



The Analysis of L1 Teaching Programs in England, Canada, The USA and Australia Regarding Media Literacy and Their Applicability to Turkish Language Teaching*

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Abstract

Two basic approaches namely "independent lesson approach" and "integration approach" appear in teaching media literacy. Media literacy is regarded as a separate lesson in the education program like mathematics and social sciences in "independent lesson approach". However, in "integration approach", activities and outcomes of media literacy are related in an existing course. It has been observed that by the 1990s, media devices and messages started to have a stronger impact on the life of a society which in turn resulted in adoption of integration approach in teaching media literacy by developed countries. Such countries specifically related media literacy specifically with teaching L1. In this study, the countries which were regarded as leaders in teaching media literacy namely England, Canada (the state of Ontario), USA, and Australia L1 teaching programs were taken into consideration in terms of relating L1 teaching with teaching media literacy; therefore, common themes were identified in their programs. A total number of 487 pages of document and 497 gains of L1 teaching programs of these countries were investigated by means of document investigation method. To analyse the data, content analysis was used. In this respect, the first analysis dealt with countries and further analysis identified the common themes of media literacy gains in L1 teaching programs. To analyse the data a qualitative data analysis program MAXQDA® was used. The results indicated that the investigated teaching programs involved media literacy gains and activities at an important level with the ratio of 37.2%. Approximately, two thirds of media literacy gains are related with "comprehension" component of media literacy whereas the rest deals with its "production" component. The component of "comprehension" includes the gains in four basic themes namely "understanding the genre of the text", "questioning the text", "identifying the information and ideas in the text", and "thinking the impact of media messages on the other people" in 21 sub-themes. The component of "production" includes the gains in four basic themes namely "forming content", "using methodological information in production", "common production and interaction", "evaluating the own product of message" in 14 sub-themes.

Key Words

Australia, Canada, England, L1 Teaching Programs, Teaching Media Literacy, Turkish Language Teaching, United States of America.

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There are several studies in international literature about how media literacy can be included within educational systems (Considine, 1990; Duncan, 1989; Kahn & Master, 1992; Melamed, 1989; Scharrer, 2003; Tuggle, Sneed, & Wulfmeyer, 1999). Based on these studies and applications of the countries, it is possible to state that there are two types of application in this connection as (i) independent course approach and (ii) integration approach with a current course curriculum.

Independent Course Approach

As the name of approach refers, it means integrating media literacy into the educational system as a separate course (Semali, 2000). It defends that integrating the applications oriented to media literacy education into the educational system as a separate course is necessary as same with mathematics, science, and music courses (Hobbs, 1998, p. 25; Kress, 1992, p. 200). As we look at the media literacy education model applied in Turkey, it is seen that independent course approach has been adopted. This course, called as "Media Literacy", is elective and takes two hours per week (Altun, 2008; Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurumu [RTÜK], 2007).

Integration Approach

The other approach to position media literacy within educational systems is to integrate gains and activities of media literacy education within current definite courses in the education system. This approach have the risk to perform media text analysis and production activities superficially, but have the potential to introduce all students in the level of basic education with media criticism and production activities at the same time (Altun, 2005; Erstad, 1997; Richards, 1992).

In many developed countries, mainly in England, USA, Australia and Canada, it has been observed that by the 1990s, media devices and messages started to have a stronger impact on the life of a society which in turn resulted in adoption of integration approach in teaching media literacy (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2011; Bazalgette 1991, 2010; Buckingham, 2009; Buckingham & Domaille, 2009, p. 93; Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency [EACEA], 2010; Goodwyn, 1992; Goodwyn & Branson, 2005, p. 103; Hart & Hicks, 2001; Hobbs, 2006, p. 100; Taylor, 2002; Ontario Minister of Education, 2006).

Aim of Research

The research aims at determining the integration situations of L1 teaching programs with media literacy education in the leader countries for media literacy education which are England, Canada (Ontario State), USA and Australia. Within this context, the research questions are; (i) What are the gains related to media literacy education in L1 teaching programs of England, Canada (Ontario State), USA and Australia? (ii) To what extent L1 teaching programs of England, Canada (Ontario State), USA and Australia include media literacy? (iii) Under which common themes can the gains placed in L1 teaching programs of England, Canada (Ontario State), USA and Australia regarding the media literacy education be categorized?

Method

Research Model

In this research, document analysis from qualitative research methods was used. By using this method, (1) subjects cannot be reached easily were reached, (2) subject or participant reactance was abolished, (3) analysis process was made in an extended time period, (4) had an idea about the low cost applications of the countries, and finally (5) possible bias were avoided since information in the teaching programs reflects official policies more than the thoughts of people.

