

Research Article

Looking for a Black Cat: EFL Teachers' Perception of Democracy

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Article Info

Received: February 16, 2017

Accepted: July 28, 2017

Online: December 03, 2017

Keywords: democracy, teacher perception, metaphor, EFL

Abstract

Stuck between the ideologies of Europe and Middle-East, Turkey is experiencing euphoria of practicing democracy which has been subject to hot debates. Society is inevitably being shaped by these discussions. As a reflection of society, how is democracy being reflected in language classrooms? To answer the question from teachers' perspective, this qualitative research was conducted. The aim of this research is to understand Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding democracy. Being the practitioners of Turkish education system and its philosophy, three English teachers participated in this study. The data came from semi-structured interviews and graphic elicitations. Data obtained from the participants were interpreted using "In-vivo" coding. The results of this study suggest that "equity" is one of the most highlighted aspects of democracy in their perception. However, participants seem to adopt "authoritative" teacher roles although they reported fostering student involvement in decision making. Lack of authority is seen as a burden to a democratic class. Experienced and novice teachers have different conceptions and practices of democracy. Experienced teacher is inclined to veil "authority" whereas novice teacher holds a militant view of democracy.



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To cite this article: Uyaniker, P. (2017). Looking for a black cat: efl teachers' perception of democracy. *Journal of Computer and Education Research*, 5 (10), 150-173 <https://doi.org/10.18009/jcer.324233>

Introduction

The existence of communities largely depends on transmission of values, and knowledge. So, education undertakes a critical role. To be more precise, without formal education, transmitting these values would be implausible (Dewey, 2001). But with such a great power, corruption may be inevitable. Considering the fact that education is planned and enforced by political institutions, it can be suggested that governments may use education as a tool to serve their own missions and to maintain their power. "Democracy in education" becomes a significant and critical issue in educating the next generation. Teachers, as practitioners of education system, may play an important role in education as

they are the key figures in education. Considering the fact that teachers' beliefs about democracy are reflected through their behaviors in the classroom, teachers having established concept of democracy may be more effective in terms of guiding interaction fostering critical thinking and modeling their students. Apart from this, teachers' democratic attitudes affect mutual trust and positive learning environment (Topkaya & Yavuz, 2011). From a more holistic perspective, there seems to be relation between democracy, life quality and economic wealth (Karahan, Sarıdoğan, Özkamalı & Dicle, 2006). The results of democratic education will be innovative, motivated, lifelong learners. Moreover, democratic education helps to build up peaceful and inclusive societies based on respect for human rights (UNESCO, 2006). So, "teachers' perception of democracy" can be said to play an important role in schools as micro representative of a democratic society, learning and students' perception of democracy.

Literature Review

Defining democracy may be troublesome because it involves more than politics. The word metaphor is derived from the Greek word "metaphoria" which means "to carry". In literary translation, a metaphor is a kind of figurative language in which a word is altered from its literal reference to a new and wide field of reference (Fadaee, 2011). Dewey's definition of democracy, however, seems to be appropriate for this context and embracing as it views democracy from a wider perspective, namely as a way of living. As the prominent philosopher writes, "... it [democracy] is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (Dewey, 2001, p. 91). Still, the concept of democracy in the classroom has a wide spectrum; it involves students as active, equally respected participants who can carry out critical, knowledgeable dialogue (Wilmer, 2006).

Democracy and Teacher Education

Teacher education is crucial because teachers are the most important component of formal education (Topkaya & Yavuz, 2011). Trying to understand and then building on their democracy repertoire will have long-lasting effects for pre-service teachers in their future careers. Unfortunately, research has shown that majority of pre-service teachers are not introduced to the term "democracy" neither in practice nor in theory throughout their university lives (Sarı & Sadık, 2011) and their knowledge of democracy is consequently insufficient (Güven & Mutluer, 2014) and can be considered as "militant" (Doğanay,

Çuhadar & Sarı, 2007). Militant view of democracy can be defined as capacity of the regime to defend itself against domestic political challenge to its continued existence (Sajó, 2004). Democracy and teachers' efficacy has been studied and its effect has been demonstrated through research; such as democracy and self-efficacy, democracy and neurotic tendencies (Karahan, Sarıdoğan, Özkamalı & Dicle, 2006). Democracy is not a solitary concept; it is reflected on what teachers do in their classrooms. Therefore, interaction in the classroom, learning environment, skill, and values of democracy are affected by how teachers perceive democracy (Topkaya & Yavuz, 2011). Studies show that teachers with high scores on democratic beliefs can cope with behavioral problems more effectively (Almog & Shechtman, 2007) and suffer less from burnout (Dworkin, Saha & Hill, 2003) and the research by Topkaya and Yavuz also demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and democratic values (2011). Teachers with low democratic values, on the other hand, show lower self-actualization and higher neurotic tendencies such as intolerance to criticism, anxiety and feeling of regret (Karahan, Sarıdoğan, Özkamalı & Dicle, 2006). Thus, we can suggest that having an established concept of democracy affects teachers' practices. Earlier studies regarding democratic education and democracy in education seem to focus more on defining the concept of democracy presenting views both from in-service and pre-service teachers (Bakioğlu & Kurt, 2009; Gökçe, 2013; Gürşimşek & Göregenli, 2005; Güven & Mutluer, 2014; Sarı & Sadık, 2011). Different components have been suggested for the term democracy; Kıncal and Işık (2003) went through the related literature and found that "equality, freedom, justice, collaboration, confidence, responsibility, looking for good and tolerance" were the most frequently used terms that can be considered as what constitutes democracy. Sarı and Sadık (2011) found that metaphors developed by participants conceptualized democracy as "equality, personal interest, independence, effort, dream, pluralism, plurivocality, system, social order, modernization". In another study, in which teachers' perception of democracy was studied through metaphors, it was reported that metaphors centered upon "democracy as a vital importance, democracy for freedom" (Güven & Mutluer, 2014).

