



## DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE SCHOOLS IN THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION

### ZORUNLU EĞİTİM KAPSAMINDAKİ OKULLARDA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİMİNDE KARŞILAŞILAN GÜÇLÜKLER

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**Cite As:** Averbek, E. (2021). "Difficulties In Teaching English In The Schools In The Compulsory Education", International Social Mentality and Researcher Thinkers Journal, (Issn:2630-631X) 7(52): 2846-2854.

#### ABSTRACT

The target of this study is to evaluate the theses from 2004 to 2020 on English Teaching Challenges in the compulsory education of primary and secondary education in Turkey. This study includes 16 theses on English Teaching Challenges in the compulsory education in Turkey with quantitative and qualitative methods published at Council of Higher Education Thesis Center. Meta-synthesis method was used in order to analyze the findings. The data were studied in terms of objectives, sample groups, methods, data collection instruments and results. After analyzing the findings obtained from the research, the results are about unsuitable course hours for the student's age levels and language requirements, competent teachers, the effective use of foreign language teaching methods and techniques, the large number of classes, the reflection of the culture of the target language in the curriculum the guiding and supporting in-service training for teachers, the course materials, the curriculum sufficiently up-to-date, motivation, the family assistance for students' language learning, the necessity of the environment that enables students to practise what they have learned, the suitable activities for the language skills, the appropriate English teaching for diverse types of schools with the students at divergent levels in schools supporting language teaching.

**Key Words:** Teaching, English, Difficulties Encountered, Compulsory Education, Meta-synthesis

#### ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı Türkiye'de zorunlu eğitim kapsamında olan ilköğretim ve ortaöğretim İngilizce Öğretiminde Karşılaşılan Güçlükler ile ilgili yapılan tezlerin genel bir değerlendirilmesidir. Çalışmanın örnekleme, 2004/2020 yıllarında Türkiye'deki araştırmacılarca gerçekleştirilen ve Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu Ulusal Tez Merkezinin veri tabanında yayımlanan İngilizce Dersi Öğretim Güçlükleri ile ilgili tezleri kapsamaktadır. Çalışmanın kapsamında, nicel ve nitel yayımlanan araştırma yöntemlerinin kullanıldığı 16 yüksek lisans tezi bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmalarda ulaşılan bulgular, meta-sentez araştırma doğrultusunda incelenmiştir. Çalışmada geçerlik ve güvenilirliği sağlamak için çalışmanın amacı ve araştırma soruları acık bir şekilde ifade edilmiştir. Çalışmadaki veriler, İngilizce Dersi Öğretim Güçlükleri ile ilgili hedeflenen amaçlar, örneklem grubu, kullanılan yöntem, veri toplama aracı ve araştırmada elde edilen sonuçlar açısından değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmalardan elde edilen bulgular sonucunda; branş öğretmenlerinin yetersizliği, ders saatlerinin öğrenci yaş düzeylerine ve dilin gereksinimlerine uygun olmaması, yabancı dil öğretim yöntem ve tekniklerinin sınıf içinde etkili kullanılması, sınıf mevcudunun fazla olması, öğrenilen yabancı dil ile birlikte o dilin kültürünün de programa yansıtılması, öğretmenlerin gerekli ve yol gösterici hizmet içi eğitim ile desteklenmesi, ders materyallerinin öğrenci ilgi ve yaş düzeylerine uygun ve çeşitli olması, öğretim programlarının yeterince güncel hazırlanması ve öğretmenlerin bu konuda bilgilendirilmeleri, İngilizce dersi öğretim programının içeriğinin öğrencilerin ilgisini çekmesi konularındaki güçlüklerin İngilizce öğretimini zorlaştırdığı belirlenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Öğretim, İngilizce, Karşılaşılan Güçlükler, Zorunlu Eğitim, Meta-sentez

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In our age, it has become quite common to learn and use different foreign languages to communicate in everyday language (Keysar, Hayakawa and Gyu An, 2012: 662). Teaching and learning foreign language is a challenging and sometimes compulsory occupation that concerns almost everyone. A foreign language course is one of the lessons studied by the parents who attend school even if they do not learn it themselves (Demircan, 2013: 9). Foreign language teaching includes various rules as in other kinds of instruction. These rules are identified as principles. People are searching to find the suitable principles to overcome the difficulty of teaching a foreign language (Kaya, 2007) Teaching a foreign language requires practicing four language skills and students need to receive language instruction according to these skills. Generally, communicative competence is emphasized in foreign language teaching. Communicative competence requires adequate use of four language skills (Ekhlas ve Shangarffam, 2013).

