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# Experiences of Primary School Students and Classroom Teachers in Philosophical Events

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal the experiences of primary school students and teachers in the philosophical activities organized with children. As one of the case studies types, a holistic single case pattern was adopted in the study. The study group was composed of primary school third-grade students and their classroom teacher, and activities on philosophy with children were carried out over the period of seven weeks with the participants. The data for the study was collected through observation notes, interviews, and diaries. Descriptive and content analysis were used in the analysis of the data. Considering the teacher's views and observation notes as a result of the seven-week practices carried out within the framework of philosophical activities with children, it was observed that the students participated in the activities willingly and fondly and were active in the process. Moreover, it was observed that the students were in the questioning process throughout the activities, put forward different ideas, tried to reason, defend their ideas, and were open to discussion and communication. The teacher stated that the philosophical activities were different, enjoyable, and instructive for her and her students. The views expressed by the students about philosophical activities in their diaries were collected under various themes. In the themes, students stated that they had discussions, that they were in the process of questioning, their perspectives gained change, and they achieved more detailed ways of thinking. They also stated that the activities were fun, they learned to reason, and they created new, different ideas. They also explained that they learned new things, their imagination-sense of freedom expanded, and they engaged in different activities.

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## 1. Introduction

The characteristics of individuals to be trained under the changing and evolving situations of our time are likewise shaped by society. While memorizing and storing information was regarded as important in the past, today, it is important to question, realize the information, and evaluate it in the process of mutual interaction. Learning environments where the students can use the information they discuss effectively, where they can look critically and discuss the information with their circle in mutual communication and interaction are preferred. In line with these factors, different methods and techniques have been developed to render the teaching and learning environment more active and make the students more effective. Many method and techniques developed brought about the reorganization and effective use of teaching and learning environments. Many approaches, from problem-solving to case studies, from research and analysis to discussion, are used for more permanent and effective use of learning.

One of the current approaches used to teach students high-level thinking skills such as questioning-critical thinking-creative thinking is to organize philosophical activities with children. Learning to ask questions, gaining the skills of research and discovery, and thinking about the life, the universe, and beings in the universe with curiosity are among the main areas of questioning in philosophy. As a matter of fact, the main

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condition of philosophy is to ask questions rather than achieve knowledge. In this respect, philosophy has been very close for children. As the children evaluate philosophy with a cognition that perceives and tries to assimilate life together with the wonder, curiosity, and the presence they develop about the beings they encounter rather than being curious about philosophy. In the philosophical activities with children, they will learn philosophy as a skill of making decisions, analysing, consistent and critical thinking rather than mere knowledge, and applying it to their lives in this way. In this context, philosophy with children constitutes the most authentic aspect of philosophy as an attitude that handles the philosophy in childhood (Taşdelen, 2014).

The foundations of philosophical activities with children were laid by Lipman and Matthews. In the 1970s, serious declines were observed in the classroom scores of students in the United States. Matthew Lipman found that his students were also unable to think in philosophical terms in this period. Believing that philosophy education shall be given at an early age, Lipman created a philosophy program for children (Lipman et al., 1980). Lipman (2003) defined philosophy education with children as developing children's thinking capabilities, including them in the process of questioning, and facilitating them in developing critical thinking and creative thinking skills.

Moreover, children considered philosophical activities as an educational approach used in schools. Lipman conducted his first applied philosophy lessons with children with 5th-grade students. In his practices, he read stories with children and proceeded by talking about the model questions included in the story. The aim and focus of his project were bringing proposals for solutions by being present in a common conversation environment and encouraging students to think and reason themselves (Karakaya, 2006).

One of the significant names continuing the understanding pioneered by Lipman is Gareth B. Matthews. Matthews (1985) stated that education of philosophy education shall be important for adults and children. Matthews (1985) emphasized that the more the philosophical attitude is developed in adults, the more philosophical attitude will develop in children. However, Matthews argued that the gap between children and adults should be filled in, and he directed a philosophical critique of Piaget's cognitive development classification in his book. Matthews asserted that the understanding capabilities in childhood have been neglected and underestimated. Yet, children can make valuable contributions to adults, at least as much as adults can, on important and major problems. Matthews preferred the term dialogue with children instead of philosophy with children (Boyraz, 2019). Matthews understood the philosophy with children as a philosophy for children only and considered what children do as a "philosophy for adults". He has done this to have the adults gain an attitude and to ensure that they support the philosophical approaches or thoughts of children based on this attitude. Thus, he believed that both children and adults would gain an attitude of philosophy. He recommended his students to go back to their youth, or at least their childhood thoughts, in order to tackle some of their difficulties. As a result, Matthews attempted to introduce university students to philosophy by allowing them to explore the infantile ideas they had gathered from these students (Karakaya, 2006). One of the most important insights about philosophy education with children is introduced by Thomas E. Jackson. Jackson is known for the program he has developed for Hawaii (p4CHI). In his work carried out together with Lipman, he also took into account the understanding of Aristotle and Plato (Jackson, 2004). However, Jackson's views differed from Lipman's on some points. Jackson, as Lipman, formed questioning groups. However, he cared to create a program where the student was given the right to speak while creating the questions in the interaction process. He stated that students shall be actively involved in the process and shall participate actively in this way (Jackson, 2013).

