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REGGIO EMILIA INSPIRED PROJECTS CONDUCTED IN A PRESCHOOL: AN ACTION RESEARCH¹

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Abstract

Reggio Emilia approach is an educational philosophy started by Loris Malaguzzi in Italy after the World War II. This approach spread from Italy to all over the world. It has been researched and applied in many countries, but there is not much research on Reggio Emilia-inspired schools in Turkey. The aim of this research is to examine how a Turkish preschool classroom can be inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach. This study was conducted in a preschool in Eskisehir, Turkey, with 11 children (48-60 months old) during 12 weeks. The researcher is working as a teacher at this preschool. Since the researcher conducting the research is the teacher of this class, the action research design was used. Data collection methods consisted of a personal information form, researcher/teacher diary, videos, photographs and semi-constructed interviews. The descriptive analysis method was used to analyze and to interpret the data. The research results showed that project-based work is appropriate for Turkish national curriculum; it was seen that many of the curriculum objectives stated in the national curricula were attained. It was also seen that the project outcomes were coherent with program's aims and objectives. During the research, children eagerly and actively participated in the projects which were inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach, and they progressed significantly with these projects. Parents, teachers, and school principal made positive comments about the projects.

Keywords: Reggio Emilia Approach; Projects; Preschool Education.

Introduction

Reggio Emilia Approach

"Reggio Emilia is a city; Reggio Emilia is a community; it is not a program," stated Rinaldi (personal communication, 25th March, 2015). After the Second World War, preschool education became one of the most important educational subjects in Europe. Like its contemporary educational approaches, Reggio Emilia Approach emerged after the war and has improved to this day (Wurm, 2005). Malaguzzi played an important role for improving this approach (Fraser & Gestwicki, 2002; New, 2007). According to Malaguzzi, traditional Italian preschool programs could not support children's intellectual and social development. He thought that in order to teach children better we should know more about them. This led to a new educational approach aimed at children's expressing themselves with the long-term projects, which are known as Progettazione (New, 2007).

The Reggio Emilia approach is inspired by the studies of many thinkers such as Dewey, Erikson, Vygotsky and Piaget (Gordon, Miles & Browne, 2007; İnan, 2012; Fraser & Gestwicki, 2002). Philosophically, this approach is mostly based on social constructivist theories, which see the children as social actors in their own lives (Kim & Darling, 2009). With the shared activities requiring effective communication and collective work, as a community of learning, children use their ideas to improve others' ideas, or they seek another way which has not been tried before and they build their perceptions about the world together (İnan, Trundle, Kantor, 2010; İnan, 2010; İnan, a2011; İnan b2011; Gandini, 1998).

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İnan (2009) states that Reggio Emilia approach is the most suitable educational approach for a preschool class, because its principles permit you to make changes and create unique projects according to your own unique context. In education, inspired from Reggio Emilia, there is no true or wrong way for education of young children but understanding children and adapting the principles to your own world with your own realities. Edwards (2007) indicates that this approach is not an educational model with identified methods, teacher training standards, or accreditation. Instead, it is an approach in that educators share their own experiences which are made sense by others.

In Reggio Emilia, children's own time perceptions and personal rhythms are taken into consideration while planning the activity and projects. A day-long program provides enough time for children doing something satisfactorily in a rich surrounding (Morrison, 2007). One of the most important contributions of Loris Malaguzzi and other educators to the approach is their different opinion about how many languages children use while expressing themselves and the world. Like Howard Gardner's widened views about intelligence, Reggio Emilia taught us that in order to understand the world, children use games made by their graphic, symbolic, and imaginative thoughts and "hundreds and hundreds more languages" (Fraser & Gestwicki, 2002). İnan (2012: 18) explains children's 100 languages as "Children express and explain themselves using different ways (dance, clay, pictures, music). A child's using these different ways is important for both communicating to others and explaining him/herself".

Pedagogistas (*Pedagogisti*/ *Pedagogsite*) are pedagogical coordinators educated in early childhood education who guide and support learning activities, work as a team member and organize weekly meetings at schools (Gordon, Miles and Browne, 2007). *Atelieristas* are art teachers observing children's learning and creativity processes, providing and organizing equipment at an atelier and school. *Atelieristas* work with teachers closely (Gandini et al., 2005). Correspondingly, *Atelier* is the studio of *Atelierista*, where s/he works together with teachers and small groups of children (Wurm, 2005).