Teaching a foreign language has many different qualities. A teacher both teaches and pays attention to students' language skills, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and helps, eases, and inspires students to have eagerness, good attitude, and motivation in order to learn English (Songbatumis, 2017: 55). The instruction of the second language is not easy. However, it can be instructed effectively with patience and hard labour by means of self-invented methodologies suitable for one's students (Ansari, 2012: 519). It

would be wrong to show the reason of failure in English teaching by means of the mistakes made in the choice of method, because many diverse factors directly affect the English learning process along with the method problem. Students' lack of motivation and interest, lack of equipment in schools, lack of use of English in the social environment, the intensity of lesson contents, high class sizes, not well trained teachers and insufficient number of teachers can be evaluated as some of these factors that negatively affect foreign language teaching and learning (Soner, 2007).

Communication is crucial and lack of it causes different ordeals. Communication and information as well are fundamental qualities in the present day's global economy. Nowadays, English is a prerequisite like using a computer to achieve communication all over the world. The way of communication in global societies is accomplished through using English in diverse situations (Koru & Akessan, 2011). One of the important purposes of today's education is to prepare the ground for talents to achieve economic development and social progress. With the increasing economical, social and technological progress, graduates with adequate English competencies are always at a premium on the job market (Wang, 2014). English meets the need to acquire a global language and communicate among different states and regions all over the world due to the rapid development of English in unpredictable globalization. Furthermore, English is increasingly being used in our age and it is taught as second and foreign language in schools, colleges and universities (Rao, 2018: 3). English is the principal medium of communication in a wide range of social, administrative, educational, and professional subjects (Moskovsky, 2019: 4). The importance of English knowledge and skills, which is widely used in international business, science and technology is appreciated in Turkey, which values cooperation and international relations, wishing to join the European Union and trying to fulfill the conditions laid down for the membership (Genç, 2004: 107).

In our country, almost every day new methods and teaching-learning techniques are discussed in English teaching, many researches are made and results are published (Kara, 2009: 23). In English language teaching in Turkey, in spite of all these resources and effort exerted, it can not reach the desired level (Işık, 2008: 15). The students in Turkey cannot reach a sufficient level in the acquisition of speaking skills although they reach a certain level of proficiency in reading, writing and listening skills (Ayaz, Ozkardas ve. Ozturani, 2019). In Turkey, difficulties in training foreign language are crowded classrooms and physical conditions of the lack of qualified teachers, dilemmas on education and language policies, such as approaches to language teaching and also to the more fundamental factors. In fact, the circumstances are getting worse owing to the miscalculations made in language policies and latest language teaching approaches and the high number of students (Haznedar, 2010: 749). Our country devotes enormous amounts of resources to teaching and learning English, however it does not reap the benefit of its endeavors and couldn't get the positive results. In order to overcome this bleak situation and to get the good results of the investments, it is necessary to eliminate the barriers to learning English specific to our country and to implement an effective foreign language teaching system (Kırkiç ve Boray, 2017: 27).

Difficulties encountered in foreign language, especially in English instruction can be grouped as follows; institutional difficulties, unwillingness to solve problems, lack of support, inability to recognize the nature of language learning, heavy workload of teachers, instructional difficulties and socio-economic difficulties. Institutional Difficulties can be stated as the infrastructure to teach English in a communicative way and the lack of desire to solve the problems posed by the teachers. Teachers' heavy workload in crowded classrooms makes language teaching difficult. Teachers are experiencing burnout with crowded classes and with over 20 hours of teaching hours. Lack of support can be perceived as the inability of the Ministry of National Education and the inability of schools to provide the necessary support to English teachers especially regarding basic materials for language instruction. Instructional difficulties are defined in three parts; intensive curriculum, unsuitable textbooks and insufficient identification-placement tests. There are unrealizable target-behaviors in the curriculum reduces the quality of language teaching. Socio-economic difficulties are also related to the inability of students in the low-income group to receive sufficient family support (Kızıldağ, 2009). Every new word that a student learns in a foreign language, every new sentence that s/he understands, every new text that s/he can solve, causes the students to produce new ideas and pose questions about the foreign culture in their consciousness. However, it is not enough to simply present situations that reflect everyday life in a foreign world or to convey information about foreign culture to arouse interest in a foreign language. The reason for that can be explained in that way; Foreign language learning is shaped by the conditions of the environment where teaching takes place. In this respect, foreign language teaching cannot be considered separately in the cultural and socioeconomic context in which teaching takes place (Polat, 1994).