The philosophy of education with children has been included as one of the issues emphasized by UNESCO over time. In 2007, UNESCO gathered the aims of philosophy with children under various topics. The topics mentioned in this work are as follows (UNESCO, 2007, pp. 15-16): "Thinking for oneself"; "Educating for thoughtful citizenship"; "Helping the personal development of children"; "Improving language, speaking and debating skills"; "Providing the skill for conceptualizing philosophy"; and "Building a didactics tailored for children. The fulfilment of the concept with children is stated to have vital and effective contributions to the development of children in terms of their purpose and approach in UNESCO's highlighted issues. Philosophy with children has played an effective role in providing students with many important qualities and skills in the cognitive/affective aspects such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creative thinking, developing a multi-directional perspective on events and situations, discussion, communication, bringing original ideas, respecting opposing ideas, and having self-confidence.

In particular, the primary school period is one of the most important periods in which basic skills and competencies are acquired and the foundations of knowledge and skills are laid. Any positive skill earned in this period is reflected in the later periods of the education life. As a result of philosophical activities with children in their developmental stages in primary school, it is expected that students' skills such as handling knowledge and thinking within a logical process, being able to look critically, achieving different perspectives, expressing their feelings and thoughts with logical data, and proposing solutions to problems will be developed. In terms of affective aspects, it is expected to be beneficial in terms of ensuring that students develop a culture of discussion, gain self-confidence through expression, develop tolerance and respect for opposing parties while not being offended by them, and develop a democracy culture (Güleryüz, 2013). As mentioned above, the primary school period has great importance in terms of cognitive and affective aspects for children to acquire and develop basic skills. Introducing students to philosophy education in the primary school period would be beneficial in terms of their development. Skills of questioning, research and discussion, which will be taught to children at a younger age, will be added to their set of skills as important skills that will affect them to become qualified individuals in other periods of their lives. Philosophy education with children is of great importance in terms of developing students' skills such as critical thinking, research, problem solving, and creativity as a result of the development of questioning and a multidimensional perspective in the children. There are various studies on philosophy education with children in the literature (Akkocaoğlu & Akkoyunlu, 2016; Biggeri & Santi, 2012; Boyacı et al., 2018; Boyraz, 2019; Daniel & Auriac, 2011; Demirtaş et al., 2018; Dirican & Deniz, 2020; Erdoğan, 2018; Gruioniu, 2013; Güneş, 2017; Güven, 2019; Karadağ & Demirtaş, 2018; Karakaya, 2006; Karasu, 2018; Kefeli & Kara, 2008; Kızıltan & Dombaycı, 2020; Mehdiyev & Yaralı, 2020; Millet & Tapper, 2012; Oktar, 2019; Okur, 2008; Ögüt, 2019; Özkan, 2020; Şahin & Tunca, 2015).

Philosophy education with children has been discussed in various aspects in these studies. Studies in which philosophy education with children are examined theoretically and explaining its history and development are more common. In addition, the extensiveness of the studies conducted in the pre-school period on philosophy education activities with children also draws attention. In addition to the philosophy education activities for pupils in the pre-school period, questioning skills, attitude toward philosophy, epistemological view, and critical thinking abilities were attempted to be investigated. Philosophy education studies with primary school pupils were also conducted, however these studies were observed to be of a more limited nature. Primary school period is of great importance in terms of gaining and developing basic knowledge and skills. In this sense, acquiring many skills such as questioning, curiosity, research, and investigation of primary school students along with philosophy education with children is among the points needed in the literature. Based on this, it is important to observe the philosophical activities in the study in the classroom environment by evaluating them as per their effect on students and the teacher's views holding these activities and determine what happened in the process.

