

THE EFFECTS OF THE FATIH PROJECT ON THE EFL EDUCATION IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the effects of the Fatih Project, a nationwide smart school project funded by the government, on the EFL education in Turkey. The purpose of this study is to provide an accurate analysis of FB's impact on foreign language learners and on the process of learning a second language (L2) is necessary. This research project seeks to add knowledge and new findings in this regard.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The developing technologies of education have been used in many subdomains of education. The increase in the number of people using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in their lives, lead to studies integrating ICT with education from all perspectives. FATIH project, which is the acronym for "Increasing Opportunities and Improvement of Technology" in Turkish, in this respect, has been launched. This project provides equal opportunities and effective education in classrooms operating with advanced technology by means of personal tablet computers, smart boards, document cameras, fast internet connections to each class, and access points synchronizing tablets with smartboards. FATIH project is an innovation in the Turkish ministry of education. The attitudes and intentions of teachers towards technology use will be determinants in the attainment of FATIH projects' objectives. Teachers' level of awareness and proactiveness are indicators of their attitudes and intents in this project. The student's attitudes and technology use is another important factor in the attainment of the FATIH project's goals. This study aims in general to reveal teachers' and students thoughts and attitudes towards FATIH project, the effect of FATIH project on the technology use of teachers and students in and out of the classrooms and on the English proficiency levels of EFL students in Turkey.

This study explores the effects of the Fatih Project, a nationwide smart school project funded by the government, on the EFL education in Turkey. The study will pursue the following research questions: Do the students in the FP schools have different attitudes towards technology than those in the non-FP schools?; Do the EFL teachers in the FP schools have different attitudes towards technology than those in the non-FP schools?; Is the frequency of the use of technology of students in the FP schools different from that in the non-FP schools?; Is the frequency of the use of technology of the EFL teachers in the FP schools different from that in the non-FP schools?; Do the students' proficiency scores in the FP schools differ from the scores of those in the non-FP schools? The purpose of this study is to provide an accurate

analysis of FB’s impact on foreign language learners and on the process of learning a second language (L2) is necessary. This research project seeks to add knowledge and new findings in this regard.

The theoretical framework of this study will consist of the social constructionism theory since FP provides a rich variety of ELT materials from which learners can choose the appropriate ones in relation to their needs and interests. Especially they help learners individualize and self-regulate their learning process when they study in their free time. The materials are likely to function as mediating artifacts to help learners engage in the activities occurring in social contexts. Second, the “expert teachers” guide and support learners considering their needs and interests which in turn provides opportunities for learners to develop dynamically. This scaffolding fosters learners’ reconstructing and transforming concepts and cognitive growth. Thus, The FP project may provide basic resources to realize social constructivist theory practices in Turkish EFL education.

Qualitative research methods will be used because the students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards technology use cannot be quantified. The research methods are 1. Questionnaire – data will be collected from all the 9th-grade students of both the experimental group and the control group who agree to take part in the study; 2. In-depth interviews – 15 voluntary classrooms from each group will be chosen from the questionnaire data, and interviews will be conducted with 30 Turkish students and 30 instructors from the classrooms; 3. Oxford Placement Test Score (OPTS)– data from the OPTS will be collected from all the students and then the interviews with the smaller group of students, and the constructions of these data will be analyzed in support of the questionnaire and interview results. In-depth interviews allow the participants to communicate their experiences more openly, so the study can be more comprehensive and thorough (Creswell, 2003, p.10).

Student Attitude Questionnaire serves as the mean to reveal how the FP affect student attitude toward English language learning and what the students think about the quantity and quality of ELT materials provided by PF. Teacher Attitude Questionnaire helps to elicit teacher attitudes towards the use of the FP in English language education Moreover it is used to see what the teachers think about the quantity and quality of ELT materials provided by PF. The purpose of the Student Technology Usage Questionnaire is to see how and how long the students exploit the FP in their classrooms and free time. Teacher Technology Usage Questionnaire is used to reveal how and how long the teachers exploit the FP in their classroom practice. The Oxford Placement Test (OPT) is administered to all students as a pre-and post-test to study the difference in the English proficiency level of the students. Moreover, the pre-and post-test OPT scores of the students in the FP schools and non-FP schools are going to be compared to see the effects of the project on the proficiency level of the students. Moreover, the schools will be visited and the implementation of the FP will be observed in the field.

1.1 Hypothesis

On the basis of the research objectives the following hypothesis is developed:

Fatih Project affects the process of second language acquisition of Turkish students positively.

