in-depth investigation of one or more cases. In short, factors related to a situation such as individual, environment, and process are investigated with a holistic approach. Here researchers focus on how these parameters affect the situation and how they are affected by it. It is expected to create examples and experiences for understanding similar situations rather than reaching general conclusions about the situation. In the study, the holistic one-state pattern, one of the case study designs, was used. There is only one analysis unit in the comprehensive one-state patterns. This unit can be an individual, an institution or a program. According to

Yıldırım and Şimşek, if there is a well-formulated theory, it is possible to use a holistic one-state pattern for the confirmation and refutation of it (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013).

Participants

The children participating in LFFLAP were comprised of 18 girls and 18 boys. The mean age of these 36 children, aged between 50-74 months, was 62 months. The participants of this study consisted of parents of the children in the LFFLAP, teachers, and principals. One principal, four teachers, and thirty-two parents participated in the study. When the characteristics of pre-school teachers, who were among the participants, were taken into consideration, it was seen that all of them were female. When these teachers' professional background was checked, two of them had twenty years of preschool teaching, one year in state schools and nineteen years at private schools. The third participant had two years state school and six years private school experience; the fourth participant teacher had fifteen years state school and one-year private school kindergarten and pre-school experience. Also, all of these four teachers had their masters in Child Development and Education.

The principal that participated in the study had ten years of experience as a Child Development and Education teacher at a Girls Vocational High School, one year of department chief experience, and ten years of experience as a principal at the school (a private school) where this research was conducted. Concurrently, she works as a lecturer at a state university. Also, she participated in projects such as Nutrition of Early Age and Montessori Education and holds a Ph.D. in Child Development.

Another group that took part in the study was comprised of parents. In the study, 32 parents were interviewed. When the education level of the participant mothers was checked, 11 of them (34.35 %) were elementary school graduates, 7 (21.8%) were high school graduates, and 6 (18.75%) were university graduates, and 8 (25%) had a master's degree. Similarly, 11 of the participant fathers (34.35%) were elementary school graduates, 4 (12.5%) were high school graduates, 7 (21.8 %) were university graduate and 10 (31.25%) had a master's degree. 3 (9.3%) of the parent participants in the study group had their master's degrees abroad.

The preparation and application of Preschool Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program

During the preparation of LFFLAP, the needs of children aged 50-74 months and the language skills they need to possess were determined. In tandem with these skills, a pool of achievements and demonstrations was created together with experts. From the created pool, common themes were identified by defining experience-focused and noticeable gains. Then, the draft of the foreign language program, which includes a total of 150 hours with a 10-week session and 3-hour sessions per day, was also discussed with the experts. Then, activities and materials were designed based on determined themes and achievements. In addition to this, experiences form the focus of this program. For that reason, the program is carefully designed to be continuous and flexible, responsive to the needs and interests of the children. Also, unlike other programs, the following aspects were built into the format: *Games, music, painting, dance, drama, nutrition, gesture and mimics, technology, love, respect, sharing, appreciation, teacher devotion, and patience*. These themes became the routines of the prepared program, and these parameters were focused in each session. It was ensured that the language was given in learning bits and that the lexicon was the focal point. The key role of communicative words in the teacher's conversations, how they are formed, coded and organized, were primary sources for the students. In tandem with these aims, each week student-centered activities program was applied according to the prepared plans.

Data Collection Tool and Analysis

Interviewing is an effective method frequently used in "qualitative research" and "case studies." For Stewart and Cash (1985), it is a mutual and interactive communicative process that is predetermined and has serious purposes based on a questioning and answering style (qtd. in Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013, p. 147). During and after the implementation of the LFFLAP, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the children's parents, teachers and the school principal to determine the program's effect on the second language learning skills. In face-to-face interviews, Patton's (1987) "standardized open-ended interview" technique, which takes place on the interview classification, was used (qtd. Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008, p. 121; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011 p.123).

Interviews were held between December 2015 and February 2016 via the implementation of the interview form to the principal, teachers, and parents. The interviews took between 35 to 117 minutes. The following questions were directed to the participants: "How do you think the foreign language acquisition program applied to your

child has affected his/her foreign language ability?" and "What are the problems encountered during the application of LFFLAP?"

