

**A STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM
IMPLEMENTATION IN 6th, 7th AND 8th GRADES OF PUBLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOLS THROUGH TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS**

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN 6th, 7th AND 8th GRADES OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS THROUGH TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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This study aimed to investigate how English language curriculum of the sixth, seventh and eighth grades of public primary schools was implemented by teachers and how it was experienced by students. The major areas of investigation were the teachers' and students' perceptions of the curriculum goals and content, instructional strategies, evaluation and assessment procedures, learner attitudes and the problems encountered during the curriculum implementation. Through a questionnaire for teachers and students, the data collected were from 368 teachers and 1235 students randomly selected from the 21 cities and 42 towns of the seven regions of Turkey.

The results revealed that the implementation process of the English language curriculum showed differences in relation to the facilities of schools and classrooms, teacher and student characteristics and perceptions. Majority of the curriculum goals were attained at a moderate level and there were some problems with the selection and ordering of curriculum content. Various types of teacher-centered and learner-centered instructional strategies were implemented depending on the language skill to be taught and learned, and the students had positive attitudes towards most of these instructional strategies. The main problems encountered in the implementation process resulted from the lack of materials and resources, the course-book, the learners, the classroom environment and the curriculum. These problems influenced

the attainment of goals, classroom practices and the assessment procedures. Teachers' perceptions of curriculum goals and content differed in relation to school location, age, teaching experience and educational background. Students' perceptions of the curriculum differed in relation to their grade levels, gender, parents' educational and English level and previous English grade.

Keywords: English language curriculum, English language teaching, curriculum implementation, teacher perceptions, student perceptions, primary school

**İLKÖĞRETİM 6. , 7. VE 8. SINIF İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİM PROGRAMININ
UYGULANMASI KONUSUNDA ÖĞRETMEN VE ÖĞRENCİ
GÖRÜŞLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ**

ÖZ

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Bu çalışma, ilköğretim 6., 7. ve 8. sınıf İngilizce öğretim programının öğretmenler tarafından nasıl uygulandığını ve öğrenciler tarafından nasıl algılandığını araştırmak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmada programın hedefleri, konuları, öğretim ve ölçme-değerlendirme yöntemleri, öğrenci tutumları ile programın uygulamasında karşılaşılan güçlükler, öğretmen ve öğrenci görüşlerine dayanılarak incelenmiştir. Öğretmen ve öğrenci anketleri yoluyla, Türkiye'nin yedi bölgesinden, gelişmişlik düzeyleri dikkate alınarak belirlenen 21 il merkezi ve bu illere bağlı 42 ilçeden, seçkisiz örnekleme yöntemiyle saptanan 368 öğretmen ve 1235 öğrenciden veriler toplanmış ve bunlar betimleyici ve yordayıcı istatistiki yöntemler ile çözümlenmiştir.

Çalışma sonuçları, İngilizce öğretim programının uygulanması sürecinde, okul ve sınıfların fiziksel koşullarından, öğretmen ve öğrencilerin nitelikleri ile görüş ve algılarından kaynaklanan farklılıkların olduğunu göstermektedir. Programın hedeflerinin büyük bir bölümü orta düzeyde gerçekleşmekte ve konu seçimi ve düzenlenmesi açısından birtakım sorunlarla karşılaşılmaktadır. Program uygulanırken hedeflenen bilgi ve beceriler dikkate alınarak, gerek öğretmen, gerekse öğrenci merkezli çeşitli öğretim yöntem ve teknikleri kullanılmakta ve bunlar öğrenciler tarafından olumlu karşılanmaktadır. Programın uygulanmasında, ders araç ve gereçlerinden, ders kitabından, öğrencilerden, sınıf ortamından ve programdan kaynaklanan sorunlar tespit edilmiştir. Bu güçlükler hedeflere ulaşılmasını, sınıf içi

etkinliklerin yürütülmesini ve ölçme-değerlendirme süreçlerini önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Öğretmenlerin çalıştıkları bölgeye, yaşlarına, deneyimlerine ve eğitim durumlarına göre programı uygulamalarında; öğrencilerin ise sınıf düzeylerine, cinsiyetlerine, ailelerinin eğitim durumlarına ve İngilizce düzeylerine ve daha önce aldıkları İngilizce notuna göre uygulanan programı algılamalarında farklılıklar olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizce öğretim programı, İngiliz Dili öğretimi, öğretim programı uygulaması, öğretmen algıları, öğrenci algıları, ilköğretim

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information about the background to the study with a summary of the goals, content, and suggested instructional and evaluation procedures of the English language curriculum offered at the sixth, seventh and eighth grade levels. It also presents the purpose, significance and definitions of the key terms.

1.1. Background to the Study

In this time of globalization, acquisition of a second and even third and fourth language is much more important than it was before. This significance attributed to the teaching and learning of foreign languages has been recognized by the educational authorities, and foreign language courses have taken their places in the core curricula at various school levels all over the world. Among the numerous sorts of languages, English is the most preferred not only because of its acceptance as a global language but also due to its widespread use. As stated by Crystal (as cited in McKay, 1992) around 570 million people use English either as a native or second language in the world.

Throughout the history, the importance given to the teaching and learning of English has led to the development of various approaches and methods having direct influence on syllabus design, classroom practices, and assessment and evaluation procedures. As Richards and Rodgers (1990) argue the individual and social purposes for learning English and the theories on second language acquisition have had great impact on the existence of these approaches and methods.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1990) these approaches and methods can be listed under three basic views of language. The first view is the “structural view” stating the purpose of language learning as “the mastery of the structurally related

elements” in the form of phonological, grammatical and lexical units, and the methods listed under this view are “Grammar Translation Method”, “Direct Method” “Audio-Lingual Method”, “Total Physical Response” and “Silent Way” (p. 17). The second view is “functional view” revealing that language is “a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning” from which “Communicative Language Teaching” and “Task Based Instruction” are derived (p. 17). The third view is “interactional view” perceiving language as “a tool for the creation and maintenance of social relations” to which “Suggestopedia” and “Community Language Teaching” relate (p. 17).

These approaches and methods have affected the syllabuses of English courses. Actually, the related literature presents two main types of syllabuses in English language teaching and learning, which are “product-oriented” and “process-oriented” syllabuses (Nunan, 1988, p. 27). In “product-oriented syllabuses,” the emphasis is on “the knowledge and skills which learners would gain as a result of instruction” (Nunan, 1988, p. 27). In such a syllabus, content is expressed in the form of “structures” meaning the grammatical rules that the students are expected to accomplish, or in the form of “functions” and “notions” (Nunan, 1988, pp. 30-36). Functions are described as “the communication purposes of the language” such as requests, offers and complaints. Notions, on the other hand, are “conceptual meanings” such as time, sequence, frequency and location (Wilkins, 1976, p. 65). In contrast to “product-oriented” syllabuses, in “process-oriented” ones, the focus is on “the processes through which knowledge and skills will be gained by the learner” (Nunan, 1988, p. 40). In these syllabuses, content is expressed in the form of “tasks, activities and themes” that the students will deal with in class (Richards, Platt, and Weber, 1985, p. 289).

Due to the gaps in second language acquisition theory and practice, there is not a consensus reached on which of these aforementioned approaches, methods and syllabuses is more efficient than the other. However, the current trend is on Communicative Language Teaching, Task-based Instruction and Process-oriented syllabuses. Yet, there is still a debate on whether these recent approaches and methods are applicable to all educational contexts (Alptekin, 2001; CEFR, 2001; Gupta, 2004; Hu, 2005; Lewis and McCook, 2002; Littlewood, 2000).

In fact, the related literature emphasizes the significance of continuous investigation of any curriculum to reach at better conclusions about the effectiveness of its approach, method and syllabus (Cronbach, 1977; Nunan, 1993; Schriener, 1973). However, this issue requires the consideration of how the investigation will be conducted and who will be involved in this investigation process. Actually, the exact definition of curriculum is provided by dividing the concept into categories like “planned curriculum,” “observed curriculum” and “experienced curriculum” (Goodlad as cited in Saylor, Alexander and Lewis, 1978, p. 5). In this regard, a comprehensive definition of planned curriculum is provided by Crocker and Banfield (as cited in Öztürk, 2003, p. 16) as “what has been set out in guidelines or syllabus documents prepared by the relevant educational authorities.” The “observed curriculum” is the one that people see when they are in a classroom (Goodlad as cited in Saylor, Alexander and Lewis, 1978, p. 5). On the other hand, the American National Council (as cited in Öztürk, 2003, p.16) clearly defined the experienced curriculum as “the planned curriculum modified and shaped by the interactions of students, teachers, materials and daily life in the classroom.”

These definitions of curriculum stem from the fact that there can be discrepancies between what is aimed by educational authorities and what is experienced in the classroom. Actually, planned curriculum is usually “either invisible or unreal” (Nunan, 1993, p. 138), so investigation on any curriculum should consider what is experienced in the classroom. Indeed, teachers are the key people who are interpreting the planned curriculum and giving life to it in the language classroom by means of their instructional and evaluation strategies. It is also a fact that the audience of any curriculum is the students, as they are the main figures who are affected by the curriculum. Thus, such an investigation should certainly include teachers and students. Moreover, as Nunan (1993) states there can be “disparities between what teachers believe happens in class and what actually happens” (p. 139). Therefore, such investigation should compare the teachers’ and learners’ perceptions.

In such examinations, not only the differences between two key groups of people, the teachers and students, but also the differences within the groups should also be taken into account. It is because there is considerable amount of literature stating the impact of certain teacher characteristics such as age, gender, educational background and teaching experience on student achievement (Wayne and Youngs,

2003). Besides, in his review of research on classroom tasks and students' abilities, It is argued that individual differences among the students have effects on how they interpret the classroom instruction. In relation to this, Doyle (as cited in Peterson and Walberg, 1980, p. 19) pays "more attention to individual differences as they relate to specific features of the classroom ecology would seem to be a fruitful direction for research on teaching"

These approaches, methods and syllabuses to English language teaching and learning together with the arguments on different types of curricula and the effects of teacher and student characteristics have had serious impact on Turkish education system. First, utmost care and significance is given to English language teaching and learning at all levels in various types of schools in Turkey. However, English language acquisition is still not at the desired level as too many students at various levels complain about not knowing and using English (Gökdemir, 1991). The anticipated problems encountered in English language teaching and learning in Turkey have been raised as lack of resources, crowded classrooms and insufficient time allocated for the courses. Besides, the quantity and quality of teachers have also been criticized (Demircan, 1988; Demirel, 1994; Kaş, 1991; Sarıgöz, 1999; Sunel, 1994).

In relation to English teachers, educational background, the department where they have graduated from, and the years of teaching experience are claimed to be the factors creating differences in their implementation of English language curriculum offered at various schools and at various levels (Akalin, 1990; Başkan, 2001; Demirel, 1991). However, there are still discrepancies among the results of the studies on the issue. In fact, some studies on the history of English language teacher education in Turkey reveal there are significant differences between English Language Department (ELT) and the departments of English Language and Literature (ELL), Translation and Linguistics in terms of the type of courses offered (Akalin, 1990). On the contrary, there are other studies stating that the ELT departments in Turkey are not very different from the others in that they are stressing field specific knowledge rather than teaching (Başkan, 2001; Demirel, 1991).

Among the previously stated approaches, methods and syllabuses "Grammar Translation Method," "Cognitive Code Approach" and "Audio-lingual Method" and "Product-oriented Syllabuses" have widely been used in English language teaching

and learning in Turkey (Demircan, 1988; Demirel 1987). However, the current trend is on “Communicative Language Teaching,” “Task-based Instruction” and “Process-oriented Syllabuses.” Besides, “Eclectic Method” which derives from the assumption that there is no best method that is applicable to all educational contexts is also emphasized. In relation to this, teachers are suggested to synthesize the strengths and weaknesses of each method and implement the ones that are appropriate for their educational contexts (Demirel, 1987, p. 48).

Considering all these issues about the significance attributed to English language education, the discrepancies between planned and experienced curricula, the diversity of approaches, methods and syllabuses and the possible effects of teacher and student background characteristics on learning and teaching of English, this study will focus on the investigation of English language curriculum of sixth, seventh and eighth grades at public primary schools.

1.1.1. Overview of English Language Curriculum of the Public Primary Schools in Turkey

After the acceptance of eight year compulsory education, which has been implemented since the 1997-1998 school year, English has been offered as a must course in the public primary schools. In fact, English courses have been provided from grade four to grade eight. Again, this curriculum has been redesigned in terms of its goals, content, instructional methods and evaluation procedures (MEB, 2004a). The regulations regarding the English language curriculum impose that English courses offered at grades six, seven and eight should have integration and continuity. At these grade levels, English is offered for four hours per week, and at the end of grade eight, the students are expected to graduate from the school with pre-intermediate level of English (MEB, 2004a). The goals of the curriculum are as follows:

In relation to the contexts, functions and structures presented in the specific objectives, the students will be able to (a) understand what they have listened and read in English, and to speak and write in English (b) identify the culture of the nations whose mother tongue is English, (c) tolerate the other cultures and (d) get interested in communicating in English (MEB, 2004a).

In fact, not only these goals but also the objectives for each grade have also been provided in the curriculum guidelines. Actually, these objectives have been listed at three levels of the cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy, which are "knowledge," "comprehension" and "application" (Bümen, 2006, p. 4). In fact, there is continuity and integration in the specific objectives of each grade level. In short, the objectives repeated at grades six, seven and eight can be summarized as:

Knowledge of the sounds, intonation patterns and pronunciation, the vocabulary items found in the dialogues/texts, the parts of speech in simple sentences, the grammatical rules in simple sentences, the abbreviations used in spoken and written English, and the functions of spoken English... Comprehension of the grammatical structures and speech acts of simple sentences, the dialogues/texts listened and read, and the daily experiences in spoken English... Application of the structures, functions and vocabulary items accurately while speaking and writing (MEB, 2004a).

For these objectives, it can be stated that all four main skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) are given place in the curriculum. Besides, the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and intonation are also given priority. In addition to these, two other objectives related to the affective domain, being motivated in learning and being interested in using the language, have also been included in the curriculum guidelines (MEB, 2004a). While stating these objectives, the authorities have also listed the specific attitudes and behaviors expected from the students. In the curriculum guidelines the expected behaviors are listed as speaking with people who know English, reading story books, listening to songs, playing language games, and solving puzzles in free times (MEB, 2004a).

Although the objectives for each grade are the same, there are differences among the types of content covered in each grade. Actually, grade 6 is a bridge between grades 4 and 5, and grades 7 and 8. In other words, the content of grades 4 and 5 has been revised in grade 6 and new content which will be covered in the coming years are introduced (MEB, 2004). The content of grade 6 as expressed in the curriculum guidelines is:

1- Greetings /Meeting People /Introducing one self to someone 2- Asking for and giving personal information 3- The names of some countries/neighboring countries/ nationalities 4- Giving classroom instructions 5- Describing objects 6- Colors, Some adjectives 7- Identifying your family 8- Talking about environment (house/garden/room/clothes) 9-

Giving negative classroom instructions 10- Asking questions with have/has/negative forms of have /has, More adjectives 11- Describing a geographical location, Giving directions 12- There is/are prepositions 13- Can/Can't (ability /disability) 14- Asking and telling the time 15- Shopping 16- Food/drink, Countable / uncountable nouns 17- Family tree, Speculating about people 18- Days of the week /months/ seasons, Ordinal numbers, Dates, Favorites 19- Containers, Discussion Activities, Jazz chants, Short poems, Rhymes, Limericks 20- Asking about likes/dislikes 21- Verbs, Some vocabulary 22- Simple Present Tense 23- Describing daily activities 24- Hobbies/professions 25- Frequency adverbs 26- Describing what people do at work 27- Weather forecast, General truth 28- Present Continuous Tense 29-Future tense 'be going to', Talking about holiday/plans/activities 30- Obligations, Clothes-sizes, TV curriculums 31- Suggestions, Describing a menu, Preferences, Imperatives, Expressing alternatives (MEB, 2004a).