Tablo-1. The Theses Included in Meta-Synthesis

Research Code	Research	Research Type	Research Model / Sample Data Analysis
A <sub>1</sub>	Ergüç, 2004	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The problems of the school directors related to asl curriculum at 4 th. 5 th. grades elementary educations and suggestions for solutions</li> <li>- Survey Model</li> <li>- Administrator and English Teachers</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Data analysis with SPSS 10</li> </ul>
A <sub>2</sub>	Sevinç, 2006	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The analysis of teachers' views regarding the difficulties in teaching of English as a foreign language in Turkish primary schools</li> <li>- English Teachers</li> <li>- Survey Model</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Statistical Analysis</li> </ul>
A <sub>3</sub>	Akkuş, 2009	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Problems in English learning and teaching in Turkey (Sample of Sivas)</li> <li>- Administrator, English Teacher, Parent, Student</li> <li>- Survey Model</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Statistical Analysis</li> </ul>
A <sub>4</sub>	Erkan, 2009	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigation of the matters confronted in application of the new English teaching curriculum for primary schools? 4th and 5th grades (A case study in Gaziantep)</li> <li>- English teachers</li> <li>- Survey Model</li> <li>- Descriptive Statistics</li> </ul>
A <sub>5</sub>	Durgut, 2010	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The reasons for effective learning of goreign language education in secondary schools unsuccessfully</li> <li>- English Teachers</li> <li>- Survey Model</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Statistical Analysis</li> </ul>
A <sub>6</sub>	Kaplan, 2013	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An analysis of students', teachers' and parents' views about lack of success in teaching English at public high schools: Antalya province sample</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- English Teachers and students</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Statistical Analysis</li> </ul>
A <sub>7</sub>	Sarı, 2014	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An analysis of difficulties which secondary school students with language learning difficulties face in english language learning process</li> <li>- Students</li> <li>- Descriptive Statistics</li> <li>- Interview</li> <li>- Content Analysis</li> </ul>
A <sub>8</sub>	Gök-Çatal, 2015	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examination of the problems encountered in English learning and teaching process in 6th, 7th and 8th grades in primary schools: Teacher and student opinions</li> <li>- Descrptive Method</li> <li>- English Teachers and students</li> <li>- Interview</li> <li>- Content Analysis</li> </ul>
A <sub>9</sub>	Erdem, 2016	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The problems encountered in English language teaching according to secondary-high school students and English language teachers</li> <li>- Survey Model</li> <li>- English Teachers</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Statistical Analysis</li> </ul>
A <sub>10</sub>	Tosuncuk,2016	Master	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examining English teaching at the primary school according to</li> </ul>

		Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teacher views</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- English Teachers and primary school teachers</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Descriptive Statistics</li> </ul>
A11	Özmat, 2017	PhD Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Factors that make learning english language difficult</li> <li>- Mixed Research Method</li> <li>- English teachers, students</li> <li>- Survey, Interview</li> <li>- Statistical Analysis, Descriptive Analysis</li> </ul>
A12	Altın-Ayan, 2018	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Efl teachers' perspectives on current challenges of teaching English according to service areas</li> <li>- Survey Model</li> <li>- English Teachers</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Statistical Analysis</li> </ul>
A13	Yıldız-Narinalp, 2018	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The problems encountered in English language teaching in secondary schools and teachers' perceptions of professional efficacy</li> <li>- Mixed Research Method</li> <li>- English Teachers</li> <li>- Survey and Interview</li> <li>- Statistical Analysis, Descriptive Analysis</li> </ul>
A14	Uçar, 2019	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluation of the reasons for the lack of success in teaching English at high schools regarding students' views (Kayseri province sample)</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Students</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Percentage and Frequency Analysis</li> </ul>
A15	Kaya, 2020	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The problems encountered by students and teachers in Turkish EFL context</li> <li>- Survey Model</li> <li>- English Teachers, students</li> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Descriptive and Correlation Statistics</li> </ul>
A16	Özcan, 2020	Master Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Problems experienced in teaching English as a foreign language in primary schools: A case study of Konya</li> <li>- Descriptive Research</li> <li>- English Teachers</li> <li>- Interview</li> <li>- Content Analysis</li> </ul>