1.2 Significance of the study

The significance of the study arises first of all from the significance of the Fatih Project in contemporary education. Namely, as already mentioned Fatih project has rapidly become an inseparable part of education in Turkish Ministry of Education schools. Almost all educational institutions have by now adopted a computer-assisted language learning asset in order to serve as an addition to traditional classrooms. Consequently, given the increasing use of technology, accurate analysis of its impact on foreign language learners and on the process of learning a second language (L2) is necessary. Its contribution to the language learning of Turkish students should be properly analyzed and identified and this research project seeks to add knowledge and new findings in this regard.

Furthermore, this research project is significant because apart from providing additional knowledge on the use of the Fatih project for language education, it also brings forward findings of technology use and teacher and student attitudes towards technology. Therefore, it would be useful to analyze the use of the Fatih Project within the Turkish educational context. So, considering the increasing number of students who learn English in Turkey as well as the impact of technology in language teaching contexts in Turkey, this study would represent a new knowledge contribution to the subject of the Fatih Project and its impact on language learning.

1.3 The educational context in Turkey

Considering that this study focuses on Turkish students learning English as L2 it is useful to discuss the educational contexts relating to Turkish students and in which learning takes place. The consideration in Turkey was and has been that proficiency in English can provide more opportunities for a better future (Atay and Ece 2009, p.24). In Turkey, there is an increasing demand to learn English. However, regarding the amount of quality of English education, there is a huge difference between public and private primary and secondary schools in Turkey (Atay and Ece 2009, p.24). According to Atay and Ece (2009, p.24), private schools provide better-quality English instruction because much more time is dedicated to English in the curriculum, and the quality and range of teaching methods and materials are compatible with the ones used in the Western world. One of the most important contextual factors affecting Turkish students' learning includes learning styles and strategies, motivation, and classroom interaction (Karahan 2007, p.75).

Karahan (2007) conducted a study in order to evaluate these factors. The author found that in relation to Turkish students' attitudes towards English learning, they welcome English as the frequently used foreign language in Turkey and take English even if is not compulsory at school (Karahan 2007, p.83). In addition to this, it was found that students were generally aware of the importance of the proficiency level in English for understanding other cultures and as a result of this attitude, they want to possess more fluent and accurate English speaking skills (Karahan 2007, p.83). Furthermore, in the same study, it was established that the age of starting to learn English also affects the attitude towards English learning. Namely, those Turkish students who started to learn English before 6 have positive attitudes toward English and thus demonstrated more positive orientation towards English (Karahan 2007, p.84).

Furthermore, Kizildag (2009) also analyzed the contextual factors in which English learning takes place in Turkey. This author identified two main institutional challenges including lack of support and lack of understanding of the nature of language teaching (Kizildag 2009, p.192). These challenges negatively affected classroom interaction according to Kizildag (2009, p.192). The Turkish Ministry of National Education has adopted a student-centered communicative computer module, called DynEd which serves to support classroom learning with a self-study time through internet-based computer software (Kizildag (2009, p.193). However, due to the poor accessibility of DynEd as a result of the lack of infrastructure Turkish students who use this module user have not fully benefited from this measure (Kizildag (2009, p.193).

1.4 Definition of Terms

1.4.1 The Fatih Project

FATIH in this case is an acronym for Fırsatları Artırma ve Teknolojiyi İyileştirme Hareketi, or Movement to Increase Opportunities and Improve Technology. It is often referred to as the “FATIH Project”, although some individuals argue that it should not be considered a “project”. This term implies something much more limited and short-term in nature, whereas FATIH is, in reality; a major—and presumably permanent—shift in the way education is delivered. The Ministry of National Education (MONE) designed FATIH to provide interactive whiteboards (IWB), tablet computers, and Internet network infrastructure to all schools in basic education (IWBs for pre-primary and primary levels and IWBs and tablets for lower and upper secondary levels) in an attempt to enhance equality of opportunity in education and to improve ICT use in teaching and learning processes in schools. FATIH intends to set up ICT hardware in 40,000 schools and 620,000 classrooms across Turkey. The project, which was initially launched in secondary schools but will eventually reach all grade levels between 2011 and 2019, has five main components as laid out on the official FATIH website:

- Preparation of the infrastructure for hardware and software that comprises effective procurement, distribution, and technical set-up of equipment in schools.
- Provision and management of the e-content that entails creating new class materials consistent with information and communication technologies (ICT)-supported instruction.
- Effective ICT usage in line with curricula that aims to find new channels of integrating ICT usage with course curricula.
- Conscious, reliable and measurable usage of ICT and the Internet that focuses on teaching users of ICT how to use relevant ICT tools with complementary information on the web as well as evaluating how people use ICT.
- In-service training to teachers for ICT instruction in classrooms that enables teachers to use ICT tools effectively in a classroom environment properly.

