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Methodological approach in teaching English language in elementary school through action research

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Abstract

Currently teaching English language, is becoming a complex task, which viewed from today's perspective, requires teachers multidimensional skills, to be involved in the teaching of foreign languages. Given that by learning a foreign language, teachers teach children "different" aspects to any culture and help students to better understand their perspective not only cultural, but also the view of almost any person else in society. It is a fact that the teaching of foreign languages is inseparable element intertwined with culture and learning as much knowledge of cultures and social boost national awareness.

Teaching English in the third grade of elementary school, provided with Kosovo Curriculum as a subject binding. With the New Kosovo Curriculum, will be subject to the first grade. Teachers who teach English in third grade, has different qualifications and training. A large number of them, especially in villages, are unqualified to teach English classes in third grade, or are only with an English language course and are not trained for the methodological approach to teach English. While a number of other English teachers are qualified but are not trained to methodological approach for working with this age of children and consequently burdening students in different learning situations. These aspects were part of our research.

We decided to do this action research on methodological approaches with English teachers in some primary schools, from villages and cities in Kosovo. The idea for such an approach was concern about the methods used in teaching English as a second foreign language in elementary school, especially based on the request of the New Kosovo Curriculum to be taught a foreign language from the first grade in elementary school. Two workshops were conducted with English teachers, which was introduced Action Research methodology, new approaches to teaching foreign language and discussed possibilities for piloting, seven schools were selected which conducted research into action with their students in third grade.

This proposal was supported by English teachers in the schools proposed to develop research in action, and also had the support of the leaders and their schools. During the entire

process, from data collection to the end of the report, we act together, because we shared tasks and each was committed to perform with high responsibility, and always working closely with school teachers and principals.

From this research we got:

- *A clear picture regarding the methodological approach to the teaching of English language in elementary school, third grade.*
- *Set up capacities of teachers in the methodological approach to teaching English.*
- *To promote the philosophy of Action Research in our schools.*

The second workshop was held after three months, which were invited principals and teachers of schools that were not part of the first workshop and teachers conducted action research in their schools, in order to present the results achieved and experiences transferred to colleagues in other schools.

Keywords: English, teaching, learning, action research, teaching practice, teachers and pupils.

Introduction

English language from 2005 in Kosovo is a obliged subject from third class in primary school as a second foreign language. Recently the Kosovo government has paid special attention to better learning for foreign languages. This attention is driven by the imperatives of the state for direct communication with the world, in all fields, as well as the necessity of translation quality. Exchanges and links with the internationally diversified expand the demand for better cognitive of foreign language, preferably in all scientific fields such as literary, political and social.

So foreign language, especially for countries in transitions it has become a new challenge. Students prepared (educated) in a good language school where you are given as much importance as the example, on the mathematics can be completely without barriers "scattered" around the world, because of showing excellent languages they know .

In the era of digitization and the development general of socio - economic in global level, importance of the development of the educational system has taken an even more important than it had in the past and this role tends to rise continuously. A key factor in the establishment and development of a society is precisely the development of its educational system. The introduction of English from the first grade of elementary school is a priority of the Ministry of Education, articulated in the New Curriculum Framework.

Drawing on the object of study, we explore the teaching methodologies of English in third grade in seven schools selected as sample areas of Kosovo, such as seven elementary schools from Glogovac, Kamenic, Prishtina, Podujeva and Mitrovica, they were involved nine english teachers, and 294 pupils from all the schools, from each school one class . The

integration of our country into the family of European - Atlantic structures, preparation of citizens of united Europe, necessarily requires a recognition and fruitful grasp of foreign languages, which should begin to be taught at an early age as new language. Primary school is the level where the basics are taken for all that society holds as valuable to learn, there is space and learning a foreign language English. Sensitization to small children learning English is helpful and overall positive for student s formation, its identity, it expands to the ability to distinguish the difference between cultures .