As can be seen in *Table-1* 16 theses were published between 2004-2020 regarding “The Problems Encountered in Schools within the Scope of Compulsory Education”.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1. Research Design

The aim of the meta-synthesis method is to obtain a new, combined and complete interpretation of the findings that provide in-depth understanding (Bondas and Hall, 2007: 115-120). There are many methods defined such as research synthesis, qualitative meta total (Finfgeld-Connett, 2018). Meta synthesis can be considered as a tool used to synthesize the findings obtained from quantitative and qualitative studies (Bair ve Haworth, 1999: 3).

### 2.2. Sample

The sample covers 16 theses between 2004 and 2020 in Turkey's Higher Education Council which are carried out by researchers and published in the database of the National Center Dissertation thesis.

### 2.3. Data Collection Instruments

The theses examined for the meta-synthesis study were acquired from the database of the Higher Education Council National Thesis Center. While the studies were contained in the study, the following criteria were taken into consideration:

- ✓ Studies consist of the theses carried out between 2004 and 2020,
- ✓ Studies are carried out in Turkey,
- ✓ Theses are accessible in the database of the Higher Education Council National Thesis Center.
- ✓ Theses are related to English Teaching Problems within the Scope of Compulsory Education

## 2.4. Data Analysis

Findings and the characteristics of these studies are important in the analysis of the data while applying the meta-synthesis research method. Its characteristics (purpose, sample, method, etc.) enable the researcher to obtain information about the sample in his research; It also helps the researcher to consider research findings in a specific context. The characteristics of the studies should be tabulated throughout the data collection process (Finfgeld-Connett, 2018: 31).

## 3. FINDINGS

Table 2. Findings Regarding the Objectives of Studies on Difficulties Encountered in Teaching English within the Scope of Compulsory Education

Aims	Studies
Revealing the problems faced by school administrators regarding the teaching of English as a foreign language	A1, A3,
Determining Teachers' Views Regarding Difficulties Encountered in Teaching English	A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, A14, A15, A16
Determining Student Views on Difficulties Encountered in English Teaching	A3, A6, A7, A8, A9, A11, A15
Determining Parents' Opinions on Difficulties Encountered in Teaching English	A3, A6

As can be seen in *Table 2*, the theses published on the Problems Encountered in Schools within the Scope of Education have been determined according to their purposes. It is seen that most of the purposes of these are "to determine the opinions of English Teachers".

Table-3. Findings Regarding the Methods of Studies on Difficulties Encountered in Teaching English within the Scope of Compulsory Education

Research Method	Studies
Quantitative	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A9, A10, A12, A14, A15
Qualitative	A7, A8, A16
Mixed Method	A11, A13

As seen in *Table-3*, thesis studies on the Problems Encountered in Schools within the Scope of Education were generally carried out by quantitative method. This is then followed by Qualitative and Mixed Research models.

Table-4 Findings Regarding the Sampling in the Evaluation Studies of Primary School English Lesson Curriculum

Sample Group	Studies
Teacher	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A9, A10, A11, A13, A15, A16
Student	A3, A6, A7, A8, A12, A14, A15
Parent	A3,
Administrator	A1, A3

As seen in *Table-4*, the sample group related to the Problems Encountered in Schools within the Scope of Education has mostly been conducted with teachers. Students, administrators and parents followed this group.

Table-5 Findings Regarding the Problems Identified in the Primary School English Course Curriculum Evaluation Studies

Difficulties	Studies
Requirement of well-equipped and experienced English Teachers	A1, A2, A3, A3, A5, A6, A8, A9, A10 A14, A15, A16,
Insufficient English class hours	A1, A3, A6, A8, A9, A10, A11, A13, A14, A16
Excessive Class Size	A2, A3, A6, A9, A11, A12
Insufficient Materials Required for the Course	A2, A3, A4, A6, A7, A9, A11, A12, A13, A14, A16
The Need for Effective, Efficient and Different English Teaching Methods	A2, A3, A4, A5, A7, A8, A9, A11, A12 A14, A15



