

Full Length Research Paper

The cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach in English language teaching: Academic and permanence success

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This study aimed at investigating the effect of the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach in English language teaching on the academic success of students and on the permanence of success. It was conducted during the spring semester of 2013/2014 academic year at the School of Foreign Languages, Fırat University, Elazığ, Turkey. The study was conducted using pre-test/post-test control group design, which is one of the true score models, and it lasted 7 weeks. During this process, lectures were taught using some activities based on the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach in the experimental group, and the traditional approach was used in the control group. As a data collection method, a test developed by the researcher was applied. Three weeks after the ending of the experimental study, a permanence test was applied. According to the results obtained from this study, it can be stated that the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach in teaching of the English language is an effective method for increasing students' academic success and permanence of success compared to the current program.

Key words: Reflective teaching, cognitive coaching.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization inevitably brings constant change and development with it, resulting in swift changes and developments in the field of education and several other fields. Genç and Eryaman (2008) opine that education is the fundamental tool for change, and development occurs as a result of the acquisition and spreading of knowledge. Change in the field of education means more than applying change in a class. Contrary to this, actual change is a multidimensional phenomenon which is hard

to complete, requires practice and aims to achieve an educational purpose (Fullan, 2001). Today's learners' and future learners' needs to be different from one another. Learners' needs have increased to such an extent that traditional methods alone cannot be sufficient. Therefore, today's educators face a completely different learning group (Çiçek, 2012). It is an indisputable fact that this new learner group, differentiated with the effects of changes and developments in the education system,

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needs to speak foreign languages more than ever (Gömleksiz, 2014, 2010; Najeeb, 2013). It has become a necessity to teach and learn English because of the global spread of it in science, technology, trade and education. English that is highly important for the socio-economic development of countries, has also become a key to success for individuals (El-Fiki, 2012). English "has become the central language of communication in business, politics, administration, science and academia, as well as being the dominant language of globalized advertising and popular culture." (Held et al., 1999) English proficiency is also a key factor in the globalization process of nations. Revolution of information technologies has shortened the distances between different nations and destroyed the borders between them and the English Language has played an undeniable role in that process (Al-Jadidi, 2009). Since English is acceptable all around the world for being understood by everyone (Sarica and Cavus, 2009).

Learning English then has become a need in order to access information easily, share acquired information, improved communication on every aspect and, most importantly, make life easier and broaden one's horizons. English has a significant status in Turkey as well. With regard to importance of English in Turkey, students have English lessons from second class in Primary Education through to the end of university. Nevertheless, students' English proficiency level and their communication ability is quite low. There are many factors that can affect learners' English education negatively such as grammar based teaching process, learning styles and strategies, motivation of the teacher and the students, exam based education and so on. According to Lei and Qin (2009) that failure factors in ELT are lack of confidence and effort, test oriented learning and lack of practice and external elements. Batstone also indicate that if there are little external stimuli like in the countries where English is not spoken, instructors will have more responsibility to encourage students on English and increase their exposure to the language (1996). When viewed from this aspect language education in Turkey needs to be improved, the problems about this field have to be overcome and alternative approaches should be utilized to make language learning more practical. Therefore, in today's world where learning English is getting increasingly important, some changes and developments are inevitable in the framework of teaching the English language. Hence, Çiçek (2012) hypothesizes that current systems of education should abandon uniform teaching methods and comply with the evolving conditions by taking changing and different needs and interests of learners into account. Fullan (2001) states that teachers should understand non-traditional, modern students who are the voices of this change, observe in-class practices and include more students in the process. Thus, students would learn better as they become integrated with their

own learning processes by structuring what they have gained.

At this point reflective teaching occupies an important position for monitoring students' own learning processes. During the reflection process, individuals need a safe harbor where their mistakes would be accepted and they could request help. In that harbor, the inconsistencies in practices and irrationalities in mentalities could be revealed without hesitation. While individuals recognize themselves by becoming integrated with their own learning processes, they could also help others to do the same (Larrivee, 2010). In this regard, it is important to address the concept of cognitive coaching. Asta (2009) theorizes that the most effective reflection is achieved through talking to a counsellor. Cognitive coaching, which is also seen as a counseling process, has an important position in the reflection process. Lin (2012), Bjerken (2013), Eger (2006) put forth the theory that cognitive coaching activities improve the power of reflective thinking and increase the reflection capacity. A cognitive coach encourages the ones whom he or she instructs to think. This person aims to improve the comprehension and awareness of individuals by using reflection and meta-cognitive processes (Diaz, 2013). Cognitive coaching models deepen reflection and support the professional development of individuals (Bjerken, 2013). Cognitive coaching practices also help break the ice in the education system and save it from traditionalism (Cochran and Dcehesere, 1995).

