

Dogme ELT: What do teachers and students think?

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to reveal what English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and their students think about Dogme ELT (English Language Teaching) described as "...a different way of being a teacher" (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009, p. 21). Three university EFL teachers and their students (N=38) took part in the study. The teachers were first informed about the general principles of Dogme ELT using relevant articles, activities and videos of sample lessons. Each teacher then developed and presented an experimental lesson in line with the principles of Dogme ELT. At the end of these lessons, both teachers and their students were given surveys aiming to reveal their opinions about Dogme ELT. The analysis of their responses led to the conclusion that although a few of the participants expressed their concerns about Dogme ELT, it was generally perceived positively. Therefore, it is suggested that Dogme ELT should be integrated to the mainstream EFL programs.

Keywords: Dogme ELT; English as a Foreign Language

Dogme ELT: What do teachers and students think?

1. Introduction

Since the 18th century, ELT professionals have been searching for ways to teach EFL, and many teaching methods focusing on various aspects of language learning (e.g., The Direct Method, Desuggestopedia, Total Physical Response, Communicative Language Teaching) have emerged so far (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Traditionally, effective English teaching was considered to be the outcome of the application of a single method by applying all its prescribed techniques in the classroom where learners were regarded only as passive recipients of the method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, in the early 1990s, some researchers, such as Prabhu (1990) and Pennycook (1989) asserted that no single method can be considered the ideal method to teach English. Furthermore, Kumaravadivelu (1994, p. 29) brought up the term "post-method pedagogy" as an alternative to the concept of method and defined this term "as the construction of classroom procedures and principles by the teacher himself/herself based on his/her prior and experiential knowledge and/or certain strategies."

Following many arguments in favor of the post-method pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2003, 2006), some recent movements have appeared in the field of ELT methodology. One of them is known to be Dogme ELT. Inspired from the belief that traditional ELT methods view students as passive consumers of *grammar McNuggets* (Thornbury, 2010), Dogme ELT has its name from Dogme 95, a Danish film movement aiming to rescue cinema from an obsession with technique and an overdependence on technology (Meddings & Thornbury, 2003a). In the same vein, Thornbury (2000, p. 2) underlines that Dogme ELT was developed to draw attention to the overdependence on resources in the ELT classroom where the actual communication is "...buried under an avalanche of photocopies."

Meddings and Thornbury (2009, p. 21), the originators of the Dogme ELT movement, point out that Dogme ELT is "...a different way of being a teacher." They also claim that it is a learner-centered way of teaching enabling conversational communication between learners and the teacher without resorting to published materials and a pre-planned lesson. They argue that English teachers should use only the resources that are brought to the classroom by students. From their perspective, Dogme ELT is a critical pedagogy as it paves the way for teachers to be skeptical about materials, including course books. As for listening materials, for example, Thornbury (2002) suggests that there should not be any recorded listening materials; instead, the teacher and students themselves should be the source of listening activities. On the other hand, in terms of the assessment of students' progress, he believes that the criteria of any assessment procedures must be determined with the students. From his point of view, teachers should also be evaluated in the Dogme ELT classroom, and the evaluation should only be based on whether their students are bored or not.

Furthermore, Meddings and Thornbury (2003b) describe the roles of a Dogme ELT teacher by stating that he/she should be a skilled linguist who knows how to use the emerging language for teaching purposes and a caring observer who is interested in the learners. According to Thornbury (2013), the goal of Dogme ELT is to enable students to become self-directed learners by creating for them the optimal conditions for discourse creation and by using the mental sources students bring with them to the class.

1.1 Principles of Dogme ELT

Thornbury (2005) mentions ten important principles characterizing Dogme ELT. These principles can be summarized as follows: Principle 1. Interactivity between students and teachers and among the students themselves leads to effective language learning. Principle 2. Students are involved in the content they create themselves. Principle 3. Learning is dialogic and social, and thus knowledge is co-constructed. Principle 4.

