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Contacts:

Home page: http://dergipark.gov.tr/tojelt

E-mail: elt.tojelt@gmail.com

Owner of the Journal:

Asst. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Selçuk AKDEMİR (Fırat University)

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Editorial Message

Dear Colleagues,

New issue of Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (*TOJELT*) is online now with a rich academic content. We sincerely thank all board members and the referees for their efforts in the publication process of the issue.

With regards,

Dr. Ahmet Selçuk AKDEMİR

Editor

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Does Sustained Silent Reading Result in a Long-Term Reading Habit?

Kyung-Sook Cho
Busan National University of Education
Department of Elementary English Education
Busan, South Korea
kscho@bnue.ac.kr

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kscho@bnue.ac.kr

Abstract: The goal of reading programs is to help students become lifetime readers, which guarantees their improvement in language and literacy long after they finish school. Cho and Krashen (2016) concluded that five conditions are necessary for this to happen: (1) A pleasant initial reading experience; (2) Time to read; (3) A place to read; (4) Self-selection of reading material; (5) No test, no workbook exercises and no rewards for reading. In this study, condition (1) was satisfied, but subjects did not establish a long-term reading habit, confirming that a pleasant initial reading experience is not enough. This conclusion was supported by subjects' comments.

Keywords: *Long-term reading habit, book access, pleasant reading experience, self-selected reading, sustained silent reading (SSR).*

1. Introduction

The result in which we are the most interested is knowing what our students will be reading ten years from now" (Thomas, 1938, p. 578).

Research on free voluntary reading over the last several decades has repeatedly confirmed the value of a pleasure reading habit: self-selected reading appears to be the major cause of literacy development and an important source of knowledge in many areas (Krashen, 2004; Lee, 2007; Mason & Krashen, 2017; Smith, 2011).

For these reasons, the establishment of a long-term reading habit is a central goal in language education. This is also the case in second and foreign language education: a reading habit in the second language will ensure continued progress even when the acquirer has finished taking a sequence of classes.

Several earlier attempts have been made to determine if SSR reading experiences stimulate the formation of a reading habit. Weisendanger and Birlem (1989) reported that third graders who had done a year of SSR did more self-selected reading on their own during the next summer than comparisons, but the difference was only present for "average" level readers, and were extremely small, with SSR veterans reading only five minutes more per week than comparisons. Greaney and Clarke (1973) reported that 6th grade boys in a sustained-silent-reading program did more leisure reading at the end of the program than boys in a comparison program. Six years later, they contacted

the boys again: A significantly larger percentage of those who had been in the reading group reported reading at least one book over the previous three months (73% for the reading group, 23 out of 31 subjects, vs 53% for the comparison group (18 out of 34 subjects). While significant, the difference is small. (Using the Fisher test, one-tail, p= .064 for this data, very close to significance. But if only two SSR veterans had not read at least one book (only 21 out of 31), the p-level drops to a clearly insignificant p = .17.). Also, neither study provides information about the reading environment students experienced after completing SSR.

Studies of long term readers in a second or foreign language reveal common factors underlying the successful establishment of a long-term reading habit (Cho & Krashen, 2015):

(1) A pleasant initial reading experience
(2) Time to read
(3) A place to read
(4) Self-selection of reading material
(5) No tests, no workbook exercises and no rewards for reading.

I hypothesize here that to ensure a long-term reading habit, all of above conditions need to be met and present evidence suggesting that number (1), an initial pleasant experience, is not enough.

The Study

I report on two separate studies with similar groups of readers

1) Subjects

The subjects were third year university students in Korea studying EFL, training to be teachers. All were majoring in elementary education and minoring in English education. All had studied English in school for 12 years, but reported that classes were largely very traditional, e.g. reading short, very difficult texts and grammar study, including diagramming sentences. The focus was preparation for tests. All students were in the author's class on English reading and writing, which was designed to prepare them to teach English reading and writing. Nearly all participants considered themselves to be non-readers before the SSR program began, as revealed by a questionnaire given before the SSR sessions began: 25 out of 26 in group 1 and 24 out of 27 in group 2. Students were also asked to indicate the reasons why they had not read in English. Their responses are presented in table 1 (note that some students indicated more than one reason).

Table 1. Reasons why they had not read in English

Reasons	Group 1	Group 2
Reading in English is too difficult	12	13
Reading in English is no fun	12	7
Lack of access to interesting books	7	8

We are tested on everything we read in English	10	21
Others	0	3

Note: Group 1 from Cho, K.S (2017)

2) SSR Procedure

The SSR program for both groups consisted of five sessions of approximately 15-20 minutes per session, done once a week for five weeks.

Students were provided access to the Sweet Valley series, demonstrated to be popular with adult second language acquirers (Cho & Krashen, 1994; 1995 a,b) as well as other books. Students were also allowed to bring their own reading material. They were not tested on what they read.

An apparent success

The results of questionnaires given at the end of the five sessions indicated that the students liked the SSR sessions and that the experience increased their motivation to read. Also, they said they would encourage their own students to do pleasure reading in English (Table 2).