As we infer from the statements mentioned above language teaching in Turkey needs to be saved from traditional practices. In line with this purpose reflective teaching and cognitive coaching should be utilized in language teaching. Since the main paradigm of new learning models in the modern education-teaching process are putting students in the center, focus on raising individuals with creativity, reflective, analytical, high level thinking and problem solving abilities who learn by themselves, by practice and experience. In this sense, it is believed that it would be beneficial to apply new methods and activities rather than previously recommended and applied ones. Savignon indicated that language learning is a complex and varied context so learners need to go beyond the methods (2007). Thus, the traditional language teaching methods should give place to the new ones that supported by the researches. According to the researches a successful language learner should have a great repertoire of cognitive and meta-cognitive learning strategies (Oxford and Crookall, 1989). At this point cognitive coaching which is an 'interactive strategy' (Costa and Garmston, 2002) should be used to produce self-directed language learners. In addition to these reflection is required in a successful language learning process (Farrel, 1999). Cognitive coaches believe that "*human beings construct their own meaning through reflecting on experience and through*

interactions with others" (Costa and Garmston, 2002: 7). Analyzing the studies in language learning and teaching fields it can be observed that there is still a need for a better method or approach for attainment. By taking advantage of the cognitive aspect of coaching, which is one of the new concepts as a result of the swiftly changing world, it is anticipated that reflective teaching activities would help individuals achieve success in their foreign language learning process by giving them the chance to get to know themselves. Starting from this point we tried to find the answers of the research questions below so that the study results can form a new alternative for approaches in the literature.

Research question

What is the effect of the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach in the teaching of English language on the academic success of students and on the permanence of success?

Sub research questions

- 1) Are there any significant differences between the experimental group, to which the approach was applied, and the control group, to which the current program was applied in regards to the scores in the success test?
- 2) Are there any significant differences between the experimental group, to which approach was applied, and the control group, to which the current program was applied in regards to the scores in the permanence test?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study was conducted using the 'pre-test/post-test control group' design, which is one of the most accurate score models. In this design, measurements are made before and after the experimental procedure on the groups (Karasar, 2003). In this study, the experimental and control groups, consisting of thirty people each, were determined according to specific criteria so as to objectively form these groups. The criterion scores of objectivity for the groups were in normal range. As a result of the required calculations and pre-test application of the success test before the experimental procedure, it was concluded that the experimental and control groups were assigned objectively and were equivalent. Throughout the seven-week experimental application, the reflective teaching practices were applied to the experimental group, while the students in that group were also coached by the researcher during their break, before the process until the end of the experiment. The control group's lectures were taught within the scope of the current program. The experimental procedure was conducted by the researcher and another instructor gave lectures voluntarily to one of the classes which consisted of the control group. After the process, the post-test, which is the success test, was applied to the experimental and control groups in order to

determine the changes in the academic levels of the students. After 3 weeks from the end of the study, the permanence test, as the success test, was applied to the groups.

Study group

The study group comprised a total of 94 preparatory class students from four different branches at the School of Foreign Languages, Firat University, Elazığ, Turkey during spring semester of the 2013/2014 academic year. Students were assigned to study groups objectively so as to conduct an experimental study. Objective criteria for this study are as follows: the pre-test scores of the students, their grade point averages for the I. Term Grammar lecture, their total average points in the I. Term Main Course, Grammar and Reading lectures and, their YGS (Transition to Higher Education Exam) scores. First, the data was classified using the clustering analysis and then, the data obtained was evaluated using computer package software (SPSS 17). Clustering analysis gives researchers summarized information by classifying the unclassified data according to its similarities (Kalaycı, 2010). K-means technique was used in the study, which is among the non-hierarchical clustering methods, since it was known at the beginning that the study would be conducted on two groups (experimental + control). Therefore, 30 students among 47, which was the total number of two classes, were selected for the experimental group, and 30 students from 47, the total number of the other two classes, were selected as the control group for the study. As a result, the total number of the students in the experimental and control groups were 60. The number of the students in both groups was equal, which is a positive fact. After it was understood that the test scores used to determine the groups were in normal range, statistical procedures were initiated so as to ensure objectivity. It was seen that there were no statistically significant differences between the students' scores in the experimental and control groups and hence, it was understood that the groups determined for the study were equal in the sense of the identified criteria.