- a) In this light, this research tries to answer the question, "What are primary school students' and instructors' experiences with philosophy activities with children?" The study's major problem sentence was selected to be "How are the experiences of primary school pupils and instructors carried out in philosophical activities with children?" in accordance with this goal. The following are sub-problems that have arisen because of the problem statement: What were the teacher's opinions about philosophical activities with children before the practices?
- b) How were the practices performed in the classroom for philosophical activities with children carried out?
- c) What are the teacher's assessments after the philosophical activities with children?
- d) What are the students' opinions on the philosophical activities carried out?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research Model

The study was designed as a case study with a qualitative approach. Individuals, organizations, communities, subdivisions (city or town), or cultures belonging to a population or community may be the focus of case studies. The discovery of a little-known occurrence, on the other hand, is shown as a pattern that allows for a comprehensive comprehension and analysis of the subject of an exemplary condition (Kumar, 2011). The study's method was judged to be qualitative design in this context. The study of the individual, group, event, or thing under investigation in its natural surroundings is, as previously stated, the most distinguishing aspect

of qualitative methods. The study's methodological goal was to uncover the perspectives of third-grade kids in primary school and their teachers on philosophical activities.

It can be seen that there are different classifications of the types of case studies in the literature (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 2003; Stenhouse, 1985; Yin, 1993, 2003). As one of the case studies types, a holistic single case pattern was adopted in the study. In a holistic single case pattern, there is only one unit of analysis (one individual, one institution, one program, one school, etc.) (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013; Yin, 1984). In this study, too, we have tried to examine how philosophical activities with children are carried out in the classroom through interviews with the classroom teacher, student diaries and classroom observations. Since we aimed to examine the detailed data of the practices based on philosophical activities in the classroom, the study was designed according to a holistic single case pattern.

## 2.2. Research Sample

The study group consisted of 3rd-grade students and their classroom teacher in a primary school in Denizli city center. The purposeful sampling method was chosen to specify the study group in order to obtain information about the practices based on philosophical activities. In the purposeful sampling method, the researcher chooses the participants with certain characteristics so that they are representative or informative (Schreiber & Asner-Self, 2011: 85). In this study, third-grade students in a primary school and their teachers were selected in relation to the philosophical activities. As per the information obtained from the classroom teacher, it was learned that the class is at a medium level in terms of socio-economic status. 36 students are studying in the relevant class. Twenty of these students are male and 16 are female. The classroom teacher included in the study group is female and she is 50 years old. She has been employed as a teacher for 30 years.

The following are some of the important aspects to consider while selecting students and a classroom teacher: Because we have previously collaborated with the classroom instructor on other projects, it was critical that the teacher be both experienced and willing to implement multiple methodologies in her classroom. Furthermore, the pupils in the chosen class attend a school with a middle socioeconomic status. We selected to conduct the practices with this group in a middle-level school rather than with lower and upper socioeconomic groups. Following the application of the relevant criteria, the teacher was informed about the study's goal and application procedure, as well as the weekly practices and study schedule for the philosophical activities.

## 2.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedure

The data collection tools used in the study are as follows:

*Semi-structured interview questions. Semi-structured interview forms were used to obtain the teacher's opinion about philosophical activities with children before, during, and at the end of the practice application were used to obtain the teacher's opinion about philosophical activities with children before, during and at the end of the application of practice. Semi-structured interview forms are preferred to enable the participants to explain their perceptions and thoughts, as well as to create a subject boundary based on the questions or problems that are required to be clarified, and to convey the participant's views in detail (Büyükoztürk et al., 2014; Merriam, 2009). In this context, semi-structured interview technique was used in the study in order to get the opinions of the teacher, who carried out the practices related to philosophy activities with children, based on their experiences. A semi-structured interview form was used to collect the teacher's thoughts on philosophical activities with children before, during, and after the activity.*

*Unstructured observation type was adopted from the understanding of "structured observation" which is a controlled observation established by the researcher, and "unstructured observation", which is an observation performed in the real world environment (Christensen et al., 2014). Unstructured observation notes were used for the classroom observations during the performance of philosophical activities with children. The reason to prefer unstructured observation was to examine and evaluate all data and items in the practices related to philosophy activities with children.*

*Diaries were used to obtain students' feelings and thoughts about the practices. At the end of the children's philosophy activities, student diaries were created to collect kids' feelings and thoughts about the process. The journals, which consist of four questions, were created as tools for pupils to share their feelings and views. The diaries were used in the context of the weekly intervals included in the implementation phase.*

## 2.4. Data Analysis

The main notion behind data analysis in case studies is that each situation should be thoroughly examined separately. This necessitates examining the situation as a system made up of components. Consolidation is also included during the analysis procedure. In addition, the researcher's question(s) must be relevant to the disease. The study report must reflect an insider's perspective of the situation from the objective standpoint of an outsider, offering a thorough grasp of each circumstance. It will also provide a detailed and comprehensive definition of each component (Christensen et al., 2014). Points relating to the case study analysis were considered in this study, and the data analysis procedure was beginning by organizing the data collected through observation, interviews, and diaries. All data was read multiple times, the audio recordings were transcribed, and a descriptive analysis was used to investigate the data collected from the interviews under present titles in order to better comprehend the data obtained from the relevant data sources. The content analysis method was used to examine the student diaries. We have paid attention to summarize and interpret the data for the descriptive analysis, and to process the data further for the content analysis, as mentioned by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013). Furthermore, the data from the observation form was presented to back up the study's findings.

