

To my beloved husband, who dedicated one year of his life to me.

AN INVESTIGATION OF PROJECT WORK IMPLEMENTATION IN A  
UNIVERSITY EFL PREPARATORY SCHOOL SETTING

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## ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF PROJECT WORK IMPLEMENTATION IN A  
UNIVERSITY EFL PREPARATORY SCHOOL SETTING

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This study is aimed at investigating the effectiveness of an existing project work program through the perceptions of the teachers and the students in the preparatory classes at Muğla University School of Foreign Languages (MU SFL). In this study, the actual implementation procedure was compared to the relevant literature in order to find out the mis-matches between the literature, and the actual implementation at MU SFL. Then, the teachers and the students' perceptions of project work were investigated.

Data used in this study were collected through classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews. Data collected with the questionnaire was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics. For this purpose, SPSS, 11.0 (Statistical

Programming for Social Sciences) was used to analyze the questionnaire. Data collected through observation and interviews were analyzed qualitatively.

The results of the classroom observation revealed that there are mismatches in implementation between the literature and the preparatory classes at MU SFL. These results revealed that neither the students nor the teachers thought that the students benefited from project work to the extent claimed by the literature. The analysis of the interviews and the implementation procedures revealed that the level of the project tasks at MU SFL is above elementary level students, and that the students do not receive enough guidance during the process of conducting project work. The students felt that they were able to improve their vocabulary and grammar knowledge more than other language skills.

In order to maximize the benefits of project work implementation in preparatory classes at Muğla University School of Foreign Languages, it is suggested that the tasks should be modified in accordance with the students' proficiency level. In addition, the allotted time for project work in the curriculum should be increased in order to increase teachers' ability to support project work. Finally, it is suggested that both the teachers and the students should be given training about the rationale of the project work and the implementation procedure of project work.

Key Terminology: Project work, project based learning, project-based language learning.

## ÖZET

### YABANCI DİL ÖĞRETİMİ OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÜNİVERSİTE HAZIRLIK OKULU ORTAMINDA PROJE UYGULAMALARININ İNCELENMESİ

Selda Akkaş Keleş

Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Öğretimi Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Bölümü

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Temmuz 2007

Bu çalışma Muğla Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu İngilizce Hazırlık sınıflarında uygulanmakta olan proje çalışmalarını öğretmen ve öğrencilerin tutumları doğrultusunda incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu konudaki literatürle Muğla Üniversitesi yabancı Diller Yüksekokulunda uygulanmakta olan proje uygulamaları arasındaki uyumsuzlukları ortaya çıkarmak için literatürle gerçek uygulama basamakları kıyaslanmıştır. Daha sonra da öğrenci ve öğretmenlerin proje çalışmalarına karşı tutumları araştırılmıştır.

Bu çalışmada kullanılan veriler, sınıf gözlemi; öğrenci ve öğretmen anketi; öğrenci, öğretmen ve materyal ofis başkanıyla yapılan görüşmeler sonucunda toplanmıştır. Anketler sonucunda toplanan veriler, betimsel istatistik yöntemi kullanılarak yorumlanmıştır. Bunun için SPSS 11.00 (Sosyal Bilimler için İstatistik

Programı) kullanılmıştır. Sınıf gözlemi ve görüşmeler ile toplanan veriler niteliksel olarak incelenmiştir.

Sınıf gözlem sonuçları, ilgili konudaki literatürle Muğla Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu Hazırlık sınıflarındaki uygulamalar arasında farklılık olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Anket sonuçları ne öğrencilerin ne de öğretmenlerin proje uygulamalarından literatürün iddia ettiği kadar faydalanmadıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Görüşme ve uygulama sonuçları Muğla Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu Hazırlık sınıflarında uygulanan proje çalışmalarının, öğrencilerin dil seviyelerinin üstünde olduğunu ve öğrencilerin uygulama sürecinde yeterince yönlendirilmediklerini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, öğrenciler bu çalışma sayesinde kelime ve dilbilgisi yetilerini diğer yetilerinden daha çok geliştirdiklerini hissetmişlerdir.

Muğla Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu Hazırlık sınıflarında bu çalışmadan en üst düzeyde fayda sağlamak için proje çalışmalarının öğrencilerin dil seviyesine göre yeniden düzenlenmesi tavsiye edilmektedir. Bununla beraber, bu konuya öğretmen desteğini arttırmak için müfredatta proje çalışmaları için ayrılan sürenin artırılması gerekmektedir. Sonuç olarak, hem öğretmenlere hem de öğrencilere proje çalışmalarının mantığı ve uygulama süreçleriyle ilgili bir eğitim verilmesi tavsiye edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: proje çalışması, projeye dayalı öğretim, projeye dayalı yabancı dil öğretimi.



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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

The use of project work as an instructional means is growing in EFL settings in Turkey. In project work students are free to choose any subjects that would draw their attention, and they have the chance to construct knowledge actively. In the EFL context, students are expected to use authentic language in order to meet this expectation. They must learn to gather information, select and connect, compare and contrast, analyze and synthesize, as well as present information orally, visually and in writing. Project work helps students to meet these standards. Moreover, project work is an alternative to teacher-centered language learning, because students will be cooperatively learning by doing. This also motivates them to take part in language learning, as project work is something interesting rather than a theoretical and boring activity.

This study will be dedicated to contributing to language teaching at preparatory classes of Muğla University School of Foreign Languages, by critically analyzing project work implementation at this institution. This will be achieved by a close insight into the project work implementation literature, and drawing a picture of the differences and similarities between the literature and the actual implementation of project work in preparatory classes at Muğla University. This comparison and the resulting conclusions will be supplemented by exploring the perceptions and the attitudes of teachers and students towards project work. The aim of the study is to find both strengths and shortcomings, with the aim of improving project work implementation as an instructional tool in language learning.



### Background of the study

Project work is defined as “an extended task, which usually integrates language skills work through a number of activities” (Hedge, 1993, p. 276). This gives students the chance to learn and practice language skills while processing and producing the project work. A project is a way of integrating students into language learning by providing them with meaningful tasks through which they can actively take part in shaping the nature and the outcome of learning and act independently in its accomplishment (Legutke & Thomas, 1991; Malcolm & Rindfleisch, 2003; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995).

When project work is the main focus of the classroom activities, teachers may be said to be using project-based instruction. According to Stoller (2006), project-based learning is an instructional approach aimed at contextualizing learning by supplying learners with problems to solve. This type of learning functions as a bridge between English in class and English in real life situations outside of the class (Fried-Booth, 2002). This function is achieved by putting learners in situations requiring authentic use of language for communication.

The potential of project work for promoting meaningful interaction was not realized until the mid-1970s (Legutke & Thomas, 1991). In the history of project work, several language teachers have published accounts of the implementation of project work, ranging from simple tasks like making a cherry pie (Fried-Booth, 1982) and writing a letter to a congressman (Carter & Thomas, 1986) to more complex activities like conducting interviews with English speaking travelers at an airport, recording them, and reporting on them in class (Legutke, 1984), or creating a

booklet with details about designing a green home after collecting data from the internet and library sources (Lee, 1999).

There are a variety of project types, differing in their content, purpose, design and organization (Kayser, 2002). Haines (1989) classifies four types of projects: information and research projects, survey projects, production projects, and performance and organizational projects; these differ due to the nature of the project tasks, the data collection procedures and the way information is reported (Haines, 1989). Eyring (1997) claims that an ideal project should allow students to be autonomous with regard to choosing topics, identifying the methods to process it, and determining their own end products to achieve.

Many benefits of project work have been described in the literature. According to Beckett and Slater (2005), project work improves language skills, enhances content learning and improves research skills. In addition, Moulton and Holmes (2000) point out that by means of project work students can improve technology skills, for example, using the internet. Stoller (2001) indicates that project work involves collaboration and negotiation at all levels of the process: planning, implementation and evaluation. As a result, project work is an instructional means with the power of contributing to the linguistic, academic, cognitive, affective and social development of the students. Project work also has power to stimulate creativity and self-assertion and reinforce confidence, self-esteem, autonomy and motivation (Blumenfeld et al., 1991; Gear, 1998; Johnson, 1998; Lee, 2002; Padget, 1994; Papandreou, 1994). Katz and Chard (1998) take into consideration the social side of project work, pointing out that project work can help to prepare students for participation in a democratic society, in that many processes and skills for

participation in a democracy, such as resolving conflicts, sharing responsibility, and making suggestions to one another, are applied in project work.

Despite the advantages of project work in ELT programs, researchers advise caution. Katz (1998) warns against the danger that problems with a project cannot be anticipated, because each project has various unique conditions depending on the topic, place and investigator. From this point of view, problems and difficulties in a project often spring from implementation. Other variables, such as the time available, the amount of authentic material, learner training and receptiveness, and flexibility of the administration in institutional timetabling, may also influence successful project work implementation (Hedge, 1993).

These factors may also influence students' and teachers' perceptions towards project work, both favorably and unfavorably (Kemaloğlu, 2006). Several studies of project work have focused on the perceptions of teachers and students (Beckett, 1999; Eyring, 1997; Gökçen, 2005; Kemaloğlu, 2006; Moulton & Holmes, 2000; Subaşı-Dinçman, 2002), revealing that there are some dissimilarities among attitudes towards this activity. According to these studies, some teachers think that project work is a pedagogically valuable technique, while others state that project work is too demanding and the workload is too heavy (Beckett, 1999, cited in Beckett, 2002; Gökçen, 2005; Kemaloğlu, 2006; Subaşı-Dinçman, 2002). Students' perceptions of project work also vary; some of them are in favor of project work because of its benefits. However, other students' perceptions are unfavorable, because they believe that EFL courses should be limited to the study of language and not involve non-linguistic aspects (Beckett, 2005; Eyring, 1997; Moulton & Holmes, 2000).

Program evaluation places value on quality management of all aspects of the teaching-learning processes in higher education. When project work is incorporated into an existing curriculum, it is necessary to evaluate whether it is achieving the goals set for it. All people involved in these processes, including administrators, teachers and students, are subjects of this scrutiny. The purpose is to find out ways of enlightenment, adaptation and betterment in language programs (Pennington, 1998, cited in Kiely, 2003). Stenhouse (1978, cited in Kiely, 2003) gave importance to the improvement of curriculum by investigating teachers' ways of teaching in classrooms. This process of information gathering and assessment shares common aspects with action research. It stresses the importance of inquiring into teachers' roles in the development of programs and the learning experiences of students (Block, 1998, cited in Kiely, 2003). Assessors gather data about teachers and students by using a wide range of information gathering techniques, including questionnaires. When evaluating language programs, the purpose of this process should be made clear to students, the focus should be on learning as well as teaching style, students should be involved in the design of the evaluation, and findings should be discussed and acted on (Block, 1998, cited in Kiely, 2003).

#### Statement of the Problem

While project work has been widely described in the literature (Eyring, 1997; Fried-Booth, 1982, 1986; Haines, 1989; Legutke & Thomas, 1991; Kayser, 2002; Stoller, 2001), and a few researchers have explored the perceptions and attitudes of students and teachers towards project work (Beckett, 1999; Eyring, 1997; Gökçen, 2005; Kemaloğlu, 2006; Moulton & Holmes, 2000; Subaşı-Dinçman, 2002) no study has been done to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an existing project work

program by combining suggestions from the literature and the perceptions and attitudes of students and teachers.

In my home institution, Muğla University School of Foreign Languages (MU SFL), the program is an intensive one. Perhaps due to its intensity, the monotonous way of teaching, being inactive in the classroom, and not being able to transfer what they learn outside the classroom, the students' interest and participation in the lessons is extremely low, and therefore the level of success is low. To address these problems, portfolios and project work were incorporated into the program to provide variety to the language teaching. Project work was integrated into the curriculum in the 2005-2006 academic years. However, due to the lack of expertise in this domain of teachers, materials unit staff and administrators, the implementation of the project work program may have some problems. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the program by comparing its implementation to that suggested by the literature, and, assisted by an assessment of teachers' and students' perceptions towards applied project work in English preparatory classes of MU SFL, to offer recommendations to improve project work implementation.

### Research Questions

1. How effective is the project work implementation in English preparatory classes of Muğla University School of Foreign Languages (MU SFL)?
  - a) How is project work implemented in English preparatory classes at MU SFL?
  - b) To what extent does the implementation of project work in English preparatory classes at MU SFL match the expectations set in the literature?

c) What are the students' and teachers' perceptions of the implementation of project work in English preparatory classes at MU SFL?

### Significance of the Study

This study will serve as an example of how a program's strengths and weaknesses can be identified by combining suggestions from the existing literature with information about teachers' and students' perceptions. Information may also be obtained about the practical factors involved in importing suggestions from the literature into the language classroom.

This study will be the first research study to assess teachers' and students' perceptions towards project work implementation as an instructional means at English preparatory classes of MU SFL, and the first to compare its implementation with the principles of project work implementation as described in the literature. The results of this study may contribute to improving project work implementation in my home institution. With the help of this study, teachers and students may become more informed about its theoretical basis, and it may lead to widespread implementation to support English language teaching and learning in other EFL settings.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, background information about project work is provided. The purpose of the study, research questions, and the significance of the study were also discussed. In the second chapter of the study, the theoretical background of project work in language teaching will be presented. The third chapter will describe the methodology of this study. The presentation of the data collected will be the concern

of the fourth chapter. In the last and fifth chapter conclusions will be drawn from the findings of the research by considering the relevant literature. Pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and implications for further research will be presented as well.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on project work. In this part, the reader will be informed about the historical background of project work, and project-based learning in general education, and in language learning. This will be followed by the definitions of project work. Then, types of project work will be introduced. In the next part, implementation procedures of project work will be discussed followed by the problems in implementation. The following part reviews the benefits of project work in terms of language, learning, and affective benefits. As the main focus of this study is on teachers' and students' perceptions, previous studies concerning teachers' and students' perceptions will be reviewed. In the final part, the necessity of program evaluation at Muğla University School of Foreign Languages (MU SFL) will be introduced.

### Historical Background of Project Work

The use of project work as an educational means to promote language learning started in the mid-1970s but became popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Eyring, 1997). The first outstanding educationalist to discuss the use of project work in education was Kilpatrick in 1918 (cited in Wrigley, 1998). Attracted by more than collaborative work in projects, he was interested in the cognitive development of students in project work. Unlike other advocates of project work, who believe that project work could also be applied to all levels of language learning for non-native speakers, Kilpatrick put forward the idea that this implementation was only appropriate for young native speakers of a language (Beyer, 1997, cited in Gökçen, 2005). Stating that there would be no division between a teacher and a



student, Kilpatrick regarded the classroom as a democratic place where students and teachers share decision-making. The democratic notion (also stated as negotiated syllabus in Eyring, 1997) that students should participate in decision-making about curriculum is a benchmark of project work (Eyring, 1997; Fried-Booth, 2002; Haines, 1989; Stoller, 1997). It is this democratic notion that made project work possible to be used in language learning classrooms. Advocates of project work came to the realization that by means of this democratic notion, students - in their projects-develop responsibility and independence as well as social and cooperative behavior. Examples of this sort of project work are provided below.

In a project work assignment for all levels of students, Haines (1989) tells students to use all four skills of language for the topic of 'British or American companies in your country'. For the writing skill in the project students use descriptions, reports, and questionnaires; for speaking and listening students have discussions and conduct interviews; the reading skill is applied for newspapers, reports or advertisements. Another example of project work run by Lee (2002), in which students work to build a green home, is aimed at enhancing students' awareness of environmental issues. In the 'green home project' students work collaboratively to prepare a booklet on designing a lifestyle that is least harmful to the environment. To accomplish this project, students work collaboratively to produce an end product by using information-seeking strategies, such as reports, interviews with experts, reading from an encyclopedia, and processing the data acquired through decision making about the end product. As students are producing the end product in the project described above, they go through several socializing

and decision making processes. These processes promote democracy in the classroom in the completion of a certain goal in language learning.

### Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is consistent with many approaches to language learning that are seen in the language learning literature today. After a revolution in learning theory based on cognitive and behavioral models, educators put emphasis on the value of project-based learning for students. According to cognitive and behavioral learning models, thinking, doing, knowledge, and the context are interconnected, and students should be required to explore, negotiate, interpret and use creativity (Dewey, 1938).

In the non-constructivists' point of view, learning means that on the condition that learners are given knowledge, they are able to use it. This means that education consists of knowledge transfer from teacher to student, and little importance is given to the learning activity (Hayati, 1998). In contrast to non-constructivists, constructivists assert that when knowledge is in the process of being formulated in the society, learning occurs; learning does not mean only procurement of knowledge (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

Many researchers (Confrey, 1990; Etchberger & Shaw, 1992; Noddings, 1990; Reagon, 1999; von Glasersfeld, 1991, 1996, cited in Allen, 2004) stress the importance of a constructivist pedagogy; in the constructivist paradigm, individuals are responsible for their own learning, learning is a personal process, and learners' interests, concerns, current knowledge, developmental level, and involvement determine what is learned. Thus, everyone's construction of knowledge differs, even though the learning experience may look similar.

Constructivist teaching typically involves more student-centered, active learning experiences, more student-student and student-teacher interactions, and more work with concrete materials and in solving realistic problems (Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997, cited in Allen 2004, p. 417). Constructivist pedagogy forces teachers to encourage the students to think and explore in a progressive atmosphere (Gould, 1996). Project-based learning is based on the principles of constructivist theory, with its characteristics of learner centeredness. Knowledge in constructivism is not regarded as something to be transferred from teacher to learner; rather, it is a construct that can be achieved through an active process of involvement and interaction with the environment. In an ongoing process of construction, evaluation and modification of constructs, students use building blocks of knowledge for meaningful language (von Glasersfeld, 1983, cited in Abarbanel, Kol & Scholnik, 2006). In project-based learning activities students work in a group to solve challenging problems which are authentic; students create an end product through intellectual inquiry and involving meaningful tasks. Moreover, because project work activities address the different learning styles of students, project-based learning takes individual differences into consideration by giving students a chance to select their own topics (Wrigley, 1998).

The constructivist view of learning can also be applied to language learning. Changing the conception of learning - from learning the lists of rules to the use of language activities connected with real life - makes a success of language learning (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

Krashen (1985) states that in order to acquire a second language, the brain needs to be exposed to meaningful input and language content, and that learning

from incomprehensible material or input is out of the question. As project-based learning is based on purpose and meaning, project work feeds into Krashen's theory; when the students are doing project work they are exposed to vocabulary and grammar structures that are beyond their proficiency level. This meets the requirements of Krashen's theory ( $i + 1$ ). Grammatical structures do not need explicit analysis or attention by the learner, because the main purpose of the learner is getting and conveying the message in project work. In accordance with Krashen's theory, learners will have the opportunity to understand the language in meaningful contexts through project work implementation (Krashen, 1985, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

From Nunan's (1992) point of view in learner-centered language classrooms, learners' language skills improve by means of interacting with other learners. Larsen-Freeman (2000) indicates that learner-centeredness is one of the bases of the Humanistic Approach in language teaching. The most important principal of the Humanistic Approach is teaching language in accordance with learners' individual interests, followed by an emphasis on the learners' active and effective role in their own learning process. On the basis of the Humanistic Approach, practitioners state that learning lists of rules of the language is worthless in communication outside the classroom. Hence, there is a need to create a language environment which provides communicative methods of teaching and learning so as to communicate in the target language. This need is attempted to be met by the Communicative Approach.

In communicative language learning students are able to learn appropriate rules and practices in a new language; they are able to develop critical thinking skills which are central to the basic language skills of reading, writing, listening, and

speaking (Kagan, 1992, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Through communicative language learning students have a chance to acquire the target language in a naturalistic way, which reduces the stress of learners and supports motivation (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Project-based learning as an approach to language learning is very well suited to the communicative classroom.

Another approach to language learning that is entirely consistent with project-based learning is cooperative learning. Inspired from the works of developmental psychologists Piaget and Vygotsky (1965 and 1962 respectively, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001), the central emphasis is on social interaction in learning; that is, learners can develop communicative competence in a language by conversing in socially or pedagogically structured situations. In these cooperative situations learners work out outputs that are beneficial to group members. Through the use of small groups, students work together to maximize their learning. Rather than competitive learning in which students work against each other, they cooperate to find solutions for the achievement of a goal. As cooperative learning offers opportunities for students to act as resources for each other, they will assume a more active role in their own learning.