History of Democracy in Education

However, it would be misleading to try to define or think democracy apart from the context in which it exists. How democracy emerged, the phases and implementation of

democracy are main factors that should be taken into consideration in the pursuit of defining citizens' concept of democracy. When we have a look at the history of education in Europe, we see that education in the west was based on Christian belief and it was considered to be right for the privileged throughout the Middle Ages (Şişman, 2007). Meanwhile, in the first century AD of the Middle East, it was reported that all children were educated regardless of their social class. Those days throughout Europe, the church established a strong influence on education. During the reformation period, the protestant enforced education for the poor and tried to establish "humanistic" values in education (Guisepe, 2004). In a nutshell, before establishing a democratic education, Europe has undergone through authoritative and undemocratic system of education. But Christian view has gradually been replaced by humanistic values (Schou, 2001). Today, organizations such as "EUDEC (European democratic education community)" are taking steps to move education to a more democratic platform by trying to establish legislations. According to reports of EUDEC, it was noted that young people are not products to be developed for economic or social purposes but complete individuals with the right to be "brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity" (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989).

Democratic Education in Turkey

Although it is generally reported that training of "Citizenship and Human Rights" goes back to 1908 (Bakioğlu & Kurt, 2009) or as early as 1808 (Sened-i İttifak) (Çavdar, 1995), we should be cautious in categorizing the democratic attempts in Ottoman State as a part of democratic education. Looking from a critical perspective, is it appropriate to mention "democracy in education" or "democratic education" in a state that was ruled by a Sultanate and thereafter constitutional monarchy? These attempts can be at best called "efforts" to democratize education. Taking this perspective, the starting point of democratic implementations in Turkish education can be considered as the acceptance of Tevhid-i Tedrisat Law in 1924 which introduced concepts of freedom and rights (Gökçe, 2013). With this law a major step was taken towards a secular and a modern education (Akyüz, 2015). Currently in Turkey, the curriculum involves "Citizenship and Human Rights" as a

compulsory course for 7th and 8th graders. A similar but selective course is offered in the 12th grade. These can be considered as curriculum bounded acts to improve democracy. Furthermore, a protocol was signed in 2004 and a project called “Democracy Education and School parliament” was implemented (meb.gov.tr). In Turkey, “BBOM (Başka Bir Okul Mümkün)” project is doing research and publishing reports on issues such as “gender equality” and “bullying” at schools. Considering the aforementioned attempts to democratize education, there has been a plethora of research considering democracy in education in Turkey (Akyüz, 2015; Karahan, Sarıdoğan, Özkamalı & Dicle, 2006; Kesici, 2008; Şişman, 2007) This may be considered rather paradoxical considering the fact that Turkey does not have a long history and democratic life in Turkey has been interrupted on some occasions. (Karahan, Sarıdoğan, Özkamalı & Dicle, 2006). This makes perception of democracy more important because “democracy” is more than just a government body. It is a mentality and a way of life.

Research Questions

One of the main aims of education is to train independent, open-minded, creative and productive individuals with scientific thinking skills who are respectful of human rights (Ministry of Education, 2015). According to Chomsky, however, the aim of mainstream education is to raise “obedient citizens” and similarly the dominant view of democracy is that people are passive and obedient (Falcone, 2009). This study will try to look into the issue from teachers’ perspectives. Teachers are the key figures in education and their roles are not to be underestimated as Sir Ken Robinson states “...education doesn’t go on in the committee rooms of our legislative buildings; it happens in the classrooms and schools and the people who do it are teachers and students” (Robinson, 2013). Thus, two main questions were formed to understand how democracy is reflected in teachers’ perceptions and how teachers retain democracy in the classroom. The two main research questions are as follows;

1. What is the EFL teachers’ concept of “democracy”?
2. How do teachers ensure democracy in the classroom?

Research Design

Participants

Three English teachers Amy, UK, and Jack (pseudonyms) were chosen to participate in this study. Amy is a novice teacher with one and a half year of experience. She is a

graduate of English Language Teaching Department. The second participant, UK, an experienced teacher has been in the profession for 21 years and he is a graduate of American Language and Literature Department. Jack, the third participant, has been an English teacher for 11 years and is a graduate of English Language and Literature department.

Data Collection

Data were collected via semi-structured interviews. The interviews lasted for 20, 25 and 28 minutes respectively. The first interview protocol included ten questions which focused on understanding teachers' perception of democracy and how democracy is retained in their classrooms (see appendix-3). One of the questions of the interview included metaphors regarding democracy. The participants were asked to form a metaphor. My aim for using metaphors is to try to understand participants' concept of democracy more concisely and in a more complex way. Furthermore, metaphors take the reader toward the emotional thoughts (Fadee, 2011) which may help to enrich the data. Furthermore, as Schmitt states, metaphors are practical in transforming complex phenomena into understandable patterns (2005). Participants were also asked to draw a picture or a graphic elicitation which was used to collect more data about their perception of democracy.