## 2.5. Study Environment

The research was conducted in a classroom setting. In the classroom, the researcher has sat in an empty desk at the back of the room as an observer so that they do not distract or attract the attention of the students or teachers. The instructor, on the other hand, conducted her activities in the classroom by wandering between the pupils' desks and occasionally remaining at her desk. In the exercises that were completed, the researcher, classroom teacher, and students maintained the order of a classroom. The pupils, on the other hand, gathered in a circle for the warm-up games at the start of each activity. The pupils returned to the classroom layout after the warm-up game and received instruction in their classroom.

## 2.6. Process of Implementation

The study's implementation took place over the course of seven weeks. Warm-up games were played with the pupils before beginning philosophical exercises with the children. For each philosophical activity, a warm-up game was chosen. Warm-up games were used as attention-building introductory activities, with students gathering in a circle at times and participating at their desks at other times. Then, the related stories were used switch to the philosophical activities. The texts shared with the students during the implementation process are as follows: The Horizon-Watcher, the Island Republic, the Scorpion and the Turtle, the Voluntary Prisoner, the New Friend, the Cake of the Bear and the Zargon Hat. The purpose of the stories were as follows: (i) Providing the first "stimulus" to the students in terms of philosophy while starting the activity, (ii) Ensuring that the students follow a more detailed and questioning approach to the subject, (iii) Ensuring that the students take a much more active part in the philosophical process with their questions, thoughts and inquiries. In this context, conditions in which the students can be in a dilemma concerning the text were presented although the events and characters in the stories were different. Thus, it was tried to intensify the process of questioning and discussion. The events described here were started in the last week of March 2019 and continued until the last week of May. Before the implementation process, it was learned that the classroom teacher did not have any knowledge about P4C applications. Since the researcher had attended trainings on P4C practices before, she informed and directed the teacher about the practices of philosophy education with children in the classroom. Teacher's opinions were also frequently consulted during the activities. During the process, the researcher took notes based on his observations about the activity that was performed in the classroom. After each activity, the students were asked to keep a diary with their thoughts on the philosophical activities. A code name was assigned to each of the students who were included in the observation notes. While determining the code names, confidentiality and ethical principles were taken into consideration, and codes that were not related to the student's real life were used. The codes assigned as "Student Number (SN)" was added to the end of the comments for the students whose views on the themes were reflected within the framework of the student diaries.

## 2.7. Ethical

In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. Ethical Review Board Name: Karamanoğlu

Mehmet Bey University Ethics Committee. Date of Ethics Evaluation Decision: 18.04.2022 Ethics Assessment Document Issue Number: 54-57

### 3. Findings

The data obtained in the study were analysed and presented in the findings and comments section. The teacher's opinions on the practices related to the philosophical activities with children, the results obtained from the students' diaries and observation notes were assessed and interpreted.

#### Teacher's Views with Regard to the Philosophical Activities before Practices

Prior to the philosophical activities, the classroom instructor indicated that she had no prior expertise or experience with philosophical activities with children, but that she had done so in his classroom. The teacher stated that when she examined the philosophical activities with children and their content, she recognized some differences from the activities she performed in her classroom. On this subject, she expressed her opinions: *"When I consider the philosophical activities with children and their content, I see some differences from the activities I do in my classroom. I applied activities that lead the class to the truth during the lessons. Especially in mathematics class, we have activities that lead to a single truth. In the philosophical activities with children, there is no single truth; this is the biggest difference ..."* Concerning the issues to be considered in the philosophical activities, the teacher presented her opinion as *"I think the most important point here is that students express their thoughts without hesitation. No matter how extreme these opinions are, they shall speak them out. Many new and good ideas arise from extreme thoughts that seem impossible. We shall consider this"*.

According to the data obtained from the interview before the study was started, it was concluded that the classroom teacher did not have any knowledge about philosophical activities with children. She stated that there are some differences between the activities that she performs in her classroom and the practices of philosophical activities. Regarding the points to be considered regarding the applications of philosophical activities, she stated that the students shall express their opinions, no matter how extreme they are.

