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The effect of using English story books in English courses by adapting them to different activities on the foreign language success of the students

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Abstract

This research is realized as an experimental study on fifth grade students and related to present the effect of using English story books in English language education success of the students. The research has been realized in Controlled Last Test Model which has been a model of control group that takes place in experimental studies. The working group is formed of first grade students of Turgut Reis Secondary school which is located at Sultanbeyli Province of Istanbul. The data taken from experiment and control groups have been transferred to SPSS and the analysis of the data has been made by using t-test in order to compare the average of the groups. It has been determined that using English story books in English courses by adapting them to different activities increased the success when compared with traditional methods and techniques according to the findings.

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Keywords: English story books, foreign language success, English teaching, foreign language teaching

1. Introduction

As it can be understood from the definition of education as formation of a requested and intentional change in the lives of the individuals (Ertürk, 1982), education has a dynamic structure because of human being’s taking place as a social entity at the basis of it. The dynamic structure of education has been formed of needs and expectations which can be differentiated according to the periods. Effecting of the human being as a source of the developments in science and technology has been inevitable with the effect of these needs and expectations. The learning wish provided firstly meeting the human beings’ with books and written sources then audial and visual materials by the development of educational technology.

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The educational developments which appeared as a reflection of scientific and technological developments brought many innovations in foreign language education, the richness of the content in foreign language education simplified the adaptation of the developments which have been lived in education to language education. As a result of this, the teachers can use different techniques and materials which are being developed every day and can find effective methods to establish meaningful learning on their students. Different learning methods are put forward with the researches by taking the individualistic differences into account. In these studies, learning strategies of the students and learning styles have been tried to be determined (Demirel, Başbay and Erdem, 2006: 51). The findings of these researches which have been valid in foreign language education make the student the focus point of education. “Multiple Intelligence Theory” as a basis of the studies which have been made on this field also defends the same reality. According to this theory, intelligence is not one dimensioned, on the contrary it is multiple dimensioned (Sönmez, 2012). Every child has a potential for the development in one field or more than one field (Gardner, 1993). The teachers, as a result of difference between the individuals, face with students who have different kinds of intelligence in foreign language classrooms. Every student has a field in which he can be better, this situation can be determined by observing their classroom performance. Whereas some students are observed that they are good at on verbal fields such as poetry and composition, some of them have the ability on music and arts. In case of teachers’ making their plans according to these learning differences, meaningful learning can be provided for students and also the quality of education can be increased. Providing permanent learning can only realize by selecting relevant techniques and contents to learning levels, learning styles and strategies and intelligence types of the students.

As learning-teaching preparation process belongs to the teachers in the frame of published curriculum, foreign language teachers should provide relevant learning environments for the students by taking their readiness level, wishes and expectations. The teachers should be careful about the differences between the students and individualize the teaching and evaluation (Demirel, 2007). They should adapt different techniques, resources and materials which will provide permanent learning by taking the students’ needs analysis and intelligence types instead of using traditional techniques and materials in their classrooms. Songs, games and stories from different sources which have been prepared with this idea are being used in foreign language education and their positive effect on education is being observed. Games and songs in these resources provide younger students to exhibit a positive attitude towards foreign languages by transforming the learning environment to an entertaining situation for the students, these are entertaining activities which have been effective to take attention of the students and provide their contribution to the course (Ara, 2009). The story books which simplify understanding of the foreign language and state themselves for the students are being used in the classroom for a long time. The stories are educational materials which provide effective learning with their reality, recognition and entertainment (Rossiter, 2002). The stories provide the development of conscious, communication and culture by adapting them to courses in addition to providing effective learning (Georgiou and Verdugo, 2011). The teachers who use stories in their courses can organize teaching aims, concepts or ideas around a story (Saban, 2005: 106). The placement of the stories in foreign language courses in this way provide them be equipped learners by providing them thinking (Erkaya, 2005).

The stories also effect foreign language success by providing contribution to understanding skills (Haven and Ducey, 2007: 38). The stories which address to the students with dominant verbal intelligence can also establish meaningful learning environments for the students with visual, audial and kinesthetic intelligence by the way of adapted different techniques and activities. For example; whereas the stories are being used as a material to develop reading and understanding skills at the basis, they can be transformed to a speaking text which will develop listening skill, a source which will develop his creative writing skill and drama activities which will provide the students physical participation with planning. The students enter an effective learning environment by providing individualistic and participant interaction with storytelling activities (Aixè, 1988). So, their monotonous learning lives will become environments which reply to the interest, request and skills of the students. This will provide every student to find an activity relevant for himself in a part of the course and active participation in the course and these will all bring success together.