Problem-based learning is one of the components of constructivist theory as a means used in project-based learning. Savoie and Hughes (1994) list the steps of problem-based learning as follows: the first step is that students are given a problem to concentrate on; in the second step, the stated problem should be connected with the students' real world, where the problem is connected with a larger social context in which students live, so that the problem in the first step addresses a social issue of interest. In the third step, the subject matter is organized around the problem, where

students are provided with a range of learning sources to motivate them to find ways to examine the issue. This initial brain storming will evoke enthusiasm and speculation. As the fourth step, students are empowered as learners; the purpose of this process is to give the responsibility to the students for directing their own learning so that students will set a learning agenda and decide how to pursue it. The fifth step is using small teams to contribute to ways of problem solving by sharing responsibility among group members. As the final step, students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their learning, where students reveal knowledge of the relevant social issues and skills acquired to overcome the problem posed. Moss and Van Duzer (1998) take project-based learning as an instructional approach, contextualizing learning by supplying learners with problems to solve. Some example problems to be contextualized by students are searching adult education resources and creating a handbook to share with other language learners, or interviewing employers to find out what qualifications they look for in their employees.

#### Definitions of Project Work

Projects are multi-skill activities focusing on topics or themes rather than on specific language targets. Specific language goals aren't prescribed and students concentrate their efforts and attention on reaching an agreed goal, so project work provides students with opportunities to recycle known language and skills in a relatively natural context. (Haines, 1989, p. 1)

This complex definition means that in project work there is more than one skill involved, and rather than focusing on specific language, the primary concern is topics and themes. To reach a previously set goal, students use whatever language is necessary.

In accordance with this definition, Stoller (1997, p. 4) defines six characteristics of project work as follows: first, project work is not centered around specific language targets, but real world subject matter and topics of interest for students. Second, the teacher offers support and guidance, but project work is student centered. Third, students can work individually, in a small group or as a class for the completion of a project, but this working together is cooperative rather than competitive, which means that students share resources and ideas throughout the project. Fourth, starting from the use of varied resources and real life tasks, students will gain an authentic combination of skills and ways of processing information. Fifth, the completion of project work finishes with an end-product, such as an oral presentation, a report, a poster session, a bulletin board display, and so forth, to be shared with others. Apart from the final product, the process of working towards the end product is also important. Thus, project work has a process and product orientation which enables students to focus on fluency and accuracy. Sixth, motivation, stimulation and challenge are potential characteristics of project work which help students gain confidence, self-esteem, autonomy and improvement in language skills and content learning, as well as cognitive abilities.

#### Project Work Types

Projects have been categorized in several ways according to their properties and functions. Haines (1989) puts them under four divisions, considering the nature of the project task, the way of reporting information, and the procedures of data collection. The four divisions are information and research projects, survey projects, production projects, and performance and organizational projects. In information and research projects, through the use of various information sources such as the

Internet, TV programs and the library, students do research on a specific topic. Maps, diagrams, and charts are possible end products and these products are given in a written format. Students' interests and needs are potential topics for these kinds of projects. In survey projects students use questionnaires and interviews for collecting data from businesses, associations and the community about the attitudes and perceptions of the chosen participants. The end products in surveys are either written or verbal. Taping and transcribing data is the most outstanding feature of this project. Haines (1989) points out that qualitative findings in written or audio-video recordings, together with statistics from questionnaires, interviews and surveys should be reported. In production projects, students organize groups for developing a media presentation, recording a radio program, laying out a magazine program or video-taping a TV program. In this kind of project, beginner ESL students could narrate their daily activities by means of short films. If students want to plan and organize public meetings, then performance and organizational projects will be their focus. An example of this type of project might be students giving conferences about their daily activities to other learners.

Projects can also be classified according to resource base. Legutke and Thomas (1991) and North (1990) classified projects with a view to resource base, such as encounter projects, text projects, and class correspondence projects. In encounter projects, students have contact with only native speakers of that language. In an example of such a project, students conducted interviews with English speaking travelers; after recording these interviews, they reported them in class. Legutke (1984, 1985) states that for text projects students should use written texts in English. Ortmeier (2000) describes such a project in which students collected data



and created posters about their homelands. When students of a second language encounter either native speakers of the target culture or second language learners from different cultures, there could be class correspondence projects. To establish negotiation between individuals and groups in these encounters, different texts are produced. As an example of this type of project, audio or video letters may be sent by one party in order for the other party to create a picture of the culture sending these items. Another example of this type of project is an email correspondence project between students of EFL and ESL in Singapore and Canada (Bee-Lay & Yee-Ping, 1991).

Another classification of project types was made by North (1990), who divided project types into four categories: community projects, case studies, practical projects, and library projects. In community projects, students conduct interviews, send letters and prepare questionnaires to gather information from the local community. When students are expected to find a solution to a certain problem they may carry out case studies. Case studies are based on the research students do to solve a problem. In an example case study by Johnson (1998), ESL students in the USA interviewed people about current problems such as drug use, homelessness and so on. For practical projects, students carry out practical work for the purpose of achieving their objective, such as building a model, doing an experiment, and so on. Library projects are similar to the text projects described by Legutke and Thomas (1991); in these projects the main source of information is the library. Students do research on a specific topic, read, and report in a written presentation about the topic.

In order to illustrate how these various types of projects compare with one another, they have been arranged in a chart (Table1).

Table 1 - The classification of project types from different researchers.

Researchers	Project Work Types				
Haines	Information and research projects	Survey projects	Production projects	Performance and organizational projects	
Legutke and Thomas	Text projects	Encounter projects & class correspondence			
North	Library projects & case study	Community projects			Practical projects

The project types in the first column are based on research from written information acquired from books, encyclopedias, magazines, the internet and libraries. Those in the second column are based on investigating people's beliefs and attitudes through interviews and questionnaires. Production projects, in the third column, are designed by students for the production of things like news stories, newspapers, publications of interest, and the like. Performance and organizational projects are long term projects which can only be used by students having already done independent projects. Practical projects in the last column are different from the others in that students do not produce written materials or concepts, but rather do practical things like building models, or doing experiments.

#### The Implementation Procedure

According to Wilhelm (1997) several basic principles should be applied in project-based classes: using a task and theme-based syllabus, encouragement of cooperative learning in the classroom atmosphere, personalized educational organization and feedback, the involvement of students while grading, the teacher serving as a facilitator and critic, authentic contexts for collaborative projects, and learner and teacher reflection for progressive change.

From Wrigley's point of view (1998), ideas for project work may spring up depending on the case in certain circumstances; for example, after a flood in Honduras, his learners decided to raise money for the victims. When a project concerns real people, it may be more effective. The teacher can occasionally give the idea for a project or learners can decide the interesting topics of their own free will. Wrigley sums up the procedure as follows: 1) labeling the problem or issue; 2) preparatory investigation; 3) planning and assigning tasks; 4) researching the topic, 5) implementing the project; 6) designing and creating a final product; and 7) extending and evaluating what worked (p. 2).

Schuler (2000) and Fried-Booth (2002) divide the process into three phases: planning, implementation, and conclusion of the project. Students and teachers come together to decide the topic, the final product and the required tasks in the planning phase. After choosing the topic, students gather and process data, and then, in order to produce the outcome, conduct the task in the implementation phase. The final phase is the presentation of an end-product such as report, poster, wall display, magazine, newsheet, three dimensional model, website, video film, audio recording, drama, role play, debate, and so on. The end product's aim is to make the students use language productively by means of presentation to a large audience such as the teacher and classmates, school, and community members. Included in the final phase, there should be evaluation and feedback on their production from both teachers and learners. In addition to these phases, Fried-Booth (2002) indicates that a follow-up program to meet the language needs of students observed during the implementation stage may be fruitful for students' linguistic competence.

Another implementation process model is highlighted by Stoller (2001), applied to English for Academic Purposes in a content-based classroom. Unlike Malcolm and Rindfleisch (2003), Fried-Booth (2002), Eyring (1997), and Wrigley (1999), Stoller gives ten concrete steps to be strictly followed by teachers and students. This ten-step process focuses on teachers' and students' roles at each level of the process as well as students' needs, such as strategies, language and skills, to fulfill the projects in a satisfying way. The steps of the process are follows:

In step 1, after the subject of the project is talked over by students and teachers, teachers have students choose the topic considering their interest, level, schemata, and practicability of the project and availability of resources.

In step 2, the final outcome is determined according to the project's nature and objectives; the most appropriate forms of the project outcome, from various alternatives such as bulletin board display, written reports, poster, letter, handbook, debate, brochure, oral presentation, drama, video, and multimedia presentation, are chosen. In addition, if the students desire, they can invite parents, the program director, the city mayor, and their friends to the display.

In step 3, students and teachers design the project together. Students' roles and responsibilities, collaborative work groups, deadlines, how information will be shared, gathered and compiled and how the final outcome will be presented are identified at this stage.

In step 4, students are prepared for the demands of the task in accordance with the project type, and students are guided as to practice. For example, if the students are going to do a theatrical performance, the teacher may give the roles, or help them learn how to use their voice and intonation. If the students conduct a

library or text project, the teacher guides them how to access this information and teaches skimming and scanning techniques.

In step 5, after the students are instructed how to gather information from the library, the internet, or personal sources, they start collecting information using methods such as library searches, interviewing, website searches, and so forth.

In step 6, teachers arrange training sessions to prepare students for categorizing, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting the sample materials. At this stage the teacher's aim is to educate students in how to put the information together.

In step 7, the most challenging step for the students is compiling and analyzing the information in groups, as students have to decide by themselves the crucial information for the completion of their project.

In step 8, the teacher provides students with the necessary language input for the final presentation. This input may be oral presentation techniques, or editing and revising written outcome and design.

In step 9, students are expected to present the final product of their projects, as was decided in step 2.

Step 10 is the last stage. In this stage students have a chance to criticize the conducting of the project work by looking at advantages and disadvantages. They also advise how it can be improved for future classes. In addition, it is time to give feedback on their language use, subject matter and design of the task.

The models of Schuler (2000) and Fried-Booth's (2002) are a bit different from Stoller's (2001). Schuler and Fried-Booth define three phases in implementing project work such as planning, implementation, and conclusion of the project, but Stoller defines ten concrete steps in which the teacher gives more concrete guidance

to ease the projects for the students. In Stoller's model, the teachers are responsible for preparing the students for the language demands of information gathering, compiling and analyzing the data, and presentation of the end product. Another difference is that in Stoller's model the evaluation phase includes self-evaluation. However, in the evaluation process of Schuler's (2000) and Fried-Booth's (2002) models, both teachers and the learners assess the projects. Furthermore, in Fried-Booth's model, there is a follow-up stage. In this stage, both the teachers and the students have more chance to do further work on areas of language weaknesses and deficiency in content knowledge.

In Stoller's model during the planning and procedure stages, the teacher acts as a guide to help students build up a connection between activities and materials that contribute to the students with certain information on language. Carrying out a project successfully depends on how the teacher guides students according to the chosen topic. If the teacher does not support students on how and what to do, students may be unsuccessful in conducting the project. Students need the teacher's guidance through the process of project work. Hence, the teacher is no longer in the center of teaching as a knowledge distributor; rather, the teacher is an organizer, a facilitator and a resource person (Stoller, 2001). However, this change in responsibility may be confusing for students, especially for those who are inexperienced in working outside the classroom (Malcolm & Rindfleisch, 2003). In the stages of planning and procedure, the students' role is sharing ideas about the process and, in the light of their peers' and the teacher's views, improving the task. Thus, it is the teacher's responsibility to help students provide feedback in class on their projects and the development of the project by preparing checklists for students

to describe difficulties and benefits of the project while they are doing it. Checklists should also be prepared for students to determine whether they have achieved the pre-decided plans (Malcolm & Rindfleisch, 2003). During project work activities, students are required to select a theme, negotiate on how to process it, and determine their own end-products in groups. However, the teacher does not play as active a role as the students. The only role of the teacher is facilitating and supporting the students for this end-product activity (Eyring, 1997).

Eyring (1997), Fried-Booth (2002), Malcolm and Rindfleisch (2003), Schuler (2000), Stoller (2001), and Wrigley (1998) have more or less the same idea about the teachers' role in the process of project work implementation. The roles of the teachers are helping the learners to move in the direction they want to go, and organizing and facilitating the students' projects. Unlike Schuler (2000), Fried-Booth (2002), and Stoller (2001), Malcolm and Rindfleisch (2003) recommend that the teachers prepare checklists in order to assess the students' projects during the implementation phases. Stoller (2001), in addition, suggests that the teachers prepare students for the language that the students need to carry out their projects.

#### *Problems in implementation*

During the implementation procedure, practitioners may encounter some unexpected problems; researchers advise to be aware of these problems. Gaer (1998) warns that if the topics are not chosen in accordance with students' backgrounds such as age, level, and interest, conducting a successful project work will be impossible. It is the students' interest and needs that determine the project. Furthermore, Lee (2002) advises that the topics should be manageable with respect

to the time and resources available to students. Otherwise, students do not make use of project work as expected.

Eyring (1997, p. 18-23) warns teachers that if the main curriculum is based on project work, to be cautious about late registration, excessive absence and tardiness, excessive quietness in some students, the gap between the needs and demands of the extremely high and extremely low level students, lack of cooperation among students, and lack of initiative. Some students may be lazy and do not want to do anything in a group and this may demotivate the enthusiastic students. The problems mentioned above affect the success of a project-based classroom because students may depend too much on the teacher or themselves, rather than on each other, in the case of such pitfalls.

Lee (2002) states that learners who are accustomed to the traditional classroom which is based on teacher-centeredness, learning grammar rules, and a closely controlled classroom atmosphere may resist the changes in their roles, due to the workload and the difficulties of taking control of their own work. On the other hand, some teachers prefer their traditional role of close monitoring; in project work classes, some teachers complain about losing the control of the class. Fried-Booth (2002) recommends that teachers should be convinced of the necessities of this role. This role entails helping students in every stage of the procedure, warning them about the problems they may encounter, making suggestions, and helping the students to negotiate clashes and having the self-confidence not to quit when they encounter problems.

Katz (1998) warns against the danger that problems with a project cannot be anticipated, because each project has various unique conditions depending on the



topic, place and investigator. From this point of view, problems and difficulties in a project often spring from implementation. Other variables such as the time available, the amount of authentic material, learner training and receptiveness, and flexibility of the administration in institutional timetabling may also influence successful project work implementation (Hedge, 1993).

### Benefits of Project Work

Numerous benefits of project work have been cited in the relevant literature. Researchers of this domain assert the great contributions of project work to language learning, motivation, stimulation, self-esteem and autonomy. These benefits accrue in language, learning, and affective or social aspects.

#### *Language benefits of project work*

One of the benefits of project work worth mentioning is students' increased language skills. Because project work gives repeated opportunities for interaction and negotiated meaning, students improve reading, writing, speaking, listening, and grammar and vocabulary abilities. The reason for the development of these skills is the fact that the authentic tasks students are engaged in makes it necessary for them to use these skills in an integrated way, which leads to meaningful language use and the recycling of vocabulary and grammar forms. By means of project work students are prepared to use these skills for lifelong learning (Stoller, 2006).

Another benefit of project work is that students are exposed to authentic experiences, which leads to authentic language use and exposure, in that while they are engaged in project work, students have authentic tasks with authentic purposes, which are absent in many classical language classrooms. For example, while

students are doing their project work, they may refer to books, newspapers, articles, and websites to take notes for meaningful purposes (Alan & Stoller, 2005; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995; Stoller, 1997, 2006).

Clennell (1999) had her ESL students prepare an inquiry project in which they were required to interview with native speaking friends and teachers in an academic environment. After recording these interviews, they presented them to the class orally. By means of this project, she ascertained that students became aware of different levels of meaning and language usage in accordance with the sociocultural medium. She also indicated that such interview-based projects enabled students to become communicatively competent in the second or foreign language. Projects carry instruction outside the traditional classroom; projects take students into the community, give them a chance to access new information sources, and help them create authentic language usage to communicate (Stoller, 2006).

A project which is carried out beyond the classroom is defined as a component of Communicative Language Teaching by Savignon (2001). In accordance with Savignon's view, the main aim of communicative activities is to prepare students to use the language outside the classroom. These activities lay the groundwork for the development of communicative competence after finishing the course. Therefore, if students' needs are to be taken into consideration, encounters with real aspects of the world alongside in-class learning via concerns for students' needs and interest is of great value.

Knolls (1997) states that when project work is combined with constructivist concepts such as cooperative learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning and industrial education, project work is the most applicable teaching

method which enhances learning a foreign language. The reasons for the wide use of projects in language teaching are that it is an efficient way to promote communicative language teaching and that project work has been improved to meet learners' community language demands beyond the classroom (Eyring, 1997; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

#### *Learning and affective benefits of project work*

Legutke and Thomas (1991) characterize the traditional language classroom as follows: 1) dead bodies and talking heads; 2) deferred gratification and loss of adventure, 3) lack of creativity; 4) lack of opportunities; 5) lack of autonomy and 6) lack of cultural awareness (p. 7-10), and they claim that project work breathes new life into classical language classrooms, largely due to its positive effects on students' motivation, self-confidence, autonomy, decision making abilities, and cooperative learning ability.

From the researchers' point of view, it is stated that project work leads to increased motivation. Dörnyei (2001) stated that human beings need conditions such as feeling competent, being provided autonomy, having a chance to accomplish goals, getting feedback, and being positively affirmed by others in order to be motivated. Another motivating factor of project work is that project work arouses curiosity about the subject matter. Therefore, project work is an efficient tool to increase students' motivation.

Stoller (2006) indicates that another benefit of project-based learning is the high degree of students' involvement and engagement, which is associated with motivation and enjoyment. However, she is not clear whether motivation or involvement comes first. She speculates that either students' motivation may pave

the way for engagement, or possibly, student engagement enhances student motivation. No matter which one comes first, she is sure about the reported positive end result of the motivation and engagement relationship. Stoller also maintains that project-based learning also inspires creativity, because the effort put into project work moves students away from mechanistic learning to creativity.

Project work enhances learner autonomy, with the characteristics of allowing students to select the topics they are interested in, providing opportunities to take on leadership roles, and giving them responsibility for their own learning. In addition, project work gives students a chance to discuss features of the project such as the theme, end product, procedures to accomplish the end product, and individuals' roles and responsibilities in the group. Project-based learning contrasts with traditional teacher-centered classroom education; with its democratic learning characteristics, students are free to make educational decisions in the classroom. By choosing, organizing, and carrying out a project of their own choice, students take responsibility for their own learning. These characteristics of project work make students more autonomous and independent in the face of traditional ways of teaching (Fried-Booth, 2002). According to Fried-Booth (2002), project-based learning is a shift from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness. As project work is an end product centering on process, achieving this end product makes project work quite constructive. The procedure of this end product gives the chance to students to enhance their confidence, autonomy and team work in a real-world environment by collaborating on a task. Through this cooperative learning, students are engaged in a process of negotiating meaning and experience, doing research, inquiry and problem solving (Stoller, 2006).

Another researcher who supports this idea is Skehan (1999). He reports that project-based learning increases students' autonomy, independence and readiness to take responsibility, as students are expected to engage actively in planning and doing their projects. As a result of this responsibility, students develop a sense of ownership and pride in the project work.

Wilhelm (1999) asserts that with the help of functional practice and extracurricular use of language in project-based classes, students can express the language fluently, and increase confidence and motivation within the class. It is reported by practitioners that sound projects with easily identifiable stages and tangible final products enable students to develop a sense of self-confidence, positive attitudes towards learning, and satisfaction with the accomplishment of the language use as a chance to see the results of their hard work (Skehan, 1998, cited in Stoller, 2006).

Wrigley (1998), in her interviews with teachers about students' attitudes towards successful project-based learning, concluded that both at the beginning and the end of projects learners were enthusiastic to learn and this enthusiasm revitalized classes, and that the more students got involved in the inquiry process, the more curious they became to get the answers.

Dörnyei (2001) states that when individuals accomplish tasks satisfactorily, create something, and achieve their goals, their self-confidence rises. Project work allows students to consider whether they have accomplished the tasks satisfactorily and achieved their goals.

It is also reported that project work enables students to improve the abilities of decision making, the skills of analytical and critical thinking, and therefore,

problem solving, which are stated as conditions for optimal learning (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993; Egbert, 2003). According to Hedge (2000) project work fosters students' imagination and creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, collaboration, research study skills and cross-curricular work through utilizing information learned in other subjects.

Project work assists students in developing problem solving skills, collaborative working skills, and organization skills during the implementation procedure (Katz & Chards, 1998). In conducting project work, students gain information from authentic sources, and project work gives students the chance to take an active part in theme or subject decision and search for required information by means of a group negotiation (Alan & Stoller, 2005; Eyring, 1997; Stoller, 1997).

#### *Social benefits of project work*

Fried-Booth (2002) notes that how much a student benefits from project work depends on how much the student is involved in the exercise. For project-based instruction to help students promote communication and collaboration with community members, they need to carry out outside classroom activities. Therefore, project work is a means to develop students' social skills.

