

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ETWINNING PROJECT PRACTICES ON STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING PROCESS^{1 2}

ETWINNING PROJE UYGULAMALARININ ÖĞRENCİLERİN İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENME SÜREÇLERİNE KATKISI

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, eTwinning proje uygulamalarının öğrencilerin yabancı dil becerilerine ve derslere katılımlarına olan katkısını tespit etmektir. Araştırma kapsamında, amacı web 2.0 araçlarıyla İngilizce öğretim sürecini zenginleştirmek olan bir eTwinning projesi uygulanmıştır. Çalışmada eylem araştırması modeli kullanılmıştır. Çalışma grubunu Türkiye'de Isparta Merkez'de bulunan bir ilkokulun 3/A sınıfı oluşturmuştur. Araştırmanın veri toplama araçları dereceli puanlama anahtarı, öğrenci ürünleri, odak grup görüşmeleri, araştırmacı günlüğü, süreç sırasında alınan görüntü ve video kayıtlarıdır. Elde edilen nitel veriler frekans ve yüzde istatistikleriyle ifade edilmiş ve içerik analizi tekniğiyle analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada eTwinning proje uygulamalarının yabancı dil öğrenme sürecini olumlu biçimde etkilediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Araştırmanın bir diğer sonucu, eTwinning proje uygulamalarının öğrencilerin motivasyonlarını artırarak derse katılımlarını olumlu biçimde etkilemesi durumudur.

Key words: eTwinning, web 2.0 araçları, Bilgisayar destekli dil öğrenimi

Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the contribution of eTwinning project practices to foreign language skills and the engagement of students to the courses. In the study, an eTwinning Project of which aim was to enrich the English teaching process by web 2.0 tools was conducted. Action research model was used in the study. Working group was of the students of 3/A class in a primary school in the city centre of Isparta, Turkey. A graded scoring form, student outputs, focus group discussions, researcher's log, photographs and videos recorded during the classes are the data collection tools. Acquired qualitative data was expressed by frequency and percentage statistics and analysed by content analysis. In the study, that eTwinning project practices affects

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foreign language teaching processes positively was deduced. Another result of the study is eTwinning project practices affect the engagement of students to the courses positively by increasing their motivation.

Key words: eTwinning, web 2.0 tools, Computer assisted language learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have recently been developed rapidly. Advancing ICT has caused global integration and this has led to some changes in humans. ICT offers people the opportunity to create unique products using multiple media. Besides, it has become a natural need to stay in touch with the world any moment. The new generation finds different ways of expressing themselves on internet with web 2.0 tools and show their willingness to share their products with the world. For the digital generation growing without recognizing the physical boundaries in creation and sharing of original products by using technology, this has become a natural need rather than willingness. The digital generation follows products created by other people on different platforms and develops themselves'.

The starting point of this research is the changing student profile observed by the researcher herself. The researcher teacher observed that the content presented in the teaching process she guided were insufficient for attracting the attention of students and that the teaching practices carried out among walls for today's students were not effective and felt the need to do research in this context. For students, the teaching environments in schools are stagnant and staying in school means being devoid of the world free from borders. In such an environment, it is unrealistic to expect learning to occur. It is important to develop content that can attract the attention of the learners and to use the methods appropriate for the age in which they have been grown up, as it will not be possible to provide a permanent learning in a student whose attention cannot be awoken.

Prensky (2001) considered computer, computer games and the internet as an analogy of digital language and called the new generation students as "digital natives". The term "digital natives" refers to the generation of the times which ICT is progressing more rapidly than the times when teachers, who teach them, grew. According to Bilgiç, Duman and Seferoğlu (2011), digital natives are the 21st century children and youth starting life with the technology of today, who put online platforms and new technologies in the center of their lives and who do their daily jobs with technology. Bilgiç et al (2011) listed the characteristics of digital natives as their desire to reach information quickly, prefer games instead of serious works, graphs instead of text, have non-successive cognitive structures, want to do more than one job at the same time and prefer method of discovery in learning. In Tapscott's (2009) words, digital natives have eight basic norms, namely independence, personalization, integrity, scrutiny, collaboration, entertainment, innovation and speed, and they get information differently than previous generations. The change in the student profile offered in the teaching environments in schools shows that some changes should be made in the teaching environment. It is thought necessary to recover the teaching situations from the mediocrity offered by a traditional classroom environment. At this point, the use of computers defined as supporting, enriching the learning process and working as a tool in learning process, is a matter for teaching processes (Hartoyo, 2006).

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is defined as the transmission of communication elements such as text, sound, graphics, pictures, photos, animation and video via computer and language learning is concerned with the use of all these communication elements in the classroom by traditional and creative methods (Bahrani, 2011). Warschauer (1996) classified CALL under three headings: Behaviorist, communicative and integrative. Integrative Computer Assisted Language Learning (ICALL) is the third and still evolving phase. In the present century, with ICALL applications, in which multimedia and internet can be used at the same time, a social platform for people to communicate with their distinctive expressions can be realized. It was thought that the implementation of the ICALL with the help of the web 2.0 tools that O'Reilly (2005) defined as "content is user", which enabled students to be active during process, would be a good option for digital natives. With web 2.0, for the first time in history, the human mind emerges as a direct production power by not having a role only on the result part of the production system (Castells, 2000). Web 2.0 tools are the examples of application of today's technology. It allows people to create original content without requiring extra computer skills. It also allows sharing the generated content instantly. The possibilities of these tools available on the internet are unlimited and available for various types of interests. According to Peachey (2009), the use of Web 2.0 tools in education has five benefits, namely socialization, collaboration, creativity, authenticity and sharing. In this respect, by the use of web 2.0 tools in teaching situations, students and teachers will have the opportunity to socialize and develop by producing original content using their own creativity and sharing these, individually or in collaboration with people they prefer.

