

**INVESTIGATION OF 5TH GRADE STUDENTS' OPINIONS ON THE
IMPLEMENTATIONS OF ACTIVE LEARNING AND COMPUTER
ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING**

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Geliş Tarihi/Received: 01.10.2019 Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 22.11.2019

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine 5th grade students' opinions on the implementation of active learning and computer assisted language learning (CALL). In the study, survey method, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was employed. The participants of the study consisted of nine 5th grade students. The data were collected through open-ended questions prepared by the researchers, and content analysis was performed in the analysis of the data. As a result of the study, it was determined that the students both have positive and negative opinions on English classes in general. Among the positive opinions students stated that the classes were very enjoyable, effective and included teacher support. On the contrary students expressed their negative opinions by saying that the classes were difficult, boring and there were a lot of homework. On the other hand, students stated that the implementation was enjoyable, effective and helpful. Besides, students said that they wanted to have more activities and more games. The findings showed that students liked the implementation and they mostly had positive opinions on the issue. Therefore, in the classroom environment the implementations which give more responsibilities to the students should be increased. Moreover, when considering the ages of the students, more enjoyable and game-based activities should be conducted in learning process to improve learning.

Keywords: Active learning; computer assisted learning; computer assisted language teaching; English language teaching

**5. SINIF ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN AKTİF ÖĞRENME VE BİLGİSAYAR DESTEKLİ DİL
ÖĞRENME UYGULAMALARI İLE İLGİLİ GÖRÜŞLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ**

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada 5. sınıf öğrencilerinin aktif öğrenme ve bilgisayar destekli dil öğrenimi (CALL) uygulamalarına ilişkin görüşlerinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemleri içerisinde yer alan tarama yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 9 5. sınıf öğrencisi oluşturmuştur. Araştırma verileri araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanan açık uçlu sorularla elde edilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda öğrencilerin genel olarak İngilizce dersleri hakkında hem olumlu hem de olumsuz görüşleri olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Olumlu görüşler içerisinde öğrenciler, derslerin çok zevkli, etkili olduğunu ve öğretmenlerin kendilerini desteklediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Buna karşın öğrenciler derslerin zor olduğunu, sıkıcı olduğunu ve çok fazla ev ödevi verildiğini söyleyerek olumsuz görüşlerini dile getirmişlerdir. Bunun yanında, öğrenciler uygulamanın keyifli, etkili ve yararlı olduğunu

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belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca, öğrenciler daha fazla etkinlik ve daha fazla oyun içerikli etkinlikler olmasını istediklerini dile getirmişlerdir. Araştırma bulguları öğrencilerin uygulamayı sevdiklerini ve çoğunlukla konuyla ilgili olumlu görüşleri olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu nedenle, sınıf ortamında öğrencilere daha fazla sorumluluk veren uygulamalar arttırılmalıdır. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin yaşları göz önünde bulundurulursa, öğrenmeyi geliştirmek için öğrenme sürecinde daha zevkli ve oyun temelli aktiviteler yapılmalıdır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Aktif öğrenme; İngiliz dili eğitimi; bilgisayar destekli öğrenme; bilgisayar destekli dil öğretimi

1. INTRODUCTION

The globalization has led to many changes in every aspect of our lives (Das, 2014). As a result, it has become a necessity to keep up with the changes. Individuals are expected to be equipped with critical thinking, problem solving, communication, cooperative working, creativity, digital literacy, information literacy, media literacy, information and communication technologies literacy (Trilling and Fadel, 2009). Besides, individuals need to learn constantly, develop themselves and produce new knowledge (Yıldırım, 2015). Therefore, it can be said that the effectiveness of the education systems has gained significance.

In today's education systems, students' ability to acquire 21st century skill such as high-order thinking, communication, creativity and innovation, problem solving and confidence is required (Warner and Kaur, 2017). In order to obtain these skills, individuals should use the acquired knowledge in life and acquire the skills to learn and be a lifelong learner (Brown, 2006). As a result, the education in the 21st century must be designed in a way to highlight the globalization and provide the development and enhancement of knowledge, skills, and attitudes among students and teachers (Abao, Boholano, & Dayagbil, 2015). Based on the information argued in the literature, it is clear that the education systems have changed and new techniques and approaches have been used intensively in order to keep up with the changes.

