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**THE VIEWS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS ON  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING TO ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL 2ND GRADE STUDENTS**  
İLKOKUL İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN İLKOKUL 2. SINIF  
ÖĞRENCİLERİNE YABANCI DİL ÖĞRETİMİ KONUSUNDAKİ  
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**Abstract**

In today's world, English stands out as the common language of communication in many fields from scientific research to international trade. This situation makes the need for individuals to be able to use English effectively even more evident. Therefore, it has become an inevitable necessity for education systems to be structured with qualified and functional programs aiming to improve individuals' language proficiency. In this context, it is important for English teachers teaching in primary schools to evaluate the primary school English curriculum based on their own experiences and to reveal the problems they experience. The aim of this study is to determine the effectiveness of the second grade English curriculum in primary schools in line with teachers' views. Phenomenology, one of the qualitative research method designs, was used in the study. The study group of the research consists of 16 classroom teachers, 9 female and 7 male, working in Malatya in the 2024-2025 academic year. Purposive sampling, one of the non-random sampling methods, was preferred in the study. The data were collected through semi-structured interview questions with the participants and the data obtained were analyzed by content analysis method. As a result of the study, it was determined that most of the English teachers teaching in primary schools found language teaching at young ages and the curriculum generally positive, found the current number of lesson hours low, and had high self-efficacy perceptions about English language teaching. In addition, teachers stated that they mostly used activities such as cooperative learning, question-answer, song, animation and games in teaching English, that they had the most difficulties in getting down to the level of the students and distracting students quickly, and that they tried to solve problems by using fun and different activities.

**Keywords:** Primary School, English, Teacher, Foreign language.

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### Özet

Günümüz dünyasında İngilizce, bilimsel araştırmalardan uluslararası ticarete kadar pek çok alanda ortak iletişim dili olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır. Bu durum, bireylerin İngilizceyi etkili bir biçimde kullanabilme gerekliliğini daha da belirgin hale getirmektedir. Dolayısıyla, eğitim sistemlerinin bu gereksinimi dikkate alarak, bireylerin dil yeterliliklerini geliştirmeyi hedefleyen nitelikli ve işlevsel programlarla yapılandırılması kaçınılmaz bir zorunluluk halini almıştır. Bu kapsamda ilkokullarda derse giren İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ilkökul İngilizce programını kendi deneyimlerine dayanarak değerlendirmeleri ve yaşadıkları problemleri ortaya koymaları bu çalışmayı önemli kılmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, ilkökul ikinci sınıf İngilizce dersi öğretim programının etkililiğini öğretmen görüşleri doğrultusunda belirlemektir. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemi desenlerinden fenomenoloji (olgu bilim) kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 2024-2025 eğitim öğretim yılında Malatya ilinde görev yapan 9'u kadın, 7'si erkek olmak üzere 16 sınıf öğretmeni oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada seçkisiz olmayan örnekleme yöntemlerinden amaçlı örnekleme kullanılması tercih edilmiştir. Veriler katılımcılarla yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme soruları ile toplanmış ve elde edilen veriler içerik analizi yöntemi ile çözümlenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda ilkokullarda derse giren İngilizce öğretmenlerinin büyük bir kısmının küçük yaşlarda dil öğretimi ve programı genel anlamda olumlu buldukları, mevcut ders saati sayısını az buldukları ve İngilizce öğretimine ilişkin öz yeterlik algılarının yüksek olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca öğretmenler İngilizce öğretiminde en fazla işbirlikli öğrenme, soru-cevap, şarkı, canlandırma ve oyun gibi etkinlikleri başvurduklarını, en çok öğrenci seviyesine inmede ve öğrencilerin dikkatlerinin çabuk dağılmasından dolayı zorlandıklarını, eğlenceli ve farklı etkinliklere başvurarak sorunları çözmeye çalıştıklarını ifade etmişlerdir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İlkokul, İngilizce, Öğretmen, Yabancı dil.