Learning occurs through conversations in which learners and the teacher co-construct the skills, and the teacher scaffolds interactions among learners by providing help when needed. Principle 5. Language and grammar emerge in the classroom. Principle 6. The teacher is the person who is in charge of attracting students' attention to the language emerging in the classroom. Principle 7. Learners' needs should be given utmost attention. Principle 8. Teachers and students are empowered by taking published materials out of the classroom and replacing them with what students bring to the classroom. Principle 9. Materials are relevant to the learners' daily lives. Principle 10. Teachers are encouraged to use materials critically to recognize students' ideological and cultural biases.

Based on these ten principles, Dogme ELT has three fundamental tenets: It is conversation-driven, materials-light and focuses on emergent language (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009).

1. *Conversation-driven*: Conversation is defined as "the kind of speech that happens informally, symmetrically and for the purposes of establishing and maintaining social ties." (Thornbury & Slade, 2006, p. 25). Therefore, it is believed that the current EFL course books have a certain "degree of artifice" that destroys the spontaneous nature of real-life conversation (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009, p. 10). In the Dogme ELT classroom, the teacher takes advantage of conversation as it occurs incidentally and scaffolds information for the learners in the process of reformulation, repair or refinement of the emerging language (Akça, 2012). Tudor (2001, p. 115) also states that the classroom should be a representation of the outside world and describes communication as "...not just something which happens 'out there', but also a process which occurs within the social environment which we call the classroom."

2. *Materials-Light*: Arguing that meaningful communication is overshadowed by materials, Bell and Gower (1998) indicate that materials destroy the creativity of the teacher and the learner. Also, according to second language acquisition (SLA) research, language is not learned "...in an additive, linear fashion" (Van den Branden, 2006, p. 5) as presented in traditional ELT materials. Therefore, Meddings and Thornbury (2003a) claim that the learning process is impeded by mass-produced materials which are not necessarily related to learners' needs and lives. However, instead of materials-free teaching, the term materials-light is used by the originators of Dogme ELT as they believe that Dogme-friendly materials, such as photos, original texts recorded or written by the students, and music stored on their mobile phones can be used in the classroom (Akça, 2012).

3. *Focus on Emergent language*: The Dogme ELT movement is also based on the idea that grammar and vocabulary items should emerge from the communicative needs of the students in the classroom (Thornbury, 2005). Thornbury (2002) also suggests that teachers should only resort to whatever happens in the classroom; consequently, there is no pre-planned lesson and thus no syllabus including pre-selected grammar items. Instead, he calls for a post-lesson plan and an emergent syllabus centered on learners' needs. In other words, as Xerri (2012) points out, rather than pre-emptive teaching, reactive teaching is favorable in a Dogme ELT lesson in which the main focus is on emerging language. It is also argued by Brown (2001) that the use of emerging language as the resource of the lesson gives learners a sense of ownership of their learning process and thus makes them more intrinsically motivated.

In line with the abovementioned principles and fundamental tenets of Dogme ELT, three university English teachers in Turkey prepared three different experimental Dogme ELT lessons for this study. The study aims to determine what the teachers and their students think about these lessons. After the relevant literature review, the methodology and the findings of the study are presented.

2. Literature Review

In an attempt to compare differences between teachers and students' opinions regarding the application of Dogme ELT, Sketchley (2011) collected data from 15 teachers and 15 students by means of questionnaires including both closed and open-ended questions. Also, interviews were conducted with two teachers. As a result of his analysis, he found conflicting teachers and students' opinions on the three key principles of Dogme ELT

(i.e., conversation-driven, materials-light, emergent language). While some of the participants in his study were convinced that Dogme ELT can be incorporated into their lessons, some of them preferred more structured materials-based lessons.

In another study, Worth (2012) investigated the opinions of nine Japanese learners on Dogme ELT and course book-based lessons and explored whether those two approaches were equally appreciated. In line with this purpose, he adopted a Dogme approach and used it along with the course book. As data collection instruments, he used open-ended questionnaires, group discussions and interviews with three students. It was found that students made strong associations between the course book and preparation for examinations. Also, they appreciated the Dogme ELT lessons when taught in tandem with the course book-based lessons.