The learning process conducted by traditional methods for decades turned out to be insufficient in providing learning opportunities for the students and teachers (Er, Altunay, Yurdabakan, 2012). For that reason, new methods are required to have an effective learning process. Alves (2015) stated that it has a significant value to use the appropriate techniques to deepen the learning and make the learning more meaningful for students. On the other hand, implementing a contemporary education program depends primarily on the teaching strategies and methods applied in the classroom. However, it is very difficult to provide effective learning within the teacher-centered education. Therefore, instead of teacher-centered approaches, student-centered approaches have gained more importance in research and implementations related to educational field. One of the learning approaches which puts the students to the center of learning is active learning (Taş, 2005).

Active learning can be defined as a learning process in which the learners take the responsibility of learning, given the opportunity to make decisions and self-regulation related to various aspects of the learning process (Açıkgöz, 2006). Active learning is a method which encourages students to be included

in the learning environment and includes a lot of activities during the classes. In active learning process students engage in activities or tasks that will lead them think (Er, Altunay ve Yurdabakan, 2012). In short, active learning requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing (Bonwell and Eison, 1991). Therefore, it refers to a process where students are actively engaged in developing an understanding of facts, ideas, and skills (Zewdu, 2017). As it can be understood, active learning is based on student-centered learning.

One of the areas where it is almost possible to acquire knowledge with the active participation is the education of basic language skills. The studies in the literature state that active learning method has beneficial aspects for the development of language teaching and communication skills (Maden, 2013). Students learn better in active learning environment than passive learning environment. Using active learning in English classes makes learning environment enjoyable for students. Therefore, students become more willing to participate in English classes (Gholami, Attaran and Moghadda, 2014). As a result, it can be said that active learning improves the language learning process.

There have been various techniques which enable the learners to take active roles in the learning process in language classes. On the other hand, teaching/learning technologies have increased significantly during the last 20 to 30 years. They have become dynamic areas in the education system, especially in second language learning process by providing a variety of tools (Thomas, Reinders, & Warschauer, 2012). Today, the use of computers and the Internet to teach/learn a second language has increased as a result of technological advances (Han, 2008). It is argued that technology use in teaching language can ve effective support and increase language teaching and learning (Hoopingartner, 2009). Moreover, computers allow students to access a wide range of material in the target language such as videos, podcasts, blogs, and they provide more opportunities to interact with native speakers (Dickinson, Brew, & Meurers, 2012).Based on this information, the use of technology and computers in language learning process enhances and improves the learning.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is one of the methods and techniques that can help improve students' language competencies. While teaching a second language to students, CALL becomes an important tool to allow students to work for themselves (Morales, 2014). According to Beatty (2003), CALL is the process of using computers in learning, which improves learner's language skills. CALL includes the issues of material design, technology, theories of pedagogical and instruction modes (Miftachudin, 2012). Technology use in language education has expanded learner autonomy, creativity, productivity and team work (Eslit, 2017). On the other hand, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has begun a revolution in the domain of language pedagogy by improving the language abilities of the students (Derakhshan, Salehi, Rahimzadeh, 2015). Besides, students and teachers have generally positive thoughts about the use of the technology in the classroom and they emphasize that technology use presents a more open format, flexibility and creativity on language learning (Morales, 2014).

Based on the information in the literature, in this study it is aimed to use active learning and computer assisted learning in the classroom environment while teaching English. Therefore, it is expected to attract the attention of the students, to make the English classes more meaningful for the students, to provide a supportive learning environment and therefore to increase the success of the students. Thus, it is thought that this study will reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the designed implementation and contribute to the development of the curriculum by eliminating the deficiencies. The following sub-problems were tried to be answered.

1. What are the students' opinions on English classes in general?
2. What are the students' opinions on the implementation of active learning and CALL?
3. What are the students' opinions on the weaknesses of the implementation?

2. METHOD

This section gives information about study design, participants, data collection tool, data collection, implementation process and data analysis.

2.1. Study Design

In the study survey model, which is one of the qualitative research models, was employed. Yin (2003) states that qualitative research is used to explain, explore or describe a case, phenomena or event in-depth. On the other hand, survey models are used to "*describe, compare, analyze and interpret the situations of individuals, institutions, groups or sources*" in the way they are (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007).