### INTRODUCTION

Language teaching is a process that has the potential to profoundly affect the social, cultural and economic lives of individuals. Foreign languages, especially at the primary school level, support students' cognitive development and offer them new ways of thinking and communication opportunities (Ünal, 2023). In today's globalized world, language learning is more than just an academic necessity; it enables individuals to take part more effectively in international platforms. In this context, introducing foreign languages to primary school children encourages the development of language skills at an early age and helps them gain cognitive flexibility (Özen, 2001).

Students who start learning a foreign language usually face three main challenges. First, they have to cope with the stress and feeling of being stuck and unable to express themselves. Secondly, they have to try to adopt and learn the rules, structure and pronunciation of the new language. Finally, they need to grasp how the grammatical structures of the new language work (Stern, 1980). The primary school age is the period when children are most likely to learn a foreign language. Language education that begins at this age develops both children's thinking skills and their ability to use language (Cameron, 2001). Language knowledge acquired at an early age makes it easier for children to pronounce words correctly, expand their vocabulary and understand the language in its natural flow. Moreover, this process makes them better prepared to speak more than one language in the future (Spada & Lightbown, 2013).

Vygotsky's social interaction theory is very valuable in understanding foreign language teaching at primary school level. According to him, children's learning takes place in a social environment, in interaction with others. Collaborative work, especially with the guidance of the teacher, helps the child to realize his/her potential. Therefore, interactive and collaborative activities in the classroom play

a major role in developing children's foreign language skills (Vygotsky, 1978). It is important for children who are new to learning English to enjoy learning a foreign language and to feel confident in learning a foreign language and to embrace the fact that language learning is an enjoyable process. The second grade English Language Teaching Program is based on this need and the main goal of the program is to create a love of foreign language learning in students. The themes of the second grade include basic vocabulary related to colors, numbers, classroom objects, animals, fruits, body and household items. In learning these basic vocabulary words, students are expected to relate them to the phonology of English. In addition, it is aimed to use the learned words in basic daily language functions such as greetings, introducing oneself, and describing things. For this purpose, students are expected to learn the target language through game-based activities enriched with fun visual and audio tools (MoNE, 2018).

Today, when the necessity of knowing English is clearly felt, educational programs should be prepared to meet these needs of individuals (Bulut & Atabey, 2016). Determining the deficiencies and shortcomings that arise as a result of the implementation of the 2nd grade English curriculum is of great importance for the success of the program. Teachers play an important role in determining the shortcomings and deficiencies that arise with the implementation of the curriculum and in the decision-making and evaluation stages of curriculum development (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2013).

In Turkey, English language education at the primary school level is offered as a compulsory subject for students aged 6-10 starting from Grade 2 (AUBSP, 2025). The Ministry of National Education's (MoNE) emphasis on thematic and interdisciplinary approaches, especially with the 2018-2019 curriculum reform, is also evident in this program (Aksoy, 2020). Within the scope of the reform, the "Theme-Based Instruction" model was introduced, which means that English is not only a language subject, but is also contextually related to other fields such as mathematics, science, and visual arts. MoNE also aimed to reinforce the four basic language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing) by providing audio-assisted activities with "Communicative Supplementary Materials" books and fascicles for grades 2-8 (MoNE, 2021). These materials were made available on the EBA platform and provided quality support to distance education during the pandemic.

Academic research shows that the primary school English curriculum in Turkey still has some shortcomings. A 2021 comparative study found that language learning strategies and intercultural education in the Turkish curriculum are inadequate, with a clear gap in these areas compared to the German states. Although the curriculum reform in 2018 was emphasized to improve communicative competencies, in practice, books, materials, teacher training and the infrastructure of schools were not sufficient (Karaca & Uygulama, 2018). Finally, experts emphasize that MoNE is gradually implementing its new model focused on simplifying the curriculum starting from primary school grade 1 in the 2024-2025 academic year (MoNE, 2023).

