DOI No: <http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/Joh40243>

Makale Türü: Araştırma makalesi
Geliş Tarihi: 20.12.2019
Kabul Tarihi: 27.02.2020
Online Yayın: 29.02.2020

Article Type: Research article
Submitted: 20.12.2019
Accepted: 27.02.2020
Published Online: 29.02.2020

Atıf Bilgisi / Reference Information

Ulum, Ö. G. (2020). Needs Analysis of English as a Foreign Language at a State Primary School for Deaf Children in Turkey. *Journal of History School*, 44,355-364.

TÜRKİYE’DE DUYMA ENGELLİ ÇOCUKLARIN ÖĞRENİM GÖRDÜĞÜ BİR DEVLET OKULUNDA İNGİLİZCE İHTİYAÇ ANALİZİ

Ömer Gökhan ULUM¹

Öz

İhtiyaç analizi, yabancı dil eğitim programlarının temel taşlarından biri olmanın yanı sıra, ders, materyal ve müfredat hazırlamanın en temel adımıdır. İhtiyaç analizi mevcut durum analizi, hedef durum analizi, eksiklik analizi ve strateji analizi gibi birkaç alt kategoriyi kapsar. Bu çalışmada öğrencilerin İngilizce ihtiyaçlarını tespit etmek için bir eksiklik analizi yapılmıştır. Müfredatlarında İngilizce dersi olmayan duyma engelli öğrencilerin İngilizce ihtiyaçlarını derinlemesine anlamak için bu tip bir ihtiyaç analizi yapılmıştır. Bu bağlamda fenomenolojik bir araştırma tasarımıyla dayanarak, Türkiye’deki duyma engelli öğrenciler için kurulmuş bir devlet okulunda bir sınıf öğretmenine, ebeveyn ve yöneticiye yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme uygulanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları Türkiye’de duyma engelli çocukların eğitiminde İngilizce dersine yer verilmediğini vurgulamıştır. Bu bağlamda yetkililerin gerekli önlemleri alması önem arz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Özel Amaçlı İngilizce, Akademik Amaçlı İngilizce, İhtiyaç Analizi, Duyma Engelli Çocuklar, Dezavantajlı Gruplar.

¹Asst. Prof. Dr., Mersin University, Education Faculty, English Language Teaching Department, gokhanulum@mersin.edu.tr, Orcid: 0000-0001-7685-6356

Needs Analysis of English as a Foreign Language at a State Primary School for Deaf Children in Turkey

Abstract

Needs analysis is the most fundamental step of preparing courses, materials, and curriculums, as well as being one of the cornerstones of foreign language education programs. It covers a number of sub-categories such as present situation analysis, target situation analysis, deficiency analysis, and strategy analysis. Here in our study we implemented a deficiency analysis which can be defined as the analysis of learners' deficiencies or lacks. In order to have a deep understanding of the EFL needs of deaf children who do not have EFL courses in their school program, a needs analysis was conducted. Based upon a phenomenological research design, a semi-structured interview was administered to a class teacher, a parent, and an administrator at a state school for the deaf in Turkey. The results of the study suggest that English as a foreign language is not included in the school curriculum designed for the deaf in Turkey. The required precautions should be taken accordingly.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, English for Academic Purposes, needs analysis, deaf children, disadvantaged groups.

INTRODUCTION

Turkey is carrying out the practice of determined and far-reaching educational renovations at present. The start of 12 year obligatory education (4+4+4) grants a specifically appealing chance to evaluate and restructure the foreign language education, particularly English, in the Turkish state schools (Özkan, Balci, Kayan, and Is, 2018). The new establishment of foreign language teaching starting from the 2nd grade should in time display an intense and boosting impact on academic levels (British Council, 2013). Some specific schools are particularly constructed to serve for the needs of students with special needs (Ulum, 2015; Ulum, 2016a; Ulum, 2016b; Alqunayeer and Zamir, 2016). "The term Special Educational Needs (SEN) has a legal definition... it applies to children who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it significantly harder for them to learn or access education than for most other children at their age." (Adi, Unsiyah, and Fadhilah, 2017).

Just a few highly deaf children can read at age-level (Simon, Fromont, Le Normand, and Leybaert, 2019). This state mirrors cognitive and linguistic barriers from deficiency of exposure to language in babyhood, besides the basic hardness of acquiring English by means of just the written modality. However, a number of deaf children can learn English by writing (Hoffmeister and Caldwell-Harris, 2014). It takes around three years or more for deaf children to attain the

Needs Analysis of English as a Foreign Language at a State Primary School for Deaf Children in Turkey

required reading ability compared to hearing children and a typical deaf adult owns a reading level of a 4th grader (Goldin-Meadow and Mayberry, 2001). Since a big number of highly deaf children hear little, if any, they encounter the impediment of being forced to read English without having grammar, word, and sound knowledge. Thus, when these mostly deaf children attain success in reading, it is since they acquired English through print forms (Kyle, 2018). However, contemporary approaches to foreign or second language learning by children do not affirm or even review the probability of acquiring a language particularly from print (Davydova and Dekusar, 2019). Therefore, this success has to be more extensively comprehended (Hoffmeister and Caldwell-Harris, 2014).