It was thought that use of ICALL integrated with "Natural Approach" defined by Richards & Rodgers (2001) as an example of the Communicative Approach with the point of view that language is a tool for communication would yield effective results in the context of the idea that web 2.0 tools would be useful for language teaching. Indeed, the sayings of Garrett (1991) that the use of computers is not a method; the fact that many methods, approaches and pedagogical philosophies can be applied as a tool, is a basis of this context.

The Natural approach described by Krashen and Terrell in 1983 consists of five hypotheses, named as Acquisition - Learning Hypothesis, Natural Order Hypothesis, Monitor Hypothesis, Input Hypothesis and Effective Filter Hypothesis. In the first hypothesis, The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, Krashen (1992) distinguishes these two actions as conscious and subconscious. He stated that the processes in the school environment can provide only learning. The second hypothesis, For the Natural Order Hypothesis, Krashen (2003) stated that a certain order existed in learning all languages and learning occurred in an order according to each language's own characteristics. In the third hypothesis, The Monitor Hypothesis, Krashen (2003) stated the human brain works as a monitor to correct the errors in the use of language and emphasized no one would have time for this during a natural communication. The fourth hypothesis, The Input Hypothesis, points out language inputs should be presented to the learners at the level and form they can understand and should be made clear and compelling (Krashen, 2003). In the fifth hypothesis, The Effective Filter Hypothesis, it is mentioned students should be open to learning with regard to emotions. According to Krashen (2003) in addition to the comprehensible input, students should have low concerns, high self-esteem, and the tenet for having the potential to be a member of the target language.

The Natural Approach dealing with vocabulary teaching in a communication-oriented manner is seen to have a viable nature in small age groups. When the stated hypotheses are examined, it is seen that there are common points among the hypotheses of The Natural Approach and The English Course Curriculum. In line with The Monitor Hypothesis, the issue of fluency was influenced when the mistakes made by the students were corrected immediately during a conversation takes place under the heading “Important Issues in Implementation of the Curriculum” in the English Curriculum as “mistakes are not mentioned during communication not to influence fluency” (MEB, 2017, p. 12). In Another example regarding The Input Hypothesis, Krashen's (1988) opinion mentioned in the English Curriculum indicates that “language inputs should be interesting, relevant and understandable to increase understanding” (cited in MEB, 2017, p. 9). With the stated information, Natural Approach in an integrated form with ICALL was chosen to be followed in this study, for it was thought to be appropriate for young learners by the researcher.

The integration of ICALL with the Natural Approach in the context of Project-Based Learning (PBL) is not only a way to make language learning easier, it is also thought to be effective for providing students to acquire 21st century skills. This research is an example of PBL with the integrated practices of ICALL and the Natural Approach, carried out through eTwinning portal, a platform for producing and implementing projects.

The researcher teacher saw eTwinning as a key to open the doors of the future with teaching environment appropriate to digital natives and acted in this direction. eTwinning provides a platform to school staff participants in European countries to communicate, cooperate, develop projects and share (eTwinning Turkey, 2017). In eTwinning, not face-to-face meetings, but the use of ICT is encouraged. In this way, it becomes possible to carry out education and instruction processes in communication with different places around the world. eTwinning is the platform where the Project-Based Learning, which provides an interdisciplinary learning, focuses on the learning process and puts the students in the center of learning process, is put into practice. Turkey joined eTwinning in 2009 which the European Commission (EC) initiated as an e-learning movement in 2005 and has been integrated with lifelong learning since 2007.

The English Curriculum includes key skills determined by the EC which include traditional, digital and horizontal skills. While traditional skills include native and foreign language communication, digital skills cover literacy and basic skills in mathematics and science, horizontal skills include learning to learn, social responsibility and citizenship responsibility, entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and creativity (MEB, 2017, p. 5). All the elements included in the key skills covered by the English Course Curriculum can be implemented through projects in the eTwinning platform.

There are publications related to the use of technology-supported teaching environments and web 2.0 tools in the literature, however it is thought that the current research will contribute significantly to the literature with the use of various web 2.0 tools in English language teaching in eTwinning projects. The studies on eTwinning are related to information about eTwinning and reflections of eTwinning and its effects (Gülner & Yatağan, 2014, Gülner, 2015, Akdemir, 2017), eTwinning and technology integration (Bozdağ, 2017), eTwinning's cultural dimension and disciplines-oriented research (Yılmaz & Altun Yılmaz, 2012) in terms of extent. In addition, in the literature, it is observed that studies are generally

carried out in a method in which the practitioner is not a researcher and the research are mostly based on the opinions of the practitioners and students.

There are some studies on the use of ICT in the process of teaching disciplines through eTwinning projects. A study by Pereira Coutinho and Rocha (2007) through an eTwinning project aimed at creating a collaborative work network covering all school levels in Europe using ICT, especially the Internet, was conducted. In the study in which the use of digital technologies in supporting collaboration between schools was investigated in the scope of schools' engagement with and experiences of the eTwinning programme by Gouseti (2013). Another research was done by Rampone (2013) on foreign language teaching through eTwinning platform by putting web 2.0 tools into the process. By Prentza (2013), an eTwinning project on the use of ICT as well as the teaching of history and geography through English was examined in 2013. The common point of the research is seen to be the use of ICT.

With the detection of the contribution of eTwinning project practices on English learning processes is a rare studied area, in this article two problems were focused on, including the contribution of eTwinning project practices on students' foreign language skills development and their participation in classes. The first question of the study was about eTwinning project practices' contribution to the students' language skills development (listening and speaking). The reason for limiting the language skills to speaking and listening is that the study group are of young learners (3rd grade class students), and the saying in the "Main Philosophy of English Course Curriculum", "while reading and writing are included in the process at higher class levels in order to provide students to reach higher levels, listening and speaking are highlighted in 2nd and 3rd grade classes" (MEB, 2017 p. 3). The second question of the research was whether the students' interest, motivation and participation would be increased by the methods and techniques applied. The dimensions of the research complement each other. The aim was to increase the students' interest and participation in the courses and by this way improving their language skills of listening and speaking. In the current research, the integration of ICALL with the Natural Approach was applied and this has come to life on the eTwinning portal, a way of PBL. It is considered the present research will make a significant contribution to the literature both in terms of the method used and the role of the researcher, for she is a practitioner as well, and the creating of a learning environment enriched by the use of web 2.0 tools through an eTwinning project.