1.1. The aim of the research

The aim of this research is to present the effect of story books in foreign language education on the success of students in English courses.
1.2 The importance of the research

When the success ranking of our country is examined in international foreign language exams, it is seen that there are many factors underlying the failure of the students, the most important factor in failure is that the students do not have any interest and wish about the course. When the learning environments, which have been planned without taking interest, need and wish into account, are associated with prejudices which can be formed against learning a different language, the expected success cannot be realized. The effect of story books which will be used with different technics in foreign language education will be determined with this study. It is important in the context of presenting the direct effect of story books on foreign language education.

1.3. Limitations

This research is limited with secondary school 1st grade students who are being educated in Turkey in 2013-2014 educational period.

2. Method

2.1. Research model

Research model of experiment and control group taking place in experimental methods of quantitative research methods has been used in this research in which the effect of story books on the success of secondary school students. To determine the difference between experimental group and control group, whereas story books have been used in courses in experimental group, classical teaching method has been used in control group.

2.2. Working group

The working group is established from 1st grade of secondary grade students in Turkey, İstanbul Sultanbeyli Province, Turgut Reis Secondary School which has been determined by aimed sampling method. Two groups have been preferred in which English course time has been longer and communication could be provided easily with the aim of providing sustainability in the research. 48 students who take place in the research are from experiment group, 21 students from the experiment group are girls , 27 of them boys, 22 students from the control group are girls , 26 of them boys. All students in the groups started to learn English in 4th grade. Because of this reason, there is not a difference between experiment and control groups in the frame of English learning past. Also a pre-test has been applied with the aim of providing validity after the groups had been determined. The data related to the test results has been given in Table 1. There is not a meaningful difference between the averages of the every two group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-application</td>
<td>Experiment group</td>
<td>52,7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23,9</td>
<td>0,544</td>
<td>0,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>50,15</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24,5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-test results of success test are seen in Table 1 before starting with two groups. According to this table, as “t=0.544” and “p=0.589” values have been taken, there is not a meaningful difference between the knowledge or success situation of two groups at “p<0.05 meaningful level. In other words, the data related to pre-application test shows that there is not a difference between the success levels of experiment and control groups.

2.3 Data collection instruments and data collection

Two test instruments as pretest and last test as data collection instrument have been used in the research. The
items requiring twinning and short answers have been preferred instead of multiple choice answers in these tests which have been developed for measuring skills at “comprehension” level. The questions which have been asked at the level of knowledge and comprehension in two tests are the questions related to measuring the acquisitions in 1st grade of secondary school English curriculum in Turkey. At the same time, the results of two pilot tests which include multiple choice questions and have been applied by a private publishing house have been evaluated with the aim of determining the effect of story books at central plot exams on success. The exam data of November exam which has been realized three times in some cities in Turkey generally in a significant period and other exam data has been taken together for one student and statistical procedures have been applied by using these averages. Also at the end of April 2014, the tests under the name of “last test” which has been applied to two groups have been applied again with the name of permanence test.

The study started on November 12, 2013; it ended on December 23, 2013 by making 12 course hours of application in total, 2 hours in elective English courses in every week. While going on studies in experiment group, education went on relevant to the yearly curriculum in elective English courses in control group.

2.4. Analysis of the data

The data which have been taken at the end of the application has been transferred to SPSS 15 statistical program. “Last test” results have been benefited with the aim of determining the difference levels between experiment and control group. Last tests which have been applied after the study in the groups have been analyzed by using t-test (Paired Sample Test). Also, after a permanence test has been applied in April 2014, “t-test” statistical analysis procedure has been realized for the twinning groups while comparing last test averages of every group with permanence test averages.

3. Findings

The effect of story books on the student success which have been adapted to different activities in foreign language courses (English) in the research is being tested. According to the last test results which have been realized in the research in Table 2, “t-test “ results of the twinning groups and some descriptive statistics take place.

