Examining 8th grade English Course book and Educational Programme about Vocabulary teaching: Teacher's Views

Elif Çelebi Demir
Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Educational Sciences Institute, Turkey *celebi.elf@gmail.com*

Asım Arı
Prof., Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Turkey, *ari@ogu.edu.tr*

The aim of the study is to reveal the teachers' view about 8th grade English Course book and educational programme about vocabulary teaching. The study is valuable for examining 8th grade English teaching programme and course book in terms of vocabulary teaching and revealing the current situation in the programme and the course book. Vocabulary is the first step of language teaching. For that reason, teachers' presenting opinions to reveal problems or deficiencies as appliers of the programme and course book will contribute literature. Moreover, data about vocabulary teaching which affects communicative skills directly and is a main object of language teaching will be revealed. The research was carried out by the case study research design, one of the qualitative research methods. The research group isn't identified, all secondary schools in city-centre of Odunpazarı-Eskişehir, were informed. 15 teachers from 11 different schools volunteered to take part in the study. Interview as a tool for collection of qualitative data was used for the study and the interview protocols presented to experts and the questions was revised according to their ideas. The collected data was examined by the descriptive analysis techniques, one of the qualitative analysis techniques. The categories and codes were formed after analysis. According to the results of the study, the teachers found the vocabulary as a key concept of language. The evaluation of the teachers shows that the book activities in vocabulary teaching are not sufficient. Vocabulary affects all four basic language skills; reading, writing, speaking, listening. When views about the learning outcomes in 8th grade English Language Teaching Programme examined, the outcomes are higher than level of students. Because of that High School Entrance Exam is applied at the end of 8th grade, communicational purpose of the program is neglected. The programme contents are not cohesive and progressive with the previous grades. While teaching 8th grade vocabulary contents, the teachers preferred the educational and digital games more than other teaching techniques and methods. As a result of the study, these suggestions are made: the teaching contents in course book should be increased, the learning outcomes in educational programme should be appropriate for the student's level and progressive. The contents should be spreaded the previous grades and the course book should be supported by the digital tools.

Keywords: secondary school, English language teaching programme, English course book, vocabulary teaching, EFL

INTRODUCTION

With developing technology, new necessities and habits have been occurred. Technology has opened the windows to other worlds and puts the language learning forward compared to recent years (Ünal & Özdemir). Turkiye has an important geopolitical position and hosts so many tourists every year. That's

why; Turkiye is one of the countries that give an importance to the language teaching. Turkish Economic Policies Research Foundation (TEPRF, 2011), has shown that Turkey came in 43rd among 44 countries in English Competence Index. These reasons have been shown for that failure; inadequate course books, teachers trying to teach English with material deficiencies, few lessons, starting to teach English in older ages. In 2018, English Teaching Programme have been changed; English lesson started to teach in 2nd grade and course books were updated for improving communicative skills of the students.

With the program aiming to increase communicational skills in English, the learning outcomes were updated and activities in which four basic skills emphasized were designed. The contents of course books have been changed and the paragraphs and listening texts which include real life dialogues have been added to the book. According to Turkish Language Institute; communication is to share opinions to other people with various ways. People need vocabulary and grammar rules to communicate. According to Wallace (1988:9), learning a language includes learning the vocabulary of that language. Harmer (1991: 153) stated that vocabulary is as significant as the vital organs in human bodies. Without vocabulary, the sentences and the paragraphs could not be formed and the communication interrupted.

Can and Can (2014) stated that although language lessons have been taught in Turkey from primary school including university, there are still a lot of students who cannot speak and understand English. They also argued that language teaching and learning in our country is insufficient and for solution of that problem, they stated that the language programmes and the course books should meet the needs of the students. Acat and Demiral (2002), learning occurs when the motivation of the learner is high and that situation should be minded by teachers. Word deficiencies, inability to understand the language and losing motivation and having prejudices about learning a language are the factors that affect the language learning negatively. According to Schmitt (2008) and Zimerman (1997), if someone could not use the correct word according to the situation, that means there is no control of that vocabulary; in other words, the vocabulary could not be learned or acquired. For all these reasons vocabulary should be repeated in classrooms all the time and the course book must give the words in different context with using all four basic skills according to the purposes of language teaching program.