2. METHOD

In the present study, an action research model was used. The most important reason for choosing this method is the researcher is also a practitioner and has the opportunity to apply the solutions for the problems that she can implement in the natural environment she is in. Şencan (2005) points out the role of the researcher in action research, having a role of an observer and an evaluator as well as being the person who applies the changes, intervention and does the experiment personally.

The study group consisted of 30 pupils of 3-A class of 15 female and 15 male students in a primary school in Isparta city center where the researcher teacher was working. According to the data obtained from the questionnaire before the process, which was applied to determine the status of the working group whether they could be able to participate in the project implementations and in order to determine the attitudes of the study group towards the

applications that would be implemented, it was determined that 26 of the students had a computer, tablet or smartphone in their houses and 21 of students had access to the internet. Besides, it was seen that 29 parents marked positive choice for students' willingness to participate in project activities and 28 parents expressed they believed the project would contribute to the students' academic achievement in English course. Although the student images were used by the consent of parents, face blurring was applied for ethical principles and the names were shortened.

2.1. Data Collection Tools

In order to ensure reliability in the research, diversity was given in data collection tools. To determine the level of achievement of the students in the language skills, a graded scoring key developed in three dimensions with the criteria of showing full, partial or very little of the behaviors in English Course Curriculum (MEB, 2017) was used. The tool was completed within the framework of the opinions received from three different instructors of English Language Teaching Department and a Program Instructor.

Another data collection tool used in the research was the researcher log. The researcher teacher noted the log about the plans to be applied in the course beforehand, all the practices carried out throughout the implementation process and the differences to do in the following processes. During the course of the process, image and video records which were defined by Mills (2003) as the most appropriate data source for the display of student knowledge, skills and attitudes were taken into record by the researcher to prevent changes in natural behavior of students. Within the application process, the records of the products expected from the students were taken and it was tried to ensure that these products could be used in such situations that students could use the language as a tool. Student products were analyzed descriptively in terms of quality and seen as a concrete data source for students' participation in the course. After the implementation process, focus group interviews were conducted with the students.

2.2. Data Analysis

Descriptive frequency and percentage statistics were used in the analysis of the data related to the first problem. In this context, the data about the students' language skills obtained from the graded scoring keys, which were completed practically one by one, experiences while students' use their products during class and the images and video records taken during the application were described and analyzed.

In the analysis of the data obtained for the second problem about the participation of the students in the class, the content analysis which was described as a method to be used to describe the data and reveal the hidden facts that may be in them by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008) was utilized. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008), content analysis consists of coding the data obtained, finding themes, organizing codes and themes and identifying and interpreting the findings. In accordance with this information, the data obtained for the second problem of the research was examined by the researcher and frequently repeated words were defined as codes and these codes were grouped under themes regarding cognitive, affective and social characteristics. The themes related to cognitive characteristics were defined as “the use of web 2.0 tools” and “digital skills”, themes related to affective features were defined as “motivation” and “attitude”, themes related to social traits are defined as “socialization” and

“product creation”, and codes concerning themes were given in the findings section. Findings were reached by the help of themes and codes, and inferences from findings were made.

2.3. Application process

In the application process of the action research, first of all, the researcher focused primarily on the problems experienced by the researcher herself and a literature review on the subject was made. Then, the implementation process was planned and the permissions regarding the research were obtained. In the classroom, heterogeneous groups were constructed and eTwinning project practices were started. During the practice, the researcher took notes on the researcher's log about her observations and video recordings and images were taken during the activities. Students were encouraged to create products to be used. After completing the process, focus group interviews were conducted with the students. The reached results by the analysis of the obtained data were interpreted and reported.

Within the scope of the eTwinning project called “Learning Today Leading Tomorrow” which was the subject of the research, all units planned to be processed throughout the year were shared among the partners for content development with web 2.0 tools. Additionally, all project partners developed content for each unit with different pre-determined web 2.0 tools. The introduction of different web 2.0 tools for each unit to the students was also part of the project's operation. In the present study, the operation of processing of the seventh unit “In my city” was examined. The application continuum consisted of eight hours English classes between 7 - 28 March 2018. The Web 2.0 tools used in the preparation of the content developed for the unit are as shown in Figure 1:

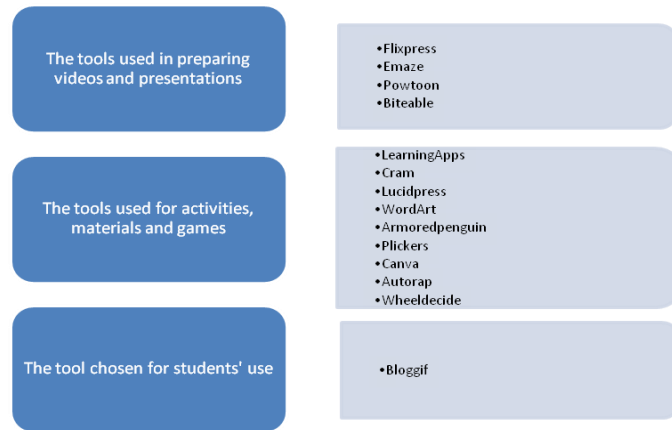


Figure 1. Web 2.0 Tools Used in the Application

The web 2.0 tools presented in Figure 1 are the tools used in the application for the purposes specified in the table. Apart from this, felt materials of target words and city models created by students were also used in the process. Concerning the use of tools and materials the researcher teacher tried to direct student to use the language as a tool and realized the use of these materials in classroom applications interactively.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Contribution of the eTwinning Project Practices to Students' Development in Language Skills