Data collection procedure

The process steps in this study conducted with the experimental and control groups within the English grammar lecture in the preparatory classes are as follows:

- 1) Cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching techniques were prepared regarding the topics which would be taught during the seven week-practice period. These techniques were prepared based on the opinion of experts. They were put into final form with the necessary revisions after receiving the expert opinion. The success test was similarly prepared by the researcher for the pre-trial application with the help of expert opinions. Afterwards, it was put into final form depending on the results of the preliminary trial.
- 2) Before the process was initiated, meetings were conducted with the school administration, required permissions were obtained, and the process was discussed in detail with the administration. Additionally, during the same period, the first meeting was held with the two classes in the experimental group so as to build a mutual trust in line with Costa's and Garmston's (2002) cognitive coaching process. The instructor who would be teaching the control group was assigned on a voluntary basis. The study details were given to the voluntary instructor and the lectures were carried out meticulously during the process, which had a high importance for the study. Thus, the planning was completed.
- 3) The achievement test was applied to the classes as the pre-test

prior to the process, and the groups were objectively dedicated as the experimental and control groups by comparing the means of classes according to the results. As no significant difference was observed between the groups the process was initiated.

4) Throughout the seven weeks, reflective teaching activities during lectures, and cognitive coaching discussions during break continued correspondingly in the experimental group. An application under the teacher's book prepared by the administration of the School of Foreign Languages was performed in the control group.

5) After the applications in the experimental and control groups, the achievement test prepared by the investigator was applied to both groups as the post-test, and three weeks later, the same test was applied as the permanence test. The final meeting of the cognitive coaching was held, and students were given the chance to express their opinions about the process. The data obtained from those procedures was transferred into a computer program.

Data collection instruments

In order to determine the effect of the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach in English language lecture on student success, an academic achievement test was prepared by the researcher in line with the course book that would be used during the term. The purpose of the achievement test is to determine the preliminary knowledge of the students, observe the achievement after the application and, measure the permanence of student knowledge 3 weeks after the application. Bearing in mind that the practice would last seven weeks and the levels of classes are B 2, in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and appropriate acquisitions and topics were determined. The achievement test was prepared as 55 questions at the beginning. Then it was submitted to experts, one is associate the other is assistant professors at Educational Science Faculty and four instructors at the School of Foreign Languages in Fırat University, for their opinions to check its content validity.

The test was reformed according to their opinions, and was applied to 300 students who were in the preparatory class last year to determine the reliability. The item analysis of the test was conducted with the TAP (version2007a) program after the pilot application. The item analysis, item difficulty indices and item discrimination indices were used and the items whose measurement ability was low were omitted from the test. Accordingly, 5 items were excluded and 4 items were revised. The achievement test comprised 50 items in its final version. The KR 20 reliability coefficient of the composed test was calculated as 0.88. The reliability test scored a coefficient of 0.70 which is higher and accepted as adequate (Büyükoztürk, 2011). In conclusion, the reliability of the test prepared to measure the students' academic success and the permanence of what they had learned was considered as adequate; the test was applied to the students as the pretest, post-test and permanence test.

Analysis of data

The T test for dependent and independent sample was used to analyze the data obtained within the study. Whereas t test for independent group was used to compare the pre-test, post-test and permanence test scores of the experimental group to which the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach was applied, and the control group to which the current teaching program was applied. The t test for dependent groups was used for the comparison of the individual pre-test, post-test and permanence test scores for each group. The main reason behind this is that t

test for independent group is used to test whether the differences in the scores between two independent groups are significant or not ;whereas t test for dependent group is used to test whether the differences between the same groups before and after the applied program are significant or not (Büyükoztürk, 2011).

RESULTS

Research First Sub Question: Are there any significant differences between the experimental group, to which the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach was applied, and the control group, to which the current program was applied in regards to the scores in the success test?