2.2. Participants

Participants of the study consisted of 9 fifth grade students selected through convenience sampling method. On the other hand, criterion sampling, which is among the purposive sampling methods, was used in obtaining detailed information through interview technique. Purposeful sampling is widely employed in qualitative research for the "*identification and selection of information-rich cases*" (Patton, 2002). In the study, a total of nine students were selected in order to obtain qualitative data through interview technique. In the selection of the students, the students were ranked according to their exam scores. Therefore, the students were classified as at low, middle, and high ability level. Two students at each of the three levels were selected. Students from each level were determined according to their exam scores. As a result, a total nine students were determined as the participants of the interview. The participants were at A1 level. Among the students, 5 students were female and 4 students were male.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

In the study, the qualitative data of the research was obtained through open-ended questions prepared by the researchers. It was aimed to prepare the questions in a way so as to reflect the purpose of the research in the best way. Therefore, three open-ended questions were prepared in total. In addition,

the questions were checked by an expert in the field of curriculum. As a result, the essential corrections were applied.

2.4. Data Collection

In order to collect the data, firstly the required permission was sought from the English teacher. The implementation process lasted 8 months. After the implementation, the students were asked the prepared open-ended questions. Prior to the interviews, students were given information about the study. The most suitable time-frame was determined for the interviews and the researcher for the interview. Students were then interviewed within the agreed time period individually. The interview was conducted in the teacher's office and interview lasted nearly half an hour for each student.

2.5. Implementation

In the implementation process, firstly the researchers made brainstorming and prepared a timetable according to current English curriculum implemented in primary and secondary state schools. The study lasted 8 months. Every month, an activity related to the theme of the month was conducted. These activities could be a software copy or a hardware copy. Software copy products were prepared using web 2.0 tools such as Canva, Postermywall, Monster Maker, Animoto, Wordwall, Wordart, Viva video and My video. Hardware copy products were prepared using paper, crayons and scissors. Software copies were shared on online platforms such as Twinspace, Facebook and Instagram. Hardware copy products were placed on bulletin boards.

In October; the first theme was "Body Parts". The students created monsters with a web 2.0 tool called Monstemaker as a software product and they painted monsters as a hardware product. It was observed that they enjoyed while doing both activities. Monstemaker implementation was new for them and they learnt how to use it. They created different monsters and presented them to the class using body parts vocabulary. The second theme was family members. The students made family trees by using Canva. Canva is an implementation used to create posters. Firstly, they learnt how to use Canva and they created their family trees. Some students used different web 2.0 tools. They shared their software copy family trees on twinspace. The researchers hung their hardcopy family trees posters on bulletin boards to exhibit for other students in the school.

In November; the theme was "Action Verbs". Students prepared role plays in the school garden. For example, a student ran and the other student slept. The researchers recorded them using Vivavideo. The teachers found a song called "Action Verbs" and students learnt it and they presented on the stage while singing and dancing it. Moreover, they played games related to action verbs.

In December, the themes were "months and days". They wrote New Year cards and sent them abroad such as Romania or Bulgaria. They created calendars with using a web 2.0 tools called calender-maker. They put their class photos on the calendar.

In January, the theme was "jobs". Students used a web 2.0 tool called Wordart to create jobs' paper. Every student wrote their dream job on the Wordart website and this site produced their common product. Moreover, they painted their dream jobs.

In February, the theme was “part of a house”. The students drew and painted extraordinary houses as hardcopy products. The students’ products were very creative.

In March, the theme was “daily routines”. Students wrote poems on their daily routines. They read them and recorded them. Researchers combined the videos using Animoto as a web 2.0 tool.

In April, the theme was “should /shouldn’t”. Students made posters with their families. They prepared presentations using Power Points, Powtoons and Prezi. They uploaded videos on Youtube. They played games.

In May, students wrote a drama script and played them on the stage. The timetable of the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Timetable of the Study

| Month | Activities |
|----------|---|
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Monsters (Monstermaker-Painting) ◆ Family Trees (Canva-Painting) |
| November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Action Verbs (Video Maker-Painting) ◆ Song (Video) |
| December | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ New Year Cards (Painting) ◆ Calendar (calendar Maker) |
| January | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Jobs (Wordart, Painting) |
| February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Extraordinary Houses With Painting |
| March | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Daily Routines Activities With Poem (Video-Maker) |
| April | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Should-Shouldn't (Presentation- Making Poster) |
| May | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Final Work (A Theatre With Mixed Groups) |

As can be seen from the table, each month different activities were prepared based on the themes given in English curriculum. While planning activities, various computer systems were utilized. Therefore, it was aimed to provide computer assisted language learning process, which supports the learning and increase the academic success of the students. On the other hand, it was aimed to provide active participation of the students. Students were given opportunities to take their learning activities. Active participation of the students was given priority. By doing so, active learning and computer assisted language learning processes were used together.