On the other hand, Bryndal (2014) developed a Dogme ELT lesson. Her main aim in the lesson was to introduce and practice vocabulary related to household problems. At the end of her lesson, she wrote a post-lesson plan including the language that emerged during the lesson, a post-lesson evaluation of her strengths and weaknesses in the lesson, and gave a survey to her students to reveal their attitudes towards the lesson. The analysis of her data showed that students liked the lesson more than the traditional materials-based lessons. She also wrote in her post-lesson evaluation that even though the lesson was successful with pre-intermediate class, it might not be suitable for lower level students. Furthermore, she noted that she was able to deal with the emergent language as an experienced teacher, and concluded her study by claiming that the Dogme ELT lesson she taught helped her to understand that teaching without a course book is liberating.

In his action research study, Xerri (2012) aimed to investigate the use of Dogme ELT and developed Dogme lessons at least once a month during an academic year. He kept a journal in which he wrote the positive and negative aspects of each lesson. He also obtained data from students through feedback forms and unstructured interviews. The analysis of his data revealed that in spite of its perception as an unconventional approach, Dogme ELT can actually be used even in an exam preparation course and is useful thanks to the interaction and the language emerging in the classroom. He also discussed how the learner-centered and materials-light principles proposed in Dogme ELT have the potential to empower the teacher.

As can be realized from the brief literature review above, since the introduction of Dogme ELT, there have been only a few studies dealing with it (Sketchley, 2011). Especially in the Turkish EFL context where there are many issues hindering the implementation of Dogme ELT (e.g., traditionalist expectations about course delivery, exam pressures, large class sizes), there is a need for action research about its application in Turkey (Akça, 2012). Therefore, this study has the main objective to reveal what EFL teachers and their students think about the experimental Dogme ELT lessons prepared for this study. Considering the aim of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

- What are teachers' opinions on the Dogme ELT lesson they teach?
- What are students' opinions on the Dogme ELT lesson they attend?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants of the study are EFL teachers and their students at the English preparatory programs in Turkey. Through a one-year-long intensive English education, these programs aim to prepare students enrolled in different departments to follow their departmental courses whose medium of language is fully/partly English. Three female EFL teachers teaching at the English preparatory programs of two different universities in Turkey volunteered to take part in the study. While one of these teachers was a native speaker of English teaching at a private university, the other two were non-native teachers working for a state university. All the teachers had more than ten years of teaching experience.

On the other hand, students taught by the participating teachers were informed about the purpose of the study and were invited to attend a Dogme ELT lesson. 38 students in three different classrooms accepted to attend the lessons at the appointed time. 14 of them were enrolled at a private university, and the remaining 24 students (14 students in one of the classrooms and 10 in the other) were studying at a state university. The level of participating students was A2 depending on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

To collect data from students and teachers about the application of Dogme ELT, three teachers were first presented the key principles of Dogme ELT based on related articles, the book *Teaching Unplugged* written by the originators of Dogme ELT (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009) and videos of sample Dogme ELT lessons presented by Meddings (2011, 2012). The teachers were then asked to create a Dogme ELT lesson or use one of the lesson ideas proposed in the book *Teaching Unplugged* and present it to the participating students.

In addition, each teacher wrote a post-lesson plan (see Findings for the post-lesson plans) illustrating the flow of the lesson. Each teacher was also asked at the end of the lesson to respond to an open-ended survey with three questions. The first question of the survey is related to how they felt about teaching a Dogme lesson. The second question developed by Sketchley (2011) is about what they think about three key principles of Dogme ELT (i.e., conversation-driven, materials-light and focus on emergent language). Finally, the third question of the survey is "Do you think that Dogme ELT is applicable to where you teach?" On the other hand, at the end of the experimental lessons, students filled out a survey including both closed and open-ended questions developed by Bryndal (2014). The first closed question aims to reveal students' opinions on whether the lesson they attended was "fun", "useful", "good", "interesting", "boring" or "not challenging enough." The second question is related to whether the time allocated for practicing speaking in the lesson was "more than usual", "normal" or "less than normal." Also, the following open-ended questions are included in the survey: "What did you like most about the lesson?", "Did you like working without materials (photocopies/course books) during the lesson? Why/Why not?" and "Was this lesson any different than usual? Why/Why not?"