Through teaching foreign language, English in primary school for every child is given opportunity to sensitize the opportunity to learn other foreign languages, as well as learning in general.

Literature review

Conducting research in action gives teachers a way to reflect on one's teaching practices that engage people, self-directed learning, with the ultimate goal, improving student learning. In order to achieve optimal learning, teachers must continually build on their knowledge of student learning, and instructional practices intentionally study they observe classroom (Rawlinson & Little, 2004). Research in Action is a natural extension of learning better. By observing students closely, analyzing their needs, and adapting the curriculum to fit the needs of all students were always important and demonstrated by teachers (Hubbard & Power, 1999). Action research, is a process through which teachers collaborate in the evaluation and practice, trying new strategies, interactive methods and recording their work in a form that is understandable by other teachers. (Elliot, 1991).

Action research is a cyclic and continuous process. Action research actually never ends because their learning is a cyclic process. An action researcher is always respectable, analyzed, designed, evaluated, and adjusted. The cyclical nature of action research provides teachers with ongoing opportunities to reflect on the teaching and practice to perfect their teaching.

From research to practice - When teachers want to perform an action research project, they enter a cycle of inquiry that involves the following steps:

1. Identifying an issue
2. Reviewing the literature on the issue and making inquiries in the narrow focus of case
3. Selecting the method of data collection
4. Collecting, analyzing and interpreting information
5. Developing and monitoring the implementation of the action plan.
6. Compiling a report with key findings and distribute to others as a good experience.

Wallace (1998 : 21) suggests that , when you select a theme and purpose of the action research should take into account the following points :

1. Purpose: Why are you engaged in this action research ? 2 . Topic : What areas / classes will you investigate ?
3. Focus : What is the exact question you will ask yourself within that area / problem or issue within the classroom ?
4. Product: What is the likely outcome of the research , how you intend to achieve it ? 5 . Method : How will you research ?
6. Time: How long will it take you to do the research? Is there a deadline for its completion ?
7. Resources: What are the resources, human and material, that will need to do the research ?

Lewin (1946) introduced a set of procedures for Action Research in the context of social planning, which are used nowadays . Planning usually starts with a general idea The whole cycle can be described as planning, execution and findings of fact , and so on for each step . All social management is a spiral process steps where each of them is part of a circle of planning , action on which the finding of facts in relation to the outcome of the action , represents the success of research into action (Lewin , 1952 , pp. 462-463)

Research Methodology

Settings and participants - We conducted two workshops with english teachers and principals of primary schools , in order to raise their capacities about the content of action research, the process of doing action research in class and changing their teaching practice using this methodological approach. This study was undertaken with 35 english teachers from primary school, exactly teachers that they teach on third class with pupils aged 8- 9 years old and its their first time beginning the second foreign language. We have done a teacher survey, observation in classes, focus group discussion and checklists. This study contributes to how the use of action research serves as a tool for teaching development activities in general.

Planning

As the methodology of this study, was used collaborative action research. According to our Politics and based on New Curriculum Framework of Kosovo(2011), English will be taught in Kosovo's schools, from first grade, and this study will contribute on building capacities of english teachers in this new methodology in Kosovo. We analyzed the plan and program of english teachers of third grades .Since 2005, English is taught from the third grade and was compared with the english textbook of third grade.

Was examined also the relevant literature related to the topic of teaching the second foreign language. Then we began preparation with the workshops within Kosovo Pedagogical Institute. The first workshop was held with 30 participants - English teachers all teaching in the third grade of elementary school, where we announced more specifically with the methodological approach to English language teaching through action research and interactive teaching methods for the second foreign language. Then we prepared the plan for action research, together with school teachers involved in the research and in collaboration with them we prepared an action plan based on the detection and identification of the

problem in the classroom by English teachers. In the second step was the observation in several hours of instruction in schools being conducted action research and checklists were completed.

