(ACTION RESEARCH): INTRODUCTION OF ACTION MODELS AND ACTION CYCLES

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ABSTRACT

Views on the emergence of an action research (AR) focus on Gestalt psychology, observations of Colliers’ mission, Kurt Lewin’s model of AR, and Moreno’s studies. AR was first applied in the field of education by Corey (1953) in the America, and then it was often used in educational research. The term educational AR was produced by Carr & Kemmis in 1986, and this term was used as an umbrella term in educational studies in the world. Although there are many AR studies in Turkey, too, some of these AR studies do not explain the processes clearly step by step, in terms of action models and action cycles. Besides, some of these AR are not available until certain date because the thesis holder has put restriction. In addition, nearly all of the AR studies undertaken in Turkey do not mention if the study was first order AR (FOAR) or second order AR (SOAR). Moreover, some of the AR studies offer a general discussion of findings instead of explaining each action plans clearly. Furthermore, the length of action cycles was also among the controversial issue. For the above mentioned reasons, firstly a brief overview of the history (origin) of AR is presented. The reason is that there are hundreds of AR study in the literature and it is not possible to refer to all of them. Secondly, the paper displays the models of AR, action cycles and action plans in detail, which are the objective of this study. In this context, the paper presents a shortened form of the cycles (processes) of an embedded (FOAR and SOAR) AR study to illustrate the action models, cycles and plans step by step. The paper concludes by discussing some of the key issues that emerged from the study.

* This article is taken from the writer’s PhD. study (Chapter Six) submitted to the University of East Anglia in 2001, some parts are shortened and some parts are extended.

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STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

This paper touches some issues such as models, number and length of action cycles, action plans and the types of AR. For example, one of the issues is the lack of information about the models and cycles of AR. Some AR studies did not usually state whose model of AR was used in their researches (Armstrong, 1992; Laidlaw, etc.). Similarly, some AR studies did not give information about parts of action cycle (Cumming & Gill, 1991; Fortune, 1992; Philport, 1993, etc.). Here neither the action cycles nor the action plans were clear. These points are crucial in order to prove that the study is (was) a real AR. For example, according to Kemmis & McTaggart's (1988) view there are four phases in an AR study and these are “planning, acting, observing and reflecting”. So these four things make one cycle. In the same token, some action researchers do not allow others to access their studies until certain date. Hence it is not possible to guess whose AR model was used and what the action plans were. For example, Karadag (2017) limited access to his thesis until the date 31.05.202. Besides, if researchers do everything in an AR by themselves, this is called first order AR (FOAR). If someone else undertakes an AR on behalf of others, this is called second order AR (Elliott, 1991). Nearly none of the AR study in Turkey mentioned if the study was FOAR or SOAR (Karadag, 2017; Yurtseven, 2016; Bozyigit, 2015; Kocak, 2015; Bulbul, 2015; Sirinkaya, 2014, etc.). Similarly, the AR studies are carried only in the form of AR in Turkey, yet the AR studies undertaken abroad are sometimes carried out with the combination of other research methods such as case study, ethnographic study, experimentally, etc.). For example, Tomakin’s (2001) study is an “AR case study” (ARCS). Similarly, action researchers can do the similar study such as “an experimental AR” or “an ethnographic AR”, etc.). In this case researchers need to define clearly which part is AR and which part is case study or experiment. These issues are answered to help the potential and novice action researchers.

Hence this paper aimed to describe the things about action cycle, action models and action steps in two levels. The things are about AR as general are presented in the introduction part as a literature review. The things are about AR specifically are presented in the findings part as an example of action model and action steps. Thus the study aimed:

a) To portray action cycles, action models in the literature in general descriptively,

b) To portray an actual AR that has united action cycles and action plans specifically.

This study used qualitative approach that is explanatory (Robson, 1995) and served to the aim of the objectives. Hence, it displayed the research processes, action models and action cycles descriptively in general. It also used interviews, observations and field and diary notes to collect data from the participants. To that end interviews were used to explore teachers’ views of AR and to explore problematic topics in English during second field work (SFW). Similarly observations were done to see and record the current language teaching sessions during this FW. The diary notes were kept to record of all happenings from the beginning to the end of the study.
Since theoretical issues (findings) were already stated in the introduction part, other practical findings were included here: There were few AR studies at the research context and the interviewed teachers during the FFW amd SWs were unaware of AR. Hence it seemed a necessity to prepare some study materials on AR and to train (prepare) them for the study. Besides, classroom observations done during the SFW indicated the traditional way of language teaching sessions (question-answer, explanation, translation, filling the blanks, repetition, etc.). Thus, the researcher had the objective of endowing the teachers with the investigative behaviours and to teach the AR by involving them. To that end a topic (vocabulary teaching) to study with the teachers was chosen. In addition, some of the contextual factors that facilitate or prevent the application of AR were explored during field studies. It seemed that getting legal permission from the governor and educational manager of the city to undertake a research and to enter the classrooms was an obligation. Hence these formalities were completed. It was also told that the English course books produced by the researchers on a trial basis, but have not been approved by the Ministry of Education are not used in the classrooms. That is, one cannot do any curriculum study on his own without permission. The application of actual AR study began in 1988 and three action plans were put into practice. These were teaching English vocabulary through pictures (drawings), actions and using cognates are helpful to the students. The full outcome of the study is seen in chapter 6 (Tomakin, 2001).