In the second interview, the participant talked about his own experiences as a student regarding the concept of democracy. This reflection of UK gave me the idea of adding a question to the interview protocol about participants' experiences with "democracy" as students. The reason for adding this question to the interview protocol is the fact that teachers are affected from their past learning experiences and this effect is sometimes reflected in their teaching practices. So, their past experiences as students may have an effect on their perception of democracy. Consequently, Amy was interviewed once again and the question "When you look back, how would you comment on your classroom environment and teachers in terms of democracy when you were a student?" was also posed to Amy and thereafter Jack. Thus, the first interview protocol was changed and the question was added to the protocol. Once each transcription process was completed, the participants were asked to read the transcription as a form of member-checking.

Data Analysis

Three teachers were interviewed to understand their concepts of democracy and how they retain democracy in the classroom. Before each interview, transcription of the former

interview had been completed. This enabled me to see the flow of the interview, reflect on it and made changes on the interview protocol if necessary. Following the interviews, participants were given the graphic elicitation task.

In transcribing the data, conventions of pause, laugh, exhale, unintelligibility, interruption and lengthening were used to fully represent and help the researcher to understand the process in a more meaningful way.

Interview data were analyzed using “IN VIVO” coding. In-Vivo coding refers to a word or a phrase that are actually used by participants during data collection (Strauss, 1987). Data were read meticulously and when I felt that I was able to get the sense of each interview, I started developing codes. To assign codes, similar data were grouped together and a codebook (Appendix 1) was developed.

The reason for choosing “In-Vivo” coding lies in the fact that some part of the data included use of metaphors. Metaphors are individualized expressions and served as the core of my understanding of the term “democracy” in participants’ cognition. Using the actual words of the participants helps the readers to understand what lies in the participants’ cognition in a more explicit way which is also discussed by Boeije; “In-Vivo” codes are not just catchy words rather they pinpoint exactly what is happening” (2010). Another benefit of “In-Vivo” coding for my research is discussed by Saldaña; “In-Vivo” coding echoes indigenous or cultural use of language (2013). To exemplify, Jack in defining “democracy” made a simile (Nasreddin Hodja, blue beads, see appendix) that is well known by Turkish people. This cultural element can be best reflected by using “In-Vivo” coding. Last but not the least, “In-Vivo” coding emphasizes participants’ voices. Following the analysis, a codebook emerged. The codebook included definition, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and example from the text.

Codes that were mentioned by one participant who based his argument on a different perspective were included because in qualitative research, the researcher is also after what has not been voiced out. The codes that were drawn from the transcripts were analyzed and three themes emerged; Democracy as interaction between parties, roles in democracy as authoritative, enlightening and engaging, and maintaining democracy by latent control.

After the codebook was developed, four themes emerged; the concept of democracy, importance of democracy, constituents of a democratic class and management with behavioral problems.

Subjectivity

Due to the nature of qualitative research, subjectivity is not necessarily problematic unless the researchers are aware of and bring their preconceived beliefs into discourse or present transparent description of the processes in the research (Carlson, 2010). In this study, trustworthiness is enhanced by triangulation in data collection; in understanding teachers' concept of democracy and how they ensure democracy in their classrooms, both interview data and graphic elicitations were included. Additionally, field notes served as a means to understand and reflect on the interview process. To illustrate, during the second interview, one important aspect was described by UK; experiences as a student. Field notes helped the researcher to think more on this aspect and one more question was added to the interview protocol about teachers' experiences as students regarding democracy.

Among the most common techniques used for increasing trustworthiness of research is member-checking. After the interviews were transcribed, the transcribed data was handed to the participants and they were asked to check if what they had said was fully presented. As feedback, Amy seemed a little anxious about her grammar errors. She was reminded her that names are kept confidential and errors are natural in speaking. So, she gave her consent and agreed that transcriptions are smooth. Jack, on the other hand, after reading transcriptions, was surprised how much he talked.

Findings

Democracy as Interaction between Parties

The first question of the interview was about definition of democracy. The participants were asked to define democracy. Similar components of democracy were brought up by Amy and UK; both participants highlighted "equality" and "involvement" in defining democracy; in the interview Amy stated, "I can say that citizens are involved in ruling country something like that or all of us are equal". This definition both includes the aspects of "involvement and equality". In her graphic elicitation, she preferred to draw a sail with the crew in which the captain being on the same sail which highlights that both the crew and the captain are equal. Furthermore, she added that captain is a symbol who needed

to be on the ship to represent “democracy” while the crew was seen as an essential component of democracy. “I think it has one captain and crew captain has nearly no effect if he doesn’t get the right crew ... and doesn’t get their support it’s something like that. If there is no crew, there is no captain to save our ship”. In making this comment, Amy urged us to think that both the crew and the captain have responsibility the captain in the essence of this responsibility lays involvement of both parties. Similarly, both in UK’s metaphor of democracy “Knights of the round table” and graphic elicitation (see appendix) underlined teacher’s existence in the classroom being equal to the students’. In this regard, UK highlighted that he wrote “Where is the teacher?” as a title for his graphic elicitation to emphasize a rhetorical question, not asking for the existence of the teacher but rather emphasize that teacher does not dominate the class.

Jack, the third participant of the study, presented a different perspective and based his argument on the absence of democracy. Jack considered democracy as; “they [people] choose it at a point when they are forced. You accept roles, you play it, you go on. It’s the easy way.” In making this comment, Jack points out that democracy is a role to be played and this highlights the arbitrariness of the term. He preferred “Nasreddin Hodja’s blue beads” (see appendix, Jack’s transcription) as a metaphor to define democracy. This metaphor is about a joke by a well-known figure in Turkish history who is famous for his repartee and quick-wit. The essence of this metaphor is as follows to make people happy, sometimes it is necessary to fake or play the role expected.