FATIH’s first distribution phase excluding tablets began in the 2010-2011 school year in four schools. Each classroom in these schools was equipped with a laptop, a projector, and an IWB.¹³ the second distribution phase including tablets was completed in 17 provinces and 52 schools in 2012-2013. During this phase, tablets had only intranet access with limited

coverage determined by MONE. Following the second phase of distribution, MONE decided to grant Internet access to tablets while in schools. The specific modalities for ensuring equitable access to the Internet after school hours and at home are still under development.

Within the FATIH framework, 680 thousand teachers should receive two modules of training. Starting in 2012, the implementation of 30-hour training on ICT use in education and 25-hour training on preparatory education was launched. According to MONE, more than 120 thousand teachers received training as of April 2013. MONE has also established 110 distance learning centers in 81 provinces, which will facilitate teacher access in the future. There is a perception both internationally and locally that FATIH is largely techno-centric because of the scale of the initial investment of 570,000 IWBs and accessories and 10.6 million tablet computers in the first three years alone. Yet the project components above do recognize that in addition to hardware, teacher training and content must be addressed. Furthermore, although FATIH is best known for its one-tablet-per-student aspect of the hardware deployment, it is equally important to note that it also includes an IWB per classroom. The goal of equipping schools with technology—particularly IWBs and computer classrooms—predates FATIH by over a decade in Turkey, as described above. However, previously schools had to fundraise locally for ICT equipment; as a result, schools in wealthier communities were better resourced while other schools remained marginalized. The word “opportunity” in the acronym FATIH refers to the effort to counter this trend and ensure that all schools and students have comparable opportunities.

12 <http://FATIHprojesi.meb.gov.tr/tr/english.php>

13 <http://FATIHprojesi.meb.gov.tr/tr/icerikincele.php?id=10>

Note: The text above is an excerpt from Pouezevara, S& Dinçer, A. (2003). Turkey’s fatih project: A plan to conquer the digital divide or a technological leap of faith? Sabanci University

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews and discusses the literature and research already conducted which is of relevance for the research topic of this dissertation. The first part reviews the literature which focuses on the relationship between technology and language learning as the aim of this research project is to identify whether computer-assisted language learning affects the process of language learning among Turkish students. This is followed by discussing the literature findings focusing on the use of technology in language education and the effect thereof.

2.1 Computer Assisted Language Learning History

Distance or online learning has evolved through several historical generations (Moore and Kearsley 2011, p.23). The first generation was when the medium of communication was text and instruction occurred through postal correspondence in the early 1880s; the second generation was teaching through means such as broadcast and television in the early 20th century; the third one was the invention of the open universities; the fourth generation in the 1980s refers to the real-time distant interaction in audio and video teleconference courses;

and the most recent generation of online learning refers to teaching and learning online in virtual classes and universities which make use of the Internet technologies (Moore and Kearsley 2011, p.23).

The Learning Management Systems (LMS) operating within the local area network (LAN) environment in the mid-90s were an attempt by educators to bring together ideas and resources and to provide a more integrated learning experience for students (Williams and Goldberg 2005, p.727). The 'dotcom' boom and the World Wide Web were the major factors behind the increased use and reliance on e-learning because they enabled education to be conducted online, anytime and anywhere as long as you had an Internet connection (Williams and Goldberg 2005, p.727). Today online learning is positioned to thrive in a variety of settings, both formal and informal, and will continue to speed up the transformation of traditional institutions of learning and contribute to further changes in the education and training sectors (Mason 2005, p.1).

Having been developed by Charles Babbage, who can be called "the father computer" because of developing the first mechanical programmable device in the 19th century, computers have been used in many fields and they constitute an important part of humanity; but using them for educational purposes has not started until the 1950s (Tafazoli & Golshan, 2014). On the other hand, the usage of computers in education did not start with using them for language acquisition. According to Chapelle (1986), language teachers like Rex Last and Graham Davies were the first people who started to use computers for language teaching in the UK. Tafazoli & Golshan (2014) state in their study that, Richard Atkinson and Patric Suppes were the first people who started the early computer-assisted language learning project at Stanford University in the US. Computer-assisted language learning, which is abbreviated as CALL, continued to be used for language teaching purposes under different names and projects in the succeeding years.

"The Computer Assisted learning exercises for French (CLEF) project began with the cooperation of three universities in Canada to teach basic French grammar"(Paramskas, 1982; cited in Tafazoli & Golshan, 2014).

In the following years, some other projects were developed to teach various languages. The Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations (PLATO) project and the Time Shared, Interactive, Computer-Controlled Information Television (TICCIT) projects were two of them.