Since students work with classmates to collect, synthesize and report information about their project, they improve cooperative, collaborative and social skills, which are transferable to other settings. As a result of the development of these skills, students begin to pay attention to each others' opinions, exchange information and negotiate meaning for the completion of a successful project output (Alan & Stoller, 2005).

Allen (2004) draws attention to the social constructivist side of project work, in that project work implementation will make it possible for students to engage in creating knowledge through interaction with others, contrary to engaging in structured models of teaching.

The other social benefits of project work on the basis of collaborative learning and democracy in the classroom are described by Eyring (1997). She conducted a study to determine the benefits of a negotiated syllabus and collaborative evaluation. Taking an active part while selecting the topic, deciding on the procedure and end product of project work, and being closely involved in assessing their peers facilitate the development of a participatory and democratic society. This view is supported by Katz and Chard (1998); through the implementation procedure of project work, students are involved in overcoming contradictions, sharing responsibility and making suggestions. These characteristics of project work provide a democratic atmosphere for the learners.

#### Teachers' and Students' Perception of Project Work

For the successful completion of project work in language learning, teachers' and students' perceptions are of great importance because they are the two parties involved in the activity of teaching and learning. Therefore, they should be well informed of the theory and basics of this implementation, which will enable them to use the implementation in language learning and teaching. As it is always true for everything, one's inclination depends on how much knowledge one has about the new issue, project work implementation, in this case.

Provided that teachers and students are well informed about the significance of this implementation, they will develop positive attitudes to it. These positive attitudes will serve as a vehicle to initiate project work implementation as a helpful means in language teaching and learning. As a result, the rate of success in language learning via the implementation of project work will doubtlessly increase.

Beckett (1999) points out the scarcity of studies on both project-based learning and teacher and student perceptions of project work. Eyring (1997), in her study, aimed to understand teachers' and students' attitudes and perceptions while employing the activities for the first time. In her study of two classes one was project-based, and the other was non-project based. The classroom applying project work implementation was compared to the one applying non-project based implementation in terms of teacher and student satisfaction. The project-based class was assigned to prepare a tourist guide book as a whole class over the summer term course. Students agreed on a theme and then decided how they would organize the procedure and end product, as well as an evaluation of this end product, with the help of the teacher's guidelines. From the results of this study, Eyring indicates that some students were extremely dissatisfied, due to unfamiliarity with a theme-based approach. They thought that the lessons should contain linguistic aspects, and another complaint was about a lack of teacher's feedback. However, some of them were highly satisfied because they benefited from essay writing, talking with and listening to peers, and working in groups. In addition, selecting their own project and evaluation procedure made it possible for the students to be pleased with the project work approach. A conclusion to be drawn from this study is that project work, together with some classical activities, should be used as supplementary materials in



order for teachers and students to initiate the communicative approach less stressfully.

Two other studies done by Moulton and Holmes (2000) and Wilhem (1999) reveal the dissimilarities among attitudes towards project work conducted in an ESL context, in the USA. In Moulton and Holmes' study, the students who managed to complete the project-based classroom claimed the benefits of integrating research; they also claimed that writing and presentation benefits were felt in the following courses two years later. However, because of the project work's heavy workload characteristics, the complement rate was low in these classes. This may also have been because of some students' misconceptions about language learning. From these students' point of view, language learning should involve linguistic items such as learning grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and listening in a traditional way of learning. In order to find a solution to this misconception, Moulton and Holmes suggested learner training sessions which involve the potential benefits and content of project-based learning.

In Wilhelm's (1999) study, most of the students felt great satisfaction in the opportunity to negotiate meaning with native speakers and to take the responsibility for their own learning. They indicated that the only pitfall of project work is its stressful character due to the heavy workload. In this study, projects classes were categorized in accordance with the students' TOEFL scores. In addition, all the students in project classes were given instruction in areas such as trust development and interpersonal relationships, demonstration of the student and teacher roles, a model for the collaborative learning approach, giving peer feedback and negotiation, and a well-balanced grading system (Wilhelm, 1999).

Another study conducted by Beckett (2005) revealed almost the same findings as Moulton and Holmes (2000), that some students have favorable attitudes to project-based instruction but some of them have mixed feelings. However, the majority of the students who participated in the study indicated their dissatisfaction with project-based instruction. Their dissatisfaction stemmed from its difficulty and the heavy workload. Dissatisfied students stated that making oral presentations, searching for and reading suitable references, and integrating the appropriate information into the projects caused them to have difficulties. Moreover, those students thought that learning basic knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary from teachers and textbooks was much more important than learning from authentic materials and native speakers. The only thing they thought they needed was grammar and vocabulary to improve their English proficiency level. From Beckett's point of view, these desires stem from the educational habits and cultural origin of the ESL students in the study. Beckett indicated that these ESL students came from classical teacher-centered educational curricula. Hence, unfamiliarity with this learner centered approach caused dissatisfaction among them. Beckett stated that it was the teachers' responsibility to get those students accustomed to project-based instructions by addressing the clash before conducting a project work assignment. Those who were favorable towards project work thought that project work paved the way for searching from the internet, and enhancing research, writing and communication skills. The students with mixed feelings reported that the reason they appreciated it was that project work enabled them to do in-depth research about specific content and develop their writing and presentation skills. On the other hand, the same group of students thought that project work was too much work for

students and it was time consuming. Another difficulty for them was oral presentations, which made them nervous.

The studies done in Turkey have reported similar results: Subaşı-Dinçman (2002) reported that most teachers believe project work is a beneficial alternative assessment tools and that it sheds light on how much the students have learnt. However, some of the teachers complained about the heavy workload and inconsistent evaluation criteria among the teachers. In another similar study on EFL teachers' attitudes towards project work as an alternative assessment and instructional tool, Gökçen (2005) stated that a great number of teachers find project work effective both as an alternative assessment and an instructional tool. However, the teachers put emphasis on its disadvantages, such as the time required, difficulties to adapt to the curriculum, and lower than expected student participation. Moreover, the same teachers were doubtful about its reliability and fairness as an alternative assessment. However, unlike the studies of Subaşı-Dinçman (2002) and Gökçen (2005), Kemaloğlu (2006) indicated that none of the teachers in her study complained about the workload. Furthermore, some of the teachers tried to do more than expected in order to meet their students' needs. However, the difference between the studies of Subaşı-Dinçman(2002), and Gökçen(2005) and that of Kemaloğlu (2006) was that Kemaloğlu conducted her study at a preparatory school where project work was being applied in the entire curriculum as a multi-skills project as it is presented in the literature; in the other two studies, project work was applied in separate skills classes. The projects at Subaşı-Dinçman's institution were applied as a writing projects, and the projects at Gökçen's institution were applied

for each separate skill course. These two studies' projects are also different from the projects in the relevant literature.

In Turkey there is only one study which assesses the students' perceptions towards project work, that of Kemaloğlu (2006). In this study, it was found that the students were generally in favor of using project work as an instructional tool, due to the fact that project work was found useful to improve the students' content learning, research skills, oral presentation skills, writing skills, translation and computer skills, vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and raising consciousness about the benefits of disciplined studying. However, in this study, it was also found that the students need more teacher support during the process of project work.

#### Program Evaluation

Evaluation is a process performed to get data for decision making about whether to change, accept or eliminate some elements of curriculum. In this process information is obtained to be used for making statements regarding the focus of evaluation. When applied to curriculum, evaluation tries to determine whether the designed, developed, and implemented curriculum can produce the desired results. This process of evaluation identifies the strengths and the weaknesses of the curriculum before implementation and the effectiveness of it after implementation (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998).

Richards (2001) emphasizes the importance of collecting information about a language program. He states that such information helps to gain an understanding of whether or not a program works and how well it works. He also claims that the data gathered will help in understanding whether the program responds to the learners'

needs or whether it is essential to train teachers as a result of a lack of students' achievement.

Brown (1995) maintains that the purpose of program evaluation is gathering data about the effectiveness of curriculum. This systematic process of data gathering and information collecting will promote the improvement of curriculum and contribute to the assessment of its effectiveness within the context of institutions. For that reason, it is important to collect information about the effectiveness of project work implementation as a particular component of the curriculum at MU SFL. In that sense, program evaluation is a process that will determine how successful, efficient, and effective the project work program at MU SFL's preparatory school is. This program evaluation process will give the preparatory school administration the opportunity to ask questions about the progress of its program.

For a proper evaluation of the curriculum of a language program the following aspects of language program should be considered (Sanders, 1994 and Weir and Roberts, 1994, both cited in Richards, 2001, p. 286-287):

- 1) Curriculum design: the quality of program planning and organization
- 2) The syllabus and program content: how relevant, engaging, easy or difficult the content is
- 3) Classroom processes: the extent to which a program is being implemented appropriately
- 4) Materials of instruction: insights about whether specific materials are facilitating student learning

- 5) The teachers: how they teach, what their perceptions of the program are and what they teach
- 6) The students: what they learn from the program, their perceptions of it and how they participate in learning
- 7) Monitoring of people progress: formative evaluation of student learning
- 8) Learner motivation: how effective the teachers are in aiding the students to achieve goals and objectives
- 9) The institution: the administrative support provided, the resources used, the communication networks employed
- 10) Learning environment: the extent to which students are provided with a responsive environment in terms of educational needs
- 11) Staff development: the extent to which the school system gives the staff opportunities to increase their effectiveness
- 12) Decision making: the extent to which principles, teachers and others make decisions resulting in learner benefits

For the evaluation of project work in my current institution, the primary concern of evaluation will be centered on materials. I will analyze the materials of instruction in my current institution to see what kinds of materials are used in what way for project work implementation, and how much they are aiding language learning. The second aspect of program evaluation will be the teacher, to see how they help students conduct project work implementation; what guidance they give students before, during and after the implementation; and what their perceptions of the implementation are. The last aspect of consideration will be the student, for the

purpose of gathering data about what linguistic and non-linguistic competence they acquired as a result of project work implementation; what difficulties they faced during the implementation; and what their perceptions of the implementation are.

### Conclusion

In this chapter the literature about project work has been reviewed. In doing so, the historical background of project work, project work types, the implementation procedure, benefits of project work, possible implementation problems, teachers' and students' perceptions of project work in the literature, and the necessity of program evaluation have been described. The literature review has demonstrated that there is lack of studies examining implementation of project work by means of analyzing both teachers' and students' perceptions in Turkey. It is the purpose of this thesis to present such a study. The following chapter will describe the methodology of the study by giving information about the setting, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and the data analysis method.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This study aims to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the existing project work program in the English preparatory classes at Muğla University School of Foreign Languages (MU SFL). The project work program was evaluated with respect to four aspects:

1. How effective the project work implementation in the preparatory classes at MU SFL is.
  - a) Objective and detailed description of project work implementation at MU SFL.
  - b) To what extent the implementation matches the expectations set in the literature.
  - c) Investigation of the teachers' and students' perceptions and attitudes towards project work.

In order to achieve the research aims the following procedure was done:

Properties of project work implementation were exposed by examining descriptions and suggestions for project work implementation in the literature; the results have been set out in the relevant literature review. In order to define objectives and document project work implementation at MU SFL, I have examined all the materials produced by the materials unit regarding project work, and I have also observed the implementation of project work. Classroom observation was done by a combination of audio taping and observation of in-class presentations during the period of project work implementation. As a result of this procedure, the extent to which the implementation matches the expectations in the literature was revealed.



Lastly, with the help of interviews and questionnaires, students' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards project work were discovered.

This chapter outlines the methodology selected for this study and explains the rationale for selecting the methodology. In the sections below information about the participants, instruments, and data collection procedures and finally data analysis will be given.

### Setting

This study was conducted in English preparatory classes at MU SFL. The purpose of these classes is to teach English to the students who failed in the exemption exam at the beginning of the academic year. For some departments, such as Tourism and Hotel Management, Civil Aviation, Tour Operating, and Electronics and Computer Teaching, English preparatory classes are compulsory; the students must succeed in the proficiency exam in order to graduate from the university. However, for Economic and Administrative Sciences students, preparatory classes are voluntary. Even if they fail in the proficiency exam, they can attend their undergraduate program. Neither voluntary nor compulsory students have to repeat the preparatory classes in case of failure; i.e., they are still allowed to start their undergraduate education.

English language teaching in preparatory classes is conducted at two different levels, B and C. B level classes are assumed to be pre-intermediate at the beginning of the academic year, and C levels are considered beginner. B and C levels are expected to reach an intermediate level of English at the end of academic year. Only one course, the main course, is given to the students in the preparatory classes. B classes study for 20 hours, and C classes study for 24 hours per week

during the academic year. The main course is complemented by alternative instruction tools such as project work, portfolio, graded readers and video classes.

Project work is employed as an aid to provide variety in English language teaching in English preparatory classes at MU SFL. The students at this school are required to do one project each term. Students conduct research on a given topic by using the library, books, magazines, and the Internet. The topics are defined by the materials unit staff partially in accordance with the curriculum. It is the materials unit staff's duty to convey the project work process to the teachers. As the first step of the project work procedure, students choose the topics from a list prepared beforehand by materials unit staff. The projects can be done individually or in a group. In the second step, the students are expected to conduct their projects outside the classroom and the teachers are expected to check what the students do and guide them in accordance with their work. At this step, students are required to analyze and synthesize to express the findings in their own words and revise their work in accordance with their teachers' comments. Then they work on how to turn their work into a final product. When they finish their final products, they submit them to the teachers. One week later they present their final products in the classroom. They are expected to complete the project requirements in 20 days. The previous year's projects were evaluated according to students' presentation performance. However, this year, the written product they submitted to the teacher is also evaluated in accordance with the criteria prepared by materials unit staff. Then, overall grades are given on the basis of the pre-presentation and final outcomes.

## Participants

The main purpose of the study was to find out strengths and weaknesses of the existing project work program through students and teachers' attitudes towards project work program in English preparatory classes at MU SFL. Thus, there were three groups of participants in this study.

The first participant was the head of the materials unit. She is 35 years old, she has eleven years of English language teaching experience, and she has been working in the materials unit as its chair for three years. She is a graduate of an English Letters Faculty. She was interviewed to define the goals and the shortcomings of the project work program at MU SFL.

The second group of participants was made up of 28 teachers who were responsible for carrying out project work implementation in their classes. The teachers participating in the study ranged from 25 to more than 45 years of age, and had English language teaching experience ranging from three to more than 15 years. For most of the teachers the bulk of their language teaching experience has been at MU SFL. Five teachers had degrees higher than BA. Eleven teachers out of 28 graduated from English Letters Faculties. The fundamental criterion while choosing the participants was the condition that they should be applying project work in their classes. For that reason, all of the teachers who apply project work in their classes were included in this study. All of the 28 teachers were given closed-ended questionnaires and individual teacher interviews were conducted with two randomly selected teachers from among the teachers who completed the questionnaire. The ages of the interviewees range from 40 to 45. One of the interviewees has a M.A. degree and 14 years of teaching experience, and the other has 18 years of experience.

One of the interviewees is a graduate of an English Letters Faculty, and the other is a graduate of an ELT department. One hundred elementary-level students were chosen to participate in the study because this number represented all of the elementary level students in the school who were participating in project work in their classes. They were given a closed-ended questionnaire and individual student interviews were conducted with two randomly selected students. Even though both of these students attended C level classes, one of the students had attended a preparatory class at his previous school.

### Instruments

There were three types of instruments used in this study. These were classroom observations, closed-ended questionnaires and interviews. These instruments will be described in the following section.

#### *Classroom observation*

In order to get a deep understanding of how the teacher assigns the students project work, what kinds of questions arise in the students' minds, and how the teacher guides students in accordance with the questions that arise, one class was tape-recorded during the class period in which project work was assigned. In addition, the presentations of the final products of the students in three classes were video-recorded, for two reasons. First, video-recording enabled the researcher to understand how well the students managed to conduct their project work. Second, it was possible to observe what the students gain with the help of project work, how the students appeared to feel while presenting the final product, and how correctly project work is implemented in the preparatory classes at MU SFL.

### *Questionnaires*

The second stage of the data collection procedure was the collection of questionnaire data from the teachers and the students at MU SFL. The reason for using questionnaires as a research instrument is that it requires little time, and it is easy to process (Dörnyei, 2003).

A questionnaire consisting of 41 5-point Likert scale items was given to the students, and a questionnaire consisting of 34 5-point Likert scale items was given to the teachers. The choices ranged on a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaires aimed to discover their perceptions of project work and their attitudes towards the existing project work program as an instructional approach. The questionnaires were designed by the researcher by taking the properties of project work in the literature into consideration.

The students' questionnaire involved 41 closed ended items which were aimed to assess how effective the project work implementation in preparatory classes at MU SFL was (see Appendix A and B for the English and Turkish versions of the questionnaire). The questions were classified according to the properties of project work in the literature. The properties were: choosing topics, teacher guidance and feedback during the project work procedure, using appropriate research sources, using time, working collaboratively, usefulness of project work to the students' grammar knowledge and language skills, and influence on autonomy, motivation, and cognitive skills. The questionnaire items were written in Turkish first, as it would be administered in the students' L1, and then translated into English for the purpose of data analysis. The translation was performed by the researcher and then it was checked by another speaker of both Turkish and English. The first draft was

piloted by administering it to a classroom of 24 students. After the piloting necessary changes were made in the items to prevent obscurity and misunderstanding in the wording of the items. Then the new version was administered to 100 students. The entire questionnaire was returned with a rate of one hundred percent.

The questionnaire for teachers consisted of 34 closed ended items which were aimed at assessing the teachers' opinions about the existing project work program in preparatory classes at MU SFL (see Appendix C). The questions were written in English and designed in parallel with the students' questionnaire. This questionnaire was piloted with four teachers in order to evaluate the items' effectiveness and clarity. After the piloting, only one item was changed.

#### *Interviews*

Interviews were conducted with the head of the materials unit, two volunteer teachers and two randomly selected students (see Appendices D, E, and F for interview schedules) in order to define the project work objectives and implementation at MU SFL and gain a deeper understanding about perceptions of project work. The first interview was done with the head of the materials unit of MU SFL. The second group of interviews was done with volunteer teachers and students in face-to-face meetings to get in-depth data about project work implementation. The interviews focused on their perceptions of project work at MU SFL.

The interview schedule for the students was designed by considering the extent to which the students benefited from the project work implementation, how the teachers guided them, and what kind of problems and difficulties the students encountered during the process of project work (see Appendix F).

The schedule for the teachers was designed to get an in-depth understanding about how the teachers implemented project work in their classrooms, whether they find project work beneficial in terms of developing students' language skills and motivation, and what kind of problems they encountered while implementing project work (see Appendix E).

The interviews with the head of the materials units and one of the teachers were conducted in English, and the other teacher preferred to be interviewed in Turkish. The interviews with the students were conducted in Turkish, due to the students' insufficient proficiency level. The interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed. All interviews conducted in Turkish were translated into English.

#### Procedure

Prior to any data collection, I requested and received official permission in December, 2007 for the research from the head of the School of Foreign Languages at Muğla University to conduct this study. To analyze how project work is implemented in English preparatory classes at MU SFL, the first step of the implementation, giving the assignment and instructing the students, was tape-recorded in one class in the first week of December and then the final step, presentation, was video-taped in three classes in the second week of January. All the documents prepared by the materials unit were analyzed in the following week to discover in more detail the implementation procedures.

Then in late January, two questionnaires were designed, one for the teachers and one for the students, to discover their attitudes and perceptions towards project work. The questionnaire for the students and that of the teachers were given to one class and four teachers to try them out in the third week of January.

With the help of this piloting it was ensured that all the items in each questionnaire were clear enough for the participants to understand, and then necessary changes were made according to students' and teachers' responses. Then, the final versions of the questionnaires were given to the students and teachers in the first week of March. The questionnaires were distributed to and collected from the students during their class hours. Distribution and collection of the questionnaire for the students took approximately two hours. However, the collection of the questionnaire from the teachers took more than a week.

After the collection of the questionnaire data, the interview questions and schedules were determined. There were three different sets of interview questions, one for the head of the materials unit, one for the students and the other for the teachers. The interviews were conducted at the end of the first week in March.

When all the questionnaires were collected, the researcher started to enter the data into SPSS at the beginning of the second week of March. In the same week, the interviews were transcribed and three of the interviews were translated into English. The qualitative analysis of the classroom observations and the interviews was done in the third week of April.

#### Data analysis

In this study both qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures were used. There were three sets of data used in the data analysis procedure, classroom observation, questionnaire responses and interviews.

First, the classroom observation data, obtained by audio-taping one class while the project work was being assigned, and video-taping three classes while the



final outcomes were being presented, were analyzed qualitatively. Through the classroom observations, supplemented by interview data and examination of documents from the materials unit, the actual step-by-step implementation of project work at MU SFL was determined.