As the current study is mostly based on the responses of three EFL teachers and their students to open-ended surveys at the end of experimental Dogme ELT lessons in the natural classroom contexts at two different universities, it would be fair to state that this study is a qualitative case study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As argued by Nunan (2002, p. 143) as follows, detailed information can be collected by means of qualitative data collection instruments including open-ended questions: "...responses to open questions will more accurately reflect what the respondent wants to say."

Students' responses to closed questions in the survey were entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 while the responses of teachers and students' to open-ended questions were analyzed by means of content analysis. Students' responses to the survey were translated into English by the researcher. After the presentation of the post-lesson plans of the teachers below, their opinions on Dogme ELT are presented. Finally, students' views about the lessons are illustrated. While analyzing students' responses, the researcher gives examples of students' statements representing other similar recurring comments, and uses the symbol "N" to refer to the number of students who made comments similar to the illustrated statement. Participants' responses are referred to with a number (e.g., Teacher 1: T1; Student 1: ST1).

4. Findings

4.1 Post-lesson Plans

While one of the teachers used a lesson idea suggested in the book *Teaching Unplugged* (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009), the other two teachers preferred creating their own lessons in line with the principles of Dogme ELT. Each lesson lasted approximately 50 minutes.

According to the post-lesson plan developed by the first teacher (T1), the lesson aimed to engage students in a discussion about what it would be like to get stranded on an island. The teacher asked students in their groups to write on post-it notes all the items they thought they could salvage from the boat wreckage and also what items they could use on the island itself. Students talked about the things they could find on the boat and on the island that might help them to solve their dilemma. While students were discussing, the teacher walked around the class and wrote down any emergent language pertaining to the topic and wrote new structures and vocabulary on the board (e.g., flares, first aid kit, tent, lighter, fishing rod, axe, rope, etc). The teacher wrote Group 1 through 4 on the board and placed the filled out post-it notes under each heading. Then, the teacher wrote all the different items the students found on the boat wreckage and on the island next to the right side of the post-it notes so the students could see how many items they included from each list. The teacher took some photos and then erased the board. Then, the teacher asked students to make some statements about the problem and how they might start to solve their problem, which were then written by the teacher on the board. The teacher asked students to discuss what types of equipment from their lists they could use and for what purpose, in order to get themselves off the deserted island (e.g., build an SOS out of rocks on the beach, make a raft out of trees and salvaged boat wood, bind the raft together using rope, repair the damaged boat motor and use it on the raft). The teacher also asked them to generate a list of problems that could arise as they were trying to save themselves. Students generated a list of potential problems (e.g., no fuel for the raft motor, no batteries for the flashlight, etc.). The teacher did a quick show of hands poll to see which students felt they could find the resources and use them in order to escape from a deserted island.

The Dogme ELT lesson idea taken from the book *Teaching Unplugged* (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009) by the second teacher (T2) is called "Space Travellers" (p. 32). This experimental lesson aimed to get students to talk about provocative statements, such as "I like Mondays", "Homework is a waste of time", "TV is bad for you" and "Britney Spears is wonderful". The teacher wrote "Agree, Disagree and Not sure" on different parts of the wall and told students that these represent three positions they can take. Each student stood up and moved to the appropriate part on the wall. After talking to the students in their groups, they explained the position they chose to the whole class. During these activities, the teacher noted on the board examples of emerging language including words or structures that caused problems and any new phrases she added to the conversation. The emerging language includes structures or vocabulary, such as "not only...but also", "if it did not exist, ...would...", "I am used to...", "what if...", "neither have I", "it determines whether...", "it is up to you", "advertisement", "...more innovative", "studious", "in terms of", "in her early twenties", "wear make-up", "wealthy". The teacher discussed the language on the board and checked meaning. Finally, she substituted Friday for Monday and the internet for TV, and asked students to move again and justify their positions.

