Learning Responsibility and Balance of Power

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This qualitative study aims to determine teacher perspectives on learning responsibility and balance of power. The research design is case study which was conducted on four primary school teachers. The data were collected with semi-structured interviews and the data obtained were analyzed with categorical analysis, a type of content analysis. The findings suggest that teachers think that learner should be at the center of teaching with LCT and they are incapable of applying learner-center teaching. It has been found that the class size and loaded teaching programs prevent them to apply LCT. Therefore, there have been some recommendations about the LCT by the researchers of the study.

Keywords: Learner-Centered Teaching, Balance of Power, Learning Responsibility, Teaching, Responsibility

INTRODUCTION

Learner centered education, basis of which goes to the studies of Hayward in 1905 and Dewey in 1956 (O'Sullivan, 2003), is substantially based on constructivist approach by giving importance to activity, exploration and independent learning (Carlileand Jordan, 2005). When it comes to its definition, learner centered education is related to many concepts such as flexible learning, self-oriented learning and experiential learning. Thus it can be said that there is a complication in its practice (O'Neill, 2005).

According to Kember (1997), with the learner centered education the teacher helps students construct the information by making the learning easier instead of transferring information to the students. Student can make choice according to his/her needs during the process (Burnard, 1999) and so he/she becomes responsible for his/her own learning as s/he is active in the learning process (Lea, Stephenson & Troy, 2003).

Weimer (2002) suggested five basic variant so that learner centered education could happen. These variants are balance of power, the function of the content, the role of the teacher, responsibility of learning and evaluation.

When the student takes the responsibility of learning, s/he substantially fulfills experiential learning that is the basis of constructivist approach. Besides, the learner precedes both affectively and cognitively. Teachers share power in order that students

can take responsibility of their own learning process and can make a decision more in the learning and teaching process. Learning responsibility can only be increased in such an environment (Weimer, 2002).

Balance of power is also as important as learning responsibility in education. According to the learner centered education achieving a balance means that there is a power sharing between the teacher and the student. The authority is not in the hands of the teacher as in the traditional education, but it is shared with the student. This sharing is achieved via the responsibilities given to the students. As a matter of fact, the student is both responsible for his/her learning and share the power in the classroom by taking some responsibility. To Rogers (1983), a power exchange from teacher to student has happened by the need of change in the traditional environment in which students are passive. In addition, Froebel stated that the teacher shouldn't interfere in the development process of the student and should take a role as a guide (Simon, 1999). The paradigm shift from teacher to learning has brought about the shift of the power from teacher to student (O'Neill, 2005).

Balance of power emphasizes that the control in the learning process and the authority of teachers decrease the motivation of the students and as a result we come up with the unwilling and dependent students who cannot take the responsibility of their own learning. It is suggested for the power imbalance that the power should be shared between teacher and the student as it will affect the motivation and learning of the students positively (Weimer, 2002).

In this research, teachers' views have been received about the balance of power and responsibility of learning that is the two dimensions of the learner centered education.

What are the teachers' views about;

• The ones who are responsible for learning and teaching process?

• Learning experiences that need to be supplied in Learner Centered Education?

• The implementations that provide students with taking responsibility of their own learning?

• Giving responsibility by taking success conditions into account?

• The policies that are applied for unsuccessfulness and negative behaviors?

• The control in the classroom?

• The process of giving homework?

• How they achieve learning motivation?

METHOD

Research Model

In this work, case study, one of the qualitative research types, is used. Case study is used when the answers to the questions of how and why is looked for, in the case that researchers' control on the events is less and when the subject is focused on a situation from real life (Creswell, 1998).

Participants

The participants of the research are made up of 4 primary school teachers who are obtained by random sampling. 2 of the teachers are Science teachers and 2 of them are English teachers. Science is a numerical, English is a verbal lesson. Because of expose the effects of a verbal and a numerical lesson, and compare, these two lessons was selected.