Child image is also different in Reggio Emilia. Children are not seen as passive learners applying given instructions, but active agents who are responsible for their own learning. Children start the project with the aim of understanding the physical and social world (How do fountains work?); a practical suggestion (Let's do this mill); or a philosophical dilemma (Can an enemy be a friend?). After hypotheses become evident, teachers prepare the environment in which children can research these hypotheses. Children test them and suggest new hypotheses. In this process, adults and children have an active role. Simultaneously, the teacher does the documentation by gathering immense data (New, 2007).

Teachers, like the children, are far from their classical definition in Reggio Emilia schools. Instead of being a didactical instructor, they are guides and do activities outside the school. Reggio teacher works with another instructor in the classroom. Also, every school has an *atelierista* (Edwards, 1998). These two teachers are equal and work in a classroom with twenty children. The school has no principal or head teacher (Gordon, Miles & Browne, 2007). Teachers work with other teachers and staff to do their own observations and documentation. They plan the answers and feedback for the children; also, they hypothesize possible results. They work together about the general management of the classroom and applications of activities (Scheinfeld and Haigh, 2008). The environment is also accepted as a teacher (Dever & Falconer, 2008; Bancroft, Fawcett & Hay, 2008; Wilson & Elliss, 2007). The environment is so simple and rich so that children can work on projects without any distractions.

Reggio teachers also believe parents have rights like children (Follari, 2011). The family's role is very important because they are members of committees that govern the school and play an active role on their children's learning (Billman & Sherman, 2008; Dever & Falconer, 2008). Parents are strong members of community of learners in Reggio Emilia schools working on projects with children and teachers, helping visitors understand how school works, sharing ideas about education of young children and so on (personal communication with a parent at La Villetta school of Reggio Emilia, 24th March, 2015)

Reggio Emilia is not a prepared program to be implemented (İnan, 2009). It has its own term called *Progettazione*. It is a method which means working with children on projects. *Emergent Curriculum*, *Project Approach* and *Projected Curriculum* are also the terms used instead of *Progettazione* (Wurm, 2005). Projects provide children opportunities for hands-on, minds-on, playful, teacher-supported work (İnan & İnan, in press).

Documentation plays an important role in the educational process at Reggio Schools. According to Rinaldi (1994), documentation is not only collecting data and materials about the things happened in the classroom, but also a physical collection, reflection, analysis, and representation. Children's learning is shown to other children, to parents and teachers with documentation panels, using videos and presentations to show the process (Wurm, 2005). "Documentation is also a vital part of *progettazione* process" (Fraser & Gestwicki, 2002: 129).

The main aim of Turkish Preschool Education Curriculum, implemented in 2013, is helping

children's physical, emotional and intellectual growth (MEB, 2013). To do this, it aims to facilitate democratic learning experiences, which are suitable to a child's developmental features and personal differences; these experiences should support a child's development. This national curriculum also considers family and environment important. It gives importance to active family participation. The curriculum requires evaluation of the education given and active use of this evaluation outputs. The curriculum is also flexible, based on program-solving, uses the environment for learning, and lends[or attributes] much importance to diversify learning experiences.

Purpose

In this research, how the project works inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach could be applied in a Turkish preschool class was investigated. In order to achieve this aim, the five questions below were asked.

- I. Can Reggio projects be applied in a public Turkish preschool class?
- II. What are the steps of these projects?
- III. How can active family participation be met?
- IV. To what extent do the projects meet Turkish preschool curriculum attainments?

Method

The Action Research model was used in this research. Because of the researcher's studying a special case in her own classroom and her being a researcher and a teacher at the same time, the study was designed as a personal "Action Research" (Cresswell, 2005).

The study group of the research consisted of 11 children (48-60 months old) studying at a preschool in Eskişehir. Five of the children were girls while the others were boys. Most of the children's fathers were workers. Two children's mothers were working, and most of the parents graduated from a secondary school.

Several changes were made in the classroom layout, and learning centers were created during the study. The teacher/researcher became Reggio Emilia-inspired in her class work and tried to follow the principles of the approach.

Data collection methods consist of a teacher/researcher diary, student information form, photographs, videos, and semi-structured interviews; and qualitative data analysis (descriptive analysis) is conducted to analyze the data.

Findings

Many ideas were broached[or introduced] and discussed during the study. These ideas led to several projects, some of which were long-term and finished at the end of the research. Moreover, some of them were short-term or had not been concluded. The data from the six projects are listed below:

1. Beginnings of the projects.

"The Houses Project" started with a play in the classroom, in which they made a tent and started playing in it; at the same time, other children were watching a construction of a house from the classroom window. The teacher showed the children different types of house pictures, children discussed the kinds of roofs they have seen in different parts of the country and then they decided to make houses.