During the qualitative data collection process, data from WhatsApp correspondence, teacher and parent letters, video and audio recordings, telephone interviews and from the researcher's impressions based on the researcher's daily notes were consistently collected. This data is used as additional evidence in the clarification of general points. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013), since the individuals in the environment that the study focused as data sources have different experiences, perspectives, and perceptions, these differences need to be identified and interpreted by analyzing the documents consisting of sources such as telephone interviews, letters, photographs, diaries, and correspondences. Confirmation of the data obtained by different methods, which is diversification, increases the validity and reliability of the study.

The frequency of opinions collected from school administrators, teachers, and parents has been generated by semi-structured interviews. In this way, the number of repetitions of ideas is ordered from the highest to the lowest. The obtained qualitative data was then analyzed by the "content analysis" technique. The participants' consistency about the interview from the beginning to the end, their frequency of repetition by their other discourses supporting their views or opinions, and similar views expressed by the majority of participants were taken into consideration. (Baş and Akturan, 2013)

In the analysis of the data, first all the interviews were transcribed, transcripts were repeatedly read, and the most important expressions were identified and listed. During the content analysis phase, opinions were grouped under eight themes (given in the "findings" section). After being systematically and explicitly described in the context of these themes, the views were explained and interpreted, and results were obtained. After each participant's interview data and the daily WhatsApp correspondence are marked on the theme frame, the data containing the same theme are analyzed and reported together.

In describing the essential elements in the acquisition of foreign language, the participants' words and sentences, and therefore "lived experiences," play a significant role (Jasper, 1994). Therefore, a direct citation is included in the description of the themes.

Findings

Research Question 1: What are the views of school principals, teachers, and parents about LFFLAP and children's foreign language learning?

The effects of the Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program on children's learning of foreign languages have been attempted to be revealed via quantitative findings as well as quantitative results. In the study, eight subjects were reached as a result of analysis of various data obtained from parents, teachers, school principal, and assistant principal. The themes are:

1. Active usage of a foreign language
2. Active transfer
3. Confidence in using a foreign language
4. Effective interest/attitude towards a foreign language
5. Self-expression/ pronunciation
6. Active sharing of learned topics
7. Active improvement in a foreign language
8. Multiple experiences in a foreign language (Visual, audio, etc.)

Below are frequency analysis for the theme and direct citations from the participants.

Table 1. Views on theme 1: Active usage of a foreign language

Theme 1. Active usage of a foreign language			
Parents	-f-	Teachers and Principal	-f-
Uses, speaks and says English concepts	32	The students first started to count numbers and say the colors among themselves in the class.	5
Sings English songs/ repeats	30	First, they acquired to say their names and last names	5
Asks and answers names of the objects in English	23	I observe now that students can ask each other their names and respond to questions.	5
Frequently uses English phrases "Good morning, good night, yes, no, hello," etc.	19	Since the classes started, students have been using the following phrases frequently: 'teacher, good morning.'	2
Can count in English	18	When numbers and colors are asked, they sometimes prefer to respond in English.	2
Sometimes speaks English when s/he needs to use the restroom when his/her nose runs when s/he wants to drink water, eat food.	14	I heard they're asking about the color in English during art class.	2
When initiating a dialogue with someone, can introduce themselves and understands the questions	13	When I asked them to come here in Turkish, they respond in English: "Come here please!"	2
Asks questions or vocabulary with his/ her siblings	7	They translate to me what their English teacher is telling to them	2
With the program, vocabulary has improved	5		
Understands questions related to animals, colors, fruit, and shapes and answers in "yes/no" format.	3		
Responds to some instructions such as "Shut the door, open the window, turn off the light" and does what is asked.	3		
Tries to teach us English at home.	2		

When the opinions of teachers, parents, and principal were analyzed, the active use of the foreign language with a life-orientation was the first theme that emerged on the effects of LFFLAP. In this context, when the participants' opinions are analyzed descriptively, it is seen that 12 views from families and seven views from teachers and school principals have come to the foreground. The most common opinions from the families about the effect of the program were: "She/he uses English concepts and words, speaks and says them," 32 participants; "Sings English songs /repeats songs," 30 participants; and "Asks and says the names of the objects in English," 23 participants. On this theme, the five ideas of the school principal and teachers are as follows: "The students started to say numbers and colors in English in the classroom when they talk to each other," "In English class they first started to say their last names and names, and greetings." The teachers observe that "the students ask each other their names and last names in English." According to the views of the participants, it was seen that students actively involved in activities conducted during the classes. One of the parents explained her ideas about active involvement in the following manner:

.... S/he learned daily phrases and words faster than I expected and I observed that s/he used them effectively in everyday life situations. For example, when s/he wants some water, s/he used to say "Father, I want water." In addition to that, it is surprising and fascinating to use the phrases "close the door" or "be quiet" appropriately. I believe that your attitudes and managerial skills were useful in this success (Parent/Female).