And after findings from research phases from drafted action we submitted what we want to achieve with the currently envisaged that the teacher should :

- recognize and implement the English curriculum for respective classes :
- to develop lesson plans for the development of capacities in the classroom ;
- to use in class teaching techniques that enhance student involvement in learning ;
- establish a reciprocal relationship with students and parents ;
- draft work plan for various activities inside and outside the school in order to increase the quality of teaching English language in schools ;
- to be updated with the newest scientific teaching of English language in early ages .

Methods proposed to be used in teaching class were more creative techniques, illustrations, animation and role play in different activities, depending on the learning unit based on curriculum of Ministry of Education Science and Technology. English teacher, had meetings and formal and informal conversations, in order to explain how to use more creative activities for children as illustrations, then games in the classroom, as e.x teaching unit " My classroom "which are all possible materials in the class, just to organize and manage properly, for students learning new words , and reach even to touch them, then have also the picture book.

We proposed more interactive methods where also the inclusion of all students can be done. So after workshops, and meetings we had with them , teachers they begin to develop such activities in their classroom and we make the observation in the classroom and see how those deficiencies that have investigated the first time , have improved significantly, as 8-9 years old child on affects a very specific activity that motivates to learn more and be active .

Also, students who first time were rather passive, they already care about what is being done in the classroom and they tried learning more about the unit. Then we realized the second workshop (2013), with English language teachers and school principals from all regions of Kosovo, where was introduced the methodology of teaching English language through action research, and was presented the work and reports of the teachers who implemented this approach in their classrooms in order to experience and to be transferred to other teachers and schools through exchanging experiences.

Discussion

Action research is research through action and is usually a collaborative activity. According to Stenhouse, L.(1975) is an action research approach in professional practice entering social situations . So even in our action research, we tested a practical approach to use more creative methods, methods that awaken developing interactive learning unit in the case of English in

third grade. Even on the findings from the data obtained from the survey , as realized action plan , managed to notice a significant improvement, especially in the climate of the classroom teaching, engagement of all students, joint activities and cooperation between groups separate class of motivation and interest of students .

Limitations of the study

Since the research was conducted only in seven public schools, the main limitation of this study is the generalization of its findings to other schools in Kosovo. We believe that this research can serve as a model for the expansion of such research in schools and other levels of education in Kosovo given the importance and effect of the teaching.

Conclusions

Children are always keen to discover new things , but to learn a new language is a uniquely rewarding experience at any age. For children, the feeling of accomplishment that comes with their first steps toward a second language, may foster in them a deep passion and wider learning in general. Because children are a special " window of opportunity" in which language learning is intuitive and natural, is the convenience and pleasure of the experience that can boost their confidence and their desire for new discoveries .

" School should be a place where all children grow, not only in height and not only possess much wisdom, but in curiosity, courage, confidence, independence, patience, ability and skills for mutual respect and understanding "

Investigations of this nature area of particular importance for the progress and improvement of the quality of teaching and learning of foreign languages in school. Because the English language is included in the Plan Lessons from grade III shows that there are still opportunities to improve, especially in teaching methodology, but also the implementation of different methodologies and strategies more effectively. This collaborative research presents a test case to assist the implementation of teaching at this level. The data obtained from the survey, can be considered as a very useful educational resource. Planning, interpretation and evaluation can provide useful resources to improve students' knowledge in the field of English language.

This cooperative research suggests that the use of different methods, for more creative and interactive teaching helps students to build and develop basic concepts. Also, the study suggests teachers use didactic materials as much, depending on conditions and opportunities within the school. Teachers should also utilize as many resources in teaching and engage as much in achieving the objectives set in the plan and program of Ministry of Education Science and Technology.

Needs arising from this study suggest actions to be taken :

1. Increase the capacity of English teachers in elementary school on methodological approach in teaching foreign language through action research .

2. Provide didactic resources on the subject of English languages in relation to the age of children;
3. Aspect of communication and expression in the English language be given wider space during classes.

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