In grade 7, not only some of the content in grade 6 is revised but also new content is provided. The content of grade 7 as displayed in the curriculum guidelines is:

1- Yes/no Questions or wh-questions 2- Tag questions 3- Agreeing / disagreeing 4- What happened?/What's the matter? 5- More about past activities (talking about things people didn't do in the past) 6- Apologizing and giving excuses 7- Indefinite pronoun/reflexive pronoun/ emphatic pronoun 8- Comparatives, Comparing people/things/ qualities 9- Making a choice 10- Past form of 'to be', Time expressions and adverbials 11- Describing people/ place in the past 12- Asking and talking about reasons for absence and expressing feelings 13- Have to/expressing obligations 14- Want to, Verb infinitive 15- Talking about preferences 16- Comparison (affirmative/negative/question) 17- Asking and saying where someone was 18- Asking for and giving opinions, making prediction and reporting 19- Expressing feelings, Comparing life in the past, Inventions and discoveries 20- Talking about past events/past habits/experiences and expressing bad habits 21- Talking about recent actions 22- The present perfect tense 23- Asking for/giving permission, Expressing procession/availability/barrowing 24- Talking about health/illness/one's state 25- Warning, Giving advice, Obligation 26- Desciribing people's appearances/things, Similarities and differences 27- Superlative form of adjectives, Talking about differences 28- Making a choice, Buying and selling, Expressing quantities 29- Adverbs 30- Talking about future events, Talking about weather conditions 31- Simple future tense (affirmative/negative/question) 32- Asking for/giving opinions about traveling/booking/requesting 33- Describing objects, Passive 34- Likes/dislikes, Giving advice (MEB, 2004a).

Finally, grade 8 is a repetition of contents in grades 6 and 7, but it also involves new content. The content of grade 8 as presented in the curriculum guidelines is:

1-Talking about experiences and past actions, narrating past actions 2- Describing things in the past/what was it like? Pattern 3- The present perfect tense (affirmative/negative/question) 4- Superlative forms 5- Saying what have/haven't done, Teaching how long? 6- Narrating the past events, Simple past tense with when/who/how questions 7- The past continuous tense 8- Talking about an interrupted action 9- Writing letters 10- Sending post-cards 11- Talking about future plans, Expressing conditions 12- Making suggestions, Expressing conditions 13- Reading time tables and working out instructions 14- Expressing enjoyments/dislikes/preferences 15- Agreeing/disagreeing to likes/dislikes 16- Abilities /disabilities 17- Talking about abilities/disabilities in the future 18- Making invitations 19- Giving and accepting excuses 20- Expressing quantity, Buying and selling 21- Asking for and giving information about places to visit 22- Describing position and directions 23- Making a picture/plan about your town, Writing some facts about the town 24- Describing people 25- Expressing enjoyments/dislikes/preferences 26- Describing objects/animals/plants 27- Expressing recommendation 28- Giving advice 29- Expressing emphasis, Feelings linking verbs (copula) 30- Emphasis, Surprise 31- Passive voice (present tense), Passive voice with/without agent 32- Describing a process, Agriculture /geography 33- Describing recipes/cooking products 34- Comparing qualities (too+ adj. + enough), Reasoning (Why/because) 35- Expressing quantity by giving unspecified numbers (Is that enough?) (MEB, 2004a)

A close examination of the content in each term and in each grade level reveals that the English language curriculum of public primary schools is too loaded that it may not be covered in four hours. Besides, the way the content of the curriculum presented shows that not a particular and consistent syllabus is provided to the teachers. In other words, although some of the content is provided in the form of “structures” (Nunan, 1988, p. 30), some is provided in the form of “functions and notions” (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983, p. 7). There is also some content presented in all three forms meaning “structures, functions and notions” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 74). In addition to these, it is observed that some content is expressed in relation to “the types of tasks to be attempted in the classroom” (Prabhu as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 4). This inconsistency about the presentation of content is not only seen among grade levels but also within the grades. Thus, it is assumed that these inconsistencies in the syllabus design of the curriculum may result in misinterpretations and ambiguities in the teachers' perceptions and may lead to diverse implementation strategies.

In the curriculum, certain approaches, methods and techniques for teachers have also been provided. It is revealed that the learner centered approach especially “Communicative Language Teaching” and “Eclectic Method” should be employed in

the courses. It is also stated that collaborative learning environment should be enhanced and small group work activities should be used even in crowded classrooms. In addition, communicative activities are highly suggested and the teachers are required to use various methods and techniques to get the students participate in the lesson. Suggested techniques can be listed as question and answer, drama and role-plays, lecture, listening and speaking, memorization, repetition and language games (MEB, 2004a). Finally, the main parts of a lesson are listed as preparation, presentation, implementation and feedback (MEB, 2004a). Not much information has been provided on what is meant by these four main parts in the guidelines, but there is extensive explanation about them in the related literature.

Briefly, “preparation” involves a large number of tasks that the teachers should conduct before presenting a language item or skill. These include “analysis of the syllabus and textbook” and “lesson planning” in the form of designing tasks, activities and materials, and preparing the tools and equipment to be used before coming to class (Lewis and Hill, 1992, pp. 56-60). The “presentation” as the name suggests refers to how teachers present the students the required knowledge, skill and even how they provide the instructions for activities and tasks. “Implementation” involves the actual use of the activities and tasks that are preplanned (Lewis and Hill, 1992, p. 29). Finally, “feedback” refers to correction techniques to be used for student mistakes (Russell and Spada, 2006, p. 133). Unlike the former three parts, in relation to “feedback,” one suggestion has been provided to teachers in the curriculum guidelines. This is, while conducting communicative activities; teachers should be tolerant to student mistakes (MEB, 2004a).

In English language curriculum, a summary of statements on the instructional materials have also been given. As for the equipment and tools to be used, it is stated that they should take the attention of the students, motivate them and be relevant for the modern technology. The suggested instructional materials include the course books, the supplementary resource books, audio and visual materials like tapes, overhead projectors and videos (MEB, 2004a).

The guidelines for the assessment and evaluation procedures focus on the importance of formative evaluation and progress tests in the form of quizzes. It is also recommended to have summative evaluation and a final test at the end of each term. The main purpose of the final tests should be to diagnose the English level of

students. Besides, it is recommended to assess each specific objective and to design tests using various formats such as multiple-choice, true-false, question and answer, and transformation type of items. Furthermore, it is emphasized that attention should be paid to prepare reliable and valid tests that measure each goal and objective presented in the guidelines (MEB, 2004a).

As it could be understood from this summary of the English language curriculum and/or syllabus, the teachers have been provided with useful guidelines to implement in their classes. Although these guidelines seem to contribute to the effectiveness of English language education, they contain serious gaps. For instance, there seem to be inconsistencies in the selection and grading of content in the syllabus provided for the teachers. Besides, no specific information has been given on how the aforementioned activities such as role-plays, communicative or language games should be like. Also, there are no guidelines on how each main skill (reading, listening, speaking and writing) can be presented and practiced more efficiently. Besides, no criteria have been recommended about the selection of materials for classroom use. These issues might be important, as some of the English teachers working in these schools may be interpreting these specific terms differently (Demirel, 1994). Besides, there seems to be a need for investigation on how students experience the curriculum.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

In light of the aforementioned discussions regarding the teacher and student characteristics, theory on the discrepancies among the planned, perceived and experienced curricula and the gaps in the curriculum guidelines, the aim of this study is to investigate how the English language curriculum is perceived and implemented by the teachers and how it is experienced by the students at the sixth, seventh and eighth grades of public primary schools in Turkey. The problems encountered in implementation of the curriculum are also investigated. Therefore, the main research questions of the study can be stated as follows:

- 1- How do the teachers perceive the curriculum goals and content? Do teachers' perceptions of the curriculum goals and content differ according to school location, age, gender, education and experience?

- 2- How do the teachers implement the curriculum?
- 3- What kinds of problems are encountered by the teachers during the implementation of the curriculum?
- 4- How do the students studying at the sixth, seventh and eighth grades of primary schools experience the curriculum? Do students' perceptions of the curriculum differ according to their grade levels, genders, ages, parents' education and English levels and English grades in the last record sheet?

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study is assumed to be significant in several respects. First, it provides feedback about the implementation of the English curriculum of public primary schools in Turkey. In other words, it gives feedback about how the planned curriculum is perceived and implemented by the teachers, and how the implemented curriculum is experienced by the students in the classroom. Thus, it helps the curriculum developers to visualize how their decisions are interpreted and practiced by the teachers in the classroom. It also helps the teachers to see how the curriculum implementation is experienced by the students. In turn, what is and is not implemented together with what is and is not experienced can be determined and the reasons for the differences among the intended, perceived, implemented and experienced curriculum can be recognized.

This study also helps to identify the problems encountered in reaching the goals of the present English curriculum from the perspectives of teachers and students so that the authorities can have a chance to consider these issues in their attempts to improve the English language curriculum. This is significant as this particular study has been conducted at the time when utmost importance is given to the teaching and learning foreign languages, especially English, at various levels in public schools and when the Ministry of Education is in an attempt to reconsider and make changes in the present English language curricula at various levels. Thus, the results obtained about the present implementation strategies, the difficulties faced and suggestions made by the teachers and students are expected to provide useful information for the specialists in their future attempts.

The findings related to the problems in curriculum implementation can also help teachers to improve their performance and instructional strategies and can be

used as a reference study in not only English language teaching methods courses in universities but also pre- and in-service training programs offered by the Ministry of Education.

As one of the few studies of English language curriculum implementation at the sixth, a seventh and eighth grade of public primary schools in Turkey, this study also helps to contribute to the literature. In this respect, a close examination of the curriculum implementation in the Turkish context and the identification of the contextual issues can provide perspective for other similar education systems.

1.4. Definition of Terms

English Language Curriculum: English language curriculum refers to the curriculum that has been planned by the Ministry of Education and implemented in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades of public primary schools in Turkey after the acceptance of eighth year compulsory education. During the study, English Language Curriculum and Curriculum are used interchangeably.

English Language Teaching: English language teaching refers to the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in public primary schools in Turkey.

Curriculum Implementation: The process of carrying out the English language curriculum by the teachers and students in the classroom. It includes both the curriculum and the instructional practice with respect to achieving the expected outcomes.

Teacher Perceptions: Teacher perceptions are the opinions and/or views of English teachers teaching at the 6th, 7th and 8th grades of public primary schools in Turkey about the English language curriculum.

Student Perceptions: Student perceptions are the opinions and/or views of students studying at the 6th, 7th and 8th grades of public primary schools in Turkey about the English language curriculum.

Primary School: Primary School is an institution where children in Turkey receive the first stage of compulsory education. Children attend the primary school from around the age of 7 until the age of 15. It lasts for 8 years.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides information about the approaches and methods used in English Language Teaching, teaching English as a foreign language in Asian and European context and research on English language education at public primary schools which is conducted to investigate the curriculum and the factors influencing the implementation of the curriculum.

2.1. Approaches and Methods in English Language Teaching (ELT)

The history of English language teaching (ELT) can be separated into five decades as “early period, the nineteen-sixties, the nineteen-seventies, the nineteen-eighties, the nineteen-nineties and “the new-millennium” depending on the major developments in the field (Jawarskowa and Porte, 2007, p.1). The early period of English language teaching was the time of “Grammar Translation Method,” which emerged from “the study of Latin” and became the usual way of studying foreign languages (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 2). The main purpose of this method is being able to read the literature of the foreign language in order to take advantage of the “intellectual development” caused by foreign language study (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 3). Thus, reading and writing are the two main skills focused in the language classroom, whereas speaking and listening are dealt with little or no interest. Vocabulary is selected from the reading texts and is taught by means of “bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorization” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 4). Since sentence is believed to be “the basic unit of language,” too much time is spent on analyzing grammatical structures and translating them to native and target languages. In other words, grammar is taught “deductively” by making presentations and sentence analyses (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 4). This method

also focuses on “accuracy” as students are expected to learn the rules without making mistakes (Howatt, 1984, p. 132).

As Brown states, the early 1960s were the time of shift to “oral practice through pattern drills and a good deal of behaviorally-inspired conditioning” (as cited in Jawarskova and Porte, 2007, p. 1). Audio-Lingual Method, which stresses “listening comprehension” and “oral proficiency with accurate pronunciation” together with accurate use of grammar and vocabulary, was the main method of the time (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 52). The main activities of this method are dialogues and various forms of drills such as “repetition, inflection, replacement, restatement, expansion, contraction, transformation, integration and substitution” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, pp. 54-56). The reading and writing are not ignored, but are developed once accurate oral practice is attained. Since importance is given to accuracy, the learners have the roles of parroting what is expected from them. In such a learning environment, teachers have central and active roles of “modeling the target language, controlling the direction and pace of learning, monitoring and correcting the learners’ performances” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 56).

Another method that assumes “stimulus-response view” of learning was Total Physical Response (TPR), which was developed by Asher (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 89). Though Asher did not inform the theory of language underlying his method, the activities and tasks of TPR reveal that it had structural and/or grammatical views of language. In relation to this, the main purpose of TPR can be stated as “to teach oral proficiency at a beginning level” by relying on “meaning interpreted through movement” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 91). Since TPR focuses on meaning rather than the form, grammatical structures are taught “inductively.” Besides, in its “sentence-based syllabus,” vocabulary items are chosen by considering the conditions in which they can be implemented (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 92). The main activities of TPR are “imperative drills” which require the learners to perform the commands provided by the teacher, and “conversational dialogues” about real life situations (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 93). The learners have the roles of listener and performer, and the teacher has the role of director who exposes the students to the target language through his or her commands. As for materials, “realia” play an important role in a TPR classroom (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 94).

As Brown claims, towards the end of 1960s and beginning of 1970s, the criticisms towards behavioral approaches to learning led to “Cognitive Code Learning,” which proposed more “deductive” learning of structures together with some drilling practice associated with audio-lingual method, but by adding “more creativity and meaningful learning in classroom routines” (as cited in Jawarskowa and Porte , 2007, p. 2). According to Ellis, the 1970s was “a period of adolescence in Second Language Acquisition (SLA),” which came up with several theories of language that led to other approaches and methods in language teaching in the preceding years (as cited in Jawarskowa and Porte, 2007, p. 4). In terms of syllabus, as Bruton states the 1970s was the time of “notions and functions,” and there was an interest in the skills for “contextualized communications.” Actually, this was the time emphasis was on “integration of skills,” and as for methodology, the structural activities in the form of “mechanical drills” gave way to more “meaningful activities, especially role-plays” (as cited in Jawarskowa and Porte , 2007, p. 8). This was also the time “the origins of Communicative Language Teaching” were formed (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 64). Finally, as Bruton states, “designer methods movement” that gave way to other contemporary methods like, “Suggestopedia, Silent Way and Community Language Learning” emerged towards the end of 1970s (as cited in Jawarskowa and Porte, 2007, p. 8).

Suggestopedia, a method developed by Lozanov, aims “to deliver advanced conversational proficiency quickly” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 147). The language to be learned is the “material” and its basic theories of learning are the importance of “authoritative source” that will facilitate information flow, and classroom environment with “bright décor, musical background and comfortable chairs” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 145). The main instructional activities are “imitation, question and answer, role-play and listening practices” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 148). Listening activities are carried out in three main steps as during the first listening, the teacher and students discuss the new text. During the second and third listening, the students sit in their comfortable chairs and listen to their teacher’s reading the text. What differs the third reading from the second is that the teacher reads the text in a “musical form” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 148).