The third teacher (T3) aimed to enable students to think about possible destinations to travel in summer holiday. The teacher said to students that she would like to travel to a foreign country for summer holiday but she could not decide where to travel. After giving time to each student to think about possible countries with his/her partner, the teacher asked each student to talk about his/her suggestions. Finally, as a whole class discussion, students voted for the best place to go and justified the reasons of their choice. Some of the emerging vocabulary items were "destination", "travel", "accommodation" while some of the emerging structures were as follows: "would rather", "should", "If I were you, I would"

4.2 Teachers' Responses

When asked "How did you feel teaching English the Dogme way?" all the teachers acknowledged that the lesson they experimented amused the students, gave them voice, took the burden off their shoulders to prepare materials, and had relevance to students' real lives. However, the difficulty of monitoring for emerging language, the need for authentic English, and the challenges of applying Dogme for lower level students were the issues raised by T1 and T2 as the negative aspects of the Dogme lesson. T3 made no negative comments. The relevant comments made by all three teachers are as follows:

T1: I enjoyed this teaching technique as did the students, it was both fun and empowering for the students in

my class. I think because my class is high functioning A2 level, it worked out very well, but for lower classes whose speaking skills are not well-developed there may be problems unless the methodology is modified to befit their language level, which, I believe can be done if the right teacher tries and experiments with this method.

T2: The highlight of the method is a free hand for the teacher to steer the class with the excitement associated with Dogme. The ideal class shouldn't be predictable (therefore boring) for the attendees. Dogme is very powerful. Additionally, teachers don't need to take the time and the pain of spending many hours for material preparation. This was the first thing that made me feel satisfied about doing this type of class activity. But during the class, I had to try hard to monitor every student. Also, teachers using this method are obliged to have firm/authentic English.

T3: I am a strong supporter of the fact that materials restrict students' thinking skills. For spontaneous speaking, there must be a topic relevant to students' lives so that they can feel more comfortable using and thinking about the language they can produce pertaining to the topic. I felt myself comfortable teaching the Dogme way by giving students the awareness that language is not only grammar. My role as a teacher in a Dogme class is just a prompt giver. The rest is done by the students themselves.

The second question was "What is your opinion and experiences of three key principles of Dogme ELT (i.e., conversation-driven, materials-light and focus on emergent language)?" Regarding the conversation-driven principle, while T2 expressed her concern that there were students who dominated the conversation in the lesson, the other two teachers generally made positive comments as they think conversation is a good alternative to traditional grammar teaching and it increases students' self-confidence as well as critical thinking skills. Their responses related to the conversation-driven principle are as follows:

T1: Having a 'conversation' where students participated was more beneficial than the traditional 'teacher-driven with book doing all the talking and students just answering questions blah blah' method. The key to this is that the strong speakers in the classroom will start out doing all the talking, but, as the others who are weaker at speaking listen to their peers, they will start to the 'conversation' and that is a real plus in this type of lesson.

T2: Students didn't always respond to the whole topic of the class. There were students who dominated the conversation, and those who were willing to stay passive. This type of lesson gives passive students time to hide behind the dominant speakers. However, in the long term, Dogme gives students "critical thinking" skills and the art of "being assertive/convincing."

T3: It was good not to focus too much on grammatical accuracy. Speaking the way they speak in daily life in the classroom gave students self-confidence. Each student was able to say something related to the topic we discussed.

As far as the materials-light principle is concerned, all the teachers were very positive as they thought the lesson was more enjoyable than traditional materials-based lessons. However, one of the teachers (T2) suggested that a booklet including a summary of each Dogme lesson should be given to students as they do not like writing down the things on the board.