One of the teacher participants states the following on the same theme:

As soon as they started to join the English class, they began to use last name and name greetings in the class. They began to say numbers and names in English. When I asked them to come here in Turkish, they responded in English "Come here, please." (Teacher/ Female)

During the application of Life-Focused language teaching program, the students were kept active in every stage of the class. It has been observed that English language skills have improved to the extent that they participated in the activities. This situation has also been confirmed by the participating teachers.

Table 2. Views on theme 2: Active transfer

Theme 2. Active Transfer			
Parents	f	Teachers, Principal	f
They use what they have learned in the class	31	They use English phrases during the breaks between activities.	5
Learned daily vocabulary and phrases faster than I expected	25	Families report that the students use English phrases at home.	5
Uses the following phrases during the day when talking to us: "good morning, good night, brush your teeth, drink some water."	16	Most of them speak English during lunch break or breaks.	3
Sometimes substitutes a concept with its English meaning during a daily conversation.	9		
Repeats what s/he learned at school in real life situations.	8		

In Table 2 the frequency distributions of the views of managers, teachers, and parents, which are determinative in the emergence of active transfer contact are seen.

According to the qualitative findings of the research, it was seen that in the context of "active transfer," children use the learned skills in different situations efficiently, especially in daily life and extracurricular processes. Interviews with parents, teachers, and school administrators, and WhatsApp correspondence are the most critical views on the transfer of children's learning: 31 of the parents stated that their children use in their daily life "what they have learned in class." 16 of them reported that there was a high learning transfer related to self-care skills, as the students frequently used phrases such as "good morning, good evening, brush your teeth, drink some water." All of the participating teachers, as well as the principal, stated that students use vocabulary actively during breaks, lunch break, and between activities.

Below are some thoughts of some teachers and parents on active transfer:

I think when compared to classical learning, you have shown that a foreign language can be learned like a mother tongue more effectively when it is used for daily situations, with songs, messages (WhatsApp), and activities. (Parent/Female)

We have seen that English does not consist only of grammar. Through practice, students achieved learning through experience. I believe that this will be permanent with reinforcement. (Teacher/Female)
Today, one of the boys went to a dentist and tried to say that the word dentist by connecting "teeth" and "doctor" together to form the word "teeth doctor." (Researcher)

Table 3. Views on theme 3: Self confidence in using a foreign language theme

Theme 3. Self Confidence in Using a Foreign Language			
Parents	f	Teachers, the principal	f
Tries to learn English	32	They got rid of their shyness during these activities.	5
Confidently uses English phrases	31	I observed that they had self-confidence during the activities.	5
Trusts himself/herself in English	30	They are aware that they can express themselves better while speaking English.	2
Active and audacious in using English words.	24	During the activities in English class, they share what they know with joy.	2
Self-confidence improved. Can use English phrases in crowded environments	21	During the activities, they say the words loudly without hesitation.	
Without our support and help, s/he started to use the language and respond to the situations	14		
With this research, the student realized that s/he could learn English and internalized it.	10		

In the table, the frequency distributions of the opinions of the principal, teachers, and parents are shown in the context of self-confidence in using foreign languages. In this regard, three premises that parents expressed were: 32 parents declared that “students try to learn English,” 35 participants stated that “the students use English concepts without hesitation,” and 31 participants said that “the students have self-confidence in English.” The views that the principal and teachers declared on this theme are as follows: “the students lost their hesitations in English activities;” “I observed that they have self-confidence in English classes;” “They are aware that they express themselves better when they speak English” and “during class activities, they share what they know with joy.”