In short, it was seen that teachers were not aware of AR in Turkey at that time. If this was the situation, we should not expect them to initiate an AR study by themselves. Either there must be someone who is knowledgeable about AR or there must be simple and explanatory material on AR. So one can buy them and learn about AR by reading these materials. If action researchers were full knowledgeable about AR, there would not be any shortcoming of their studies mentioned in this paper. If action researchers knew the factors (being volunteer and gate keepers, etc.) that would prevent the study in advance, they would find solutions to these barriers. Besides, the notion of “teachers as researchers” movement coined by the Stenhouse (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995) must be included in the contents of “research methods” module taught at the Faculties of Education. So the teachers know how their students learn by undertaking a small scale research in their classrooms. The reason is that this investigative movement has been being used in the United Kingdom (UK) since 1960 (Elliott, 1991).

**Keywords:** action research, action cycle, action plan, research process.

(EYLEM ARAŞTIRMASI): EYLEM MODELLERİ VE EYLEM DÖNGÜLERİNİN TANITIMI

**ÖZET**

Eylem araştırmasının (EA) ortaya çıkışı ile ilgili görüşler Gestalt psikolojisi, Colliers’in göreviyle ilgili gözlemleri, Kurt Lewin’in EA modeli ve Moreno’ya dayanmaktadır. E’A’nın eğitim alanına uygulanması ilk kez

1. Introduction

It seems that there are many claims about the origin of AR in the literature. One possible source is Gestalt psychology because Kurt Lewin stated the necessity of combining ‘theory and reality’ in a published article in Germany in 19261 (Allport 1948xv). Zuber-Skerritt (1992b: 90) states that Lewin, produced field theory, experiential phenomenology and AR, influenced by the German tradition of Gestalt psychology which refers to an organised configuration or pattern of experiences or acts. Another possible source is Collier’s activities and writings during the period 1933-1945. Collier, as a Commissioner of Indian affairs, “stressed the importance of social planning, demanded much research and used the term AR” (Corey, 1953: 7). The other possible source of AR is Kurt Lewin himself for some researchers Kelly (1985: 129), Bryant (1986: 107) and Kemmis & McTaggart (1988: 6). However, Gunz (1996: 145) states that Moreno is usually ignored in the claims about the origin of AR although he was a pioneer of AR. To him, Lewin was involved in AR studies later and after Moreno. As a result, it seems difficult to claim that the AR emerged from only one source.

AR was used in education and other fields as follows: Researchers state that Corey (1953) used the term AR in education firstly in America such as Hopkins (1996: 46), Lomux (1991: 7), and since then the term AR has been one of the much used and referred terms in education. In McNiff’s (1995) view Carr & Kemmis produced the term ‘educational AR’ (EAR) in 1986 and then it has been used as an umbrella term in educational studies (p.20). It is seen in the literature that AR studies were not limited to education, but many AR studies were undertaken in other fields such as health, housing, prison, insurance, coal-mining, etc. (Cohen & Manion, 1995).

1 The name of this article: Vorsats, Ville and Bedurfnis, Berlin: Lulius Springer.
2 This person wrote the ‘introduction’ of the Lewin’s book (1948).

Anahtar Kelimeler: eylem araştırması, eylem döngüsü, eylem planı ve araştırma süreci.
Since the AR has a long history, its definitions, objectives, starting point, types and models change from one researcher to another, this part focuses on the controversial issues as stated in the abstract rather than repeating the same views in the literature. These controversial issues are the models, limitations, length, action cycles, action plans and types of AR. Now, these issues are explained respectively.

First, one of the issues is the lack of information about the models of AR. That is, some of AR studies do not usually state whose model of AR was used in their researches (Armstrong, 1992; Laidlaw, 1994, Block, 1997, etc.). It is known that the AR studies became widespread since the 1950s and many AR models were suggested in the literature by researchers and only prominent of them is cited here to exemplify Lewin, (1948), Ebutt (1985: 147). McNiff (1995: 47), Carr & Kemmis (1990: 8), McNiff et al. (1996: 8), Elliott (1991: 69), Somekh (1989) and McBride (1995: 27) Whitehead (1989: 43), etc.

Second, some AR studies do not give information about cycles of AR (Cumming & Gill, 1991; Fortune, 1992; Philport, 1993, etc.). These points are crucial in order to prove that the study is (was) a real AR. Here the question of “what is an AR cycle?” can be exemplified like this: For Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) there are four things that need to be done in an AR study and these are “planning, acting, observing and reflecting”. So these four things make one cycle. In other example, in McNiff’s (1995) model there are six things (observe, reflect, act…) that need to be implemented and these six things make only one cycle. Hence it can be stated that the total steps of an AR model makes only one cycle.