When the literature about English teaching programme examined; in an analysis of English educational programmes published over the last 15 years (Yücel & Dimici & Yıldız & Bümen, 2019), it is stated that teachers know the communicative teaching approaches in theory, but they depend on traditional methods in classrooms. Üner and Aşılıoğlu (2022) are also stated that teachers use traditional methods in the process of testing and evaluation. In the study that compares 2013 and 2018 English teaching programme, it is stated that 2018 programme copied most of the parts from 2013 programme without any changing and citations. Acar (2021), examined the master thesis about English teaching programme and stated that teachers complained about few lesson hours, material deficiencies and they thought that teaching materials should be updated in terms of teaching contents and they should be technology entegrated. In the study about teachers' competency perception about teaching programme, the results are differentiated according to teachers' age, work experience, lesson numbers. When the literature examined about the course books that are written according to teaching programmes; there are studies that compares the English course book with different lesson course books (Kalaycı & Durukan, 2019; Maden & Önal, 2020), evaluates projects given in the course books at the end of each unit (Acar, 2021; Acar, 2021), evaluates the course book contents' cohesion with the exams applied by National Edcuation Ministry (Uzun & Kılıçkaya, 2020).

There is no study found about examining the language teaching programme and course book in terms of vocabulary teaching. The studies about vocabulary are generally action-oriented studies. These studies test whether a method or technique increase the students' academic success, motivation or

affect their attitude towards the lesson. This study is valuable for examining 8th grade English teaching programme and course book in terms of vocabulary teaching and revealing the current situation in the programme and the course book. Vocabulary is the first step of language teaching. For that reason, teachers' presenting opinions to reveal problems or deficiencies as appliers of the programme and course book will contribute literature. Moreover, data about vocabulary teaching which affects communicative skills directly and is a main object of language teaching will be revealed.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to examining the teachers' views about 8th grade English course book and language teaching program (2018) in terms of vocabulary teaching. With this study, with the help of the expert ideas, these questions have been formed:

1. What are the views of the teachers about vocabulary in language learning and teaching?

2. What are the views of the teachers about learning outcomes for vocabulary teaching in English Language Teaching Programme (2018)?

3. What are the views of teachers about 8th grade English course book vocabulary teaching activities?

4. What are the views of teachers about cohesiveness of 8th grade vocabulary teaching contents in course book with the previous grades (5th, 6th, 7th grades)?

5. Which vocabulary teaching techniques are used by the teachers in 8th grade?

METHOD

This study has been reproduced from a master thesis conducted in Eskişehir Osmangazi University Educational Sciences Institute, Educational Programs and Curriculum department, called "Examining 8th grade English Education Programme and Course book in terms of vocabulary teaching". As the current situation analysed and revealed; it is descriptive study and the research design is case study. Case study is a descriptive study that examines programmes, a case, or a situation with some sources such as interviews, observations, reports deeply and describes the findings with relationally (Creswell, 2007). Teachers' views have been examined with the help of the interview protocol about educational programme and 8th grade English course book. The collected data examined by content analysis.

Participants

The sampling group is not specified. The study has been conducted in Eskişehir province in Turkiye. All central city secondary schools in Odunpazarı district of Eskisehir province were informed about the study. From 11 different schools, 15 teachers have been volunteered to participate in the study Three of the fifteen teachers participating in this study are male and twelve are female. While ten of the teachers are graduated from faculty of education, three of them are graduated from open education faculty and one of them is graduated from faculty of language history and geography. While seven of these teachers have more than fifteen years of work experience, eight of them have less than fifteen years of work experience. The time and place are determined by participants. The voluntary participant forms have been signed to them and they are informed about they will be informed about the results of the study and their name will be kept confidential.

