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AN INVESTIGATION ON SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED PRIMARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DOING HOMEWORK

<u>THESIS BY</u>

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I

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II

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ÖZET

SOSYAL AÇIDAN DEZAVANTAJLI İLKOKUL ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN ÖDEV YAPIMINA KARŞI TUTUMLARI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Engin ZİLKAR

Ödev yapımı eğitimde çok önemli bir yere sahiptir. Ödev yapımı özellikle ilkokul öğrencileri için soyut kavramları muhakeme yetenekleri olmadığından oldukça önemlidir. Bu yüzden, dil öğretmenlerinin öğrencilerinin ihtiyaçlarına göre ödev vermesi bir gerekliliktir. Çok sayıda eğitimci öğrencilere ödev vermenin öneminin farkındadırlar; ancak ilkokul öğrencilerinin ödev algıları hala tartışılmaktadır.

Mevcut çalışmanın ana amacı İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen ilkokul öğrencilerinin ödev yapımına karşı algılarını araştırmaktır. Bu sebeple, araştırmacı çalışmaya Kars ili Akçakale İlkokulu'ndan 60 tane katılımcı seçmiştir. Çalışmada bir anket ve sözlü mülakat araştırma araçları olarak yer almıştır, ayrıca ilkokul öğrencilerin ödev yapımına karşı tutumlarını ölçmek ve anketle sözlü mülakat sonuçlarından elde edilen verileri değerlendirmek amacıyla istatistiksel ve içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Çalışma ödev yapımının öğrencilerin eğitim hayatlarının vazgeçilmez bir parçası olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Ek olarak zamanlama ve ödev miktarı çalışmadaki bir diğer konudur. Katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu kendilerine haftalık 2 saatten fazla İngilizce ödevi verilmesini istemektedir. Dahası, kendi bakış açılarına göre öğrenciler eğlenceli, ilgi çekici ve resimli ödevler yapmayı tercih etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ödev Yapımı, İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Çocuklar, Dil Öğreniminde Motivasyon, Sosyal Açıdan Dezavantajlı Öğrenciler

ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION ON SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DOING HOMEWORK

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Homework plays a significant role in education. Especially for young learners, doing homework is quite important due to their inability to reason abstract notions. Therefore, it is a necessity for language teachers to assign homework according to their students' own needs. A great number of educators are aware of the importance of assigning homework to their students, however young learners' perceptions of homework is still questionable.

The main purpose of present study is to investigate primary school students' perceptions of doing homework in EFL classrooms. Therefore, the researcher selected 60 students from Akçakale Primary School, in Kars Province. A questionnaire and interviews were employed as the data collection tools in this study. Descriptive statistics and the content analysis were used to interpret the results from the questionnaire and interviews. The findings of this study show that homework has been an important part of the students' education life. Most of the participants hold positive opinions about doing homework. In addition, the amount and the timing of a homework assignment is another concern in the study. A great majority of the participants want to have more than 2 hours of English homework in a week. Furthermore, they prefer to do enjoyable, interesting, and pictorial assignments.

ABBREVIATIONS

EFL   : English as a Foreign Language

NEA   : National Education Association

TEYL   : Teaching English to Young Learners

CEFR : Common European Framework of Reference

AMTB : Attitude/Motivation Test Battery

SDT   : Self-Determination Theory

MEB   : Turkish Ministry of National Education

FLL   : Foreign Language Learning

SPSS   : Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Many studies have been carried out in order to find out the importance of doing homework in language classrooms. Tam & Chan (2011) state in their study that "To optimize the use of homework, we need to have thorough understanding on preferences and perceptions of different parties towards homework" (p. 570). Likewise, Xu & Yuan (2003) think that "…instead, it was viewed as one of the major indicators of whether students were doing well in school or not, a view shared by all three parties" (p. 32). There are many reasons for doing homework. Firstly, homework raises the attention of a child on lessons. It gives children opportunity to repeat his/her lessons. It directs the children to repeat to various sources. Lastly, it makes students more responsible, and children will discover the ability to learn a language. Dobozy (2010) asserts that "Generally speaking, homework can have a number of functions, but generally all assigned homework tasks allow teachers to extend the school day" (p. 3).

Learning a new language is challenging if a student knows nothing about it. A learner ought to meet some requirements in the process of language learning. Doing homework is one of those requirements to be done. Doyle & Barber (1990) order the importance of homework as follows:

> (1)Doing homework is useful as an act of intellectual discipline; (2) Homework eases time constraints on the amount of curricular material that can be covered; (3) Homework fosters student initiative, independence, and responsibility; (4) Homework supplements and reinforces work done in school; and (5) Homework brings home and school closer together. Research into the effectiveness of homework is inconclusive (p. 2).

We have known that homework assignments are directed to the students out of school. Eddy (1984) points out that "homework is the out-of-class tasks that a student is assigned as an extension of classroom work" (p. 2). Homework assignments are given to repeat and support the

lessons that were issued in the classroom atmosphere. Homework assignments are substantial for learners to take responsibilities outside of the school.

With the help of the teacher, students can learn the importance of doing homework as a part of language learning. Doing homework can help students to develop their language and get prepared for the next assignment. Homework is the supplementary part of school activities. Learner might be successful if s/he knows the importance of doing homework after the teacher teaches the new topic.

1.2. Background of the Study

The diversity and types of homework bring out the question how language teachers can give appropriate homework tasks to their students. It is also quite important to learn how the students and how the teachers perceive homework. While giving homework tasks, it is important for the language teachers to consider their learners' capacity to do homework, their language proficiency levels, ages, and attitudes towards fulfilling homework.

There have been developments in the types of homework assigned to learners together with the new technology. Traditional ways of homework tasks have been replaced by modern types such as multimedia usage, quizzes on websites, and preparing materials with the help of computers. Spiri (2009) articulates that "In addition, external links provide students a range of other activities including short, understandable, and topic-relevant YouTube videos, ELL reading pages, and fun quizzes" (p. 5). But students' physical conditions for completing a homework task have significance in order to finish a task. All in all, traditional methods are still applicable all over the world.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Homework is a learning process in which the teacher monitors the experiences of children. It also builds a bridge between home and school. Cooper (1989) articulates that "Because homework goes home, we have to consider variations in out-of-school environments when we think about what might determine the value of an assignment" (p.87). For all language teachers, giving homework to their students is a requirement in the language learning process. They are naturally aware of the importance of homework. It is really essential to give appropriate,

useful, and enjoyable homework tasks that attract students' attention about homework. It might be boring to deal with a new language for some students. Because primary students are learning reading and writing, their mother tongue, even functions of a school in their early years of education. Therefore, language teachers ought to be more flexible when it comes to teaching a new language. They need to find out how they can manage to teach a new language and how they can give suitable forms of homework tasks to their students by taking their ages, expectations, their ability to learn a new language, and their levels of learning a foreign language into consideration. Cooper (2008) explains the factors which affects doing homework as "gender, ethnicity, ability, motivation, wealth, parent involvement, subject matter, teachers' training, and class size" (p. 1).

1.4. Significance of the Study

Many studies have been carried out to evaluate how and what kind of homework tasks language teachers give their students. This depends on teachers, school administrative, and parents. To relate this, Epstein (1988) thinks that "If teachers, administrators, and parents define several purposes simultaneously, then multiple outcomes may be measured to determine whether all purposes are met" (p. 12). As it had already been put forward, this study aims to find out primary school students' perceptions and behaviours towards doing English homework.

Naturally, most language teachers assign their students homework to be carried out at home. However, it is important to remember that learners may have some difficulties in fulfilling their homework assignments at their home. The sources of these difficulties might be caring for their brothers or sisters, housework to do, or to do list that their parents give. These kinds of actions may be either obligatory or voluntary. Therefore, language teachers had better be aware of out of school incidents.