The second project was called "Cake Project." In this project, the teacher received help from specialists and made field trips. The project started after the teacher saw the children making cakes from modelling clay. The teacher and children decided to make cakes at the morning meeting. Then, the teacher invited a pastry teacher to the school and organized a field trip to a vocational school. There, children worked on making their own cakes.

"Traffic and Transportation Project" was also a project started by the children. The teacher joined the children's game with her Lego car. After the teacher's participation, all the children started to play a car game. The teacher asked provocative questions and invited a policeman to the class for a meeting. During the project, the class made a trip to the train station, a plane museum and a ship, after which they took a tour of a model train.

"The Pineapple Project" was started by the teacher. The teacher wanted to work on the children's ignorance on this fruit. She asked the children to inspect the fruit, explain their thoughts about it and make a guess about how inside looks like.

"The Our Hair Project" was also started with girls' play. They were playing a hairstylist game in the classroom. The teacher used this game to start a project. The project continued with field trips and parent involvement.

"The Penguins Project" emerged from the daily routine of the school. The morning sport was done every day, and that day animal walks were imitated. At the morning circle, children started talking about the penguin walk, and they learned much about the penguins during the project.

One day, one of the children came to the classroom with his new shoes. Others were really interested in them. The next day the teacher brought some different shoes, which was the start of "The Shoes Project."

2. Family Participation

One of the most important factors of this approach is family participation. The Ministry of Education gives importance to family participation in classroom activities at related legislation. Parent participation in the project works was one of the aims of this study.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the parents a week after the project activities were finished, and one of the questions was about their expectations before the study; they said that they had positive expectations about the project work. For example,

Child 10's mother: When you talked about the project work, I really liked it because I could attend the activities in the classroom.

Child 3's mother: As I know you are studying at the post-graduate level, I knew that my child would have a better education.

On the other hand, one of the parents expressed her uneasiness about trying something new at the school.

Child 1's mother: In fact, I wasn't very willing at the beginning; I had even thought about not giving permission. You were trying a new thing.

Another question asked of the parents was their positive or negative thoughts about the study. They said that they were well-informed of their children's works at school through the continuous documentation. They were able to monitor their children's progress and had a strong connection with the school. Here is an excerpt from the interviews:

Child 5's mother: He is my second child; we hadn't had this kind of experience with my first child. We took her to school in the morning and returned home in the afternoon. Now, school is a part of our life.

Some parents said that they also learned a lot at this process and changed their behavior toward their own children.

Child 12's Mother: We always restrained him because we thought he was too young. We thought that protecting him was the best, but we saw, in fact, he was learning by this way.

Child 6's mother: I learned that children have quite different ideas.

None of the parents made negative comments about the study. Moreover, parents stated that this type of education should be given to their children throughout their preschool years.



Pictures 2-4: Parent participation to the projects

3. Field trips and visits.

While working on projects inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, teachers should understand the importance of field visits and organize field trips to let children see things that they wonder about in their original sites. Moreover, inviting specialists to the school and allowing children to pose questions about which they have always wondered would enable them to widen their horizons.

In this study, field trips were organized according to children's interests and project requirements; for example, during the Cake Project, a pastry teacher was invited to the classroom, then field trips to a supermarket and a regional vocational school were organized.



Pictures 7-11: Works done during the Cake Project

While doing the Traffic and Transportation Project, a policeman was invited to the classroom; then, a field trip to a railway station, train museum, plane museum, and pirate ship was done.



Pictures 12-15: Pictures from the trip during the Traffic and Transportation Project

During the Our Hair Project, children went to a coiffeur and they had a chance to ask the hairdresser their questions.



Picture 16: Coiffeur trip

4. Children's works

Children are in the center during the Reggio Emilia-inspired projects. As a learner-centered approach, projects are determined according to children's interests and wishes, after which they progress to their choices and curiosity.

Here is an excerpt from the teacher's diary about the Houses Project:

After finishing making the bricks of the house, we prepared the ground on which we would put the house. In order to see how the garden should be, we decided to go and see the garden of the school. Children saw the keystones and said;

S.1: Let's do partitive stones

S.2: We can't put stones, our house is from paper

Teacher: Then we can cut it and use it as if it was stone

During the projects, the children found a change to share their ideas that came from their experiences or cultural backgrounds. For example, during the Houses Project, one of them suggested making a flat roof. When the teacher asked the reason, she said that she was from Adıyaman and the roofs are flat over there.