Third, some action researchers do not allow others to access their studies until certain date. Hence it is not possible to guess whose AR model was used and what the action plans were. For example, Karadag (2017) limited access to his thesis until the date 31.05.2020. Besides, Kocak (2015) limited his study until the date 18.09.2018.

Fourth, another issue is the length and number of action cycles. That is, ‘how many’ action cycles must be in one AR study and what must be the length of ‘each cycle’. For Whitehead, on her on-line notes, says that there must be at least one cycle to show that researcher deals with the methodological issues (URL-1, 2017). In another source (URL-2, 2017) multiple cycles allow greater rigour to be achieved. The views about the length of AR study is that the appropriate length of each action cycle for Sanger (1986) one week and for Elliott (1991) one year. As an experienced action researcher there must be at least two cycles and each of which must continue two academic years.

Fifth, the other issue to consider is the notion of ‘action steps or action plans in an AR. That is, the action researchers must reveal how many action(s) they used in their researches. AR can be carried out for various purposes (general ideas, interests, problems, objectives). So each researcher proposes solutions to these ideas, problems and objectives. Hence these solutions are called action plans or action steps. In other words, action plans are imagined solutions. In that case action plans are like potential answers to the researchers’ objectives or hypotheses. Thus each action plan must be clearly stated. For example, three solutions were imagined and put into practice in an AR study aiming to improve English vocabulary teaching. These are: 1) the use of drawing or pictures, 2) the use of animation (action), 3) the use of phonetic, semantic and scriptural (PSS) similarity in teaching English vocabulary (Tomakin, 2001).

Sixth, the terms ‘first order or second order’ are not used in the AR literature in Turkey. One person can carry out an AR study by actually involving in it. That is, the researcher himself (herself)
does everything (collect and analyse data, etc.) virtually in an AR. If researchers do everything in an AR by themselves, this is called first order AR (FOAR) (Elliott, 1991). Yet in some cases professional researchers themselves do not undertake the AR study. Instead, they train less experienced ones (novice researchers, teachers, etc.) through seminars, courses, in-service trainings etc. and these trained ones undertake an AR study on behalf of the professional researchers whose task is to guide, coordinate and help throughout all research processes. This last type of research is called second order AR (SOAR) (Elliott, 1991). The point with the content is that nearly none of the AR study in Turkey mention if the study is FOAR or SOAR (Karadag, 2017; Yurtseven, 2016; Bozyigit, 2015; Kocak, 2015; Bulbul, 2015; Sirinkaya, 2014; Gokmen, 2014, Sakırgil, 2014, etc.).

Seventh, it is usually seen that the AR studies are carried only in the form of AR in Turkey, yet the AR studies undertaken abroad are sometimes carried out with the combination of other research methods such as case study, ethnographic study, experimentally, etc. For example, Tomakin’s (2001) study is an AR case study (ARCS). Likewise, other researchers can do the similar study such as “an ethnographic AR” or “an experimental AR”, etc. In this case researchers need to define clearly which part is AR and which part is ethnography or experimental.

2. An overview of AR studies

The literature review indicates the total number of AR as well as AR on language teaching at education research information centre (ERIC) and the British Education Index (BEI) databases. It is seen that there are 1140 general AR studies and only 78 of them on language teaching (Tomakin, 2001: 99).

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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total AR</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR on Lang. Teaching</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Besides, Beaulieu (2013: 31) gives the number and rate of AR studies year by year at the Ph.D. level from ProQuest database between the dates 2001 and 2012. It is seen that there are 1,000 AR study every year as average and the rate of AR studies compared to other studies is % 2.14.

It seems that the AR study started in the 1990s in Turkey, nearly 40 years later than the AR studies in the UK. It also seemed that there has been an increase in the use of AR as a research method in Turkey recently. The review of the theses submitted to the Thesis Centre of Higher Education Council indicates that there are about 134 theses as of August 2017. About 30 of them is on foreign language teaching/learning and its sub-topics (vocabulary, listening, reading, etc.). Hence, it is logical to include only the recent ones here.

For example, Karadag (2017) studied AR oriented comprehension-narrative skills of students who learn Turkish as a foreign language. Besides, Yurtseven’s (2016) study was the investigation of the reflections of AR based ubd implementations in EFL teaching on teachers and students. In addition, Bozyigit’s (2015) AR was video assisted written constructivist feedback of ELT student teachers in micro teaching sessions. Moreover, Kocak (2015) analysed the process of displaying performance in foreign language (English) learning. Furthermore, Bulbul (2015) interested in improving the reading comprehension skill through concept mapping in education of Turkish as foreign language. The last three were about multimedia, reflecting teaching and teacher development. Sirinkaya (1914) designed multimedia focused reading classes in her AR study. Gokmen (2014) analysed developing EFL instructors’ reflective teaching through collaborative AR and peer observation. Sakırgil (2014) designed a teacher development in a university context.
As a result, some of AR are not available until certain date apart from the above stated and available ones. Some of them, as seen above, offer a general discussion of results. Yet they do not offer information about action cycles and action steps. Hence, the importance of showing the processes, action models, action plans in AR studies becomes necessary. Thus next two titles are devoted to explain these action cycles and action models.