Today, English has become a common language in many fields from international communication to science, technology and business. Therefore, introducing children to English at an early age provides an important advantage for their future educational and professional success. The primary school period is a time when children can learn new languages most naturally and quickly. English education starting at this age contributes to their ability to pronounce correctly, increase their vocabulary knowledge and use the language with confidence. In addition, children who learn languages at an early age are more open to learning about

different cultures and can more easily develop multilingual thinking skills. From this perspective, effective and student-oriented English language teaching in primary schools not only supports individual development, but also paves the way for more socially aware and well-equipped individuals. In this context, the evaluation of the primary school English curriculum by teachers is of great importance in terms of increasing the effectiveness and applicability of the curriculum. Teachers, who are the direct implementers in the classroom, are the best observers of how well the curriculum suits the age, developmental level and needs of the students. Therefore, teachers' feedback helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program in terms of content, methods and materials. In addition, teacher evaluations provide an opportunity to test the consistency of the curriculum between practice in the field and theoretical objectives. This process supports the continuous improvement of the curriculum and increases teachers' professional involvement and motivation. Therefore, evaluation based on teachers' views contributes to the democratization of the curriculum development process and makes a more qualified language teaching possible.

## METHOD

### Research Model

In this study, phenomenology approach, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Phenomenology offers experiences, explanations, situations and examples that provide a better understanding of a phenomenon or event (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). This approach allows the researcher to collect detailed data on the topic and analyze the individual experiences of the participants in depth (Patton, 2014). In this context, the views of English teachers working in primary schools on the second grade curriculum were evaluated in a comprehensive and detailed manner through their own expressions. Thus, thanks to the phenomenological design, teachers' experiences and opinions were conveyed from a more holistic perspective.

### Working Group

The study group of this research consists of 16 English teachers working in the center of Malatya in the 2024-2025 academic year. Of these, 9 were female and 7 were male teachers. Purposive sampling method based on certain criteria was preferred instead of random selection. Purposive sampling enables the selection of information-rich groups that are compatible with the objectives of the study in order to conduct a detailed research. Thanks to this method, it is possible to collect comprehensive data and examine the identified situations in depth. Thus, the results of the research become more meaningful and explanatory (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

**Table 1.** *Demographic Information on the Teachers Participating in the Study*

		n
Gender	Woman	9
	Male	7
Professional Seniority	1-10 years	9
	10 to 20 years	5
	20 years and above	2
Region of Duty	Province Center	7
	District Center	6
	Village	3
Title	Teacher	9
	Expert Teacher	5
	Chief Teacher	2
Total		16

When Table 1 is analyzed, it is seen that 9 of the classroom teachers participating in the study were female and 7 were male. It was determined that 9 of the teachers had a seniority of 1-10 years, 5 of them had a seniority of 10-20 years and 2 of them had a seniority of 20 years or more. It is seen that 7 of the classroom teachers participating in the study work in the city center, 6 in the district center and 1 in the village. It is also seen that 2 teachers are chief teachers, 5 teachers are expert teachers and 9 teachers have teacher status.

### **Data Collection**

The data used in the study were collected through semi-structured interview questions in the 2024-2025 academic year. Before the interviews, the participants were informed about the process and the subject matter, and the interview form used consisted of two parts, one including the interview questions and the other including the personal information of the participants. While preparing the form, the relevant academic sources were examined in detail and questions suitable for the purpose of the study were formulated. After the questions were prepared in a clear, clear and understandable way, they were evaluated by three experts. Necessary corrections were made in line with the suggestions of the experts and the final version of the form was created.