Along with these, Warschauer (1998) divides the CALL process into three phases. The Behaviorist CALL is the first phase of the process which was used during the years between the 1960s and 1970s. Warschauer and Healey (1998) stated in their study that this first phase was affected by the Audio-Lingual method and repetitive and extensive language drills, grammatical explanations, and translation was used mostly and computers were seen as mechanical tutors who never let students study individually in this phase.

The second phase is Communicative CALL which was developed on the basis of communication claiming that the behavioristic approach does not let students study interactively and with intrinsic motivation. Tafazoli & Golshan (2014) state that different types of programs were developed during this phase to make it possible for learners to study

interactively with the computer itself and with other learners, but computer games were the dominant and significant programs among them. To enhance the communicative skills of the learners; conversations, written tasks, and some other spelling and speaking activities were used.

The last phase is Integrative CALL. This phase appeared between the years of 1980s and 1990s. It was based on multimedia computers and the internet was aimed to integrate four skills with technology in the language learning process (Warschauer and Healey, 1998). The aim of the advocators of this approach was to provide authentic teaching materials which let learners study interactively. The developing technology and World Wide Web (WWW) provided this environment for it.

2.2 Teacher Attitudes to Call, Teacher Attitude to Technology in Language Education

The presence of technology is not an indicator of technology in language education. The teacher is the utilizer of the technology in language education. Because of this reason the teacher needs to be aware of computer-assisted technology in the classroom and have a positive attitude towards technology use in language education.

Namlica (2010) had his study in Turkish state schools, this study indicates that The majority of the teachers did not completely know the concept of CALL at all, among the results of this study, the most common definition of the term 'CALL' is that CALL is students' learning a language using computers in the presence of a teacher.

In this study, Namlica (2010) suggested that there is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of CALL and teaching experience, educational background, and gender. On the other hand, he found significant relations between the teacher's perception of CALL and their preference of attending self-paid overseas CALL conferences, taking part in CALL projects before, preference for attending self-paid CALL courses offered by computer schools, having learned about CALL as one of the subjects in the teacher training program and also the type of the school that the teachers work.

"The effect of gender on the attitudes of teachers towards CALL is still under debate and research findings are inconsistent. Previously, several studies have addressed this factor and revealed that males have a more positive attitude towards computers compared to females"(Krendl 1989; Loyd1987 cited in Bakr 2011).

On the contrary, Barrier and Margavio's study (1992) showed that males' attitude towards computers was more negative than that of females. Surprisingly, Yildirim's study (2010) which investigated 120 pre-service teachers' attitudes toward computers showed no gender differences in attitude towards computers. Kay (1990) has stated that gender-related studies have produced conflicting results. Thus, the understanding gender-based attitudinal difference is likely to have an important implication.

According to Zereyalp (2009), teacher educators had such barriers as lack of hardware, lack of time, technical and administrative support, and people's opinions or ideas although they had strong positive attitudes towards the use of CALL in their instruction. There was not a statistically significant difference between the gender and the teacher educators' attitudes

towards the use of CALL. The relationship between teacher educators' ages and their attitudes towards CALL was not statistically different either.

Bakr (2011) found out that, the Egyptian public school teachers' attitudes towards computers are positive. There were no significant differences in terms of gender and teaching experience. On the other hand, Sadik (2006) proved that more experienced teachers showed more positive attitudes towards computers. Accordingly, the researcher believes that there is a need for more studies to explore the relationship between years of teaching experience and attitudes towards computers.

"Kadel (2005) found that overcoming the typical obstacles that may deter faculty from utilizing technology for instruction requires an attitude that is extremely positive. This attitude may manifest itself in an extensive time devotion or willingness to challenge institutional thought. Becker and Riel (2000) found that those teachers who come from a constructivist background are more likely to use computers for instruction and more likely to find these activities effectively." Cited in Greg Kessler (2007)

Sokucu (2014) found out that the teachers of a private university have an overall positive attitude toward CALL this study is an indicator of the institutional effect on the teachers. In private universities administration constitutes a less barrier compared to public universities, this enables enthusiastic teachers to have a positive attitude towards CALL with less possibility of frustration. Similarly, Onsoy (2004) stated that proper education of students and teachers and an effective curriculum are also required for developing a positive attitude towards CALL.

2.3 Student Attitudes to Call, Teacher Attitude to Technology in Language Education

Classic class environments and Computer-assist Language Learning environments were compared in many types of research in language classes. There are a lot of research projects that gave feedback about the CALL implications and their effects on students' attitudes. In order to draw a clear picture of learner attitudes in CALL programs, I will give a historical background of the conducted research projects in the field.