3. Action models and action cycles

It is known that qualitative research has its steps; collecting data, analysing it and producing hypothesis at the end. Quantitative research starts with hypothesis applying it on treatment group. There are two routines in the above stated research. No matter how many times they were undertaken, they follow the same routines. On the contrary, AR has its own models, being “spiral of cycles and this spiral of cycles distinguishes AR from other research methods (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Now models and cycles are explained respectively.

Lewin’s (1948: 207) model of AR consist of examination of a general idea, implementation of the idea, fact finding (evaluation), planning of implementation, more fact-finding (evaluation) and reflection of whole circle activities. Ebbutt’s (1985) model of AR consists of general idea, reconnaissance, overall plan, applying action 1, monitoring and reconnaissance, either amended general plan or action plan 2. For Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) AR process is planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Elliott’s (1991) model of AR starts identifying general idea, reconnaissance, general plan (having 3 action plans), implementing action step 1, monitoring implementation and effects, reconnaissance, revised general idea. McKernan’s (1991) model of AR is defining problem, needs assessment, hypothesis ideas, develop action plan, implement plan, evaluate action, decision. Somekh (1989) and McBride’ (1995: 27) model of AR has these processes: identify a focus of interest (problem), collect data, analyse data and generate hypothesis, plan action steps, implement action steps, collect data to monitor change, analyse and evaluate, plan the next circle. Whitehead’s (1989: 43) model follows these steps: I experience a problem, I imagine a solution… I act in the direction of …, I evaluate…, I modify my problems/ideas/actions…, McNiff’s (1995) model of AR is observe, reflect, act, evaluate, modify, move in new direction.

4. Display of action cycles in theory

This part aims to display action cycles theoretically from two researchers shortly in order to save space and to make them clear. The first example of AR is from Carr & Kemmis (1986) whose process has four steps in each cycle: These are “1) plan, 2) act, 3) observe, 4) reflect”. The former sentence (plan, act, …) may not mean much if it is considered in isolation. That is, readers cannot get much or deep information about an actual AR study just by reading this sentence. Yet if the actual AR processes are displayed step by step, they become more clear. The following figure illustrates its shape and process.  

![Figure 1. Carr and Kemmis’s Model of AR.](https://www.google.com.tr/search?q=models+of+action+research (retrieved, 29.09.2017).)
Another example is McKernan’s model of AR that has six steps in each cycle (URL-6)⁶.

As a summary, it can be stated that AR studies are cyclical and process based studies. There are several steps in each model and the number of these action cycles change from one researcher to another. The important point here is this. For example, what is/are planned? what is/are acted? according to Carr & Kemmis model of AR? The answers to similar questions will be seen in the findings section. Now the way (method) of explaining these answers is presented under the following titles.

5. Objectives

This paper had the aim of describing the things about action cycle, action models and action steps in two levels. The things are about AR as general are presented in the introduction part as a literature review. The things are about an application of AR are presented in the findings part as an example of action model and action steps. So the study had the aims:

a) To portray action cycles, action models in the literature in general descriptively,

b) To portray an actual AR that has united action cycles and action plans specifically.

6. Method

This paper used qualitative approach that served to the aim of the objectives. This is because qualitative studies are explanatory (Robson, 1995). Hence it aimed to explore the research processes, action models and action cycles descriptively. It also used interviews, observations and diary notes to collect data from teachers and students. Hence interviews were used to learn about teachers’ and students’ points of views of AR and action plans. Observations were done by the researcher to see to what extent the action plans were implemented by the teachers. The diary notes were also taken by the researcher to keep a record of happenings during the actual AR study.

7. Findings

Denzin (1998: 323) states that “an event or process can be neither interpreted nor understood until it has been well described”. In order to make the action cycles and action plans understood, this part offers a detailed portray of an integrated AR study. As will be seen, there are two action models of AR embedded one another. Whitehead’s (1989) model has five steps that became the researcher’s

FOAR study and aimed to investigate the general objectives of the research. This is because action researchers themselves imagine solutions to problems in this model, yet Somekh (1989) and McBride’s (1995) model gives emphasis to the problems and solutions of the practitioners. Hence a SOAR was used by the English language teachers while undertaking the 2nd and 3rd steps of FOAR. An overview of action models and action plans year by year comes as follows:

### 7.1 Action cycles and action plans (1997)

I myself identified the starting point of my FOAR and the situation was like this: lack of AR study in the research context, language teachers’ unawareness of the teachers as researchers movement, (Tomakin, 1996), traditional methods of language teaching sessions, etc. In addition, the quality of teachers’ expertise, and of English textbooks, assessment of pupils, etc. were relevant at the diagnostic stage. Hence, I stated my concerns at the outset of the study as ‘experiencing problems’. Briefly, the statement of problems formed the ‘starting point of my FOAR’ in 1997 and can be briefly summarised as follows:

**FOAR [1997] (First Cycle)**

1st step: I experienced problems
- Lack of AR studies in Turkey,
- Teachers’ unawareness of AR,[MA]
- Traditional method of language teaching

After identifying the starting point of FOAR, the imagined solutions constituted the second phase of the FOAR study. Some of the imagined solutions while conducting field studies were, for instance, to explore the contextual factors that support or prevent AR studies, to introduce AR study to the participant teachers before initiating an actual AR study, and to explore the views about introduction and initiation of AR studies in various contexts for the first time, etc. Thus far, the imagined solutions of FOAR can be summarised as follows:

2nd Step: I imagined solutions
- To undertake an actual AR study in Turkey,
- To conduct field studies,
- To introduce the notion of AR,
- To choose a topic to study,
- To explore contextual factors,
- To explore views of introducing and initiating AR studies in various contexts for the first time,
- To explore common points of AR and language teaching theories.

To pursue the imagined solutions I put them into practice individually. It was not possible to initiate an actual AR study immediately without undertaking field studies. To these ends two field studies were undertaken in 1997 to identify the current situation of ELT, to select potential participants and problematic areas in English, etc. Besides this, the production of written materials on AR was among the imagined solutions. The following is the 3rd step of FOAR and a brief account of the enacted solutions can be stated as follows:

3rd Step: I enacted imagined solutions
- Undertaking the first field work (FFW),
- Preparing written materials on AR, and giving them to the participant teachers
- Undertaking the second field work (SFW)

3rd Step: The First Field Work
The FFW lasted about one month -25 March-27 April 1997- and investigated the choice of potential participants and possible research areas. These areas were anticipated as curriculum change, Inset activity, a new syllabus design on a trial basis, or a collaborative study with a language-teaching department of a university. During this field work, two head teachers [MI, SK] answered my enquiries about trying a new syllabus or curriculum change negatively. In their views “if books have not been approved by the Ministry of Education (MOE), they are not used in schools”.

If an area was chosen without considering the possibility of getting permission from the authorities in Turkey, it was likely that I would experience some difficulties in getting permission. Hence the following tasks were carried out during the FFW:

-Six English language teachers, two head teachers, a head foreign language department, a deputy head of the LEA and a member staff serving at the MOE were interviewed.

-English language teachers’ views of AR and problematic topics in teaching English were collected.

-Pupils’ views of problematic topics in learning English were collected.

-Teachers were required to fill in a questionnaire to discover their options for a potential local in-service activity.

The interviewed teachers, too, as had seen in the MA study (Tomakin, 1996), were not aware of AR. Having identified teachers’s lack of awareness of AR, a short-term local Inset activity was considered to introduce the notion of AR to the teachers.

3rd Step: The Choice of Participants

During this FFW, a questionnaire was designed to choose the potential research participants. It included 25 options in total and had also some options (articles) about the features of AR aiming to choose those teachers who had some interest in learning AR or joining in an AR.

3rd Step: Identifying Problematic Areas in English

English teachers’ and students’ views of problematic topics in English were identified through open ended questions. After coding and putting the similar ones in one group, two groups of problem tables appeared; the one for teachers and the other for the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ views on problematic areas</th>
<th>Students’ views on problematic areas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>Problems</td>
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<td>Nr of Teachers</td>
<td>Nr of Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Vocabulary teaching</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of Audio visual aids</td>
<td>Understanding text</td>
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These topics meant that any of them could have been chosen and studied by the teachers during my SOAR. As a result, the following emerged from the FFW:

- I chose potential research participants.

- I identified problematic topics in English, in terms of teachers and pupils.

- I learnt the possibility of running a short-term local Inset activity.

- I learnt the impossibility of doing a curriculum study or a syllabus design in schools.

- I learnt the impossibility of undertaking an AR study with a university department.

- I was unable to choose a topic to study during SOAR.
- Interviewed teachers were not aware of AR, or its elements.

3rd Step: Introduction of AR

After reading Bennett’s view (1996: 81) who states that “teachers cannot teach what they do not know…” I came to conclusion that the language teachers who were unaware of AR in Turkey could not start or do an actual AR study by themselves.

3rd Step: Production of Study Materials on AR

The above stated view helped me to proceed the study. So I produced some study materials about AR, its objectives, stages, models, data collection techniques, etc. In short, these materials aimed to teach AR theoretically in 25 sub-topics with an example on AR. I gave these materials to the teachers during SFW, but I did not have any chance to explain them to the teachers because of their over work load. Besides, I did not have a meeting with the teachers to study a topic among the above stated problematic views during my SOAR.