If we try to sum up the first theme, we can see that Amy and UK highlighted two important aspects of democracy; equality and involvement. Although authority figures were presented in Amy’s (captain) and UK’s (king of the round table) metaphors, it can be suggested that democracy is not the lack of authority but rather the role of authority as provider of an interactionist atmosphere. On the other hand Jack reminded us that the term is rather arbitrary and it was enforced to the community.

Roles in Democracy as Authority, Enlightening and Engaging

Another theme regarding the roles of the teachers’ and the students’ in a democratic class emerged from the interviews. Regarding the question about the constituents of a democratic class, participants urged me to see democratic class from two different perspectives; in the eyes of teachers and the students.

The role of a teacher in a democratic class, as UK and Amy asserted, is guiding as UK summarizes; “teacher should be just somebody to light a path to the acquisition of the language.” In defining teachers as guides, participants rejected the traditional view that teachers are the only rule-setters or decision-makers. Rather, teachers are seen as guiding the learning process for the students. To put it in another way, students and teachers work in collaboration to achieve a common set goal. Amy likewise specified that role of teachers in a democratic class is to inform the students throughout the process of learning thus helping them to learn by themselves. Therefore, regarding power relations between the teachers and the students, it can be suggested that both sides are equal and this equality is protected by the teacher; “while doing that while having them participate in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom I limit them to the respect for others.” This accentuates teacher’s role both as a guide and an engager.

Another perspective regarding the role of a teacher in a democratic class came from Jack and Amy, which seems similar yet very different when looked closely. Their “roles to be played” in the classroom are defined as “authority”. “There should be authority, this already makes unequal. Unfortunately, it collapses itself authority sets the rules, the democratic ones obey the rules.” Jack’s critical point of view urges to think more on already set or established norms and roles in education; “They already took the roles coming here and they have to keep on doing that”. Being a student or a teacher in that sense is a role and people being a part of the community or more specifically a part of a classroom, have already accepted their roles and play accordingly. In other words, these roles are bestowed which from the start shatters democracy. Amy, on the hand, presented a different perspective; “because I am working in a military institution and I have to be dominant in the classroom so they should do what I told them.” In her way of thinking, Amy seemed to equate this role as being “authoritarian”. Although these terms may sound familiar, there is a substantial difference between them; what distinguishes authoritative from authoritarian is how you enforce; the authoritative style strikes a balance between rules and nurture, whereas the authoritarian style demands that students simply follow the rules (Brown, 2010). In that sense, Amy simply wants her students to follow her rules and seems to exercise rigorous control but does not pay attention to involving students’ in decision making;

Interviewer: ... you ask your students what they want to add if they have something to add. Do you ask their opinion about that?

Amy: I thi::::nk I couldn't ask (heh) but I should ask let me think that again and you know next lesson I will do it.

Involving students in decision making regarding classroom rules seemed to give Amy a food for thought. As a novice teacher, it can be considered normal for her not to think elaborately on this issue.

As for students' roles in a democratic class, students are seen as active participants as UK stated; "every and each of the participants in the classroom should have a say in the course of the teaching and the learning process." In other words UK believes that students contribute to their own learning process by getting engaged or by providing feedback to the teacher. This process is not controlled only by the teacher but by mutual understanding. They contribute and this contribution not only makes them active participants but also as Amy pointed out gives them confidence which will effect learning in a positive way.

What can be drawn from this section is two -fold; from a critical point of view regarding roles, it can be suggested that assigning roles as "teacher" or "student" in the first place distorts the term democracy, showing inequality already. As for the second, experienced teachers reported they engage students in decision making and guide them throughout the learning process which enables learners to be active participants. This is an indication of practicing democracy. Amy, the novice teacher, confessed that she had not thought of involving students in decision making before. When her role in the classroom is scrutinized, we can see that rather than being an authoritative teacher, Amy is actually "authoritarian".

Managing Behavioral Problems

UK, Amy and Jack believe that democracy in the classroom is important because democratic atmosphere enables people to have a different perspective while respecting for others. To ensure this respect, teachers may have to deal with behavioral problems such as immaturity, disobedience or aggression and the way participants manage these problems may give us information about their concept of democracy. Furthermore, the way teachers manage these problems can be considered as an indicator of how teachers maintain democracy in the classroom.

Amy, in managing with behavioral problems, prefers warning the students in an appropriate way. If students fail to understand the seriousness of the issue or carries on his/her behavior, Amy prefers to talk to him privately:

Amy: So I will talk him privately and ask him what do you (heh) what has happened to you tell me what has happened to you?

As Amy, Jack also warns students when he is confronted by behavioral problems but if warning does not help, Jack threatens them: "I warn them in a suitable way I say politely and smiling I say it again but not smiling then I become serious and after that I threaten." Threatening for Jack is helping the students to realize the situation in a way that he thinks students would understand;

I go and tap him on the shoulder and talk to him honestly if you wanna stay here, it's your choice. If you don't wanna stay here [school], I can help you. It's your choice and the next week he comes and says sorry teacher, I made a mistake I know.