Table 2**.** Reactions to SSR Time

Questions	Scale	Mean Group 1	Mean Group 2
How was the SSR time?	1 = not at all, 5 = very good	4.44	4.15
After SSR sessions, did you feel less stress about reading?	1 = not at all, 5 = very good	4.20	4.19
After SSR sessions, were you more motivated to read?	1 = not at all, 5 = very good	4.24	4.08
Would you include SSR in your teaching?	1 = not at all, 5 = definitely	4.68	4.20
Will you encourage your students to read series books?	1 = not at all, 5 = very good	4.71	4.24

The experience, however, did not result in their becoming dedicated or even modestly dedicated readers. Questionnaires given to group 1 after six months and group 2 after one academic year indicated that there was a clear increase in reading in English in both groups, but only one student in group 1 became a dedicated reader, and only four in group 2 (read more than five books). A large number of students reported reading no books or only one book (15 in group 1, or 60%, and 11 in group 2, or 42%).

Table 3. Number of books read after SSR

Group	N	None	1	2 to 5	more than 5	more than 10

1	25	6	9	9	0	1
2	26	3	8	11	2	2

Students in group 2 were asked why they did not read more. Thirteen (13) students responded: four (4) students said that there was no time to read because of heavy school assignments and four (4) more said that they had other obligations, which could have included school work. Four (4) more students said they had no access to easy and interesting books. One student confessed to having a fear of English, which could have been a fear in not understanding.

Conclusions

In this study, sustained silent reading had a positive effect: Students liked it, and said that it motivated them to read, but these positive feelings did not translate into the formation of a reading habit. This was true in both samples of subjects.

The results suggest that the pressures of school, and perhaps other obligations, as well as a lack of access to interesting and comprehensible reading material, prevent the formation of a reading habit. This conclusion is consistent with Cho and Krashen (2016): all conditions must be met to ensure the establishment of a reading habit. This suggestion can be testing directly by providing improved access to comprehensible and interesting books, and making sure students have time (and a place) to read, as a respected part of their school experience.

It is possible that the positive experience and understanding of the benefits of self-selected reading may have a lasting effect. If so, those who were unable to establish a reading habit will form a habit later, after finishing their studies. This is an open question.[1]

Notes:

(1) *It might be argued that five sessions are not enough to establish a reading habit. In response, there are cases in which a single positive experience was enough (home run book studies, e.g. Ujiie & Krashen, 2002; Von Sprecken., Kim, & Krashen, 2000; Kim & Krashen, 2000, based on Trelease, 2001), In addition, the students clearly enjoyed the sessions, and were enthusiastic about continuing to read.*

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American Students' Vocabulary Acquisition Rate in Japanese as a Foreign Language from Listening to a Story

Beniko Mason
Shitennoji University Junior College
Osaka, Japan.
benikomason@gmail.com

Stephen Krashen
University of Southern California (Emeritus)
Los Angeles, California, USA
skrashen@yahoo.com

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Corresponding author:
benikomason@gmail.com

Abstract: The positive effects of listening to stories on second language development have been widely reported. In this study we investigated the rate of vocabulary acquisition by American high school students of Japanese-as-a-foreign-language from listening to a story told in Japanese just once. The rate was .17 words per minute, very similar to the rate reported for students in Japan acquiring English and German who also listened to a story just once.

Keywords: *Story-Listening, second language acquisition, vocabulary development*.

1. Introduction

Studies have shown that listening to stories can result in improvement in listening, reading, speaking, writing, imagination, and vocabulary (Ackerman, 1994; Hemmati, Gholamrezapour & Hessamy, 2015; Huang, 2006; Kalfus & Van Der Schyff, 1996; Lie, 1994; Mallan, 1996; McQuillan & Tse 1998; Wang & Lee, 2007).

In this study we report on the rate of vocabulary acquisition from only one exposure to listening to a story. It has been debated how effective and efficient it is to have students just exposed to input in L2. Many argue that input alone cannot be sufficient and therefore we need both input and skill-based direct learning. We believe that it is interesting to find out how far we can stretch the idea of the input alone approach (Krashen, 1981; 1982).

Native speaker children's rate of vocabulary acquisition from reading has been estimated to be 1000 words per year, at the rate of 0.25 words per minute (Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985). Studies conducted with college students acquiring a foreign language have produced similar results from listening to stories. Students taking an English as a foreign language course in Japan listened to stories containing unknown words. Five to seven weeks after the treatment,

delayed post-test results indicated the subjects acquired between .10 to .25 words per minute (Mason, 2005; Mason & Krashen, 2004). Consistent findings were found with students of German as a foreign language in Japan (Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch, & Krashen, 2009).

The purpose of this experiment was to replicate previous studies and examine whether a similar rate could be found using American students who were learning Japanese as a foreign language. A possible criticism is that for the Japanese subjects in the studies (Mason, 2005; Mason & Krashen, 2004), the subjects had been studying English for six years and therefore, Story-Listening cannot be concluded to be effective for beginners. In order to begin to answer that question, a study was done using students who were learning German as a second foreign language; these subjects had had no exposure to German before they entered the University, and they had no exposure to German outside of the classroom. They had studied German in the university, but classes were very traditional, with very little comprehensible input. These German vocabulary studies demonstrated similar rates. The number of subjects in the study, however, was small (Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch, & Krashen, 2009).