When mentioning deaf children's reading problems, related variations are often confronted in these issues (Webster, 2017). For instance, while translating to the first language, deaf children have hard times in comprehending idioms and even mostly used phrases where one vocabulary is employed in a non-literal way (Payne and Quigley, 1987). Deaf children commonly encounter extreme difficulties in learning spoken languages (Morgan, 2020) contrary to their natural and painless acquisition of signed languages. The lack of total access to the sounds of the spoken language results in a weak acquisition process for deaf students which emerges at a much slower rate compared to hearing students (Quigley and King, 1980). Few deaf students can more or less make up for the deficiency of hearing the spoken language and achieve native-like competency of the language (Hansson, Ibertsson, Asker-Árnason, and Sahlén, 2017). Yet, numerous deaf students attain solely limited acquisition of the spoken language and encounter constant hardships in reading and writing (Berent, 2001). To gain a deep understanding of the EFL needs of deaf children in Turkey, a needs analysis was conducted in this present study.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to find out the EFL needs of deaf Turkish students who do not have EFL courses in their school program. To examine the issue, the study implemented phenomenology which is an approach to describe an explicitly third-person by means of interpreting consciousness or experiences. "The importance and essence of a phenomenological research approach (IPA) is its ability to explore, investigate, and interpret the 'lived experiences' of the research participants" (Alase, 2017). In a similar vein, it is based on carrying out scientific principles with an anthropological angle, associating the third-person's self-reports with any possible evidence to perceive their cognitive states. "We

conduct qualitative research because a problem or issue needs to be explored” and phenomenological research is the most suitable way of getting to the root-cause of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Thus, this qualitative approach inquires the qualitatively diverse ways in which the respondents have the experience of the related issue.

The present study investigated the conceptual underpinnings of a class teacher, a parent (mother), and an administrator at a state school for the deaf in Adana, Turkey, by means of a phenomenological tradition (Richardson, 1999). At the school, there are 18 teachers comprised of such majors as Turkish Education (N= 3), Science and Technology (N= 2), Math (N= 2), Special Education (N= 2), School Counseling (N= 1), Informatics Technologies (N= 1), Social Sciences (N= 1), Culture of Religion (N= 1), Design and Technology (N= 1), Music (N= 1), Art (N= 1), and Physical Education (N= 1). However, there has been no English course at the school curriculum since 2015-2016 education year, which has been enacted by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. Besides, the branching in Special Education Departments in Turkey, as teaching to mentally disabled, blind, and deaf was legislated away by the Turkish Council of Higher Education in 2006. Further, the number of overall students is 54 and there are maximum 10 students in each class at the school where the study was carried out. There are classes at each level from 1 to 8 in the school. Moreover, the disability of the students is both congenital and adventitious. Their level of disability is around 50%, while their level of hearing loss is around 90% since most of them also have other types of disability as a result of eclampsia, high fever, or other such syndromes. Furthermore, the students all come from socio-economically poor backgrounds.

The data of the study were gathered through semi-structured interview questions designed by the researcher. For the semi-structured interview questions, inter-coder reliability was conducted. For the coding reliability of the interview, Kappa Coefficient for Inter-coder Reliability was calculated and it was found that the coding process was highly reliable ($K = .883$, $p < .001$). The respondents voluntarily participated in the study. Moreover, convenience sampling method was employed in the present study (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, and Nigam, 2013).

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis section is comprised of three parts which reflect the views of a parent, a class teacher, and an administrator. The following part illuminates the views of a mother of a deaf student.

Findings in Relation to the Views of a Parent

The question whether they had adequate opportunities to support the education of their deaf child was responded as “no” by the mother. In addition, the mother was not sure about the need of English for her child since they were not even able to afford their daily life expenditures. She was also not sure about the usefulness of English since her child’s other school subjects were also weak. Further, the mother was not hopeful as to the future career of her child since, let alone English, he was even highly unmotivated to learn any other school subject. Excerpts from the parent’s views are as follows:

- My husband is unemployed and I am a housewife. We are not able to supply the required opportunities for our children.
- There are other important issues to consider before learning English. We cannot afford other needs of our children which are more important.
- My son’s school grades are highly low since he does not care about school subjects. The only thing he considers is playing games.