Before the actual implementation, a pilot study was conducted with three primary school English teachers working in public schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education to test the validity of the form. Feedback from the participants showed that the questions were appropriate for the purpose and were clearly stated. As a result of these evaluations, the form was finalized for use in the actual implementation.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the interviews conducted within the scope of the research were evaluated using the content analysis method. In this method, data with similar characteristics are grouped according to certain themes and concepts, then organized and interpreted in a way that readers can easily understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this direction, the opinions of the individuals participating in the study were presented and analyzed in tables.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Referring to expert opinions is an important method to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research (Merriam, 2015). In this process, the draft interview form was presented to three experts in the field and finalized by making the necessary corrections in line with the feedback received. In addition, in qualitative research, conveying the views of the participants as they are and including direct quotations is a factor that increases the reliability of the study (Büyüköztürk et al., 2009). In this study, the researcher presented the collected data unchanged and encouraged the participants to give sincere answers by keeping their personal information such as identity and school confidential. Participants were assured about this and their consent was obtained. The participants were coded as T1, T2, T3 to ensure that the data remained anonymous and the research process was explained in detail.



## BULGULAR

### English Language Teachers' Views on English Language Teaching in Primary School 2nd Grade

The English language teachers who participated in the study were first asked the question “What are your views on teaching a foreign language in primary school 2nd grade?”. When the responses were analyzed, it was seen that the majority of the teachers had positive opinions about teaching English at the second grade level. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *English Language Teachers' Views on English Language Teaching in Primary School Grade 2*

Categories	Participants	f
Positive	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16,	14
Negative	8, 16	2
Total		16

When Table 2 is analyzed, it is seen that the majority of primary school EFL teachers (14 teachers) approve of teaching a foreign language to students at the second grade level. 2 teachers, on the other hand, answered no and stated that they did not approve of teaching English at the primary school level. The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

*“I personally do not find it right to teach a foreign language in the second grade of primary school. I do not find it right and useful for children who have not yet learned their mother tongue to receive foreign language education.” T8*

*“I find it positive to start teaching English in the second grade because young children are more interested in English.” T9*

*“I think it is a very good decision to introduce a foreign language to children who are still in primary school. As one of the biggest needs of the new world, it is quite reasonable to start foreign language learning in the second grade.” T6*

*“I think language learning should start at a much earlier age, but I don't think the current class hours are enough.” T15*

### English Language Teachers' Opinions on the Primary School 2nd Grade English Curriculum

The second question asked to the English language teachers participating in the study was “What are your opinions on the primary school 2nd grade English curriculum?”. When the responses were examined, it was seen that the majority of the teachers evaluated the curriculum of the second grade English course as adequate and positive. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *English Language Teachers' Opinions on the Primary School 2nd Grade English Curriculum*

Categories	Codes	Participants	f
Positive	Suitable for Level	7, 8, 9, 11, 14	5
	Activities Fun	8, 10, 13, 16	4
	Program Simple	16	1
Negative	Less Class Hours	1, 3, 4, 6	4
	Less Activities	5, 12, 15	3
	Books Insufficient	2	1
Total			18

When Table 3 is examined, 9 of the primary school English teachers stated that they found the second grade English curriculum positive and liked it because it was suitable for the level of students (5 teachers), included fun activities (4 teachers) and had a simple structure (1 teacher). 7 teachers, on the other hand, stated that they found the curriculum negative and did not like it because of the short class hours (4 teachers), the lack of activities (3 teachers) and the insufficient books (1 teacher). The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

*"Although I like the program in general, I think it should move away from grammar a little more. The program is positive in general, but activities for speaking and listening should be increased."* T11

*"In addition to the emphasis on listening and speaking, it was useful to include fun activities in the textbooks. For this reason, I like the program and I have a positive opinion about the program."* T8

*"The time for teaching English in the program is really too little. I think the class hours are too few. Unfortunately, we have not been able to progress in foreign languages for years because of this."* T4

*"I think that the program is prepared according to the development and interest characteristics of children. It was very useful to include fun activities suitable for children's ages in each unit."* T10

#### **English Language Teachers' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy Regarding Primary School 2nd Grade English Lesson Teaching**