Data collection and tools

One of the techniques of qualitative research, interviews have been used while collecting data. Interview is the most popular data collection technique (Brinkmann, 2013). The question about the research questions is prepared for learning the participants' view about a topic. Semi- structured interview questions are prepared and presented to 4 experts from Eskişehir Osmangazi University,

English Language Teaching department, Educational Sciences department and an active- working English teacher. According to experts' views, the questions revised. Time and place are determined by participants. They are informed about the study and their participation forms are signed by them. With the approval of the participants, interviews have been recorded and the research notes have been taken down. The research data and the forms are archived.

Data Analysis

The collected data have been examined by one of the qualitative analysis method content analysis. The content analysis is the analysis that searches an answer for a specific question via documents and files (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). After the data have been transcribed, the answers have been examined order with the research questions and the categories and codes have been formed. The categories and codes are shown in the tables from most given answer to the least. The data are given in the findings.

FINDINGS

In this part, there are findings and tables about the findings.

Findings about Vocabulary Teaching and Learning in Language

Here are the findings of the research question about what the views of the teachers are about vocabulary in language teaching and learning:

Table 1
Teachers' views about vocabulary in language learning and teaching

Category	Code	Frequency
Vocabulary teaching and learning	Vocabulary is the base of the language knowledge.	12
	Without vocabulary, communication is not possible.	12
	Vocabulary knowledge increases the academic success.	10
	We need vocabulary for understanding other people.	9
	We need vocabulary for being understood by other people.	6
	We can communicate by just using vocabulary.	6
	Vocabulary affects four basic skills.	4
	Vocabulary is not enough by itself for communication.	3

When we examine the table 1, there are 8 codes about vocabulary teaching and learning. Here are some examples of the teacher views.

Code 1: Vocabulary is the base the language knowledge*;*

> *To me, vocabulary is the most important issue for expressing yourself, using four basic skills properly, existing in a language, breathing in that language. I am not a language teacher who believes the ones that haven't developed their vocabulary knowledge, can learn a language in a literal sense. [Ö8]*

Code 2: Without vocabulary, communication is not possible:" To *me, all of the key concept, key concept of the four basic skills is a vocabulary. We cannot communicate, write without vocabulary. We can read but can't understand. "[O14]*

Code 3: Vocabulary knowledge increases the academic success:

> *Readiness, you know readiness is so important. You can handle with the students who have readiness. When comes to the issue of teaching, that students can learn fast. When they don't have readiness; I mean by readiness, İt is not only being ready for the class. I mean, coming to class ready with the background, the background affects learning. When they come to class with the background, background of vocabulary; it is easier to teach that student. [O7]*

Findings about Learning Outcomes in English Language Teaching Programme

Here are the findings of the research question about what the views of the teachers are about the learning outcomes about vocabulary in English Language teaching programme:

Table 2
Teachers' views on learning outcomes about vocabulary in English Language Teaching Programme

Category	Code	Frequency
Learning outcomes	There should be vocabulary outcomes in language teaching programme.	5
	Time is not enough for applying learning outcomes.	5
	We cannot make the students acquire the learning outcomes because of the examination (High School Entrance Exam).	5
	Vocabulary is needed for listening outcomes.	5
	Learning outcomes are higher level than students' level.	4
	Learning outcomes are so intense for teaching.	4
	There should be less learning outcomes.	4
	four skills learning outcomes is also about vocabulary teaching.	4
	Vocabulary is needed for speaking outcomes.	4
	Learning outcomes is enough for teaching.	3
	Learning outcomes does not match the activities in the book.	3
	Learning outcomes are not clear.	3
	Learning outcomes are hard to apply.	2

When we examined the table 2, there are 13 codes about learning outcomes. Here are some views of the teachers about the codes.