In this respect, participants expressed that children had a high level of self-confidence in their use of foreign languages through the practice of foreign language teaching based on experience. Regarding self-confidence in using a foreign language, parents expressed their views as follows:

We did not have any effort to contribute to his/her learning of English at home (even after we started classes.) The only thing that we did after the classes started was to listen to the messages that you had sent regularly and encourage the students to respond your questions. After a while, s/he already wanted to answer herself, and she started to do so without us directing what she wanted to say. (Parent/Female)

Our son was an introvert kid. We noticed that he was using the English words he learned during the classes. This made him proud of himself. Hesitated to say his name... changed suddenly. This 10-week education, taken by a 6-year-old child, began to create a fun dialogue at our home with half of Turkish and half English dialogues as if it were a Turkish family living in Europe and came here for a vacation. (Parent/ Male)

A teacher expressed her observations on the increase of self-confidence in foreign language learning of the students as follows:

The students love to participate in English classes...I observed that the students express themselves better with confidence. Especially (name of a student) became more expressive and social. Those who were quite in the class began to participate and express themselves. (Teacher/Female)

It has been seen that with the Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program, children showed intense self-confidence, expressed themselves better at school and in daily situations, were eager to show what they have learned, and were happy while they were learning.

Table 4. Views on theme 4: Effective interest/attitude towards a foreign language theme

Theme 4. Effective interest/attitude towards a foreign language			
Parents	f	Teachers, the principal	f
They enjoy English activities	30	They are very much interested in classes.	5
They go to school with joy the day they have English class.	29	They participated in the activities with joy. They loved learning English.	5
They wonder English equivalence of everything they know.	28	They want to speak English	5
They are so happy while doing English activities at home.	25	They look forward to their English classes.	3
English activities have contributed significantly to social and emotional development.	23	They are interested in English.	3
S/he especially likes English songs	22	They are interested in all the activities in the class.	2
They had great fun during English training.	20	They are so active during English class.	2

In the table, the frequency distributions related to the opinions of the principal, teachers, and parents, who appear to be influential in the emergence of a positive attitude/attention to foreign language courses, are seen. According to the analysis, 3 important opinions that emerged on the basis of the attitude towards LFFLAP are as follows: 30 participants “are enjoying English activities happily”; 29 participants “enjoy reading the day that they have an English course” and 28 participants expressed their opinion that “Everyone is curious about English.” The views expressed by the principal and the teachers on the same theme are as follows: 5 participants stated they were “very interested in the classes”; “I enjoy the class with pleasure” and “I like English.”

Throughout the process, the students have shown these attitudes by participating in lessons, enjoying activities, mumbling the songs prepared for this program, engaging and enjoying lessons. The views of two parents on these behaviors in and out of school are as follows:

(Student 1) and (student 2) enjoyed themselves a lot during English education. The fact that their English education developed in a very natural process brought them out of a classroom atmosphere and they unconsciously got used to the language. (Parent/Female)

It is honorable that you have shown that English education is not a fearful dream, but rather a piece of life, a most important part of life, and a natural phenomenon... Knowing more than one language gives that person awareness and confidence...We started asking English words to each other at home. (Parent/Male)

Table 5. Views on theme 5: Self-expression/pronunciation

Theme 5. Self-Expression/Pronunciation			
Parents	f	Teachers, the principal	f
As the lessons progressed, the number of English concepts used increased, the pronunciation improved	31	All of the students can use the English concepts they studied in class	5
Uses English concepts and words appropriately	27	Each week expressions and pronunciations improved	5
Constantly uses English phrases and concepts	25	The study improved the students' pronunciation	5
Communicative skills both in Turkish and English languages have improved	15	They can easily express what they have learned	2
Addresses in English to those around	13	They frequently repeat English concepts	2
His/her Turkish improved a lot thanks to English.	11	When they speak Turkish, they make better sentences	2

In Table 5 frequency distributions of the principal, teachers and parents related to self-expression/pronunciation are seen.

According to the analysis, 3 important opinions emerged on the basis of self-expression and pronunciation are as follows: 31 participants stated "as the lessons progressed, the number of English concepts used increased, the pronunciation improved"; "Uses English concepts and words appropriately," and "Constantly uses English phrases and concepts." The views expressed by the principal and the teachers on the same theme are as follows: 5 participants stated "all of the students use the concepts they have learned during the classes;" "Each week their expressions and pronunciations improved."