Silent Way, a method developed by Cattegno, is based on the assumption that “teacher should be silent as much as possible in the classroom and the learner should

be encouraged to produce as much language as possible” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 99). The main goal of this method is to provide elementary level students with “oral facility in basic elements of the target language” through a structural syllabus with courses focusing on “grammatical items and related vocabulary” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, pp. 103-104). This method differs from Audio Lingual in that teacher is silent. In other words, he or she avoids making use of repetition. The “physical foci” is provided with “the rods and color-coded pronunciation charts” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 100). These pronunciation charts include symbols of vowel and consonant sounds of the language. In silent way, the teacher has the roles of modeling a language item and eliciting from students through mimes and gestures. Other suggested materials are “books and worksheets for practicing reading and writing, and tapes, films, videos and other visual aids,” which are of secondary importance (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 109).

Community Language Learning, a method developed by Curran, is based on a “holistic approach to learning” in that learning is viewed as being both “cognitive and affective” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 117). In other words, this method is derived from humanistic approaches to learning and “social-process view of language in terms of six qualities of sub-processes” which are “the whole person process, the educational process, the interpersonal process, the developmental process, the communicative process and the cultural process” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 116). The main purpose of the method is achieving “near-native like mastery of language” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 117). The main activities used while implementing this method are “translations,” meaning a student tells a message to the teacher who translates it into the target language, “group works” in the form of discussions, conversations, presentations, “recording” of what is said or discussed in class, “transcription” of what is recorded, “analysis” of language structures in transcriptions, “reflection and observation” of what is experienced in class, “listening” to the teacher talk about classroom interaction and “free conversation” on what is being learned and feelings about the classroom experiences (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 120). The instructional materials are the ones developed by the teacher. In other words, course book is not considered as the necessary element.

Oxford reveals that the 1980s was the decade that began with a “bang through Krashen’s hypotheses about language acquisition” (as cited in Jawarskova and Porte,

2007, p. 10). The explanation of this theory in its simplest sense can be made by comprehending the five main hypotheses which are “the acquisition/learning hypotheses ... the monitor hypothesis... the natural order hypothesis... the input hypothesis... and the affective filter hypothesis” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, pp.131-134). In brief, these hypotheses can be described as follows:

According to the acquisition/ learning hypothesis, acquisition is the natural way, paralleling first language development in children... Learning by contrast refers to a process in which conscious rules about a language are developed... According to the monitor hypothesis, time, focus on form and knowledge of rules are the conditions that limit the successful use of the monitor... According to the input hypothesis, language can be acquired if the comprehensible input is understood, and ability to speak fluently emerges in time and cannot be taught directly... According to the affective filter hypothesis, the three affective variables related to second language acquisition are motivation, self confidence and anxiety (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, pp. 131-134).

All these hypotheses of Krashen affected the approaches and methods used not only in 1980s, but also in other periods. As a result of these hypotheses, Natural approach and Task-based language teaching (TBLT) emerged in this period. Furthermore, Nunan reveals, “the principles of Communicative Language Teaching” began to be implemented in the language classroom (as cited in Jawarskova and Porte, 2007, p.10).

As Terrell claims, the main purpose of Natural Approach is to emphasize “the meaning of genuine communications” to reduce anxiety (as cited in Oller and Richard-Amato, 1983, p. 267). As in other communicative approaches, which will be discussed later, the specific objectives in this approach rely on learner needs and interests and the four main skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and “level being taught” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 134). The three conditions of a communication situation are listed as “the message”, the comprehension of the message and “low-anxiety environment” (Oller and Richard-Amato, 1983, p. 267). In short, As Terrell states since the main focus is on message, it is not acquired with structural exercises and mechanical drills, so attention should be paid to meaningful exercises and activities. Besides, to enhance comprehensibility of the input, it should be simplified. Simplification here does not mean using vocabulary items and grammatical structures only, but talking with “slower rate,” using “high frequency

vocabulary,” incorporating “marked definitions such as gestures, repetitions and pictures” and implementing “discourse techniques like asking yes/no or tag questions” (as cited in Oller and Richard-Amato, 1983, pp. 272-273). Finally, low anxiety environment can be attained by not having students speak in class till they are ready. Instead, they are supposed to react to “teacher commands and questions” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 136). In addition to this, direct correction of speech errors are avoided as it will lead to “affective barriers” and focus the speaker’s attention on the form rather than the meaning (Oller and Richard-Amato, 1983, p. 280). The suggested activities are “games, content activities such as presentations and panels, show and tell sessions, humanistic activities exploring students’ ideas, values and feelings, and information gap and problem solving activities” (Oller and Richard-Amato, 1983, p. 281). The recommended materials include “visuals, schedules, brochures, advertisements, maps and books” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 138).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the suggested approach of the curriculum under investigation, was founded in the 1960s, but gained popularity in the preceding years. That’s why Howatt (1984) proposed two main terms for this approach as “strong and weak versions of communicative language teaching.” In relation to this division, “weak version” emphasizes the significance of providing students with opportunities to use the language for “communicative purposes,” while the “strong version” puts emphasis on the stimulation of the “existing language system” (p. 279). The main purpose of this learner-centered approach is to develop “communicative competence of learners” and to improve processes for teaching the four main skills (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 66). According to Savignon, the “communicative competence” is best described by dividing it into four main dimensions as “grammatical competence” which can be defined as the mastery of “lexical, grammatical and phonological” units of a language, “sociolinguistic competence” that refers to understanding of the “social context” in which the language is used, “discourse competence” which is concerned with “interpretation of isolated sentences or utterances to form a meaningful whole” and “strategic competence” which is about strategies that people use to “imperfect knowledge of rules” (as cited in Jawarskova and Porte, 2007, pp. 36-40). The main elements forming the learning theory of CLT can be listed as:

Communication principle: activities that involve real communication promote learning... Task principle: activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning... Meaningfulness principle: language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 72).

These theories on language and learning have led not only to Communicative Language Teaching but also to learner-centered curricula which are designed by considering the needs and interests of the students, and process-oriented syllabuses which center on procedures, tasks and contents (Nunan, 1988). In this learner-centered approach, the learners have active roles and they are required to contribute to the learning environment through collaboration and cooperation in an “independent way” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 77). In short, collaborative activities such as pair-work and group-work are highly emphasized. “Social interaction activities” such as discussions, conversations, role-plays, simulations and debates are also given priority. Furthermore, problem-solving and information-gap activities such as the following are suggested; “discovering missing information... following instructions and directions....working out a daily sequence of events.... solving problems from shared clues” (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 76).

In CLT, the teacher has several roles as a facilitator, resource, organizer, guide, researcher and learner. In other words, the teacher has the role to identify and appeal to the learner needs to “facilitate the communication process” among the students, to “guide classroom procedures and activities,” and to “organize” materials to be used in the classroom (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, pp. 77-79). This last role reflects that materials have important functions in the CLT classroom and they should promote communicative language use.

The materials in CLT can be divided into two as “task-based” and “text-based” materials (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, pp. 79-80). The tasks and activities of CLT such as role-plays, discussions, games and jigsaws necessitate the use of different materials. In brief, the materials for role plays and simulations are written “cue cards” in which different roles assumed from the students are explained (McDonough and Shaw, 1998, p. 166). The “jigsaws,” “information gap” and “problem solving” activities call for materials in which two sets of information are provided to students in the form of charts, diagrams, labels and tables so that the

students can fill in the missing information by interacting with one another (McDonough and Shaw, 1998, p. 165). The communicative games and discussions necessitate the use of “maps, pictures, questionnaires” as materials (McDonough and Shaw, 1998, p. 163). All these activities and materials are especially for the improvement of listening and speaking skills as well as the lexical and grammatical knowledge. “Text-based” materials which are highly important in improving four main skills, especially reading and listening, rely on topics and themes. In such materials, “visual cues, taped cues, pictures and sentence fragments” are used to initiate interaction (Richards and Rodgers, 1990, p. 79).

These developments in activities, tasks and materials with the influence of CLT also led to reconsideration of evaluation and assessment procedures. Weir (1990) criticized the existing structural methods used in the assessment of language skills and came up with the concept of ‘Communicative Language Testing.’ His major criticism was that the existing “discrete point” tests “break the elements of language apart and try to test them separately with little or no attention to the way those elements interact in a larger context of communication” (Weir, 1990, p. 2). In other words, the structural methods such as multiple-choice, matching, true-false and short-answer tests center on “linguistic” competence, and tend to ignore “sociolinguistic,” “discourse” and “strategic” competences that are integral parts of communicative competence. Integrative tests such as “close” and “dictation” which came up as a result of the aforementioned criticisms towards “discrete point” tests were also criticized for their ability to test “the receptive skills,” mainly reading and listening (Weir, 1990, p. 3).

In light of these criticisms, Weir (1990) revealed that any assessment procedure which aimed to test the communicative competence needed to have the following characteristics. First, it should be “contextualized” by making use of authentic tasks and texts that are derived from real-life situations (p. 11). In other words, the test tasks “should cover as wide a range as possible of the operations that candidates might be expected to cope with” (p. 86). Next, emphasis should be on incorporating tasks in four of the main skills that are reading, listening, speaking and writing. Furthermore, the use of “performance tasks such as controlled writing tasks, listening and note-taking and face-to-face spoken interactions” should be encouraged (p. 86). Finally, the use of “integrated tasks” and the development of “relevant and

adequate scoring criteria” should be emphasized (pp.18-19). These issues related to the construct validity of the communicative tests were stressed because of the ‘backwash-effect’ of assessment procedures on curriculum implementation. In this regard, it is revealed that “the closer the relationship between the test and teaching that precedes it, the more the test is likely to have construct validity” (p. 27). In short, no matter to what extent a CLT environment is enhanced in the language classroom, if the students are assessed with structural tests, they will likely to pay attention to those exercises done in the classroom, not the communicative tasks and activities.

Actually, the 1980s was the decade which experienced explosion of activity in materials development. These materials, activities and tasks derived from especially Communicative Language Teaching approach, which continues to be implemented in the preceding years. However, there are still other improvements in the field. As Waters reveals the nineteen-nineties was the time when the importance of “teacher development” was realized (as cited in Jawarskova and Porte, 2007, p. 12). Actually, this was the time when publications on pre and in service training of teachers became available. According to Waters, the second main trend was “the growing number of ELT projects involving innovations in teaching, testing and training” (as cited in Jawarskova and Porte, 2007, p. 12). Besides, the use of English as a means of “international communication” increased, but this led to concerns about its potential “negative effects on other languages and cultures” resulting from its wide-spread use (p. 12).

According to Savignon, in the new millennium ELT has become the basis of “theoretical” interest involving researchers and practitioners searching for the “best practices” to meet the needs of a growing “population of learners” (as cited in Jawarskova and Porte, 2007, p. 13). Actually, the new trends in ELT are the recognition of the assumption that there is no “best method” applicable to all cultural and teaching contexts, the significance of both meaning and form in the attainment of “language proficiency,” the use of the language not only by natives but also by “nonnative users,” and “dynamic instructional models” that facilitate communicative competence (as cited in Jawarskova and Porte, 2007, p. 14). In other words, the elaboration of Communicative Language Teaching approach is expected to continue influencing the developments in linguistic theory and curriculum implications in the twentieth century. The models for integrated teaching are supposed to produce new

and revised materials for “content or theme-based” and “task-based” instruction (as cited in Jawarskova and Porte, 2007, p. 14). Again, the recognition of differences in teaching contexts is assumed to lead to new practices for different types of learners with different needs and interests in the form of teaching young learners, teaching adults, and teaching in an EFL situation.

The “integrated skills” teaching as the term suggests is “the teaching of four main skills,” specifically reading, writing, listening and speaking “in conjunction with each other” (McDonough and Shaw, 1998, p. 201). The main benefit of such an approach is that it enables the learners to comprehend how communication takes place in real life by motivating them with “meaningful tasks and activities” (McDonough and Shaw, 1998, p. 202). Skills can be integrated by implementing different strategies in the teaching of each main skill by means of different activities, tasks and materials.

One main strategy for the teaching of the two receptive skills, listening and reading, is the integration of speaking and writing by means of pre, while and post activities. The “pre-activities” aim to prepare the students for the texts by focusing their attention to the subject matter by means of “introduction” from the teacher, “pre-questions” and “pre-teaching” of the vocabulary items (Lewis and Hill, 1992, p. 107). In brief, as for introduction, the teacher gives short information about the content of the text by introducing the characters and settings of text. In addition, sometimes the teacher enables students to talk about the title or subtitles of the text and/or illustrations such as pictures, photographs, charts, graphs and figures associated with the text. Moreover, the teacher may lead in discussions by asking “pre-questions” that enable students to make predictions about the content, organizational style and language of the text (Lewis and Hill, 1992, p. 108). Finally, the teacher may introduce key vocabulary items in the text by either pre-teaching directly or enabling students anticipate them through “word-ladders” and “word-roses” (Lewis and Hill, 1992, p. 108). This summary of the activities reveal that they not only prepare students for the listening and reading texts but also encourage oral and written practice.

The “while” stage activities can vary depending on the specific objectives for listening and/or reading. The objectives may be “skimming (getting the gist), scanning (recognizing details), comprehension, drawing conclusions, finding

relations, guessing meanings of unknown words, inferencing” (McDonough and Shaw, 1998, pp. 106-109). The way the tasks and activities are organized, whether they are in the form of open-ended questions, matchings, true-false items, chart fillings, ordering of jumbled sentences and taking notes; the way they are conducted as individual activities or pair or group work activities; and the way they are presented like “silent-reading,” “reading-aloud,” through a medium such as “tapes, videos, OHPs” affect the incorporation of four skills (McDonough and Shaw, 1998, pp. 112-142). In brief, some activities call for listening, some reading, some writing and some speaking.

Similarly, there are several “post” activities depending on the aims for listening and reading (Lewis and Hill, 1992, pp. 62). They can encourage language practice by enabling students to identify and practice the grammatical structures, vocabulary items and phonological features like pronunciation, stress and intonations in the texts. They may also involve oral practice through enabling students “role-play similar dialogues... participate in discussions and debates... make presentations of their attitudes and feelings towards the content of the texts” (McDonough and Shaw, 1998, pp. 215-220). Depending on the levels of the students, these aforementioned activities like role-plays and discussions can first be written and then be practiced orally. Sometimes, the students might be provided with “controlled practice writing activities” through which they produce a written product like paragraphs, letters, postcards, advertisements, questionnaires by making use of the instructions and or clues provided (McDonough and Shaw, 1998, pp. 182-191). These instructions may require reading and understanding, and/or listening and understanding.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) which relies on the “constructivist theory of learning” and “communicative language teaching methodology” is a learner centered approach which “advocates content-oriented meaningful activities rather than linguistic forms” (Jeon and Hahn, 2006, p. 2). The related literature on TBLT reveals that various definitions have been provided for the term “task”. Actually, “the definition of task ranges along a continuum according to the extent they insist on communicative purpose” (Littlewood, 2004, p. 320). For instance, Nunan (1989) claims that “tasks can be conceptualized in terms of the specific goals they are intended to serve.” Willis (as cited in Jeon and Hahn, 2006, p. 4)) describes a task as “an activity in which the target language is used for a communicative

purpose.” Skehan (as cited in Jeon and Hahn, 2006, p. 4) reveals four main characteristics of tasks as “there is a goal to be worked towards; the activity is outcome-evaluated; meaning is primary; and there is a real-world relationship”. Littlewood (2004) provides a summary of the tasks that students engage in classrooms rather than working out a definition of it:

Non Communicative Learning: Focusing on the structures of language, how they are formed and what they mean such as substitution exercises and awareness raising activities... Pre-communicative Language Practice: Practicing language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others like question and answer practice... Communicative Language Practice: Practicing pre-taught language in a context where it communicates new information e.g. information-gap activities or personalized questions... Structured Communication: Using language to communicate in situations which elicit pre-learnt language, but with some unpredictability such as structured role-play and simple problem-solving... Authentic Communication: Using language to communicate in situations where the meanings are predictable like creative role-play, more complex problems-solving and discussion (p. 322).