The third question asked to the English language teachers participating in the study was "How is your perception of self-efficacy regarding primary school 2nd grade English language teaching? At what level?" question was asked. When the responses were analyzed, it was determined that all of the teachers considered themselves competent in teaching English. Teachers' views are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** *English Language Teachers' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in Teaching English Lesson in Grade 2*

Categories	Participants	f
Adequate	2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16	8
Partially Adequate	5, 14	2
Very Adequate	1, 3, 7, 11, 12, 13	6
Total		16

When Table 4 is analyzed, 8 of the primary school English teachers stated that they found themselves sufficient in teaching English at the second grade level. While 2 teachers stated that they found themselves partially sufficient, 6 teachers stated that they found themselves very sufficient. According to Table 4, none of the teachers stated that they did not consider themselves inadequate. The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

*"I consider myself competent because I was trained specifically in this field while studying at the university. I can say that my self-efficacy perception is at a very good level."* T11

*"I have been an English teacher for 9 years, 6 of which I have worked in primary school, and I am still working in primary school. I have always liked teaching with 2nd graders because young children do not have prejudices against the lesson and*

*they like the lesson because I usually teach with songs, games and movements. I find myself sufficient."* T9

*"Primary school is a difficult stage because children are still young and in the concrete operations period. For this reason, I do not think that everyone can teach at the primary school level. However, I do not consider myself inadequate. I feel partially competent."* T5

### **English Teachers' Opinions on the Methods-Techniques They Use in Teaching Primary School 2nd Grade English Lessons**

The fourth question asked to the English teachers participating in the study was "Which methods-techniques do you use in primary school 2nd grade English lessons?". When the responses were analyzed, it was seen that the teachers' responses differed. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** *English Language Teachers' Views on the Methods-Techniques They Use in Teaching English in Grade 2*

Categories	Participants	f
TPR	9	1
Role-Play	4, 9, 16	3
Audolingual	4, 9, 10	3
Game	8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16	6
Competition	15	1
Group Work	11, 13	2
Cooperative Learning	2, 10, 16	3
Smart Card	12	1
Question-Answer	5, 11	2
5E	5	1
Storytelling	3	1
Visualization	1, 13	2
All	6, 7	2
Total		28

When Table 5 is examined, 6 of the primary school EFL teachers stated that they used the game method in English language teaching. Then, they stated that they used role-play, audolingual, cooperative learning (3 teachers each), group work, visualization, question-answer, all (2 teachers each), TPR, competition, smart card, 5E, storytelling (1 teacher each) methods-techniques respectively. The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

*"I often use the TPR technique. I ask them to act out the words with movements and guess them. After teaching the subject, sometimes I make them do a role-play about the dialogues they have learned, I use the Audiolingual method, I often open a listening text or a song in the class and ask them to catch some words in it. At the end of the lesson, I usually play a short game about the words I have taught."* T9

*"In addition to focusing on activities for listening skills, I follow a program in which competitions and games are predominant."* T15

*"I use various methods and techniques. For example, cooperative learning and Communicative Activities."* T2

*"I use methods and techniques appropriate to the subject and the target outcomes of the lesson. I try to ensure children's participation in the lesson with the cooperation method, singing and listening methods. I take care to use them for active participation."* T10



### English Language Teachers' Opinions on the Activities They Use in Teaching Primary School 2nd Grade English Lesson

The fifth question asked to the English language teachers participating in the study was “Which activities do you use the most while teaching English lessons in primary school 2nd grade?”. When the responses were analyzed, it was seen that the responses of the teachers differed. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** *English Language Teachers' Opinions on the Activities They Use in Teaching 2nd Grade English Lessons in Primary School*

Categories	Participants	f
Word Games	11	1
Flash Cards	1, 12	2
Sing a Song	2, 5, 7, 9, 10	5
Play and Learn	5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16	7
Coloring	10	1
Role Play	2, 9	2
Matching	4, 7	2
Board Games	4, 16	2
Competition	15	1
Embodiment with Materials	3	1
EBA Activities	13	1
Total		25