This sub question was aimed at determining the effect of the practices applied to the experiment and control groups on the students' academic development, and also to compare student achievement. In line with this purpose, the English language success test prepared by the researcher was applied to the groups before and after the process, and the results were compared. At the first stage, after it was understood that the students' pre-test and post-test scores were in normal range, t test for the dependent group was used to examine the differences between the scores. Table 1 displays the results obtained.

If Table 1 is examined, the arithmetic mean of the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group can be seen as ($\bar{X}_{pretest}=24.46$; $\bar{X}_{posttest}=35.70$). There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group [$t_{(29)}=17.67$; $p<0.05$]. The total post-test score increases and the difference occurred is calculated as $\bar{X}_{post} - \bar{X}_{pre} = 10.54$. As it can be clearly seen, this difference is on behalf of the post-test scores.

The pre-test and post-test scores of the students in the experimental group were also examined in regard to normal range, and after observing that they were in normal range, the t test for dependent group was used to determine the difference. Table 2 displays the results of that statistical procedure.

Table 2 displays the arithmetic mean of the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group ($\bar{X}_{pretest}=23.96$; $\bar{X}_{posttest}=40.16$) as the success test. There is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group [$t_{(29)}=-19,33$; $p<0,05$]. The total post-test score increases and the occurred difference is calculated as $\bar{X}_{post} - \bar{X}_{pre} = 16.2$. It was discovered that this difference is for the post-test scores. This finding clearly demonstrates that the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach is effective for increasing the success of students. The nonparametric Mann Whitney U test was used, which is one of the t tests for independent groups,

Table 1. The Results of t-Test for dependent group for the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group.

Experimental group	n	\bar{X}	S	r	t	p
Pre-test	30	24.46	2.59	0.326	-17.67	0.000
Post-test	30	35.70	3.31			

*p<0.05.

Table 2. The Results of t-Test for dependent group for the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group.

Experimental group	n	\bar{X}	S	r	t	p
Pre-test	30	23.96	2.72	0.607	-19.33*	0.000
Post-test	30	40.16	5.69			

*p<0.05.

so as to reveal the significance of the difference between the English language success scores of the students in the experimental and control groups, following the experimental procedures. The reason for using this test is the fact that the post-test scores of the groups were not in normal range with the data obtained after the Levene test was applied. Table 3 displays the success of the post-test results of the students in the experimental and control groups.

The statistical procedures demonstrate that there is a significant difference between the groups' scores regarding the post-test practice as the success test (MWU=219,000; p=0.001). The significance level is lower than p= 0.05 value, which demonstrates a significant difference between the means of the success post-test scores of the students participating in the study according to the groups. This finding demonstrates that the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach has a positive effect on the academic success of students in the experimental group when compared to the traditional practice.

Findings regarding the Second Sub Research Questions

The second sub question of the study has been put forth as "are there any significant differences between the experimental group, to which the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach was applied, and the control group, to which the current program was applied in regards to the scores in the permanence test?" This sub problem was aimed at determining if there was a difference between the experimental group, to which the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching

approach was applied, and the control group, to which the current teaching program was applied, regarding the permanence of what had been learned. In line with this purpose, after the experimental procedures, the groups' scores were examined with the Levene test at the first stage so as to determine whether there was any significant difference between the experimental and control groups regarding the permanence. The scores were found not to be in normal range. After this procedure, the Mann Whitney U test was applied, which is one of the nonparametric tests. Table 4 displays the results obtained after those statistical procedures.

The statistical procedures demonstrate that there is a significant difference between the groups' scores regarding the permanence test as the success test [MWU=111.000; p=0.000]. The significance level is lower than p= 0.05 which demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the means of the success test permanence scores of the students participating in the study for the experimental group. This finding demonstrates that the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach has a significant effect on the permanence of the academic success of the students in the experimental group when compared to the traditional practice.

CONCLUSION

To achieve success in the education system, each subject participating in the process should contribute to it. The main purpose is to succeed in all levels of the system. However, success means failure unless it is achieved at the student level (Fullan, 2001). In Turkey traditional language teaching methods are not functional

Table 3. The results of Mann Whitney U and t-Test regarding the experimental and control groups' post-test practice success.

Group	n	\bar{X}	S	SD	Levene		T	p	M.W.U		Mean Rank	Total Rank
					F	p			M.W.U	p		
Experimental	30	40.16	5.69									
Control	30	35.70	3.31	58	7.61	0.008	3.711	0.000	219,000	0.001	38.20	1146.00
Total	60										22.80	684.00

*p<0.05.