#### Classroom Practices for Philosophical Activities

Activities were held for seven weeks, with the class selected for implementation. Warm-up games were played with the students before starting the activities. After the warm-up games, the specified texts were explained to the students by the teacher. One of the texts for the performance of philosophical activities with children was "The Horizon-Watcher Ship". It was observed that the students listened to the story of the horizon-watcher carefully and participated actively in the teacher's inquiries. The flow of a conversation in the classroom for the relevant text was as follows:

Teacher: *Now, I replaced the mid-section parts of the Horizon-watcher ship. Now every part of the Horizon-watcher ship has changed. Since all its parts have changed, do you think this is the same Horizon-watcher ship again?*

Ece: *Only its parts have changed. Its purpose is the same.*

Fatma: *It's the same ship, even if its parts have changed. They just maintained it. The ship is the same.*

Alp: *Let's say, your car has broken, and you have delivered it to the service shop. Let's say the brand of your car is Audi. This car will not become a Mercedes once it has been repaired. It will be the same vehicle. It serves the same function.*

Cem: *It's coded in its genes, it's a ship, and this can't be changed because it is the same.* (Observation Note. Date: March 29th, 2019)

The students tried to explain their thoughts concerning the teacher's question. It was observed that the students were active and willing to participate in the course. It was observed that the students produced various ideas and thoughts within the framework of the activities and actively participated in the questioning process. It was included in the observation notes that the atmosphere in the classroom had a very positive and moderate structure. The teacher expressed her opinions, saying, *"[...] We had merely an introduction this week, but my students have original ideas. Our philosophy activities with children shall gain efficiency over time. Besides that, I observed that they loved the event and willingly participated in the questioning process"*.

Another story included in the practice's framework is the story named "New Friend". With the relevant text, it was observed that students adapted more to the philosophical activities and continued their active

participation in the process. It was observed that they were more involved in the questioning process. An example of a dialogue that took place in this activity was as follows:

Teacher: *Do you consider that Robo the robot can think?*

Enes: *It can think because its brain is a computer.*

Murat: *It can think, but not creatively as people.*

Erdem: *It cannot think. It has no brain designed. We have love, but it does not. It cannot think, he accesses the internet and takes the information.*

Teacher: *So, what does think mean?*

Ece: *Stating an opinion, giving an answer.*

Zümra: *Concentrating on something.*

Süleyman: *Using your brain.*

Enes: *Imagining, visualizing something you don't know.*

Erdem: *Stating an opinion, using your logic when you are asked a question.*

Teacher: *Can you be a friend with a robot?*

Mert: *You cannot because it does not have feelings.*

Göksu: *You cannot, your friendship ends in some way.*

Erdem: *For example, your friendship with Aslı does not end. Because, you do not get bored of Aslı.*

Furkan: *You spend more time with Aslı and have more fun with respect to the robot.*

Enes: *You cannot because the robot does not get upset when you get upset. (Observation Note. Date: April 12th, 2019)*

Considering the statements presented by the students, it was observed that they made various claims and that they were in the process of questioning. Moreover, it was observed that they were willing to participate in the activities and were actively involved in the questioning and thinking processes. The teacher stated her opinion: "Students are now used to philosophical activities and *willingly doing it. They often ask "Teacher, when will do our next philosophy hour?" Both the warm-up games and the stories and queries we present them are a very nice experience for them..."*. As it can be understood from the teacher's words, the students have embraced philosophical activities with children, and thus the teacher stated that the practices were efficient. "I liked doing philosophy," he wrote based on this fact. *We express our thoughts because philosophy classes are enjoyable. My thoughts change, everyone has various thoughts*" (SN:7) a student wrote in his diary on how much he enjoys philosophical activities and how they influence his thoughts. The teacher shared the text of another story, "Scorpion and the Frog" with the students. Along with this process, the variety and differences in students' views were noticed. An example of a dialogue occurred in the classroom about the activity was as follows:

Teacher: *Is a fault related to responsibility?*

Enes: *It is related because the scorpion promises but bites, it's about responsibility.*

Halil: *It is related, teacher. Because for example, let's say we did not do our homework, and you check our homework, and then you say that you are at fault.*

Teacher: *I say that because you didn't fulfil your responsibility*

Melisa: *It is related, because the scorpion has to be responsible for its sting. He shall not sting. If he does have the control of his needle, both shall be drowned, so he shall act responsibly.*

Erdem: *I think it's both a responsibility and it's not in some respect. And about it not being a responsibility, you know, it is the nature of the scorpion. Now, the scorpion makes a promise, but stings the frog in the middle of the sea.*