Analysis of Cases

6th to 8th grade level gains of L1 teaching programs applied in England, Canada (Ontario State), USA and Australia in 2012 have been examined. The reason why these countries were selected is that they are described as the leader in media literacy teaching in several researches (Federov, 2003, 2008; Namita, 2010; Pungente, Duncan, & Andersen, 2005; Shibata, 2002).

Typical Case Sampling approach was applied in this research (Patton, 2002). In this approach, firstly the leader countries in media literacy topic (typical cases) were defined and then these countries were included into the analysis of the cases of study.

Data Collection Tool

Data analysis of regarding teaching programs was accomplished via "Media Literacy Checklist". The resources used while preparing the "Media Literacy

Checklist” are mainly *Media Education: Literacy Learning and Contemporary Culture* of Buckingham (2009), *Media Literacy* of Potter (2005; 2011) and *Teaching the Media* of Masterman (2006) besides various articles, books and teaching programs (Abreu, 2007, 2008; Burn & Durran, 2007; Goodman, 2005; Harlak, 2000; Hart & Hicks, 2001; Hobbs, 2001, 2007; Hobbs & Frost, 1999; Hobbs & Jensen, 2009; Share, Jolls, & Thoman, 2005; Tobias, 2005; UNESCO, 2008).

Steps of Data Analysis Process

It is possible to state that data analysis process was formed in two main chapters:

Step 1: As documents for teaching programs were searching, firstly “present or absent” technique was used. This technique is based on the practice of coding “1” if desired subject presents in the document and coding “0” if it is absent. In this way, every gain defined in teaching programs was examined. After coding as “1” for the gains related to media literacy education, they were taken for data analysis process and the ones not related to media literacy education were coded as “0” and were excluded from analysis process.

Step 2: In this part of the data analysis process, 3-stage content analysis approach was adopted. These stages are (a) coding data, (b) forming themes, and (c) organizing codes and themes.

Validity and Reliability

“*Media Literacy Checklist*” was applied in order to provide the reliability of coding during content analysis process. However, not only precautions for coding reliability were taken in this step, but also coder reliability was also given importance. For this purpose, both “repeatability” and “certainty” (Bilgin, 2000; Creswell, 2008) approaches were adopted to increase the coder reliability. In order to provide the validity of the research, the strategies of “content validity”, “estimation validity” and “comparison validity” (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were used as well.

Findings

Number and Ratio of Gains in L1 Teaching Programs Defined Oriented to Media Literacy Education

Canada (Ontario State): There are 225 gains in L1 teaching program of Ontario State of Canada. As

it was examined related to the distribution of gains according to learning areas, there are 75 (33%) gains for “Writing” learning area, 54 (24%) gains for “Reading” learning area, 54 (24%) gains for “Oral Communication” learning area, and 42 (19%) gains for “Media Literacy” learning area.

Australia: There are 93 gains in L1 teaching program of Australia. 48% of these gains ($f=45$) can be associated with media literacy education. A similar analysis according to learning areas showed that 29% ($f=10$) of “language” learning area, 42% ($f=10$) of “literature” learning area and 71% ($f=25$) of “literacy” learning area can be associated with media literacy.

England: There are totally 51 gains under different learning areas in L1 teaching program of England (QCDA, 2008). As they were evaluated in terms of media literacy education, it was resulted that 51% ($f=26$) of gains was associated with media literacy education. A similar analysis based on learning areas displayed that 13 (81%) gains in “Reading” learning area was related to media literacy teaching. This ratio differed as 42% ($f=5$) for “Speaking and “Listening” learning area and it was found as 35% ($f=8$) for “Writing” learning area.

United States of America (USA): There are totally 32 gains under different learning areas in L1 teaching program of USA (CCSO & NGA Center, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). As it was examined related to the distribution of gains according to learning areas, 31% ($f=10$) of them can be associated with media literacy education. A similar analysis for different learning areas presented that “Speaking and Listening” and “Reading” learning areas had the highest ratio as 50% ($f=5$) with relation to media literacy education. While 20% ($f=2$) of gains in “Writing” learning area was associated with media literacy education, no gain was encountered under “language” learning area to be able to relate with media literacy education.

Findings and Comments Related to Common Themes of Gains Associated with Media Literacy Education in L1 Teaching Programs

Content analysis in order to find common themes for media literacy in the teaching programs was categorized in two groups as (1) gains to understand media messages and (2) gains to produce media messages.