1.5. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the primary school students' perceptions and attitudes towards doing English homework in language classes. This study investigates the reasons for doing homework, and it searches what skills a child will gain by doing homework. The importance of the timing a homework task, types of homework tasks, students' ability to

learn a new language, their perceptions of language and homework tasks, their ages and language levels, motivational factors, and characteristics of young learners are studied in order to be aware of the expectations on homework.

1.6. Research Questions

The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What are EFL students' perceptions of homework?

2. What are the problems the students encounter while completing homework, if any?

3. What are their preferences regarding homework tasks?

1.7. Operational Definitions

Homework: "Homework is the out-of-class tasks that a student is assigned as an extension of classroom work" (Yvonne, 1984, p. 2).

Socially Disadvantaged: "Children who grow up in a "socially disadvantaged" context often lack the language skills required to function in society in the way that society expects them to. Low literacy skills are often observed; a lack of proficiency in the standard language makes it difficult for the children to participate in the societal debate; they avoid writing because they realise that they make a lot of spelling mistakes" (Avermaet, 2006, p. 7).

CHAPTER II

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate primary school EFL learners' perceptions towards doing homework. This chapter starts with the definitions of homework, and then continues with the types of homework. Next, the characteristics of young learners and their motivation in language learning are discussed. Finally, the studies that reveal students' perceptions towards doing homework are presented.

2.2. What is Homework?

In literature, homework has various definitions. Eddy (1984) defines homework as one of the out-of-class tasks that a student is assigned as an extension of classroom work. Epstein (1988) states the importance of homework as one of the most important practices for establishing a successful academic environment in a high school. In a similar way, Alanne & Macgregor (2007) give the definition of homework as "the time students spend outside the classroom in assigned activities to practice, reinforce or apply newly-acquired skills and knowledge and to learn necessary skills of independent study" (as cited in Dobozy, 2010, p.2). Following, he identified seven purposes of homework as follows:

> Practice (to increase speed, mastery, or maintenance of skills); participation (to increase the involvement of each student with the learning task); personal development (to build student responsibility, honesty, perseverance, time management, self-confidence); parent-child relations (to establish communication between parent and child on the importance of schoolwork and learning); policy (to fulfil directives from administrators at the district or school level for a prescribed amount of homework per week); public relations (to inform parents about what is happening in class); or punishment (to remind students of the teacher's requirements for class work or behaviour) (p.3).

As Epstein & Voorhis (2001) indicate the homework process starts with teachers who choose the topics and the content of assignments to help students in order to meet particular learning goals. Similarly, Corno (1996) explains homework as teachers' tool, which is used to make students go back over things they have taught in school, as reinforcement or practice. Generally, teachers give their students homework out of lesson time. Accordingly, Corno (1996) clarifies five widespread misconceptions about doing homework: "the best teachers give homework regularly, more homework is better than less, parents want their children to have homework, homework supports what students learn in school, homework fosters discipline and personal responsibility" (p.28). Moreover, Cooper (1989) thinks that homework frequently yields to disagreement among teachers, students, and parents. Another well-known researcher, Warton (2004), defines homework as activities that school students are asked to complete outside of lesson time.

According to Doyle & Barber (1990), there are three types of homework commonly assigned by teachers: practice, preparation, and extension. The following subsections present these three types of homework.

2.2.1. Practice Homework

Practice homework is the most and commonly used type of homework. Teachers' aim of giving such kind of homework is to provide students an opportunity to reinforce recently acquired skills or apply recent learning (Doyle & Barber, 1990). For Doyle & Barber (1990), there is a misconception about assigning students this type of homework. Conversely, in their study, they questioned the effectiveness and utility of such types of assignments.

In like a manner, Epstein (1988) states that doing homework gives students opportunity to practice and enhance their understanding of how and when to use their acquisition.

2.2.2. Preparation Homework

This type of homework is generally used in the upper classes. The purpose of preparation homework is to let students know what will be the following day's discussion or lecture and to get students prepared for that discussion (Doyle & Barber, 1990). Naturally, by giving

preparation homework, teachers aim to prepare their students for a continuous process. Students are expected to get prepared for the next chapter of that day's topic.

In a booklet published by National Education Association (NEA), Washington, it is stated, "Preparation periods are another way of reducing the amount of homework by having some or all of it done in school. In some schools, the last period of the day, or even most of the afternoon is scheduled for independent study under supervision. Students are encouraged to use the library and to have individual conferences with their teachers" (p.24).

2.2.3. Extension Homework

Another commonly used type of homework is the extension homework. According to Doyle & Barber (1990), extension homework tends to take students to the next level of practicing in which they feel individualized, creative and more productive. Extension assignments aim to strengthen students' initiative for learning the topic by fostering individuality. This kind of homework exceeds the time limit in the classroom, which takes too much time to finish. Therefore, it may be difficult to handle this kind of assignment for teachers.

2.3. Characteristics of Young Learners

In recent years, researching characteristics of young learners has become an important area of topic in literature. Similarly, teaching English to young learners (TEYL) has attracted many researchers into language teaching. Scott and Ytreberg (1990) studied young learners by dividing into two groups: five to ten-year-olds and eight to ten-year-olds. The main reasons for dividing young learner into categories are children's different process of development and acquisition of a foreign language.

In this study, the age range of participants changes between 8 and 10 year-olds, who are in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades of primary school. Scott and Ytreberg (1990) have listed the characteristics of eight to ten-year-olds:

- Their basic concepts are formed. They have very decided views of the world.

- They can tell the difference between fact and fiction.

- They ask questions all the time.

- They rely on the spoken word as well as the physical world to convey and understand meaning.

- They are able to make some decisions about their own learning.

- They have definite views about what they like and don't like doing.

- They have a developed sense of fairness about what happens in the classroom and begin to question the teacher's decisions.

- They are able to work with others and learn from others (p.4).

According to Scott and Ytreberg (1990), eight to ten-year-olds controls their mother tongue competently which means they are aware of main syntax rules of their mother tongue. When they reach ten years old, they will be able to understand abstracts and symbols, and they will be able to generalize and systematize. They will gain language awareness and readiness, which they will use unconsciously in foreign language classrooms. This is quite parallel with the explanations of Brown (2007). Brown (2007) emphasizes that children use the language simply by not learning formal grammar. Although teachers don't directly teach the verbs or nouns, children learn the language perfectly. It is unnecessary for children to conceptualize the grammar of the foreign language.

More specifically, what children can succeed in simple and general tasks is emphasized in Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as follows:

Learners;

- can make simple purchases where pointing or other gesture can support the verbal reference;

- can ask and tell day, time of day and date;

- can use some basic greetings;

- can say yes, no, excuse me, please, thank you, sorry;

- can fill in uncomplicated forms with personal details, name, address, nationality, marital status;

- can write a short, simple postcard (p. 31).

Cameron (2001) states that children are more willing to please their teachers than adolescents although they don't understand why. However, their attention span is limited as compared to older learners. What's more, children aren't capable of solving complex items of a foreign language such as syntax, morphology, and phonology. Older students, in contrast, can use their meta-linguistic ability to understand discourse or grammar.