Teacher: *You say it is because of his creation.*

Erdem: *And, teacher, responsibility is a duty he had already assumed.*

Teacher: *Whose duty is assumed?*

Erdem: *There is a reason that the scorpion is brought to life. Otherwise, he would not be created, this is his responsibility. The fact that he is not responsible means that he cannot hold itself.*

Teacher: *I have another question. You can't stop yourself from doing something. This concerns you a lot, you can also associate it with your daily life. Is this, too, your fault?*

Yiğit: *Teacher, this is a fault. Let's say you can't keep yourself from beating someone, but if you beat them up it's your fault.*

Teacher: *You say I must hold myself there.*

Berat: *It is both a fault and not. It is also the fault of that person, too. For example, you have not eaten anything, you are very hungry, but someone comes and puts the cake in your eyes, then you cannot hold yourself back and eat it.*

Teacher: *You say that those people who provoke you are also guilty.* (Observation Note. Date: May 10th, 2019)

The students presented various ideas and expressed their opinions on the teacher's questions. As you can see in the relevant dialogues, the students tried to bring a multi-directional perspective to the teacher's questions. It was observed that the teacher guided the pupils with her questions and explanations during the tasks carried out this week. After the students' explanations, the teacher provided hard questions and requested the students to evaluate the subject from various perspectives. This exchange of ideas was observed at a teacher-student level and in the form of dialogues between students. One of the most striking points was the fact that the students tried to express themselves more comfortably and focused more on the activities. The teacher has expressed her opinion: *"I see that the students embrace the activities more. They are active and willing to participate in the events. They stated that they liked to philosophize because no one passes a judgment here"*. In his diary, a student stated that philosophical activities changed his thoughts with the following words: *"Doing philosophy changed my thoughts because there were different perspectives. And I strengthened my brain more with their ideas"* (SN: 21). Another student said, *"I would like to continue to do philosophy. As all philosophies are very beautiful"* (SN: 2) to express that he liked the practices.

One of the texts shared with the students was the story of "The Zargon Hat". An example of a dialogue with regard to the practice related to this story presented was as follows:

Teacher: *What does an object's being depend on?*

Furkan: *Teacher, I think everything is done according to its function. For example, we write on the board, the board has its own pen, but we cannot write on it with a pencil. We use the pencil to write on the paper.*

Teacher: *You say it depends on its qualities.*

Süleyman: *It depends on its purpose. Because we cannot use this map as a ruler or use books as hats and cabinets as beds.*

Teacher: *You say that it is according to the purpose of intention, and you presented good examples.*

Yiğit: *According to its function. A globe, for example, is for looking, not for sitting on it.*

Teacher: *Is what an object is independent of its intended use?*

Students: *What? We could not understand that.*

Teacher: *I mean, can we use an object for different purposes?*

Erdem: *A plastic basin is for washing clothes, for example, but it can also be used for sliding down a snowy slope in the winter.*

Halil: *For example, the table may be used for warming yourself. Because it is made of wood, it can be burned.*

Süleyman: *We can use them for different purposes, for example, we can produce pots from recycling. I can remove the metals on this board and use the board to make a pram.*

Mehmet: *I can use the water bottle as a feeder.* (Observation Note. Date: May 24th, 2019)

It was observed that, in the statements made by the students, they presented rich ideas and different opinions about the teacher's questions. During the relevant questioning process, it was observed that students took an active role in the practice by presenting many alternative thoughts. Among the observation notes, the teacher accompanied the students as a guide and provided guidance to the students in these practices. Stating that *"We have completed our last week activity in the process of practising philosophy with children. During this week, the students willingly participated in the practices. We started with the question they asked me, 'What is philosophy?', and we found ourselves in deep discussions. Everyone participated actively in the process. I think this week has been productive as well"*, the teacher expressed that the practices were effective and they enjoyed the activities carried out as the whole class.

About the last week, a student said, *"I loved the philosophy lesson. Because it is a very fun lesson and makes you think. I would love to continue."* (SN: 16), while another student stated, *"In this lesson, I learned that everyone's point of view is different"* (SN: 27) to express his opinion. Students stated that they liked the practices related to philosophical activities, that they liked to participate in, and that the activities made positive contributions to their perspectives.

At the end of the 7-week period spent with the students and the teacher selected for the implementation, it was observed that the participation rate in philosophical activities with children was high and that they were

effective in the triggering the questioning process. The students participated actively in the process and expressed their opinions and thoughts freely. It was noticed that students' thoughts showed diversity and richness in the class selected for implementation. It was observed that the teacher managed the process effectively and guided the students. Moreover, the moderate classroom atmosphere, the teacher's close attention to her students, and the fact that she contributed positively to philosophical activities with children and the questioning process were included in the observation notes.