Common Themes Formed by the Gains Defined as to Understand Media Messages: The common themes reached as a result of MAXQDA® analysis of gains to understand media messages have been shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Common Themes in the Programs Formed by the Gains to Understand Media

Analyzing the Technical Structure of The Text
Analysis of Multi-layer Text Structure
Understanding the effect of tool on the message
Understanding the effect of tool on the audience
Questioning the Media Text
Understanding the Perspective
Questioning the Aims Behind the Messages
Questioning the Production Perspective
Questioning the Stereotypical Notations
Determining the Prejudices
Distinguishing Information and Views Placed in Media Text
Analysis of Persuasion and Propaganda Techniques
Evaluation of Claims and Arguments
Making Comparison
Questioning Reliability and Accuracy
Considering the Effect of Media Messages on Other People
Taking into account the other people
Empathizing

Common Themes Formed By the Gains Defined For Media Message Production: The common themes reached as a result of MAXQDA® analysis of gains to produce media messages have been shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
Common Themes In The Programs For The Gains As To Produce Media Messages

Forming content
Benefiting from Persuasion and Propaganda Techniques
Taking Into Account The Audience And Aims
Heading To Current Issues
Benefiting from Valid References And Arguments
Using Technical Information in Production Process
Benefiting from Technological Developments
Forming and Presenting Multi-layer Content
Benefiting from Different Media Tools and Presentation Techniques
Common Production and Interaction
Interaction
Sharing
Evaluation of The Message Produced
Evaluation of the Effect of the Tool Used on the Message Formed
Evaluation of the Effect of the Tool Used on the Audience Addressed
Controlling the Reliability and Accuracy

Results

Results Related To Integrating the Gains for Media Literacy Education in the Countries' L1 Teaching Programs

487-page documents were examined in order to determine the media literacy gains placed in the L1 teaching programs of the countries. It was revealed that 27% (f=133) of these 497 gains in the documents was related to media literacy education. All L1 teaching programs of leader countries for media literacy education in literature were associated with media literacy education. Content analysis results revealed that teaching programs of England and Australia is related to media literacy education with almost 50% ratio and this ratio differs as 30% and approximately 20% for USA and Canada respectively.

Results Related To the Common Themes Emerged For Media Literacy Education in the Countries' L1 Teaching Programs

It was found that there were two categories for the gains in L1 teaching programs of the countries as "understanding media messages" and "producing media messages". Two-third of the gains are oriented to understanding media messages and the other part (one-third) are related to producing media messages. Therefore, it can be said that producing media messages is another important aspect of media literacy as much as understanding media messages.

Discussion

At first, media literacy education was included into education system as an independent course structures in several countries such as "media studies", "media education", etc. However, as media and communication technologies surrounded the daily life since 1990s, the issue started to be integrated into educational systems by relating to various courses (Buckingham & Domaille, 2009, p. 22). In the countries adopting integration approach, the main course that media literacy education is associated with is L1 teaching courses in which there are objectives to develop understanding and expressing skills of individuals (Kubey & Baker, 1999). Findings obtained in this research were discussed under two headings within the contexts of "Turkish Language Education" and "Media Literacy Education".

In terms of “Turkish Language” Education

It is often mentioned that the content to be presented in Turkish course should be related to the daily life issues by several researchers (Cavkaytar, 2009; Çifçi, 2006, pp. 89-90; Güneş, 2000, p. 15; Kurdayıoğlu & Tüzel, 2010; Özbay, 2006, p. 92; Tüzel, 2012b; Ünalın, 2006, p. 32; Yalçın, 2002, p. 34; Yaylı, 2010; Yıldız, Okur, Arı, & Yılmaz, 2010, pp. 58-59). Different kinds of media texts which surround students in this age such as advertisements, TV series, films, songs, posters, and news texts (RTÜK, 2009; Sanders, 1999) should also be taken into account in Turkish courses. Since individuals spend most of their time in school or business life on media tools. In this respect, integrating Turkish courses with media literacy education can be evaluated as an important opportunity in terms of making Turkish courses closer to daily life.

In terms of “Media Literacy” Education

In the first year of elective Media Literacy course, 350 thousands of secondary school students took this course and this number was found quite inadequate by the head of Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) and also the Minister of National Education in that time (RTÜK, 2008). There are some discussions in the related literature about that giving Media Literacy course as an elective course statue causes many students completing basic education without having the skill to question media messages (Altun, 2008, 2009; Balaban, Ünal, & Küçük, 2008; Çakmak, 2010; Tüzel, 2012a). On the other hand, giving Media literacy education as integrated with Turkish courses have the capacity that all of 13 million of students in secondary school age can complete basic education by having the media literacy skills.

Suggestions

Suggestions based on the results of the study are as in the following: (i) Media literacy education has been given related to L1 teaching programs in the leader countries in the field of media literacy. Taken together with the advantages mentioned in discussion part of this approach, some improvements can be made in order to relate media literacy education with Turkish courses. (ii) Current “Media Literacy” course given as an elective course in our education system can be re-questioned in terms of its cost, accomplishment level of its objectives, and fields of teachers for this course.

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