UK, being the most experienced participant, does not prefer to take the control over but engage other students to solve the problem. In extreme situations, Jack stated he tries to "explain the situation to the student what he has done wrong he has said wrong or insult or any discrimination related ideas whatever I explain the situation to him and make him think about this with only words I use the words and human intelligence". In this comment, Jack's point is to raise students' awareness and help them to realize the mistake committed. This control is not direct but latent. Believing that classroom is a reflection of the community we live in, UK thinks talking or negotiating is what he can offer as a teacher similar to what it should be in a democratic society.

In the essence of how UK and Amy manage with behavioral problems lies a rather authoritarian manner. To illustrate, Jack, if he doesn't get any result from warning, prefers to threaten students. UK's way of controlling students, on the other hand, is more latent, more indirect.

To conclude, it can be suggested based on the themes that emerged from the interviews that teachers highlighted "equity" to define democracy while trying to explain the term according to their own perceptions and it is also clear that they follow a similar path in dealing with behavioral problems in relation to their view of democracy.

Discussion

This study investigated teachers' perception of democracy and how they ensure democracy in the classroom. Three themes emerged from the interviews and graphic elicitations. The themes included nature of democracy, teachers' and students' roles and maintaining democracy. In this part of the study, findings will be discussed.

Teachers' definitions of democracy highlighted the component of "interaction". Equity in this interaction is seen as an indispensable component. Studies also report that equality is the most highlighted component in defining democracy (Kıncal & Işık 2012; Shechtman, 2002; Winfield & Manning, 1992). Similarly, according to the reports of EUDEC and BBOM in Turkey, the aspect of equity in education was highlighted (1989). In their study, Sarı & Sadık found that participants conceptualized democracy as equality (2011).

Teachers are seen as guides and authorities in the classroom. Teachers, in that sense, are found to be responsible for guiding the teaching process. Role of a teacher as an authority was accentuated by Jack. This definition at first this might seem undemocratic however Freire stated that in democracy we need "authority" which is the freedom of the teacher and the student (as cited in Mayo, 2011), what is a burden to democracy is "authoritativeness". At this point, it necessary to draw a distinction between the terms. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, authoritative means having or proceeding from authority. The word "Authoritarian" refers to favoring blind submission to power or to a leader. Authoritative teachers encourages interaction and respect among students and between themselves and students. She motivates students maintaining control and classroom rigor. An authoritative teacher thus is warm, open and friendly. Authoritarian teachers, on the other hand, set barriers to student-teacher interaction. Their rules are absolutely enforced, there is rigorous control and little interest in student involvement. Amy, being the youngest teacher in this research, can be considered as "authoritarian" because she seems to exercise rigorous control but does not pay attention to involving students' in decision making. That is, although she may seem to respect and encourage ideas, participation and equity, her role as authoritarian predominates; "I have to be dominant in the classroom so they should do what I told them". At this point it is worth mentioning that Amy's militant view of democracy can be the result of her teaching experience. As she had been teaching for one year by the time this study was conducted, she may not have fully established a consistent and personal philosophy for

teaching including the teacher, student interaction and democracy (Güven & Mutluer, 2014) and she may be affected more by institutional constraints compared to Jack and UK. This can be due to the fact that as research has shown, novice teachers are not introduced to the term “democracy” neither in practice nor in theory throughout their university lives (Sarı & Sadık, 2011).

In defining a democratic class, it is almost mandatory to discuss students’ roles because students are the part of classroom and teachers’ view of democracy will determine students’ roles in the classroom. Students in a democratic class are seen as active participants. This means they are effective in the process of learning and contribute to the process. This role creates a collaborative atmosphere in the classroom which has been considered as one of the constituents of democracy (Kıncal&Işık, 2003). Similarly, Chomsky in his interview stated that in his school which he considered to be democratic and good, students were involved in collaborative work (Falcone, 2009). Furthermore, if teachers see students as active participants, it can be suggested that they work with them. In the relationships which people work things out with each other is considered as having a high democratic social factor (Bussler, 1994).

Another finding in this study aimed at understanding how teachers’ ensure democracy in the classroom. In order to understand this, teachers were asked how they manage with behavioral problems. Amy and Jack pointed out that they prefer to warn students but in extreme situations Jack stated that he threatens students. This may indicate an anti-democratic way in coping with student problems. This finding supports the view that most Turkish teachers do not possess democratic values (Çankaya & Seçkin, 2004). Amy, on the other, does not know what to do in extreme situations. Considering her context of teaching and her year of practice in the profession, it is possible that she rarely had to cope with extreme behavioral problems. Being the third and the most experienced teacher, UK, highlighted the importance of self-awareness and communication between the teacher and the student in coping with behavioral problems.

Conclusion

To sum up, democratic education is a requirement for educating democratic citizens, in that sense it is suggested here that teachers can be trained or courses including democracy and education can be added in the syllabus of teacher education faculties. Alternatively, the

concept “democracy” can be embedded into methodology courses such as classroom management. In doing so, teachers’ awareness can be raised and thus their potential in modeling students regarding democracy and coping with behavioral problems are enhanced and the clearer teachers’ perception of democratic atmosphere is, the more democratic they will be. Being a democratic teacher is important in creating a positive learning atmosphere and encouraging critical thinking. But more importantly, considering the fact that school is a reflection of the community we live in, students will have the chance to understand the term as they become citizens.

Recommendations for Further Research

This qualitative small scale study aimed to understand how teachers with different years of experience ensure democracy in their classrooms. In order to understand teachers’ practices, classroom observation may also provide useful information. Furthermore, a larger scaled study involving school administrators may provide a different perspective.