Third Step: The Second Field Work

Although the MA and FFW studies provided some information about the research site, the SFW was done for the following purposes.

a) to choose a research topic with the teachers.
b) to do classroom observations of language teaching situations.

This was because the necessity of describing the situations in the research context before using action plans was stated by some researchers (Ebbutt, 1985, Elliott, 1991). So the SFW was conducted from 10/11/1997 to 15/12/1997, during which time the following tasks were carried out.

- Legal permission from the LEA and the governor of Ordu was obtained to enter classrooms and 31 classroom observations were undertaken.
- The ethical rules of this study were identified and a copy of these rules was given to each participant teacher.
- A research diary and lever arch file was given to each participant to encourage him or her to write their views and keep the materials produced.

During the SFW, each teacher’s significant teaching experiences were collected and shared with the other teachers. Besides, seven teachers’ language teaching sessions were observed 31 times in four types of schools. I recorded/jotted down all the occurrences and their frequencies as follows.

T (teachers) ask questions, accepts correct answers. xx times.
T refuses wrong answers… xxx times
T checks the attendance sheet…etc.

All the data was transcribed and translated into English. As Ireland & Russel (1978) stated patterns in these transcriptions were identified and stated as a sentence. Some findings of the SFW,

- None of the teachers engage in reflective activity (take notes, keep a diary or do classroom observations about their teaching sessions).
- None of the teachers seemed to be undertaking an educational AR for any purpose (to solve problems or improve practice).
- Teachers give homework at the end of the lesson, but none of them use any short quiz to see whether or not all students have understood the topic. (This report was revised 15/1/2000)
In summary, the following emerged from the SFW:
- 31 classroom observations were conducted,
- Observed and interviewed teachers [7] were not aware of AR or its elements,
- These teachers did not use/implement any AR study either.
- I could not have a meeting with teachers to choose a topic to study because of double session teaching programmes in schools.
- I gave the study materials on AR to each teacher, so they could read these materials and gain some knowledge of AR study.
- Since double session teaching badly affected coming together, I myself produced draft rules of ethical concerns. Only T3 suggested views.

At the end of 1997 I focussed on evaluating the FOAR. Hence the remainder of the imagined solutions were investigated in the next cycles of FOAR and SOAR. For instance, the selection of topic became available in the next cycle (1998). So the next step of the first action cycle of the FOAR was to evaluate the actions as follows:

4th Step: I evaluated my actions - Evaluating FFW, and SFW.

The evaluation of the FFW and SFW were carried out when these studies finished. The evaluation included the teachers’ unawareness of AR, any curriculum study or syllabus design, non-use of reflecting activity, not undertaking, at least, small scale AR, the problem of double session teaching, not identifying the focus of the SOAR and ethical rules of the study and if the teachers read the study materials or not. The 5th step of the FOAR was to review research problems stated in the first step and re-plan for the next cycle. In short, The first cycle of the FOAR undertaken in 1997 can therefore be summarised as follows.

1st step: I experienced problems - Lack of AR studies in Turkey,
- Teachers’ unawareness of AR [MA],
- .............................................

2nd Step: I imagined solutions - To undertake an actual AR study in Turkey.
- To conduct field studies,
- .............................................

3rd Step: I acted imagined solutions - Undertook the FFW, SFW,
- Prepared written materials about AR,
  and gave it to the participant teachers,
- .............................................

4th Step: I evaluated my actions - Evaluated FFW, and SFW,

5th Step: I reviewed problems and planned the 2nd cycle of the FOAR.

In conclusion, only a few of the imagined solutions could be put into practice in one year (in 1997). It was apparent that the remainder of the imagined solutions should be investigated in the next cycles of the study. It is seen that not only action cycles themselves, but also the efforts (e.g. FFW, SFW, etc.) to initiate/introduce the notion of AR to different contexts have formed parts of action cycles in 1997. The following section explains the remaining action cycles and action plans in 1998.
7.2 Action cycles and action plans (1998)

It seemed that the major problems diagnosed at the outset of the study [in 1997] still existed in the research context. It also seemed that these problems should be sorted out step by step and restated as follows.

FOAR [1998] (Second Cycle)

1st step: I experienced problems

- Teachers' unawareness of AR,

The introduction of AR to teachers, either in theory or in practice, was still an important aim and the following activities were imagined as solutions of the above noted problems in the second cycle of the FOAR.

2nd Step: I imagined solutions

- To introduce the notion of AR,
- To choose a topic to study,
- To undertake an actual AR study in Turkey,
- To explore contextual barriers to the study,

So the third step of cycle 2 of my FOAR was devoted to the implementation of my imagined solutions, and these can be stated as follows.

3rd Step: I enacted the imagined solutions

- Introducing AR to teachers,
- Selecting a topic to study,

3rd Step: The efforts to introduce AR

I was in Turkey in the first week of March 1998, yet it was not possible to come together with the participant teachers to run an Inset activity and work-shop to study the prepared materials on AR because of double-session teaching in schools and teachers’ own excuses.