4 primary school teachers are chosen by random sampling when participants of the research are determined. According to random sampling, the most ideal participant is the one to whom can be reached without a plan (Neuman, 2009). Demographic information of the participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants

Teacher	Field	Level of Education	Graduation Faculty
SCIENCE1	Science and Tech.	Doctorate (dvm)	Faculty of Education
SCIENCE2	Science and Tech.	Postgraduate (dvm)	Faculty of Science
ENG1	English	Undergraduate	Faculty of Education
ENG2	English	Undergraduate	Faculty of Education

2 Science and Technology teacher and 2 English teachers took part in the study. The reason why these fields were taken into account is to show whether research questions display differences according to the learning in the two different fields.

Data Collection

Data in the research were attained by semi-structured interviews. Interview questions were prepared by considering the expert views and the literature related to the subject. The questions were prepared on the basis of power balance and responsibility aspects of learner centered education. 10 open-ended questions were asked in the interview. Owing to the fact that the answer of the first question comprised of other 9 questions, it was eliminated in the analysis phase. The interviews lasted 30 minutes in average. Interviews were recorded and then they were put on the paper. Then the written records were justified by the participants.

Data analysis

In the data analysis, categorical analysis, a type of content analysis was used. Firstly, voice records were put on the paper. Then, the data were coded by two researchers to increase the reliability of the research. Finally, researchers and other faculty members with experience in qualitative research coded the data that conducted by researchers on both encodings for reliability, Reliability = Consensus / Separation of Consensus + X 100 formula was applied to (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Correspondence percentage between two encoders calculated as %80. The percentage of correspondence %70 or higher is seen to be sufficient, reliability in terms of data analysis is provided. Made by the researchers and expert faculty members encodes indicating correspondence codes were basis for achieving themes. Inconsistent codes were excluded from analysis.

The Reliability and Validity

Before forming interview questions related literature were reviewed and a theoretical framework was created to increase internal validity. The scripts of the recordings were

approved by the respondents. This was to enable internal validity. There has been coherence between themes and subthemes created in the content analysis. Unrelated terms were excluded. Beside, participants were interviewed in a comfortable and warm environment. The stages of research design were described in detail to increase external validity.

The results of the research were presented without any interpretation to increase internal validity. Also, the research was interpreted in detail and the raw data were kept by the researchers to increase external reliability.

RESULTS

In this part, in the frame of main themes, teachers' views about learning responsibility and balance of power are presented.

Views on Responsibility of Learning-Teaching Process

In Table 2, views about who is responsible in learning-teaching process are presented. According to the teacher who thinks that only the teacher is responsible in this process: *"... there are no students who cannot learn but teachers who cannot teach."* (Sci-2). For this reason, the idea of teacher should take the responsibility of learning-teaching process is claimed.

An English language teacher thinks that a teacher should take not the whole responsibility as seen in the example above, but more of the responsibility because of the quality of being a guide.

"*Because learning a language is difficult process and most students have prejudice against it, the teacher is the most responsible person who should create need and awareness in the students.*" (Eng-2).

However, as the learning is a process happening inside of an individual, it is thought that the learners' responsibility in it is more dominant. It is thought that the teacher should put the students to forefront and lead them to take the responsibility of their own learning.

Table 2: Views on Who is Responsible in Learning-Teaching Process

Main Theme	Sub Themes	Sci1	Sci2	Eng1	Eng2
Responsibility of Teaching-Learning Process	Only teacher is responsible		X		
	teacher is more responsible				X
	students is more responsible	X		X	

Views on Learning Experiences

One of the important factors affecting responsibility and balance of power in learner-centered learning is thought to be learning experiences and it is added to the interview questions. The views of teachers on this are presented in Table 3.

When views of teachers about learning experiences are examined, it is thought that a teacher should be in the position of a guide. At this point, it is thought that a teacher

should offer the students different learning styles, equal opportunities, the opportunity to discover themselves and experiences that they can use in real life. For example:

"*…I think that if a teacher teaches the students the subjects that they can make use of in their real lives and offers these kinds of experiences, the learning will be easier and more effective for the students*" (Eng-2).