2.6. Data Analysis

Content analysis method was used in the analysis of the data obtained. Before the analysis, the objectives of the study and each of the interview questions were determined as themes. Opinions obtained from the students were carefully read and examined. Meaningful codes were formed according to the opinions obtained. The coded data were analyzed according to the similarities and differences and the related codes were combined. In this way, the codes were put under the specified themes.

In order to ensure the validity of the study, data were presented with direct quotations without changing the opinions of the students. For the reliability of the study, in order to determine whether the coding and the themes were correctly arranged, the researchers first reached an agreement and then they were examined by two field experts except the researchers. Field experts were asked to comment on the

appropriateness of the structure. Necessary corrections were made in line with the comments. The answers given by the participants to each question were processed according to these themes, the list was prepared, and the findings were defined and interpreted. In the findings section, the names of the students were not explicitly given and coded as S1, S2,... S7. The characteristics of the participants and the research process were clearly defined and linked to the results of other studies.

3. FINDINGS

In this section, the findings obtained from the answers to the questions directed to the students in line with the sub-problems of the research are given. The findings were presented in tables and interpreted according to the direct quotations of the students. In direct quotations, views with a higher frequency were given more emphasis and the code number was indicated.

3.1. Opinions of the Student on English Classes in General

In line with the first sub-problem of the study, it was aimed to determine the general views of the students on current 5th grade English curriculum. The findings showed that the students had both positive and negative opinions on the curriculum. The opinions and the frequencies are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Opinions on English Classes

| General Views on English Classes | <i>f</i> |
|---|-----------------|
| Positive Opinions | 8 |
| Very enjoyable | 4 |
| Effective | 2 |
| Teacher support | 2 |
| Negative Opinions | 7 |
| Very Difficult | 3 |
| A lot of Homework | 2 |
| Not interesting | 2 |

As can be seen in the table students both have positive and negative opinions on English classes. Most of the students (f=8) expressed their positive opinions on English classes. Among these opinions, four students stated that they found English classes very enjoyable. For example, S1 stated that, "*English lesson is very nice and it has got lots of fun. I love it very much.*" Similarly S2 expressed his ideas as "*It is very nice and it is fun.*" Another opinions on this issue was as; "*The lessons are very enjoyable. We play games, sing songs.*" (S5). Lastly, S6 said; "*I like the classes. They are really enjoyable.*"

In addition some students (f=2) emphasized that they found the classes effective. S8 stated that; "*I learn English better.*" Similarly S7 said that; "*The classes are very entertaining and instructive.*" On the other hand, two students expressed that they benefitted from teacher support in English classes, and as a result, they like the classes. About this issue, S3 said that; "*My teacher is very helpful. So, I can*

learn better.” Similarly S9 stated that; *“I love my teacher. We do lots of different enjoyable activities. The teacher helps us all the time.”*

On the other hand, some students (f=7) expressed their negative opinions on English classes. Three students stated that the English classes are very difficult. About this issue, the student opinions are as follows: *“English is very difficult. So, I do not understand much in the classes.”*(S4) *“Our teacher is very nice but English language is very difficult and different from Turkish.”* (S2). *“The classes are enjoyable but very difficult for me.”* (S9).

In addition two students were in the opinion that there were a lot of homework and they were not happy with the homework. About this issue S1 stated that; *“I can’t finish my homework. Teacher gives homework every week.”* Similarly S4 said that; *“I like the classes but the homework is problem.”*

Lastly, two students stated that the English classes were not interesting for them. About this issue, the opinions are as follows: *“I study but the subjects and the lesson is a bit boring.”* (S7). *“The classes are not interesting and boring.”*

3.2. Students’ Opinions on the Implementation of Active Learning and CALL

In the second sub-problem of the study, it was aimed to determine students’ opinions on the implementation of active learning and CALL. The obtained data showed that students liked the activities and positive opinions on the implementation. The students (f=5) expressed that the activities were really enjoyable and they had fun a lot. Moreover some students (f=4) stated that the implementation was very useful and effective. In addition two students said that the implementation supported learning process. The opinions of the students on the implementation and the frequencies are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Students’ Opinions of the Implementation

| Opinions | f |
|----------------------|---|
| Enjoyable | 4 |
| Useful and effective | 3 |
| Support learning | 2 |

As seen in the table, all students (f=9) had positive opinions on the implementation. Most of the students (f=4) stated that the implementation was enjoyable. The opinions about this issue as follows: *“We both have fun and learn thanks to the games.”* (S3). *“I had very enjoyable lessons.”* (S6). *“It was very nice and enjoyable.”* (S2) *“I really had fun and enjoyed. It was like playing a game.”* (S8).