3rd Step: The Selection of Pedagogical Focus

I only managed to have my first meeting with the participant teachers six weeks after my arrival, on 17/4/1998, during which time a topic – vocabulary teaching - was chosen to be pursued.

During this meeting the participant teachers stated that ‘the teaching of the Turkish meaning of English words was difficult / problematic. Pupils forgot the Turkish meaning of English words although they had learnt them. Pupils also had difficulty in correctly pronouncing the English vocabulary. Finally, pupils were not eager to use English to English dictionaries. Generalising across these problems, we were concerned with teaching/improving English vocabulary teaching.

3rd Step: Undertaking an AR Study

The selection of a topic (focus) became the first step of my SOAR. This was because the focus of the SOAR was more specific - the improvement of vocabulary teaching. This topic was investigated by me and participant teachers together, whereas the focus of my FOAR was more general and had not been investigated by the participant teachers.

3rd Step: I enacted the imagined solutions

- Efforts to introduce AR to teachers,
- The selection of the focus of a SOAR
- Undertaking an SOAR with teachers,
While investigating the selected topic, I therefore began to undertake an actual AR study that formed an independent AR, within FOAR as follows: The next part below explains how my SOAR study with teachers developed and formed an independent action cycle within the FOAR.

After choosing the topic of the SOAR on 17/04/1998, from this step on, I was carrying out my SOAR, but this also implicitly meant that I was investigating one of the imagined solutions of my FOAR. The next step of SOAR, according to Somekh’s (1989) and McBride’s models, was to collect data that was the SOAR can be stated as follows:

2nd Step: Collect data.

A note was written on a piece of paper to elicit teachers’ and pupils’ suggestions about the selected topic as seen below:

What sorts of step(s) need(s) to be taken in order to teach vocabulary well or to get pupils to acquire vocabulary effectively? In other words, what must be the general principles of teaching English vocabulary?

The following table indicates the number of suggestions offered by teachers and pupils. Indicating the return dates is important because I had to wait until they returned the materials. In other words, it was not possible to carry on the 3rd step of SOAR (analysing data) without finishing the data collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers &amp; Pupils Names</th>
<th>Number of Suggestions</th>
<th>Date of Return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1/5/1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Gursu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1/5/1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Temel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1/5/1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total numbers of suggestions posed by the teachers was 70 and by pupils was 49. The next step of the SOAR was to give meaning to the collected data:

3rd Step: Analyse data and generate hypotheses.

I myself analysed the data by looking for the most common patterns stated both by pupils and teachers in 1998. The collected data was analysed using a coding system, giving labels to the data, looking for patterns, putting the similar patterns in one group, etc.

4th Step: Produce and plan action steps [plans].

After finishing the data analysis and producing potential action plans, each teacher was visited to get their suggestions and agreement. The agreed action plans as formulated in 1998 were:

- Learners learn well if English vocabulary is taught using drawings or pictures.
- Learners learn well if English vocabulary is taught by acting or in action.
Learners learn well if the similar words (phonetically, semantically and scriptually PSS) are used/exploited between the English and Turkish languages by teachers.

It was assumed that teachers could implement the above noted first and second action plans without preparation. For instance, they can draw instantly, or teach by action, but it seemed necessary for me to undertake a search for those words that refer to PSS similarity. To that end I took responsibility, produced a list of those words by looking at a Turkish-English dictionary and gave that list to each participant teacher. That list included about 1,000 words and the following are a few examples of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Turkish Meaning</th>
<th>Turkish Phonetic</th>
<th>Turkish Script</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acacia</td>
<td>akasya</td>
<td>akasya</td>
<td>akasya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academy</td>
<td>akademi</td>
<td>akademi</td>
<td>akademi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balcony</td>
<td>balkon</td>
<td>balkon</td>
<td>balkon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ballerina</td>
<td>balerin</td>
<td>balerin</td>
<td>balerin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cactus</td>
<td>kaktus</td>
<td>kaktus</td>
<td>kaktus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cafe</td>
<td>kafe</td>
<td>kafe</td>
<td>kafe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After giving a copy of this list to each participant teacher, the next step of SOAR was to use these action plans in classrooms:

5th Step: Implement action steps [plans].

The participant teachers were primarily responsible for implementing/using the agreed action plans in classrooms. My task was to observe the teachers, pupils and classes. Before or during my classroom observations I did not tell teachers, for instance, do this, do that, use this action plan, etc. This was because my intention was also to promote teachers’ [real] commitment to the study. So some of teachers applied them in the class as much as possible.

The next step of the SOAR was to collect data from pupils and the participant teachers to elicit their views about action plans and AR study. So the next stage is stated as follows:

6th Step: Collect data to monitor change.

Data concerning the influence of action plans was collected in two ways. In the first place I wrote notes in my diary about my classroom observations. Secondly, data about the implementation of action plans was collected through interviews. Thus I preferred interviewing pupils during breaks when the lessons were over. The intention in doing this was to get pupils’ immediate reflections [views] about the influence of action plans. There was no a pre-decided list or decision about whom to interview. My intention was to interview as many volunteer pupils as possible.