According to the opinions of parents, teachers and school principal, children's English has a high rate of regular speaking, pronunciation, and vocabulary. For this development, in their letters the parents expressed their views as follows:

Sometimes he cannot remember the Turkish word he wants to say, and he speaks English. He shook his toes and said to his father, who says "finger," "no, they are not fingers—toes," and he laughed a lot when his father did not know the difference between fingers and toes. (Parent/Female)

The impact of English on my child is high. My child was able to speak Turkish more smoothly thanks to English... He could not express himself. At the end of the session, self-expression was the most developed skill. (Parent/Male)

It was seen that with the application of LFFLAP, children effectively used basic expression skills such as recognizing the language, pronouncing English words correctly, using words appropriately, and placing words correctly into a sentence. Also, the school principal and assistant principal stated that activities based on life-focused learning and dynamic interaction was effective in children's speaking skills and pronunciation. Speaking only English during the application, encouraging the students to speak in a natural flow, their ability and care to use the words appropriately contributed to this outcome.

Table 6. Views on theme 6: Active sharing of learned topics

Theme 6. Active sharing of learned topics			
Parents	-f-	Teachers, the principal	-f-
They share at home what they have learned in English class.	29	Class participation is high.	3
Share with his/her friends what s/he has learned at school.	22	Shares with his/her friends and with me.	3
The whole family uses the phrases s/he learned at school.	19	They take pleasure in sharing with their friends.	3
S/he asks me (mother) the words they covered during the day and repeats them.	16	The student's participation in the activities and sharing is high.	3
S/he uses English words with people s/he encounters.	15	Sometimes they ask what a specific word means in English. Their sharing with me (teacher) is high.	2
Tries to teach us English at home.	6		

In Table 6, frequency distributions of the principal, teachers and parents related to sharing theme are seen. The most common views from the parents are as follows: 29 participants stated that the student “shares at home what s/he has learned at school,” 22 participants reported that “they share with their friends what they have learned at school,” and 19 participants stated that “the whole family uses English at home.” When the responses of the principal and teachers are analyzed (3 participants), all participants indicated that the participation of the classes and activities were high and the students shared with each other what they know.

All participants expressed their children’s progress in learning English by pointing out that the students are positive and eager to share what they have learned at home and school.

In this regard, the opinions of parents, teachers and the school principal are as follows:

(Student’s name) did not know even a word in English before the research study began. Now s/he can use the “I want.....” sentence structure. S/he has learned a lot of vocabulary and shared this with his/her sister. During his/her visit to her grandmother, asks for “banana” using the English word. Then starts teaching the phrases s/he knows to his/her grandmother. (Parent/Female)

The students participated in the English class with great enthusiasm. They shared every new concept they have learned. In group work and class activities, sharing level was high (Teacher/Female)

Table 7. Views on theme 7: Active improvement in foreign language

Theme 7. Active Improvement in Foreign Language			
Parents	f	Teachers, the principal	f
Their English improved.	32	The development in English was rapid.	5
English vocabulary has developed with the classes.	30	After a few classes, all of the students started to use English words and concepts.	5
The method applied here was the reason this fast improvement.	23	Inactive students became active in English in subsequent weeks.	2
Quickly adapted to the foreign language and used some words on his/her own.	14		
Started to use many concepts in English during daily activities.	13		
Could use English words above his/her level and age.	10		
In some cases, used English rather than Turkish words.	5		
As the foreign language developed, verbal and nonverbal communication skills improved too.	3		

In Table 7, frequency distributions of the principal, teachers and parents related to progressive improvement in the foreign language (Theme 7) are seen. According to the analysis, all of the parents expressed the view that with LFFLAP, their children's "English improved, progressed, and was enriched." 30 of the parents stated that, "With the classes, their vocabulary was enhanced." 23 of them stated that, "The applied program was the reason behind the students' rapid improvement." When the responses of the principal and teachers were analyzed related to the same theme, all the participants (5) stated that, "Improvement in English was so fast," and, "after a few classes all the students started to use English words."

In this regard, the opinions of two parents are as follows:

I think that this productive process and the child's improvement in English is the result of the method you applied here. It was more a sort of activity rather than a traditional class, and the students learned the language unconsciously in the natural environment. (Parent/Male)

My child who used to know only "yes" and "no" in English, now tries to understand when somebody talks to him/her in English. S/he tries to answer, and most importantly s/he loves English. (Parent/Male)

Table 8. Views on theme 8: Multiple experiences in foreign language (visual, audial, etc.)