Along with this distinction of tasks, Littlewood (2004) reveals that a comprehensive definition of TBLT can be achieved by understanding the two dimensions of tasks which are “focus on forms and focus on meanings” and “the learners’ active personal involvement with the task, whatever the nature of that task may be” (p. 323). In fact, the students may demonstrate various involvements in the tasks. In short, they can have “low task involvement and low focus on meaning, low task involvement and high focus on meaning, high task involvement and low focus on meaning, and high task involvement and high focus on meaning” (p. 324). In addition, the “classroom setting” where the tasks are implemented is also crucial in TBLT in that “classroom arrangement should be flexible rather than fixed” so that learners can make use of “different settings in different learning situations” (Jeon and Hahn, 2006, p. 5). A final, but not the least important determinant in TBLT is the teacher not only because of his or her role in designing the tasks, but also due to his or her implementation of them. In other words, the achievement in a TBLT classroom depends on the relationship between “the teacher’s intention and learner’s interpretation of the task coverage” (Murphy, 2003, p. 353). Thus, in TBLT, the teacher has to clarify the task objectives for the students. This necessitates the

teacher to have adequate information about “the instructional framework related to its plan and procedure” (Jeon and Hahn, 2006, p. 6).

According to Savignon, the new millennium is also expected to lead to new practices for different types of learners with different needs and interests (as cited in Jawarskova and Porte, 2007). One of these is assumed to be on new and best practices for teaching students with different age groups, especially teaching young children and adults.

In fact, there is great amount of literature which states that teaching young learners and adolescents is different from teaching adults in that they have special characteristics. As Philips (2001) states young learners are concerned with the purposes and tasks of language learning and they do not treat it as “an intellectual game or abstract system” (p.5). Besides, being “great mimics,” they are usually not conscious while learning, but are “prepared to enjoy” what is done in the classroom (p. 5). This means they can easily be motivated to learn a foreign language by providing an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Actually, learners at primary schools tend to have more positive attitudes towards learning a foreign language if “it is associated with enjoyable and pleasing activities” (Çakır, 2004, p. 2). This requires the foreign language teachers teaching this group to act several roles as facilitators, guides, counselors and controllers in the classroom. In other words, these teachers should be careful in selecting, designing and implementing their classroom tasks and activities. In relation to this, Moon (2000) reveals that teachers should keep in mind that young learners learn better by “being motivated, listening and repeating, imitating the teacher, interacting with each other in an atmosphere of trust and acceptance, and translating sentences into their own languages” (p. 3).

According to Çakır (2004), enjoyment and entertainment in the language classroom can be attained by making use of “visual materials, meaningful contexts, various activities, games, songs, and technology” (p. 3). The benefits of using visual materials in teaching English to learners should not be restricted to their being great tools for enhancing motivation, but it should also be considered that young learners and adolescents have mainly visual, spatial and kinesthetic learning styles. The types of visual materials that can be used as learning tools are listed as, “large, colorful and amusing pictures, posters, drawings or flashcards, puppets, toys and real objects or dramatizations through miming, facial expressions and gestures” (Çakır, 2004, p. 4).

It is also noted that if these visuals are used together with “contextualized activities,” learning will be enhanced (Çakır, 2004, p. 5). The suitable contexts for language use can be provided by using, “simple poems, stories, tongue-twisters, puzzles, reading and listening texts though which the students guess the meanings of words together with posters, advertisements and surveys which the students prepare themselves” (Philips, 2001, p. 56).

In addition to these contextualized activities, the language classroom with adolescents should involve activities that enable the learners to acquire the language by actively participating in the learning environment. Besides, activities which enable the learners to use their imagination and creativity should be enhanced. The main activities that can be used in the language classroom to teach young learners and/or adolescents are provided as:

Total Physical Response activities such as listen and do, listen and repeat, listen and draw a route, read and draw; Information gap and problem solving activities such as reading and vocabulary jigsaws, finding the odd one out, ordering jumbled sentences; Acting out role plays by pretending games with masks, puppets, toys, play dough figures (Philips, 2001, p. 73).

Among the aforementioned activities, the importance of language games is highly stressed and it is revealed that language games not only enhance motivation but also improve the skill to “co-operate and compete without being aggressive and by being a good loser” (Philips, 2001, p. 79). In fact, language games can be divided into two as those who promote collaboration and those who enable competition. In comparison with competitive games, the collaborative games in the form of pair-work and group-work are believed to be more influential in overcoming anxiety in the language classroom (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006). Language games are also categorized in terms of their purposes like “structure games, vocabulary games, spelling games” (Çakır, 2004, p. 4). Thus, teachers should take into account the purposes and styles of the games that they want to implement in the language classroom before selecting and designing them.

The significance of CLT, TBLT and Integrated Skills Approach in teaching English to young learners has already been stated in the literature. In addition to these, certain problems that are assumed to hinder the application of these

aforementioned tasks and activities have been discussed. In relation to this, the major problem is stated to be the ignorance of learning strategies and learning styles.

A comprehensible and brief definition of learning strategies can be stated as any “conscious” activities, processes and procedures in which language learners engage in order to “understand, learn, or remember new information” (Hismanoğlu, 2000, p. 2). There is extensive literature claiming that learners can be trained in using appropriate learning strategies to facilitate their learning. Hismanoğlu (2000) provides “taxonomy” of language learning strategies proposed by several researchers (p. 3). In this taxonomy, first the learning strategies are divided into three main categories as “learning strategies, communication strategies and social strategies” and then these three main categories are divided into subcategories within themselves (Rubin 1987 as cited in Hismanoğlu 2000, p. 3). The “learning strategies” refer to those which “contribute directly to the development of language system constructed by the learner” and are divided into two as “cognitive” and “meta-cognitive” (Hismanoğlu, 2000, p. 3). The “cognitive strategies” like “clarification/verification, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice, memorization and monitoring” are those that can be used in solving problems, whereas “meta-cognitive” ones are used to self-regulate language learning by “planning, prioritizing, setting goals, and self-management” (Hismanoğlu, 2000, p. 4). The “communication strategies” are those that rely on “the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended” (Hismanoğlu, 2000, p. 4). The “social strategies” sometimes called “interpersonal strategies” are those activities which provide learners with “opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge” (Stern, 1992 cited in Hismanoğlu, 2000, p. 4). In the taxonomy, a fourth strategy called “affective strategies” is discussed later on as the awareness of language learners about the “emotional problems” such as “the feeling of strangeness” (Hismanoğlu, 2000, p. 5). As a result it is claimed:

The language learner capable of using a wide variety of language learning strategies appropriately can improve his language skills in a better way. Meta-cognitive strategies improve organization of learning time, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Cognitive strategies include using previous knowledge to help solve new problems. Socio-affective strategies include asking native speakers to correct their pronunciation, or asking a classmate to work together on a particular language problem. Developing skills in three areas such as meta-cognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective can help

the language learner build up learner independence and autonomy whereby s/he can take control of his own learning (Fedderholdt, 1997 cited in Hismanoğlu 2000, p. 5).

Besides, the related literature reveals that teachers can help their students to overcome their problems not only by training them on the use of suitable learning strategies but also by matching their teaching styles with the learners' learning styles. Learning styles differ from learning strategies in that the former are "moderately strong habits rather than intractable biological attributes" (Zhenhui, 2001, p. 7). In other words, unlike learning strategies learning styles are subconscious and habitual. However, by training "these sub/unconscious styles can become conscious learning strategies" (Zhenhui, 2001, p.7). In short, some of the learning styles derived from Gardner's theory on multiple intelligences can be listed as "Linguistic, Mathematical-Logical, Visual-Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal" (Currie, 2003, p. 2).

As stated in the introduction, another problem that is revealed to hinder the use of the aforementioned communicative tasks and activities in Turkish primary schools are large classrooms with mixed ability students (Gökdemir, 1991; Kaş, 1991; Sunel, 1991). However, the related literature reveals that these tasks and activities of CLT can still be employed in large classes by incorporating effective strategies. Gibson (2004) suggests that group work is one of the problems of large classrooms and "assigning a weekly student leader to facilitate group interaction dynamics" is an efficient way to manage crowded classes and to make sure that "groups stay on task throughout the duration of the class" (p. 3). In relation to this, Gibson (2004) also states that the group leaders might be evaluated on their performance by considering whether "the group stays on task," if all group members actively participated, and whether the target language is used in completing the tasks (p. 4). Another technique proposed is the use of "interaction based quizzes" in the form of information gap activities through which students have to interact in order to come up with the product. A final suggestion is the use of assignments or project works which require students to communicate among them. Lin (2002) recommends that if learning is "personalized" in large classrooms then interaction can be achieved. In this regard, it is claimed that students should be convinced that "learning

can and should be meaningful” and they should be provided with topics that they are interested in (as cited in Gibson, 2004, pp.1-2).

As for mixed ability classes, Çopur (2005) summarized teachers’ problems as being unable to reach all students with diverse socio economic backgrounds and English levels, finding a textbook and materials that are suitable for students with different levels, ensuring equal amount of participation from all students, appealing to interests of all students and overcoming “ill-disciplined behavior” (p. 2). In order to cope with these problems, Çopur (2005) suggests making use of visual materials that “appeal to all senses,” having “contingency plans” for the early finishers, having “optional tasks” for students with diverse levels of English, incorporating “open-ended tasks such as letter writing, paragraph writing,” “personalizing the tasks” by asking about students’ lifestyles, opinions and feelings, using “games, competitions and role plays,” assigning “individual and group projects,” and forming “self-access centers” where students can visit in their free times (pp. 3-4). Similarly, Dellicarpini (2006) reveals that the best way to overcome problems in mixed ability classes is “scaffolding and differentiating instruction” (p. 1). “Scaffolding” refers to the use of different learning tasks and materials, and provision of various “verbal supports from both teacher and more proficient peers” (Dellicarpini, 2006, p. 2). To achieve this, teachers should have continuity in the language classroom and support from context that increase learner autonomy.

In conclusion, this review of literature about the history of approaches, methods and techniques together with the past and current trends in ELT reveal that a language teacher has various options to implement in the classroom depending on their own philosophy of learning, the language learning context, learner characteristics and the learning tasks. Besides, the outcomes achieved are shaped by the students’ experiences with the implemented approaches, methods and techniques.

2.2. Teaching English as a Foreign Language

EFL (English as a Foreign Language) is a context in which English is “taught as a subject in schools but not used as a medium of instruction in education nor as a language of communication” (Richards and Platt, 1992, p. 123). By its nature, EFL differs from teaching English as mother tongue and ESL (English as a Second Language), which is a context where English is for minority groups in English

speaking countries. In fact, the “sociopolitical,” “economic,” “educational” and “cultural” context of a country affects English language teaching in various respects (McKay, 1992, p. 3). Actually, whether a country has the concerns for “nationalism,” meaning “the feelings that develop from a sense of group identity,” or “nationism,” referring to “the political concerns for governing” affects the planning of language curriculums in the sociopolitical context (McKay, 1992, p. 9).

Besides, the economic support provided for teaching English in terms of materials and resources influence the quality of teaching in terms of its methodology. In addition, language teaching is affected by the “economic rewards” that exist in countries. In short, whether the learners have “integrative” or “instrumental” motivation play a significant role in an EFL situation. The main distinction between “integrative motivation” and “instrumental motivation” is that “integratively motivated” learners are interested in and want to learn the culture of the target language. On the other hand, “instrumentally motivated” learners are willing to learn the target language for the social benefits and economic rewards (McKay, 1992, p. 26). König (1991), in his argument about Turkish students’ being less successful in learning English than the students of other developed countries, claim that Turkish students are instrumentally motivated. In other words, they learn language to get accepted to a better university or to get better jobs, but students of developed countries are integratively motivated as their concern is to learn about other cultures.

Furthermore, the “educational context” also plays a crucial role in an EFL situation (McKay, 1992, p. 79). The language education policies proposed by the Ministry or Department of Education regarding whether English should be “the medium of instruction” or “required subject of study” have serious implications for language teaching (McKay, 1992, p. 82). In both cases, it should be noted at what level English is incorporated in the curriculum. What is more, although Ministries are significant in forming the language policies, there can be discrepancies between what is stated in the policy guidelines and actual implementation.

Finally, the “cultural context” has serious impacts on the teaching-learning process as when teachers and students with diverse backgrounds have separate expectations about classroom behavior, “conflicts may arise” (McKay, 1992, p. 47). Culture in this sense should be viewed in two aspects as “culture outside the classroom” which is formed by the families, peers and communities that shape the

individual and “culture inside the classroom,” which occurs as a result of the teachers’ and students’ classroom behaviors (McKay, 1992, p. 48). The importance of cultural context in English language learning has led to conflicting views about the applicability of the approaches, methods and techniques proposed by research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Considering this, it will not be unwise to differentiate the current implications in EFL in two broader contexts which are EFL in Asia and EFL in Europe.

2.2.1. Theory and Practice of EFL in Asia

The current debates on EFL in Asian context center around one main issue which is the suitability and success of the recent approach, Communicative Language Teaching proposed in curriculum guidelines for the teaching of English to the students whose learning styles and strategies are assumed to be different from those in other developed countries in Europe.

In his article “Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT,” Alptekin (2002) questioned the “native-speaker based notion of communicative competence” and proposed that this model was “utopian, unrealistic and constraining in relation to English as an International Language (EIL)” (p. 57). In other words, Alptekin (2002) claimed that it was “utopian” as it standardizes the language use and performance in communicative situations by ignoring the culture, preferences and personal styles of the listener and speaker in the EFL situation and various dialects of the target language. Next, it was found to be “unrealistic” as the status of English as a global language is not reflected in the traditional notion of communicative competence. Finally, it was stated to be “constraining the view of language” by limiting the authenticity of tasks and materials to native speakers and ignoring the “nonnative-nonnative” communicative purposes (p. 60). Considering these, Alptekin (2002) revealed that a new model of communicative competence should take into account that instructional materials and activities involve:

Local and international contexts which are familiar and relevant to the lives of language learners... They should have suitable discourse samples pertaining to native and nonnative speaker interactions, as well as nonnative and nonnative speaker interactions (Alptekin, 2002, p. 63).

This criticism was also raised by other researchers in the field. For instance, Aslanargu and Süngü (2006) found Turkish Ministry of Education's (MEB) use of course-books that involve contexts from Turkish culture very beneficial. In fact, Aslanargu and Süngü (2006) revealed that Turkish students could not be successful in leaning English because of their prejudices towards the language and these prejudices were assumed to result from certain anxiety factors. In short, the anxiety factors were listed as:

Students' lack of self-confidence and motivation towards learning English. The wrong belief that English can be learned and fluently spoken in a short time. The use of books, materials, tasks and activities that were derived from the target culture, but not the students' own culture. The widespread use of teacher-centered approaches rather than learner-centered ones. The teachers' use of mother-tongue in the language classroom. The employment of structural tests full of questions requiring long answers for assessment and evaluation (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006, p. 6).