2.4. Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation in language learning has been a major concern for scholars for many years. Especially, with the introduction of new methods in language teaching, psychological characteristics of learners and how the brain functions have gained importance in language learning. It is quite difficult to give an exact definition to motivation. However, as a dictionary term, motivation refers to "desire or willingness to do something or enthusiasm" (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/motivation). In the educational background, Dörnyei & Cheng (2007) define motivation as "the initial engine to generate learning and later functions as an ongoing driving force that helps to sustain the long and usually laborious journey of acquiring a foreign language" (p.153). Dörnyei (1994) also states that motivation is an indicator of Foreign Language Learning (FLL) achievement. He illustrates the components of foreign language learning motivation as in the table below:

Table 1. Components of foreign language learning motivation (Dörnyei, 1994a, p. 280)

Language Level	Integrative Motivational Subsystem
	Instrumental Motivational Subsystem
Learner Level	Need for Achievement
	Self-Confidence
	* Language Use Anxiety
	* Perceived L2 Competence
	* Causal Attributions
	* Self-Efficacy
Learning Situation Level	
Course-Specific	Interest
Motivational Components	Relevance
	Expectancy
	Satisfaction
Teacher-Specific	Affiliative Motive
Motivational Components	Authority Type
	Direct Socialization of Motivation
	* Modeling
	*Task Presentation
	* Feedback
Group-Specific	Goal-orientedness
Motivational Components	Norm & Reward System
	Group Cohesion
	Classroom Goal Structure

In fact, motivation cannot be defined in a way that people can understand easily. Gardner & Masgoret (1985) list some basic features that a 'motivated' person has: "the motivated individual is goal directed, expends effort, is persistent, is attentive, has desires (wants), exhibits positive effect, is aroused, has expectancies, demonstrates self-confidence (self-efficacy), and has reasons (motives)" (p. 2). He also formulated 'Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB)' model in order to measure motivation in a standardized way.

Motivation is as important as both for learners and language teachers. Teachers need to know how to create a motivated classroom atmosphere. In a noteworthy study, conducted by

Dörnyei & Csizer (1998), they mention about Ten Commandments for motivating language learners:

1. Set a personal example with your own behaviour.
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
3. Present the tasks properly.
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners.
5. Increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence.
6. Make the language classes interesting.
7. Promote learner autonomy.
8. Personalize the learning process.
9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture (p. 215).

Deci & Ryan (1985) came up with a theory, called Self-Determination Theory (SDT), dividing motivation into two categories: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. In this theory, they express different types of motivation depending on various reasons or goals, which trigger an action.

As parallel with Deci & Ryan (1985), Williams and Burden (1997, p. 126) set a framework of motivation in language learning by dividing into two parts as in the table below:

Table 2. Williams and Burden's (1997) framework of motivation in language learning

Internal factors	External factors

Intrinsic interest of activity
  • arousal of curiosity
  • optimal degree of challenge
	Significant others
	  • parents
	  • teachers
	  • peer

Perceived value of activity
  • personal relevance
  • anticipated value of outcomes
  • intrinsic value attributed to the activity
	The nature of interaction with significant others
	  • mediated learning experiences
	  • the nature and amount of feedback
	  • rewards
	    • the nature and amount of appropriate praise
	  • punishments, sanctions

Sense of agency
  • locus of causality
  • locus of control RE process and
    outcomes
  • ability to set appropriate goals
	The learning environment
	  • comfort
	  • resources
	  • time of day, week, year
	  • size of class and school
	  • class and school ethos

Mastery
  • feelings of competence
  • awareness of developing skills and
    mastery in a chosen area
  • self-efficacy
	The broader context
	  • wider family networks
	  • the local education system
	  • conflicting interests
	  • cultural norms
	  • societal expectations and attitudes

Self-concept
  • realistic awareness of personal
  • strengths and weaknesses
    in skills required
  • personal definitions and judgements
    of success and failure
  • self-worth concern learned
    helplessness	

Attitudes language learning in general
  • to the target language
  • to the target language community and culture	

Other affective states
  • confidence
  • anxiety, fear	

Developmental age and stage	
Gender	

2.4.1. Intrinsic Motivation

Ryan & Deci (2000) define intrinsic motivation as "the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence" (p.56). In like a manner, Mahadi & Jafari (2012) explain that intrinsic motivation in linked with the mental satisfaction of a person, which is obtained from other people's praise. In order to be intrinsically motivated, there ought to be an action for fun or challenge rather than the effect of pressure. It was first acknowledged in the experimental studies that intrinsic motivation has a direct connection with animal behaviour. Scientists noticed the notion of "intrinsically motivated" during their experiments with the animals.

Moreover, there is an identical relationship between human being and animals as Ryan & Deci (2000) mention. However, humans act differently while getting intrinsically motivated. According to Ryan & Deci (2000), the difference is that there is a relation between individuals' motives and activities. People react according to an activity or a task to show their motivational levels. Additionally, the study of Mahadi & Jafari (2012) shows that there are some factors, which affect the amount of motivation. Those factors are personal, psychological and social factors.

Within the educational context, teachers are the head of the motivation process that trigger their student's thoughts. Mahadi & Jafari (2012) also state that teachers are responsible for forming, capturing, and displaying the motivational resources of the learners. Sometimes, motivation becomes a tool for learners to demonstrate how impressive they are. That is, learners of English language show consciously notifications of motivation for pleasure or joy.

2.4.2. Extrinsic Motivation

For Ryan & Deci (2000), extrinsic motivation refers to an activity, which is done to obtain a separable outcome. Naturally, there is a difference between intrinsic motivation, which is done for pleasure or enjoyment and extrinsic motivation, which refers to get an instrumental value.

Mahadi & Jafari (2012) explain that extrinsic motivation is a type, which is triggered by external factors such as getting high marks or reward. Dörnyei (1998) mentions about extrinsic

motivation, which is similar to those of Ryan & Deci (2000) and Mahadi & Jafari (2012). He asserts that extrinsic motivation stems from an external source in order to reach future goals.

2.5. Students' Perceptions of Doing Homework

The effectiveness of doing homework has long been a controversial issue among the educational environment. Researchers have questioned the importance of homework whether it is worth for academic improvement. The case is the same both for the learners and teachers, especially language teachers. Moreover, parents' contribution to their children's academic development has been an important phenomenon among researchers. Parents only pay attention to their children when they need physical instruments that the school requires. Therefore, the only responsible follower of the process of homework is the teacher.

Another essential situation for the perception of homework is how necessary students and parents find the homework for the student's short-term goals. According to a research conducted by Turanlı (2009), most of the students and parents claimed that homework is useless for the students' short-term goals. In contrast, they all think that in order to reach long-term goals, assigning homework to students is quite useful.

Furthermore, Turanlı (2009) mentions that the motivational power of homework and its academic contribution to a student's academic process are quite an important issue. In his study, Turanlı (2009) found that both parents and learners complained about homework assignments, which lack the motivational power. In sum, parents are less sceptical than their children about the power of homework.

After examining the research of Turanlı (2009), thought occurs about what kind of homework assignments is best for students to motivate them without getting bored. Bulut & Üğüten (2003) list assignment types for EFL learners according to students' perceptions towards homework from interesting to boring: listening and speaking, reading, grammar and mechanical skills activities, and writing respectively. Among the popular assignment types, listening and speaking activities are charming for the EFL learners. Hence, the activities are quite enjoyable and fun for them. On the other hand, the most boring homework assignment type is writing.

Learners generally think that writing practices are a waste of time by getting negatively influenced.

One of essential issues on homework is the consistency of the expectations of teachers and learners. There is a controversy over the expectations on what and why to give homework to students between language teachers. What's more, learners' expectations do not correlate with the teachers mind. Therefore, this controversy affects students negatively on their perceptions of doing homework.

It is important to note that place of living may affect the learners' perceptions towards doing homework. In the study of Xu (2009), he compared the urban and rural learners in a middle school. Then, he discovered that rural students are more de-motivated as compared to the urban ones about their workspace, budget time, handling distraction, monitoring motivation, and control their emotions while doing homework. In addition, urban school students are more frequently self-motivated during homework compared to the rural students of the school.

<div align="center">**CHAPTER III**</div>

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This study aimed to examine the primary school students' perceptions of doing homework, the problems that they encounter while completing homework and their preferences regarding homework tasks in English lessons. This chapter firstly presents the research design of the study, the context and the participants. Then, it gives information about the data collection tools and the procedures used by which the questionnaire was applied. Finally, it indicates the data analysis methods.