Table.2. “T-test” results of experiment and control groups after the application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>sd.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After the application</td>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>70.83</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19.44</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>60.04</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the results of t-test which have been realized between experiment and control groups determining effect of English story books on student success, “t=2.33 and p=0.024” values have been taken. As these values provide the condition of being below “p<0.05” meaningful level, it shows that there is a meaningful difference between the last test results of experiment and control group. In this situation, when the averages of every two groups have been examined, it is observed that the average of experiment group has been “70, 83”, the average of control group has been “60, 04”. According to these values, the success average of the students in experiment group is 10, 79 points higher than the students in control group. In other words, English story books which took place by adapting to different activities in English courses increase the success of students in English.

Table. 3. Last test and Permanence test “t-test” results of the groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>sd.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>Last test</td>
<td>70.83</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19.44</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Permanence test 65.33 48 19.96
Control group
Last test 60.04 48 21.90
Permanence test 51.08 48 21.87

When “t-test” results which have been realized between last tests and permanence tests of experiment and control groups in Table 3 have been examined, there is a meaningful difference between the average of last test and permanence test of experiment group (t=6.55 and p=0.000). Whereas last test average of experiment group is “70.83” its permanence test average has been “65.33”. When the results of “t-test” of control group is examined, as “t=3.65 and p=0.001” has been, it has been determined that there is a meaningful difference between the averages at that point. Also, it can be seen from the table that last test average of control group has been “60.04” and permanence test average has been “51.08” . According to these findings, it cannot be told that English teaching with story books by adapting them to different activities increases the permanence of the knowledge learned much. But, when the average of two groups have been examined, there is a “5.50” points difference between the last test and permanence test of experiment group, “8.96” points difference between the last test and permanence test of control group. According to the findings taken, it can be told that forgetting rate of experiment group is less than the control group.

4. Discussion, result and proposals

4.1 Discussion

The story books and activities contribute to the foreign language education by increasing foreign language success of the students according to this experimental research findings in which the effects of activities which have been adapted from English story books on English course success have been examined. The studies made on foreign language education in or out of the country have the qualification that the findings of this research on English course success is supported. Rossiter (2002) asserted that the stories have been educational materials providing effective learning with their remembrance, realism and joy aspects. The observed students during the research lived different learning lives by the way of stories and adapted activities and these differences motivated them to the courses. As a result, success in foreign language of the students has been observed. Haven and Ducey (2007) and also Aïx (1988) reached the same findings which support Rossiter’s (2002) ideas. Whereas Haven and Ducey (2007) think that the stories effect success by contributing foreign language skills of the students directly; Aïx (1988) defended that the students had effective learning lives by entering individualistic and participative interaction with story activities. Morrow (1985) examined the effect of explaining story on understanding the read document in his study, according to his findings he stated that explaining a story is an active process which provides analyzing the events, verbal language development and helps the students understand what they listen. Saban (2005) stated in the research he made that the stories can be used in organizing the teaching aims, concepts and ideas and this will decrease the workload of teacher and the student.

Georgiou and Verdugo (2011) and also Erkaya (2005) took the stories in a different concept in their studies and they tried to demonstrate that the stories not only effected foreign language success but also the life of the student as a whole. Whereas Erkaya (2005) states that the stories provide the students to be equipped learners by making them think with the integration of story books to foreign language courses, Georgiou and Verdugo (2011) states that the stories provide the students to be equipped by making the students think and also providing effective learning by adapting the stories into courses.

The students on foreign language education field showed that usage of English story books and adapted activities effectively in foreign language courses helped learning the foreign language actively. In this research, the students on whom foreign language education has been realized with the help of English story books and activities adapted from the books have been more successful than the students who have been taught with traditional
4.2. Proposals

If the teachers want to increase their English success, they should give place to English stories and activities related to these stories in their courses. The teachers can use the activities such as reading stories, listening the recorded stories, video watching actively in their courses to use the stories in the development of reading, listening, writing and speaking skills which have been four basic factors in the development of foreign language.

The teachers can present the required structures and words in a context as a force of the subject by adding short stories in the activities in English course books.

English teachers can present alternatives to their students by establishing an English story library in their classrooms. So, they can make the students gain habit of reading English story books.

Proposals to the researchers

1. The relationship between the usage of story books and developing four basic skills in foreign language courses can be searched for.

2. The contribution of storytelling can be examined on the student’s understanding and concept development.

References