In the first question, the contribution of eTwinning project practices to students' development in language skills was investigated. The level of achievement in speaking skill acquired from the graded scoring key is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Level of Attaining the Objectives of Speaking Skill

The Level of Attaining the Objectives	Completely achieved		Partly achieved		Low achieved	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
3. S/he will be able to ask where the buildings are in this city and where the other places are.	10	33,3	4	13,3	16	53,3
4. S/he will be able to point to the map where the buildings and other places in a city are by saying "over there".	21	70	-	-	9	30
5. S/he will be able to say where people are now by stating "at".	17	56,6	13	43,3	-	-
6. When s/he does not know the answer, s/he will be able to express that s/he does not know.	19	63,3	9	30	2	6,6
7. S/he will be able to produce utterances by using "in" when necessary about the material given.	17	56,6	13	43,3	-	-
9. S/he will be able to respond appropriately to the questions related to the animated pictures S/he created.	18	60	-	-	12	40

The findings were commented on in accordance with the data presented in Table 1:

Objective 3: The ratio of students who use expression in the way it would not interfere the communication is 46,6. However, in the "wheeldecide" activity applied within the class at the third week in the application process, it was seen that 24 (80%) students used target question correctly. When in-class activities and the student performances related to the objective 3 in the graded scoring key were compared, it was thought the difference might be caused by the excitement of the students during the completion of the graded scoring key. Another factor was thought to be the application was not developed in its natural environment as in communicative activities in the classroom. In focus group interviews, M.C.'s statement "I was very excited when you called us in the morning, I didn't want to answer at all, but our English lecture was so good" also supports this idea.

Objective 4: 70% of the students fulfilled the behavior by using the expressions completely. It was observed that the students performed the behavior telling expression using

their body language. This was considered to be an indication of the students' internalization of the expression fully.

Objective 5: When the video records were examined, it was seen that 24 (80%) of 30 students were able to realize the objective 5 in the question - answer activities conducted in the third week. At the end of the fourth week, 56.6% of the students exhibited the behavior by using the expressions fully. The 43.3% of students answered the question by not using “at” in the expression. Ultimately, the rate of students answered the question with simple grammar or pronunciation errors that would not interfere with communication increased to 100% following the process.

Objective 6: 63.3% of the students told “I’m sorry. I don’t know” completely, while 30% used the expression with simple pronunciation and grammar mistakes or element deficiencies as “I’m sorry. Don’t know”. The students used the expression truly or with simple grammar or pronunciation mistakes (93.3%) showed they had internalized expression with body language they utilized.

Objective 7: The 56,6% of students answered the question completely according to the city brochure s/he chose during the completion of graded scoring key, while 43,3% chose to use another preposition rather than “in” or chose to use no preposition. The fact that the fault in using preposition does not constitute an obstacle to the communication in daily life supports the situation in which all the students understand the question and express the city they were in.

Objective 9: 60% of students have fully attained the objective 9 and 40% could not perform the behaviour as they did not make the expected student product in the objective 8. It was considered that all the students developed the product were able to answer the questions asked on the product correctly as an indicator of the fact the task contributed to permanent learning.

As a result, it was seen significant progress was made in the dimension of speaking skills at the end of the process when the video recordings about the question - answer activity applied on city models during the second week of the application and the ratio of the graded scoring key applied at the end of the process, the two data sources aiming the same objective, were compared.

The findings about the listening skills were evaluated in line with the data acquired from the graded scoring key which was completed at the end of the process due to the fact that it could not be clearly distinguished in class activities. It was seen that the majority of students (90%) recognize the parts of the city and building names in the city in terms of the objective 1 “s/he will be able to recognize the city parts and buildings”. 10% of the students had a partial knowledge of the target words in the 75% - 45% range. About objective 2 “s/he will be able to track building names and parts of the city by saying and showing”, it was observed the majority of the students (86,6%) showed the behavior exactly. The building or city sections which 13,4% of the students showed were between 75% and 45%. In conclusion, when the findings about listening skills were examined, 90% of the students achieved understanding and distinguishing of target words, and 86% of the students attained the objective completely in means of comprehension of instructions regarding subject.

3.2. Contribution of eTwinning Project Practices to the Level of Student Participation

In order to determine the contribution of the eTwinning project practices to the participation of students in the class, the themes related to cognitive, affective and social characteristics were determined as described in the section on analysis of data and the codes for each theme were designated and presented under the relevant headings as schemes.

Cognitive characteristics: Two themes were defined as “the use of web 2.0 tools” and “digital skills” for cognitive characteristics (Figure 2).

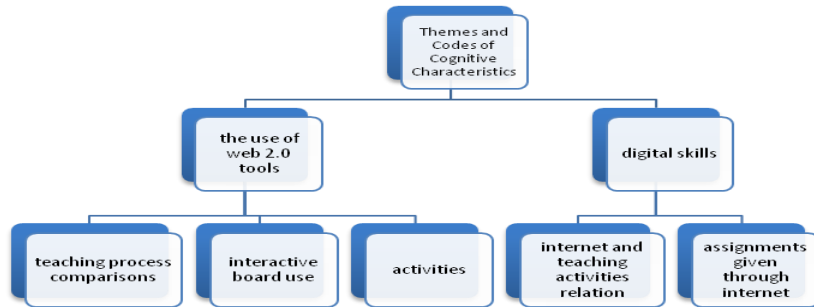


Figure 2. Themes and Codes of Cognitive Characteristics

The theme “the use of web 2.0 tools” includes “teaching process comparisons”, “interactive board use” and “activities” codes. The “teaching process comparisons” code was used to make the effects of the teaching process on students make clearer.