### **Assessment of the Teacher on the Philosophical Activities with Children**

The teacher said that she was happy to do the "Philosophy with Children" activities and that a new method was used in her evaluation at the end of the studies, "*Performing philosophical activities has been a new and different way for me. We had very good experiences [...]*" The teacher stated that the activities performed increased the self-confidence of the students. In addition, she explained that there were reflections on the students such as not being influenced by each other in speaking their ideas and expressing their ideas without hesitation. Besides that, she added that she always tried to get the students' thoughts in her lessons, so there was a resemblance. In this context, she stated that they liked and enjoyed doing philosophy as a class with the following words: "*We loved the philosophy activities. The children and I, we enjoyed it very much. We have implemented practices that increased students' self-confidence and allowed them to express their opinions without hesitation. I also get the opinions of my students in my other courses. In this sense, it was similar in some way*".

The teacher continued her explanations with the following words: "*I would like to use these in all of my lessons as part of the activities applied. I like that students speak their opinions without hesitation. Also, students can take the skills they gain here to their daily lives. They can evaluate the situations they encounter without pursuing right or wrong. These are factors that increase students' self-confidence and make them feel better. I think, science is always changing, why the ideas should not change*". In the findings from observations, it was observed that the teacher attaches importance to taking the ideas of her students and followed an attitude towards increasing their self-confidence. It was observed that the teacher created a positive, moderate atmosphere in her classroom and acted as close and interested to the students. It was also included in the observation notes that this contributed positively to the philosophical activities with children. Furthermore, it was found that the teacher attempted to adapt numerous scenarios encountered during activities to her students' daily life.

### **Opinions of the Students on the Practices of Philosophy Activities with Children**

Opinions of the students were examined under various themes in the activities for Philosophy with Children. In the themes examined, students stated that they had discussions that they were in the process of questioning their perspective gained change, and they achieved more detailed ways of thinking. They also stated that the activities were fun; they learned to reason and created new different ideas. They also explained that they learned new things, their imagination-sense of freedom expanded, and they engaged in different activities. The names of the themes created based on the diaries of the students are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Themes Created Based on the Diaries of the Students

One of the most expressed themes in the students' opinions based on philosophical activities is "fun," which is in accordance with the linked concepts. On the theme of fun, while a student expressed his opinion as "It's be nice and fun to do philosophy and I want it is continued." (SN: 17) in his diary, another student stated, "It is very fun to state your ideas and play games, I would love it to continue" (SN: 10). In the observation notes, too, it was observed that the students had fun in philosophy activities and that they liked the course. Another commonly mentioned theme is "Discussion". In their diaries, the students reported that they conducted conversations, shared ideas, and participated in philosophical activities as follows: "In our philosophy sessions, I learned to argue sweetly" (SN: 9); and another student stated, "I learned to have a discussion, to transform my views into rules" (SN: 33). It was included in the observation notes that the students were brought into the process of questioning within the activities, that they discussed their feelings and thoughts, and shared different ideas.

One of students most frequently emphasized themes is the "Different/Diverse Ideas" theme. Within the framework of philosophical activities, students expressed their opinions about developing different/diverse ideas in their diaries as follows: "In our philosophy lessons, we always handle different topics and different ideas" (SN: 14); and another student shared his opinion by stating, "This is how we learn many different ideas in the class" (SN: 23). In the activities, it was observed that the students developed different ideas about the texts provided and tried to present multi-directional perspectives. It was also seen that the students provided different views and examples based on the texts.

In their opinions about philosophical activities with children, the students stated that they liked the activities and participated willingly. Besides that, the students stated that they had fun during the process and that they considered the practices as different activities. In the practices included in the questioning process, students emphasized that their thinking capacity expanded, they understood logical thinking better, and their imaginations improved. It was stated that within the framework of the activities, more extensive areas of freedom were created in the expression of feelings and thoughts, different perspectives were presented together, and thus it was effective in learning new things.

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

The study was aimed to reveal and examine the experiences of primary school students and teachers about philosophical activities. The study aimed to reveal the experiences of third-grade students in a primary school and their teacher on philosophical activities. Some conclusions have been achieved within the framework of this purpose. The teacher stated that she did not know about philosophical activities before these practices.

However, she added that she performed similar practices in the classroom, but there were various differences. She stated that the most important point to be taken into consideration regarding the practices is that the students were required to share their thoughts, no matter how extraordinary these thoughts may be. Dr. Thomas E. Jackson also states this opinion expressed by the teacher. Jackson also attached importance to free thought and behaviour in the philosophical activities with children and emphasized that it is important to express ideas freely (Karakaya, 2006).