Primarily, Chapelle and Jamieson (1986) stated the positive effects of CALL in an EFL program. It was found that field independence and motivational intensity were two aspects that learner attitudes were affected. As it was mentioned in another research paper (Sanaoui and Lapkin, 1992) autonomous learning characteristics were encouraged by technology in a high school of French. Students felt that with the help of the CALL program, they heightened their learning responsibility and cultural awareness.

Beauvois (1998) showed that learners performed better in a Local Area Network class. According to her, the reasons why students showed positive attitudes were the control over CALL equipment and low-anxiety situation. Moreover, Warschauer (1996) classified three different motivation factors for students that were encouraged by technology-enriched settings. Those three factors; communication, empowerment, and learning, could be the reason for students' positive attitudes. The findings of a study by Hernandez et al. (2010) showed the positive effects of technology-assisted programs on students' attitudes. For those students, new technology is a significant tool for reaching information and increasing

knowledge. Using technological equipment in CALL environments is encouraging for positive student attitudes.

Siragusa and Dixon (2009) identified learner attitudes towards technology in the language learning environment. According to them, participants' interaction with the CALL program was observed positively. Moreover, another study was conducted by Ipina (2012). She mentioned that students showed positive feelings toward Information Communication Technology. And their attitudes were changed in a positive way following the use of technology in their classes. As it is seen there are many research projects that questioned different aspects of technology in language learning environments. Lunde (1990) stated that participants who participated in a CALL project improved their reading comprehension ability.

Considerable progress was noticed by Sanaoui and Lapkin (1992) in a case study. Students had a course that was integrated with computer networking. And researchers noticed that participants improved their speaking skills and also there was considerable growth in their listening and reading comprehension. There can be an overall effect of CALL on other skills.

It was stated in many studies that learner attitudes, reflections, and roles are significant issues to be considered in a technology-based language learning environment. Besides, it was pointed out that in many cases EFL learners showed positive attitudes towards CALL in language classrooms (Garcia, 2001; Daigle, 2003; Isman et al, 2004; Karakas, 2011; Abedalaziz, Jamaluddin & Leng, 2013; Award & Alkaraki, 2013).

When gender has been considered a factor in CALL classrooms, female learners are likely to have more positive attitudes towards computer-based language learning (Hashim & Mustapha 2004). In another research Kay (2008) pointed out that male students are considerably positive about computers and computer technology. It can also be a motivational reason for CALL. Nevertheless, it was stated in considerable amount of studies that gender was not an effective variable in the attitudes of students. As an example, Abedalaziz, Jamaluddin, and Leng (2013) mentioned that in terms of the learning motivation with computer and computer-based technology; there was not a considerable difference between male and female learners' communication and writing skills.

It is clear in many research projects that the use of computers and computer technology is clearly related to the feedback on students' attitudes. Moreover, the various types of language learning activities are also related to the positive effects of CALL on EFL learners. Mitra (1998) says that a high level of computer usage points to positive attitudes towards computers.

All in all, it is pointed out in numerous studies that Computer-assist Language Learning has a positive impact on EFL learners. When we consider their attitudes as a variable, it is clear that computers and computer technology have positive effects on the second language learning environment. Positively, gender is not an effective factor for CALL and it provides an advantage for language classes.

2.4 Social constructionism

Social Constructionism is concerned with the processes by which people describe, explain or account for the world in which they live (Gergen 1985, p.3). Social constructivists argue that it is through social artifacts that people perceive and describe the world (Au 1998, p.299). According to this theoretical paradigm since reality is considered to be created through processes of social exchange meaning is collectively generated (Au 1998, p.299). According to constructivists meaning is constructed in our minds in the process of interaction with the physical, social, and mental worlds during which we make sense of our experiences (Swan 2005, p.1).

According to the social constructivist thought, language is essential in forming our thoughts and should be considered a crucial tool in the cognitive development process (Swan 2005, p.4). Learning environments that encourage active participation, interaction and dialogue provide students with opportunities to engage in a process of knowledge construction as they try to create meaning from new experiences (Pena-Shaff and Nicholls 2004, p.244).

2.5 The Fatih Project and Social Constructivist Theory

The social constructivist theory claims that learning is an ongoing, dynamic, interactive, and social process realized through participation in socio-cultural contexts. Learners are the cognitively-active participants of the learning process and appropriate externally mediated knowledge and skills. They self-regulate their own learning and reconstruct the social meaning. Dialogic mediation and scaffolding provided by the “expert” teachers help students internalize concepts and move beyond their actual level of performance. When The FP is evaluated from the social constructivist perspective, it can be suggested that the Project is compatible with the basic tenets of the theory. First, it provides a rich variety of ELT materials from which learners can choose the appropriate ones in relation to their needs and interests. Especially they help learners individualize and self-regulate their learning process when they study in their free time. The materials are likely to function as mediating artifacts to help learners engage in the activities occurring in social contexts. Second, the “expert teachers” guide and support learners considering their needs and interests which in turn provides opportunities for learners to develop dynamically. This scaffolding fosters learners’ reconstructing and transforming concepts and cognitive growth. Thus it can be concluded that The FP project may provide basic resources to realize social constructivist theory practices in Turkish EFL education.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Researcher Positionality Paradigm