Children's creative thinking skills also developed during the projects; for example, one of the children made a house from beads on a paper and shared it with the classroom. They produced many drawings and sculptures, used paper in a different way they used to, and so on. For example, at the beginning of the Cake Project, children drew different kinds of cakes to show variety.



Picture 17: House from Beads

The children actively participated in every stage of the project works and were eager to work in groups. They shared ideas with one another on their projects by arguing, asking questions, and working together. Moreover, documenting their works made them so happy. They were eager and excited to present their work to their parents when the parents came to the school to take their children home.



Picture 18-21: Children working on the projects

They worked more actively and confidently during the later projects than the earlier ones. The teacher's direct support role at the beginning changed to more facilitating and guiding role in the later projects.

The children, learning best by playing, were really serious when they returned from their field trips and made up games from their experiences. Group works were similarly serious and entertaining. Here being serious means that they were able to focus on their work with great attention.



Pictures 22-24: Group works and games

Interestingly, the children's works looked similar to the ones, which appeared in Reggio Emilia-inspired preschools in other countries. This motivated the teacher about the applicability of the study.



Picture 24: Childworks in this study



Picture 25:Child works from the Bike Project from Australia. <http://www.reaie.org.au/aboutreaie>

In order to see if what children learned was permanent, the teacher asked questions about previous learning, and it was found that children were able to remember and answer the questions. For example, at the beginning of the Traffic and Transportation Project, the teacher read a book and began a discussion about planes and said they use pink and white fuel for planes. Then, at the trip to the plane museum, she asked what color the plane fuel is and all the class answered correctly to the question.

5. Project outcomes and documentation

One of the most important features of Reggio Emilia-inspired schools is their emphasis on documentation and unique way to deriving benefit from this.

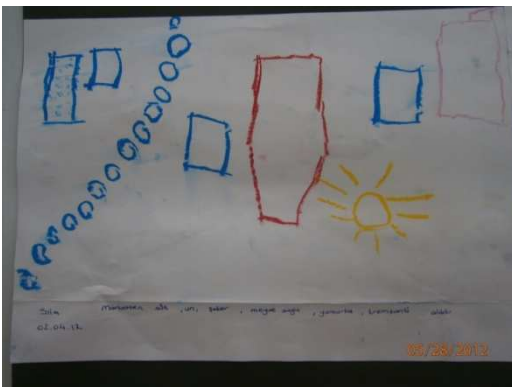
Documentation is an important part of this study. Photos were taken during projects, notes and the teachers' diary were taken, and project works of children (e.g., drawings, 3D works) were saved and later shared with families and other school staff on an exhibition wall separated for the classroom work by the school administration. In a short time, this wall became the most interesting part of the school. The teacher/researcher regularly met with the other teachers and parents about documentation (i.e., products and photos).



Picture 26: The Exhibition Wall where the children's learning were made visible to others



Pictures 27-30: The Houses Project works





Pictures 32-36: Children's drawings and 3D outcomes

6. Project attainments and their accordance with Turkish Preschool Curriculum

The curricula for all grades are developed by the Ministry of Education and yearly plans are prepared according to these programs. However, during this project, the teacher did not follow the yearly plan, but she regularly checked and compared the children's progress with the Turkish curriculum educational attainments. In this comparison, it was seen that many of the objectives were met during the projects.

Table 1. Projects and attainments

Project	Social and Emotional area	Linguistic area	Cognitive area	Self-care skills area	Psychomotor area
Houses Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Starts doing something by himself. >Tries to finish something he started. >Attends group works by oneself. >Voluntarily takes responsibilities in the group. >Prosecutes one's responsibility in the group. >Explains main specialties of one's own culture. >Explains main specialties of another culture. >Makes products at visual arts activities. >Makes visual products at visual arts activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Makes eye contact while listening or speaking. >Attends conversations. >Starts conversations on a particular subject. >Continues conversation on a particular subject. >Waits for his turn to speak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Recognizes an object/situation/event that requires recognition. >Intensifies his attention to a subject/event/situation. >Tells what the objects were made from. >Orders the events according to their happening sequences. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Uses some tools that require hand skills. >Gathers the objects in a way that they made new shapes. >Makes pictures by using different materials. >Cuts the materials in required shape. >Sticks the materials in required shape. >Shapes the materials with his own hand. >Shapes the materials with a tool.