In focus group interviews, it was seen students considered the project and web 2.0 tools together as a whole and they enjoyed the project. In this context, a cognitive area can be mentioned in terms of permanence, while the presence of an affective area is evident. When they were asked about what the “project” meant to them, A.K. defined it as “only to study better, to do such better works on smart board” referring to the applications of web 2.0 tools. The following sentences taken from the interviews are evident:

Teacher: So what occurs in your mind when you think our project?

D.D.: We wrote diary, we did Cram.

E.Z.: We played Daisy Game.

E.K.: We played games on board. We did something with glue.

Teacher: What made you love English?

E.K.: Its' activities.

It was seen when the activities prepared via web 2.0 tools were put into practice, the participation could be ensured with the methods, techniques and tools used even in an activity that compels them. For example, in the researcher's log for “daisy game”, a word game including writing skills prepared with Learning Apps utilized in the third week of the application, “the students are not generally willing to participate in activities involving writing, but they played this game with a great interest and a very high participation” statements were included. About “cram” which was used in the second week of the application and that even shy students participated in the activity eagerly was observed in the

video recordings, the following sentences were stated in the researcher's log: "instead of going out of the classroom in the break, they continued the game in a line in front of the board. The students who played the game stated that they still would like to go on playing after the break."

In order to clarify the effects of the process in the focus group interviews, students were also asked to make a comparison among different teaching processes. It could be concluded from the sayings of E.Ç. "in other classes we read questions and answer them. We learn English by playing games" that applications conducted in the process reached the goal. In another dialogue during the interviews, it was seen the students stated they both learned and had fun during the process:

Teacher: What is the feature that differentiates English classes from other courses with the project this year? Think about the actions in other courses and ours'. How did it make you feel?

N.N.: I'm bored when my teacher does it through books, but I like playing games on interactive board...

Y. A.: I sometimes get bored from the book. I have more fun doing activities on the board or on the phone.

On the way to compare the two processes that are technologically-supported and unsupported, M.B. emphasized he learned better in technologically-supported education by saying "when we use smart board we learn quicker, but with pen and paper we learn less". The student E. K. told "we have less time with our teacher, but more time with you and our activities". This was considered as an indicator that a process full of proposeful activities suitable for the students' profile, despite having less duration with students, yields positive results. In the following citation, D.D. who attended another school in 2nd grade class compared this year's English courses to his at 2nd grade:

D.D.: I never liked second grade. Now we're doing more beautiful things.

Teacher: Like what?

D.D.: I don't know. Things we do today, events, activities from the book. Our old teacher never did anything like you. It was just from the book.

It was concluded students found a traditional static classroom environment boring, which in turn leads to a reduction in or loss of interest to the course.

Codes belonging to "digital skills" in the cognitive field defined as "internet and teaching activities relation" and "assignments given through internet". The students' views about the assignments given through the internet were examined under the theme of "digital skills" in order to make the students gain digital literacy that is among the 21st century skills, to create awareness of students can use the internet for education and to provide a teaching in accordance with the period characteristics of "digital natives". In focus group interviews, the student M.E.K. evaluated internet assignments as "I think it's good. It sticks up to the mind". It was seen that the aims of using the internet during the project continuum overlapped with the project goals in terms of online assignments. When students were asked about what could be done on the internet, N.N. replied as "we were able to do homework on the internet", and Y.A. replied as "we could do research".

The use of internet for teaching activities, which was thought to contribute to the right direction in the cognitive field, had also had positive effects on students in affective sense as in saying of M.Ç. “when homework comes in notebook, I do them, but when assignment is on internet, they are more fun and I want to do them more”. That giving students online assignments made students gain digital literacy was seen through the comment of S.B.T. “it was difficult for me at first because I did not know, but after I learned it, it became easy”. Along with that, according to the statements took place in researcher’s log, in the researcher note about the meeting done with parents, a parent said that “thank you teacher, we learned how to use our phones” referring to their digital literacy improved, too.

Affective characteristics: Within the context of affective characteristics, two themes were defined as “motivation” and “attitude”. “A sense of achievement”, “asking for the right to speak”, “active participation in the process (repeating, following the lesson, etc.)”, and “finding activity at the level that they can do” were the codes of the “motivation” theme. The codes of “attitude” were “emotions like love, willingness, excitement, entertainment, etc.” and “to compare their feelings with what they felt in other teaching processes” (Figure 3).

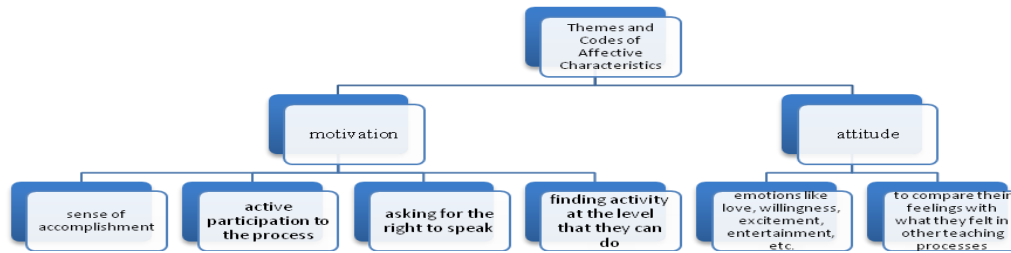


Figure 3. Themes and Codes of Affective Characteristics

The theme “motivation” concerning affective features included “sense of accomplishment”, “asking for the right to speak”, “finding activity at the level that they can do” and “active participation to the process” codes. “Active participation to the process” code referred to repeating words and expressions in materials such as video, presentation, song etc. used in the continuum, and responding to questions asked. The following notes about motivation in the researcher log are noteworthy:

Participation and attention were at the highest level during two courses. Even the uninterested students who generally caused problems in the courses were as attentive as possible and did not disturb other students. There was no conversation among the students. (Third week in practice)