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Appendix-1

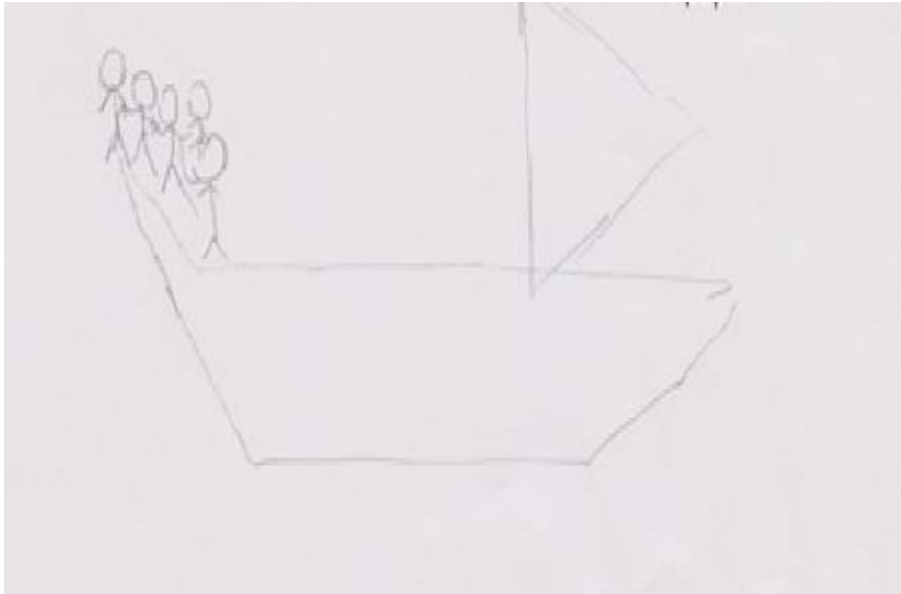
| CODE | DEFINITION | INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA | EXAMPLE FROM THE TEXT |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| "A big lie" | Participant defines a component of democracy regarding societal dynamics | Inclusive of societal dynamics, exclusive of democracy in the classroom | "It is a big lie told to the society"(Jack, line 63, p.3) "It is not true" (Jack, line 65, p.3) |
| "Equal" | Participant defines a component of democracy regarding equality | Inclusive of teacher-student interaction, exclusive of democracy in the classroom | "All of us are equal"(Amy, line 25, p.2) |
| "Knights of the round table" | Participants define democracy in the classroom | Inclusive of teacher role, exclusive of political ideas | " for example I mostly do not sit at the teacher's desk, I sit among the students on the same chair level with them and (3) whenever I have a chance, I err just err create a round classroom environment just bringing the chairs in a circle just like the Knights of the round table I do that." (UK, line 94, p.3) |
| "Port" | Participant defines a component of democracy regarding | | democracy is like a port, naval port which mankind thinks it is a most suitable for today's world (UK, line 24, p.1) |
| "Authority" | Participants define components of a democratic class | Inclusive of teacher and students' roles. | "First there should be authority"(Jack, line 91, p.4) "They should do what I told them" (Amy, line 36, p. 2) "I have to be dominant in the classroom" (Amy, line 26 , p.2) |
| "Fear" | Participant(s) explain importance of democracy | Inclusive of experiences as a student, exclusive of | "I could more easily tell the teacher that I didn't understand the subject" (UK, line 116, p.4) "fear from being beaten and humiliated in the class"(UK, line 125, p.4) |
| "Light a path" | Participant(s) explain his/her role as a teacher | Inclusive of , exclusive of | "Teacher should be just somebody to light a path to the acquisition of the language."(UK, line 38, p.2) "Teachers are like guide like a guide or like an orchestra leader." (Amy, line 49 , p. 3) "They just show what things happen this will happen then next and next." (Amy, line 50 , p. 3) "They are like a guide" (Amy, line 49 , p. 3) |
| "Trick of the devil" | Participants explain his/her role as a teacher | Exclusive of the period in instruction, inclusive of teacher-student interaction | authority but make them feel like friends (Jack, line 138, p.5) |
| "Rebellion spirits" | Participants explain how they cope with behavioral problems | Exclusive of punishment, administrative intervention or threat and inclusive of teacher-student interaction | "I warn them in a suitable way" (Jack, line 166 ,p. 6) "I want to talk why he's doing something like his" (Amy, line 100 ,p. 4) I am warning them (Amy, line 93 ,p. 4) |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| "Pick them up" | The participant explains training about democracy | Exclusive of high school training, inclusive of life experience | You cannot train but you what do you call it? Analyze, synthesize, you pick them up in your brain (Jack, line 289, p.10) " If you look at things from a different point of view, you see that 3D in 3D" (Jack, line 229, p.8) "we have two eyes to see that from two ways at least" (Jack, line 230, p.8) "if you can create a difference, then you are free. You free your mind, you free yourself, you free your environment no matter where you are, you're free. I try to make them think" (Jack, line 232, p.8) |
| "Different point of view" | Participant(s) explain importance of democracy | | |
| "Have a say" | Participants define components of a democratic class | | "everybody should participate in the process of teaching and learning" (UK, line 37, p. 2) "each of the participants in the classroom should have a say" (UK, line 31,p.2) |
| "Accepting roles" | Participants define components of a democratic class | | "everyone took the roles and gave the performance" (Jack, line 109, p.4) |