Cake Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Expresses his own positive or negative feelings appropriately. >Obeys the rules of daily life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Makes eye contact during listening/ speaking. >Attends conversations. >Starts conversations on a particular subject. >Continues conversation on a particular subject. >Waits his turn to speak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Guesses measurement results. >Compares measurement results with his guesses. >Tells he problem. >Finds various solutions to the problem. >Tries solutions. >Decides the best solution. >Explains why he decided that solution is the best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Cares cleanliness of foods and drinks. >Uses food equipment cleanly. >Cares the etiquette, while eating. 	
Traffic and Transportation Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Behaves appropriately without adult supervision. >Adapts new and uncommon questions. >Follows the leader if necessary. >Obeys the rules of daily life. >Presents his products with various ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Makes eye contact during listening/ speaking. >Attends conversations >Starts conversations on a particular subject. >Continues conversation on a particular subject. >Waits his turn to speak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Tells the meaning of a symbol that is shown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Attends a resting event when got tired. >Tells the dangerous situations >Avoids dangerous situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Walks properly according to visual directions. >Uses some tools requiring hand skills.
Penguins Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Respects rights of living beings. >Explains the sharing's with other living beings. >Walks/dances with aesthetic body movements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Makes eye contact during listening/ speaking. >Attends conversations. >Starts conversations on a particular subject. >Continues conversation on a particular subject. >Waits his turn to speak. >Shows his listening with pictures, music drama, poetry, stories etc. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Crawls through a specific distance. >Uses tools that require handcraft. >Cuts the materials in required shape. >Sticks the materials in required shape. >Carries objects with different weights to a specific distance.

Shoes project	>Explains main specialties of one's own culture. >Explains main specialties of another culture.	>Makes eye contact during listening/speaking. >Attends conversations. >Starts conversations on a particular subject. >Continues conversation on a particular subject. >Waits his turn to speak. >Makes rhyme with various materials. >Tells the source of the sound.			>Walks on different kinds of floor.
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Looking at the table above during this 12-week-period, one can see many of the educational objectives were met with the projects. Also, there were other projects which were not listed above helped the children meet more objectives.

7. Thoughts of the other staff about the project

In order to collect teachers' opinions about the study, interviews were done with three teachers in the school.

Two of the teachers said that they have information about the Reggio Emilia approach because of the lessons they took during their undergraduate study. However, it is understood from their statements that the teachers had not gleaned enough information about Reggio Emilia. Some of the teachers' thoughts about the approach before the study are as follows:

"We learned about the Reggio Emilia approach during our undergraduate education with the other approaches. I was suspicious about the applicability of the approach in our school as it has many requirements."

"I knew the Reggio Emilia approach, but I can't say I have much information about it. When you talked about the project work, I thought you would give the project subjects and they would try to do them."

It can be understood that the teachers did not have much idea about the context of the study because they had not seen Reggio projects before.

The teacher/researcher wanted them to compare the current curriculum with the Reggio Emilia; they said that Reggio is more libertarian and gives teachers more freedom. They also added that children attend activities more voluntarily. Some of the excerpts from the interviews are as follows:

"I think my daughter's being in your class was a great chance. As both a teacher and a parent, I think one can be more successful with the projects instead of traditional program. My daughter was very eager to learn. Everyday, she came home and talked about everything she did that day."

"You always made field trips. I think field trips are more effective because it is better to go and see something in its own place than to stay and learn between classroom walls"

The teachers said that they learned much after this study was done, and they want to work at a Reggio Emilia preschool. When the teacher/researcher asked about what they learned from this project, they said:

"Sharing the products on the wall was like your advertisement. Everyone was informed about your works and projects. We should share our studies like that."

Teachers' positive opinions about family participation and documentation were good indicators for showing that the study was accomplished some of its aims.

Moreover, after the pastry project finished, the teacher/researcher asked the pastry teacher some questions her opinions about the study. She answered:

"I think it is really good. This is exactly what we say learning by living and doing. Children had a chance to do what they inquired about. They were all happy."

Also, an interview with the school principal was done in order to learn how the study was seen by the school administration. When the teacher/researcher asked the school principal what were her expectations from the project, she said:

"I really liked the idea. We are always asked to do projects so we want these projects from our teachers. Doing projects in our school is a chance for all of us. I truly guessed that you would always do activities during your research study."