In Science and Technology lesson, it is thought that an efficient laboratory is essential for the students to take responsibility in their learning.

"*…I think that an efficient laboratory with a lot of equipment is necessary especially for the Science and Technology lessons. So, there can be an effective atmosphere with quality teachers and motivated students*"(Sci-1).

Table 3: Views on the Learning Experiences that Should Be Provided in Learner-Centered Learning

Main Theme	*Sub themes*	*Sci1*	*Sci2*	*Eng1*	*Eng2*
	Teacher should be guide	X	X		
	Laboratory should be provided	X			
	Equality should be provided		X		
Learning Experiences	The opportunity to discover themselves should be provided			X	
	Choices of teachers and learning styles should be provided			X	
	It should awake learners' need				X
	Experiences that can be used in real life should be provided		X		X

Implementations Providing Learning Responsibility

In the previous part, the views about learning experiences are presented. In this part, the views of teachers about the possible implementations for students to take responsibility of their own learning are presented in Table 4.

When Table 5 is examined, for the students to take responsibility of learning, the searching-questioning and cooperative learning strategies are claimed to be used. It is thought that thanks to this, students will be active in the teaching-learning process and so they will be able to take responsibilities. For example:

"*… we ask questions to the student based on a theory or hypothesis. We take the answer by making the student use the scientific method stages. So we can only try to lead him by revealing their knowledge. In this process, the student himself tries to find and do something, follow the stages himself and thus he will have taken the responsibility* (Sci-1).

It is thought that the teacher should use his/her guidance for the students to get motivated, feel themselves valuable. This is an important factor in students' responsibilities in their own learning. Performance assignments given to the motivated students are thought to be activities which will concretize their responsibilities. In addition to these, the self-evaluation reports are also thought to improve students' learning responsibilities. Here are some examples about these:

"... the student believes that he is worthless. One day I told him that his hand writing is beautiful and asked him to help me. When I give him responsibilities and make him feel valuable, he started to feel himself as a part of the process. It can be showing them learning in a group or giving a responsibility like this…"(Fen-2).

"...the student interiorizes the topic because he has chosen it. So, the students should be provided different choices. They should be given the opportunity to create something which belongs to them…"(Ing-2).

Table 4: Views on the implementations to give students responsibility of learning

Main Theme	Sub-themes	Sci1	Sci2	Eng1	Eng2
Implementations for responsibility of learning	Offering a variety of choices				X
	Providing collaborative works	X		X	
	Make them feel themselves valuable		X		
	Motivating for learning	X	X		
	Inquiry-based and problem-based learning	X	X		
	Providing performance tasks	X			
	Self-evaluation reports		X		

Views on giving responsibility based on student success

Table 5 shows the views on giving responsibility based on student success. Teachers dwell on the importance of individual differences while giving students responsibility. In this respect, they agree on the fact that giving more responsibility to unsuccessful students makes them motivated. Students can feel themselves valuable.

"*If we give more responsibility to successful students, we can lose the ones that we address as unsuccessful.*"(Sci-1)

On the other hand, they think that successful ones should not be ignored and they should be given more responsibilities as usual.

"*Giving successful students more responsibility will increase their success. Successful students have right to be behaved in a different way than unsuccessful students.*" (Sci-2)

Table 5: Views on giving responsibility based on student success

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Sci1	Sci2	Eng1	Eng2
Responsibility based on student success	Regarding individual differences	X	X	X	
	Unsuccessful students should get more responsibility	X		X	
	Successful students should get more responsibility		X		
	Successful and unsuccessful students should get responsibility equally				X

Views on Policies against Failures and Problems

In table 6, the policies against failures and problems have been given. According to the results, it is stressed that teachers should communicate with the students one by one. Additionally, it is claimed that teachers should investigate the reasons behind the

misbehaviors by making contacts with counselor and students' families. The teachers think that students have a social life outside the classroom and they should act accordingly. For instance,