3.2. Research Design

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve its aims. Kothari (1990) states that "Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity" (p.3). On the other hand, Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2007) define qualitative approach as "Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities" (p.461). Similarly, Kothari (1990) mentions about qualitative research in his book as follows:

> …Qualitative research, on the other hand, is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind. For instance, when we are interested in investigating the reasons for human behaviour (i.e., why people think or do certain things), we quite often talk of 'Motivation Research', an important type of qualitative research. This type of research aims at discovering the underlying motives and desires, using in depth interviews for the purpose (p.3).

3.3. Context and Participants of the Study

The study was conducted at a village school, Akçakale Primary School, in Kars, Turkey, in 2014-2015 academic year. The total number of the students in the school in the 2014-2015 academic year was 174. The schooling starts from kindergarten to 8th grade middle school. There is an open-air football area, a computer technology classroom, a theatre hall, and a small library in the school environment. Students are all from same social status. That is, they are observed to have same economic problems and also "a lack of proficiency in the standard language makes it difficult for the children to participate in the societal debate; they avoid writing because they realize that they make a lot of spelling mistakes" (Avermaet, 2006, p. 7). The teaching context is a blackboard classroom setting in which the English teacher and all the students were non-native speakers of English.

All participants were already an existing group of students in the school so no selection was made among the participants. Eighteen second grade, 22 third grade, and 20 fourth grade students aged between 7 and 10 were chosen from primary school as the participants of the study. Normally, there were totally 70 students in the classes of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of the school (see Table 1). However, the rest of the 10 students either did not know reading and writing or needed individualized education. Therefore, they were excluded from the study.

The students in the 2nd and 3rd graders take two hours of English per week while the 4th graders take three hours in a week. They have only one English teacher, and the teacher teaches all the classes of the primary school. The students in the grade 2nd and 3rd do not take any written or speaking exam. They are measured with rubrics during the fall and spring semesters. However, 4th graders take two written examinations in each semester.

The economic, social, and educational circumstances of the participants are nearly the same. Almost each family in the village does farming and animal breeding as occupation. In addition, almost everyone in the village is relatives with each other. Therefore, their social background resembles each other which also show they don't have high living standards. Table 3 below shows the demographic features of the participants in this study.

Table 3. Demographic distribution of the participants

Participants	Age	Hours of English Per Week	Total Number	Excluded Numbers from Study
2nd Graders	7-8	2	20	2
3rd Graders	8-9	2	28	6
4th Graders	9-10	3	22	2

As shown in Table 3, there are 20 participants from the 2nd graders whose age change between 7 and 8. Two participants from 2nd graders were excluded from the study because of their illiteracy. Twenty eight students attended to the survey from 3rd graders 6 of which weren't included in the study. Fourth graders were 24 students originally. Two students did not know writing; therefore they did not attend to the questionnaire. What's more, both 2nd and 3rd graders take two hours of English lessons while 3rd graders take three hours in a week.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

Two data collection instruments were used in this study to collect the data. The first one was a questionnaire developed by Auchinairn Primary School, in UK, in 2004. The second one was an interview which had 6 questions in total.

This study was carried out in the English class hours of the weekly program, two hours for each classroom. To provide the necessary data for the study, a questionnaire and an interview were applied to the participants.

3.4.1. Questionnaire

This instrument was chosen for the study in order to obtain a rich source of data and seek answers for the research questions. In the original questionnaire, there were 22 closed-ended questions. However, in the present study we used only 18 closed-ended items from the original questionnaire. That is, we excluded four of the questionnaire items in the present study as those four questions were beyond the scope of the study.

The original questionnaire was in English (see Appendix 1). For this reason, it was translated into Turkish by the researcher (see Appendix 2). The translation was made because the participants' level of English proficiency was not sufficient enough to understand the questions in English. After that, the researcher e-mailed the translated form of the questionnaire to three different English teachers all of whom study in different universities in order to increase the reliability of the questions. Moreover, a back translation technique was used by the researcher to prevent the mismatch between original and the translated questionnaire. Finally, the questionnaire was self-administered by the researcher. According to Phellas, Bloch, & Seale (2011), self-completed questionnaires have both advantages and disadvantages:

The advantages are:

- They are cheap to administer. The only costs are those associated with printing or designing the questionnaires, their postage or electronic distribution.
- They allow for a greater geographical coverage than face-to-face interviews without incurring the additional costs of time and travel. Thus they are particularly useful when carrying out research with geographically dispersed populations.
- Using self-completion questionnaires reduces biasing error caused by the characteristics of the interviewer and the variability in interviewers' skills.
- The absence of an interviewer provides greater anonymity for the respondent. When the topic of the research is sensitive or personal it can increase the reliability of responses (p.184).

The possible disadvantages are:

- Questionnaires have to be short and the questions must be simple as there is no opportunity to probe or clarify misunderstandings.

- There is no control over who fills out the questionnaire, and the researcher can never be sure that the right person has completed the questionnaire.
- Those with low levels of literacy or poor access to email or the Internet are unlikely to complete a questionnaire, meaning that they are excluded from the study.
- Response rates tend to be low and it is difficult to know the characteristics of those who have not filled in the survey and how their non-response will affect the findings (p.185).

3.4.2. Interview

Six participants were selected from all grade levels, 2 from each grade. All the subjects were addressed five questions (see Appendix 3). Then the interview items were translated into Turkish (see Appendix 4). The aim was to collect detailed data to achieve the purpose of the study. Those questions were:

1. What kind of an atmosphere do you want while doing your homework?

2. What types of homework do your English language teachers assign?

3. What types of homework tasks do you enjoy doing?

4. Do you experience any difficulties when doing your homework?

5. What are the sources of your problems while doing homework?

3.5. Procedures

The researcher met with the administrator of Akçakale Primary School and explained the details of the study and asked for permission to study with young learners. After getting the permission from the administrator, the researcher informed the students about the scope and the purpose of the study. They all knew that they would be implemented a questionnaire about their perceptions on homework.

The translated version of the questionnaire was applied to all the grades 2nd, 3rd, and 4th in an hour of class. For all of the students, answering a questionnaire had been the first time in their lives. Therefore, the researcher explained them the aim of conducting a questionnaire and how to answer the questions separately.

The researcher selected six participants in order to apply interview questions. The subjects were informed about the content of the interview. Then the responses from the interview questions were analyzed by the researcher in the fourth chapter.

3.6. Data Analysis

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were followed and as one of the data collection tools in the qualitative researches, a questionnaire and an interview were applied to the participants in order to collect data. While assessing the qualitatively collected data, content analysis was employed. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2007) mention about content analysis as "the term 'content analysis' is often used sloppily. In effect, it simply defines the process of summarizing and reporting written data – the main contents of data and their messages" (p.475). Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected through the questionnaire. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the items in the questionnaire were coded into three parts as parallel with the research questions: the primary school students' perceptions of doing homework, the problems that they encounter while completing homework and their preferences regarding homework tasks in English lessons.

CHAPTER IV

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This study aimed to examine the primary school students' perceptions of homework, the problems that they encounter while completing homework and their preferences regarding homework tasks in English lessons. To achieve the goal of the study, two different data collection tools were used. The first tool was a questionnaire consisted of 18 closed-ended questions (see Appendix 1). The second tool was an interview with 6 participants in order to reach detailed information about learners' perceptions (see Appendix 3).

This chapter firstly reveals the demographic characteristics of the participants. Then, it presents EFL students' perceptions of homework and the problems the students encounter while completing their English homework. Finally, EFL students' preferences regarding homework tasks are discussed.