When the teacher/researcher asked what she learned from this study, she said that our traditional schools are limiting the children too much.

"All classrooms are the same in our school; other schools are the same as our school. We are expecting all the children and teachers to do same things. This may be possible in high schools, but more freedom should be given to preschools. Whenever I looked at your wall, there were different documents. This showed us that how an active class you were and we felt like as if we were like in the class with you."

Results

In this action study, it is observed that children readily embraced this project-based education environment. The detailed guidance and great effort of the researcher was decreased in time. At the same time, the children adapted their thinking styles according to this approach. This indicated that how children can adjust quickly to new situations and how children are ready to use their investigator characteristics, which are also assertions of the Reggio Emilia Approach.

An art teacher from a close primary school lent her assistance. With the help of this teacher, the teacher/researcher became aware of where she should pay attention to the pictures and projects. She said that children's using colors and their drawing objects may refer to many things; for example, orange shows happiness, while brown shows insecurity. Similarly, big pictures can show distractibility while small ones show introverted children.

Documentation of the process enabled authorities, teachers, parents, and other children to check and see the productions and children's learning. Exhibiting productions motivated both parents and children. It also created an opinion about the productivity of the class.

Although the members of the school had some ideas about the Reggio Emilia Approach, this study made it more concrete for them and affected their opinions about this approach. The teachers impressed from the studies, and the principal stated that the free environment affected positively children's learning.

During the course of the study, three meetings were set. In these meetings parents were informed about the progress of the children and contributions they could make to the next practices. By these meetings, parents were kept updated about the state of the children and the teacher/researcher did not have to meet them out of school time.

During this study, the children attended more field trips than other classes of school, which enabled them to learn in a more detailed manner and see the subject in its natural environment. That also enabled parents to be more active about their children's learning. They learned more about the children during the field trips and activities, so we can say that the study was also a parent training from some aspects.

The children were giving ideas about projects and applying those ideas, which increased their self-confidence. Progressively, they were coming with more ideas to their teacher. After the study finished, they were still coming with new project ideas and some of them were applied. They also had different kinds of information about specific objects; for example, they had different and interesting information about planes or cakes.

The children showed a big progress in acquiring many of the Turkish national preschool attainments during the process. That means attainments of the Turkish preschool curriculum can be met with Reggio inspired projects. In addition to this, it was found that some first grade goals were met with the projects.

The children learned scientific thinking with the activities. Their science process skills were improved. They made observation, identification, classification, comparison and communicated and used the information they gained during the projects. For example, they observed authentic environments during the field trips, identified their own works, classified shoes and houses, compared a house roof with another one, communicated with each other and the teacher and finally they used their newly obtained information in new activities. There was also a great progress in children's creative and critical thinking skills. They developed new ideas and criticized another idea with the existing information.

Children gradually got used to this working style. They followed the school, classroom and other project rules naturally. They acted as a responsible person in their own learning, because they were intrinsically motivated in the activities in which their own needs and curiosity were addressed.

As a result, the projects inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach were successfully applied, and this study affected children positively. The research showed that children are more active and self-confident when they are taught in a free atmosphere. These projects provided this atmosphere in the frame of Turkish preschool curriculum.

The researcher knew about this approach from the lessons that she took during her undergraduate and graduate study and she made an extensive literature review. However, because of both the

inappropriate school environment and the program being applied in school on the course of the research, all the assumptions couldn't be met easily. Although necessary objects were not available to create an atelier, by using the existing objects in the class and buying others, a mini atelier was established. Only one classroom participated in this study, but if the school was fully in the project, there would be more stimuli for the children. It is suggested to apply this study school-wide with enough material and educated staff. Moreover, in-service training courses should be organized for teachers about project-based works and the Reggio Emilia Approach. Schools should support doing projects inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach and project outputs should be exhibited regionally and nationally.

The Turkish preschool curriculum has been updated in 2013. Now, it is more suitable for being Reggio Emilia-inspired and conducting project works by following children's interest and inquiries than the previous one. In the new version of the national preschool curriculum, yearly plans are changed to monthly plans and give more freedom teachers to conduct project-based work. Classroom layout has also been changed in the new version, learning corners evolved to learning centers, and there are small places divided with closets in classrooms. Aims are taken out of the program and objectives and their indicators are used in the program and more emphasis is given to family participation. Science and mathematics activities had been done together before; it has been divided as science and mathematics in the new version. All those changes in the national curriculum will allow Reggio Emilia-inspired project works happen more easily in preschools.

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