"*First, I try to learn the reason for the failure. I ask my students what they think about their failure. One of them for example, said he looked after his younger sister last night. Another student said that my parents quarreled last night. I mean teachers should be aware of the fact that students have a life outside the school.*" (Eng-2)

On the other hand, Teachers state that providing funny activities and having accessible goals can prevent failure. Also, they think that ignoring the misbehaviors of the students can lead extinction of the behavior. For instance:

"*….misbehavior should be ignored at first, but if they insist on misbehaving, they should be warned personally.*" (Sci-1)

Table 6: Views on Policies against Failures and Problems

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Sci1	Sci2	Eng1	Eng2
Policies against problems	Collaboration with counselor and families	X	X		
	Ignoring the misbehavior	X			
	Giving students more responsibility		X		
	Providing funny activities		X		
	Emphasizing success and positive behavior			X	
	One to one communication with students	X	X		X
	Providing accessible goals			X	X

Views on Classroom Control

Table 7 shows teacher views about classroom control in learner centered teaching. According to the results, classroom control can be shared to the extent that teachers still have their roles.

"*Classroom management is critical. Of course, it can be shared with students by choosing class chairman and giving students responsibilities. However, the position of the teacher shouldn't be underestimated. The students should know that teachers have the authority in the classroom.*" (Sci-2)

On the other hand, it is thought that sharing control with students can lead discipline problems. Also, the teachers think they share power with chairman of the class.

"*If the control is given to the students, there will be problems. For instance, if students do all the activities and presentations, it will be a chaos and it is impossible to control the class.*" (Sci-1)

Table 7: Views on Classroom Control

Main theme	*Sub-themes*	*Sci1*	*Sci2*	*Eng1*	*Eng2*
Classroom Control	Teacher should have the classroom control	X			
	Classroom control can be shared with students; however teacher authority should be accepted.		X	X	X

Teacher Views on Assignments

Table 8 shows teacher views about giving assignments. Teachers claim that a wide range of assignment topics can be provided to allow students to make their own choices. Moreover, students should have the opportunity to have assignment when they feel they need.

"*Students should know that they can have assignments whenever they want. I give homework that doesn't take much time and enables students to reflect themselves.*" (Eng-1)

In this process, individual or group work in which students express themselves is suggested. In line with this idea, the teachers think that there should be activities that require students to use their creativity. Also, giving rewards is thought to enable students to be motivated.

Table 8: Teacher views on assignments

Main Theme	Sub-themes	Sci1	Sci2	Eng1	Eng2
	Offering choices on assignment topics	X			X
	Giving assignments in which students express themselves		X		X
	Doing group or pair work relevant to students' choices	X			
	Rewarding assignments		X	X	
	Arranging competitive activities		X		
Assignment	Giving assignments encouraging creativity			X	
	Giving assignments that doesn't take much time			X	
	Giving assignments including repetitive activities			X	
	Students should have assignments whenever they want			X	

Teacher Views on Learning Motivation

Learning motivation has been included to the main themes of the research since it is closely related to learning responsibility. Table 9 shows teacher views about learning motivation. According to the results, giving rewards is claimed to be a way of enabling learning motivation.

"*…in the past years, we had a vocabulary activity. The student who learns the most words beginning with a common letter was the student of the week. It was an activity that motivates students pretty well*. (Eng-1)

The teachers think that lessons should be related to real life and students have a need to learn. Additionally, the teachers agree in determining the learning goals in this respect.

"*In the counseling course, I asked the students what they wanted to be. I saw that the one who wants to be a doctor is interested in science lesson. If they have some goals,*

they can motivate themselves. Therefore, we can lead them to find their own goals as teachers. (Sci-1)

Last but not the least, it is thought that students can be motivated by grades. According to the teachers, they can be encouraged to learn in this way.