When Table 6 is analyzed, it is seen that primary school EFL teachers stated that they use Play and Learn activity the most (7 teachers) in English language teaching. After that, they stated that they used Sing a Song (5 teachers), flash cards, role-play, matching, board games (2 teachers each), word games, coloring, competition, concretization with materials and EBA program (1 teacher each). The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

*“I try to do the activities in the textbook published by the Ministry of National Education. In addition, I also play games for vocabulary learning.” T11*

*“I play games. When I do activities by playing games/ activities, the level of students' participation in the lesson increases. I also make use of flash cards, that is, I do activities in which children actively participate.” T12*

*“I try to multiply and differentiate the activities as much as I can while teaching the lesson. I teach the lessons using activities such as coloring activities, gap-filling and matching activities, role-play, short answers, and listening.” T7*

### English Language Teachers' Opinions on the Problems They Face in Teaching English Lessons in Grade 2

The sixth question asked to the English language teachers participating in the study was “Which problems do you face the most while teaching English lessons in Grade 2?”. When the responses were analyzed, it was seen that the responses of the teachers differed. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.** *English Language Teachers' Views on the Problems They Encounter in Teaching English Lessons in Grade 2*

Categories	Participants	f
Word Pronunciation	1, 12	2
Distraction	4, 6, 10	3
Descending to Student Level	5	1
Lack of Time	7, 9, 13, 14, 16	5
Embodiment	8	1
Parent Indifference	3, 11	2
Prejudice Against the Lesson	2, 15	2
Illiteracy	12	1
Total		17

When Table 7 is analyzed, it is seen that primary school EFL teachers stated that they experienced the problem of lack of time the most (5 teachers) in English language teaching. After that, they stated that they encountered the problems of distraction (3 teachers), word pronunciation, parental indifference and prejudice against the lesson (2 teachers each), getting down to the level of students, concretization, and illiteracy (1 teacher each). The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

*"When I teach English lessons, I have the most problems with illiterate students. I also have problems with mispronunciation of words because students are not used to English words."* T12

*"2 class hours are very insufficient for English lessons. I have problems with time. I teach the vocabulary to the child and when a week passes, those who do not get help at home and do not repeat what I have taught forget what I have taught and come to class."* T9

*"Parents' lack of interest and their lack of knowledge of English are problems. Children do not have the chance to practice what we learn at home. Also, some children do not repeat. This creates serious problems in language teaching and learning."* T11

*"Since the students are young, they get distracted very quickly. This makes it very difficult for us to teach and for students to grasp the subjects."* T4

#### **English Language Teachers' Opinions on the Solutions They Produce for the Problems They Encounter in Teaching Primary School 2nd Grade English Lesson**

The English language teachers participating in the study were asked the eighth question, "How do you produce solutions to these problems you encounter?". When the responses were analyzed, it was seen that the responses of the teachers differed. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8.** *English Language Teachers' Opinions on the Solutions They Produce for the Problems They Encounter in Teaching Primary School 2nd Grade English Lesson*

Categories	Participants	f
Subject Repetitions	1, 7	2
Homework Checks	2, 7	2
Emphasis on the Importance of the Lesson	7	1
Associating with Daily Life	2	1
More Activities	5, 6, 9, 10, 14, 16	6
Cooperation with Parents	3, 7, 11	2
Fun Classroom Environment	4, 6, 8, 10	4

Categories	Participants	f
Cooperation with the Classroom Teacher	12	1
Using Technology Visualization	13	1
Subject Repetitions	15	1
Total		21

When Table 8 is analyzed, it is seen that primary school EFL teachers stated that they found solutions to the problems they experienced in teaching English mostly by doing more activities (6 teachers). 4 teachers stated that they tried to solve the problems by creating a fun classroom environment, 3 teachers by cooperating with parents, 2 teachers each by checking homework, repeating topics, and 1 teacher each by emphasizing the importance of the lesson, associating the topics with daily life, using technology, visualization, and cooperating with the classroom teacher. The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