Family Influence	A3,A6, A7, A8, A10, A12, A14, A16
Motivation Status in Students	A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11,A14,A15
Students not being sufficient in English Learning and Studying Methods	A3, A8, A9, A10, A14
English Textbooks Not Meeting the English Learning- Teaching Needs	A3, A4, A6, A8, A10, A13, A14,A16
The English Lesson Curriculum is not Appropriate for the Readiness Level of the Students and the Efficient Processing of the Lesson	A3, A4,A5, A7, A8, A12, A13, A14, A16,
Teachers' Need for Adequate In-Service Training	A2, A3, A4, A5, A9, A10, A11, A12,A13, A16
Insufficiency of Assessment and Evaluation Methods	A3,A12,A16,
Opportunities Enabling the Use of Learned	A4, A5, A8. A14, A15, A16

As seen in *Table-5*, the most emphasized problems in theses' results are; lack of proper lesson hours, excessive class size, insufficiency of the curriculum, not being able to use what has been learned, parents' effect, the need for the materials required for the lesson, the need for appropriate methods and techniques, the inadequacy of assessment and evaluation methods, the support of teachers with in-service training, lack of motivation for students. Insufficiency of the necessary material for the lesson, the need for effective and efficient language teaching methods, the influence of the family, the lack of motivation in students, the inability of students to study English, the inability of textbooks to meet the English teaching needs, the need for in-service training for teachers, inadequate assessment and evaluation methods, the inability to use what has been learned and the insufficiency of the English education program.

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In agreements with the findings, it is noticed that the aims of the theses are carried out mostly through the opinions of English Teachers. It is seen that quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods are preferred as research methods. The sample group is composed mainly of teachers. It has been observed that the survey model is mostly used as the data collection method. It is seen that descriptive methods are used. Statistical analysis and content analysis are used.

Teachers of English need enough time to prepare for the next day's classes taking into consideration various activities and teaching materials such as pictures, drawings, cards etc. As result, English teachers who have an over-loaded with work may not perform well in class (Tılfarlıoğlu ve öztürk, 2007). The class size has an important effect in the teaching and learning process (Bahanshal, 2013). Furthermore, students' views are as crucial as the views of instructors in curriculum development process. The lack of clarity is one of the ordeals regarding to objectives of the curriculum (Uysal, 2019). There are some primary problems faced by students in the process of learning English. Problems arising from textbooks (language is heavy, entertaining activities are limited, , activities are difficult and not comprehensible etc.), Students do not know many words, which lead to the fact that too many English words are not permanent in their memories, computer etc.). The lack of technological equipment also causes problems in learning English. Moreover, along with these problems that students face in the language learning process; The problems arising from the program (insufficiency of lesson time / hour etc.), lack of a language laboratory to learn a language in the teaching environment, crowded class sizes, constant and frequent change of English teachers, the problems arising from measurement and evaluation (example; and grammar, etc.), the teachers' teaching the lessons in Turkish and other students' disturbing the peace of the lesson in the classroom are among the main problems they encounter in learning English (Gök-Çatal, Şahin & Çelik, 2018: 131)

Concerning the results obtained in research,; there are some problems such as the lack of the well-equipped and experienced English Teachers, insufficient teaching hours, excessive class size, insufficiency of the necessary materials for the course, the need for effective and efficient language teaching methods, the influence of the family, the lack of motivation in students, the inadequacy of students in English teaching methods, insufficient textbooks in English Teaching to meet the required needs, the need for in-service training for teachers, the inadequacy of assessment and evaluation methods, students' inability to use what has been learned and the inadequacy of the English education program, insufficient curriculum which addresses to different types schools. Learning and teaching a foreign language requires time and efforts. Many problems are faced in achieving goals in foreign language instruction. Some of recommendations below can shed light on the solving foreign language, especially English instruction.).

#### 4.1. Recommendations

- ✓ Encouraging more research on problems related to teaching English can be a facilitator in overcoming the problem.
- ✓ English Teaching programs, curriculum can be prepared in accordance with the types and levels of the school.
- ✓ English lessons can be arranged according to the course hours and class sizes.
- ✓ Practising what has been learned can be encouraged..
- ✓ With in-service trainings, supportive and developing studies can be carried out for teachers.
- ✓ Preparing diverse English curriculum for various schools can help overcome difficulties arising from the differences in schools and students.
- ✓ Textbooks and material can be arranged according to differences in schools and language levels.
- ✓ It can give beter results if students become aware of the importance of foreign languages
- ✓ Students can be supported and encouraged to learn and use the foeign language
- ✓ English teachers can be assisted with materials suitable fort he foreign language instruction.

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#### Theses

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