This study used 21 American high school students in Denver, Colorado, who were taking a Japanese language course. The story they heard was a Japanese folk tale, and it was told only one time for 20 minutes. Participants were enrolled in a class comprised of both third and fourth year students of Japanese. They heard a story for 20 minutes and their retention of the meaning of the words used in the story was tested after five weeks.

The class was a traditionally taught Japanese class, taught by a Japanese teacher using a textbook, who taught the class partly in Japanese and partly in English. The story told to the class was "The Carpenter and a Cat." This was the first time students heard a story told in Japanese. It was told by the first author.

The Story

A Japanese carpenter lost his wife and then found a cat. He bought a fish every day and brought it home to the cat. The cat waited for his return every night on a bridge above a river near their home. They lived together happily.One day the carpenter got very sick and became blind. He could no longer work. He apologized to the cat and told her that he was sorry that he could not bring her a fish every night anymore. Then the cat started licking the carpenter's eyes day and night, every day and all day. After seven days, his eyes opened and he could see. He was very happy. He could go back to work and buy a fish for the cat. But, now the cat became blind. The next day he told the cat that he would bring a fish home for her, and he left for work. On the way home he bought two fish and rushed home happily to meet the cat, but the cat was not waiting for him at the bridge. The cat was gone and he could not find her anymore. The carpenter set up a Buddhist alter, and brought a fish home as an offering every night. Every night for a long time he told the cat what had happened that day in front of the alter.

2. Procedure

The investigator told the story in the style known as Story-Listening. She made a list of 38 words as a prompter to remind her which words were to be included, in order to introduce new words for the students and also to make the story rich and interesting. The students might have known some words already, but some words were clearly unknown to the students (Appendix).

When one of these 38 words came up while she was telling the story, she paused, and illustrated the meaning of the new word using drawings or gestures with facial expressions, and using the students' first language (English). At no time did she tell the students that they were responsible for remembering the words; rather, the goal was to have the students enjoy the story,

although some of the students may have tried to memorize the new words. (For additional description of Story-Listening, see Mason, 2005; Mason & Krashen, 2004; Mason, Vanata, Jander, Borsch, & Krashen, 2009).

Three tests were administered: A pre-test just before the students heard the story, a post-test immediately after hearing the story, and a delayed post-test five weeks after hearing the story. Students were not told that there would be a delayed post-test.

The format for all three tests was the same: students were simply asked to write an English translation for each word. Before the3 second test, there was a brief review of the targeted vocabulary. During this brief review, students were first shown cards with the targeted words written in Japanese in both Romanized and Japanese scripts. The instructor next read the word aloud in Japanese, pointed to a relevant drawing, and made gestures appropriate to the meaning the word. She concluded by asking the students to tell her the meaning of the words in English. In other words, the instructor reviewed the words that she used to tell the story with the students. This was done very quickly. Five weeks later they were given an unexpected delayed post-test. No review was done before the delayed test.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the results. Students made impressive gains on the immediate post-test, and retained about a third of this gain on the delayed post-test.

Table 1. Pre-test and post-test results.

	Pretest 1/14	Posttest 1/14	Gain	Delayed Posttest 2/28	Final Gain
Mean (S.D.)	11.5 (6.5)	27.4 (8.1)	15.9	16.5 (8.0)	5
Rate			0.53		5/30 = 0.17

N = 21
Rate = words acquired per minute

To determine the efficiency of vocabulary acquisition from Story-Listening, the number of words gained was divided by the total time spent in the treatment, including the pre- and post-tests, and time spent before the post-test reviewing the targeted words, a total of 30 minutes. The result was .17 words gained per minute, a figure very close to the results of the studies reviewed in the introduction. When it was divided only by the actual time spent hearing the story the rate was .25 words per minute.

This means that if a teacher spends 20 to 30 minutes telling a story each period in a foreign language course for secondary schools in the US, assuming over 100 hours of instruction time, we can expect a gain of 500 words in one year with the 0.25 wpm rate. All students have to do is to listen to a story without homework.

This result gives us additional evidence that the vocabulary acquisition rate from listening to stories is somewhere between .10 to .25 depending on the level of the students, even when the languages are not related. This confirms that Story-Listening, when it is done consistently with stories that contain rich language, is a very promising method for vocabulary acquisition.

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Comparison of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Turkey with Denmark, Hungary, and Portugal

Muhammet Fatih Alkan
Faculty of Education, Gaziosmanpasa University, Turkey
mfatihalkan@hotmail.com

Şefik Kartal
Faculty of Education, Gaziosmanpasa University, Turkey
sefik.kartal@gop.edu.tr

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Corresponding author:
fatihalkan@hotmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5600-0160

Abstract: In this study, systems of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in different countries were compared. The focus country was Turkey, which has low achievement in English. Other countries compared were Denmark, Hungary, and Portugal, which had considerably higher achievements in teaching English. The selection of these countries was based on the mean scores for five years of Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Education First Proficiency Index. The study was designed as a qualitative research. The data related to targeted countries were gathered from the web sites of the studied countries' ministries of education and governments, curriculums, Eurydice and OECD resources, and published articles. The data were analyzed using document analysis technique. The comparisons were made in terms of general educational systems, aims and goals, content, teaching and learning process, and evaluation. As a result of the study, Turkey's more centralist structure was observed among countries. Moreover, Turkey's primary objective in primary school is the positive attitude towards English. Finally, the system in Turkey views the language as a combination of four skills while other countries emphasize the communicative aspect of language.