*"I try to make them love the lesson. I explain the importance of English and why they should learn it. I give repetitions and short assignments. I make sure to check homework. I try to provide parental support."* T7

*"Problems inevitably occur during the education and training period. In order to solve and cope with these problems, I try to be communication-oriented and try to overcome the problems by doing plenty of activities."* T16

*"It is not possible to overcome the problems alone. Especially for our English branch, we need to cooperate with parents. For this reason, I try to find solutions to problems by involving parents in the education process as much as possible."* T3

*"Primary school students are quite young in terms of age. However, when I use interesting visuals, the lessons become enjoyable and they do not get distracted quickly. For this reason, I visualize the subjects and they are more eager to learn."* T15

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As a result of the study, it is seen that the majority of English language teachers are positive about teaching English at the 2nd grade level. Ekuş and Babayigit (2013) obtained similar results in their study. Although there are some teachers who are against teaching a foreign language before they have learned their mother tongue correctly and completely, most of the teachers stated that teaching a foreign language at a young age is appropriate and correct. However, even those who were in favor of teaching foreign languages at a young age stated that the course hours were insufficient. Bulut and Atabey (2016) obtained similar results in their study and teachers stated that primary school English lesson time was insufficient and activities were not sufficient.

While English teachers stated that the 2nd grade English curriculum is suitable for the level of students, is a simple program and includes fun activities, they stated that the book content and duration are insufficient. Bulut & Atabey (2016), as a result of their research, it was determined that the achievements foreseen to be realized in the second grade English curriculum are generally suitable for the developmental characteristics of students, but the content is not suitable for student development levels, the physical structure in schools is insufficient, and teachers do not have enough knowledge about the program and need in-service training on this subject. Kandemir & Tok (2017) concluded in their study that English teachers found the curriculum "good" and "applicable" in general terms even if they wanted some adjustments in certain elements of the curriculum and that the curriculum can be implemented effectively when their suggestions are

taken into consideration, but that the lesson hours should be increased, the activities should be updated and increased to be more effective and enjoyable in accordance with the age, interest and level of the students, and the textbooks should be updated. In addition, it is also suggested that the class size should be reduced to a number that is suitable for language teaching and learning and the seating arrangement in the classrooms should be changed. In his study on the English language teaching program, Çankaya (2015) determined that the learning and teaching process and assessment dimensions of the program should be changed and reorganized based on teachers' opinions. However, although teachers reported that they needed in-service training on the program, they had positive attitudes towards the program in general.

All of the English teachers stated that they considered themselves adequate in terms of teaching at the second grade level. At this point, none of the teachers participating in the study defined themselves as inadequate. Süer, Demirkol, and Oral (2019) concluded in their study that teachers teaching English in primary school found themselves sufficient in terms of the implementation of the curriculum. Güven & Çakır (2012) conducted a study on the self-efficacy perceptions of English teachers working at the first level of primary education. The results of the study revealed that the self-efficacy beliefs of English language teachers working at the first level of primary education varied according to the department they graduated from and whether they took a course on teaching language to children; the self-efficacy perceptions of teachers who took a course on teaching language to children differed significantly compared to those who did not, and the self-efficacy perceptions of teachers who graduated from English Language Teaching, English Language and Literature, and English Linguistics were higher than those who graduated from English as a medium of instruction and from other departments. Yenen and Dursun (2019), on the other hand, found that the self-efficacy perceptions of English teachers differed; they were found to be medium level, below average and above average.

English teachers stated that they mostly used methods and techniques such as role-play, cooperative learning, smart cards, visualization, storytelling, audio-lingual, games, question-answer, group work, competitions and 5E. They also stated that they taught with activities such as coloring, matching, board games, EBA activities, and word games. Kahramanoğlu and Şenel (2018) concluded in their study that primary school English lesson applications with online activities created great pleasure in students and offered a fun learning environment. In his study, Balım (2020) determined that the program outcomes are achievable but too much, the topics in the content are appropriate to the level, interesting but intense, the methods and techniques in which learners actively participate in educational situations are more successful, and there is a need for concrete materials as well as online materials. She concluded that the physical structure and equipment of the school were inadequate for the English language teaching process.