To overcome those anxiety factors, certain strategies were also provided. In this regard, the teachers were suggested to shift to a learner-centered approach and to be competent in using collaborative activities like language games, problem solving activities, information gap exercises, and visual materials in the form of pictures, songs and posters (Durukafa, 2000; Ergür, 2004). The teachers were also suggested to sustain a communicative learning environment in which oral practice is implemented rather than structural grammar and vocabulary exercises. (Kaş, 1991; Durukafa, 2000; Önal, 2003). Furthermore, the teachers were recommended to develop their materials and tasks considering whether they include any cultural information that might hinder comprehension (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006). Besides, the teachers were advised to test the processes rather than the outcomes by providing students with opportunities to redo their assignments, and if possible, by enabling students to share their own experiences through project work (Ergür, 2004). In addition, the teachers were recommended to provide effective feedback to students' mistakes by avoiding overcorrection and by not being strict in reading the student assignments and exams (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006; Ergür, 2004).

There are other researchers teaching English in other countries that question whether the practices of the recent innovations like CLT and TBLT are suitable for

all cultural contexts especially the Asian context or not (Gupta, 2004; Hu, 2005; Lewis and McCook, 2002; Liao, 2004; Littlewood, 2000; Zhenhui, 2001).

In a study, Lewis and McCook (2002) examined the classroom practices of 14 English teachers teaching in secondary schools in Vietnam by means of their writings in journals. This study was conducted considering the debates on the “uptake and rejection of CLT in Asian classrooms” (p. 146). In their review of literature about the issue, Lewis and McCook (2002) summarized that the studies like the one conducted by Hird (1995) revealed that the “teachers’ doubts about CLT result from three factors: past traditions, current practices and the way CLT has been interpreted” (p. 146). Moreover, it was stated that there were studies indicating, “students’ being active and passive in class was determined by their teachers’ expectations rather than the culturally based learning styles” (Howe, 1993 cited in Lewis and McCook, 2002, p. 147). Considering these, the research question addressed in this study was “What beliefs and practices about English language education do teachers express?” (p. 148). In the end, it was found that teachers implemented the new ideas by incorporating the traditional procedures. To be specific, these teachers were found to be interested in implementing CLT by “going beyond the textbook to create local contexts for language use” (p. 149). The teachers also claimed that “memorizing and understanding” of especially dialogues were significant. Again, the teachers valued “hard work” when they were revealing their opinions of a good student (p. 150). The results of this study are significant for the present one in that similar to Vietnamese situation, teachers in Turkey might be incorporating the principles of CLT into the traditional procedures in contrast to the belief that traditional teacher-centered practices are mainly employed (Gökdemir, 1991; Kaş, 1991; Sunel, 1991)

Liao (2004) and Hu (2005) in their debates on the use of CLT in China summarized the English language teaching and learning situation in primary and secondary schools and reflected their views about the use of dominant approaches that are CLT and TBLT. Liao (2004) revealed that in China, the State Education Development Commission, which is responsible for setting educational policy, required all primary and secondary teachers to use “task-based language teaching, and relevant task-based textbooks,” and added that similar to China, ministries of education in all other countries in Asia relied their goals on the communicative

language teaching of English. In relation to this, Liao (2004) claimed that in China and in other Asian countries, certain difficulties caused by environmental constraints like large classroom sizes and structural tests, and the teachers' getting used to traditional teaching methods like grammar-translation method, direct method and audio-lingual method may "inhibit" the utilization of CLT in the classrooms (p. 270). Therefore, Liao (2004) proposed that the application of CLT would have a positive influence on English language education if these constraints were recognized by the educational authorities.

In his response, Hu (2005) revealed that Liao (2004) was "specious" in that "CLT is the default methodology for developing communicative abilities, and is applicable for all contexts where communicative competence is a pedagogical goal" (p. 65). In addition, Hu (2005) stated that Liao (2004) seemed to neglect the education research literature on the critical roles of teachers in making decisions on whether to carry out the policy makers' decisions or not. Besides, Hu (2005) cited recent studies demonstrating that CLT was "present in classrooms in the more developed regions of China," but not in "rural areas" (p.6). Finally, Hu (2005) criticized Liao (2004) for having a narrow scope of "context" and added that in addition to situational context, other factors like scarcity of resources such as materials and equipment, teachers' lack of communicative competence in English and English-speaking cultures, limited opportunity to use the target language in real life situations and students' being motivated or unmotivated to learn English might have negative impacts on the use of CLT. Thus, unlike Liao (2004), Hu (2005) proposed that rather than CLT, an eclectic approach that "draws on various methodological options" might be more suitable for the teaching and learning of English in China (p.7).

Similar to Hu (2005), Gupta (2004) summarized the situation in India and revealed that CLT was the proposed methodology of the primary school curriculum of English courses. However, no matter to what extent CLT was considered to be the only method as a "whole and complete solution to language learning," the reality was different in that the traditional "teacher-centered, lecture-centered and examinocentric dull procedure" was in practice in many classrooms (p. 266). In a survey with teachers, Gupta (2004) examined the reasons for not implementing CLT and found that the teachers had "no time to get used to it" and were not familiar with

“the whole concept of CLT.” Besides, it was revealed that the backwash effect of traditional exam situations impeded the use of CLT practices. As a result, Gupta (2004) like Alptekin (2002) proposed that the communicative language teaching should be reconsidered by attending the language teaching and learning situation, meaning the context in which it was used.

The assumptions of Gupta (2004), Liao (2004) and Hu (2005) are significant for the present study in that having a similar educational system like China and Vietnam; Turkey might be having the same constraints in applying the recent approaches, CLT and TBLT, in the language classrooms.

Zhenhui (2001) summarized the learning styles of learners in East Asian countries, specifically Japan, Korea and China. In these countries, students are taught by “a teacher-centered, book-centered, grammar-translation method with an emphasis on rote memory” (Zhenhui, 2001, p. 2). Thus, majority of learners in East Asia were claimed to have introvert, closure-oriented, analytic, field-dependent, visual and concrete-sequential learning styles (Zhenhui, 2001). In fact, since these learners believe that information should be transmitted from the teacher, they are not used to discovery learning. Again, as they are not used to “ambiguity,” they are not “autonomous.” Furthermore, they learn better by analyzing grammatical rules, memorizing vocabulary items and imitating the teacher. They are better at reading as they are “visual” and they strictly follow the teacher’s instructions since they are “sequential” (Zhenhui, 2001, p.2). Considering these, it was proposed that these students can better be taught by identifying the learning styles of learners, matching the teaching styles with the learning styles of students and by providing different activities for different groups of learners.

One main strategy for identifying learning styles was revealed as making use of the readily available, reliable and valid instruments and assessment tools. Before applying the tool, the teacher should explain the purpose of the survey. After the survey is finished and the students diagnose their own learning styles, they should be given opportunity to discuss others’ learning styles and the teacher’s teaching style. Considering the limitations of such objective instruments, Zhenhui (2001) suggested utilizing “diaries” or journals in which learners talk about “their reactions to the course, their teachers, their fellow students and any other factors which they consider are having an effect on their learning” (p. 5).

Considering the “preconceptions” about the learning styles of Asian students, Littlewood (2000) conducted a survey to compare the attitudes of 2307 students of eight Asian countries (Brunei, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam) with those of three European countries (Finland, Germany and Spain) (p. 31). On a five point scale, Littlewood (2000) collected data about the extent the students agree with the following statements:

1- In the classroom I see the teacher as somebody whose authority should not be questioned, 2- I see knowledge as something that the teacher should pass on to me rather than something that I should discover 3- I expect the teacher (rather than me myself) to be responsible for evaluating how much I have learned (p. 32).

The results revealed that there were not significant differences between the students of Asia and those of Europe as both would like to be “active and independent” in the language classroom. In other words, Asian students revealed they did not see the teacher as an “authority figure” who should pass knowledge and be responsible for evaluating their learning (Littlewood, 2000, p. 34). In the end, Littlewood (2000) suggested that the influence of culture on behaviors and learning styles should not be denied, but there was “still a long way to go in exploring the nature and extent of this influence” (p. 34).

The arguments proposed by Zhenhui (2001) and Littlewood (2000) are significant for the present study in that as stated by Zhenhui (2001) Turkish students with similar backgrounds in educational contexts might be having similar learning styles and may be encountering similar difficulties because of the mismatch between the teaching styles and learning styles. Or, as claimed by Littlewood (2000) Turkish students might be ready to accept a learning environment in which they were autonomous and were actively participating in communicative practices.

Up to now, the findings of studies conducted in Asian context and the assumptions of various researchers about the difficulties regarding the implementation of CLT in Asia have been discussed. The case for Europe is different so it should be discussed under a separate heading.

2.2.2. Theory and Practice of EFL in Europe

The expansion of European Union (EU) membership has led the Council of Europe to develop a document titled “The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)” whose aim is to set standards to be attained at successive stages of teaching and learning modern languages. Its implications are observed in the reform of national curricula. CEFR has been of particular interest to course designers, textbook writers, testers, teachers and teacher trainers, to all who are directly involved in language teaching and testing in Europe. Actually, it facilitates a clear definition of teaching and learning objectives and methods, and provides the necessary tools for assessment of language proficiency. All the issues dealt in CEFR about the teaching and learning of modern languages have ultimately affected the teaching of English as a foreign language.

The basic theory of language in CEFR is the concept of “plurilingualism” which emphasizes the importance of “communicative competence in which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which all languages interrelate and interact” (CEFR, 2001, p. 4). In this sense, “plurilingualism” is different from “multilingualism,” the knowledge of more than one language, which can be achieved by offering courses at a school. In relation to this difference, it is revealed that the aim of language teaching and learning is no longer viewed as “to achieve mastery of one or two languages, each taken in isolation with the ideal native speaker as the ultimate model” (CEFR, 2001, p. 5). Instead, it aims to “develop a linguistic repertoire in which all linguistic abilities have a place” (CEFR, 2001, p. 5). Considering this, the main benefits of the framework include the planning of not only language learning curriculum in terms of their purposes, goals, objectives, content and assessment criteria but also “self-directed learning” (CEFR, 2001, p. 6)

CEFR (2001) has adopted “action-oriented approach” to language teaching and learning which is defined as follows:

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of *competences*, both *general* and in particular *communicative language competences*. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various *contexts* under various *conditions* and under various *constraints* to engage in *language activities* involving *language processes* to produce and/or receive *texts* in relation to *themes* in specific *domains*, activating

those *strategies* which seem most appropriate for carrying out the *tasks* to be accomplished (p. 9).

Actually, without an attempt to favor any one methodology to another in foreign language teaching and learning, CEFR (2001) provides “parameters, categories, criteria and scales” which enable its users to determine their own syllabuses and methodologies considering a wide range of options by “questioning” their suitability to the standards (p. 18). Briefly, the objectives of language teaching and learning are suggested to be derived from the learner and social needs together with the tasks, activities and processes that the learners have to perform in order to accomplish those needs. As for theory of learning, CEFR (2001) takes into account the fact that there is no “research-based consensus on how people learn” (p. 139).

CEFR (2001) also explains the roles of the different parties in foreign language teaching and learning. In this respect, the examination boards are stated to take decisions on which tasks, activities and themes to consider while testing the language proficiency of the learners in terms of their knowledge and skills. The authorities are claimed to draw up curriculum guidelines and formulate syllabuses that specify the learning objectives. The textbook writers are revealed to be responsible for the selection and sequencing of content, meaning the knowledge, activities, tasks and themes. Teachers are stated to have wider roles of implementing what is set in the syllabuses and textbooks by making use of appropriate classroom activities, tasks and materials. They also have the roles of monitoring and assessing the learner progress, and finding techniques to tackle with their problems. The learners are claimed to have the responsibility to participate in the teaching-learning environment by following the instructions provided by the teacher and/or the textbook.

The methodological options to the education of modern languages have also been provided. Actually, these options have a large scope ranging from structural teaching and learning activities to communicative and task based techniques. Thus, it could be stated that eclectic method is suggested. However, the users of the framework are recommended to consider the roles and responsibilities of teachers and learners in the “organization, management and implementation” of the language learning tasks, activities, materials and media (p. 145). They are also suggested to consider the role of spoken and written materials taking into account

the basis for their “selection, adaptation, sequencing, grading and presentation” (p. 147). In the framework, not only social and pragmatic communicative competences but also linguistic competence is emphasized and the users are advised to consider “size, range and control” of vocabulary as well as how grammar is “analyzed, ordered and presented” to learners and how it is “mastered” by them (p. 150). Attention is also paid to errors and mistakes, and it is recommended to take into account “whether the same or different criteria” will be used to address pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, socio-cultural and pragmatic errors and mistakes (p. 156).

CEFR (2001) includes detailed information about the importance of the selection, grading and implementation of tasks in the language classrooms. In short, tasks are divided into two as “real-life” tasks and “pedagogical” tasks and both are claimed to be communicative in nature as long as they enable students to “comprehend, negotiate and express meaning in order to achieve a communicative goal” (p. 157). Task performance is stated to be affected by several factors like “competences” and characteristics of learners, “conditions” under which the tasks are carried out, and the “strategies” that learners activate to accomplish a task (p. 158-159). In determining the potential difficulty of the tasks, it is recommended to consider the “cognitive” levels of the students in terms of “task familiarity,” and their “abilities to cope with processing demands” together with their “affective” levels like “self-esteem,” “involvement and motivation,” “physical and emotional state” and “attitudes” (p. 160-161). In addition, the task difficulty is revealed to be influenced by “linguistic factors” and “task conditions and constraints” referring to the provision of adequate support in terms of “contextualization” and “language assistance,” “time” allocated for task preparation and implementation, “task goal,” “physical conditions” and “the roles of participants” (p. 161-163).

CEFR (2001) also provides scenarios for curricular designs and states that foreign language (F1) introduction can begin at the primary school level with an attempt to develop “language awareness” rather than the “communicative competence” and continue at the lower secondary level at which communicative competence is gradually developed (p. 172). In this scenario, the second (F2) and even third (F3) foreign language introduction start at the upper secondary school level. In another scenario, the introduction of F1 begins at primary school level, this

time, with the purpose of improving communicative competence and F2 is introduced at lower secondary school level and its education is provided together with F1. At upper secondary school level, F3 is provided (p.173). This brief information about the options for curricular designs reveals that CEF emphasizes teaching and learning of more than one foreign language.

Finally, CEFR (2001) sets forth the principles and guidelines for “the assessment of the language of its user.” In this sense, the “reliability, validity and feasibility” of the assessment is highly stressed (p. 177). Besides, the different forms of assessment like public examinations and teacher assessment are recognized, yet it is aimed to set standards to “relate different forms of assessment to one another” (p. 178). However, it is still recognized that teacher assessment is concerned with “achievement assessment” that aims to measure the extent at which the objectives are attained (p. 183). On the other hand, “proficiency assessment” that is the measurement of what an individual does in the real world is revealed to be the concern of employers and educational administrators, which is beyond the scope of the present study (p. 184). In addition to these, other types of assessments have been provided as follows:

Norm-referencing vs. criterion referencing, continuous vs. fixed assessment, formative vs. summative assessment, direct vs. indirect assessment, performance vs. knowledge, subjective vs. objective assessment, checklist rating vs. performance rating, impression vs. guided judgment (p. 184).

In the end, it is proposed that users of the framework should consider which types of assessments are more suitable for the contexts in which foreign language learning and teaching will be implemented. Besides, it is recommended that teachers should be trained on the aforementioned categories of assessments (p. 192).