The second set of data was gathered through Likert scale type questionnaires and was analyzed quantitatively. The gathered data from the actual study was statistically analyzed by using SPSS (version 11.0). The questionnaires were composed of 41 Likert scale questions (see Appendix A) for students and 34 Likert scale questions (see Appendix C) for teachers, and the data from these questions were entered into SPSS. The frequencies and the mean scores for each item were calculated in order to find out the students' and the teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards project work implementation at MU SFL. In addition to frequencies, chi-squares were also calculated for the questions to support the frequencies.

The researcher then analyzed the qualitative data gathered from interviews conducted with the head of the materials unit, two teachers and two students. After the interviews were transcribed, the responses were categorized and coded in respect to the aspects of project work explored in the questionnaires. These aspects fell into the categories of the goals of project work, the implementation steps, benefits, and problems of project work implementation at MU SFL.

### Conclusion

In this chapter the setting of the study was described. Then, the participants who were involved in this survey study were introduced. General information about the purpose of the study and the specific research questions was detailed. Finally, the

instruments used, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures were presented. The next chapter will present the results of the data gathered through both qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures.

## CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

### Overview of the Study

This study was conducted in order to investigate the effectiveness of the existing project work program at Muğla University School of Foreign Languages (MU SFL). The participants of the study were 100 preparatory class students and 28 teachers of that school. In order to conduct this study, first, classroom observations were held so as to understand the actual implementation procedure; then, questionnaires were handed out to 100 students and 28 teachers, and interviews were conducted with the head of the materials unit, two teachers who implemented project work in their classes, and two volunteer students, in order to examine their perceptions towards the existing project work program at MU SFL. To analyze the results of the quantitative data, SPSS (version 11.0) was used. The interviews and classroom observations were analyzed qualitatively.

### Research Questions

1. How effective is the project work implementation in preparatory classes at MU SFL?
  - a) How is project work implemented in English preparatory classes at MU SFL?
  - b) To what extent does the implementation in English preparatory classes at MU SFL match the expectations set in the literature?
  - c) What are the students' and teachers' perceptions of the implementation of project work in English preparatory classes at MU SFL?

## Data Analysis Procedure

Analysis of the data was divided into two sections. In the first section, qualitative data gathered from classroom observations and interviews were analyzed. In the second section of this chapter, the analyses of the quantitative data gathered through questionnaires were explained through percentages of the given answers and supported by interview and observation data.

### Qualitative data analysis

#### *Classroom observations and interviews*

Although there are three stages of project work in the relevant literature, classroom observation was only possible in two stages, because the second stage of the project work implementation at MU SFL is carried out outside the classroom. Therefore, the researcher had no chance to observe the students in this stage. In the relevant literature, Fried-Booth (2002) divides the process into three phases: planning, implementation, and conclusion of the project. Students and teachers come together to decide the topic, the final product and the required tasks in the planning phase. After choosing the topic, students gather and process the data, and then, in order to produce the outcome, conduct the task in the implementation phase. The final phase is the producing of an end-product such as a report, poster, wall display, magazine, newssheet, three dimensional model, website, video film, audio recording, drama, role play, or debate. Also included in the final phase, there should be evaluation and feedback on the students' production (see Chapter 2).

The first stage is deciding on the topic, how it is done, what kinds of materials are needed, and what will constitute the final product of the project. The

first stage of the classroom observation in this study was done via tape-recorder, in one class in which the project work was assigned. The researcher aimed at getting an in-depth understanding of how the project work was assigned, how the students were informed about it, how they chose their group friends and topics, and what kind of information was given to them about project work implementation. The second stage of the observation, during the concluding phase of project work implementation, was done by video-taping three classes in which the students were presenting their projects. At this stage the researcher aimed to understand what kinds of final products were displayed, whether students had done research about it, how they presented their outcome, how they felt while presenting it, what the classroom atmosphere was like, whether the audiences were involved or asked questions, and how the students were evaluated.

In the first section of the data analysis procedure, qualitative data in the form of classroom observations and interviews were analyzed. Since the main aim of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding about the actual process of the project work implementation in preparatory classes of MU SFL, how project work is applied in the classes was explored through the analysis of the classroom observation, interviews with students, teachers and the head of the material unit, and examination of documents concerning project work at this school. The analysis of these data will also be related to the quantitative data in the second section of this chapter.

#### *The First Stage of Project Work Implementation in Prep-classes at MU SFL*

The first stage of project work was investigated through classroom observation by tape recording. Before the teacher assigned project work, she first mentioned the purpose of this work with the following statements:

Observed Teacher (OT):

The purpose of this project is to produce something by using the whole language you have learnt up to now and using your creativity.

After that, the topics of the project work were distributed to the students as a list. There are 54 topics in this list (see Appendix G). The observed teacher made the following remark to inform students about the introductory process of the implementation:

OT:

The topics of the project work will be handed out. You have 54 alternatives to choose from, however, you do not have to be bound to this list. You have the freedom to choose another topic which you are interested in. If you do not choose your topic from the list, it must be confirmed by me, because the topics you choose should be appropriate for your English proficiency level and your age. Otherwise, it will be difficult to conduct this work.

The purpose of allowing students to choose another topic that is not on the list is not to restrict the students' interest, which might discourage the students from carrying out project work. The following comment by an interviewed student shows that he was aware that he was not restricted to the list.

S2:

As students, we were given 54 topics or more than that; however, we were free to study on another topic which we would like to focus on.

The topics require working individually, in a pair, or in a group. Working in a pair or group was suggested by the observed teacher. When asked about this later, the teacher said that her rationale behind this suggestion was that it would be their first project work experience and students would feel more comfortable in a group or pair; in addition, they could share their opinions and duties to produce a better outcome. One student explained how they did their project:

S2:

We worked in a group to conduct project work. We shared duties and ideas, which made our job much easier. Besides, I felt more comfortable in the group.

One of the students asked how they could choose their group friends and the teacher advised them to choose someone whom they could keep in touch with easily. Then, the observed teacher talked about the project topics in the list and gave some samples of previous year students' projects.

OT:

I would like to give you some samples of last year' projects. One of my students wrote a horror story in English; the pictures of the story were painted by her cousin. She worked individually; it was amazing for me how she managed to write a story. Four of my students constituted a music group; they filmed their rehearsal and presented it to the class.

After that the teacher informed the students what kinds of materials they could use; she said that the students were required to access the written materials in Turkish, and after they comprehended the whole meaning of the text, they were required to rewrite the written materials in English in their own words, in order to prevent plagiarism. The teacher then mentioned the timetable of the steps (see Appendix I).

Then, the criteria for the process and presentation of project work and the points of each stage were read to the students in Turkish (see Appendix H). After that, what the students could do and could not do for the project work process and presentation were read to the students (see Appendix I). One of the students asked whether the whole group would present the topic or just one of the group members would do it. Another question was raised about what happened if they memorized the presentation. The teacher said that every member of the group would present

their own part, and she reminded them that if they memorized the presentation, they would get lower marks.

*The Second Stage of Project Work Implementation in Preparatory Classes at MU*

*SFL*

Almost all of the above results were gained through the first stage of classroom observation. Information about the second stage, the implementation phase, is obtained from interviews with two teachers, two students, and the head of the materials unit staff. In the following quotes the interview participants outline the steps of the process of project work implementation. Those parts of the quotes relevant to the implementation phase are highlighted in bold text.

T1:

First, they were given 50-100 topics which may catch their interest, photocopies of the topics list were distributed to the students and students are expected to define their topics by a definite date. **Then, teachers worked with the students on how to find materials and compile them; afterwards the teacher confirmed their topics and how they would carry out their projects;** then they present their products to their peers in the class and their peers discussed them as a forum, such as strong points and weak points.

(Translated from Turkish)

T2:

..... In my class, the steps are like these. First of all, I told my students about project work, about the topics we chose, it was the first step. I introduce the topics to them, first in English and we translate some of them into Turkish and then I told them choose the topics by a definite time; it was the second step, and then I talked about the criteria; I told the students you will be evaluated according to these criteria and I explained them in Turkish as well, and then I also involved my students in the assessment; I told them we will assess together, they will assess their friends, peer assessment, something like that, **and the other step was the preparation phase, the students work themselves, sometimes they came to me; they asked questions ‘ teacher shall I do it in that way, I couldn’t find this topic, can I change it, etc. this was another step.** As for the presentation stage, they presented their projects. After the presentation, I told the class to ask some questions.....



Materials Unit Head:

Well..... the first and the most important step is explaining the project work's goal and giving different subjects to choose from, and together with their project work teacher they decide on which topic they are going to prepare, also they decide whether they are going to do something individually, as a pair or group and then after this they decide what kind of final outcome they will produce. They decide on it together with their project work teacher again. With their guidance teacher they find out what is the product going to be at the end **and then after this, they start doing some research with their group, while they are doing this, they contact with their project work teacher. They first show the things that are prepared, they take an arrangement to make project work teacher check what they have done after that time and at last they show their teacher the final outcome.** If there is no problem, they present their project.

S1:

**At the very beginning of the study, the teacher said that you could often come to me to show your product while we were doing that study, the teacher corrected our language mistakes and gave information to us how to present that study.** And also, she informed us about the evaluation criteria. She said that if we presented the project you would get 30 points, if we memorized it, we would get low marks. She said that we could do whatever we wanted while presenting it.....

As it is stated in the quotes we can conclude clearly that the implementation phase takes place outside the classroom and that the teachers guide their students outside class time for the students to carry out the project work

#### *The Third Stage of Project Work Implementation in Prep-classes of MU SFL*

The third stage of the project work is the presentation stage. Three classes were video-taped, because at this stage the researcher aimed to understand the actual presentation phase of project work implementation at MU SFL. Table 2 below summarizes the information which was gathered through classroom observation of the presentations.

Table 2 - Summary of Project Work Presentations

Class	Format	Topic	Group/ ind./ pair	Use of tech.	Audience participation	Time (in mins.)	Source of Information	Assess- ment	Read/ not read
1	Story talk	King's sons	Ind.	none	none	6	Story book	Teacher	read
1	Story talk	Opera house	Ind.	none	participation	4	Story book	Teacher	read
1	Historical places in a city	Diyarbakir's Walls	Ind.	none	none	3	Internet	Teacher	read
1	Describe a city	Urfa	Ind.	none	A few questions	4	Internet	Teacher	read
1	Describe a friend	Best friend	Ind.	none	none	3	none	Teacher	Not read
2	Describe a city	Izmir	Group	Power Point	none	20	Internet/tourism brochures	Teacher	read
2	Ideal school	Robert College	Group	Power Point	A few questions	25	Internet	Teacher	Not read
2	Present a magazine	Ocean	Group	none	none	10	Periodicals	Teacher	Not read
3	Introduce a famous dead person	Famous singer	Pair	Power Point	none	8	Internet	Teacher	read
3	Describe a city	Mugla	Pair	Power Point, OHP, realia	A few questions	50	Internet/tourism brochures	peer	Not read

Three classrooms were observed by video-tape; the classes were at the same proficiency level. The most preferred format was describing a city; four out of ten of the chosen topics for the projects in those classes were introducing a city or hometown. However, other kinds of formats were also chosen such as telling a story, describing someone or an ideal school, and preparing a magazine. As it is understood from the table, the style of working differs from class to class; there were three group presentations, two pairs, and the rest of the presentations were done individually. The use of the technology devices also differed from class to class. The students in two classes out of three supported their presentations with visual or audio-visual aids via computer, OHP, realia, and projector. One of the groups reflected the unknown words onto the wall; it was a good idea, because before that the audience seemed uninterested in the presentations due to the unknown words. Also, the students did not prepare any brochures, booklets, or posters, as it is mentioned in the literature. The only visual aids were realia and slides on the computer and on the OHP.

In terms of audience participation, for six out of the ten presentations, the audience was not the slightest degree interested, neither commenting on the topics nor asking questions. Students' uninterested attitudes towards the presentation phase of project work were supported by one of the interviewees' statements.

T2:

I think project work after presentation, it is good, it is beneficial, if students can also comment on the topic, if they ask the presenter some questions, and this is more beneficial I think, but the time didn't allow us to do this. Students just **have the ability to present and stop no questions, no comments.**

However, one of the students, who told a story, prepared a vocabulary puzzle about the story and the audiences were involved in the presentation. In the remaining three presentations, a few questions were raised by the audience during or after the presentations.

Some of the students' presentations took a very short time, just a few minutes. There was not a balance among the students in terms of time. The range of the presentation times was from three to fifty minutes. Four individual presentations were less than four minutes, and three presentations were twenty minutes or more. The longest presentation was fifty minutes, by a pair who had searched in-depth for their topic, used many visual aids such as power point slides, OHP, and realia, and asked many questions of the audience. When asked about the length of the presentation later, the teacher said that she did not want to interrupt their presentation as there was interaction in the class. Furthermore, she could see that almost all of the students were interested in the presentation.

Most of the students, for six out of ten presentations, benefited from the Internet as a source. None of the students conducted an interview, whereas interviews are one of significant parts of the projects in the literature. In terms of assessment, all but one of the presentations were assessed by the teachers in accordance with the criteria (see Appendix H). In one of the classes the teacher, on her own initiative, handed out sheets in which there were 3 scales, from poor to successful, for peer assessment.

Six out of ten presentations were read from the paper, making it very difficult to comprehend them owing to wrong pronunciation, intonation, and stress. This

observation was supported by the statements of one of the interviewed teachers and students. They made the following statements:

T2:

They chose the topics which sound interesting for them, but their level of English was not equal to that topic to talk about this topic, so this was the main problem, and the other problem was **in the presentation stage; the students use some vocabulary and they pronounce the vocabulary in a wrong way, they didn't know the correct pronunciation, so it was difficult for classmates to understand the topic, the content of the presentation was difficult to follow for the classmates** and also, the other problem was that they didn't know the meaning of the words that they used.

S1:

We **did not understand much, because of the unknown words**. Some of our friends just read it from the paper, so we **could not catch the points**.

Even though the interest of the audience was negatively affected by this practice, the students who read their presentations looked quite relaxed, while the presenters who did not read were nervous.

Other characteristics came to light during the classroom observations of the presentations. It seemed that most of the students did enough research about their topics, but the problem was that the sentences probably were not their own sentences. They were taken from somewhere. Therefore, their written products which were submitted to the teacher before the presentation as a file, as a booklet, or as a book were prepared better than their presentations. One interviewed teacher was quite pessimistic about project work implementation:

T1:

..... the topic was about a city in Turkey. Although the written product was well prepared, the student was not good at presenting his product. Most of the students take their products from the Internet, they copy, and then paste. Audiovisual aids are good enough, but the students can not utter even a correct sentence. He presented his products in words not sentences.  
(Translated from Turkish)

S1:

Most of my friends did not give enough importance to this work. They either downloaded from the internet and did not reorganize their data or read from the paper while presenting it. Therefore, nobody understands what they say.

In the first observed class, two students told stories, but I think they were not original stories which were written by them, because they were read directly from the paper, and the structure and the vocabulary of the stories were higher than the students' proficiency level. This also occurred in several other presentations.

Another teacher drew attention to the problems faced in the implementation:

T2:

They chose the topics which sound interesting for them, but their level of English was not equal to that topic to talk about this topic, so this was the main problem, and the other problem was in the presentation stage; the students use some vocabulary and they pronounce the vocabulary in a wrong way, they didn't know the correct pronunciation, so it was difficult for classmates to understand the topic, the content of the presentation was difficult to follow for the classmates **and also, the other problem was that they didn't know the meaning of the words that they used.**

When the presentations were compared across the three classrooms, several differences emerged. The first difference was working style. In class one, all of the students worked individually. In class two, the students worked in groups, and in class three, they worked in pairs. Another difference was the use of technology, which was observed only in two of the three classes. A third difference was whether the students tended to read from the paper or present without reading. In one class all except for one of the students seemed to read from the paper, while in the other two classes more students presented without reading. The final difference was assessment type. In only one class was peer assessment observed. The probable

reason for these differences may be teacher guidance, especially for the working style and use of technology.

In the first section of the data analysis, qualitative data which were gathered through classroom observations and the interviews were analyzed. This has revealed the process of project work implementation at MU SFL. The quantitative data will be analyzed in the next section.

#### Quantitative Data Analysis- Questionnaire Data

In this section of the data analysis procedure, questionnaires which aimed to investigate both students' and teachers' perceptions of the existing project work program at MU SFL were analyzed and also supported by interview and classroom observation results. There were 41 Likert-scale questions for the student's questionnaire and 34 Likert- scale questions for the teacher's questionnaire. The following scale was used for both of the questionnaires: Strongly agree: 5 Agree: 4 Partially agree: 3 Disagree: 2 Strongly Disagree: 1

The responses to both questionnaires were entered into SPSS, and percentages, means and standard deviations were calculated for each item. In addition, the responses were subjected to a chi square analysis to determine any significant differences among the responses. Due to lack of differences across the five responses, a separate chi square was performed on the items with SA / A responses combined, and D / SD responses combined, resulting in a 3-point Likert scale, and these results have been reported here.

#### *Students' views about project work implementation at MU SFL*

In this part of the data analysis procedure, students' views, which were gathered through the questionnaire, and the interviews about project work

implementation in the preparatory classes of MU SFL will be analyzed by categorizing the questions which are related to each other.

#### *Students' Views on Choosing Topics*

The first category of questions about project work is related to choosing topics. According to the relevant literature, project work topics should be related to students' interest, age and proficiency level. The findings about choosing the topics represented by three items in the questionnaire (1, 2, 3) are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Students' views on choosing topics

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
1.Choosing topics in accordance with their interest	100	64 ***	25	11	2.52	.703
2.Choosing topics in accordance with their age	100	65***	18	17	2.48	.771
3.Choosing topics in accordance with their proficiency level	100	63***	20	17	2.45	.783
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St. Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p<.000$ )						

Table 3 shows that a significant majority of the students ( $p<.000$ ) agree that they are given the chance to choose project work topics in accordance with their interest, age, and proficiency levels. This result was confirmed both by the classroom observation and in the statements made by one of the interview participants.

S2:

As students, we were given 54 topics; **however we were free to study on another topic which we would like to focus on.**

The observed teacher also indicated that even though the list of the topics was distributed to the students, they were allowed to study on another topic which



they were interested in or they could use their creativity much more on it, on the condition that it was confirmed by their class teacher. Table 3 also shows that 25% of students partially agreed about being able to choose topics in accordance with their interest and 20% of students partially agreed about choosing their topics in accordance with their proficiency level, which indicates that some students have mixed feelings about these questions.

*Students' Views on Teacher Guidance/Feedback during Project Work Procedure*

The second category of the questions investigates how the teachers guide their students to conduct project work. Teachers' guidance is of great importance, because students may not be familiar with this kind of activity. The findings about teacher guidance and feedback represented by seven items in the questionnaire (4-10) are given in Table 4 below.

Table 4 - Students' views on teacher guidance/feedback during project work

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
4. easily ask the teacher what students do not understand	100	74***	15	11	2.62	.678
5. Teacher's help while choosing the topic	100	74***	10	16	2.59	.753
6. Teacher's help while preparing the final outcome	100	80***	15	15	2.72	.587
7. Teacher's help while presenting the final outcome	100	77***	18	5	2.71	.555
8. Teacher's feedback during the PW process	100	72***	16	11	2.61	.680
9. Clearly stated expectations	100	72***	19	9	2.60	.651
10. Process of PW is clearly stated by the teacher	100	64***	20	15	2.78	3.14
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St. Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ )						

Table 4 shows that a significant number of the participants ( $p < .000$ ) agree that they can easily ask the teacher about the incomprehensible part of their study;

also, a significant majority of the participants ( $p < .000$ ) agree that they had enough teacher guidance during the three stages such as choosing the topic, preparation of the final outcome and presentation of the final outcome of the project work. However, a number of students ranging from 15% to 16% disagreed about being able to get teacher guidance during these three stages, and 10-18% only partially agreed. A significant majority of the participants were satisfied with the feedback that was given by their teacher ( $p < .000$ ). Most of the participants agree that the process of project work and what was expected from the students were clearly stated ( $p < .000$ ), but some of the participants (19% - 20%) did not completely agree on those issues.

These quantitative data are supported by qualitative data results. Classroom observation showed that what was required in each step of the project work, choosing topics, preparing it, and presenting it, was told to the students in detail, in addition to which, each step's written criteria were distributed to the students; at the same time, evaluation criteria were given verbally and in writing to the class. The list of the things that should be done for project work was handed out. The teacher gave some clues about how they should present it and how they should start their speech. The teacher gave a few samples of the previous year's projects in order to make the final products concrete in their mind. The results of the questionnaire items about teacher guidance were confirmed in the statements made by the interviewed participants.