4.2. Findings on EFL Students' Perceptions of Doing Homework

The purpose of the first research question was to identify primary school EFL students' perceptions of doing homework. There was a total of 11 closed-ended items regarding students' perceptions in the questionnaire. These were Items 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, and 18. To find an answer to this question, we also used the responses elicited from the interview question 1 *"What kind of an atmosphere do you want while doing your homework?"* and the interview question 2 *"What types of homework do your English language teachers assign?"* Table 4 presents the participants responses given to the questionnaire in percentages and frequencies.

Table 4. Participants' perception of homework assignments

Items	Frequencies & Percentages (%)				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
3) "Doing homework helps me to learn."	46	11	1	2	0
	(76,7)	(18,3)	(1,7)	(3,3)	(0)
10) "I think homework helps me do well at school."	52	4	2	1	1
	(86,7)	(6,7)	(3,3)	(1,7)	(1,7)

SA= Strongly Agree   A= Agree   N= Neutral   D= Disagree   SD= Strongly Disagree

Items 3 and 10 were directed to the participants to understand whether doing homework helps them to learn or not. Item 3 was *"Doing homework helps me to learn."* While none of the participants strongly disagreed about the help of homework, %76, 7 of the participants (46) strongly agreed that *doing homework help them to learn*. Item 10 was *"I think homework helps me do well at school."* A large majority of the subjects (% 86,7) strongly agreed that doing homework helps them do well at school.

Before doing homework, the tasks given require some preparation for students. To understand this, the 5th and 14th statements were directed to the participants. Table 5 presents the participants responses given to these statements in percentages and frequencies.

Table 5. Participants' perception of preparation for homework tasks

Items	Frequencies & Percentages (%)				
	A	U	S	N	NS
5) "I do the homework that I am set:"	46	9	3	2	0
	(76,7)	(15,0)	(5,0)	(3,3)	(0)
14) "I understand what I have to do for my homework.	38	8	2	9	3
	(63,3)	(13,3)	(3,3)	(15,0)	(5,0)

A =Always   U =Usually   S =Sometimes   N =Never   NS =Not Sure

More than ¾ of the subjects always did their homework when they felt ready, they did their tasks. Only 2 of the subjects disagreed with the opinion for preparation for homework. Moreover, Item 14 was selected to understand participants' own responsibility for homework. Three of the participants (%63) indicated that they always understand what they are going to do. Meanwhile, %15 (9) of them stated they never understand their responsibility and that they need their teachers' explanations for the tasks.

Interview question 1 *"What kind of an atmosphere do you want while doing your homework?"* was a supportive one, which helped the children elaborate their thoughts. The answers elicited from the interview were as in the following:

Student 1: *"I want a bird in my room which can sing a song in English."*

Student 2: *"I want English writings everywhere in my room."*

Student 3: *"I want a quiet place to study that whenever a guest visited us, I can study alone. If I cannot find an extra room, I order the people around me to turn down the TV."*

Student 4: *"I wish there weren't my brother or guests."* Additionally he said, *"I want a quiet room to study."*

Student 5: *"The study atmosphere should be quiet."*

Student 6: *"quiet and bright room."*

Student 1 and 2 were the 2nd grade, student 3 and 4 are the 3rd grade, and student 5 and 6 are 4th grades students in the school. As it can be understood from their responses, Student 1 and Student 2 gave more imaginary responses in contrast with the others. Nearly all the participants wanted to have a quiet study place in order to get more concentrated and motivated. Some of them complained about either their brothers or guests.

Item 11 and 12 were about the difficulty level of the homework tasks while Item 19 was about participants' anxieties of homework. Table 6 presents the participants responses given to the questionnaire in percentages and frequencies.

Table 6. Participants' perception of difficulty levels of homework assignments

Items	Frequencies & Percentages (%)			
	VO	O	S	N
11) Is your homework too easy?	27 (45,0)	6 (10,0)	26 (43,3)	1 (1,7)
12) Is your homework too hard?	3 (5,0)	4 (6,7)	30 (50,0)	23 (38,3)
19) "I worry about my homework."	18 (30,0)	6 (10,0)	19 (31,7)	17 (28,3)

VO =Very Often   O =Often   S =Sometimes   N =Never

As it is clearly stated in Table 6, twenty-seven participants find their homework easy while 23 participants find them difficult. It means that the participants were divided into two groups to mark those questions. Therefore, there might be personal differences between young learners to decide whether their homework is easy or not.

According to 18 out of 60 participants, they are worried about their homework while 17 out of 60 participants never worry. It means that homework type and difficulty level may affect participants' anxiety level. To understand more about young learners, second interview question was asked to the participants: *"What types of homework do your English language teachers assign?"* The answers elicited from the interview were as in the following:

Student 1: *"writing numbers and colouring them."*
Student 2: *"colours, numbers, and daily expressions."*

Student 3: *"Our teacher gives dialogs as homework that we have just learned. In addition, he gives painting, matching words with the course book and numbers. "*

Student 4: *"painting, dialog construction, numbers, and matching exercises."*

Student 5: *"word repetition, painting etc."*

25

Student 6: *"role playing, dialog construction, and repetition exercises"*

The assignment types given by the English teacher seem to be quite natural for their age levels. Hence, they like to deal with the colours, numbers, and words. Therefore, they most probably enjoy doing such kinds of homework assignment types.

To understand how much they like doing homework, Item 1 in the questionnaire was asked: *"Do you enjoy homework?"* Table 7 presents the participants responses given to the questionnaire question in percentages and frequencies.

Table 7. Participants' perception of enjoyment from homework

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)
1) Do you enjoy homework?	
Yes, a lot	47
	(78,3)
Yes, usually.	7
	(11,7)
Sort of.	2
	(3,3)
Not much	4
	(6,7)
No.	0
	(0)

A high majority of the subjects (47) enjoy doing homework. On the other hand, 4 out of 60 participants do not like doing homework. In sum, most of the participants are in favour of doing homework.

Item 6 was related to the amount of homework assigned to young learners. Table 8 presents the participants responses given to this statement in percentages and frequencies.

Table 8. Participants' perception of homework load

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)		
	Yes	No	Do not Know
6) Do you think you get enough homework?	36 (65,0)	6 (10,0)	15 (25,0)

%65 of the participants stated that they get enough homework, while %15 of them does not have any idea about it. However, %10 of the learners isn't satisfied with the amount of the homework they get.

Table 9. Participants' confessions about a piece of homework

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)
12) Which of these statements best, describes what you might usually say about doing a piece of homework?	
"I took time over it and thought about what I did."	26 (43,3)
"I didn't do it."	10 (16,7)
"I did more than I really needed to because it was interesting."	20 (33,3)
"I did it quickly to get it out of the way."	4 (6,7)
Do not know	0 (0)

When we look at Item 12, we can see that %43, 3 of the participants pay extra attention to what they have done. On the other hand, % 16, 7 of the subjects accepted that they do not do their homework and %6, 7 of them completed their homework to get out of it. Conversely, %33, 3 of the subjects do more than they have to do. Therefore, it can be concluded that they enjoy doing their homework.

Table 10. Participants' perception of failure about homework tasks

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)
21) If children fail to do homework then:	
Parents should be told immediately.	35
	(58,3)
Parents should be told if it happens over and over again.	17
	(28,3)
There should be no further action.	5
	(8,3)
Homework should be completed in playtimes/lunchtimes.	3
	(5,0)
Something else. (Please say what.)	0
	(0)

When the subjects were asked what needs to be done when they fail to do homework (Item 21), more than half of the participants (%58, 3) stated that parents should be told immediately, while %28, 3 of the participants thought that parents should be told if there was a recurrence while %8, 3 of the participants was neutral for this item stating that there shouldn't be any action. The rest of the participants (% 5) think that homework should be completed in lunchtimes or playtimes.