Participation in the class was very high, even the students who were shy and not so successful such as T. U. and B. Ç. were very active. This week, the use of the prepositions “at” and “in” was taught. Students changing to Turkish due to low self-esteem in English lessons, which is a common case in English classes, did not happen. It was observed that the students tried to use the target structures by doing their best. (Fourth week in practice)

It was deduced web 2.0 tools were very effective in providing the students motivation for the course. Biteable and powtoon were the web 2.0 tools used for preparing videos to be shown during classes. When the video records were examined, except for the students M.Ç,

D.D. and T.K. known as their interest towards lessons are low, 27 pupils outside these pupils followed the video effectively and repeated what was said in the video. The style of biteable was noted to be liked by students in researcher's log for the second week of the process. There were also notes on the "Powtoon" tool in the researcher's log:

With the video prepared with Powtoon, target words and structures were repeated. Students read aloud the expressions by watching the video with interest. Even before seeing the picture, many were saying the words before the post. A.T. commented "it was very nice". The video was seen to be effective. (Third week in practice)

When the video prepared with "Powtoon" was being watched, it was observed it could take attention of the students E.K. and B.Ç., who were known to lose attention easily and it was realized in the records that M.Ç. and T.K. whose academic achievements and interests in all subjects were low, also followed the video with interest and repeated words and expressions in the video. It was available in recordings in which D.D. was the only one who was not very interested.

In the focus group interviews, it was seen that the students thought they got more permanent learning through interactive board via web 2.0 tools. There are some quotes about this below:

N.N.: When I see it on the board, I look at it and memorize it. This is so good.

Y.A.: The lessons are good for me. I've learned so many wonderful things.

Another point in focus group interviews was that the word "project" evoked the word "success". When it was asked what came to their minds when "English" was said, E.Z. said the words "houses, school and success".

The students stated they enjoyed the activities even if they had difficulties in them and they wanted to continue to do and they started to learn as they went on:

S.B.T.: Teacher, I actually love them all, but it seemed hard.

Teacher: Which were the hardest?

S.B.T.: It was difficult for us to do things at home.

Teacher: Which is better, not doing at all or doing it by having difficulties with love?

S.B.T.: Doing it by having difficulties because I love it.

The same kind of activity implemented with web 2.0 tool was a feeling of anxiety in students when applied on paper:

Teacher: We could actually do this from the book or worksheets, but we do it this way.

C.Ç.: The book is difficult, I solve the tests hard. I become happy when I win something practiced on interactive board.

The themes regarding the affective field were "attitude", "emotions like love, willingness, excitement, entertainment, etc." and "to compare their feelings with what they felt in other teaching processes". The code "comparing emotions with other teaching processes" was used to define students' attitudes towards the process more clearly. In the focus group interviews, it was found that the students found the lesson enjoyable and were excited about the lesson. The quoted citations support field notes and video recordings:

A.T.: For example, we do other things in Turkish and in English. English is more fun to me.

B.A.: English is a beautiful language, I like it very much.

Y.E.: And also very fun.

A.T.: Yes teacher, it is fun.

B.A.: And also exciting.

...

Teacher: What do you feel when you come to classes?

M.Ç.: I get excited when I am in English. I just get angry when I forget my stuff.

C.Ç.: I get excited.

E.E.: Happiness.

From the point that students were aware of the fact they learned while they were having fun, an important detail in the use of technology was seen that using technology as a tool not as a goal is achieved.

Teacher: What do you think when you speak English?

B.A.: Happiness.

A.E.: Lesson, excitement, you.

S. U.: Project.

Teacher: What do you think is the LT project? What is our purpose?

S.U.: We're trying to learn English.

B.A.: Enjoy.

A.E.: Taking pleasure while learning English.

Autorap is a web 2.0 tool that turns normal speech into rapstyle. Autorap was put into practice to make students use the target words and structures.

Even students who did not have high academic success participated in the activity and all students obeyed the classroom rules. The students were not affected by the pronunciation mistakes and they told unit words they chose. When I asked questions, they responded collectively. After recording, all students listened to their words transformed into rap style. The activity was repeated three times with different rhythms. The students loved the practice and it was seen that each student was participated with excitement. (Second week of practice)

Social Characteristics: Two themes were defined as “socialization” and “product creation” concerning social characteristics. “Sharing activities”, “socialization” and “cooperation” codes were related to “socialization” theme, “product sharing” and “active participation in the process” codes were defined for “product creation” theme (Figure 4).

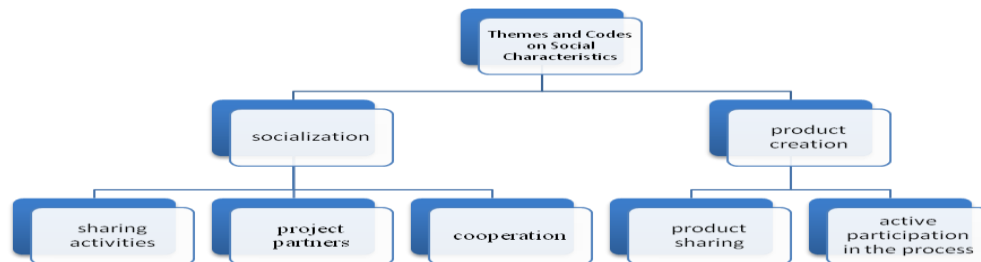


Figure 4. Themes and Codes of Social Characteristics

There were “sharing activities”, “project partners” and “cooperation” codes related to “socialization” theme within social domain. All teachers included in the project prepared a brochure introducing the city where their schools were located using the “lucidpress” tool. According to the researcher teacher, these brochures were interesting for the students because there was a curiosity about the project partner schools in the students. When the video recordings were examined, it was seen that the activity was remarkable for the students, although there were 14 brochures examined in total and they were examined on the board one by one. Although it was a time-consuming activity, in the classroom of 30 students, it was

seen only three students were distracted and exhibited uninterested behaviors during the examination of a few brochures. It was also reflected the participation in the classroom activities through the brochures was high in the field notes in the researcher's log as well as in the video recordings:

After examining the brochures, the students came to the board as groups of 2 or 3 and they said "I am at..." and gave hints about the places chosen from brochures to class and other groups guessed by saying "Are you in...?" about the city. The group guessed right about the city came in front of the board and the activity ended when all groups came in front of the board. With this activity, I think that the use of the buildings was reinforced in an exciting way. Almost all of the students were eager to participate. Even if the questions were asked in the normal order, it was seen that even the students who were thought to be hesitant about responding did not apply to the Turkish language and expressed themselves in English. (Third week in practice)

It was also included in the focus group discussions the students were excited about the project partners. T.U said that "you said that we could talk with friends from other cities, I was very happy", M.C. told "I get excited to meet our partners when I come to class", and A.K. told that "I love the excitement".

It was a matter of excitement for the students to do the same activities and share the images of the activities with the project partners. A.K. expressed his excitement by saying "the videos we see on the board are so exciting to me. What my class and the other classes do is fun to me". In addition, the use of English in videos prepared jointly with schools included in the project provided a concrete and useful purpose for learning English for students. E.Z. expressed the necessity of learning English as "we speak English to speak with other classes".

The social dimension of the project was provided by sending project partners to each other the ant mascot, the logo of the project, a memory book, and samples of student products. The students greeted the package came from Balıkesir with joy and they were excited about filling the memory book while reading what was written in it by project partners. Here are the writings of one of the students on project memory book:

"I am very curious about you, friends. I wish I could come out there, but I can't. Thankfully, this project started. I'm very curious about you and your teachers. Your presents were very good, friends. We will also send a gift box to you dear friends, teachers. I love you very much. This project is a very nice project; I hope you also liked this project friends, teacher. I love you very much..."

In addition to the cooperation formed by project partners, it was tried to instill a sense of cooperation among the students and it was expected the activities were organized in groups in order to make the students sit in groups. When the researcher notes were examined, it was seen that the students were very eager to cooperate and a more positive environment was created in the classroom.

There were "product sharing" and "active participation in the process" codes related to "making a product" theme examined in the social domain. Two products were demanded during the application. One of the products demanded was making a model city and the other one was creating a three-dimensional cube or editing a photograph by using "Bloggif"; the photographs were to be taken in the places learned in the class. It was thought that the students' doing the products were important in determining the participation and interest of students. During the process, dialogues were realized on the model cities and students were expected to present their bloggif products prepared with using target words and sentence

structures. At the end of the process, it was seen that more than half of the class (63.3% in the model city and 60% in the “Bloggif”) performed both tasks. In the researcher’s log, notes on the “Bloggif” application in the fourth week were included:

The course started with Bloggif products. The students talked about where they were in the photos they created through “Bloggif” “3D Cube” or “Gif effect” or both of them. It was seen that all students presented were quite successful in forming sentences with the target structure and words. They enjoyed the process, and even those who didn't do their homework were interested in their friends' products.

Homework presentations prepared by students through Bloggif were shared in the form of a collage in related social media groups to be an inspiration for other teachers. After sharing, some English teachers asked the application used in tasks.

When the researcher notes about the city model, another product in the process, were examined, it was seen the students were proud of the models they made and they liked this kind of homework. E.C. stated “it was very nice for me. There are beautiful assignments at home ... we stucked what we learned in English onto buildings and we built a city”, and R.A. indicated “making models” as the most beautiful point of the project. A. K. expressed the happiness coming from learning actively in the process and sharing the product he created as “I am very excited in our project. I'm very considerate; I want to do everything like that. I made a house and I loved it, and it is fun to take a photo of it and send to you. I love what I do by myself, what I do on the internet”. The student named as C.C. stated they were more satisfied with the process and experienced more permanent learning when they were actively involved in the process with the sentence “I learned the buildings better because we made buildings”.

When the video recordings were examined, it could be seen while the question - answer activity was carried out on the models with the students; even the students who did not do the task watched the activity carefully and curiously. The students named as M.C. and T.K. who are not academically successful and have low interest on lesson. It was seen that those two students who could not do their homework, visited their friends’ desks in order to listen to homework of them. After the prepared models were used actively in the teaching process, they took place in the project exhibition together with the other products.

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the research which aimed to determine the contribution of eTwinning project applications to students' foreign language skills and their interest and motivation for the course, when the students' speaking and listening skills were examined, the first problem of the research, it was observed the students achieved a great deal of gains in communicating with target words and structures. However, although reading skill at the recognition level was included in the content developed and used during the learning experiences, this skill was not evaluated because the aim was to improve daily life communication skills and the fact that there is no provision as an achievement in the English Course Curriculum (MEB, 2017).

Another important point to be stated is about the web 2.0 tools used in the process. Considering whether or not the same success could be achieved with the use of the web 2.0 tools, without the implementation of an eTwinning project, it is thought that affective and social dimensions contributed to the achievement of the cognitive domain. Therefore, conducting a process through content development with web 2.0 tools without eTwinning

would not produce the same results. One of the results of the study by Gouseti (2013), in which the role of digital technologies in supporting collaboration between schools was investigated, was that the potential of web 2.0 technologies in education was undeniable and it was expressed that the matter was not just to educate teachers and pupils on the use of web 2.0 tools and work collaboratively, but to make the programs less organized and more flexible in order to conduct such practices. The results of the present study are consistent with the results of Gouseti's research in the frame of the potentials of web 2.0 tools.