The English teachers who participated in the study stated that they had the most difficulties in terms of lack of time, word pronunciation, getting down to the level of the students, distraction, concretization, prejudice against the lesson, parental indifference, and some students' illiteracy. Bulut and Atabey (2016) obtained similar results in their study and found that teachers had the most problems with word pronunciation and getting down to the level of students. In order to be able to teach in a healthy way, it is necessary to be in complete harmony with the students, to give them confidence, and to arouse interest in the language they will learn. Making them love the language, teaching it in a fun way, tolerating their deficiencies and mistakes, including current conversations; going from known to

unknown, from simple to difficult in practice can be more effective in terms of language teaching. Good language acquisition should start at an early age. Steps in this regard have only recently begun to be taken in Turkey. However, since there are still no approaches that will attract children's interest as a teaching method, children say goodbye to the acquisition of a new language at an early age. However, it is a fact that educators, who have the most important function in language education, do not use the language they teach inside and even outside the classroom (in the corridor, in the garden), and therefore students lose motivation. Those who have studied secondary education institutions in different countries abroad know that students' English and pronunciation are really good. Because it is noticeable that students take every opportunity to communicate in English. It is an important observation that they communicate in English with their English teachers during breaks. In Turkey, educators who teach foreign languages are not able to speak the language they teach in practice as much as they have a good command of grammar (Arslan, 2009).

As a solution to these problems, English teachers stated that they resorted to methods such as frequent repetition, homework checks, associating with daily life, doing more activities than the activities in the textbook, cooperation with parents, cooperation with the classroom teacher, creating a fun classroom environment, visualization and emphasizing the importance of the lesson. Işık and Semerci (2016) wanted to determine the effect of educational games on academic achievement in teaching English in primary school. As a result of the study, it was seen that there was a significant difference in favor of the experimental group between the academic achievement of the experimental group teaching English vocabulary with educational games and the achievement of the control group teaching English vocabulary using non-game activities.

As a result, when foreign language teaching at primary school level is planned taking into account children's age and developmental characteristics, it contributes not only to their academic achievement but also to their social skills. Language education in this period allows children to gain the courage to express themselves, recognize different cultures and establish stronger ties with the world. It also supports their cognitive development and improves their skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and creative thinking. In order for these positive effects to emerge, curricula should be prepared in accordance with the child's interests, needs and learning style. The child should be at the center of education and the learning process should be based on active participation, cooperation and communication. Teachers should take the role of guides, engage in interactive activities with students, and carry out creative activities that show how to use language in daily life. Such child-centered and interactive approaches teach not only the rules of language but also the nature of communication.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Recommendations for Educators***

- They can make language teaching fun by using flash cards, memory games, animated activities such as "Simon Says".
- Children in this age group like to move and play games while learning. Therefore, game-based learning methods can be used.
- Lessons supported with short videos, songs, cartoons and illustrated stories increase students' attention span. With these methods, students' attention spans can be drawn to lessons for longer periods of time.



- Visuals make vocabulary learning permanent. Visuals can be used to help students keep English vocabulary in mind and remember what they have learned.
- Activities that emphasize that language is not only grammar rules but also used for communication can be preferred. Dialog exercises, paired conversations, mini role plays can be used for this purpose.

### **Recommendations for Researchers**

- The effect of activities prepared with materials that are appropriate for the developmental level of 2nd grade students, do not exceed the attention span and have interesting content can be examined with experimental studies.
- The effect of anxiety level on early foreign language learning can be investigated.
- The effectiveness of supportive activities implemented at home can be examined.
- Studies can be conducted on how the contribution of parents to English language teaching affects children's achievement.
- The effects of tablet applications, interactive boards, digital games on language learning can be examined in future studies.

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