Code 1: There should be vocabulary outcomes in language teaching programme:

> *The outcomes of the vocabulary in the previous curriculum, I started the job with using that curriculum, there were outcomes about vocabulary, More precisely, there were outcomes in the name of vocabulary topic. Later, in the curriculum, let's call it programme with more precise word; in the program they are not clear. It is not given the way that teachers touch on. If the new program will revise, to me, there should be 1-2 outcomes about the vocabulary. [O3]*

Code 2: Time is not enough for applying learning outcomes:

> *….Yes, there are four course hours. There are 10 units, but there are tons of vocabularies…… We are not giving our one hour to make students memorize the vocabulary, but we are explaining the vocabulary with different chunks in that four course hours, because the time is not enough for more. [O10]*

Code 3: We cannot make the students acquire the learning outcomes because of the examination (High School Entrance Exam): "*… there are listening texts, some teachers use them in their class. Listening is good activity. But in the high school entrance exam, they don't ask listening, I can't teach it. It is waste of time for me. "[O6]*

Findings about Vocabulary Teaching Contents in 8th grade English Course book

Here are the findings of the research question about what the views of the teachers are about vocabulary teaching contents in 8th grade English Course book:

Table 3
Teachers views about vocabulary teaching contents in 8th grade English course book

Category	Code	Frequency
Vocabulary activities	We must use other materials because of the vocabulary activities in course book is not enough.	12
	Vocabulary activities are not enough.	11
	There are nice activities, there should be more.	10
	There should be software to use in the classroom.	5
	There should be test books to teach vocabulary for examination (High School Entrance Exam).	3
	Vocabulary activities are not enough for examination (High School Entrance Exam).	2
	The activities should be more colourful and funny.	2

There are 7 codes about vocabulary activities. Here are some views of the teachers about the codes.

Code 1: "We must use other materials because of the vocabulary activities in course book is not enough*:

> I think vocabulary activities are not adequate in the book. There are some matching activities. The outcomes start with "the students will be able to notice". But if there is not smartboard in the classroom, we generally give the vocabulary with the videos; it is not enough for making the students keep the vocabulary in their long memory. [O9]*

Code 2: Vocabulary activities are not enough:

> *I don't find the vocabulary activities adequate. I don't give the vocabulary list at the beginning of the lesson, it won't be helpful..... The vocabulary should be presented in different contexts for many times…. And we can also give their daily usage... [O2]*

Code 3: There are nice activities, there should be more: "*Because the activities are so few. It should be varied. But we are doing it. The students are trying to success. But we can vary them. Instead of matching, fill in the blanks; there should be games." [O1]*

Findings about Cohesiveness of Teaching Contents in Secondary School English Teaching Programme

Here are the findings of the research question about what the views of the teachers are about cohesiveness of contents in secondary school English Teaching Programme:

Table 4
Teachers' views about cohesiveness of teaching contents in secondary school English teaching programme

Category	Code	Frequency
Cohesiveness	There is no progressivity in vocabulary teaching contents in secondary school language teaching programme.	12
	Vocabulary teaching contents in 8th grade language teaching programme are not cohesive with previous grades.	9
	Some of the vocabulary contents in 8th grade consist of very new vocabulary.	7
	8th grade vocabulary contents are higher level for students' understanding.	6

There are 4 codes about cohesiveness. Here are some views of the teachers about the codes.

Code 1: There is no progressivity in vocabulary teaching contents in secondary school language teaching programme:

There is no cohesiveness with the contents of secondary school and 8th contents. We are opening new page in 8th grade. There should be connections between the contents of secondary school programme. There are so few. The students cannot benefit from background of vocabulary knowledge of secondary school. [O4]

Code 2: Vocabulary teaching contents in 8th grade language teaching programme are not cohesive with previous grades:

Some topics completes the others in 8th grade, but some of them are completely different. For example, wild animals topic in 7th grade finishes in 7th grade. Animals are not included in 8th grade. There is also science or space topic in that way. [O13]

Code 3: Some of the vocabulary contents in 8th grade consist of very new vocabulary: "*Some topics has connections with 8th grade topics but most of them are different. For example, natural forces are only in the 8th grade. "[O5]*

Findings about Vocabulary Teaching Techniques and Methods

Here are the findings of the research question about which vocabulary teaching techniques and methods are used by the teachers:

Table 5
The vocabulary teaching techniques and methods used by the teachers

Category	Code	Frequency
Vocabulary Teaching Techniques and methods	Web 2.0 games	11
	Educational games	10
	Matching	3
	Live and learn activities	3
	Coding	2
	Videos	2
	Songs	2
	Group works	2
	English wall	2
	Dialogues	2
	Drama	2

There are 11 codes about vocabulary teaching techniques and methods. Here are some views of the teachers about the codes.