4.3. Findings on the Problems the Students Encounter While Completing Homework

The purpose of the second research question was to identify primary school EFL students' problems that they encounter while completing homework tasks. There was a total of 3 closed-ended items in the questionnaire. These were Items 7, 8, and 13. To find an answer to this question, we also used the responses elicited from the interview question 4 *"Do you experience any difficulties when doing your homework?"* and the interview question 5 "What are the sources of your problems when doing your homework?*"*

The 4th interview question was related to any difficulties that students encounter while doing homework. Subjects responses obtained from the interview were as stated in the following:

Student 1: *"no."*
Student 2: *"no."*

Student 3: *"Yes. My family members talked to each other while I am doing homework. It makes me nervous that my father turn up the TV and the electricity goes up."*

Student 4: *"Yes. There are many reasons. Firstly, my mother uses vacuum cleaner while I am doing homework, and then she orders me to do some housework. Finally, my father wants me to use milk machines to milk the cows. "*

Student 5: *"The voice of TV gets me crazy."*

Student 6: *"Sometimes, it is hard to do homework because I do not have enough time. Sometimes the homework tasks are too difficult and it causes me to lose my concentration."*

Because of their ages, Student 1 and Student 2 might not think of any possible problem to distract them. However, other participants gave quite satisfying answers to the question. Participant 3, for example, gave three reasons that stem from environmental factors. Electricity or

housework might be an obligation to many participants. Especially in village schools, many students ought to work. This can be clearly understood by examining Student 4's response: *"… finally, my father wants me to use milk machines to milk the cows."* The student works in their stall to help his/her family members. In addition, the difficulty of homework assignments might be a burden for young learners. For instance, Student 6 mentioned about the hardness of the tasks that affected him negatively.

To understand possible sources of problems the students encounter while doing homework, the last interview question was asked to participants and the results were:

Student 1: *"The electricity went off while doing homework and we have animals to feed."*
Student 2: *"electricity, hunger, thirst and need for WC."*

Student 3: *"electricity, TV in the room, and noise."*

Student 4: *"heating problems and the need for food."*

Student 5: *"orders of both my mother and father."*

Student 6: *"please, nobody asks me a question. I want my brother to stay away from me."*

The answers give us a clue that environmental factors such as noise, heating may affect the young learners' attention while doing homework. Furthermore, undesired situations like electricity or orders of the parents affect the process of completing a homework task negatively.

Having enough time is another issue to consider homework process. Table 11 presents the participants responses given to the questionnaire in percentages and frequencies.

Table 11. Participants' perceptions of time left for homework tasks

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)		
	Yes	No	Do not Know
7) Do you usually get enough time to do your homework?	52 (86,7)	2 (3,3)	6 (10,0)

Item 7, in Table 11, was *"Do you usually get enough time to do your homework?"* Out of 100 participants, %86 (7) agreed that they have enough time to do a homework assignment, while the only small percentage of the participants (%3, 3) pointed out that they do not have enough time to complete the tasks. Then, we might assume the time left for young learners to complete their homework is satisfying.

8th Item in the questionnaire was about whether participants' family members help them or not when they do their homework. Table 12 presents the participants responses given to the questionnaire in percentages and frequencies.

Table 12. Participants' perceptions of help they get from family members

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)				
	A	U	S	N	NS
8) "I rely on an adult at home to remind me to get my homework done:"	14 (23,3)	9 (15,0)	11 (18,3)	25 (41,7)	1 (1,7)

A =Always   U =Usually   S =Sometimes   N =Never   NS =Not Sure

Item 8, *"I rely on an adult at home to remind me to get my homework done"* was disagreed by %41, 7 of the participants, while %23, 3 out of 100 participants agreed to the item. These results indicate that most of the participants do their homework on their own.

The subjects also answered Item 13, *"Homework causes arguments at home"* in the questionnaire. Table 13 presents the participants responses given to the questionnaire item in percentages and frequencies.

Table 13. Participants' perceptions of homework related arguments at home

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)			
	VO	O	S	N
13) "Homework causes arguments at home:"	2	7	11	40
	(3,3)	(11,7)	(18,3)	(66,7)

VO =Very Often   O =Often   S =Sometimes   N =Never

Seven (%66) of the participants said "never", and %18, 3 of the answered as "sometimes" to this item. This situation shows us that most of the parents are aware of the importance of their children's homework assignments. On the other hand, a small percentage of participants (%3, 3) said "very often" that means they have arguments with their parents.

4.4. The EFL Students' Preferences Regarding Homework Tasks

The purpose of the third research question was to identify primary school EFL students' preferences regarding homework tasks. There were a total of 4 closed-ended items in the questionnaire. These were Items 2, 4, 15, and 17. To find an answer to this question, we also used the responses elicited from the interview question 3 *"What types of homework tasks do you enjoy doing?"* The results elicited from the interview were as in the below:

Student 1: *"dialogs and numbers."*
Student 2: *"dialogs and numbers."*

Student 3: *"I enjoy doing paintings and colouring. This type of assignments makes me feel good."*

Student 4: *"painting and dialogs."*

Student 5: *"I like all kinds of homework types."*

Student 6: *"repetition exercises and dialogues."*

It is generally understood from the responses of the interviewees that they prefer doing activities which seems to be more enjoyable and easy to them. Because of their capacity, they normally choose to have such kinds of homework assignment types. All the types that participants mentioned can be practice, preparation or extension assignments. Table 14 presents the participants responses given to the questionnaire items in percentages and frequencies.

Table 14. Participants' readiness for homework

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
2) "All children at primary school should be set homework, no matter how young or old:"	45	9	3	3	0
	(75,0)	(15,0)	(5,0)	(5,0)	(0)

SA= Strongly Agree   A= Agree   N= Neutral   D= Disagree   SD= Strongly Disagree

To Item 2, "All children at primary school should be set homework was strongly agreed by % 75, 0 and by % 15, 0 of the subjects. This consisted of %90, 0 of the total number. It can be inferred that preparation for homework assignments is a necessity for the majority of the participants.

Next question in the questionnaire was Item 4: *"Does an adult help you with your homework?"* Table 15 presents the participants responses given to the questionnaire item in percentages and frequencies.

Table 15. Participants' perceptions of help they get from an adult

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)				
	A	U	S	N	NS
4) Does an adult help you with your	35	5	19	1	0
homework?	(58,3)	(8,3)	(31,7)	(1,7)	(0)

A =Always   U =Usually   S =Sometimes   N =Never   NS =Not Sure

Thirty-five out of 60 participants stated they always get help from an adult and 5 out of 60 participants expressed they usually get assistance from an adult. Therefore, we might conclude most of the participants get help from others.

In a study conducted by Tam & Chan (2011), it is stated that "time spent on homework is in part related to the type of assignments: work that is tedious and boring is often deemed more strenuous and effortful than interesting and intriguing ones" (p. 577).To understand this situation, Item 15, "How much homework do you think you should usually be set in a week?" was analyzed. Table 16 presents the participants' responses given to the questionnaire item in percentages and frequencies.