In this study, my goal is to identify and explain the impact that the Fatih Project has among Turkish students in EFL classrooms. To achieve this goal, I am positioning myself under a constructivist paradigm that assigns significant value to information “received within the person’s own framework of understanding” and that “this information is received within the person's own framework of understanding or "fit" of the new information” (Sheets, 1994, p. 13). In other words, I will receive and construct an interpretation. A constructivist approach will enable me to bring EFL students’ and their instructor’s voices to the forefront.

Toma (2000) asserts that researchers have to be objective and unbiased in their research. Therefore, the researcher needs to find the right balance between using primary experience and knowledge as part of the inquiry and not being swept away and overwhelmed by it. My personal views, beliefs, and experiences about the impact that the Fatih Project has among Turkish students in EFL courses are positive because, based on my teaching and learning years in Turkey, I have noticed that EFL instructors in Turkey mostly give tasks to be completed in the classroom using smart boards and most students like working on smart boards and sharing their ideas with their friends. However, for this research I know I need to unpack my assumptions and be open to my participants' opinions as well. Thus, I also need to appreciate other positions and experiences that stand in contrast to mine. I feel that each has its own rightness, integrity, and validity.

3.2 My specific methodology summary

The topic of this research is approached from the constructivist perspective, meaning that the data is observed through the cultural, historical, and social settings that shape the context which is analyzed, and participants' interactions with others and attitudes towards the use of technology will be used in order to interpret the impact of the Fatih Project in EFL classrooms in Turkey (Cresswell 2007, p.25). This approach is taken because analyses of social interaction and attitudes should be studied using naturally occurring data whereby turn sequences can be used to analyze and identify what meaning is constructed in the interactions (Deckert 2006, p.25).

The constructivist perspective allows the researcher to identify the impact of Fatih Project activities on the process of knowledge formation because this perspective allows the researcher to make sense of and interpret the meanings individuals attach to the phenomena surrounding them (Cresswell 2007, p.25). To achieve this goal, the research project is approached from the constructivist standpoint which means that the researcher will observe knowledge as socially constructed by people and that the researcher will attempt to understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of the participants (Schwandt 2000 as cited in Mertens 2014, p.17).

According to Cresswell (2007, p.39), the research process for qualitative research is emergent which means that the initial plan cannot always be sustained, and instead, the research process including the data collection processes or the participants may change. For this reason, in the process of data collection, I will maintain a flexible approach based on the participants' circumstances. For instance, as stated, I might approach the participants before the interviews and talk with them about their experiences and attitudes towards the use of technology in their English classrooms. This experience would allow them to gain a better perspective about the goal of the interviews and would make them more prepared.

In addition to this, this research project takes the inductive approach. This means that the researcher takes the bottom-up approach and reads through the data and develops categories and codes as the research process develops (Neergaard and Uih 2007, p.340). The end results of the inductive research approach are concepts, themes, and generalizations in the form of theory (Mangal 2013, p.635). As an important element of the inductive process involved in qualitative research Cresswell (2007, p.39) argues to be the interaction with the participants.

Similar claims were made by Polkinghorne (2005) who also argued that qualitative data are not identical to the experience they are describing and that qualitative data in the oral form are a product of the interaction between participants and researcher. Therefore, as already mentioned in the previous paragraph the researcher seeks to maintain interaction with the participants in order to strengthen the qualitative data resulting from the data collection process.

3.3 Methods and Procedures Applied to Human Subjects:

This research will use the following procedures:

1. Questionnaire – data will be collected from the students of 7 classes that use Fatih Project and 7 classes that do not use Fatih project, who agree to take part in the study

2. In-depth interviews – voluntary classes using the Fatih project will be chosen from the questionnaire data, and interviews will be conducted with 30 Turkish students and their teachers from the class. Besides, voluntary classes NOT using the Fatih project will be chosen from the questionnaire data, and interviews will be conducted with 30 Turkish students and their teachers from the class

3. Oxford Placement Test– data from the placement test will be collected from the whole class and then the interviews with the smaller group of students, and the constructions of these data will be analyzed in support of the questionnaire and interview results.