T1: The only materials we used were pencils and post-it notes to write single words or thoughts on. I wrote their examples and sentences on the smart board with a white board marker, but that was 'it' so it was more fun than the normal lessons in my view, and it was really fun to not have to be constrained by a book.

T2: Having none or very few materials is the BINGO part of this Dogme education (Not only for the teacher, but also for the students) but a booklet (summary of every session's language) should be prepared and handed to students. Students often don't bother writing down the information on the board.

T3: I think Dogme ELT pulls down the barriers of language learning as it requires no course books. As soon as students see the course book, they close their communication channels and feel themselves restricted. I can feel that easily in my own classes, and some students have also said that they disliked the course book.

In terms of the emergent language principle, while T3 did not make any negative or positive comments, T1 positively commented that emergent language has a "cascading effect" leading to "the flood gates of idea generation". Conversely, T2 described emergent language as "one-time-use material". Their comments are as follows:

T1: Actually it is rather like a domino effect or a cascading effect. The language emerges, the students speak, hear and see it written on the board, and then new ideas pop up immediately, it's like someone opened up the flood gates of idea generation. It is really addictive in a way, the more sentences and thoughts they generated, the more ideas came and it just kept on and on through two class periods actually.

T2: There was too much language that emerged in the lesson. I took some chunks and put them on the board, and gave a quick explanation. In most cases, all the students (even the passive students) knew the language already, they nodded that they knew it, but they probably wouldn't use it again. I think that the emerging language is only one-time-use material. The emerged language will only sound familiar the next time they hear it. The same (emerged language) should be put on the board over and over again in the later sessions (if luckily emerges again!) to be made practical.

T3: I wrote on the board the new structures and the words that emerged during the conversation. I also tried to restate the new things on the board so that students could predict what the words meant. I also wrote their synonyms if any.

Finally, the participating teachers were asked to comment on the question "Do you think that Dogme ELT is applicable to where you teach?" While T1 found it applicable and stated that she would encourage the use of Dogme ELT in her institution, T2 voiced her concerns by arguing that it is difficult to apply it because of the exam-driven syllabus in her context and the insufficient level of students. Similar to T2, T3 also indicated that students below the level of A2 are not ready for such lessons, but she also commented that Dogme ELT can be used in the first and the last lessons of the day. Their comments are as follows:

T1: Most certainly it is because I saw the students get really involved in planning on what they wanted to do in order to get off the 'Desert Island' or cope with a 'lost' scenario. It involved teamwork and then speaking out to get on the board populated with their ideas including what items were needed, and how they would execute their plan of action to escape from the desert island. It was such fun for the students that they asked if we could do it again sometime. After I teach my fellow teachers how to do this, I plan on having one day per week using a theme from the current book we are using, where the students can have the final two periods of one school day to do this with the teacher. I believe this type of teaching allows the students to be more in control of the lesson and also makes them feel empowered to use their L2.

T2: Prior to any Dogme, abundant language input is an inquiry. Most students don't have sufficient language for Dogme, though. Dogme is only applicable when the "Speaking Skill" is meant to be evaluated. Unfortunately, it is not the focus, where I teach. Besides, we have to keep track of the book, page by page. Following the syllabus of the book, is a must, since exam materials are taken according to the book-mentioned language and not (the emerged language) to a speaking session.

T3: I think Dogme is applicable especially in the first and the last lessons of the day. It can be used as a warm-up in the first period while in the last period; it can be used as a revision. For levels above A2, it is applicable, but A1 students are not ready to have a free conversation-driven material-free lesson.

4.3 Students' Responses

Among 38 students taking part in the study, the majority (N=26) indicated that the Dogme ELT lesson they attended was fun or useful while the remaining 12 students marked either "good" or "interesting". None of the students marked "boring" or "not challenging enough".

When it comes to the amount of time allocated for practicing speaking, most of the students (N=23) stated that the time for practicing speaking in the Dogme lesson was more than usual while only 15 of them thought that the time for English practice was normal. None of the students held the idea that the time for English practice was less than normal.