S1:

..... the teacher said that you could often **come to me to show your product** while we were doing that study, **the teacher corrected our language mistakes** and **gave us information about how to present that study**. And also, she **informed us about the evaluation criteria**. She said that if we presented the project you would get 30

points, if we memorized it, we would get low marks. She said that we could do whatever we wanted while presenting it.

S2:

..... **we got aid from our teacher**, first we submitted what we did, and then he **gave us written feedback about the language mistakes** and **guided us** what we could do about this topic. We corrected our mistakes according to the teacher's **written feedback**. Before we started to study on the project, **the teacher informed us how to present it, how we started the speech. We were informed about these kinds of things.**

According to these triangulated data results, the students seem relatively satisfied with the teacher guidance provided.

#### *Students' Views on Using Research Sources*

The main rationale of project work in the relevant literature is to produce an end product after an in-depth investigation on a single topic, either in pairs, in groups, or individually, by using a variety of skills and knowledge (see Chapter 2). The findings about what kind of research sources were used, whether the students encountered difficulties, and whether they got help from native speakers are given by four items in the questionnaire (12, 13, 14, and 19) in Table 5 below.

Table 5 - Students' views on using research sources

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
12. Using library, books, magazines, encyclopedias, TV programs or films.	100	58***	23	19	2.36	.785
13.Using the internet	100	81***	9	10	2.68	.664
14. Getting help from native speakers	100	13	12	75***	1.40	.710
19.Difficulties of finding appropriate materials	100	31	24	45	1.86	.876
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St. Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p<.000$ )						

As can be seen in Table 5, a significant majority of the participants ( $p < .000$ ) indicated that they benefited from the Internet; this result was confirmed in the statements made by interviewees:

S2:

Almost all of us **benefited from the Internet**. Since **everything is available on the Internet, we did not have any difficulty in accessing the sources..... We learnt how to access the websites**. We, as a group collected many sources and then chose the easiest and the most organized one for comprehension. First we translated it into Turkish and then rewrote them in our own.

S1:

It was **not difficult for us to access sources**, because we **downloaded them from the internet..... This era is the time of technology, so you can access a great variety of sources there. All of my friends took advantages of the Internet;** we just needed a dictionary in order to understand the meaning of the new words.

Most of the respondents reported that they used other sources such as books, magazines, films, and so on, for the preparation of their projects, although the number of the students choosing either partially agree or disagree indicates that this source was not as popular as the Internet. The findings show that a significant number of the participants did not benefit from native speakers, such as conducting interviews with a native speaker, even though there was a native English speaking teacher in the school. As for item 19, there were no significant differences among the students' responses, but it appears that the students experienced varying levels of difficulty in accessing appropriate sources to conduct project work.

#### *Students' views on using time*

Another important issue in project work is timing. Projects may be short-term or long-term. In the preparatory classes at MU SFL, projects are long-term. Therefore, approximately one month is given in order to conduct project work. The

findings about the time issue represented by two items in the questionnaire (17, 18) are given in Table 6 below.

Table 6 - Students' views on using time

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
17.Enough time is given	100	77***	13	20	2.46	.821
18.PW takes a long time	100	49***	31	20	2.29	.782
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St. Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p<.000$ )						

As seen in Table 6, while a significant number of participants agree that they were given enough time to conduct this work ( $p<.000$ ), 20% of the participants did not agree; this indicates that some students may have needed much more time to produce a valuable product, or they may not have managed their time or scheduled well. In addition to this, almost half of them think that it requires quite a lot of time ( $p<.000$ ), and 31% of the students partially agree about this aspect of project work. Project work is not the same as other classroom tasks. It has ten steps, as Stoller indicated in the literature; after the students choose the topics, they have to gather and process the information in order to prepare it for the presentation, and these procedures require a lot of time and effort. Since the final outcome must be presented, they have to spend a lot of time organizing how it will be displayed. This may explain why 49% of the respondents stated that project work takes a long time. As for the respondents who thought that project work does not take a lot of time, they may not have given enough importance to conducting the project, as one of the interviewed students indicated:

S1:

Most of my friends **did not give enough importance to** this work.... and they did not reorganize their data or read from the paper while presenting it.

As the projects which were implemented at MU SFL are long-term projects, students may need more time to conduct projects in an appropriate way. The data indicates that students are relatively satisfied with the amount of time given to project work, but they feel that it takes a lot of their time.

*Students' views on collaborative working*

According to the literature, project work is structured around cooperative learning activities with the aim of combining efforts so as to complete the project (see Chapter 2). This category of questions includes the questions that aim to investigate students' perceptions about the effects of collaborative working. The questions were analyzed and reported in Table 7 below.

Table 7 - Students' views on collaborative working

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
15.Easy to work collaboratively	100	53*	23	24	2.27	.827
20.Freedom to ask their peers what they do not understand	100	66***	17	17	2.49	.771
21.Exchanging ideas with peers during the PW process	100	68***	11	21	2.47	.858
40. Making close friends	100	32	22	46	1.86	.876
41.Usefulness of collaborative working	100	56***	15	29	2.27	.897
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St. Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p<.000$ ) * indicates ( $p<.05$ )						

The results in Table 7 reveal that a great number of the participants ( $p<.000$ ) are in favor of working collaboratively, feeling able to exchange their ideas easily and free to ask what they do not understand. A significant number of the participants agree that working collaboratively is useful to carry out projects. However, only a

small number of the respondents agree that with the help of project work they made close friends in the classroom. It is possible that teacher guidance may have affected whether students had the chance to make new friends in the classroom, because in the classroom observation, it was seen that the students were recommended to conduct this work in a group of their friends. Even though they had an option to work individually, they were encouraged to work with their friends. Thus, they may not have had a chance to make new friends.

These results reveal that collaborative working was appreciated by some students, and this conclusion is supported by the statement made by one of the interviewees.

S2:

We worked **in a group** to conduct project work. We **shared duties and ideas**, which made **our job much easier**. Besides, I **felt more comfortable in the group**.

However, there were many students who appeared to have mixed feelings, or disagreed about the positive effect of collaborative working to carry out projects. As it was noticed from the classroom observation, five students out of ten preferred working individually. The students who have mixed feelings or disagreement for working collaboratively might be guided to work individually by their teachers, or it might have been their personal choice due to the difficulties of coming together at certain times to work on the project.

#### *Students' Views on Project Work's Benefits to Their Grammar Knowledge*

Project work may be a tool for reflecting what the students acquire during the program in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and the other language skills. Projects may cater as an aid to consolidating students' grammar knowledge. The results of

the data for questions about benefits to grammar knowledge are shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8 - Students' views on project work's benefits to grammar knowledge

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
22.Using acquired grammar rules	100	82***	14	4	2.77	.509
23. Consolidating acquired grammar rules	100	73***	15	11	2.61	.680
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St. Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ )						

As presented in Table 8, a significant majority ( $p < .000$ ) of the students seemed to have benefited by being able to use the grammar knowledge they have acquired during the term. In addition, they had a chance to consolidate their grammar knowledge, while conducting their projects. The disagreement and partial agreement percentages are much lower than those for agreement. Furthermore, one of the interviewed student's statements below supports this finding:

S1:

Project work was useful..., and at the same time **it was a good chance for using the grammar that we have learnt in the lessons.**

However, the other interviewee indicated that he made good use of project work for other language skills, especially listening. He stressed that he did not think of PW in terms of grammar.

S2:

..... With the help of the projects, we learnt **many things** that we did not know. First, we **learnt how to use the language**, as the sources are original texts; we **learnt how the natives speak**. We **learnt a number of new words; I can not say we learnt a lot in terms of grammar**. And also, we really got invaluable information in terms of general knowledge. We **did not think of PW in terms of grammar**.



In spite of this student's views, it seems clear that the majority of the students perceive project work as valuable for their grammar development.

### *Students' Views on Improving Their Language Skills*

In the literature, researchers indicate that project work is beneficial in order to develop all language skills. Students have to use multi-skills while conducting projects. The priority of the skills may change in accordance with the topic which is chosen. To illustrate, if the student chooses to conduct an interview with an English speaker, he has to use listening, writing, and speaking ability in that order, or if the student chooses a topic which requires research, he first reads it from the written material then rewrites it in his own words and presents it to the audience; hence, he uses reading, writing, and speaking ability in his projects. This section includes questions which aim to investigate students' perceptions about the benefits of project work for their language skills. The results of these questions are presented in Table 9.

Table 9 - Students' views on improving their language skills

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
26. Helping to improve oral presentation skill	100	75***	15	10	2.64	.674
27.Helping to improve reading skill	100	61***	23	16	2.44	.782
28.Helping to improve vocabulary skill	100	75***	14	11	2.63	.676
29.Helping to improve writing skill	100	60***	17	23	2.37	.848
30.Helping to improve speaking skill	100	57**	23	20	2.36	.810
31.Helping to improve listening skill	100	37	27	36	2.00	.864
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St. Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ ) **indicates ( $p < .01$ )						

As can be seen in Table 9, a significant majority ( $p < .000$ ) of the participants agree that project work helped them to improve their oral presentation skills, while a small number of them did not agree. Some students also have mixed feelings about this aspect of project work. In the classroom observation, it was seen that several of the students just read their products from the paper while presenting, and some of them had memorized their presentations. Therefore, it is expected that those students did not have the chance to improve their oral presentation skills. A large group of the participants (61%,  $p < .000$ ) thinks that project work was useful to improve their reading ability, but a number of them (23%) have mixed feelings, and a few students (16%) disagree about whether project work improved their reading skills. A significant majority of the participants thought that it was useful to develop their vocabulary knowledge. This result is supported by the statements of the interviewees.

S1:

Project work **was useful for me mostly in terms of vocabulary**.....  
**I just benefited from it in terms of vocabulary** and grammar. For me, it was **not useful in terms of developing reading, writing, listening and speaking ability**.....**I can not say that it was useful for me to improve my language skills except for vocabulary and grammar.**

S2:

With the help of the projects..... **We learnt a great number of new words.**

Even though a large number of them think that it helped to improve their writing ability, nearly one quarter of the students did not agree. Most of the participants found that it was useful for their speaking ability, but a group of them (20%) did not find it useful. Students conduct just two projects during the year, one

in the first term and the other in the second term; hence, two projects may not be enough to improve productive skills such as writing and speaking. The number of the participants who thought project work helped them to improve their listening ability was nearly the same as the number who thought the opposite, and a large number of the students have mixed feelings about this issue. The students' lack of agreement about the improvement in their listening skill may be explained by the classroom observation. It was seen that the audiences did not listen to the presenter's speech; they either studied their own part, or did not pay attention to their friend's part. In an informal interview, the researcher asked them why they did not pay attention to their friends' presentations; they said that they did not understand what the presenters said, because of the vocabulary or the structure of it. They also indicated that some presenters read it from the paper, so it did not attract their attention. However, one interviewed student indicated how his listening ability had benefited from project work.

S2:

**Of course, it was useful for me; we both listened to our classmates' project presentation and we, ourselves, prepared a project. With the help of the projects, we learnt many things that we did not know.**

Those students who participated in the questionnaire and who were interviewed reported that they benefited from project work in developing language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and especially, vocabulary and grammar; however, they did not, for the most part, reported that their listening skill benefited from project work.

### *Students' Views on Affective Influence*

The 25<sup>th</sup> question aimed to understand whether the students feel nervous or not during the presentation stage. The findings about this question are as follows:

Table 10 - Students' views on affective influence

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
25. Feeling nervous while presenting PW	100	52*	22	26	2.27	.851
N: Number of Participant, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						
* indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ )						

Table 10 shows that just over half of the students ( $p < .000$ ) agreed that they were nervous when presenting the final product of their project work. However, a nearly equal number of the participants disagreed or only partially agreed that presenting the PW made them nervous. This result is really interesting for the researcher, because during the classroom observation via video-tape, it was observed by the researcher that most of the students could not present their projects owing to anxiety, so they had to read directly from the paper.

### *Students' Views about Project Work's Influence on Autonomy*

In the relevant literature, it is pointed out that project based learning postulates preliminary conditions such as learner autonomy, including real choices, opportunities to take on leadership roles, and responsibility for and sense of control of one's own learning (Stoller, 2006). The findings about learner autonomy represented by two items in the questionnaire (35, 37) are given in Table 11 below.

Table 11 - Students' views about project work's influence on autonomy

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
35. Enhancing sense of responsibility	100	62***	24	14	2.49	.784
37. Helping to improve decision making ability	100	58**	19	23	2.36	.822
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						
* indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ ) ** indicates ( $p < .01$ )						

As can be seen from Table 11, a significant majority of the respondents agree that project work enhances the sense of taking responsibility for one's own learning. However, 24% have mixed feelings and 14% do not agree. This may be because students just conduct one project during the term; hence, it may not be enough to enhance their sense of taking responsibility for their own learning. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents think that it helped to improve their decision making ability; this may be due to the fact that students, themselves have to decide on their projects' topics, preparation and presentation of their final outcomes. However, it is interesting to note that nearly one quarter of the participants disagreed that project work enhanced their decision making ability. This may, again, be due to the limited number of projects conducted in the term.

#### *Students' Views about Project Work's Influence on Cognitive Skills*

Through project work, students are required to transfer what is learnt in the classroom well beyond the classroom's walls and produce their final outcome by doing research with the combination of their imagination and creativity (Stoller 2006). This section of the questionnaire was composed of the items (16, 36) that aimed to understand students' perceptions on these aspects. The findings are given in Table 12 below.

Table 12 - Students' views about project work's influence on cognitive skills

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
16. Transferring what is learnt in the class outside the classroom	100	59**	19	21	2.35	.821
36. Help to use Ss' creativity	100	71***	12	17	2.53	.784
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ ) ** indicates ( $p < .01$ )						

The results reveal that a significant number of the participants agree they could transfer what was learnt in the class outside the classroom, although 21% disagreed with this statement. A significant majority of the participants think that project work helped them use their creativity, confirming what is pointed out in the literature.

#### *Students' Views on the Motivational Benefits of Project Work*

If projects are structured to arouse student curiosity, provide opportunities to comprehend some phenomenon of interest, and make the students feel a sense of success with challenging, but manageable tasks, students will be motivated (Stoller, 2007). Dörnyei (2001) states that when the individuals perform tasks competently, produce results, and achieve established goals, they feel self-confident. According to the relevant literature, project work is a means of increasing motivation in students. Questions 11, 32, 33, 34, 38, and 39 were composed to understand whether project work increases students' motivation for language learning. The findings about motivation are given in Table 13 below.

Table 13 - Students' views on the motivational benefits of project work

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
11. Feeling more interested in learning English	100	56*	19	25	2.27	.862
32. Feeling sense of satisfaction about Lang. learning	100	44	27	29	2.14	.841
33. Feeling sense of achievement about Lang. learning	100	51**	28	21	2.29	.807
34. Enhancing self-confidence about Lang. learning	100	52**	26	22	2.28	.817
38. Helping to be more active in the classroom	100	45*	30	25	2.20	.816
39. Enjoyable class atmosphere	100	74***	14	12	2.61	.694
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St. Dev: Standard Deviation.						
***indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ ) ** indicates ( $p < .01$ ) * indicates ( $p < .05$ )						

As can be seen from Table 13, almost half of the respondents gave negative answers or showed mixed feelings to items 11, 32, 33, 34, and 38. These results indicate that even though significant proportions of the participants agreed with these statements (with the exception of item 32), many of the respondents think that project work did not help their motivation to learn English. A large number of the participants think that they felt a sense of satisfaction and achievement about language learning (item 32). However, it is interesting to report that a larger percentage have mixed feelings or showed disagreement about this question.

A significant number of the participants think that project work created an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Unlike the presentation stage, the other stages of project work were carried out beyond the classroom, so this response must reflect the fact that students felt that there was an enjoyable atmosphere during the presentation stage in the classroom.

These results show that the project work program in the preparatory classes of MU SFL does not completely achieve an increase in students' motivation about language learning as it is pointed out in the literature, because the number of students with mixed feelings or negative feelings is nearly equal to those with positive feelings; given the mixed responses provided by the participants for items 11, 32, 33, 34 and 38, it is difficult to claim that project work enhances interest, sense of satisfaction and achievement in learning English, or being an active learner in preparatory classes at MU SFL.

In this section students' attitudes towards the existing project work program in the preparatory classes of MU SFL were presented. The results of the questionnaires have shown largely positive perceptions, but many mixed feelings. In the following section teachers' perceptions of the existing project work program at MU SFL will be presented.

#### *Teachers' views about project work implementation at MU SFL*

In this part of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedure teachers' views about project work implementation at MU SFL will be analyzed by categorizing the questions which are related to each other.

#### *Teachers' Views on Teacher Guidance during Topic Choice*

The first section of the teachers' questionnaire is about teacher guidance while the students choose their project topics. These findings, represented by three items in the questionnaire (1, 2, 3), are given in Table 14 below.



Table 14 - Teachers' views on teacher guidance during topic choice

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
1.Guidance for choosing topics in accordance with their interest	28	96 ***	---	4	2.92	.377
2.Guidance for choosing topics in accordance with their age	28	64 ***	21	15	2.57	.690
3.Guidance for choosing topics in accordance with their proficiency level	28	75***	21	4	2.60	.628
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p<.000$ )						

According to the results shown in Table 14 a significant majority ( $p<.000$ ) of the participants agree that they guided their students to choose project topics in accordance with their interests. The percentage value of this question is 96%, which means that almost all of the participants agree on that issue. The second question of this section is about choosing topics in accordance with students' age. A majority ( $p<.000$ ) of the participants agree that they guide the students to choose their projects' topics in accordance with their age. However, 21% of them showed mixed feelings on this question, and 15% disagreed. The majority of the participants ( $p<.000$ ) also think that they guided the students to choose the topics in accordance with their proficiency level. However, 21% of them only partially agree on this issue and 4% of them showed disagreement. Particularly with regard to students' interests, it seems that teachers feel that they give students appropriate guidance in choosing topics.

*Teachers' Views on Guidance during the Implementation Process*

According to the relevant literature in project work implementation, teacher guidance is critically important to successful project work. The results of the teachers' perceptions about teacher guidance are given in Table 15.

Table 15 - Teachers' views on guidance during the implementation process

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
5. Guidance for accessing research sources	28	64 ***	21	15	2.60	.685
6 .Guidance for the preparation stage of PW	28	89***	7	4	2.85	.448
7.Guidance of the first draft of PW	28	82***	11	8	2.67	.611
8. Guidance for the final outcome of PW	28	79***	14	8	2.82	.475
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ )						

The results in Table 15 reveal that a significant ( $p < .000$ ) number of respondents agree that they guided their students in how to access research sources, although 15% of them did not agree; a number of the respondents (21%) showed mixed feelings about this statement. A significant majority of them ( $p < .000$ ) think that they guided their students enough during the preparation stage, first draft of the prepared outcome, and final outcome of project work, while a small group of teachers only partially agreed that they guided their students enough in order to carry out this work. One possible reason for this may be the teachers' heavy workload, which was confirmed by the statements of one of the interview participants.

T2:

Each teacher at this school has **at least 25 hours of lessons**; personally I think that **PW is a burden to the all teachers at this school**.

In spite of this complaint, it seems that the teachers feel that their guidance during the implementation of project work is adequate.

*Teachers' views on giving feedback during the implementation process*

Giving feedback during each stage of project work makes considerable contributions to the students in order for them to carry out this work successfully. Questions 9 and 10 were composed to understand to what extent the teachers gave feedback to their students. Table 16 shows the findings about teachers' feedback.

Table 16 - Teachers' views on giving feedback during the implementation process

ITEM NO	N	%SA/A	% PA	% SD/D	Mean	St.Dev.
9. Giving written feedback for their first draft of PW	28	50	32	18	2.28	.809
10. Giving oral feedback for their first draft of PW	28	81***	7	11	2.71	.658
N: Number of Participants, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						
***indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ )						

According to the data revealed in Table 16 above, half of the participants agreed that they gave written feedback and a substantial number of them ( $p < .000$ ) agreed that they gave oral feedback to their students. The probable reason for the difference between oral and written feedback may be teachers' lack of time to help their students. In my home institution students are expected to carry out this work outside the class, so teachers cannot spare any lesson hours for guidance, and the only time they can deal with students' projects is during their 10 minute break time. In addition to project work, they have much extra work to do, such as checking students' portfolios, checking their homework, preparing quizzes for graded readers and grading them, and other official duties. Therefore, as one of the interviewees indicated, teachers are overburdened with all of these duties, and project work is just

one of them. Hence, it seems that the largest group of teachers gave oral feedback instead of written.