The language policy division of European Union (LPD) conducted a study to get an idea about to what extent “CEFR is known and used, and of the experiences gained in using it” (2005, p. 1). In this survey, a questionnaire published on the web page of the LPD was delivered to all language contact addresses of the Council. The questionnaire involved ten basic open-ended questions which aimed to investigate how much and by whom CEFR is known and used in the institution, which parts are

mostly known and used, whether CEFR has been translated into the native language and what the benefits of CEFR in terms of:

Curriculum/syllabus development, pre-service teacher training, in-service teacher training, testing/assessment/certification, textbook writing/production of educational materials, communication with stakeholders (learners, parents, teachers, clients, etc.) and other contexts (please specify the context) (LPD, 2005, p. 2)

The data were obtained from 111 participants from 37 European states, Egypt and Mexico and from 39 Higher education, 29 Central authority, 18 Teacher training, 18 Teacher education, 16 Examination provider, 14 Language school/center, 12 Adult education, and 28 Other primary and secondary school, publisher and further education institutions.

The results of LPD study (2005) demonstrated that CEFR was “quite widely known and used” in the institutions and was mainly used by “teachers, teacher trainers, test writers and material writers” (p. 3). Besides, it was stated to be mostly used in “teacher training, language testing/assessment, language curriculum development, textbook/material production, and communication with stakeholders” (p.3). The most commonly used parts of the CEFR were revealed to be “the common reference levels of language proficiency (the global scale, the self assessment grid, and the scales of illustrative descriptors)” (p. 4). In fact, CEFR was found to be useful in curriculum and syllabus design, and testing and assessment.

The main problem with CEFR was claimed to be its being not user-friendly. In short, it was found to be very long and detailed. Besides, it was stated that it required teachers to be more “analytic and observant,” so it was assumed to be not comprehensible for majority of the present teachers (p. 4). Furthermore, it was assumed not to be of immediate use for the teachers. The difficulty in accessing CEFR by all parties in educational context was also stressed. In addition, its philosophy in the form of “plurilingualism” was found to be promising, but not applicable in real life. Moreover, the current textbooks, courses and examinations designed by making use of CEFR were found to be “impressionistic” rather than “systematic” (p. 5). Finally, it was found to be hard to accomplish a “standard setting” in which CEFR could be implemented (p. 5). In relation to these problems, the most frequent suggestion for the improvement of CEFR was to come up with a

clear summary of the basic principles of it. It was especially stated that the connections between CEFR and classroom practice should be established. Next, it was also recommended to design more reliable and valid tools for assessment.

This LPD study (2005) is significant as it demonstrates that the standards of CEFR have still not been understood in the context in which it is implemented. Besides, this summary of CEFR (2001) and its implication within Europe stated in LPD study (2005) are significant for the present study in that national foreign language education in Turkey is reconsidering its language policies on its way to EU.

2.3. Research on English Language Education at Public Primary Schools in Turkey

The related literature on English language education at public primary schools in Turkey can be categorized into two as studies conducted to investigate English language curricula, and studies carried out to examine the impact of certain teacher characteristics and instructional strategies. In fact, majority of the studies in the first category were conducted under the guidance of universities as unpublished masters and doctorate theses.

2.3.1. Research on English Language Curriculum of Public Primary Schools

Studies aimed to investigate the English language curriculum of public primary schools after the acceptance of eight year compulsory education were conducted by Büyükduman (2005), İğrek (2001), Mersinligil (2002), and Tok (2003). All these studies examined the English language curriculum implemented at the fourth and fifth grades. Büyükduman (2005) and İğrek (2001) evaluated the curriculum considering the teachers' perceptions, whereas Tok (2003) focused on the perceptions of students. In comparison to these, Mersinligil's (2002) study is more conclusive in that she evaluated the curriculum considering the perspectives of teachers, students and administrators. Moreover, all of these survey studies were restricted to certain sites meaning Büyükduman (2005) carried out her investigation in five districts of İstanbul, İğrek (2001) examined the curriculum involving teachers from Kırşehir city center and its towns, Mersinligil (2002) conducted her research at the Seyhan and Yüreğir towns of Adana in Turkey, and Tok (2003) did her study in the Malatya city center. Again, both Mersinligil (2002) and Tok (2003) considered

the assumption that socioeconomic background and achievement level are predictors of attitudes towards English and involved students with various socioeconomic backgrounds and achievement levels in their studies. Although there were similarities among these studies, they differed in terms of their specific research questions, data collection instruments and some findings. Therefore, each will be discussed separately.

Büyükduman (2005) evaluated the English language curriculum implemented at the fourth and fifth grades of public primary schools taking into account the teachers' perceptions on its purposes and goals, content (course book), instructional strategies and evaluation procedures. As for methodology, cluster random sampling strategy was used. First, five districts out of thirty two in İstanbul, and then forty six schools from these five districts were randomly selected. All the fifty four teachers working in these schools were involved in the study. The main data collection instrument of the study was a questionnaire designed by Büyükduman (2005). This questionnaire in the form of five point Likert-scale was validated by getting expert opinion and by pilot testing. The inter-scorer reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was found to be .92. The questionnaire was administered to the teachers working in the pre-determined schools during the 2000-2001 school year.

The descriptive analysis of the responses to the questionnaires revealed that although the teachers had positive opinions about several aspects of the curriculum, they still had some problems. As for the purposes and goals of the curriculum, majority of the teachers claimed that they were suitable for the age and cognitive levels of the students. Again, most of the teachers stated that their students had positive attitudes towards learning English. When the specific language skills were considered, approximately half of the teachers admitted that the students were able to improve their reading, but not their listening, writing and speaking skills. The reasons for not achieving these skills were provided as insufficient time allocated for each unit, and the crowded classrooms. In relation to the course book, vast majority of the teachers revealed that it was suitable in terms of the difficulty level and ordering of content. Besides, the visuals in the book were believed to be enhancing comprehension. Again, the examples were taught to be appropriate for the Turkish culture. However, it was still believed to be involving inadequate number of examples and exercises. Considering the suggested instructional strategies in the

curriculum, majority of the teachers revealed that they were satisfied with the guidance provided in the curriculum guidelines. Again, they found the suggested instructional methods and techniques suitable for teaching English to students at these age levels. The only objection was that it was not possible to implement learner centered methods and language games in the actual classroom environment due to the crowded classrooms. Finally, in relation to assessment procedures, the teachers revealed that the guidelines provided in the curriculum were helpful for them in preparing their exams, but they were used to prepare assignments and exercises. In fact, during the preparation of exams and tests, the questions were not verified and increased because of the crowded classrooms. It was because it took too much time to prepare and check such kinds of tests.

At the end, in relation to these findings Büyükduman (2005) suggested that the English language curriculum of the fourth and fifth grades should be clarified by providing more information about the suggested instructional and evaluation strategies. Besides, it was recommended that the course book should be reedited by placing more communicative games and songs. Again, it was suggested to incorporate teachers at the planning stage of the curriculum.

Another study that aimed to investigate the teachers' perceptions of English language curriculum of the fourth and fifth grades of public primary schools was carried out by İğrek (2001). Unlike Büyükduman (2005), İğrek (2001) conducted this research with the actual population, meaning all the 78 English teachers teaching at fourth and fifth grades in public primary schools in Kırşehir. Similar to Büyükduman (2005), İğrek (2001) designed and implemented a questionnaire as a data collection instrument, whose reliability and validity measures were taken through pilot testing. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was revealed as .91. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts. The first part involved two questions about the teachers' educational backgrounds and teaching experiences. The second part involved 41 statements about the purposes and goals, content, instructional strategies and evaluation procedures of the curriculum. The teachers were asked to reveal their perceptions on the given statements by means of a five-point Likert-scale.

The results were analyzed through descriptive analysis and it was found that the teachers were generally undecided about the curriculum purposes and goals with an overall mean score of 3.33. In other words, the teachers felt undecided whether

the cognitive and affective goals and objectives of the curriculum were sufficient in number, and whether the stated goals and objectives were overlapping. However, they agreed that the goals and objectives of the curriculum were ordered appropriately, were suitable for the level of the students and were clearly stated. Moreover, the teachers were also undecided about the content of the curriculum with an overall mean score of 3.41. In brief, the teachers felt undecided whether the selection and grading of content was suitable, whether it enabled the achievement of the curriculum goals and whether it led to the achievement of four main skills, meaning reading, writing, listening and speaking. On the contrary, the teachers agreed that the content was suitable for the needs and interests of the students, was applicable to real-life situations and was ordered from simple to complex and from concrete to abstract. Thirdly, the teachers were again undecided about the instructional strategies with an overall mean of 3.11. In short, the teachers felt undecided whether the suggested instructional strategies were suitable for achieving the purposes and goals of the curriculum, whether communicative activities such as games and songs were involved in the curriculum and whether the recommended instructional strategies were interesting and entertaining. In contrast, the teachers agreed that the suggested instructional strategies were suitable for the students' levels. As for instructional tools and equipment, the teachers revealed that they were undecided whether they were suitable for the curriculum goals and the students, and whether they were readily available. Finally, the teachers were undecided about the evaluation procedures of the curriculum with an overall mean of 2.95. All these findings of İğrek (2001) seem to be consistent with the results of Büyükduman (2005) in several respects and similar suggestions such as redesigning the curriculum in terms of its goals, content, instructional strategies and evaluation procedures were suggested.

Unlike these two studies, Mersinligil's (2002) was a more in-depth analysis of the English language curriculum of the fourth and fifth grades at public primary schools as not only teachers but also students and administrators of various schools were incorporated in her evaluation study. Actually, all the 278 teachers and 152 administrators working in the public primary schools in the two towns of Adana were involved in the study. As for students, cluster random sampling was used, and among 28173, 705 participants studying at the fifth grade were selected. Three data

collection instruments used in the study were questionnaires, interviews and observations. The perceptions of teachers and students of the purposes, goals, content, instructional strategies and assessment procedures were investigated by questionnaires. In addition to this, in-depth interviews were held with 16 of the administrators. Besides, in order to get more information about the instructional strategies, 16 classrooms were observed by the researcher by using the observation tool used in the project of World Bank on the development of national education in Turkey. As for analysis, Mersinligil (2002) used descriptive and inferential statistics to examine the data obtained from the questionnaires and observation tool. The data obtained from the interviews were qualitatively analyzed by using transcriptions, themes and codes.

As a result of this in-depth analysis, Mersinligil (2002) found that there was a significant difference between teachers and students in their perceptions about the purposes and goals of the curriculum. In general, the students believed that majority of them were attained, but the teachers did not agree with it. As for specific goals, according to the teachers, the affective goals such as being motivated and getting interested were achieved more than the cognitive ones like understanding, pronouncing, writing and applying. Similarly, there was a significant difference between the students and the teachers about the content. Although majority of the students had positive opinions about the content of the curriculum in terms of its importance, suitability to their level, sequencing, being interesting and relevant for their purposes, almost half of the teachers found the content ineffective in relation to these aspects. In fact, teachers had doubts about the content's contribution to the attainment four main skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

As for instructional strategies, it was revealed by the students that lecture and question-answer were the most common techniques being used. Besides, it was stated that whole class activities, not pair or small group activities, were employed more frequently. However, the students' preferences were on learner-centered tasks such as language games, role-plays, simulations, talking about pictures and dictation exercises, which were hardly ever implemented. Although teachers claimed that these learner-centered activities were used more frequently than the students had stated, the answers of students were supported by the observations. Thus, it could be revealed that the activities used were mainly teacher-centered and traditional. The

results about the learning environment revealed that the teachers could create a positive environment in the classroom by using their classroom management strategies effectively. However, they had some problems in providing effective feedback to students' assignments. Furthermore, both the teachers and the students frequently spoke Turkish in the classroom. Moreover, the teachers had problems in using time efficiently in the classroom as most of the content was not covered at the allocated time. Therefore, there was significant difference between the students and teachers in relation to the learning environment, and the observations supported the students' negative attitudes. Likewise, there was significant difference between the teachers' and students' perceptions about the tools and equipment used to facilitate learning. The main material used was the course book, and though the students had positive opinions about it, the teachers revealed that the activities and examples in the book were inadequate, the content was too loaded, and that it was not supported by tools such as tapes, videos, computers and supplementary materials. Although the teachers had serious complaints on the issue, only one third of the teachers admitted that they used materials outside the book. In addition to this, there was complete agreement among the students, teachers and the observer that instructional tools and equipment such as tapes, videos, projectors, and computers were hardly ever used. The findings related to the assessment procedures revealed that the most common ones were paper-based tests. In these tests, there were questions about grammar, vocabulary, making sentences and reading. All the students and more than half of the teachers claimed that the in-class activities and tasks were not considered in the assessment.

Finally, as for the views on the teaching-learning system, majority of the teachers stated that they worked in collaboration with their administrators, colleagues and parents. However, the administrators revealed there were some communication problems between the classroom teachers and English teachers. Besides, they stated that the communication between the English teachers and parents was not adequate; most of the parents were not interested and even not knowledgeable about this new arrangement on English courses. In addition to these, the administrators complained about the insufficient number of English teachers, and their interest in attending in-service training courses. Although most of the administrators revealed there were

adequate number of instruments such as projectors, computers, videos and tapes in the schools, the teachers found their schools insufficient in providing these facilities.

Unlike Büyükduman (2005) İğrek (2001) and Mersinligil (2002), Tok (2003) aimed to compare the English language education in public and private primary schools in Malatya city center in an attempt to find out the students' problems with the purposes, goals, content, instructional strategies and assessment procedures of the English language curricula implemented in these two types of schools. Samples of 589 students from three public and three private schools were involved in this survey. Tok (2003) used stratified and cluster random sampling strategies to select the participants of the study. In the data collection process, questionnaires with 22 close-ended items were administered to the students. These questionnaires involved two sections, the first on personal information and the second on the teaching of English in terms of its purposes, content, instructional methodologies and assessment procedures.

In the end, it was found that the educational level of the parents of the students studying in private schools were higher than those of the students in public primary schools. In relation to the purposes of the curriculum, there was no significant difference between the private and public schools in terms of the students' motivation towards learning English. However, in attaining the purposes, there was a significant difference between the private and public schools in that the students in the private schools were more successful in using the four main skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) covered. As for content, there was no difference between the private and public schools as students of both found the content suitable for their language level and interests. Besides, students in both schools claimed that the course-books offered by MEB were beneficial and appropriate. As for materials, the most frequently used ones were the course books and supplementary exercises. Equipment such as tapes, videos, computers and projectors was used less frequently in both types of schools. Moreover, in both schools, the most frequently used instructional techniques were question-answer and lecture. The other learner-centered activities like role-plays, simulations, pair and group work activities were implemented less. Finally, almost half of the assessment in both schools relied on grammar tests, and the practice tests such as writing, listening and speaking were ignored.

Tok's (2003) findings seem to be consistent with Mersinligil's (2002). However, in comparison with it, Tok's (2003) study had serious limitations as it was conducted with only six schools in Malatya and included only the students but not the teachers and administrators. Furthermore, the instrument involved questions investigating the issue at the surface level and no information was revealed about its reliability and validity. Thus, it needs to be replicated considering all these limitations.

In contrast to the studies that were previously discussed, Yıldız (1996) did research to examine to what extent the students achieved the cognitive purposes of the English courses offered at the first grade of secondary schools in Turkey. Since this study was conducted before the implementation of the eight-year compulsory education, the first grade of secondary education means the sixth grade of primary education according to the new system. Besides, although this study does not reflect the present situation in Turkey, its results are still assumed to be relevant as they may provide some insights into English language education at the primary level in Turkey. Yıldız (1996) conducted her study in five public schools in Ankara and selected 290 students from these schools randomly. As an instrument, she prepared a language test considering the knowledge and comprehension levels of the cognitive goals presented in the curriculum guidelines of MEB. After administering the test, she found that the students' achievement level in attaining the knowledge level cognitive objectives was medium, as the achievement level was 54.41%. As for comprehension level cognitive objectives, the students' success rate was stated as low and only 34.59% achievement level was reported. Yıldız's (1996) study was limited to the students studying in these five schools and to one grade level, but the results are still significant in portraying the situation that our students have difficulties in achieving the objectives of English curriculum.