Keywords: *teaching English as a foreign language, comparison of countries, TOEFL, Europe, Turkey*

1. Introduction

Situated at boundaries of both Europe and Asia, Turkey has a strategically important geographical position. This strategic and geopolitical position of Turkey makes learning English, which is the lingua franca, a necessity so that the country could catch up with ongoing progresses in a variety of fields such as technology, education, and business (Kırkgöz, 2007). However, there are doubts about the success of teaching English in Turkey, and the general opinion is that education system has failed to teach English to kids despite its importance in keeping up with developed countries and developments (Karahan, 2007; Mirici, 2003; Paker, 2012). One of the ways of understanding the reasons behind this setback is to examine the systems of other countries, which are successful in teaching English. By this means, the different practices in Turkey and other countries can be revealed, and some insights about what to do to improve teaching English in Turkey can be gained.

The countries, which were compared with Turkey in this study, are Denmark, Hungary, and Portugal. These countries were selected for the study since they are successful at teaching English according to the reports of Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Education First Proficiency Index. The detailed information about the selection criteria can be found in the method section of the current study. Moreover, all of these countries are located in Europe like Turkey. As a result, both the geographical position and achievement in teaching English made these countries a part of the current study.

Neighbouring Middle East and Europe, Turkey formally applied for membership of European Union in 1987. Negotiations began in 2005. Since then, a variety of reforms have undergone in Turkey, including education. Two of these reforms were made in 2005 and 2013. The main idea of these reforms was to implement Constructivism as the basic philosophy in curriculums. This was a dramatic change since the earlier curriculums were based on teacher-centered approaches. On the other hand, constructivism is highly student-centered and requires teachers to facilitate engagement, active learning, cooperation, and reflection (Pardamean and Susanto, 2012). As a result of 2013 reform, English courses are implemented starting from the second grade level, which started in fourth grade level earlier. At each grade level, there are English courses through secondary and high school (Ministry of National Education [MONE], 2013). A centralist structure is significant in Turkey. Curriculums are prepared centrally by MONE. The only change that can schools can make is selecting among elective courses, whose syllabuses are also prepared by MONE (Eurydice, 2015a).

Situated in Northern Europe, Denmark has been a member of European Union since 1973 (EU, 2016). Education for all, lifelong learning, self-governance, and projects are among the specific features of Danish education (Eurydice, 2016a). Teaching English starts at first grade and continues until the end of 12th grade level. Curriculums aren't centrally developed. Instead, schools implement their own curriculums within a general framework (Eurydice, 2015b).

The other country selected for the study is Hungary. It is located in Eastern Europe and has been a member of European Union (EU) since 2004 (EU, 2016). Teaching English starts at fourth grade and continues until the end of 12th grade level. In contrast with Denmark, the central government prepares curriculums in Hungary. The schools can make limited changes on them (10%) (Eurydice, 2012).

Finally, Portugal is located in Western Europe and has been a member of EU since 1986 (EU, 2016). Teaching English starts at third grade and continues until the end of 11th grade level (Eurydice, 2016b). A central curriculum is prepared by the government in Portugal, but the school can make minor changes on it (Eurydice, 2016c).

Within this framework, this study aimed at comparing the system of TEFL in Turkey with Denmark, Hungary, and Portugal. Accordingly, the research questions are as follows:

(1) What are the basic characteristics of educational systems in given countries?

(2) What are the similarities and differences in the aims and goals of TEFL language in given countries?

(3) What are the similarities and differences in the content of TEFL in given countries?

(4) What are the similarities and differences in the learning and teaching process of TEFL in given countries?

(5) What are the similarities and differences in the evaluation of TEFL in given countries?

2. Method

In this section, information regarding the research desing, sampling, data collection, and data analysis are presented.

2.1. Research design

Document analysis was used in this qualitative study. It is a systematic procedure like other techniques in qualitative research and demands the data to be examined and interpreted to extract meaning, understanding, and develop knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). In this direction, the websites of the studied countries' ministries of education and governments, curriculums, Eurydice and OECD resources, and published articles were reviewed.

2.2. Sampling

Selection of Denmark, Hungary, and Portugal for comparison was based on TOEFL (2015; 2014; 2013; 2012; 2011; 2010) and Education First Proficiency Index (2015; 2014; 2013; 2012; 2011) results. Although there are other international tests such International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), TOEFL and Education First Proficiency Index were chosen in this study since their yearly reports were available to anyone, which allowed to make comparisons among countries. Having an international recognition, TOEFL is a test for measuring English language competency of individuals. It is conducted in many countries every year. Education First English Proficiency is an initiative aiming at ranking the countries in accordance with adults' English levels. For the selection process, average scores of countries for six years were obtained from TOEFL reports. At this stage, countries whose average scores were missing for at least two years were excluded from the study. Then an average score for each country was estimated using average scores of six years. The countries were ranked in terms of these average scores. A similar process was conducted for EF English Proficiency results. Yearly average scores of countries were obtained from EF English Proficiency results. An average score for each country was estimated using average scores of five years. Then the countries were ranked in accordance with their average scores. Finally, both TOEFL and EF English Proficiency rankings were examined, and countries in top 20 were determined. Rankings for both tests are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Countries in top 20 and Turkey for EFEP and TOEFL rankings