3.4 Research Design

The study will be conducted at six different state high schools located in Istanbul, a city that is more populated than the capital city and well known in Turkey. I have chosen the state schools in Istanbul because of the convenience and standardized education. I'm actually living in Ankara but during the summer I will be in Istanbul for vacation and research purposes as well as for conferences. I will include 9th-grade intermediate-level students. Once I get permission from their parents with the help of the school principals, I will visit their classrooms to explain my research and apply my questionnaire to the volunteer students as well as their teachers. I will approach thirty randomly selected students to recruit student participants for the interview questions.

Since the purpose of qualitative research is to gain a better understanding of an experience and phenomena, in order for this to be achieved the researcher needs to select suitable exemplars of the experience for the particular subject (Polkinghorne 2005, p.140). This selection of the sample should be purposeful and not random or left to chance (Polkinghorne 2005, p.140) and for this reason, I chose students and schools which use the Fatih Project as part of their education program. Through this purposeful selection of participants, I seek to collect data that are rich enough to ensure clarity to better understand the experiences and attitudes of students towards the use of technology in the EFL classrooms (Polkinghorne 2005, p.140).

In order to select information-rich cases from which I can learn more about the process of knowledge construction through the use of technology (Patton 1990, p.112) apart from

conducting the interviews with the 30 students and their instructors, Student Attitude and Student Technology Usage Questionnaires, Teacher Attitude and Teacher Technology Usage Questionnaires, and the Oxford Placement Test (an online English proficiency test) will be used as a pre-test and a post-test. Descriptive statistics will be used to compare the pre-test and post-test scores within each group. Later the pre-test and post-test scores of standard and specified treatment groups will be compared to each other. In addition to seeing if there is any correlation between the amounts of time spent in and outside the classroom and post-test scores, The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used. Finally, the relationship between learner attitudes to the FP and their test results will be studied by using SPSS. Conducting these collection methods with the same individuals should provide information-rich cases and would ensure that their experiences are observed from two different perspectives.

The students participating in this proposed study will be Turkish EFL speakers, and the students will be majoring in various departments at the universities once they complete high school. The age of the students will range from 15 to 16, which are the typical ages of high school 9th-grade students, and both male and female students will be included.

The 9th-grade students from six different state high schools located in Istanbul and their English teachers form the target population of the study. In three of these schools, the Fatih Project has been implemented for three years. 970 false-beginner Turkish EFL students and 52 EFL teachers in these three FP schools form the experimental group. 1021 students and 49 EFL teachers from the other three non-Fatih Project schools take part in the study as the control group.

The learners in both groups attend the 9th grade in state schools. They were placed in these schools depending on the results of the TEOG (transition from primary to secondary education) exam, a nationwide exam given to the 8th-grade students. Their TEOG scores range from 455 to 470 over 500. Thus it can be concluded that they are almost of the same academic background and academic level. They receive 6 hours of English per week during the academic year which lasts 36 weeks. They study the coursebook, Power Up, prepared by the Ministry of Education. What is different between the experimental and the control group is the implementation of the FP in the experimental group. In the FP schools, all the classrooms are equipped with interactive smartboards and PDFs of the English course materials are uploaded to the smart boards. Offering free unlimited Wi-Fi, the schools make EBA (education informatics network) accessible to both teachers and students. EBA operated by the Ministry includes extra supporting materials and a special version of DyNet. Moreover, the students are granted tablet PCs and their set-ups are adjusted solely to the FP project materials which they can exploit both in and out of their schools.

Criteria for a Purposive Sampling of Participants

I expect to recruit thirty student participants. Following is a list of criteria for purposive sampling of student participants:

1. The students will self-identify as English as a Foreign Language users.
2. All will be studying in the state high schools.
3. Students will be enrolled in the English course during the data collection period.

3.5 Data Collection

As mentioned in the first chapter apart from relying on qualitative research methods this research project draws on additional research techniques. According to Cresswell (2007, p.39) by relying on multiple research collection methods the researcher can report multiple perspectives, identify the multiple factors involved in a phenomenon, and generally establish the larger picture that emerges around the phenomenon (p. 39). By adopting this approach, researchers are able to identify the complex interactions of factors in the phenomena they are studying (Cresswell 2007, p.39).

In order to answer the different questions and collect the relevant information, different types of collection methods are needed. To this end, the researcher relies on questionnaires that are used in order to collect data about the students and their teachers that use Fatih Project and that participate in the study. In order to provide even more though data that will support the data collected with the questionnaires in-depth interviews will also be conducted with 30 students and 30 teachers individuals.

Student Attitude Questionnaire serves as the mean to reveal how the FP affect student attitude toward English language learning and what the students think about the quantity and quality of ELT materials provided by PF.