Finally, Acar (2006) aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a course book rather than the curriculum. The course book that Acar (2006) evaluated was "Spotlight on English," which is still used at public primary schools in Turkey. In order to evaluate the course book, first an evaluation model was developed by reviewing the related literature on the issue. This evaluation model involved six main components which were "practical considerations, language content, design and organization, language skills, exercises and activities and cultural considerations" (p.

36). The participants of the study were two hundred English teachers who were working in public primary schools in five districts in İzmir. In this study, no information was provided on the sampling strategies. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire with thirty six items on six of the aforementioned sections. The instrument was validated by pilot testing and the reliability coefficient was found to be .77. The teachers were asked to evaluate the items on a five point Likert-scale and the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The results revealed that the course book had serious limitations in terms of practical considerations, language content, design and organization, language skills and exercises and activities. First, as for practical considerations, the course book was found to be unclear in terms of layout and presentation and unsuccessful in terms of “time, labor and money” (Acar, 2006, p. 42). Secondly, the language content of the book was believed to have certain problems as there were too many unknown vocabulary items and grammatical structures. Besides, it was claimed that the grammatical structures were not repeated in the following units. Next, the main problems of the course book in terms of design and organization were revealed as not having variety in design, clear and logical unit organization, appropriate texts for students’ levels and interests, and coherence in unit format. Furthermore, the teachers revealed that although speaking and listening were adequately “treated”, integrated skills, reading and writing were not sufficiently “treated”. (p. 59). Especially, pre-reading and post-reading activities were stated to be ignored. Finally, the exercises and activities in the book were claimed to be unattractive in that they were not meaningful exercises that promote interaction, critical thinking, and language practice. In relation to these findings, Acar (2006) suggested sample units to modify the course book. In those sample units, it was considered that the aforementioned problems were overcome. Acar’s (2006) study is very significant for the present one in that some of the problems at public primary schools might be resulting from the course book. However, Acar’s (2006) study was limited to only one of the course books used in public primary schools, to a certain site which was selected districts of İzmir, to teachers only and to certain issues. In other words, there might be other problems resulting from other course books and these might be influencing the implementation of the curriculum. What is more, students might be having other problems with the course books.

In summary, although the aforementioned studies by Acar (2006), Büyükduman (2005), İğrek (2001), Mersinligil (2002), Tok (2003) and Yıldız (1996), have strengths in terms of their methodologies, findings and suggestions that are relevant for the present study, they also had certain limitations in terms of their purposes and scopes. In other words, they were carried out at certain sites, with certain grade levels, and considering certain issues. Furthermore, almost no research has been carried out to investigate the implementation of English language curriculum at sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Considering these points, there seems to be a need for the present study in which the limitations of the existing ones are assumed to be controlled by means of incorporating randomly selected teachers and students from all over Turkey, and by designing data collection instruments with open-ended questions.

2.3.2. Research on Factors Influencing English Language Curriculum of Public Primary Schools

Apart from the aforementioned investigations on English language curricula and one course book, there is also research carried out to examine the factors influencing English language education in public primary schools. These studies are particularly on the effectiveness of certain teacher and student characteristics and instructional strategies at the public primary schools.

One of these studies was conducted by Onur (2005). In his study entitled “The Effect of Collaborative Language Teaching on Student Achievement,” Onur (2005) aimed to compare the collaborative method with traditional teacher centered method in the teaching of two pieces of grammatical content which were “Simple Present” and “Simple Past” tenses (p. 1). This pre-test post-test experimental study was conducted with seventh grade learners at one of the public primary schools in Elazığ. Before the investigation, the experimental and control groups were established, each containing 32 students. These randomly assigned 64 students in both groups were provided with an achievement test of 70 questions before the experiment. The reliability and validity of the achievement test was sustained by pilot testing and item analysis. The reliability coefficient of the test was found to be .82, and the difficulty level of test was established as .56. In short, the test was moderately difficult and it was reliable. After the pre-test, the experiment was carried

out in both groups for five weeks, two days a week and eighteen hours in total. The previously designed lesson plans and materials were given to the experimental group and the teacher was trained on the use of them. During the courses, the teacher implemented the given pair-work and group-work activities, and role-plays in the experimental group without making any changes in the lesson plans. In contrast, in the control group whose members were exposed to the traditional teaching method. That is, the teacher lectured the students and asked them to do the exercises in the book. After the eighteen hours implementation, the two groups of students were given the same achievement test as a post-test.

After the comparison of the pre-test and post-test results, it was found that the students who were taught by collaborative teaching method were more successful than the students who were taught by the traditional method in attaining the cognitive objectives of the studied units. In the end, this finding was attributed to a great amount of student participation in collaborative teaching environment. Besides, this result was revealed to be consistent with the other similar studies conducted within and outside Turkey (Açıkgöz, 1993; Erdem, 1993; Hayırsever, 2002; Johnson ve Johnson, 1977; Kocabaş, 1995; Slavin, 1983; Yeşilyaprak, 1997 as cited in Onur, 2005). Onur's (2005) study is relevant for the present one in that enhancing collaborative teaching environment and making use of group and pair work activities even in crowded classrooms have been highly emphasized in the English language curriculum of public primary schools. Therefore, in the present study, its use as one of instructional strategies is examined. Though, Onur's (2005) study had strengths in terms of its methodologies, it was limited to the small group of students that were involved in the study and to only one unit of the curriculum. There seems to be a need for investigating whether this method is being used in other sites, with a large group of students and for teaching other language content and skills.

Similar to Onur (2005), Konuşmaz and Toksöz (2004) did an investigation on collaborative language teaching. In their study, Konuşmaz and Toksöz (2004) examined the "communication strategies used by primary school students in English courses" (p. 181). In this study, it was revealed that in pair and group work activities students had difficulties in beginning, continuing and closing conversations and this was attributed to students' lack of background vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Thus, certain "communication strategies" which enable starting and continuing

interaction were proposed as “transfer from the native language” which means usage of inappropriate structure in the foreign language due to the effect of native language, “overgeneralization” which is generalizing a foreign language rule to other rules in appropriate contexts, “topic avoidance” which is defined as not talking about the issues that require the use of newly learned structure, “appeal to authority” which refers to consulting another person often the teacher, “paraphrase” which is using other suitable structures in order not to use a complex structure, “message abandonment” which is short cutting a sentence if there is difficulty in using the needed structure, “language switch” that is saying the native language equivalent of the needed structure, “message reduction” that is saying less than what is thought, “restructuring” which means retelling a message by “use of non-linguistic strategies” such as body language, mimics and gestures and “retrieval strategies” such as being silent to remember the needed structure (Konusmaz and Toksöz, 2004, p. 182). In order to examine the extent these strategies were used by the students, first the interaction between the teacher and students, and then interaction among students in group work activities were recorded in three classrooms. In total, 64 students who role played a situation and made conversations about their daily activities were involved in the study. The recordings were transcribed and analyzed considering the aforementioned communication strategies.

As a result, it was found that students used “retrieval strategies” the most in three of the conversations meaning the teacher-student interaction, role plays and group conversations. The other three strategies commonly used were “transfer from the native language,” “overgeneralization” and “language switch”. In relation to this, it was suggested that the use of native language should not be avoided in the language classroom. In contrast, other strategies such as “appeal to authority” and “paraphrase” were used rarely in three of the situations. Again, “topic avoidance,” “message reduction” “restructuring” and “non-linguistic strategies” were used mainly in group conversations rather than role-plays (Konusmaz and Toksöz, 2004, p.187). As a result, the teachers were suggested to encourage their students to use these communication strategies. Konuşmaz and Toksöz’s (2004) study is significant in that some of the problems in public primary schools might be resulting from the misuse of these communication strategies in the language classrooms.

In another study, Deniz, Avşaroğlu and Fidan (2006) aimed to investigate whether “the levels of English Teachers’ motivating the students” differ by their gender (p. 1). This survey study was conducted with randomly selected 170 English teachers teaching at the public primary and high schools in Konya city center. Among these 170 teachers, 107 of them were females, but 63 of them were males. In order to determine the teachers’ levels of motivating their students, a questionnaire designed by Sünbül, Kesici and Bozgeyikli (2003) was used (as cited in Deniz, Avşaroğlu and Fidan, 2006, p. 4). In this questionnaire, the teachers were asked to rate the given statements which summarize teachers’ possible opinions, attitudes and behaviors upon a sample situation and problem on a five point scale. The inter-scorer reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was found to be .76. The t-test results revealed that there was no significant difference between female teachers and male teachers in the dimensions of students’ high level of control, high level autonomy and medium level autonomy. However, there was significant difference between female teachers and male teachers in the dimension of medium level control. In short, female teachers tended to control the students at the moderate level when compared with the male teachers.

These findings were stated to be in consistent with the similar findings done on the issue. In short, the studies of Bozgeyikli, Sünbül, Kesici and Üre (2003) conducted with public primary school teachers also revealed that male teachers were more likely to control students when compared with the female teachers (as cited in Deniz, Avşaroğlu and Fidan, 2006, p.8). Though Deniz, Avşaroğlu and Fidan’s (2006) study had strengths in terms of its methodologies, it was limited to teachers’ perceptions in Konya, to only one background characteristic which was gender and only to their perceptions regarding the motivation. Thus, there seems to be a need for investigating whether other teacher characteristics such as location of school, educational background, age, and years of teaching experience play a role in their perceptions of the curriculum goals and content, and implementations of other methods.

In another study, Genç (2002) proposed guidelines which the English teachers at public primary schools can make use of while selecting their course books. In this study, Genç (2002) first revealed that the teachers in these schools were required to select their course books from a list of books which were approved and posted by the

Ministry of Education (MEB). In relation to this, the teachers were suggested to consider their English language curriculum, their students and teaching and learning environments while selecting their course books. First, the suitability of the course book to the curriculum was recommended to be considered at three levels which are its suitability to the MEB's general principles, the type of school and time allocated for the course. Next, the suitability of the course book to the students should be sustained by taking into account the students' personal characteristics such as their ages, cognitive development and language levels, and socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Also, the visual and written content of the course book should be motivating and suitable for the needs and interests of the students and it should be affordable by students with various socioeconomic backgrounds. Finally, the suitability of the course book to the teaching and learning environment was recommended to be sustained by considering the classrooms such as their acoustics, seating plans and visual design of the classrooms. It should also be noted whether the classroom environment was suitable for the application of certain collaborative instructional strategies such as group work and pair work. In this regard, it should also be considered that the instructional tools and equipment such as tapes, videos, OHPs needed to be used while studying the course book should readily be available in the schools. These criteria proposed by Genç (2002) were really significant for the present study as some of the problems encountered at public primary schools might be resulting from the course books' being unsuitable for the suggested guidelines.

To sum up, the purpose of all of the aforementioned studies was to investigate the factors influencing English language education in public primary schools. It is assumed that their methodologies and results contribute to the present study in several respects as the problems encountered in the implementation of the curriculum might be resulting from these factors.

2.4. Summary

Throughout the history, English Language Teaching (ELT) has been affected by certain views on language and learning. Specifically, the 'structural,' 'functional' and 'communicative' views of language together with 'behaviorist,' 'cognitive,' 'humanistic' and 'social' views of learning have led to certain approaches and methods (Richards and Rodgers, 1991). These approaches and methods have

influenced ELT with their curriculum and syllabus designs, classroom practices and materials, the roles assigned for teachers and students, and assessment and evaluation processes. In short, the traditional methods like ‘Grammar Translation,’ ‘Audio-lingual,’ ‘Total Physical Response’ and ‘Silent Way’ are the outcomes of structural view of language which perceives the language as separable units in the form of phonological, grammatical and lexical structures. Again, especially ‘Audio-Lingual’ and ‘Total Physical Response’ rely on the behaviorist view of learning which is rooted in the stimulus response theory of Skinner (Richards and Rodgers, 1991). With the influence of these two traditional views, the ‘product-oriented’ syllabuses, teacher-centered activities and mechanical exercises such as drills, and outcome oriented assessment procedures like ‘discrete point’ tests have emerged (Nunan, 1988; Weir, 1990).

Later on, ‘functional’ view of language which emphasizes meaning over structures, and the ‘cognitive’ and ‘humanistic’ views of learning have led to ‘Natural Approach,’ which enabled the use of ‘functional/notional syllabuses,’ learner-centered meaningful exercises both as classroom practices and assessment procedures (Oller and Richard-Amato, 1983; Nunan, 1988; Weir, 1990). Though not widespread, other methods like ‘Suggestopedia’ and ‘Community Language Teaching’ also come up as a result of ‘humanistic’ and ‘social’ views of learning and they have contributed to the field with their unique materials and classroom practices to a certain extent (Richards and Rodgers, 1991).

The recent trend in ELT is the ‘communicative’ view of language, which incorporates form or structure, meaning and social context, and the combination of ‘cognitive,’ ‘humanistic’ and ‘social’ views of learning. Three basic approaches, ‘Communicative Language Teaching,’ ‘Task-based Instruction’ and ‘Integrated Skills Approach,’ are based on these views. These approaches find their ways in ‘process oriented’ syllabuses, learner centered classroom practices such as communicative, problem solving, information-gap and collaborative activities that promote the attainment of four main skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking and in turn process focused, learner centered assessment and evaluation procedures (Nunan, 1993; Richards and Rodgers, 1991; Weir, 1990).

Although these approaches and methods derived basically from Second Language Acquisition research, they are widely accepted in environments where

English is taught and learned as a foreign language (EFL). Actually, the implementation of them in the EFL situation is affected by the ‘social,’ ‘economic,’ ‘educational,’ and ‘cultural’ context of any country where they are used (McKay, 1992). Actually, the current debates on English language teaching and learning seem to highlight two broader cultural contexts in EFL which are Asia and Europe. The Asian context is full of arguments about the suitability of the current approach ‘Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)’ highly emphasized in their curricula for the learners whose learning styles and strategies are assumed to differ from those in Europe. Basically, the related literature in Asian context questions the available definition of ‘communicative competence’ and proposes that CLT and Task-based Instruction cannot be suitable for Asian context whose students are assumed to be used to traditional teacher-centered methodologies such as memorization and have introvert, analytic, field-dependent, visual and sequential learning styles (Gupta, 2004; Hu, 2005; Lewis and McCook, 2002; Liao, 2004; Littlewood, 2000; Zhenhui, 2001). On the contrary, the European context is full of arguments about the interpretations and implications of ‘Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)’ which sets the standards to be achieved at various stages of teaching and learning modern languages, one of which is English (CEFR, 2001; LPD, 2005).

Turkey, a country between Asia and Europe, is in the centre of these debates. At one side, it is demonstrating similar characteristics like Asia and is debating the suitability of CLT for its educational context and at the other side, it is trying to adopt its EFL practices to the CEFR (Alptekin, 2002; Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006; Ergür, 2004). In fact, the related literature in Turkey involves various types of research on English language curriculum and factors influencing them at public primary schools. However, all these studies are restricted in their purposes and scope. In other words, they are conducted at certain grade levels, specifically fourth and fifth grades, at certain sites, Ankara, Istanbul, İzmir, Kırşehir, Konya, Malatya, considering either students’ or teachers’ perceptions (Acar, 2006; Büyükduman, 2005; Deniz, Avşaroğlu, Fidan, 2006; Genç, 2002; İğrek, 2001; Kuşkonmaz and Toksöz, 2004; Mersinligil, 2002; Onur, 2005; Tok, 2003; Yıldız, 1996). Thus, they need to be replicated taking into account the curriculum of other grade levels meaning the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, and carefully selected participants of teachers and students from all over Turkey.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter provides information about the overall design of the study, the research questions, research population and sample selection, the data collection instruments, and the methods used to collect and analyze the data.