Table 16. Participants' perceptions of preferred homework load per week

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)
15) How much homework do you think you should usually be set in a week?	
2 hours or more	19
	(31,7)
1½ hours to 2 hours	16
	(26,7)
1 hour to 1½ hours	10
	(16,7)
½ hour to 1 hour	15
	(25,0)
½ hour or less	0
	(0)

Nineteen out of 60 participants prefer to have more than two hours of English homework weekly. Sixteen out of 60 participants want to have 1½ hours to 2 hours homework assignment. Ten out of 60 participants choose to study 1 hour to 1½ hours in a week. The rest 15 participants are reluctant to have more homework as they choose to have ½ hour to 1 hour weekly. In addition, Figure 1 below shows the percentage distribution of preferred homework per week by the participants.
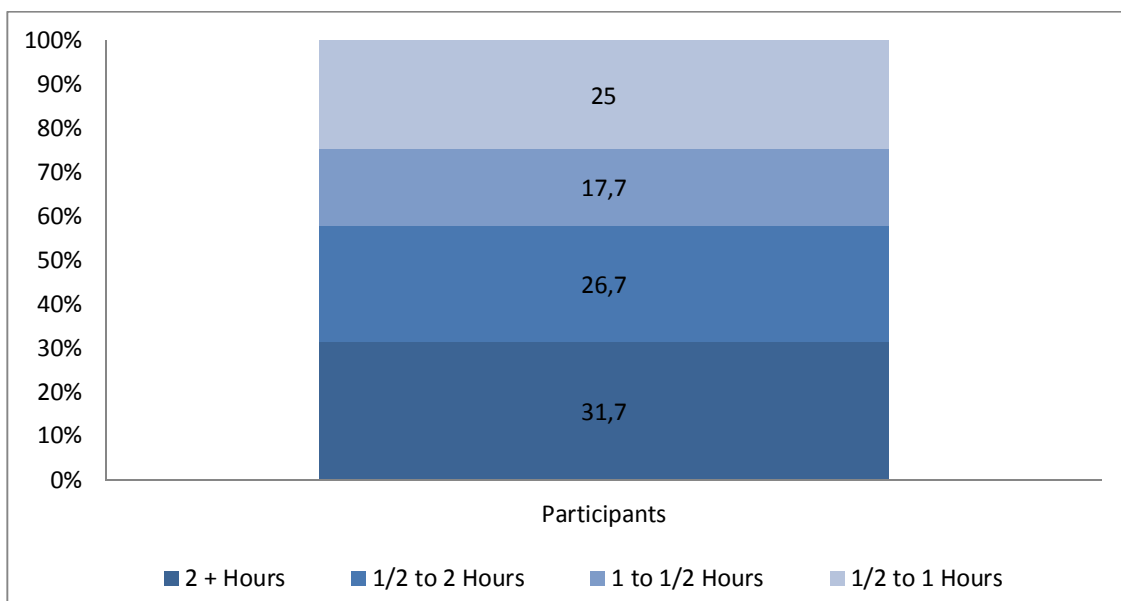
Figure 1. Percentage distribution of preferred homework per week by the participants

As indicated in Figure 1, 31,7 % of the participants want to have more than two hours of English homework while 26,7 % of the participants choose to have ½ to 2 hours of assignment. A total of 58,4 % of the participants wants to have more than ½ hour of English homework in a week which seems to be satisfying. On the other hand, 17,7 % of the participants want 1 to ½ hours of homework in a week and 25% of them choose to have ½ to 1 hours of the homework assignment in a week. Therefore, 42,7 % of the subjects is more unwilling to do homework.

Item 17 was asked to the participants to learn their choices of classroom homework. Table 17 presents the participants responses given to the questionnaire item in percentages and frequencies.

Table 17. Participants' homework task preferences

Item	Frequencies & Percentages (%)		
	Yes	No	Do not Know
17) Do you think that everyone in a	34	7	19
class should get the same homework?	(56,7)	(11,7)	(31,7)

To item 17, *"Do you think that everyone in a class should get the same homework?"* more than half of the participants (34) agree with the opinion that everyone in a class should get the same homework. Only 7 participants do not agree with this opinion while 19 out of 60 participants indicated they do not know anything about it.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter includes the conclusions of the study, limitations and suggestions for the further studies.

5.2. Overview of the Study

The aim of the study was to observe primary school students' perceptions of doing homework. Data were gathered by means of a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) based on the perspectives of young learners and an interview (see Appendix 3) in order to have a broader understanding of the study. The research questions proposed by the researcher were:

1. What are EFL students' perceptions of homework?

2. What are the problems the students encounter while completing homework if any?

3. What are their preferences regarding homework tasks?

Specific grouping was addressed based on the research questions. They are; the EFL students' perceptions of homework, the problems the students encounter while completing homework, and students' preferences regarding homework tasks. Interview items were grouped and mentioned within the related items of the questionnaire.

5.3. Conclusion and Discussion

Doing homework is an essential part of an education cycle. It is generally a source of enjoyment for most of the young learners while a trouble for others. Similarly, the findings of this study showed that most of the participants think that doing homework helps them to learn while some of them did not agree the idea that homework helps them to learn. Moreover a high majority of the participants believe that doing homework helps them to do well at school while a few of them did not. Turanlı (2009) found in his study that most of the students see homework as a necessity for students' academic achievement and effective in its aims. Similarly, Xu & Yuan

(2003) articulated that "the parents and teachers shared similar views, namely, that homework was a way of reinforcing school learning and developing self-regulatory attributes" (p.28).

More than 2/3 of the participants articulated that they enjoy doing homework very much. Most probably, participants like doing favourable homework assignments such as pictorial ones. Tam & Chan (2011) state that "...among both senior primary students and parents, the endorsement of learning and communicative values of homework is linked to favourable views towards assignments and preference of spending time on homework" (p. 575).

Most of the participants thought that they were given enough homework assignments. They are quite satisfied with their teacher's homework load. They are given more than 1 hour of homework assignment at school. Similarly, Cooper (1989) states that teachers in the primary schools should give two hours of homework in a week.

It is understood from the participants' responses that there are some problems that prevent them to complete a homework task. Those problems are the lack of electricity, the noise of the TV or radio in the room, heating problems, the need for food, and the presence of their brothers or sisters. Nonetheless, a great number of the participants asserted that they have enough time to do their homework while some of them did not support this idea. Therefore, drawing on the participants' responses we may claim that they do whatever they can in order to finish their homework.

The subjects of the study gave some clues on the distribution of the preferred homework hours in a week. Many students agreed that homework should be more than 2 hours weekly. Hence, teachers are as responsible as learners about deciding enough study time. Most of the participants are aware of their responsibilities for homework. They also know the significance and benefits of doing a homework assignment.

Because primary students (aged between 7 and 10) are young learners, it might be a good idea for language teachers to assign short, enjoyable, pictorial, and interesting homework assignments to their students. The main attribution here is that students' attention span is short in contrast to adult learners, and they are still children.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

The conclusions of this study reflect 60 students' perceptions towards doing homework in a certain context. For this reason, the findings cannot be generalized to all contexts. Further research might be conducted with a greater number of primary school students in different cities.

In addition, including the parents of the participants to the study might be a good idea to reach more considerable results about the learners' home context. Thus, it might be easier to study learners' perspectives in a broader context.

Another limitation was the class hours of English allocated by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MEB). There are only two hours of English classes for 2nd and 3rd graders in a week while 4th graders have only three hours, which is insufficient to get more desirable and pleasing results at the end.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Studies

In the light of the responses given by the participants, it can be said that teachers need to consider regional features of the students. By doing so, language teachers may assign more appropriate homework tasks according to the needs of the learners.

This study took place in only one primary village school in the district. Taking into consideration findings of this study, including large number of students from various schools in the district can be added in order to make more concrete generalizations about the topic.

A further research might be to conduct a study with the language teachers of the primary schools in the same region. Furthermore, comparing the findings of those studies can be helpful to develop a further understanding of homework phenomenon.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1. Appendix 1: Homework Questionnaire English Version

Homework in the Primary School:

Questionnaire for Children

When answering questions, please place a clear 'X' inside the box that most nearly reflects your opinion, one for each question. Thank you.

About you: Boy ☐   Girl ☐

Class: 2 ☐   3 ☐   4☐

Please answer the questions for yourself. One 'X' for each question unless indicated otherwise.

1) Do you enjoy homework?