After the collection of data about the use and influence of action plans, the next step concerned the analysis of data and evaluation of the study:

7th Step: Analyse data and evaluate the study.

First, the analysis of the collected data constituted the evaluation of the 1st cycle of the SOAR. Simultaneously, since my SOAR was a part of my FOAR, the evaluation of the 1st cycle of SOAR also meant the evaluation of the 2nd cycle of the FOAR.

Source: Redhouse English-Turkish Dictionary.
After finishing the implementation of the imagined solutions of FOAR in 1998, the next step was to evaluate all of the imagined solutions of the FOAR. Here I moved from the SOAR to the FOAR and this step is designated as follows:

- **FOAR [1998] (Second cycle)**
  - 4th Step: I evaluated my actions that refer to the evaluation of my efforts to introduce AR, the selection of topic, overall outcome of my SOAR, and exploring barriers to the study.

Consequently, the following activities were carried out to evaluate both action cycles. Apart from the contextual barriers (political and educational, see thesis chapter 3) it became clear that some social and cultural elements of the research context were also barriers to the use of AR in Turkey.

- The participant teachers’ and pupils’ views of AR and action plans were explored.
- The participant teachers’ suggestions were explored for the next cycle of SOAR.
- The next cycles of FOAR and SOAR were planned on the basis of the above mentioned findings and suggestions.

The final step of the FOAR in 1998 was to review the assumed action plans and re-plan the next action cycle:

- **FOAR [1998] (Second cycle)**
  - 5th Step: I reviewed problems and planned the 3rd cycle of the FOAR.

An embedded form of action cycles in 1998 is shown below. Note that the big cycle refers to the 1st and 2nd cycles of the FOAR, whereas the small one refers to the 1st cycle of the SOAR that had seven steps. Note that the study went on in 1999 in the form of FOAR and SOAR, yet these cycles and action plans cannot be included here owing to the space limitations. One can reach the whole thesis at the Thesis Centre of the Higher Education Council.
8. Conclusion and discussion

The study mainly aimed to show action models, action cycles and action plans in general. It also aimed to show the lack of the above stated issues at the AR studies in Turkey and abroad. To that end, it was seen that the participants at the research context were not aware of AR and had not been involved in any AR study before. Hence they were not expected to initiate and carry out an AR study by themselves without getting external help and guidance.

It was also seen that traditional way of language teaching was dominant at the research context. Thus some efforts to introduce the notion of AR to the participants were necessary. These could be doing some seminars, running In-service courses or field work studies to endow the teachers with the knowledge (literature) of AR. Besides, actual guidance to the teachers by an experienced researcher was necessary this was because “theory and practice” are two different concepts. Among these, some legal formalities such as getting official permission from the governor of the city and manager of the local educational authority (LEO) must be taken to enter the schools and classrooms.

It was observed that some AR studies did not provide much information about the used model, action cycles and plans. Hence, it was not possible to speculate whose model of AR was used. It was not also possible to guess what the used action plans were. Instead, these studies give information about the success rate or the reasons for failure of their studies. In line with the above stated results the following issues can be discussed for and against.

It is seen that the participant teachers were not aware of the notion of AR. Yet this case should not be seen as a shortcoming of these teachers. This was because the teacher training system (curriculum) did not include the topics like “research methods” in general and AR “action research” specifically. In this context, the unawareness of the the AR can be regarded as a problem of the education system at that time. Nowadays, it is known that the teacher training programmes of the all education faculties include a course named “research techniques” and it is hoped that the topic of AR is possibly included in that course.

The literature review showed that action researchers in Turkey did not reveal information whether they carried out FOAR or SOAR. Similarly, these researchers do not state the type of AR (if it is a technical AR, a practical AR, a diagnostic AR, a participant AR, an empirical AR, or an emancipatory AR, etc.) (Tomakin, 2001: 76-79).

One of the main features of AR is action. Action plans are put into practice to make the change. If there is no action (application), it is difficult to call the study as AR. Yet it is seen in this paper that participants should know all features of AR in order to apply it. If the participants don’t know them, the researchers can introduce it through certain ways such as seminars, workhops, courses, etc. Efforts to make the participants aware of them and preparing the conditions in the research context can be regarded as action (application). In other words, all these preparing efforts must be seen as a part of action cycle. In this study, the FFW and SFW were the efforts to prepare the teachers for the study. Hence the FFW and SFW were the part of action cycle.

In an AR study, action models, action cycles, and action plans are indespensible parts of AR. They must be clearly and separately stated in the research process. As seen, some AR studies do not reveal the model used, and the action plans applied. This is unreasonable in the research tradition. All in all, it is hoped that this paper show step by step procedure of an AR study and this would be helpful for the researchers, especially for the novice ones, who will undertake an AR in the future.
REFERENCES