Code 1: Web 2.0 games:

Sometimes I prepare them myself, sometimes I asked my students to prepare. I ask my students to prepare game about 5th unit. Sometimes I tell can you prepare "jeopardy" (web 2.0 game), sometimes I ask them to prepare matching activities from learning apps. Sometimes I use the prepared ones on the net. [O12]

Code 2: Educational games:

Sometimes we use the games from different sources, there are group games. I use my own chosen games which I have used them for so many years. At the end of every unit, we play some game and make revision. Sometimes I used game called flapper... [O4]

Code 3: Matching*:*

> *For example, in the first unit, the vocabulary and their meaning have been given and there is a matching activity. If the student could not learn the meaning, I noticed one event like that today, they can ask and learn the meaning. [O15]*

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION

Teachers' views about vocabulary teaching; in language learning, English educational programme and 8th grade course book have been examined. The codes and categories are created and examined. The codes and categories have been discussed with the help of the literature.

The theme about vocabulary teaching and learning, almost all teachers have positive views about vocabulary and they think that vocabulary is important for language learning and teaching. For communication vocabulary is a key concept and for interaction is a must. Here are some examples with same findings with this study. Alqahtani (2015), highlighted the importance of vocabulary and stated it is an essential for language learning. Alqahtani (2015) suggested that the teacher should notice the type of vocabulary and choose appropriate methods and techniques for them and vocabulary should be taught in different context repeatedly.

The theme about learning outcomes in English Language teaching programme, almost all teachers have negative ideas. The teachers think that learning outcomes in programme is higher than the level of students' understanding. There is no direct learning outcome about vocabulary, but four skills learning outcomes affect vocabulary. For that reason, the teachers evaluated the outcomes in terms of vocabulary. The content of the language teaching programme so intense and words that is given in the content is so many. The programme is written for communicative approach but because of the examination (High School Entrance Exam). They focus on teaching testing. The theme about content cohesiveness in secondary school English Language teaching programme, teachers think about there is no cohesion between the contents. The teachers find the content so intense to teach. The contents do not progress gradually and they are higher than the level of students' understanding.

The theme about vocabulary teaching activities in 8th grade course book, almost all teachers find the book activities inadequate. The teachers think that there should be more activities and software for classroom usage. The teachers use other materials for meeting the needs of vocabulary activities. Batdı & Özbek (2010) also concluded that there should be computer assisted activities in the book for teaching language effectively and enjoyably. There should be activities that makes students motivated and make their learning easier.

The theme about vocabulary teaching methods and techniques, most of the teacher use web 2.0 tools and educational games. They found the games are effective for students and in digital era, there should be software of the course book and games for the classroom usage. Varan & Sulak (2018), in their study about effectiveness of educational games in teaching vocabulary, found that the games are effective in teaching. There are many studies about effectiveness of educational games in different lessons (Kaya & Elgün, 2015; Karabacak, 1996; Gökbulut & Yumuşak, 2014).

SUGGESTIONS

Here are some suggestions for the results:

1. The vocabulary content of the 8th grade English language teaching programme should be simplified.

2. There should be more vocabulary activities in 8th grade English course book.

3. There should be software of the course book and digital games for teaching.

4. 8th grade vocabulary must be given gradually in previous grades.

5. There should be learning outcomes about vocabulary.

6. There should be games in book for teaching vocabulary.

7. The language teaching programme should be written by taking account to the examination applied at the end of 8th grade (High School Entrance Exam).

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