In addition, three students stated that the implementation was very useful and effective. For example, (S9) expressed that; *“I learn better when we do these activities. So, they are very useful.”* Similarly, S1 emphasized that; *“I could learn English better during the classes.”* Lastly S7 said that; *“The classes are really effective.”*

Besides, two students stated that the implementation supported their learning process. For example, S4 stated that; *“My exam scores were lower before, but now I can get higher marks.”* Similarly, S5 said that; *“The implementation increased my English skills. I can speak a little now.”*

3.3. Students' Opinions on the Weaknesses of the Implementation

In the third sub-problem of the study, students' opinions were asked about the weaknesses of the implementation. Some students (f=5) expressed that they wanted to have more games and more activities. The obtained data showed that except this, students did not have any negative opinions on this issue. The opinions and the frequencies related to this sub-problem is given in Table 4.

Table 4. Students' Opinions of the Weaknesses of the Implementation

| Opinions | f |
|-----------------|----------|
| More games | 6 |
| More activities | 3 |

The students' opinions on the weaknesses of the implementation are grouped into two as more games and more activities. The opinions as "more games" are as follows: *"I never want a lesson without any games and any activities. I want more games."* (S1). *"The English lesson without games is very boring. I think games are enjoyable."* (S2). *"I want more games."* (S9). *"I want to play games in the classes."* (S7). *"The lessons are very enjoyable when we play games. So, there should be more games."* (S6).

In addition some students (f=3) expressed that they wanted to have more activities in the classes. For example S3 stated that; *"I want the lessons with more activities."* Similarly S4 said that, *"I want more activities."* Lastly, S8 expressed that; *"Lessons are more enjoyable with activities. I want to have more activities."*

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, it was determined to 5th grade students' opinions on active learning and CALL implementation. In line with the first sub-problem of the study, students' opinions on English classes were examined. The obtained data showed that the students had both positive and negative opinions on English classes. The positive opinions included that the classes were very enjoyable, effective, and teacher provided support in the classes. Wang and Neihart (2015) emphasized that students who have more support in the classroom environment become more successful. On the other hand Aidinlou and Ghobadi (2012) stated that teacher support is an important factor since it affects students' verbal participation in English classes. As a result, the positive opinions stated by the students have significant value in terms of improving learning. Therefore, teachers should provide more support and try to make the classes more enjoyable and effective. On the contrary, some students stated that English lessons were very difficult, were not interesting and teacher gave a lot of homework. The opinions of the students on the classes and their attitudes directly affect their performance. As a result, the negative opinions of the students should be cared and the reasons behind these negative opinions should be examined in detail. By doing so, students' motivation can be increased and the classes can be more effective.

In the second sub-problem of the study, it was aimed to determine the students' opinions on the implementation of active learning and CALL. The findings showed that the students liked the implementation. They found the implementation enjoyable and effective. Moreover, they expressed that the implementation supports the learning process. Therefore, it can be said that the implementation was very useful and successful. The rapid scientific and technological developments experienced in the information provide various opportunities for educational practices by providing flexibility to education. For this reason, computer, which is the most common technological tool used in education, has become a necessity (Kozikoğlu, 2013). As a result, it is important for educators to use information technologies that provide mobility to learning-teaching processes and thus, the use of new technologies in education has made learning-teaching activities easier and more enjoyable (Yanpar, 2007). The findings of the study showed similarities with the information in the literature. It is suggested that by the use of CALL, students can increase their English competences and become more successful. Therefore, the use of CALL implementations should be encouraged and increased.

In the last sub-problem of the study students' opinions of the weaknesses of the implementation were tried to be examined. The findings showed that students generally found the implementation as useful. However, they stated that more games and more activities would be better for them. Games in education are important in terms of increasing students' motivation and engagement, enhancing visual skills. Moreover, games improve students' interaction and collaboration abilities with their peers (Zirawaga, Olusanya ve Maduku, 2017). Similarly Boyle (2011) indicated that games have significant value in building students' self-confidence. When considered as educational tools, games are constructive since they make the learning more enjoyable.

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that students had positive opinions on English classes and the implementation in general. Therefore, teachers should use this kind of implementations more during the classes.

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