Yes, a lot	☐
Yes, usually	☐
Sort of	☐
Not much	☐
No	☐

2) "All children at primary school should be set homework, no matter how young or old:"

Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly disagree	☐
Don't know	☐

3) "Doing homework helps me to learn."

Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly disagree	☐
Don't know	☐

4) Does an adult help you with your homework?

Always	Usually	Sometimes
☐	☐	☐

Never	Not sure
☐	☐

5) "I do the homework that I am set:"

Always   Usually   Sometimes

☐   ☐   ☐

Never   Not sure

☐   ☐

6) Do you think you get enough homework?

Yes   No   Don't know

☐   ☐   ☐

7) Do you usually get enough time to do your homework?

Yes   No   Don't know

☐   ☐   ☐

8) "I rely on an adult at home to remind me to get my homework done:"

Always   Usually   Sometimes

☐   ☐   ☐

Never   Not sure

☐   ☐

9) "I think homework helps me do well at school:"

Strongly agree   ☐

Agree   ☐

Disagree   ☐

Strongly disagree   ☐

Don't know   ☐

10) Is your homework too easy?

Very often   Often   Sometimes   Never

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

11) Is your homework too hard?

Very often   Often   Sometimes   Never

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

12) Which of these statements best describes what you might usually say about doing a piece of homework?

"I took time over it and thought about what I did."   ☐

"I didn't do it."   ☐

"I did more than I really needed to because it was interesting."   ☐

"I did it quickly to get it out of the way."   ☐

Don't know   ☐

13) "Homework causes arguments at home:"

Very often   Often   Sometimes   Never

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

14) "I understand what I have to do for my homework:"

Always   Very often   Often

☐   ☐   ☐

Sometimes   Never

☐   ☐

15) How much homework do you think you should usually be set in a week?

2 hours or more   ☐

1 ½ hours to 2 hours   ☐

1 hour to 1 ½ hours   ☐

½ hour to 1 hour   ☐

½ hour or less   ☐

None   ☐

16) "I worry about my homework."

Very often   Often   Sometimes   Never

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

17) Do you think that everyone in a class should get the same homework?

Yes   No   Don't Know

☐   ☐   ☐

18) If children fail to do homework then:

Parents should be told immediately.   ☐

Parents should be told if it happens over and over again.   ☐

There should be no further action.   ☐

Homework should be completed in playtimes/lunchtimes   ☐

Something else. (Please say what.)

7.2. Appendix 2: Homework Questionnaire Turkish Version

İlkokul'da Ev Ödevi:

Öğrenci Anketi

Sorulara cevap verirken, size en yakın gelen seçeneğin yanına 'X' işareti koyunuz. Teşekkürler.

Cinsiyet: Erkek ☐   Kız ☐

Sınıf: 2 ☐   3 ☐   4☐

Lütfen sorulara kendinize göre cevap verin. Aksi belirtilmedikçe her bir soru için 1 tane 'X' işareti koyunuz.

1) Ödev yapmayı seviyor musunuz?

Evet, çok fazla   ☐
Evet, genellikle   ☐
Biraz   ☐
Çok değil   ☐
Hayır   ☐

2) "Küçük ya da büyük fark etmez (öğrenci yaşı gözetmeksizin), ilkokuldaki bütün çocuklar ödevlere hazırlıklı olmalıdır:"

Kesinlikle katılıyorum.   ☐

Katılıyorum.   ☐

Katılmıyorum.   ☐

Kesinlikle katılmıyorum.   ☐

Fikrim yok.   ☐

3) "Ödev yapmak öğrenmeme yardımcı oluyor.''

Kesinlikle katılıyorum.   ☐

Katılıyorum.   ☐

Katılmıyorum.   ☐

Kesinlikle katılmıyorum.   ☐

Bilmiyorum.   ☐

4) Ödev yaparken bir yetişkinden yardım alır mısınız?

Her zaman   Genelde   Bazen
   ☐   ☐   ☐

Asla   Emin değilim
   ☐   ☐

5) "Kendimi hazır hissettiğimde ödevlerimi yaparım:"

Her zaman   Genelde   Bazen

☐   ☐   ☐

Asla   Emin değilim

☐   ☐

6) Sizce, size yeteri kadar ödev veriliyor mu?

Evet   Hayır   Bilmiyorum

☐   ☐   ☐

7) Ödev yapmak için genellikle yeterli zamanınız oluyor mu?

Evet   Hayır   Bilmiyorum

☐   ☐   ☐

8) "Ödevlerimi bitirmem için bir yetişkinin bana hatırlatmasına ihtiyaç duyarım:"

Her zaman   Genelde   Bazen

☐   ☐   ☐

Asla   Emin değilim

☐   ☐

9) "Bence ödev yapmak okulda başarılı olmamı sağlıyor.''

Kesinlikle katılıyorum.   ☐

Katılıyorum.   ☐

Katılmıyorum.   ☐

Kesinlikle katılmıyorum.   ☐

Bilmiyorum.   ☐

10) Ödeviniz çok mu kolay oluyor?

Çok Sık   Sık Sık   Bazen   Asla

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

11) Ödeviniz çok mu zor oluyor?

Çok Sık   Sık Sık   Bazen   Asla

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

12) Aşağıdakilerden hangisi bir ödevi yaparken genellikle söyleyebileceğiniz cümlelerdendir?

"Ödevim için daha fazla vakit harcar, ne yaptığım hakkında düşünürüm.''   ☐

"Ödevimi ben yapmadım."   ☐

"Olması gerekenden fazlasını yaptım, çünkü ödevim çok ilgi çekiciydi." ☐

"Ödevimden hemencecik kurtulmak için hızlıca yapıverdim." ☐

''Bilmiyorum.'' ☐

13) "Ödevler evde tartışmalara sebep oluyor:"

Çok Sık   Sık Sık   Bazen   Asla

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

14) "Ödev yaparken ne yapmam gerektiğini anlayabiliyorum:"

Her zaman   Genelde   Bazen

☐   ☐   ☐

Asla   Emin değilim

☐   ☐

15) Haftada ödevlerinize ne kadar süre ayrılması gerektiğini düşünüyorsunuz?

2 saat veya daha fazla ☐

1 Buçuk - 2 saat arası ☐

1 - Buçuk saat arası ☐

Yarım saat - 1 saat arası ☐

Yarım saat veya daha az ☐

Hiçbiri ☐

16) "Ödevlerim için kaygılanırım."

Çok Sık   Sık Sık   Bazen   Asla

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

17) Sizce sınıfta herkes aynı ödevi mi almalı?

Evet   Hayır   Bilmiyorum

☐   ☐   ☐

18) Eğer ödevler yapılmazsa:

Aileler derhal bilgilendirilmeli. ☐

Tekrarlanması halinde aileler uyarılmalı ☐
Bir şey yapılmamalı. ☐

Ödevler oyun ya da yemek saatlerinde tamamlanmalıdır. ☐

Bunların dışında. (Lütfen belirtiniz.)

7.3. Appendix 3: Interview Questions English Version

Please answer the following questions according to your own thoughts.

1. What kind of an atmosphere do you want while doing your homework?

2. What types of homework do your English language teachers assign?

3. What types of homework tasks do you enjoy doing?

4. Do you experience any difficulties when doing your homework?

5. What are the sources of your problems while doing homework?

7.4. Appendix 4: Interview Questions Turkish Version

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları kendi düşüncelerinize göre cevaplayınız.

1) Ödevlerinizi yaparken nasıl bir çalışma atmosferi olsun istersiniz?

2) İngilizce öğretmenleriniz size ne tür ödevler verir?

3) Ne tür ödevler yapmaktan hoşlanırsınız?

4) Ödevlerinizi yaparken herhangi bir zorlukla karşılaşıyor musunuz?

5) Ödev yaparken karşılaştığınız problemlerin kaynağı sizce nelerdir?