Table 4. The results of Mann Whitney U and t-Test regarding the experimental and control groups' success test permanence practice.

Group	n	\bar{X}	S	SD	Levene		T	p	M.W.U		Mean rank	Total rank
					F	p			M.W.U	p		
Experimental	30	39.10	5.16									
Control	30	31.80	3.16	58	6.64	0.012	6.596	0.000	111,000	0.000	41.80	1254.00
Total	60										19.20	576.00

any more in terms of students' English learning levels. In this regard it should be gone beyond the previously recommended and applied methods and activities. With new methods and activities, individuals can succeed in the foreign language learning process by getting to know themselves with the help of reflective teaching activities which can be of benefit from the cognitive aspect of coaching. Within the context of the study, to determine the effect of the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching practices in English language learning on the academic success of the preparatory class students, statistical procedures were used. First, it was discovered that the experimental and control groups' total scores of the pre-test, post-test and permanence test as the English language success test were not in normal range. Then the results of the analysis

demonstrated that the post-test scores were significant on behalf of the experimental group. It was discovered that the method used in the study is more effective to increase the students' academic success than the current teaching method used on the control group. Students who familiarize themselves with learning tactics showed a higher success rate of mastering and retaining information and as they evaluated themselves during the process with reflections. Their success also increased when they got support with a cognitive coach. Indeed, the results of the study regarding the success supported these comments. Students whose teachers getting cognitive coaching training and approach are more successful compared to the ones whose teachers do not apply this method (Rennick, 2002). Demir (2009) proved that the cognitive

coaching method creates significant differences on the success of the experimental group students. Ceylan (2011) also proved that the cognitive coaching method increases student success. Rinaldi (2013) used the cognitive coaching method in mathematics which helped in student success. Diaz (2013) opines that cognitive coaching has a positive effect on the success of students with the support of reflection. All these results demonstrate that cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching practices increase students' academic success. After examining the effect of the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach in English language learning on the permanence of success, it was observed that the permanence test results of two study groups were significantly in favor of the experimental group. Based on this, it was

concluded that the new approach applied in the study had relatively positive results regarding the permanence when compared to the current teaching method. In other words, learning in the education system based on current teaching methods did not demonstrate permanence, whereas the permanence of learning in the experimental group receiving lectures based on the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach increased. The success of this research may be due to the fact that lectures were taught within the non-traditional constructivist program framework. In this framework, several different learning activities were performed in the courses, including reflective ones, increasing the students' attention to lectures. Cognitive coaching process also played an important role in students' educational improvement in terms of language learning.

Since cognitive coaching practices in general helps melting the ice in the system of education and spare it from traditionalism (Cochran and Dcheesere, 1995). Teachers as cognitive coaches and mentors to learners in each step of the learning process contribute to increasing students' academic success and to the permanence of what they have learned. As a result, there was a significant difference regarding the total permanence test scores of the students in the experimental and control groups as the English language success test. Learning is based on individual, and what make learners autonomous are the practices applied. This study aimed to give individuals independence and increase their success by teaching them to play the leading role in their learning process and to draw new paths to foreign language learning. It would be fair to state that those aims were achieved. Also by this study, students in experimental group were enabled to acquire more experience in language learning and the permanence of their knowledge in this field was ensured through these experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations put forth in accordance to the results of the study are as follows:

1. Alternative methods and techniques for the teaching of English language have been researched for a long time. The approach in the present study has been practiced on an academic level in English teaching. More experimental studies can be conducted to find out whether the approach is suitable or not to use in the other teaching stages.
2. When the efficiency of the cognitive coaching method on student success and on permanence of what has been learned is taken into consideration, cognitive coaching can be beneficial for education by informing instructors and teachers in other stages about this

method, and by institutionalizing cognitive coaching in some schools so as to give students autonomy in their learning process.

3. In this study, the cognitive coaching method has been used to support reflective teaching practices. More experimental studies can be conducted to examine cognitive coaching with other constructive teaching practices.

4. The cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach was applied. It can be examined to what the extent to which studies that bring cognitive coaching and different methods together that increase students' success and permanence of success.

5. More experimental studies can be conducted to examine the efficiency of the cognitive coaching-supported reflective teaching approach applied to English learning in this study on different lectures. In future studies, findings can be made stronger with a longer experimental process or with a larger study group.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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