The analysis of students' responses to the question concerning what they liked most about the lesson, the following issues emerged: the lack of materials (N=7) (e.g., "I felt that I could learn English without a course book" ST7), the real-life nature of the lesson (N=5) (e.g., "Talking about up-to-date topics and thinking about solutions to real life problems makes learning permanent" ST21) and the contribution of the lesson to their imagination (N=2) (e.g., "I had to use my imagination during the activities in the lesson" ST30).

When asked "Did you like working without materials (photocopies/course books) during the lesson? Why/Why not?", out of 38 students, 29 students responded positively whereas the remaining 9 voiced some reservations about the lack of materials in the lesson. The analysis of the positive comments about the lack of materials in the lesson led to the following issues: the ineffectiveness of course books (N=6) (e.g., "I do not find English course books instructive. We just memorize and forget the things when we stick to a course book" ST35), the boredom course books cause in the classroom (N=4) (e.g., "Course books are monotonous as there are a lot of boring fill-in-the-blank type activities" ST3) and the non-natural content of the course books (N=3) (e.g., "Some parts of the course books are unnatural" ST14).

On the other hand, pertaining to the lack of materials in the lesson, some students expressed concerns about the issues of exam preparation (N=3) (e.g., "We need a course book because the questions in the exam are all from the course book" ST33) and low level students (N=2) (e.g., "Especially for beginner level students, a course book is a must" ST11).

As for the question "Was this lesson any different than usual? Why/Why not?", nearly all the students held the idea that it was different. As a result of the analysis of their justification of why the lesson was different than usual, three issues emerged: the fun nature of the lesson (N=5) (e.g., "The lesson was different as we did not get bored during any moments of the lesson" ST26), the lack of materials (N=3) (e.g., "There were no course books or any other materials we had to follow" ST19) and the lack of grammar explanations (N=3) (e.g., "Normally we study grammar to be successful in a test but this time I think we did something for the sake of learning English" ST24).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study has the main objective to reveal what teachers and their students think about Dogme ELT. Before collecting their opinions by means of open-ended surveys, three EFL teachers were informed about the Dogme ELT movement and the general rationale behind it. In line with the principles of Dogme ELT, the teachers developed lessons. One of the teachers preferred to use a lesson idea proposed by Meddings and Thornbury (2009). Her lesson aimed to enable students to take a position (i.e., agree, not sure, disagree) on debatable sentences written on the board and justify their positions. Another teacher prepared a lesson encouraging students to think as if they were stranded on an island, and students were expected to find a way off the island. The other teacher, on the other hand, started her lesson by asking students' suggestions about possible foreign countries she should travel in summer holiday.

At the end of the lessons, teachers filled out a survey. It was found that they were generally positive about Dogme ELT as the lesson empowered students, saved the time spent for material development, had relevance to students' real lives and was entertaining. From these comments, it is realized that teachers were convinced about some of the key principles of Dogme ELT (i.e., empowerment and relevance) (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009). Similar to teachers, students believed that the Dogme ELT lesson they attended was fun and useful. They also indicated that the topic of the lesson was relevant to real-life, and the lesson contributed to their imagination. In terms of the amount of time allocated to practicing speaking during the lesson, the majority of students expressed

their satisfaction. Some students also suggested that such conversation lessons should be incorporated into the program as an alternative to the grammar-based lessons.

On the contrary, the following drawbacks of Dogme ELT were highlighted by the teachers: the difficulty of observing all the students for the language emerging in the lesson, applying Dogme for lower level students, and the need for the teacher to be able to speak authentic English in Dogme lessons. Likewise, the difficulty of applying Dogme in the beginning-level classes was mentioned by some students. Regarding this issue, Bryndal (2014) also claims that Dogme lessons might be challenging for students below the level of pre-intermediate.