During the seven weeks spent with the practice class, it was observed that the students liked the warm-up games and the stories presented by the teacher and were active in the process. It was observed that the students were included in the process of questioning, expressed their thoughts without hesitation, presented their claims and explained these claims. Moreover, it was evaluated within the framework of the conclusions that they tried to present a multi-directional perspective and expressed different points of view within the activities. In their diaries, the students reported that they conducted conversations, shared ideas, and participated in philosophical activities as follows: "In our philosophy sessions, I learned to argue sweetly" (SN: 9); and another student stated, "I learned to have a discussion, to transform my views into rules" (SN: 33). The development of the pupils' thoughts and talents had a beneficial influence within the scope of the activities, according to the observation notes and judgments made by the teacher during the application process. Lipman has underlined this in the literature, as well as the importance of increasing students' capacities to generate thoughts and ensuring the development of intellectual abilities in childhood (Martens 1999).

The findings obtained from the present study are similar to the research findings in the literature (Akkocaoğlu Çayır & Akkoyunlu, 2016; Demirtaş et al., 2018; Karadağ & Demirtaş, 2018; Kefeli & Kara, 2008). In these studies, it was stated that students' skills for discussion, critical thinking and questioning were improved in line with the philosophical activities with children. Similarly, Danile and Auriac (2011), Biggeri and Santi (2012), Millett and Tapper (2012), Gruioniu (2013), Taşdelen (2014), Tunç (2017), Boyacı et al. (2018), Öğüt (2019) and Güven (2019) emphasized the importance of philosophical activities with children in providing students with creative thinking, discussion, questioning and critical thinking skills.

It was observed that the teacher displayed a moderate and positive attitude, guided the students, and helped the students to explain and express their opinions. Therefore, it was stated by the teacher that the philosophical activities with children was conducted in a moderate classroom atmosphere and that this had positive effects. These results agree with Boyraz (2019) and Öğüt (2019) studies. In the studies mentioned above, it was stated that the teacher shall present encouraging and positive attitudes against allowing the students to explain their thoughts.

At the end of the philosophical activities with children, the teacher stated that she and her students enjoyed, had a different experience, and liked this activity. The teacher also stated that the students gained self-confidence and could express their thoughts without hesitation. This result is like the results of Boyraz's (2019) study. In the study mentioned above, it was found that philosophical activities with children improved students' self-confidence, decreased their shyness, and ensured that they could communicate comfortably. The teacher also stated that these practices may be transferred to daily life. She stated that the students were included in the questioning process without looking for the concept of right and wrong only. She also added that the activities brought positive contributions to the students.

Students expressed their thoughts in their diaries during the practices in the philosophical activities with children. In line with the opinions expressed, the thoughts of the students were framed under various themes. Students stated that they developed multi-directional perspectives, that they have discussed, and developed detailed thinking skills about different conditions in the philosophical activities. They also indicated that the exercises were enjoyable, that they learned to think logically, and that they came up with new ideas. Aside from that, they stated in their diaries that their imaginations had improved, their regions of freedom had extended, and they had participated in a variety of activities, all of which had taught them new abilities. Within the themes stated by the students; logical thinking, discussion, improvement of thinking capacity, freedom, diverse ideas, imagination, different perspectives were also emphasized in the studies of Danile and Auriac (2011), Biggeri and Santi (2012), Millett and Tapper (2012), Gruioniu (2013), Taşdelen (2014), Tunç (2017), Boyacı et al. (2018), Öğüt (2019) and Güven (2019). In the studies mentioned above, it was explained that philosophical activities for students affect many areas, from logical thinking to imagination.

## 5. Recommendations

The following are some ideas for future research that are related to this study: The practice teacher noted at the conclusion of the study that he had never heard of philosophy activities with children before. Thus, a teacher training program or seminar on philosophical activities with children could be arranged. As a result, teachers will be informed about philosophical activities with children and their ideas will be taken into consideration. Accordingly, research may be performed to better transfer philosophical activities with children to the classroom environment or to conduct them in combination with various courses. Teachers may offer suggestions for studies to be conducted. Furthermore, the teacher indicated that children's philosophical activities are appropriate for other lessons and can be employed in other sessions. As a result, presenting philosophical activities with children in primary school in combination with various courses and their contribution to the courses can be evaluated in terms of academic achievement and various skills (creative thinking skills, critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and so on). Quantitative or mixed methods research can be used to investigate these approaches. The students indicated that they enjoyed philosophical activities with children, that they had fun, and that they were able to ask questions. In accordance with their opinions, students' attitudes toward philosophy might be analyzed. Philosophical activities can be explored with primary school kids utilizing various ways in qualitative patterns. Parents' perspectives on philosophical activities and practices may be investigated

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