*Teachers' Views on Project Work's Benefits for Language Skills*

One of the benefits of project work stated in the literature is that students improve their four language skills through projects. The questions in this section of the questionnaire were composed to understand whether the teachers see project work as beneficial to improving students' four skills. The findings, represented by four items in the questionnaire (27, 28, 29, 30), are given in Table 17 below.

Table 17 - Teachers' views on project work's benefits for language skills

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% SD/D	Mean	St.Dev.
27. Improving Ss' reading skills	28	54	29	18	2.25	.751
28. Improving Ss' writing skills	28	57	25	18	2.32	.772
29. Improving Ss' speaking skills	28	53	39	8	2.32	.722
30. Improving Ss' listening skills	28	21	43	34	1.75	.751
N: Number of Participant, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						

According to the results in Table 17, the average percentages of the questions about improvements in language skills are spread across the possible answers. Nearly half of the participants agree that students improved their reading, writing, and speaking skills through projects, but the other half either partially agree or show disagreement on this issue, and the differences among the responses are not significant. Among the language skills, the teachers appear to be least appreciative of improvements in listening skills.

As it is understood from the results in Table 17, a large number of the participating teachers think that project work didn't help students improve their

language skills. This perception of lack of improvement of language skills is confirmed by the statements of the interview participants.

T1:

The most important handicap of our students is that **neither they understand what they read, nor they catch the point what they hear, neither they speak, nor they write**.....

(Translated from Turkish)

T2:

I think **to some extent**, because **the level** of my students is **elementary** and **the topics** that they chose were **a little bit above their level**. So, it was **difficult for them to write** their topics themselves.....they **got help** and **they used the structure that they did not learn**. So, they **just** you know **read their projects, read the projects of people whom they got help** and also the other problem was that there were **lots of vocabulary** that **the class did not know**, so the **presenter student presented the topic**, but **the class didn't fully comprehend the topic**.

Both quantitative and qualitative data results show that project work at MU SFL does not result in improvement in language skills, in contrast to the benefits reported in the relevant literature.

#### *Other Academic Skills*

Other academic skills which are expected to develop through project work are collaborative working skills, computer skills, research skills, and speaking skills in public. The teachers' responses to questions about these skills are presented in Table 18:

Table 18 - Other academic skills

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% SD/D	Mean	St.Dev.
25.helping them work collaboratively	28	60*	29	11	2.42	.741
31. Improving Ss' computer skills	28	53*	32	14	2.39	.737
32.Improving Ss' research skills	28	78***	18	4	2.67	.547
33. Improving SS' speaking skills in public	28	68**	21	11	2.50	.693
N: Number of Participant, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p<.000$ )** indicates ( $p<.01$ ) * indicates ( $p<.05$ )						

Table 18 shows that most of the participating teachers ( $p<.05$ ) agree that project work helps students improve their collaborative working skills, and 29% of the participants showed partial agreement. In addition, most of the teachers ( $p<.05$ ) think that project work helps the students improve their computer skills, but the number of the teachers who have mixed feelings (32%) cannot be disregarded. The reason for these feelings may be some of the students' end products. In the classroom observation the researcher noticed that some students presented their final products without using a computer; they did not type the papers for the projects on the computer, and they did not use Power Point. A significant majority of the respondents ( $p<.000$ ) agreed with the statement that project work helps the students improve their research skills. In addition, a significant majority ( $p<.01$ ) of the respondents think that through project work, students improve their speaking skills in public. However, 21% only partially agreed with this statement, and 11% of the respondents showed disagreement. The result for item 33 is not supported by the classroom observation, because most of the students were unable to speak in public, tending to only read their presentation from the paper.

*Teachers' Views on Project Work's Benefits for Learner Autonomy*

Since the projects are conducted well beyond the classroom walls, project work is expected to increase learner autonomy (see Chapter 2). The questions in this section were composed to understand to what extent project work is beneficial in developing learners' autonomy. The findings about learner autonomy represented by five items in the questionnaire (4, 19, 21, 23, 34,) are given in Table 19 below.

Table 19 - Teachers' views on project work's benefits for learner autonomy

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% SD/D	Mean	St.Dev.
4.Allowing Ss to decide their own process of PW	28	61*	32	7	2.35	.678
19.Ss don't spend enough time	28	50*	32	14	2.35	.731
21.Taking their own learning responsibility	28	60*	29	11	2.46	.692
23.Making them more independent learners	28	60**	32	8	2.46	.692
34.Making them independent users of Eng. in real life	28	32	50	18	2.17	.722
N: Number of Participant, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p<.000$ ) ** indicates( $p<.01$ ) * indicates ( $p<.05$ )						

As can be seen in Table 19, most of the teachers ( $p<.05$ ) agree that they allowed their students to decide their own process of project work. Again, with a mean value of 2.46 ( $p<.05$ ), most of them think that through project work students take responsibility for their own learning, and they also think that project work makes the students more independent learners ( $p<.01$ ). Even though some teachers only partially agree with these statements, it appears that most of the teachers agree that project work contributes to learner autonomy. In addition, a number of the respondents reported partial agreement that project work makes the students independent users of English in real life. The reason for their mixed feelings may be

that this question is also related to developing linguistic skills. In order to use English in real life, they must be quite proficient. However, most of our students are at the elementary level, so it is difficult to say that just because of project work, they can use English in real life. A significant number of teachers agree that students do not spend enough time to conduct project work ( $p < .05$ ). This opinion is supported by the statements of a student interviewee:

S1:

Most of my friends **did not give enough importance to this work**. They **either downloaded from the internet or did not reorganize their data or read from the paper while presenting it.....** everybody **chose the easiest way**.

#### *Teachers' Views on Project Work's Benefits for Students' Motivation*

This section includes question numbers 18, 20, 22, and 24, which examine teachers' perceptions about how project work affects students' motivation. The questions were analyzed and reported in Table 20 below.

Table 20 - Teachers' views on project work's benefits for students' motivation

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
18. Feeling enthusiastic to conduct PW	28	28	61***	11	2.10	.566
20. Making them more motivated	28	43	39	18	2.14	.803
22. Making them more interested in Eng. lang. learning	28	46	32	21	2.07	.813
24. making them more active learners in the classroom	28	46	32	22	2.25	.799
N: Number of Participant, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ )						

As can be inferred from Table 20, a significant majority ( $p < .000$ ) of the teachers showed mixed feelings about the question of whether students were



enthusiastic to carry out project work. This result was supported by one of the interviewed students' statements:

S1:

**Most of my friends did not give enough importance to this work.**  
 ....it **was waste of time for us**, project work **took up our lessons time**.  
 Sometimes, we were **bored a lot**.....

The teachers as a whole appear to have mixed feelings about the effect of project work on students' motivation, with no significant differences among their responses to item 20. In addition to these results, one of the interviewed teachers thinks that the project's topics are above the students' level, so students think that they are unsuccessful to use the language and this psychologically demotivates them. This is illustrated by the teacher's statement, as follows:

T2:

But, if we do it **too much about their level**, this **demotivates students**. Students think that 'oh my God, I am so bad, I can't do anything. **I can't express myself; I have learnt nothing at this school.**' **This is really demotivating for students.**' So, they say Ok I have to go to a person and ask. When their families learn it, they are surprised and ask them 'did you ask another person, didn't you learn anything? What happened? Why didn't you learn anything at this school?' This is another demotivation.

Less than half of the participants fully agreed with the statement that project work makes the students more interested in language learning, although a nearly equal number reported partial agreement. This pattern of responses is repeated for the question about whether with the help of the project work students are more active learners in the classroom. Although the head of the materials unit indicated that the main goal of project work implementation was to motivate students, a majority of the teachers either think that in general project work does not have a great effect on

students' motivation or they have mixed feelings about this reported benefit of project work.

#### *Teachers' Views on Project Work Difficulties for the Teacher*

From the formal and informal interviews that were conducted with a group of teachers it was found that many of the teachers complained about the difficulties of project work implementation. Questions (11 - 14) were analyzed and reported in Table 21 below to reveal to what extent teachers have difficulty in applying project work.

Table 21 - Teachers' views on project work difficulties for the teacher

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
11. Difficulty to guide how Ss conduct PW	28	32	36	32	2.03	.838
12. Difficulty to organize the whole class projects	28	42	29	29	2.10	.875
13. Difficulty to develop materials for the chosen topics	28	32	36	32	1.96	.744
14. Difficulty to assess Ss' projects objectively	28	39	29	33	2.10	.875
15. PW requires a large amount of work time	28	68***	21	11	2.67	.669
16. PW requires heavy workload	28	57***	36	7	2.60	.685
N: Number of Participant, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						
*** indicates significant majority responses ( $p < .000$ )						

According to the results shown in Table 21, the participating teachers appear to have mixed feelings as to whether they had difficulty in guiding students how to do project work, or organizing the whole class projects. The responses to item 13, finding it difficult to develop materials for the chosen topic, are spread almost equally, again indicating mixed feelings among the groups. The results for question 14 are also spread across all the responses, indicating that some teachers had some difficulty in assessing students' projects objectively. The probable reason for these

results may be the differences in attitudes of the teachers. The teachers who are unwilling to carry out projects may find it difficult to guide their students, organize the whole class projects, develop materials, and assess them objectively. Because students have to carry on their studies outside the class without the teacher's control, the teachers may develop negative attitudes towards project work implementation. To take an example, one of the participants of the interview explains why she thinks it was difficult to assess students' projects objectively:

T2:

..... the evaluation of project work was **very difficult** for me. We had criteria and we had to evaluate the PW in accordance with these criteria, **it was very difficult because you can't know whether the students got help or not**, because they did it at home **to what extent did they get help, you don't know this**, so it was **really difficult for me to evaluate them**.

As can be inferred from Table 20, a significant ( $p < .000$ ) number of teachers reported that project work requires a large amount of work time and heavy workload. In addition, there are also a number of teachers who partially agree. The majority opinion is supported by the statements of one of the interview participants.

T1:

**Each teacher at this school has at least 25 hours of lesson, personally I think that PW is a burden to all teachers at this school.**

In conclusion, the reasons why the teachers are not very positive to the items in Table 20 can be listed as follows: the teachers find it difficult to develop materials, and organize whole class projects. They also report that they face difficulty in assessing the projects objectively as they are not certain about how of much of the project students did by themselves. The

teachers also complain about the heavy workload of the implementation phase.

*Teachers' Views on Whether Project Work Helps to Meet the Program's Goals and Objectives*

The aim of the 17<sup>th</sup> item was to investigate the teachers' perceptions of whether project work meets the goals and objectives of the entire language program. The findings are given in Table 22 below.

Table 22 – Does project work help to meet the program's goals and objectives?

ITEM NO	N	% SA/A	% PA	% D/SD	Mean	St.Dev.
17. Meeting program's goals and objectives	28	43	39	18	2.21	.786
N: Number of Participant, SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, PA: Partially Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, M: Mean (on a 3-pt. scale), St.Dev: Standard Deviation.						

As can be seen in Table 22, while less than half of the respondents fully agree that project work meets the program's objectives, nearly the same number of the respondents only partially agrees. The reason for these mixed feelings or disagreement may be a result of teachers' being unclear about or unaware of the program's goals and objectives; they may also think that project work does not meet the program's goals and objectives, due to the implementation problems of project work. The head of the materials unit expressed the goals of project work at MU SFL in the interview as follows:

H:

The **main goal is to motivate students**..... the main reason was to **set variety and to motivate students**. Students need to produce something themselves, they must feel that they can do something with their English, with the language they learn, so the **main goals of project work implementation is that when they see they can understand an article written in English, while doing their research they get happy and they get motivated. The main goal**

**was to motivate them and to make them produce something with their English.**

The results of the quantitative data analysis revealed that the project work program at MU SFL failed to meet the program's goals and objectives, because the head of the materials unit indicated that the main goal was to increase the students' motivation through project work. However, neither the students nor the teachers had strong feelings about the positive effects of project work to increase students' motivation to learn a foreign language.

### Conclusion

In this chapter the data gathered from the questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observation were analyzed and presented in two parts. In the first part, the researcher tried to understand the actual implementation procedure by analyzing the classroom observations and interviews. In the second part, the attitudes of the teachers and students towards the existing project work program at MU SFL were presented through questionnaire responses and interviews. The next chapter will present an overview of the study, discussion of the findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, implications for further research and conclusion.

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

### Overview of the study

The main focus of this study was to investigate the existing project work program, and the attitudes of students and teachers towards the project work program at Muğla University School of Foreign Languages (MU SFL). The reason for the investigation was to find out any implementation problems, and to improve the existing project work program with the help of suggestions from the relevant literature. The results of this study might contribute to the better implementation of project work at MU SFL.

In this thesis, what project work is, and how project work is implemented, as described in the relevant literature, were first introduced. Then the methodology of the study was explained, and the data was presented and analyzed.

Since the aim of the study was to investigate the perceptions of the students and the teachers at MU SFL, this study was conducted with 100 students, 28 teachers, and the head of the materials unit. In collecting and processing the assessment data, two aspects were emphasized: how project work is implemented at MU SFL, and the students' and the teachers' views towards the actual implementation of project work at MU SFL.

The assessment of the actual process was made by classroom observations through tape recording and video taping. Data concerning students' and teachers' perceptions were collected by means of questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively via frequencies and chi squares, and the interviews were analyzed qualitatively, with the results used to further inform the questionnaire results. This chapter summarizes the findings related to the research

questions. The pedagogical implications for state university preparatory classes, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research will also be presented.

### Findings and Discussions

The major findings of the study will be presented in three aspects: how project work is implemented at MU SFL and to what extent this implementation matches with the relevant literature; the attitudes of students and teachers towards the existing project work program in the institution; and the effectiveness of the project work implementation at MU SFL?

#### *Project work implementation at MU SFL and in the literature*

In order to understand any mis-matches between actual procedures and the literature, I will compare the ten-step model (Stoller, 2001, p. 112) step by step with the implementation procedure at MU SFL.

Stoller's first step in project work implementation is that students and teachers agree on a theme for a project. At MU SFL, the first phase of the actual implementation procedure partially corresponds with the literature. According to the classroom observation and interview results, the topics lists are given to the students first, then the students choose the topics from among them, and the teacher affirms the topics that are chosen by the students. The teacher and the students decide the topics together as described in Stoller's procedures. However, through the classroom observation and document investigation (see Appendix I), it was seen that students were given a number of topics from which to choose; the relevant literature indicates that a project should reflect the interests and concerns of the learners (Moss & Van Duzer, 1998, p2). In addition, Eyring (1997) claims that an ideal project should allow students to be autonomous, regarding choosing topics, identifying the methods

to process it, and determining their own end products to achieve. In my home institution, students might probably choose from the topics in the given list which arouse their interest, but it may be that 54 topics is not enough to reflect all the students' interests, owing to individual differences. In addition, the students do not usually create their own topics; they just choose the topics from the list. Even though the students are allowed to study any topics they are interested in, classroom observations showed that all the topics were from the list. It is possible that the list restricts the students' imagination about possible topics. Therefore, it can be said that the first step of Stoller's procedure overlaps only partially with the actual implementation procedure at MU SFL.

In the second step as described by Stoller, students and instructors determine the final outcome; for this phase, the actual procedure at MU SFL partially corresponds with the literature, because students themselves determine the final outcome, and the teachers just give oral feedback and suggestions for language use during the ten-minute break time. Since there is not enough time allotted for project work in the curriculum, it appears to be very difficult for teachers to help all students in designing the final products of project work.

In the third step in Stoller's sequence, students and instructors structure the project; again, at MU SFL, students themselves structure the project outside the classroom, and the teachers just guide those students who cannot decide how to structure their projects. This guidance takes place outside the classroom during the ten-minute break time. However, Stoller (2001) suggests carrying out this procedure in classes, particularly for the students whose language proficiency is low, and who are not familiar with project work studies.



Stoller's fourth step is that teachers prepare students for the language demands of information gathering. This procedure was not observed, and was not reported by the participants in the study in my home institution.

In the fifth step in Stoller's sequence, students gather information. Through the classroom observation, and the interviews, it was noticed that the observed teacher and the interviewed teachers suggested that the students should gather the information in their native language, and then rewrite it in their own words; however, the researcher has not come upon this kind of information in the literature, and it also completely contradicts the rationale of project work, because students are expected to improve their multi-skills through the projects. It is not clear how students can manage to improve their reading skills, and grammar and vocabulary knowledge, if they don't work on authentic texts. Moreover, the head of the materials unit, in the interview, indicated that students are expected to work on authentic English materials in order to get maximum benefit from this work. Thus, there seems to be a mis-match between the observed and interviewed teachers who apply project work in their classrooms, and the materials unit staff, probably due to a lack of communication between the teachers and the materials unit. The reason that the observed teachers wanted the students to begin with Turkish materials may have been to prevent plagiarism, because most of the students tend to take the materials from the Internet, and present them without processing. Therefore, the outcomes are not their own products. If the students do not struggle to produce something for the project work, they cannot take advantage of this work by just presenting something which they do not really assimilate. Another reason that teachers encourage the students to work from Turkish materials may be the students' proficiency level.

Most of the students do not have an English language background and many of the students at MU SFL are exposed to intensive English for the first time in their education. Therefore, the teachers may believe that it is not realistic to expect the elementary level students to analyze and synthesize authentic materials. Thus, it seems that the teachers and the materials unit staff have different perceptions of the students' abilities and willingness to put effort into project.

The sixth step is that teachers prepare students for the language demands of compiling and analyzing the data. This step was not observed or reported in my home institution.

In the seventh step as described by Stoller, students compile and analyze information; at MU SFL students themselves try to compile and analyze the information, even if it is really difficult for them owing to their language proficiency level. Therefore, as the interviewed students indicated, many of the students cannot compile and analyze the information, so they download it from the internet. Without processing what they gathered, the students present it to the audience. Therefore, it is impossible to say that the students benefit from project work or develop their language learning.

The eighth step is that teachers prepare students for the language demands of presentation of the final product; at MU SFL this procedure is also ignored. The big parts of the responsibility for this belong to the students. Although one interviewed student mentioned being given information by the teacher about how to present the project work, it was not mentioned by either interviewed teacher, or the head of the materials unit.

In the ninth step in Stoller's sequence, students present the final product. At MU SFL, all of the students have to present their outcome in the classroom, but because of the omission of the previous step, the quality of the presentation was affected. It was seen that nearly all of the observed students only read their products, rather than presenting them. Furthermore, it was observed that the audience was uninterested in what the speakers said. When the researcher asked the reason in the informal meeting, they reported that they did not understand what the speakers said, because of the unknown words or pronunciation mistakes.

Stoller's last step in project work implementation is that students evaluate the project. However, in my home institution teachers evaluate the students' projects according to set criteria (see Appendix H). If peer assessment is provided, it may raise the interest of the audience. Hence, this may be a solution for the problem of uninterested audiences in the project work presentations at MU SFL. In one of the observed classroom, the teacher had the students assess their peers. The audiences listened to the presentations attentively, because they were responsible for commenting on their peers' presentations, and giving them marks.

So far, it has been deduced that there is a lack of teachers' guidance in the implementation procedure of project work in preparatory classes at MU SFL. This may be because the teachers were not trained before the project work program started. The teachers were only given verbal or written guidelines about what to do on what date (see Appendix I). Although ten steps were written on the guideline sheet which was distributed, the students were left alone in many steps of the process due to a lack of time for teachers. In order to follow these steps properly, teachers require enough time; however, in my home institution they were just given one hour

for topic choice and giving information about project work, such as purpose of the project work, evaluation criteria, and timetables of the work, and then three hours for the presentation stage. There is no learning training session. The teachers only give a little information about topics, gathering information and presenting this information to their classmates. For the other stages, the teachers have to deal with the projects of the students outside the classroom during a ten-minute break time; therefore, it is impossible to guide the students or give feedback properly. Allen (2004) indicates that students need more guidelines from their teachers about how to write and how to present their projects. In the present study the questionnaire results showed that they can only give cursory oral feedback to the students owing to lack of time. Eyring (1997) reports that the most vital factor in project work, which reaps great success, is teachers' support. Through her study a great majority of the students appreciated greatly the friendly and helpful attitudes of the teachers. The reason that the students in the present study did not appear to benefit from project work implementation may be that not enough time is allotted in the curriculum for project work, which leads to a lack of teachers' guidance to increase the benefits of this work. If the decision is made to incorporate project work into the curriculum, then enough time should be allotted to conduct this work; otherwise it may be just a waste of time and energy both for students and teachers.