Findings in Relation to the Views of a Class Teacher

The class teacher said those deaf children have no awareness of learning a foreign language and added that they only give importance to their sign language. Further, he suggested that there has to be English courses for the long term goals, for instance, studying or working abroad. He also complained about their low standards at school. Besides, he declared that teachers of specific subjects do not have any idea related to teaching to deaf children. Some examples regarding the respondent’s perspectives are as follows:

- Only the teachers of special education have the required content and pedagogical knowledge to teach to deaf children. However, the teachers of specific subjects do not have any related content or pedagogical knowledge for the deaf. They get no related training or course since the Turkish Ministry of Education does not require them to have such characteristics.

- Our students are not aware of the need of learning. They are mostly unmotivated to learn. They do not come to school to learn something. They come to school to play games and entertain.
- Our standards and equipments should be more developed to educate our students. By developing our standards, the students can learn English or any other school subjects more and this may result in a successful future career for them.

Findings in Relation to the Views of an Administrator

One of the directors of the school stated that their students are not eager to learn English or any other school subject, because they have other priorities. He also added that their students come to school only to play games or to entertain. Moreover, he declared that students feel it is enough to learn only sign language because they can communicate with each other through it. He also declared that they are more related to each other by communicating through their sign language, but timid towards the outside world in which majority of people cannot understand sign language. Further, the director put forward that he does not know the exact reason why the Turkish Ministry of Education abolished English from the curriculum. Lastly, the director clarified that teachers of specific majors are uneducated in terms of teaching to those with special educational needs. It is only teachers of special education who are proficient in teaching to those deaf children. Some remarks of the director are as follows:

- Knowing sign language is totally enough for them, because they can communicate with each other through it. This may also result from the fact that they have shared habits as playing games and entertaining together. They are like a close community of sign language; they do not much care about the outside world.
- Our teachers of specific majors have not been educated to teach to those with special educational needs. Further, they are not required to take the related certificates or seminars to empower themselves for the education of the deaf.
- Turkish Ministry of Education abolished English from the curriculum. We were never informed about the reason why it was abolished.

DISCUSSION

Deaf education in the United States is carried out and supplied chiefly by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) which is executed in country, province, and school levels. IDEA is an American law which calls for justice, accountability and quality in education for children with disabilities. Around 7 million children are under the protection of this law in the USA, which became more useful in 2005 with new empowerments. The law was sustained by opportunities of research, technology, and training. Afterwards, in 2006, IDEA became more powerful with new improvements fostering the facilities of disabled children (Hult and Compton, 2012). In Turkey, although there are more promising improvements in the education standards of children with disabilities compared to past, these standards have to be more qualitative in order to catch up with the related high standards of the USA.

Researchers generally discuss the isolation of deaf students in their studies (Domagała-Zyśk and Kontra, 2016), although there seems to be only few studies based on EFL education of deaf students. Freel et al. (2011) inquired the use of American Sign Language (ASL) as a tool to comprehend English reading texts, which displays a meaningful relation deaf children's ASL competency and English reading proficiency. As every participant in this inquiry employed ASL at their early ages, this study could not refer to whether the same assumption is true for those whose native language is neither English nor ASL, and acquire ASL afterwards in case they live outside America. In this present study, such a relationship could not be referred to since there is no English course in the school program of the deaf students in Turkey.

Further, Szymanski et al. (2013) examined the needs and situations of deaf students by means of detecting their obstacles by means of comparing the situation with hearing children. Yet, their study did not particularly clarify the needs and situations of deaf children in EFL setting. Therefore, the present study is worth of considering as it focuses on a specific school setting— EFL which is not available in the related program in Turkey.

In his study, Dian Inayati (2014) pinpointed the impediments encountered by deaf students in learning EFL at higher education. Moreover, he examined the needs of deaf children to support them in coping with their EFL learning. He found out that the obstacles were both external and internal. Further, he suggested that these barriers should be overcome by supplying the students' internal and external needs. In this present study, an EFL deficiency analysis which can be defined as the analysis of learners' deficiencies or lacks was conducted.

Besides, Bedoin (2011) emphasized the importance of teacher factor to overcome such barriers and found out that EFL teachers need to develop their language teaching strategies accordingly, and employ written and visual aids to empower deaf students. Thus, teacher training has to be empowered. In the present study, an EFL teacher specializing in deaf students was not reached since there was no EFL course in the curriculum.

CONCLUSION

This paper implemented a deficiency analysis to have a deep understanding of the EFL needs of deaf children who do not have EFL courses in their school program. Accordingly, it was found out that authorities do not give much importance to EFL learning while educating the deaf in Turkey. Thus, the Turkish Ministry of Education has to clarify the reason of its omitting EFL from the school curriculum prepared for the deaf and has to support the reason by scientific data. The students were mostly found to be unmotivated to learn any school subject while they were very keen on playing games. However, teachers could not turn students' love of games into an advantage by teaching through games, which may be the result of a lack of related pedagogical knowledge. Thus, authorities have to take firm precautions to foster the quality of education of the disabled children.