Theme 8. Multiple Experiences in Foreign Language			
Parents	f	Teachers, the principal	f
Tries to use English outside classroom settings.	30	They started to use English in all learning environments.	5
They sing songs in English and play games in English.	28	English visuals attract their attention.	5
Listens to musicals on TV in English.	19	They sing songs in English.	3
They use the English words for their belongings.	18	English became a common communication language during meals eaten together	2
They are interested in English books with illustrations.	17	Learning English with game activities was enjoyable.	2

They say the names of the objects in the street and at shopping.	15		
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In Table 8, frequency distributions of the principal, teachers and parents related to multiple experiences in foreign language learning (Theme 8) are seen. According to analysis, 30 parents stated, “They try to use English in everyday situations outside of class settings”; 28 stated, “They sing songs in English and play games in English”; and 19 said, “They listen to English or musicals on TV in English.” The opinions that the principal and teachers expressed on this theme is that “They use English in all learning environments” and “English visuals attract their attention.”

In this regard, opinions of parents, teachers and the school principal are as follows:

I believe that the songs you gave them to listen to, photos from your past, the fruits you have eaten together, the games you played in the playground, WhatsApp messages sent to participants every day, your constant speaking of English, and the fact that you had classes not once a week but every day from 12:30 to 14:30 contributed to rapid and satisfactory improvement in the program. (School Principal/Female)

S/he is trying to answer questions in English every day. S/he sings the songs on his/her own, more courageously. S/he is trying to speak English, asking questions, and wants to learn the names of animals, colors. S/he does this in the form of play. The most important things are that s/he got used to English sounds. S/he can sound them well. (Parent/Female)

Within the context of life-focused activities, Multidimensional environments created for the classes were carried back to the children’s homes through WhatsApp applications and songs that were specifically written for this program. English game activities and recommended films created multi-dimensional experiences for the students and improved their exposure to the target language. Even the student sharing these experiences at home with their siblings, parents, and grandparents turned their experiences into a teaching experience. Thus, it was seen that language is alive and active.

Research Question 2: What are the problems that arise in the practice of LFFLAP?

Table 9. Views about the problems arising in the implementation of the Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program

Problems and difficulties encountered in implementing the program	f
We had difficulties in implementing the program for the first few weeks.	12
Some parents could not help their children since they do not know English.	10
Some students had adjustment problems at early stages of the study.	8
We had difficulties in implementing some activities during the first few weeks.	5
Some students had little participation during the first few weeks.	3
They had stress during the first few weeks.	3
It took time to learn some concepts during the first few weeks.	3

In Table 9, frequency distributions of the principal, teachers and parents related to problems encountered during the implementation of LFFLAP are seen. Since the number of views about this theme was low, all respondents were evaluated together. According to the analysis, 12 participants stated that, “We had difficulties in implementing the program for the first few weeks”; 10 participants stated that, “Some parents could not help their children since they do not know English;” 8 participants said that, "Some students had adjustment problems at early stages of the study;” 5 participants stated that, “[They] had difficulties in implementing some activities during the first few weeks;” 3 participants stated that, “Some students had low participation during the first few weeks;” 3 participants stated that, “Students had stress during the first few weeks;” and finally, 3 participants stated that, “It took time to learn some concepts during the first few weeks of the study.”

In this regard, one parent and one teacher expressed their views as follows:

“S/he had difficulty in expressing himself/herself and was shy. Now s/he looks forward to texting you and talking to you in English.” (Parent/Female).

Below are some notes taken from the diary of the English teacher:

We are in week four, and they can understand 70% of my speech. (23/11/2015)

At first, the students did not know any words yet now most of them are aware of the foreign language, and they try to find similarities between the target language and their native language; they also try to understand these differences they have noticed. Their pronunciation improved. At first, they only texted "Hello, teacher," which later improved to "See you at school." (27/11/2015)

Students who were faltering at first can speak fluently now. (8/12/2015)

The improvements I have observed so far are excellent, and in week ten, with 150 hours of classes, we brought the students to this level together. Their knowledge has improved from a few words, numbers, and colors to "I want some water," "Be Quiet!," "I have to pee," "See you tomorrow," and much more. They expressed themselves appropriately and correctly. (8/1/2016)

According to the findings obtained from the participants of the research, it has been observed that children were silent in foreign language activities at first, and tried to understand the process by observing it. However, after a few sessions, they got involved and adapted to the program and started using the target language. It was confirmed by all attendees that the number of concepts that the children used at home and school increased during the following weeks. Also, it has been observed that this development was stress-free and took place without any need for an individual effort. This process has also contributed to the development of children's use of foreign languages as well as the use of their Turkish and non-verbal skills.