Countries	EF English Proficiency Ranking	TOEFL Ranking
Sweden	1	12
Denmark	3	1
Norway	4	7
Belgium	8	9
Germany	9	8
Singapore	10	4
Hungary	12	3
Switzerland	13	6
Portugal	14	20
Argentina	15	11
Spain	18	18

India	20	15
Turkey	32	80

As can be seen in Table 1, countries from Northern Europe were observed to be successful in teaching English. When both rankings were considered, Denmark, Hungary, and Portugal were chosen for the study as representatives of Northern, Eastern, and Western Europe. Although there are countries from other continents in the top 20 such as Singapore and Argentina, these countries weren't selected due to the language limitations. On the other hand, most of the documents of the countries in European continent were available in English.

2.3. Data collection

The documents and curriculums that were obtained from the websites of countries' ministries of education were the primary sources in this study. Additionally, Eurydice and OECD resources and published articles were used. A total of 25 websites and pages were used to gather information that could answer the research questions. Much more web pages were scanned while seeking the necessary information. The only criterion was the availability of the required information and the trustworthiness of the source. The data collection period lasted for two months.

2.4. Data analysis

The documents were examined by one author in accordance with the research questions. During this examination, the sentences or information that could be used to answer any research question were extracted and used. This process was repeated by the other author. The results were compared, and it was observed that the findings were quite similar.

3. Findings

In this section, findings related to research questions are presented under headings respectively.

3.1. Findings regarding general education systems of the countries

When the general education systems of countries were examined, various similarities and differences were observed among countries. Educational structure apart from higher education in Denmark is organized as 6+3+3, and the compulsory education lasts for 10 years (Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender [DMCEG], 2016a). Danish central government decides on educational policies, and schools can develop and implement their own curriculums (Eurydice, 2015b). Hungarian education system is shaped as 4+4+4 (Eurydice, 2014). Similar to Denmark, duration of compulsory education is 10 years (OECD, 2015). Unlike Denmark, Hungary has a centralist structure. Educational policies and national curriculums are determined by the central governments. School administrations can make limited changes (%10) on curriculums (Eurydice, 2012). The schooling system is organized as 4+2+3+3 in Portugal (Eurydice, 2016d). Duration of compulsory education is 12 years (OECD, 2015). It can be stated that the role of central government is effective also in Portugal. Curriculums are prepared centrally; however, schools can make minor changes on them (Eurydice, 2016c). In Turkey, school organization is shaped as 4+4+4, similar to Hungary, and duration of compulsory education is 12 years as in Portugal (MONE, 2012). Educational policies and curriculums are prepared by central governments (Eurydice, 2015a). Neither provincial directorates nor schools

are authorized to make changes on them. In other words, it can be expressed that Turkey has the most centralist structure while Denmark has the least among the countries studied. Summary of information about general educational systems of countries can be viewed in Table 2.

Table 2. Overview of education systems of the countries

	Denmark	Hungary	Portugal	Turkey
Basic education	6+3	4+4	4+2+3	4+4
High school	3 years	4 years	3 years	4 years
Compulsory education	10 years.	10 years.	12 years.	12 years.
The role of central government	The central government determines educational policies and general framework. School administrations can implement their own curriculums.	The central government determines educational policies and national curriculums. Schools can make minor changes (10%).	The central government determines educational policies and national curriculums. Schools can make minor changes on condition that they are suitable for national curriculums.	The central government determines educational policies and national curriculums. Schools can't make changes on them.

Apart from education systems, information about the systems of TEFL was obtained. These findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Overview of TEFL in the countries

	Denmark	Hungary	Portugal	Turkey
Starting year of teaching English	Teaching English starts at 1st grade level (Eurydice, 2015b).	Teaching English starts at 4th grade level (Szabó, 2008).	Teaching English starts at 3rd grade level (Eurydice, 2016b).	Teaching English starts at 2nd grade level (MONE, 2013).
Weekly English course hours or duration	1 course hour in 1st and 2nd grades; 2 course hours in 3rdand 4th grades; 3 course hours in 5th, 6th, 7th, 8thand 9th grades (Ministeriet for Børn, Undervisning og Ligestilling, 2016). A total of 200 hours in 10th, 11th and 12th grades (DMCEG, 2016b).	2-6% of total course hours in 4th grade; 12-20% of total course hours in 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9thand 10th grades; 13% of total course hours in 11th and 12th grades (Nemzeti Erőforrás Minisztérium [NEM], 2007).	2 course hours in 3rdand 4th grades; weekly 500 minutes in 5thand 6th grades for languages and social studies (including Portuguese, English, Geography, and History); weekly 270, 225, and 225 minutes for English and an additional language in 7th, 8thand 9th grades, respectively (Eurydice, 2016b); weekly 150 minutes in	2 course hours in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades; 4 course hours in 5th, 6th, 7thand 8th grades (MONE, 2013). 6 course hours in 9th grade; 4 course hours in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades (MONE, 2014).