KAYNAKÇA / REFERENCES

- Acharya, A. S., Prakash, A., Saxena, P., & Nigam, A. (2013). Sampling: Why and how of it. *Indian Journal of Medical Specialties*, 4(2), 330-333.
- Alqunayeer, H. S., & Zamir, S. (2016). Needs Analysis of Saudi EFL Female Students: A Case Study of Qassim University. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, 5(1), 87-104.
- Richardson, J. T. (1999). The concepts and methods of phenomenographic research. *Review of Educational Research*, 69(1), 53-82.
- British Council (2013). *Turkey National Needs Assessment of State School English Language Teaching*. <https://www.britishcouncil.org.tr/en/programmes/education/research>, 14.06.2019.
- Adi, S. S., Unsiyah, F., & Fadhilah, D. (2017). Teaching special students: english lessons for deaf students in indonesian special junior high schools. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 5(12), 121-136.

Needs Analysis of English as a Foreign Language at a State Primary School for Deaf Children in Turkey

- Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 5(2), 9-19.
- Bedoin, D. (2011). English teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in French schools: Needs, barriers and strategies. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 26(2), 159-175.
- Berent, G. P. (2001). English for deaf students: assessing and addressing learners' grammar development. In *International Seminar on Teaching English to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students at Secondary and Tertiary Levels of Education: Proceedings* (pp. 124-134).
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, Sage publications.
- Davydova, N. V., & Dekusar, G. G. (2019). Contemporary methodological approaches to the second language teaching. *Міжнародний науковий журнал Науковий огляд*, 4(57), 212-221.
- Dian Inayati, I. (2014). A needs analysis of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in learning English as a foreign language at inclusive higher education. 61 *TEFLIN International Conference*, UNS Solo.
- Domagała-Zyśk, E., & Kontra, E. H. (Eds.). (2016). *English as a foreign language for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons: Challenges and strategies*. Cambridge Scholars publishing.
- Freel, B. L., Clark, M. D., Anderson, M. L., Gilbert, G. L., Musyoka, M. M., & Hauser, P. C. (2011). Deaf individuals' bilingual abilities: American sign language proficiency, reading skills, and family characteristics. *Psychology*, 2(1), 18-23.
- Goldin-Meadow, S., & Mayberry, R. I. (2001). How do profoundly deaf children learn to read? *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 16, 222–229.
- Hansson, K., Ibertsson, T., Asker-Árnason, L., & Sahlén, B. (2017). Phonological processing, grammar and sentence comprehension in older and younger generations of Swedish children with cochlear implants. *Autism & Developmental Language Impairments*, 2, 2396941517692809.
- Hoffmeister, R. J., & Caldwell-Harris, C. L. (2014). Acquiring english as a second language via print: The task for deaf children. *Cognition*, 132(2), 229-242.

- Hult, F. M., & Compton, S. E. (2012). Deaf education policy as language policy: A comparative analysis of Sweden and the United States. *Sign Language Studies*, 12(4), 602-620.
- Kyle, F. E. (2018). Reading development in deaf children: The fundamental role of language skills. *Evidence-Based Practices in Deaf Education*; Knoors, H., Marschark, M., Eds, 217-235.
- Morgan, G. (2020). Deafness, cognition and language. *Understanding Deafness, Language and Cognitive Development: Essays in honour of Bencie Woll*, 25, 1.
- Özkan, M., Balci, S., Kayan, S., & Is, E. (2018). Quality of educational resources: a comparative evaluation of schools that joined PISA 2015 from Turkey and Singapore. *International Education Studies*, 11(4), 132-143.
- Payne, J.-A., & Quigley, S. (1987). Hearing-impaired children's comprehension of verb-particle combinations. *The Volta Review*, 89(1987), 133-143.
- Quigley, S. P., & King, C. M. (1980). Syntactic performance of hearing impaired and normal hearing individuals. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 1, 329-356.
- Simon, M., Fromont, L. A., Le Normand, M. T. & Leybaert, J. (2019). Spelling, reading abilities and speech perception in deaf children with a cochlear implant. *Scientific studies of reading*, 23(6), 494-508.
- Szymanski, C., Lutz, L., Shahan, C. & Gala, N. (2013). *Critical Needs of Students Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing: A Public Input Summary*. Gallaudet University, Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center.
- Ulum, Ö. G. (2015). A needs analysis study for preparatory class ELT students. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 1(1), 14-29.
- Ulum, Ö. G. (2016a). ESP Needs Analysis of Public Order Police Officers. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 4(1), 19-30.
- Ulum, Ö. G. (2016b). The situational analysis of the physical state of an ELT department. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research*, 2(3), 949-959.
- Webster, A. (2017). *Deafness, Development and Literacy*. Routledge.