One of the theoretical bases of the study was the Natural Approach, which is seen as an example of the Communicative Approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In this context, as a result of the materials used in the scope of the eTwinning project within the research, the conducted program implementations and the sharings with the project partners, it was determined the students started to see the target language as a tool rather than as a goal by their using of target language to join the project practices. Another theoretical basis of the research was ICALL. Within this approach, computers are seen as a tool that various approaches and pedagogical philosophies could be applied on (Garrett, 1991) and it was stated this approach included the transmission of communication elements through computer (Bilgiç et al, 2011). According to Krashen's (2003) Message Hypothesis, that input should be understandable is the important thing and this can be achieved with images or movements in these small age groups. When this approach is combined with ICALL in small age groups, the presentation of the input made clear and remarkable with web 2.0 tools becomes meaningful to students within the eTwinning project. At this point, it is possible to say that the use of ICALL and Natural Approach through an eTwinning project contributes students' listening and speaking skills in foreign language. It is thought that the positive results of the action research are consistent with the Effective Filter Hypothesis within the Natural Approach. In the aforementioned hypothesis, it was stated students with high motivation and self-confidence and low level of anxiety would be open to input in language acquisition and therefore more successful results would be obtained (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In the action research carried out within the scope of eTwinning project applications, technologically enriched teaching process enabled the students to increase their attention and motivation, therefore their participation increased and thus the students who exhibited the products experienced a sense of success which increased their self-confidence. So, the teaching process, in which the concerns were left aside, was completed with excitement and enthusiasm. At this point, it is possible to mention the contribution of both eTwinning project and use of web 2.0 tools.

In the second problem of the study, the contribution of eTwinning project applications to students' participation in class was investigated. When the findings were examined, it was concluded eTwinning project practices contributed positively to students' participation in class in "cognitive, affective and social" dimensions. With the data obtained, by the help of web 2.0 tools, the learning environments were tried to be created in accordance with the qualifications of "digital natives" and it was observed this application could take their attention. The practiced activities increased the students' interest and motivation and this positive effect was reflected positively on the students' language skills. However, it would not be realistic to reduce this positive reflection only to technologically enriched learning environments. Because the eTwinning project, in the context of which the content was developed and implemented, added a social dimension to the applications and enabled

students to share their activities by making common activities with their peers in different cities. The students expressed satisfaction with sharing the activities they did in the process and showed this with their interest and engagement in the course, too.

Another factor that increased the participation of the students to the course was the products made them active. Students were pleased to be active in developing their products and enjoyed presenting them in the classroom environment using target language. The students who did not perform the products showed their active participation in the attitude of watching other friends' presentations in a careful manner. It was seen the students realized the product had the feeling of being successful in using the language as a tool and being proud of sharing the products they developed with related groups through the social media. Another contribution of eTwinning project practices, which affected positively the students in the affective sense, was in the dimension of digital literacy. As the students gained competency in using ICT with the assignments, they gained awareness about that the internet could be used for courses and research with the help of the performed activities that were transferred to the online platforms.

It is thought the applications of Natural Approach within ICALL in the implementation process of the present research and the web 2.0 tools used in this context could draw attention of students, but the sharing phase of the activities carried out through the web 2.0 tools would be incomplete and therefore the students' willingness might decrease due to becoming familiar to the practices after some time. In this respect, the absence of a social sharing environment could not provide motivation for the students. It is thought that this situation might have negative effects on the academic success of the students. In the study conducted by Rampone (2013) to incorporate web 2.0 tools into the foreign language teaching process through eTwinning, students gained not only foreign language skills, but also other abilities such as other language skills, making presentations, doing the assigned tasks, and photography and video editing. When the results of the research conducted compared to the study of Rampone, it is thought that they are similar at the point of that English language teaching in the scope of eTwinning project practices make students gain not only language skills but also different digital and social skills. In accordance with the nature of PBL, students were expected to develop their products with the web 2.0 tools used in the research. In this way, while students were improving their digital skills, they gained experience in making presentations and developed their foreign language skills, too. If there was no sharing made through the partnerships established on the eTwinning platform, the social dimension would be incomplete even if such presentations were made in the classroom, and the students' eagerness and excitement about the activities and the assignments would not be so high.

On the other hand, a study including an eTwinning project containing the use of ICT as well as the teaching of history and geography via English by Prentza (2013) revealed that there is an increase in students' writing skills and their motivation. The results of the present research and Prentza's are consistent in the issues that eTwinning project implementations show effects not only in the improvement of the skills of a single language or other disciplines, but also in different areas such as development of social skills by the use of ICT. In another study, Pereira Coutinho and Rocha (2007) conducted an eTwinning project aimed to create a collaborative work network that encompassed all school levels in Europe by using ICT, particularly by the use of Internet, in which students made progress in the use of basic computer skills and internet. Additionally, they developed social skills and tolerance to

different cultures, and finally they gained experience in team work by cooperation. Moreover, providing the students with the communication skills in language, it was concluded that eTwinning practices developed them in terms of social and collaborative skills and digital literacy, not only in academic but also social and emotional aspects.

To sum up, eTwinning project practices in the current research contributed to the development of foreign language skills of students. Within the scope of the eTwinning project implementations, ICALL and Natural Approach were applied by the integration of each other on the ground of PBL. This study contributed to the development of students' cognitive, affective and social aspects. In other words, the integration of the technologically-supported learning environment with the Natural Approach increased the motivation of the students to some level, but the implementation of these practices within the scope of the eTwinning project enabled the students to increase their interest to the course, because the students of the age are motivated by the idea of sharing the products they produce. The eTwinning project practices increased the participation of students with the opportunity to share their products emerged at the end of the process by using target language and this led to the development of language skills of the students.

The current research progressed in an action research discipline. It is thought that the use of similar applications in the research with an experimental design would be useful because it would allow comparing the results of the techniques used in the research with traditional techniques. Finally, the current research was conducted with a single teacher and class. It is thought that a research with more than one participant of a project can be a good option to be conducted.

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