Result and Discussion

According to the qualitative findings of the study which focused on the effects of the Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program, the students:

- Used what they have learned actively, either at school or out of school
- Increased their self-confidence
- Transferred what they have learned
- Developed a positive attitude towards English and English classes
- Shared what they have learned with their peers and families
- Could express themselves using English with correct pronunciation and precision
- Showed rapid improvement in learning the language
- Learned English more effectively through multiple experiences

According to Doğan (1997), making knowledge meaningful for the child is the first condition of effective learning.

It is one of the important tasks of the teacher who is responsible for organizing teaching processes to establish a relationship between the content being processed and everyday life skills of children in the developing age. One of the main mistakes that many teachers make is to force children to learn only for the sake of learning without specifying the area of application that students can understand. Real life experiences which connect with the subject teachers are instructing in make great contributions to the relationship between the subject and real life. One of the general objectives of LFFLAP is to apply the gains of the classroom into life, and to transfer them to real life experiences. In this process, foreign language skills will develop to the extent the students internalize what they have learned and how much they use it during daily life. For this reason, LFFLAP has provided a rich, stimulating environment for the children to transfer the foreign language into the language of daily life.

Another qualitative finding of this study is the effectiveness that emerged during the Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program.

The place of powerful features in learning foreign languages is emphasized in numerous studies such as in the studies of Bağçeci and Yaşar, 2007; Cadwell, 2011; Kara, 2004. Children's affective behavior throughout the process improved conditions like the self-confidence that children gained during the process, more participation

in lessons, enjoying activities, high interest and taking pleasure in English lessons. This has led to higher achievements in learning.

In Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program applications, a major goal was to improve multiple learning environments through applying different teaching methods and techniques, real objects, materials, tools and equipment that were used in school and classroom environments as well as through applying communication technologies outside the school. It is thought that children can understand language more effectively in the real world and therefore experience rich learning environments. Participants had positive views on the effects of these multidimensional experiences on language learning.

In addition to these positive results, administrators, teachers and parents stated that there were difficulties in implementing the program in the first weeks, low participation in class, difficulties for children to do certain activities, and that some parents were unable to help their children because they did not speak a foreign language. However, it was seen that during subsequent weeks, such problems have diminished and all students have realized the goals of the program.

Consequently, according to the qualitative findings of this study, which aims to research the effects of LFFLAP on learning English, it was determined that the applied program had a high impact on language learning. Through the letters and interviews, the principal, teachers and parents expressed their satisfaction and praised the success of the program. According to the findings of the teachers about the success of the program and the results of the discussions, all class teachers stated that the students learned rapidly in English classes and that they used it in their other lessons. They also expressed the advantages of LFFLAP. Parents stated that the students shared with them what they have learned at school. The researcher's designing LFFLAP was based on the needs and interests of the children which included real-life materials such as music, sports, and pictures. These considerations made the classes functional and increased the success of the program because they connected with their interests and sparked the enjoyment of learning a foreign language, which became a channel for communicating their enthusiasms. Also, parents' insistence that the program should continue after the research has been completed can be read as a sign of the success of the program.

Based on the findings of this research, the following suggestions are made for future researches:

1. Teachers and parents can be trained in the Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program that can be applied to pre-schools.
2. Teaching materials and tools appropriate to the core principles of LFFLAP can be prepared.
3. The LFFLAP developed for preschoolers can be adapted for higher grade levels.
4. Regarding their developmental characteristics, pre-school children are at an age when they are more open to learning a foreign language, and they can acquire a foreign language more quickly. It will facilitate teaching a foreign language more efficiently in higher grades if children begin learning a foreign language at this early age. However, to ensure equality of opportunity in education, it is suggested that English education should be included in state-affiliated pre-school institutions.
5. Experimental and qualitative studies can be conducted for the implementation of LFFLAP in schools with children from different socio-economic levels.

Acknowledgments and Notes

The present article is derived from the first author's Ph.D. thesis with the title "The Study of the Effects of Life-Focused Language Acquisition Program on 50-74 Months Old Turkish Children's English Learning" and the dissertation is financially supported by Selçuk University Coordinatorship of Scientific Research Projects (BAP) with the Project number 16102002.

This paper was presented orally at the International Conference on Research in Education and Science (ICRES) which was held in Ephesus Kusadasi, Turkey between 18th – 21st May, 2017.

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