The other difference in the implementation procedure from the literature is in the degree of collaboration among the students in conducting the project work. The relevant literature suggests working collaboratively. Since projects are product-oriented work and require creativity, two or more heads are always more creative than one head. However, it was noticed that some of the topics in the list require

working individually; in addition, it was noticed from the classroom observations that, even though in some classes students chose to work collaboratively, in some other classes they chose to work individually. It is possible that the reason that it differs from one class to another class in preparatory classes at MU SFL is the teacher's guidance; teacher choice appears to determine students' choice when it comes to working collaboratively. It is interesting to note that the observed teacher, during the introduction of the project work assignment, emphasized the value of working collaboratively, and consequently all of her students chose to work in groups. After noticing the different working styles in different classes, the researcher asked the teachers of the observed classes about this. One of the teachers indicated that she wanted the students to work in pairs, due to the difficulty of evaluating the students' success in groups objectively. Her concern was that each member of the group might not work equally, but they would get the same points as the students who do work on it. According to her it may not be fair, so she guided her students to work in pairs or individually. The other teacher stated that she guided her students to work individually, because she thought that the group members affect each other's success negatively. For example, some students do not work hard to overcome the task, and the end product may not be as it is expected. Also, she emphasized the difficulty of giving equal roles to each member of the group.

*Students' and teachers' perceptions of project work at MU SFL*

In the relevant literature, project work is seen as an effective means for promoting language learning (Fried-Booth, 2002; Haines, 1989; Legutke & Thomas, 1991; Papedreou, 1994; Stoller, 1997). However, there are also contradictions in the literature. The research studies which were done by Eyring (1997) and Beckett

(1999) indicate that their students felt that the resource base in language learning should not be project work; it should be textbooks and teachers. In addition, most of their students preferred traditional ways of language learning, which is a teacher-centered way of learning. In the preparatory classes of MU SFL, a series of course books is used as the main focus of the courses. However, two project work assignments in a year were incorporated into the curriculum. The head of the materials unit stated that the rationale behind project work implementation was to promote language learning and increase students' motivation for language learning. In this section, the extent to which project work promotes language learning at MU SFL as seen in the perceptions of students' and teachers' will be discussed.

*Students' perceptions of project work at MU SFL*

Students in the preparatory classes at MU SFL generally have positive attitudes towards project work implementation. However, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis results show that the students could not experience all of the advantages of project work as they are described in the relevant literature. The main areas in which the students did not appear to benefit from project work are developing their multi-skills ability, promoting learner autonomy, and increasing motivation. However, the students indicated that they felt the benefits of improving their vocabulary and grammar knowledge, as well as collaborative working for those who preferred working collaboratively.

From the students' points of view, generally they felt that they were able to choose the topics in accordance with their interest, age, and proficiency level, as it is stated in the literature. Another important result is that almost all of the students benefited from the Internet during the data collection procedure but the other sources

mentioned in the literature, such as books, magazines, films, native speakers, and so on, were not observed. It seems that the students preferred the convenience of the Internet when collecting data.

According to Stoller (2006), owing to the authentic tasks and texts that students are engaged in, students use multi-skills in an integrated way, which leads to meaningful language use and recycling of vocabulary and grammar forms. The findings in this study regarding the students' perceptions of their development of vocabulary knowledge and grammar forms through projects correspond to the literature; also, in Turkey, perceptions of improved vocabulary knowledge were evident in Kemaloğlu's (2006) study. However, the results show that students did not draw much benefit for improving other language skills, especially their listening skills. This may be because they only carry out two projects during a year, and this limited number of projects may be inadequate to improve their productive and receptive skills as it is mentioned in the literature. With regard to listening skills, through the classroom observation it was noticed that no student conducted an interview or used authentic aural materials for their projects. The reason for this may be that among the topics, there are almost no topics which require aural materials or interviews.

With regard to the motivational benefits of project work, the results of this study contradict some claims made in the literature. According to many researchers, (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993; Egbert, 2003; Fried-Booth, 2002; Hedge, 2000; Skehan, 1999; Stoller, 2007) project work promotes students' autonomy, decision making ability, motivation, negotiation of meaning, and collaborative working skills. However, the results described here show that many of the students at MU SFL have

mixed feelings or disagree about some of these benefits of project work, although some of the students feel that they benefit from working collaboratively and using their creativity. The reasons for these mixed or negative feelings may be the limited number of project work assignments they carry out, the lack of teachers' guidance, or the lack of teacher and learner training in project work.

When these results were compared with the study by Kemaloğlu (2006), which was conducted in Turkey, it was found that the students' perceptions about these aspects of project work at Yıldız Technical University were nearly the same as those at MU SFL. Kemaloğlu (2006) suggested that the reasons for these results could be the disliked project topics and content of the projects, and short and unchallenging projects. Furthermore, Kemaloğlu's results regarding motivation and learner autonomy correspond to the present study. The students' perceptions at YTU about promoting motivation and autonomy through project work are not as positive as the experts speculated in the literature. In the studies by Beckett (1999) and Eyring (1997), they reported the same negative student perceptions about the motivating quality of project work because the students in these two studies found project work, a long term process, stressful.

#### *Teachers' perceptions of project work at MU SFL*

The results of the study indicate that many of the teachers have positive attitudes towards project work, which is parallel to some other studies in the literature (Beckett, 1999; Gökçen, 2005; Kemaloğlu, 2006; Subaşı- Dinçman, 2002). However, in several aspects the teachers' views reflect some of the students' negative views. Like the students, the teachers think that project work did not help the students develop their multi-skills, especially listening and speaking skills, or



promote learner autonomy, or motivation for language learning. The biggest complaints by the teachers are the heavy workload, and the lack of time, which affect negatively the success of project work implementation. These points will be discussed further below.

Like the students in preparatory classes at MU SFL, teachers also think that they guided the students to choose topics in conformity with their interest, age, and proficiency level. From Gear's point of view (1998) the project topics should appeal to the students' background and interest. The teachers may have strong feelings about these results, as students themselves decide on their topics from the list given; they were not forced to work on a specific topic. However, one of the interviewed teachers stated that the task expected from the students makes it difficult to take advantage of project work. She felt that the tasks are unrealistic, because elementary level students are unable to do research on authentic texts, or compile and analyze the information which they gathered in order to present their products to the audience. In addition, Lee (2002) states that topics should be manageable in terms of available sources. Perhaps the main problem is not availability of sources, due to the Internet, but it appears that the tasks of the topics, as one of the interviewed teachers reported, are unmanageable for elementary level students. Therefore, they must be modified in terms of proficiency level in order to make them manageable for elementary level students.

The results show that a significant number of the teachers think they gave enough guidance in order to enable the students to carry out this work. However, through the classroom observations and interviews, it was noticed that teachers only give information about the topics in the list, due time of the procedure, and

evaluation criteria. Some students' thoughts confirm the observation that information was inadequate to conduct project work properly. According to this result, learners need training sessions about project work implementation, which was also recommended in the literature by Hedge (1993), Moulton and Holmes (2000), Stoller (2001), Beckett (2005), and Kemaloğlu (2006).

The results also show that most of the teachers prefer giving oral feedback rather than written feedback, and this is probably due to lack of time and information about the rationale of project work. In addition to project work, the teachers have much extra work to do, such as checking students' portfolios, checking their homework, preparing quizzes for graded readers, and other official duties. As was mentioned before, teachers could only deal with students' projects during the break time, because no time was allotted from the lesson hours in the curriculum for students' and teachers' collaboration for project work. Therefore, many of the teachers were unwilling to spend their break time to give feedback. If enough time is allotted in the curriculum for project work, the teacher will guide the students better. In addition, not only learners, but also teachers should be given training about the rationale, benefits of project work, and the teachers' major roles in this work so as to guide the students correctly. Teacher training about project work was also suggested by Subaşı-Dinçman (2002), and Kemaloğlu (2006).

The teachers' perceptions about improving language skills correspond with those of the students; many of the teachers have mixed feelings about the improvement of language skills through project work. Like students, a significant majority of the teachers do not think that students have a chance to improve their listening skills. This may be because almost all of the students benefited from

written materials, rather than aural materials or interactions with native speakers. Teachers should encourage students to conduct interviews with nonnative English speakers to promote interactive use of English outside the classroom, or use authentic aural materials as well as written materials. Savignon (2001) states that it is normal to have an interactional gap in EFL settings. However, it should be settled by using different sources such as online interaction.

It was also deduced from the results that the teachers felt that the students improved their research skills with the help of project work, which is also parallel to the study of Moulton and Holmes (2000), as well as Kemaloğlu (2006).

Like students, teachers also have mixed feelings about the positive effects of project work in promoting learning autonomy and motivation. These perceptions of students and teachers contradict with what the experts say in the relevant literature.

Most of the teachers think that organizing projects involving the whole class is not difficult for them. This perception may result from the fact that they do not apparently give guidance, and thus, it may appear easy for them to organize the projects and give feedback. In an informal interview, they indicated that they generally guide the students when they have difficulty in deciding what to do or how to do.

The significant majority of the teachers reported that project work takes a lot of time and it is a heavy workload for them. Even though project work does not take a lot of class time, teachers still have to spend a lot of time out of class giving oral feedback and answering the students' questions about language and the organization of the final product. This result is parallel to the studies reported by Eyring (1997), Subaşı-Dinçman (2002), and Gökçen (2005). The reason for this seems to be that, at

preparatory school teachers have to do many jobs, and project work is just one of them; hence, the teachers can not take a strong interest in project work.

Most of the teachers have mixed feelings about whether project work meets the program's goals and objectives. The reason behind this may be a lack of information about the program's goals and objectives. Furthermore, due to the implementation problems of project work, it may be that some of the teachers actually do not think that project work meets the program's goals and objectives.

*The effectiveness of project work implementation at MU SFL*

Through the sub-questions, the main aim of this study is to assess the effectiveness of project work implementation in preparatory classes at MU SFL. According to the findings of these sub-questions project work implementation at MU SFL is not very effective. The first sub-question reveals that there are some implementation differences between the literature and the actual implementation procedures. The most important difference is lack of teachers' guidance. In every step of the model implementation procedure the teacher acts as a guide. However, in many steps such as structuring the projects, and preparing the students for the language demands of compiling and analyzing the data and presentation of the final product, the students at MU SFL are left alone. This is one of the factors which appears to reduce the effectiveness of project work implementation at MU SFL. The teachers at this school are not aware of the importance of teachers' guidance for students' success in conducting projects. As the chair of the materials unit indicated, there was no teacher training session for project work implementation at MU SFL. Therefore, the teachers do not have sufficient knowledge to guide the students and give feedback. This state of insufficiency affects project work negatively.

Another important issue is that all of the students, without being categorized according to their English proficiency level, have to manage the same task, which requires the students to search for an authentic text, and compile and analyze the information in the text to make it ready for presentation. This task is not manageable for elementary level students, because they do not have enough foreign language knowledge in order to understand the authentic text, or analyze and synthesize the information in it.

Another reason why project work is not effective is the insufficient amount of time allotted in the curriculum for the implementation. Teachers take time only during ten minute breaks to help students structure their projects. The total amount of time allotted in the curriculum for assignment of the projects and presentation is only six hours in one term. As enough time for the students to successfully prepare and present the projects is not given, the implementation in the current institution is not as effective as the literature claims to be.

#### Pedagogical Implications

The results of data analysis have shown that there are some mis-matches between the implementation procedure at MU SFL and that described in the literature, such as the extent of collaboration among the students, the amount of teacher guidance and help, and also the evaluation process. As for the teachers' and the students' views, both the teachers and the students found the project work implementation at MU SFL to some extent useful for improving students' vocabulary and grammar knowledge, working collaboratively, and developing students' research skills. On the other hand, neither the teachers nor the students thought that project work was useful for improving language skills, especially

listening and speaking skills, promoting learner autonomy or increasing motivation. According to the teachers, the most remarkable problems with the project work implementation are the facts that the tasks associated with the topics were a bit above elementary level students, project work was a heavy workload for them, and also, not enough time was allotted in the curriculum to conduct this work properly. These issues mentioned will be explained one by one below.

The analysis of the qualitative data showed that in preparatory classes at MU SFL, the project work implementation is different from the relevant literature in some aspects; the most significant difference which was noticed in the classroom observation was that in one class all of the students worked in a group, in the second class, they worked in pairs, and in the third class, individually. The fact that this differs from one class to another class appears to be due to teacher guidance. Another important issue is that the students were left alone to do project work without the guidance of a teacher. However, as it is understood from Stoller's implementation procedure, teachers should always support the students in nearly all of the steps. The teachers at MU SFL only give the students oral feedback after they gather information about their topics. Moreover, the literature says that students should evaluate the project. However, at MU SFL the teachers evaluate the projects according to the criteria sheet which was prepared by the materials unit. The teachers in this institution were not trained about project work implementation. They were only given some information sheets about topics, due time, and evaluation criteria. However, the great majority of the teachers are not aware of the rationale of the project work, and also some of them do not give enough importance to project work implementation due to lack of information about it. Therefore, in this institution, the

teachers need training about project work in order to decrease the implementation differences from the relevant literature.

Another important issue that was realized through the quantitative data is that of the topics. It seemed that all the students choose the topics in accordance with their interest, age, and proficiency level through the quantitative data. However, one of the interviewed teachers pointed out that the requirements of the tasks are above the abilities of the elementary level students, so most of the students are unable to conduct this work themselves and they tend to get help from other people. If the students get help to conduct this work from other people, it is impossible to benefit from project work. Therefore, the tasks of the projects should be revised and modified in conformity with the level of the students.

Another interviewed teacher indicated that the elementary level students cannot conduct project work to the standard expected by the MU SFL prep school program. In order to research from authentic text the students need some background in English, and hence the project expectations from elementary levels should be simpler than higher level of students. For example, the students can introduce their family members via poster sessions, or make a model house and introduce it to the class, they may prepare a film which is about their daily routines, prepare a photo album to talk about their past life, and so on (Hutchinson, 1991). Since the main aim was to make the students use the foreign language through projects, elementary level students can prepare something without searching on an authentic text. One of the interviewed students had previous instruction in English, and he indicated that he benefited from the project work. However the other student was at the elementary level, and she indicated that it was really difficult for her, and she did not benefit

much. All of these results show that the tasks of the topics should be modified in conformity with the students' proficiency level.

The other key point which was realized through the classroom observation is the lack of audience interest in the presentations. There were no discussion sections after the presentation section, and almost none of the students were willing to ask questions or comment on the topics. In order to increase the students' participation during the presentation stage, the students should be involved in the assessment phase, or the students' participation can also be evaluated with the participation performance.

As for the quantitative data analysis, it seemed that a significant majority of the students have positive attitudes towards the project work implementation at MU SFL. However, there are some key points that must be revised. Many students have mixed feelings about the benefits of project work to improve their multi-skills. According to them the most improved language skill was vocabulary, and the least improved skill was listening skills. Through the observation it was noticed that none of the students took the advantage of aural materials, but all of them benefited from written materials. The importance of teacher and learner training comes into the scene again, because the literature indicates that learners can conduct interviews with non-native foreign language speakers, and then present the interview to the class. The teachers may have the students conduct an interview with an English speaker, the interaction between them is recorded, and after it is transcribed, it may be presented in the class through role plays, or the written products of it with the original cassette may be submitted to the teacher.



Another important issue which is different from what the experts point out in the literature is that many of the students think that project work did not promote their autonomy or motivation. This result may be related to the number of the projects they carry out. The students only conduct two projects during a year, one in the first term, and the other in the second term. It is thought that the more the students carry out project work on their own or with their groups, the more autonomous they will become, because they will acquire some skills which will enable them cope with the language related difficulties and those skills that will enable them produce language. If students can produce something in the language they will be proud of their products, which will motivate them to carry out better projects. Therefore, in order to experience these benefits of project work implementation, the number of projects may be doubled in each term.

However, it is not only project work implementation that will make students autonomous and motivated. Apart from project work implementation, students should be trained to use learning strategies. Most of the students at the very beginning of the course do not know how to study the language outside the classroom. That is why they should be trained for coping with language-related difficulties, such as how to transfer the knowledge acquired in the classroom to real life, so that students will be able to use these strategies to express themselves with the language.

Teachers' views with regard to project work implementation at MU SFL are not as positive as students' views. A great number of the teachers have positive feelings about project work implementation; however, there are also many teachers who have mixed or adverse feelings about project work program at MU SFL. The

possible reason behind these feelings may be that implementing project work is a great strain on the teachers, and they are not given enough time in the curriculum to carry on this work. The curriculum does not allow the teacher to guide the students adequately in the lesson hours. The teachers were given only one hour to give information about project work and get the students to decide on their project topics, and three hours for the presentation stage. If the presentations take more than three hours in a class, the teachers fall behind the curriculum, which influences badly the process of forthcoming lessons. The teachers have to keep up with the syllabus schedule, due to the testing system; therefore, neither teachers nor students are given enough time to carry out this work properly in the current program. In order to sort out this problem, the materials unit staff, who are responsible for developing the syllabus schedule, should be given an in-service training about the implementation procedure in the literature, and its time requirements. If the amount of time required for carrying out this work is not incorporated into the curriculum, project work cannot be carried out properly. Hence the learners cannot draw all the benefits from this work as they are described in the literature.

#### Limitations of the study

The most crucial limitations of this study involved the limited amount of time. Hence, the study had to be carried out with a limited number of participants. If it had been applied to all of the students who carry out project work, the results might have been more reliable. Because of administrative barriers, classroom observations were conducted with a limited number of classes in a limited time. In addition, since the teachers were not enthusiastic about answering the questionnaire, it took a large amount of time to collect the questionnaire. Another important

limitation of this study is that interviews were conducted with only a few teachers and students, which impairs data reliability. In addition, due to lack of time the interviews had to be conducted in the same week the questionnaires were administered. If the interviews had been conducted after the analysis of the questionnaires, the researcher might have been able to ask more directed and probing interview questions.

The study was conducted just for one level; it was not carried out with different levels of students. If it had been conducted with different proficiency levels, the researcher would have been able to compare any differences that may have derived from proficiency levels.

Since the study was carried out at a university with a limited number of participants, the results cannot be generalized. The results of the study are applicable only to preparatory classes at MU SFL. However, the procedure followed in evaluating the project work program might be applied in other contexts.

#### Suggestions for Further Studies

This study may be replicated with a larger number of participants in other local contexts. In addition, this study could be done after giving in-service training to the teachers about the place of project work in English language teaching and learning. This study was conducted only with teachers and students, but the administrators could be involved in another study. A case study could be done by giving training to the students and teachers, with the pre-training results and post-training results compared. Another suggestion is that an experimental study, which assesses the effectiveness of project work in English language teaching, might be conducted by comparing the results of project work groups with control groups.

Since this study was conducted with a single proficiency level of learners, it could be done with different proficiency levels, and the results can be compared in order to affirm that project work implementations require some English background so as to be conducted according to procedures outlined in the relevant literature.

### Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that the actual project work implementation in the preparatory classes of Muğla University has some mismatches with the literature. The mis-matches were identified with the help of classroom observations, and some recommendations were made so as to improve the existing project work program. The students' and the teachers' attitudes towards the existing project work program are generally positive. However, they indicated that the students did not experience the advantages described in the literature, especially in terms of improving multi-skills, promoting learner autonomy, and motivation.

The research described in this thesis aimed to find out the implementation problems in the existing project work program, and to recommend some solutions to the problems which occurred due to the differences in implementation. The results of this study will be used to improve the existing project work program in the preparatory classes of Muğla University School of Foreign Languages.

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## APPENDIX A: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Students,

In this questionnaire, there are statements about project work that you did in the first term. Please state to what extent you agree with the statements by circling the suitable number. In order that the study can be carried out in a sound way, please mark **only one item** in each statement.

**The given statements have no right or wrong answers.** For this reason while doing the questionnaire **think about what you actually did**, not what is required from you **and mark the item that reflects this in the best way.**

Please do not write your name in the questionnaire and in order that the study can be carried out in a sound way, please state your sincere thoughts **without skipping any items.**

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

SELDA AKKAŞ KELEŞ

(2007)

MATEFL Programı

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The meanings of the given numbers are as follows:

- 1: Strongly disagree.
- 2: Disagree.
- 3: Partially agree.
- 4: Agree.
- 5: Strongly agree.