	10th and 11th grades (Eurydice, 2016c).

As can be seen in Table 3, teaching English starts earlier in Denmark compared to other countries. It starts in second grade in Turkey while it begins in third grade in Portugal. At this point, it is necessary to state that the starting year of teaching English in Turkey was fourth grade until 2013. In primary schools, weekly English course hours range from 1 to 2 in relevant countries. It is 3 or 4 hours on an average in secondary schools. In high schools, weekly course hours range from 3 to 5.

3.2. Findings regarding aims and goals of teaching English in the countries

When the countries were compared in terms of their aims and goals of TEFL, important similarities and differences were observed. Basic goals are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Basic goals of teaching English in the countries

Denmark	Hungary	Portugal	Turkey
For 1st, 2nd, 3rdand 4th grades: short and simple dialogues about daily topic. For 5th, 6th, and 7th grades: participating in short dialogues and giving short information about familiar topics and situations. For 8th, 9th, and 10th grades: participating in long and spontaneous dialogues and arguing own opinions (Styrelsen For It Og Læring [SIL], 2016a).	For 4th grade: introduction to learning a language, providing a basis for language learning within the context of receptive skills, and laying the foundations of language learning strategies (NEM, 2002a). For 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades: improving productive language skills in addition to receptive, and communicative skills (NEM, 2002b). For 9th, and 10th grades: asking for and giving information about real life events. For 11th, and 12th grades: exchange of extensive knowledge both in written and oral form (NEM, 2002c).	For 3rd and 4th grades: providing a basis for future language learning (Ministério Da Educação [MDE], 2014a). For 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grades: direct interaction with different languages and cultures, awareness of own lingual and cultural identity, and a balanced development of cognitive, social, affective, aesthetic, cultural, and psychomotor aspects (MDE, 2014b; 2014c). For 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: acquiring and systematizing key competences of receptive and productive sides of English, interactions in different sociocultural context using English, developing study habits and learning skills (MDE, 2001).	For 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades: developing positive attitude towards learning a foreign language. For 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades: increasing interests in learning a language and using it in real life contexts (MONE, 2013). For 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: providing a motivating and entertaining learning environment so that the learners could speak English fluently, effectively, and accurately (MONE, 2014).

As can be viewed in Table 4, goals in each level in Denmark and Hungary emphasize the cognitive aspects of individuals. In Portugal, it was observed that both cognitive and affective goals are focused. Similarly, the goals of primary school are related to affective aspects in Turkey. In secondary school, both cognitive and affective goals are present. In high school, the focus is on cognitive aspects mostly. It is necessary to express that these goals are the basic ones, written in general statements. More specific objectives related to both cognitive and affective

aspects can be found in curriculums. Other than the general aims and goals, targeted skills were also examined. They can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Targeted skills in teaching English in the countries

Denmark	Hungary	Portugal	Turkey
From the start to the end of teaching English, written and oral communication are emphasized. The four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) aren't focused separately (SIL, 2016b).	For 4th grade: listening and reading skills are primary, limited level of speaking and writing (NEM, 2002a). For 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades: Listening, reading, speaking, and writing (NEM, 2002b). For 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: in addition to four skills, communicative aspect of language is emphasized (NEM, 2002c).	For 3rd and 4th grades: oral aspects and vocabulary knowledge are emphasized (MDE, 2014a). For 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grades: oral and written communication is focused (MDE, 2014b; 2014c). For 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: Communicative competence in addition to four skills (MDE, 2001).	For 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades: listening and speaking skills, quite limited levels of reading and writing. For 5thand 6th grades: listening and speaking skills, limited level of reading and quite limited level of writing. For 7th and 8th grades: primary skills are listening and speaking, secondary skills are reading and writing (MONE, 2013). 9, For 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: focus on the integration of four skills (MONE, 2014).

As can be seen in Table 5, the language isn't separated into different skills, and the communicative aspect is emphasized in Denmark. In all school levels, oral and written communication skills are determined to be the main focus of curriculums. In Hungary, listening and reading skills in primary school, listening, reading, speaking and writing skills in secondary school, and communicative aspect of language in addition to four skills in high school are emphasized. In Portugal, oral skills and vocabulary knowledge in primary school, oral and written communication in secondary school, communicative competence in addition to four skills in high school are focused. In Turkey, listening and speaking skills in primary school, four skills in secondary school, and integration of four skills in high school are emphasized.

3.3. Findings regarding content of teaching English in the countries

General information about content of curriculums in the studied countries can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Content of teaching English in the countries

Denmark	Hungary	Portugal	Turkey
No topic lists. Teachers are expected to prepare their content encouraging oral and written communication based on their experiences (SIL, 2016b).	For 4th grade: topics about the immediate environment of children such as "Me and My Family", "Weather Forecast", and "The School" (NEM, 2002a). For 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades: similar but broader topics to those of 4th grade (NEM, 2002b). For 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: broader topics such as "Human and Society" and "Scientific and Technical Literacy" (NEM, 2002c).	For 3rd and 4th grades: topics related to daily lives of children such as "Me and my Friends", "My School", and "My Country and Other Countries" (MDE, 2014a). For 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grades: there are three dimensions of content: "Themes", "Me" and "Us" (MDE, 2014b; 2014c). For 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: the content is divided into three dimensions: "Interpretation and Producing Texts", "Sociocultural Dimensions", and "English Language" (MDE, 2001).	There are 10 interrelated themes for each grade level. For 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades: there are topics such as food and drink, colours, numbers, leisure activities, and jobs. For 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades: Similar topics are broadened (MONE, 2013). For 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: broader scopes such as "Studying Abroad", "Wild Life", and "Intercultural Issues" (MONE, 2014).