As far as the conversation-driven principle is concerned, it was indicated by the teachers that this principle is an alternative to the grammar-oriented teaching, and students' self-confidence and critical thinking skills could be increased thanks to this principle. It is a promising finding because as rightly stated by Uysal (2012), teacher-centered traditional grammar teaching methods have dominated the Turkish EFL context. Demirtaş and Sert (2010) also claim that because of the teacher-centered traditional approaches that deal mostly with grammar teaching in Turkey, the English language proficiency of students at the university preparatory programs is not sufficient in spite of the intensive foreign language education. In addition, in the report published by the Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) (2015, p. 12), the following observations were made: "In Turkey, instruction in English is highly grammar-driven, with a repetitive curriculum and few communicative teaching methods. This emphasis on grammar and memorization discourages students, who have been rating their own mastery of English lower and lower each year despite hundreds of additional hours of instruction."

As for the materials-light principle, all the teachers held positive ideas because they found the lesson without materials more enjoyable. In response to the question whether they took pleasure in working without materials during the lesson, students also expressed their negative feelings about the course books. They thought that course books are boring, ineffective and unnatural. However, one of the teachers added that a booklet containing the summary of Dogme lessons should be provided to students. With respect to the emergent language principle, while one of the teachers commented that this principle has a cascading effect for the production of more language in the classroom, the other teacher considered emerging language "one-time-use material" as necessary follow-up work is not done using materials in Dogme lessons.

Another important finding of the study is that course books were considered inevitable parts of the English lessons by some participants in this study. As indicated as follows in the comprehensive report published by the British Council and TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation) (2015, p. 44), university-level EFL education in Turkey relies too much on course books: "There is evidence of textbook dependence in many universities, with most teachers planning their lessons around the set course book and with few attempts to go beyond the textbook to develop more interactive or subject-relevant activities."

Pertaining to the question whether Dogme ELT is applicable to their teaching context, mixed feelings arose among the participating teachers. One of them argued for the integration of Dogme ELT in her context whereas another teacher opposed to it because of the exam-driven syllabus in her institution. Similarly, some students were against the Dogme ELT because they believed that the lessons should be taught in line with a course book on which the exam questions were based. In the EFL context of Turkey, which is notorious for its examination-driven English syllabus (Şahin, 2007), traditionalist expectations about course delivery and large class sizes (Akça, 2012), it is normal to find conflicting opinions regarding the applicability of Dogme ELT. Therefore, it would be fair to suggest that Dogme ELT could only be integrated to the mainstream EFL programs in Turkey rather than being the dominant teaching philosophy. Researchers, such as Worth (2012) and Sketchley (2011) also argue that Dogme ELT should be embedded in the mainstream course book-based lessons. Sketchley (2011, p. 55) calls this approach "Balanced Approach" referring to a combination of both structured and the Dogme ELT lessons. He suggests that if an unpredicted event emerges in the classroom, the teacher can resort to emergent language arising from the students; on the other hand, if the Dogme ELT is not successful, the teacher can lead students towards more structured pre-planned activities. Similarly, the following statement illustrates

van Lier's (1996, p. 200) call for balanced teaching: "...a lesson which is so tightly planned that there is no room at all for improvisation, and conversely, a lesson which is not planned at all and therefore entirely improvised, would generally be considered unbalanced and perhaps not terribly effective."

In conclusion, unlike the traditional materials-based methodology, Dogme ELT gives students ample opportunities to create language by verbally responding to the prompts provided by the teacher. This enables students to practice the language they have learned and thus gives them confidence when communicating in real life situations. Also, teachers can create surprise situations using Dogme ELT and can save time they normally spend for lesson planning. However, considering the mixed feelings among the participants, it would be fair to conclude this study that Dogme cannot totally replace the traditional forms of ELT practices but can be employed as a means to give students some variety throughout the EFL programs.

Considering the limited amount of time during which teachers and students experimented with Dogme ELT and the limited number of participants in the university EFL context of the present study, there is a need for more research studies in which more teachers and students experiment with Dogme ELT for longer periods of time in different educational stages (i.e., primary schools, high schools). Such future research endeavors can challenge English teachers to think outside the box and use Dogme ELT as a supplement to their ordinary lessons.

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