NUMBER	ITEM	strongly agree	agree	partially agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	I can select the topic in accordance with my interest.					
2	I can select the topic in accordance with my age.					
3	I can select the topic in accordance with my English language level.					
4	I can easily ask the teacher everything I do not understand about project work					
5	The teacher helps me while choosing the topics					
6	The teacher helps me how to prepare the projects					

7	The teacher helps me how to present the projects					
8	The teacher gives me feedback during the process of project work.					
9	Expectations of tasks are clearly stated by the teacher.					
10	Process of project work is clearly defined by the teacher.					
11	Project work increases my interest to learn English					
12	During the research I use the sources such as library, books, magazines, encyclopedias, TV programs, or films					
13	I use the Internet in order to search information					
14	I get aid from native speakers to conduct project work					
15	It is easy to work collaboratively with other students to finish project work successfully					
16	Project work helps me to transfer what I learnt in the classroom to outside the classroom					
17	I am given enough time to finish project work					
18	Getting prepared for the project work takes a long time for me					
19	Finding appropriate materials for the project work is difficult for me					
20	I can easily ask my peer what I do not understand about project work					
21	I exchanges ideas with my peers during the project work procedure					
22	I use the grammar rules I've learned while I am doing project work					
23	I reinforce my grammar knowledge while I am doing project work					
24	I use integrated language skills such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar and vocabulary while I am doing project work					
25	Presenting project work makes me nervous					
26	Project work helps me improve my oral presentation skills					
27	Project work helps me read and comprehend the text better than before					
28	Project work helps me learn more English words					
29	Project work helps me write better than before					
30	Project work helps me speak better than before					
31	Project work helps me improve my listening skills					

32	Project work helps me feel a sense of satisfaction about English language learning					
33	Project work helps me experience success in English language learning					
34	Project work helps me enhance my self-confidence in English language learning					
35	Project work helps me enhance the sense of responsibility					
36	Project work helps me use my creativity					
37	Project work helps me improve my decision making ability					
38	Project work helps me become a more active learner in the classroom					
39	Project work makes the classroom atmosphere a more enjoyable place for me					
40	Project work helps me make close friends in the classroom					
41	Working in group for project work is useful					

## APPENDIX B: KAPALI UÇLU ÖĞRENCİ ANKETİ

Sevgili Öğrenciler,

Bu anket yapmış olduğunuz proje çalışmasına ilişkin değerlendirmenizi almak ve uygulanan proje çalışmalarını daha etkin hale getirmek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır.

Anketten elde edilen

bilgiler Bilkent Üniversitesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği Yüksek Lisans Programı çerçevesinde gerçekleştirilen Proje çalışmaları konulu bir yüksek lisans tezinde kullanılacaktır.

**Ankette bulunan ifadelere ne ölçüde katıldığınızı size uygun numaraya x işareti koyarak gösteriniz.** Araştırmanın sağlıklı bir şekilde yürütülmesi için lütfen her bir maddede **tek bir seçeneği işaretleyiniz.**

Ankete isminizi yazmayınız ve lütfen hiçbir maddeyi atlamadan samimi görüşlerinizi iletiniz.

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Verilen sayıların anlamları şunlardır.

1: Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

2: Katılmıyorum

3: Kısmen katılıyorum

4: Katılıyorum

5: Kesinlikle katılıyorum

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Kendi ilgi alanım doğrultusunda proje konusu seçebiliyorum.					
2.	Yaşıma uygun proje konusu seçebiliyorum.					
3.	İngilizce dil seviyeme uygun proje konusu seçebiliyorum.					
4.	Proje çalışmasıyla ilgili anlamadığım her noktayı öğretmene rahatça sorabiliyorum.					
5.	Öğretmen proje konusunu seçerken yardımcı oluyor					
6.	Öğretmen projeyi nasıl hazırlamam gerektiği konusunda yardımcı oluyor.					
7.	Öğretmen projeyi nasıl sunmam gerektiği konusunda yardımcı oluyor.					
8.	Proje çalışmam boyunca öğretmen geri bildirim veriyor.					
9.	Proje çalışmamdan ne beklediği öğretmen tarafından açıkça belirtiliyor.					
10.	Proje çalışması aşamaları öğretmen tarafından dikkatli bir şekilde planlanıyor.					

11.	Proje çalışması İngilizce öğrenme isteğimi artırıyor.					
12.	Araştırma için kütüphane, kitap, dergi, ansiklopedi, televizyon programı ve film gibi kaynaklardan yararlanıyorum.					
13.	Araştırma için interneti kullanıyorum.					
14.	Proje çalışmasını tamamlamak için ana dili İngilizce olan birisinden yardım alıyorum.					
15.	Proje çalışmasını başarılı bir şekilde tamamlamak için başka arkadaşlarla beraber çalışmak kolay oluyor.					
16.	Proje çalışması sınıf içersinde öğrendiklerimi sınıf dışına aktarmama yardımcı oluyor.					
17.	Proje çalışmasını tamamlamak için bana yeterli zaman veriliyor.					
18.	Proje çalışmasına hazırlanmak çok zamanımı alıyor.					
19.	Proje çalışması için uygun materyali bulmakta zorlanıyorum.					
20.	Proje çalışmasında anlamadığım noktayı arkadaşşıma rahatça soruyorum.					
21.	Proje çalışması süresince arkadaşlarımla fikir alış verişi yapıyorum.					
22.	Proje çalışması yaparken öğrendiğim İngilizce dil bilgisi kurallarını kullanıyorum.					
23.	Proje çalışması süresince öğrendiğim İngilizce dil bilgisi kurallarını pekiştiriyorum.					
24.	Proje çalışması yaparken okuma, yazma, konuşma, dinleme, dil bilgisi kuralları, kelime öğrenme gibi farklı dil yetilerini kullanıyorum.					
25.	Proje sunumları bende gerginlik yaratıyor.					
26.	Proje sunumları sunum yapma becerimin gelişmesine yardımcı oluyor.					
27.	Proje çalışması İngilizce metinleri öncekinden daha iyi okumama ve anlamama yardımcı oluyor.					
28.	Proje çalışması daha çok kelime öğrenmeye yardımcı oluyor.					
29.	Proje çalışması İngilizcede daha iyi yazmama yardımcı oluyor.					
30.	Proje çalışması İngilizceyi daha iyi konuşmama yardımcı oluyor.					
31.	Proje çalışması İngilizce dinleme yetimin gelişmesine yardımcı oluyor.					
32.	Proje çalışması İngilizceyi öğrenmekten has duymamı sağlıyor.					
33.	Proje çalışması İngilizceyi öğrenmede başarıyı tatmama yardımcı oluyor.					
34.	Proje çalışması İngilizceyi öğrenmede kendime olan güvenimin artmasını sağlar.					
35.	Proje çalışması sorumluluk bilincimin artmasına yardımcı oluyor.					
36.	Proje çalışması yaratıcılığımı kullanmama yardımcı oluyor.					
37.	Proje çalışması karar verme yetimin gelişmesine yardımcı oluyor.					
38.	Proje çalışması sınıfta daha katılımcı bir öğrenci olmama yardımcı oluyor.					
39.	Proje çalışması sınıfı daha eğlenceli bir ortama dönüştürüyor.					
40.	Proje çalışması sınıf içinde yakın arkadaşlıklar edinmeye yardımcı oluyor.					
41.	Proje çalışması için grup halinde çalışmak faydalı oluyor.					

## APPENDIX C: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear colleagues,

This questionnaire has been developed to find out your attitudes towards the project work implemented in the institution. Your answers are not only invaluable for the researcher herself but also they will help to reveal strengths and weaknesses of the existing project work program. The data collected by the questionnaire will be used in an MA thesis about project work.

Please do not write your names on the questionnaire, and in order that the study can be carried out in a sound way, please state your sincere thoughts **without skipping any items** Your answers will be kept entirely confidential.

If you have any questions, please contact with me. I thank you in advance for devoting your time for questionnaire and kind cooperation.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT PROJECT WORK FOR TEACHERS

NUMBER	ITEM	strongly agree	agree	partially agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	I guide my students to choose the topics in accordance with their interest.					
2	I guide my students to choose the topics in accordance with their age.					
3	I guide my students to choose the topic in accordance with their level.					
4	I allow my students to decide their own process of doing the project work					
5	I assist my students in accessing research resources.					
6	I assist my students clearly in what they do for the preparation of the project					
7	I assist my students ,in the way they do their first draft of project work					
8	I assist my students how they do their final product					
9	I give written feedback on their first draft of their work					
10	I give oral feedback on their first draft of their work					
11	I find it difficult to guide the students how they conduct the project work					
12	I find it difficult to organize all the students' projects.					
13	I find it difficult to develop materials related to chosen topics					
14	I find it difficult to assess all of the students' project work objectively					
15	Project work implementation requires a large amount of work time for teachers					

16	Project work requires a lot of workload for teachers					
17	Project work meets our program's objectives					
18	Students are enthusiastic to conduct project work					
19	Students do not spend enough time to conduct their project work					
20	Students feel more motivated about learning English through project work					
21	Project work helps the students take their own learning responsibility					
22	Project work helps students feel more interested in English language learning.					
23	Project work helps students become more independent learners.					
24	Project work helps students become more active learners in the classroom.					
25	Project work helps students work collaboratively					
26	Project work helps students consolidate their English learning.					
27	Students improve reading skills through project work					
28	Students improve writing skills through project work					
29	Students improve speaking skills through project work					
30	Students improve listening skills through project work					
31	Students improve their computer skills through project work					
32	Students improve their research skills through project work					
33	Project work helps students improve speaking skills in public without embarrassment.					
34	Project work implementation helps students become independent users of English in real life.					



## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS, HEAD OF MATERIALS UNIT

1. What was the reason of incorporating project work into the curriculum of MU SFL?
2. What are the goals of project work?
3. Can you tell me the steps of PW application?
4. Why did you decide to use projects as an instructional tool?
5. What kind of information or training do you give the teachers about PW implementation?

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS, TEACHERS

1. Do you think that students make use of PW implementation at MU SFL?
2. What kind of problems do you encounter while implementing PW?
3. Can you tell me the steps of PW implementation in your class?
4. Do you think that you support your students adequately?
5. Can you say that PW is beneficial for students language learning and it should go on ?

## APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS, STUDENTS

1. Do you think that PW is beneficial for your language learning?
2. What kind of problems do you encounter while doing PW?
3. Did you get adequate support from your teacher? Did she explain you what to do and how to do clearly?
4. Was it difficult to find appropriate research sources?
5. Was it difficult to understand authentic text?
6. Was it difficult to analyze and synthesize the text?
7. Was the given time enough for you?
8. Did you enjoy PW while doing it?

## APPENDIX G: TOPIC LIST

**2006-2007 ACADEMIC YEAR**

## PROJECT WORK TASKS

1. Introducing a city / hometown (individual)
2. My ideal home / city / school (individual)
3. Introducing a dangerous / extreme sport (individual)
4. Writing a film / novel review (individual)
5. A famous invention (individual)
6. Introducing a special occasion (e.g. Dwali, Thanksgiving, etc.) (individual)
7. Comparing two famous people / celebrities (individual)
8. The problems of youth in Turkey (individual / pair work)
9. Introducing Muğla and its districts (individual / pair work)
10. The importance of media in a country. (give the concrete examples from the history and the events in the past (individual)
11. Prepare a school magazine or a newspaper (group work)
12. The reasons and the results of traffic accidents in Turkey. What should be done to prevent the traffic accidents? (individual)
13. The unemployment problem in our country. What are the reasons, the results and the solutions? (individual)
14. Environmental problems of the earth and its effects on all living things. (air pollution, water pollution, etc.) (individual)
15. Describe a traditional local wedding one by one, day by day. (you can look at Pathfinder 3 Lesson 12 as a pre-activity lesson.) (individual)
16. Internet; its history and its use at present. What are its harms and benefits. (individual)
17. The superstitions of people in Turkey. (individual)
18. Writing a short story (individual)
19. Preparing a poster to advertise your class trip. Give a detailed explanation of the trip. (e.g. how long will it last, how many people will attend, what is the route, etc.?) (pair work)
20. Preparing a tourist brochure (group work)
21. Describing a friend (individual)
22. Using readers for project work (group work)
  - a) summaries of the story / stories
  - b) Crosswords / word searches of vocabulary from the story / stories
  - c) Reviews of the book / books
  - d) Filmed scene from the book

- e) Presentation of a clip from the film of the book compared to a scene in the book
  - f) Biographies and photos of actors from the film
23. Using music for project work (group work)
- a) make a CD cover
  - b) invent the band and the names and biographies of the band members
  - c) video an interview with the band
  - d) record a song
  - e) write gig reviews
  - f) photo shoot of the band
  - g) design a poster advertising gigs (live performance)
24. Interview with a hotel manager (individual)
25. Building an imaginary hotel (group work)
26. Inventing a new planet (group work)
27. Advantages and disadvantages of alternative medicine (individual)
28. Preparing a brochure for new students (group work)
29. The problem of students at prep schools (group work)
30. The problems of teachers (group work)
31. Description of a hotel or a holiday resort (group work)
32. Generation gap (individual / pair work)
33. A day in the life of ..... (individual)
34. Fashion (local / general / global) (individual)
35. Writing a play and performing it in class (group work)
36. Folk tale project (group work)
37. Look around! What a beautiful world you live in (individual)
38. Find a Turkish poem and write the story in the poem (individual)
39. Tours around the world (group work)
40. The differences between men and women (individual)
41. We are teenagers (group work)
42. Women in my country (group / pair / individual work)
43. What's your symbol? (individual)
44. World of Harry Potter (group / individual work)
45. English is everywhere (group / individual work)
46. Giving information about St. Valentine's Day (individual)
47. Preparing and performing a quiz contest (group work)
48. Pocket money survey (individual)
49. My hero (individual work)
50. Natural disasters (group / individual work)
51. A picture tells a thousand words (individual)
52. The island (group / individual work)
53. Famous foreign cities (group / individual work)
54. Animals are our friends (individual)

## APPENDIX H: EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PROJECT WORK

Date : \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Student 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Student 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Student 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Student 4: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROCESSS CRITERIA

COMPONENT	MARKS	St	St	St	St
		1	2	3	4
The task chosen and reported at the proper time.	5				
Meeting with the consultant teacher conducted appropriately.	5				
An active role played in the group.	5				
The written product handed in at the proper time.	5				
The written product composed of mainly student's original words and sentences.	10				
The written product composed of partially student's original words and sentences.	5				
The written product copied from another source or the internet.	0				

## PRESENTATION CRITERIA

COMPONENT	Mark	St	St	St	St
		1	2	3	4
<b>Task Achievement(15)</b> The topic dealt with comprehensively & relevantly with appropriate details. The topic dealt with comprehensively with limited details. Moderate success with the topic, some details, some irrelevant data/ideas. Limited success with the topic, some details, includes irrelevant data/ideas. Inability to deal with the topic, includes irrelevant data/ideas.	15 12 9 6 3				
<b>Vocabulary(10)</b> Use of vocabulary is accurate and appropriate. Appropriate terms use, but student must rephrase ideas due to lexical inadequacies. Communication limited from inadequate & inappropriate vocabulary. Frequent misuse of words & very limited vocabulary. Communication impaired from inadequate vocabulary.	10 8 6 4 2				
<b>Grammar &amp; Structure(10)</b> Makes few (if any) noticeable errors of grammar or word order. Some errors of grammar and/or word order, but meaning not obscured. Some errors of grammar and/or word order which obscure meaning Use of only basic structures and simple tenses, and/or frequent errors of grammar and/ word order which obscure meaning. Many errors, even in basic structures, causing impaired communication.	10 8 6 4 2				
<b>Fluency(10)</b> Speech is fluent and effortless with wide range of expressions used. Occasional brief hesitations or searching for words, but they do not disturb the listener or prevent communication. Noticeable hesitations which sometimes disturb the listener or prevent communication. Hesitations and fragmentary speech often demand great patience from the listener. Fragmentary and disconnected speech results in disrupted communication.	10 8 6 4 2				
<b>Presentation Skill(10)</b> Fluent and effective presentation made naturally without reading. Fluent and effective presentation made partially through reading. Presentation made totally through reading.	10 5 0				
<b>Intelligibility(8)</b> Fully understandable, even with influence from mother tongue. Some mispronunciation attracts listener's attention, yet do not affect understanding. Frequent pronunciation deviations demand listener's attention/effort. Hard to understand due to pronunciation, deviations, great listener effort required. Not understandable due to numerous pronunciation deviations.	8 7 5 4 2				
<b>Visual Aids(7)</b> Comprehensive and effective display of visual aids. Limited use of visual aids. No use of visual aids.	7 3 0				
<b>TOTAL</b>					

## APPENDIX I: STEPS OF PROJECT WORK

	DUE DATES	STEPS OF THE PROJECT WORK
1	04.12.2006	*agree on a theme
2	04.12.2006	*determine the final outcome
3	04.12.2006	*structure the project
4	05.12.2006-08.01.2007	*identify language skills and strategies  *Ss gather information  *compile and analyze information
5	08-10.01.2007	*Ss hand in the product
6	15-19.01.2007	*Ss present the product



## APPENDIX J: THE DOS AND DON'TS OF ORAL PRESENTATIONS

## DO:

1. Lots of background research. Even the information is not used in the presentation; it is useful to have knowledge as possible for the discussion and audience knowledge.
2. Be organized. Prepare in plenty of time.
3. Structure your presentation.
4. Obtain material from a wide range of sources.
5. Practice your presentation. This enables you to check the timing.
6. Use note cards and write down ONLY the key words on the cards.
7. Speak clearly.
8. Have eye contact with your audience.
9. Start and stop your presentation on time.
10. Dress appropriately.

## DON'T:

1. Leave research and preparation until the last minute.
2. Rely on one source of data.
3. Read from a script.
4. Go over the time allotted for the presentation.
5. Have notes to rely on if you get stuck.
6. Be late for the presentation.

Important note: Do not forget that memorization method is risky. While speaking you can lose your place and leave something out. Memorization also causes panic.

## APPENDIX K: SAMPLE OF THE INTERVIEW WITH THE MATERIALS HEAD

I: Hi, how are you?

H: Fine, and you?

I: Thank you, if I don't keep you busy, can I ask some questions about project work implementation in our institution?

H: Sure!

I: Ok. I would like to ask you the reasons of incorporating project work into the curriculum of Muğla University School of Foreign Languages.

H: The main reason was to set and provide variety, because students are really getting bored from just doing something from the text book and doing other worksheets, and etc., but we found out that our students need some other aspects of learning English, learning a language and they need to show their productivity and creativity doing with different works and they have to do it with themselves. So, we did some research for this and we found out that project work is being implemented in different kinds of prep classes and we decided to incorporate it to our curriculum.

I: Thank you. Can you tell me the goals of project work in our institution?

H: The main goal is to motivate students. While answering the first question I mentioned that the main reason was to provide variety and to motivate students. Students need to produce something themselves, they must feel that they can do something with their English, with the language they learn, so the main goal of project work implementation is that when they see they can understand an article written in English, while doing their research they get happy and they get motivated. The main goal was to motivate them and to make them produce something with their English.

## APPENDIX L: SAMPLE INTERVIEW WITH A TEACHER

I: Hello, how are you?

T2: Thank you.

I: You look tired.

T2: I am a little bit.

I: I would like to talk to you about PW. Are you implementing PW in your classes?

T2: Yes.

I: Can I ask a few questions about it?

T2: Ya, that's a pleasure.

I: Do you think that students can make good use of PW implementation in our institution.

T2: I think to some extent, because the level of my students is elementary and the topics that they chose were a little bit above their level. So, it was difficult for them to write their topics themselves. I think they got help from other people around them, they got help and they used the structure that they did not learn. So, they just you know read their projects, read the projects of people whom they got help and also the other problem was that there were lots of vocabulary that the class did not know, so the presenter student presented the topic, but the class didn't fully comprehend the topic I think. So, these were the problems I mean the topics were a little bit above their level. The task was too difficult for them you know to manage. I think the topics must be easier for the level.

I: You mean that the topics are not appropriate for their proficiency level, so PW doesn't appeal to them, do you mean that?

## APPENDIX M: SAMPLE INTERVIEW WITH A STUDENT

I: Hi!

S2: Hi!

I: Could I talk to you about the projects you implemented in your classroom?

S2: Sure, that's my pleasure.

I: The first question I would like to ask you is whether project work is beneficial for you in terms of improving your language learning.

S2: I can say that it was really beneficial for me.

I: What kind of learning benefits did you gain?

S2: We both listened to our classmates' project presentation and we, ourselves, prepared a project. With the help of the projects, we learnt many things that we did not know. First, we learnt how to use the language, as the sources are original texts; we learnt how the natives speak. We learnt a number of new words; I can not say we learnt a lot in terms of grammar. And also, we really got invaluable information in terms of general knowledge. We did not think of PW in terms of grammar.

I: Thank you very much. You think it was beneficial in order to improve your general knowledge as well as your language.

S2: Certainly.

I: Another thing I would like to know is that what kind of problems you met during the procedure of project work implementation.

S2: What do you mean by saying problems?

I: Was it difficult for you to access the resource? Was it difficult for you to understand the authentic materials?

S2: Of course, I encountered some problems.