APPENDIX-2

Graphic Elicitations

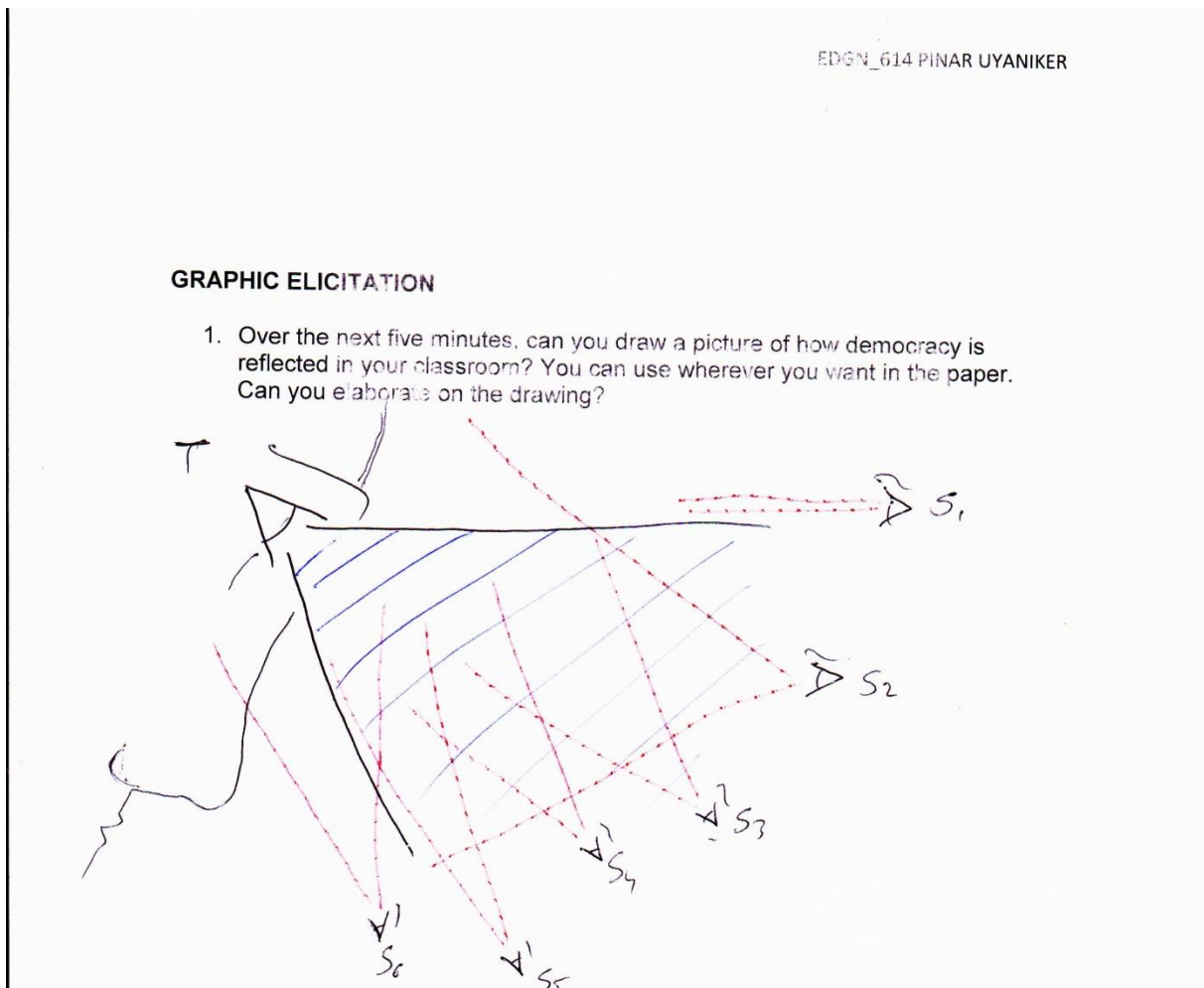
2.1 AMY



Amy to explain how democracy is reflected in the classroom, preferred to draw a sail with the crew and the captain being on the same of the sail which highlights that both the crew and the captain are equal. "Equality" was delineated during the interview by Amy in definition of democracy. The roles of the crew and the captain are of course different; Amy compared the captain as a symbol who needs to be there to represent "democracy" while the crew was seen as an essential component of democracy; "I think it has one captain and crew captain has nearly no effect if he doesn't get the right crew ... and doesn't get their support it's something like that. If there is no crew, there is no captain to save our ship"