When the content was examined, it was observed that topics covered in English lessons were similar. Apart from other countries, topics aren't listed in curriculum of Denmark. Instead, teachers are expected to prepare their content encouraging oral and written communication based on their experiences. In the other countries, topics related to children's environment are involved in primary school. As the grade level increases, the scope of topics is broadened. This seems appropriate in terms of teaching principals.

3.4. Findings regarding learning-teaching process of teaching English in the countries

How teaching and learning process is handled can differ depending on the paradigms or approaches adopted by countries. In overall, the countries in this study demonstrated similar characteristics about teaching and learning process. The summary of teaching and learning processes can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7. Learning and teaching processes in the countries

Denmark	Hungary	Portugal	Turkey
For 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades: activities involving games, addressing to imagination and body language of children. For 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th grades: activities that require students to use language as a tool, encouraging oral and written communication, independent use of language (SIL, 2016c).	For 4th grade: natural language acquisition process (NEM, 2002a). For 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades: language is seen as a tool rather than the goal itself (NEM, 2002b). For 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: supporting self-directed learning, making them engage in language outside the school (NEM, 2002c).	For 3rd and 4th grades: activities requiring active participation and focusing on oral aspects of language such as songs, games, and drama (MDE, 2014a). For 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grades: student-centered activities conducted by students, who are aware of their own learning process (MDE, 2014b; 2014c). For 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: using multiple teaching techniques, making use of students' entry behaviours and sources, student-centered activities requiring active participation (MDE, 2001).	Communicative aspects for each grade level. For 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades: Total Physical Response, handicrafts, drama, songs, and games. For 5th and 6th grades: drama and role play. For 7th and 8th grades: thematic teaching is focused (MONE, 2013). For 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: role play, reading and writing, short and oral presentations, drama, dialogues (MONE, 2014).

Similarities in teaching-learning processes of studied countries were observed. Basically, student-centered activities which require students to be active during the courses and encourage using the target language for communicative purposes are mostly recommended in curriculums and other governmental documents. Drama, role play, singing songs, and games are among these activities. Moreover, activities requiring students to use English outside the classroom are emphasized.

3.5. Findings regarding evaluation of teaching English in the countries

When the countries were compared in terms of evaluation, a number of differences were observed. These can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8. Evaluation in teaching English in the countries

Denmark	Hungary	Portugal	Turkey
Teachers conduct observations, product analyses and interviews with reference to learning goals (SIL, 2016b).	Evaluation techniques aren't expressed explicitly; however, self-evaluation techniques are recommended (NEM, 2002c).	Summative evaluation is emphasized for basic education (Direção-Geral da Educação, 2015). Both summative and formative evaluation techniques are recommended in secondary	In primary and middle school: project files and portfolios, self and peer-evaluation, teacher observations, paper and pencil tests are recommended (including

	schools (Direção-Geral da Educação, 2012).	listening and speaking) (MONE, 2013). For 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades: paper and pencil tests, teacher observations, discussions, e-portfolios, and video blogs (MONE, 2014).

In Denmark, observations, product analyses, and interviews are recommended in the curriculum. In Hungary, self-evaluation techniques are emphasized. No evaluation technique is recommended in curriculums in Portugal; however, it is suggested to use summative or formative evaluation techniques depending on situations. In Turkey, evaluation techniques are explained in curriculums in detail. Project files or portfolios, self and peer-assessments, observations, and paper and pencil tests are among the recommended techniques.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Educational systems of the studied countries are similar in terms of structure. The biggest difference among them is between Turkey and Denmark. The duration of primary school in Turkey is 4 years while it is 6 years in Denmark. Primary school has a crucial role in subsequent stages. This difference may have an impact on English achievement of individuals. Another important difference is about the strict centralist structure in Turkey. Denmark and Portugal also have central curriculums; however, the schools or teachers are allowed to make changes on them. In Hungary, it is also possible to make changes on curriculums even if it is limited (10%). On the other hand, teachers are obliged to implement the curriculums prepared centrally. This situation creates an obstacle in determining local needs, priorities, problems and solutions (Kurt, 2006). Therefore, a partial localization can lead to an increase in success of education in Turkey.

Students in studied countries begin learning English at similar grades. They also keep taking English courses in similar durations. However, it should be stated that students in Turkey began learning English in second grade in 2013. Before that time, teaching English started at fourth grade (MONE, 2013). Therefore, it can be expressed that the reflections of this change in 2013 have still years to be seen on TOEFL or EF English Proficiency results. As a result, this change is thought to be reflected on the success of Turkish students positively in the future.