"*As I think that students need to get high grades, I sometimes tell students possible questions that may appear in exam. At that time, they listen to me eagerly and take notes*. (Eng-2)

Table 9. Teacher Views on Learning Motivation

Main Theme	Sub-Themes	Sci1	Sci2	Eng1	Eng2
Learning Motivation	Course content related to real life	X			X
	Creating a need for learning		X		X
	Encouraging to success				X
	Rewarding		X	X	X
	Motivating with grades				X
	Using analogy to attract their attention	X			
	Help them set goals	X		X	

DISCUSSION

According to the results if the study, it has been found that all the teachers are not able to implement a learner centered teaching because of excessive class size, lack of time for the syllabus. In this respect, there should be some changes on the points that prevent teachers from implementing learner centered teaching. First of all class size should be reduced and standardized to enable teachers to apply a learner centered teaching. Hence, students can be active learners. To achieve this, learning environments should be rearranged based on students' needs. The conventional seating arrangement should be replaced by adaptable designs that foster the interaction. The changes in classroom layout make students more comfortable in class.

Besides, It is thought that learner centered teaching cannot be implemented because of lack of time to cover course content. As teachers hurry to cover the material, they choose the easy way of presenting knowledge rather than allowing students to discover the facts. Therefore, students do not have learning responsibility which is aimed to be acquired by students in learner centered teaching. At this point, reducing overloaded course content can be suggested. Moreover, learning areas can be created instead of many courses to make students improve themselves in a specific learning area. So, students can take learning responsibility.

According to the results, contrary to the notion that the learning responsibility belongs to students in learning centered teaching, the teachers suggest that they have more responsibility in guiding students. On the other hand, teachers should guide students to have their learning responsibility in learner centered teaching (Weimer, 2002). Teaching should be suitable to the nature of learning, therefore, teachers should adopt a way to give the responsibility of learning to students who should already have. Students should feel that they have the responsibility to learn. Therefore, they should learn to learn.

Science teachers suggest that problem-based learning and collaborative learning should be encouraged. On the other hand, English teachers think that students take learning responsibility with the activities that discover themselves. These differences can stem from the fact that two courses require different ways of learning. While science teachers focus on approaches such as problem-solving, inquiry-based learning, English teachers focus on discovery learning.

In the results, self-evaluation reports are recommended to enable students to observe their progress in line with the taking responsibility of their own learning. Self-track of what they learned helps them be aware of their responsibility.

In the views on assignments, teachers would rather give assignments based on their interests and choices. The teachers have remarkable views on giving assignments in learner centered teaching. Offering choices does not mean that students decide everything about the assignment. Teachers still have the responsibility to set parameters for assignments. Offering choices for assignment makes students to express themselves and use their creativity. Flexibility about assignments is that students can have assignments whenever they want.

On the other hand, students may tend to depend on extrinsic motivation when they are constantly responded with rewards. Students are familiar with this kind of token economies. Instead of letting them be dependent on grades, teachers should trigger their intrinsic motivation. (Weimer, 2002) Nevertheless, handling conventional practices in a critical way rather than ignoring them will benefit students and learning environment.

Another idea about assignments is arranging competitive activities. However, competitive activities lead students to ignore their responsibilities and improvements.

The teachers interpret sharing of power in a different way. They think that power can be shared with students by letting one of them be chairman of the class. However, power sharing should include all students in class in learner centered teaching. To share authority, teachers should give students more responsibility in decision making about their learning. Individual differences of students should be taken into consideration while giving them responsibilities. It is what teachers mean when saying that successful students should have more responsibility than others. Nevertheless, it is not what power sharing is based on. Unsuccessful students may have the maturity to have their learning responsibility, if we as teachers decide to give them choices within certain parameters.

There is consensus among the teachers on the fact that they should have one-to-one communication with students. An important thing in handling failures is to make students take the firsts step (Weimer, 2002). It is in fact, the first step of accepting their responsibilities. Teachers should enable them to come to their office or demand an office hour. They can ask what they think about the reason of their own failure. Then an individual study plan can be prepared. While creating the plan, students should decide what to do and teacher should offer choices to help them. In this process, progress reports can be useful to see improvement of students.