The purpose of the Student Technology Usage Questionnaire is to see how and how long the students exploit the FP in their classrooms and free time

Teacher Attitude Questionnaire helps to elicit teacher attitudes towards the use of the FP in English language education Moreover it is used to see what the teachers think about the quantity and quality of ELT materials provided by PF

Teacher Technology Usage Questionnaire is used to reveal how and how long the teachers exploit the FP in their classroom practice.

Moreover, in order to further explain and understand the meanings and interpretations of participants, the researcher will conduct an analysis of the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). This will be administered to all students as a pre-and post-test to study the difference in the English proficiency level of the students. Besides, the pre-and post-test OPT scores of the students in the FP schools and non-FP schools will be compared to see the effects of the project on the proficiency level of the students.

Finally, the schools will be visited and the implementation of the FP will be observed in the field. Specifically, the following interview questions are planned to be utilized to elicit more data about the project (See Appendix G).

The data collected from the interviews, questionnaires, and the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) will be analyzed qualitatively. That is, by using qualitative content analysis, I will look for themes and patterns that emerge from the data in order to identify codes in the data.

3.6 The Oxford Placement Test

The Oxford Placement Test (OPT) is an online English proficiency test. Results are given in CEFR level, a score out of 120, and the time taken. Oxford Online Placement Test is in two parts - Use of English and Listening. Students are tested on their knowledge of grammatical form and vocabulary in the Use of English section, as well as their listening skills in the Listening section. In addition, both sections test how well students understand the meaning of what is being communicated. Understanding meaning is fundamental to communication and is an excellent indicator of language ability. The test has been pretested and validated by more than 19,000 students across 60 countries.

The test is computer-adaptive, which means that it selects an easier or more difficult question depending on whether the previous answer was wrong or right. This makes the test shorter than a pen and paper test. Students are asked between 40 and 45 questions, depending on their level.

3.7 Treatment

The participants in both groups received roughly 210 hours of language instruction, which took about eight months. All the groups follow the syllabus prepared by the Ministry week by week. For the specified treatment group, the teachers make a plan to exploit the software systematically in and outside the classroom. They carefully integrate the software to the course materials. Additionally, they also guide their students to use it in their free time to improve their language skills.

3.8 Materials

Power UP is a coursebook prepared for false beginners and aims at taking learners to the low-intermediate level of English proficiency. It is organized around topics to help learners carry out tasks at the A2 level. Moreover, the ELT materials provided by EBA are exploited in and out of the classroom.

To conclude, all the students have access to the same ELT materials, except for the specified treatment, group has a systematic plan to utilize the software in and outside the classroom.

3.9 Data Sources

As stated before, my data sources for this study will primarily constitute questionnaires with students and their teachers. Secondary sources of data include interviews with the students and their teachers, and the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) not only to study the difference in the English proficiency level of the students but also to see the effects of the project on the proficiency level of the students.

3.10 Questionnaires

I am going to use Student Attitude to Fatih project Questionnaire which is adapted from Albirini (2006) and Yuan (2005) for the student participants in order to obtain information concerning the participants' prior and present experience in and attitudes towards technology-enhanced language learning, (which specifically refers to the FATIH project). Secondly, I am going to use other questionnaires regarding the Technology Use of Students in and outside

the classroom which is adapted from Alduwairaj (2014) for the student participants in order to obtain information concerning the participants' prior and present experience in their use of technology both in their English course and outside their course (which specifically refers to the FATIH project).

Similarly, I am also going to use Teacher Attitude to Fatih project Questionnaire which is adapted from Albirini (2006) and Yuan (2005) for the teacher participants in order to obtain information concerning the participants' prior and present experiences and attitudes towards technology-enhanced language learning, (which specifically refers to the FATIH project). Likewise, I am going to use other questionnaires regarding the Technology Use of Teachers in and outside the classroom which is adapted from Alduwairaj (2014) for the teacher participants in order to obtain information concerning the participants' prior and present experience in their use of technology both in their English course and outside their course (which specifically refers to the FATIH project).

I am going to translate the questionnaires that will be given to the student participants into Turkish using a back-translation procedure in order to clear up any ambiguities that will be caused due to the limited knowledge of L2 students in their foreign language. I will also have a second analyst check it for accuracy. After the questionnaire is collected and analyzed I am going to choose 30 students randomly and 30 teachers and have in-depth interviews with them.

4.0 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The methods section first explained the rationale of this study, methodology, and the research questions. Then, it illustrated the research design of this study as well as the researcher positionality paradigm, setting and participants, how the participants will be selected, and the data sources such as questionnaires, interviews, and documentary data. Lastly, data analysis and interpretation tools together with validity issues, ethical issues, and the researcher's role were discussed to have a clearer view of the study.

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