Positive attitude towards learning English is emphasized in Turkey as the main goal of teaching English in primary school. However, other countries focused on cognitive goals for the same grade levels. It can't be argued that having a positive attitude has a crucial role in learning English (Khan, 2016; Sadighi and Zarafshan 2006); however, it is recommended to involve cognitive goals as well since the duration of primary school is too long to focus on only affective goals. Moreover, English Language Curriculum in Turkey targets listening, speaking, reading and writing skills as if they were separate parts of a language. On the other hand, other countries in this study mainly focus on gaining communicative competence or communication skill. It seems that language is perceived as a mechanical tool that is composed of different parts in Turkey. The priority should be determined precisely. Do we need students who are good at four skills or who can communicate in real life situations? Therefore, major emphasis should be on the communicative aspects of language from the beginning of language learning.

Content and teaching processes of studied countries are similar. A pattern of content starting from close environment of students becomes broader as the grade level increases in all of the countries. This situation is among the favorable points in curriculums. Moreover, student-

centered activities requiring active participation is another positive situation in all curriculums. However, writing something in curriculum doesn't mean that it is implemented in the classroom. Especially in Turkey, there are questions about full implementation of curriculums in classrooms after the 2005 paradigm change (Çiftçi, Sünbül, and Köksal, 2013; Dinç and Doğan, 2010). A complete reform on curriculums was made in 2005. Constructivist paradigm was the foundation of new curriculums, and especially experienced teachers had difficulty in complying with this paradigm shift. Therefore, it is recommended to involve observations in future studies.

Contemporary evaluation techniques such as self and peer evaluations and portfolios are recommended in all of the countries. However, the implementation of these techniques should be investigated further especially in Turkey similar to learning activities.

In conclusion, the biggest differences between Turkey and other countries are determined in centralized-decentralized structures, basic goals of teaching English and perception of language as composed of four different skills vs focusing on communicative aspects. Improvements are recommended at these points in Turkey so that Turkey could reach the success rates of other countries.

The main data source of this study was composed of countries' curriculums, ministry's web pages, and Eurydice resources, which were reached online. This situation creates an important limitation. Additional data collection techniques such as observations and interviews are recommended in future studies to increase validity and reliability. In addition, during the selection of sample, TOEFL and EF English Proficiency results were used since there is no international initiatives such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) for basic or secondary education students. Although these results give clues about the success degrees of countries, they may not yield the absolute scores of countries for basic or secondary education levels. This situation is another limitation of the study. Finally, it should be kept in mind that important curricular and paradigm shifts were made in Turkey in 2005 and 2013. The data of current study were composed of up-to-date inputs. However, it may take years to observe the reflections of curricular changes on individuals. Therefore, the changes in 2005 and 2013 may already be improving the quality of TEFL in Turkey.

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Improvement on TOEFL through reading and without formal instruction: Another look at Işık (2013)

Stephen Krashen
University of Southern California (Emeritus)
Los Angeles, California, USA
skrashen@yahoo.com

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skrashen@yahoo.com

Abstract: This short report includes supplementary data and comments for Işık's (2013) study in which he reported on the achievement on the TOEFL examination of two groups in Turkey.

Keywords: *reading, formal instruction, TOEFL.*

Işık (2013) reported on the achievement on the TOEFL examination of two groups in Turkey:

Current Students: 122 senior university students in Turkey majoring in electronic and computer science who competed a four-year course in English for Special Purposes (four to six hours per week). This group, the "current students," scored an average 537.6 (sd = 39.5) on the TOEFL examination.

Graduates: A group of former students, 57 graduates of the same university who had been working with English on their jobs. Eighty-seven percent had been working between 2 and 5 years. This group, the "graduates," achieved a mean score of 577.4 (sd = 47.7) on the TOEFL.

If we assume that the graduates were at the same level of English as the current students when they graduated, they gained about 40 TOEFL since graduation, (577.4 – 538.6), about ten points a year. None of the graduates had had any formal instruction in English while on the job, which supports the hypothesis that language can be acquired without formal instruction, in this case through doing "job-related tasks" that involved English.

Işık also reported that reported frequency of reading in English after graduation, while on the job, correlated significantly with graduates' TOEFL scores, but reported frequency of writing, speaking and listening did not. I confirmed this using rank-order correlations, a crude measure that does not consider raw scores but only their rank order, and in this case with only a small

number of pairs (n = 7). The correlations were calculated from data in Işık's tables 1,2,3 and 4. The results are consistent with Işık's analysis using ANOVA.

Table 1: Rank order corrections between TOEFL scores reported reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Reported activity	Rho
Reading	0.96
Writing	-0.29
Speaking	-0.14
Listening	0.32

Again, if we assume that the graduates had scores similar to the current students when they first started working, this result confirms that the amount of reading done and language proficiency, as measured by standardized tests, are related (e.g. Gradman & Hanania, 1991; Mason & Krashen, 2017).

A gain of ten TOEFL points a year without study is encouraging, but it is likely that the graduates could have done better by engaging in self-selected pleasure reading. Mason (2006) has estimated that reading 40 pages of self-selected books in English will result in about a 1 point gain on the TOEFL for university EFL students in Japan. This predicts that reading a little more than one page of an English book per day over one year would double the graduates' gains.

My analysis assumes that the graduates did no pleasure reading in English outside of their work. It would be interesting to know how much non work-related reading the graduates did.

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