Another suggestion about handling failure and problems is setting reachable goals for students. Therefore, focusing on success and positive behaviors can persuade unsuccessful students to be successful. However, goals should be neither simple nor very difficult for them to handle. Also, setting goals individually should minimize competition among students. Including students in the process of setting goals is motivating as they contribute to decision-making (Svinicki, 1999). Teachers should create a need to learn in students. This means triggering intrinsic motivation by offering choices for students. (Svinicki, 1999).

Lastly, the teachers reveal that they tend to motivate students with grades. This can lead students to become extrinsically dependent learners. If it has some short term gains, students cannot value learning itself. They aim to have good grades rather than taking learning responsibility.

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Turkish Abstract

Öğrenme Sorumluluğu ve Güç Dengesi

Bu araştırmada, öğretmenlerin öğrenme sorumluluğu ve güç dengesine ilişkin görüşlerinin tespit edilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırma bir vaka incelemesi olup, dört ilköğretim öğretmeni ile yürütülmüştür. Veriler yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme ile toplanmış ve içerik analizi türlerinden kategorisel analizle işlenmiştir. Araştırmada öğretmenlerin, öğrencilerin öğretimin merkezinde olması gerektiğini düşündükleri fakat bunu uygulamaya koyma hususunda yetersiz oldukları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Sınıf mevcudunun ve öğretim programlarının gereğinden fazla bilgi yüklü olmasından dolayı bu uygulamanın gerçekleştirilemediği belirlenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda araştırmacılar tarafından öğrenme sorumluluğunu öğrenciye kazandırma ve güç dengesinin paylaşılabilmesine ilişkin öneriler sunulmuştur.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğrenen Merkezli Öğretim, Güç Dengesi, Öğrenme Sorumluluğu

French Abstract

Responsabilité De l'Apprentissage Et l'Équilibre Des Pouvoirs

Cette recherche vise à determiner les perspectives d'enseignant sur la responsabilité de l'apprentissage et l'équilibre des pouvoirs. La conception de la recherche est une étude de cas qui a été conduit sur quatre enseignants de l'école primaire. Les données ont été collectées par les semi-structurées interviews et les données obtenues ont été analysées par l'analyse categorielle, un type d'analyse de contenu. Les résultats suggèrent que les enseignants pensent que les apprenants doivent être dans le centre d'enseignement par LCT et ils sont incapable de l'application l'enseignement centré sur l'apprenant. Il a été trouvé que la grandeur de la classe et les programmes d'enseignement chargés les empêchent d'appliquer LCT. À cause de cela, il y a certaines recommendations faites sur LCT par les chercheurs de cette étude.
Mots clés: Enseignement Centré Sur L'apprenant; Équilibre Des Pouvoirs; Responsabilité De L'apprentissage; Enseignement; Responsabilité

Arabic Abstract

مسؤولية التعلم و توازن القوة

تهدف هذه الدراسة النوعية ال تحديد وجهات النظر الخاصة بالمعلم حول مسؤولية التعلم و ميزان القوة.تصميم البحث هو عبارة عن دراسة حالات تم إجراءها على اربعة مدرسين في مدارس إبتدائية.تم جمع المعلومات عن طريق مقابلات ,حيث تم تحليل المعلومات المكتسبة عن طريق التحليل التصنيفي.تشير النتائج الى ان المعلمين يعتقدون ان المتعلم يجب ان يكون في مركز العملية التعليمية ضمن وانهم غير قادرين على تطبيق التعليم المركزي للمتعلم. تم التوصل الى ان العدد الزائد للطلاب و العبئ التدريسي للمعلم يمنع المعلمين من تطبيق . لذلك هناك بعض التوصيات من قبل الباحثين في هذه الدراسة.

مفردات مهمة: التعليم امركزي للمتعلم, موازنة القوى, مسؤوليات التعلم, مسؤوليات التعليم.