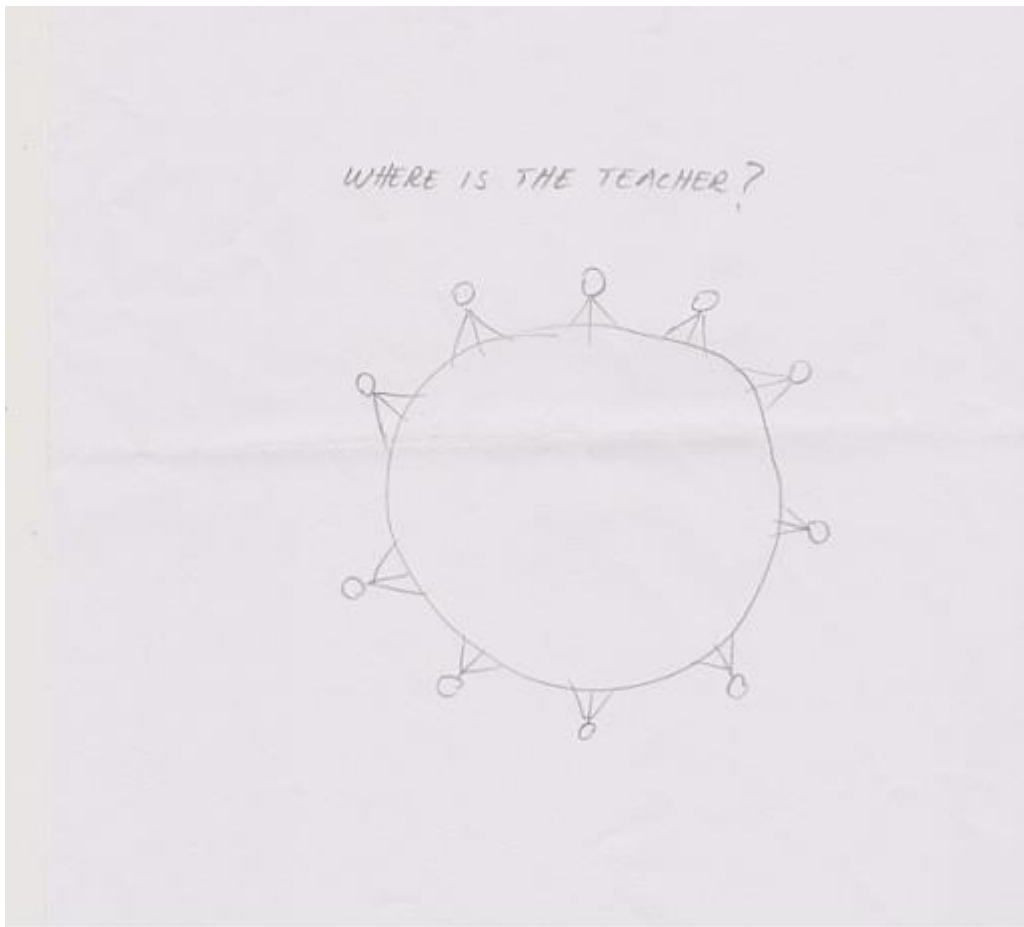
Amy also stated that "captain and the crew work together to save the ship" which may underline "collaboration" in democracy. When asked the reason for drawing a sail, she brought about the issue of delicacy saying that "once it's broken you have no chance to repair it. You are in the middle of the sea."

2.2 JACK



In this graphic elicitation, Jack as he similarly stated during the interview underlines the importance of teachers' trying to keep students' point of views wide. "If you look at things from a different point of view, you see that 3D in 3D, not in 2D because we have two eyes to see that from two ways at least." This elicitation therefore focuses more on role of a teacher who helps the students to have a different and wide perspective. Referring to S1, Jack stated that the student's narrow point of view made it difficult to get something from the teacher. That's why he is lost while other students' point of view interacts with teacher's making possible for them to be understood or seen.

2.3 UK



This graph showing how democracy is reflected in the classroom was drawn by participant UK, a teacher with more than 15 years of experience in the field. During the course of the interview, the participant stated that one of the ways of how democracy is reflected in the classroom may be related to how students are seated. Similarly, he added that democracy is like “the round table” (referring to the Knights of the Round Table). The reason for participant’s opting this metaphor may be due to his major which is literature. This graph is also in line with the participant’s definition of democracy which in that sense emphasizes equality. Equality is a broad term that can be considered while taking into account the roles of students’ and the teacher as well as students’ participation, and voice of the students. In this regard, UK highlighted that “Where is the teacher?” was rather a rhetorical question, not asking for the existence of the teacher but rather emphasize that teacher does not dominate the class. Furthermore, shape of the table (roundness) may be said to contribute to the term equality. As the graph clearly shows it is not possible to detect

teacher. People are sitting around a round table and thus it is expected that interaction among these people is not dominated by a single person but all the people seem to contribute in a balanced manner. Again turning back to the metaphor “Knights of the Round Table”, it can also be said that Knights are fighting together for a purpose which can be interpreted as struggling for an aim, in our context, learning.

So, it would not be wrong to assume that in UK’s cognition, democracy is more about power relation (either among students or between the teacher and the student) and equality.

APPENDIX-3

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

A. Interviewee background

1. How long have you been ...

_____ in your present position?

_____ at this institution?

2. What is your major? _____

3. How long have you been in the teaching profession? _____

4. What is your highest level of education? _____

B. Main questions

1. How do you define “democracy”?

2. What constitutes a “democratic classroom?”

3. In what ways is democracy important in the classroom?

4. How do you define your role as a teacher? (If participant has difficulty, you can exemplify: Are you a facilitator are you a decision-maker, are you a guide in teaching process?)

5. How do you manage with behavioral problems such as immaturity, disobedience, hostility or aggression in the classroom?

6. Suppose that one of your students constantly refuses to do the in-class assignments with no valid excuse and distorts the flow of the lesson. How would you react to this student?

7. Can you explain how you involve students in decision making process such as what to learn, timing the class?

8. How do you take students’ topic of interest into account? (If yes, how?; if no, why not)

9. To what extent and in what ways can students express their thoughts during the course?

10. Can you think of a metaphor that describes democracy in the classroom? (The “body politic” was an old political metaphor used frequently by Tocqueville. This metaphor used by Shakespeare and other Renaissance writers compared a country to a human body with the king as the head and the people as the limbs.)

Do you have any questions for me? Thank you very much for your participation.