3.1. Overall Design of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the process of English language education at the sixth, seventh and eighth grades of public primary schools in Turkey from the perspectives of English teachers and students. An attempt was made to describe how the English language curriculum was implemented by the teachers and experienced by the students, and to determine the factors that influence its implementation. The major points of focus were the teachers' and students' perceptions of the goals and content of the curriculum, the instructional methods, techniques and materials used, the assessment and evaluation procedures employed and the problems encountered during its implementation. Teacher characteristics i.e. location of school, age, gender, educational background, and years of teaching experience, together with student characteristics i.e. class, gender, parents' educational level, parents' English level, and English grade in the last record sheet were also examined specifically.

First, by considering the related literature, two survey questionnaires, Questionnaire for Teachers and Questionnaire for Students, were prepared to obtain information about the implementation process and the factors influencing this process. Furthermore, a group of experts were consulted to validate the prepared items. Next, the questionnaires were pilot-tested by selecting a representative sample of English teachers and students studying in the sixth, seventh and eighth grade

levels, and by asking each group to reply to the questions presented in the survey questionnaires. Finally, the sites in which the questionnaires would be implemented were determined and the questionnaires were sent to them by the Education Research and Development Directorate of Ministry of Education (ERDD).

Since the intention of this study is to describe the existing situation without any attempt to influence it, overall research design of this study is survey. In this survey, teachers' perceptions, implementations and problems together with students' perceptions and problems are described, and the relationships between teacher and student characteristics and their perceptions are examined through descriptive and inferential statistics.

3.2. Research Questions

The specific research questions used in the study are:

- 1- How do the teachers perceive the curriculum goals and content? Do teachers' perceptions of the curriculum goals and content differ according to school location, age, gender, education and experience?
- 2- How do the teachers implement the curriculum?
- 3- What kinds of problems are encountered by the teachers during the implementation of the curriculum?
- 4- How do the students studying at the sixth, seventh and eighth grades of primary schools experience the curriculum? Do students' perceptions of the curriculum differ according to their grade level, gender, parents' educational and English levels, and English Grade?
 - a. Which goals of the curriculum are perceived to be achieved?
 - b. How is the content of the curriculum perceived?
 - c. What are their perceptions of the instructional methods and techniques used in learning language skills?
 - d. What are their perceptions of the assessment procedures of the curriculum?

3.3. Population and Selection of Sample

The actual population of this study was all the English teachers implementing and all the students studying the English language curriculum offered at the sixth, seventh and eighth grades of public primary schools in Turkey during the 2004-2005 school year. The following table provides information about the number of public primary schools, the number of English teachers working and the number of students studying in these schools during the 2004-2005 school year (MONE, 2004b).

Table 3.1: Number of Public Primary Schools, English Teachers and Students

Number of Schools	Number of English Teachers	Number of Students			
		6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade	Total
34904	14562	1271521	1189351	1595509	4056381

As it is displayed in Table 3.1, the size of the population was so large that it was difficult to reach all the teachers and students in all of the public primary schools, so the study was conducted with samples. While determining the samples of teachers and students, it was important that they were representative of the actual population and the selection procedure was feasible for the institution which provided support for the study. Therefore, two-stage random sampling was used. First, by using cluster random sampling, it was decided to include cities and towns from the seven regions of Turkey. In the related literature, it is revealed that there is positive relationship between socioeconomic level of people and their education (Sunel, 1991). Thus, while selecting the cities and towns, statistical information about the socioeconomic levels of the cities and towns was taken into account (DPT, 2003). In relation to this, first three cities from each region of Turkey (one developed, one partially developed and one undeveloped) were selected and then two towns from each city (one developed, one undeveloped) were determined. The selected cities and towns together with data on their development level were listed in Table 3.2, where 1 refers to developed, 2 refers to partially developed and 3 refers to undeveloped.

Table 3.2: Socioeconomic Developmental Level of Cities and Towns Where Students and Teachers were Involved in the Study

Regions	Cities	Towns	Socioeconomic Developmental Level of Cities and Towns (out of 3)
Marmara Region	Bursa	Mustafakemalpaşa	1
		Büyükorhan	2
			3
	Balıkesir	Susurluk	2
		Balya	2
			3
	Çanakkale	Lapseki	2
		Yenice	2
			3
Aegean Region	Denizli	Sarayköy	1
		Cameli	2
			3
	Manisa	Akhisar	2
		Selendi	2
			3
	Afyon	Bolvadin	2
		Hocalar	2
			3
Mediterranean Region	Antalya	Manavgat	1
		Gündoğmuş	2
			3
	Isparta	Senirkent	2
		Sütçüler	2
			3
	Osmaniye	Kadirli	2
		Sumbas	2
			3
Central Anatolia Region	Eskişehir	Seyitgazi	1
		Alpu	2
			3
	Nevşehir	Avanos	2
		Acıgöl	2
			3
	Yozgat	Sorgun	2
		Çekerek	2
			3
Eastern Anatolia Region	Elazığ	Keban	2
		Karakoçan	2
			3
	Erzurum	Aşkale	2
		Pasinler	2
			3
	Ağrı	Doğubayazıt	2
		Patnos	3
			3

Table 3.2 (continued)			
	Gaziantep	Nizip Oğuzeli	1 2 3
Southeastern Anatolia Region	Diyarbakır	Ergani	2
		Silvan	3
			3
	Siirt	Aydınlı Eruh	3 3 3
Black Sea Region	Samsun		2
		Bafra	2
		Havza	3
	Trabzon		2
		Maçka	2
		Çaykara	3
	Giresun		3
		Keşan	3
		Yağlıdere	3

After determining the cities and towns, the questionnaires were sent to each city's and each town's Educational Directory. An official note was sent with the questionnaires and Educational Directorates were asked to photocopy and administer the questionnaires with five of the randomly selected English teachers working in their towns and/or cities. Considering that there were 21 cities and 42 towns, five of whose teachers were planned to take part in the study, the expected return rate for teachers' questionnaires was 315, but 368 returned instead (Return rate: 116.8%). This reveals that there is high response rate. Table 3.3 displays the number of teachers working in the selected cities (MEB, 2004b).

Table 3.3: Number of English Teachers Working in the Selected Cities

Regions	Cities	Number of English Teachers
Marmara Region	Bursa	533
	Balıkesir	218
	Çanakkale	99
Aegean Region	Denizli	221
	Manisa	277
	Afyon	128
Mediterranean Region	Antalya	525
	Isparta	90
	Osmaniye	98
Central Anatolia Region	Eskişehir	224
	Nevşehir	72
	Yozgat	54

Table 3.3 (continued)		
Eastern Anatolia Region	Elazığ	53
	Erzurum	108
	Ağrı	16
Southeastern Anatolia Region	Gaziantep	241
	Diyarbakır	200
	Siirt	13
Black Sea Region	Samsun	267
	Trabzon	134
	Giresun	50

While determining the student sample, it was considered that it might not be feasible to include all the students whose teachers took part in the study. Therefore, Educational Directorates of the 21 cities and 42 towns were asked to deliver the student questionnaires to one of the schools whose teachers participated in the study. Thus, 63 schools were selected by the Educational Directorates and the student questionnaires were sent to the principals of these schools. While identifying the student sample, it was also important to include sufficient and equal number of students from 6th, 7th and 8th grade levels. Therefore, Educational Directorates were asked to remind the principals of the selected schools that they should photocopy and deliver the questionnaires to six students from each class. Thus, eighteen students from each school were expected to take part in the study. Again, considering that there were 73 schools eighteen of whose students were planned to participate in the study, the expected return rate for students' questionnaires was 1134, but 1235 returned instead (Return rate: 108.9%). This means that the response rate for the students is very high. While selecting the student sample, it was also important to have students with diverse academic achievement levels, so the Educational Directorates were requested to take this into account and remind the teachers to select the first six students from the lists.

In summary, more than one sampling strategy was used to identify who would be involved in the study. While determining the cities and towns, cluster random sampling strategy was used and it was decided to include teachers and students from seven regions of Turkey. Next, by using maximum variation sampling, the cities and towns were determined. In fact, the effect of socioeconomic level on education was considered at this stage. Then, Educational Directorates of the selected cities and towns were asked to identify the teachers randomly. Finally, by using cluster random sampling strategy, the schools whose students would participate in

the study were determined. Besides, by using systematic sampling, the students from each class were selected. The distribution and return process was facilitated by the Education Research and Development Directorate (ERDD) of Ministry of Education in Turkey. Figure 3.1 displays the sampling strategies used to determine the teachers and students.

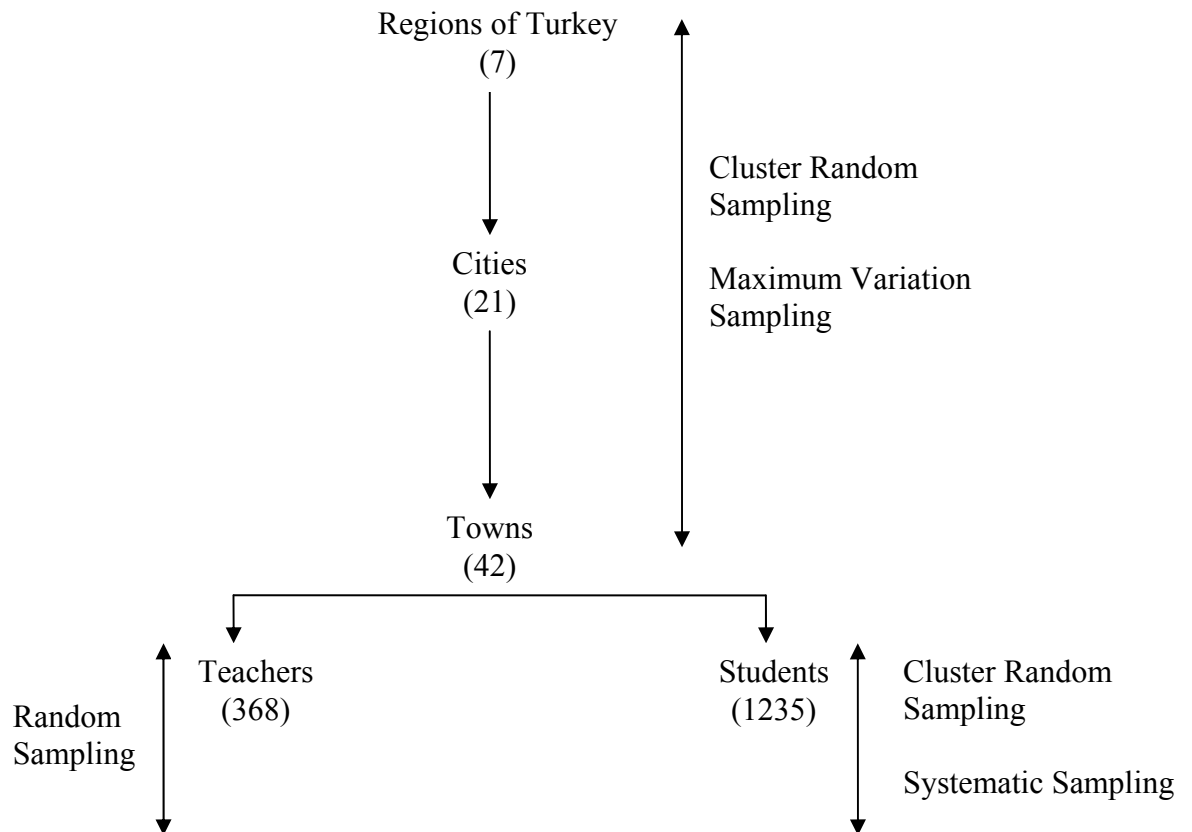


Figure 3.1: Sampling Strategies

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

Survey questionnaires designed for teachers and students separately were the main data collection instruments used in this study. While designing the questionnaires first the research questions were taken into account and they were divided into subheadings accordingly. Besides, while interpreting the results, it was important to diagnose the differences between teachers' implementations and the students' experiences of the curriculum. Therefore, attention was paid to keep these two questionnaires parallel to each other.

The Teacher and Student Questionnaires involved both close-ended items and open-ended questions. The purpose of involving open-ended questions was to get in-depth information which might not be possible to obtain by close-ended items. Another reason was the role of the open-ended questions in sustaining the internal validity of the study (Jaeger, 1988). In addition to these, it was assumed that by asking open-ended questions, “social desirability threat” which is one of the limitations of survey studies was expected to be controlled (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000). In fact, the related literature reveals that while answering the items in questionnaires, the respondents tend to reply them without thinking deeply (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000). Hence, by means of open-ended questions, the respondents were assumed to put thought to it and give more sincere answers.

While designing the Teacher and Student Questionnaires, the related literature about the English curriculum under investigation, and the theories and practices in English language teaching in general were taken into account. Furthermore, the questionnaires used in several master theses and dissertations to evaluate various English Language Curricula were also referred to (İğrek, 2001, Mersinligil, 2002, Tok, 2003). In the newly prepared questionnaires, the strengths and limitations of the questionnaires used in other studies were considered, and the necessary changes were made to make them suitable for the purposes of the present study.

Although teacher and student questionnaires are parallel to one another, there are still some differences between them. It is because; there are differences between the two groups in terms of their knowledge and experiences of the curriculum. In short, the teachers are assumed to have more knowledge and experiences about the goals, content, instructional methods and evaluation procedures of the curriculum when compared with the students. Besides, the teachers perceive the curriculum from the teaching point of view, whereas students perceive the curriculum from the learning dimension. Finally, the age range of the students was considered and the questions and statements were simplified and more close-ended questions were involved in the Student Questionnaires. As a result of the differences between the Teacher and Student Questionnaires, it can be beneficial to describe them separately.

3.4.1. Teacher Questionnaire

In relation to the purposes of the study, Teacher Questionnaire was divided into four main sections (see Appendix A). The first section titled ‘Personal Information’ involves open-ended questions and items about the teachers’ background characteristics such as location of the school, age, gender, educational background, experience and classes taught. The main purpose of this section was to determine the general profiles of the teachers taking part in the study. Besides, the results obtained from this section were used to determine whether these background characteristics created differences in their perceptions of the goals and content of the curriculum, which is another research question of the study.

In the second section titled ‘Opinions about Purposes and Goals,’ it was aimed to answer the first research question, ‘How do the teachers perceive the curriculum goals and content?’ and to find out the reasons for not attaining them if there are any by means of a five-point scale. As stated earlier, the statements presented in this section are related to the goals and of the English Curriculum of Ministry of Education (MEB, 2004a). The third section titled ‘Opinions about Content’ is also related to the first research question. In this section, the aim was to investigate the perceptions of the teachers about the strengths and weaknesses of the content in the course books and curriculum. While determining the statements in this section, the criteria for selection and organization of content in English language courses presented in the related literature were referred (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Nunan, 1989).

In the third section titled ‘Opinions about Instructional Strategies,’ it was aimed to reply the third research question ‘How do the teachers implement the curriculum?’ Actually in this section, the purpose was to get information about the most frequently used methods, techniques and materials implemented in order to achieve the basic knowledge (vocabulary and grammar) and skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) that take part in the purposes of the curriculum. It was also aimed to identify the problems that teachers encounter while implementing the instructional strategies. When compared with the first three sections, this section involves open-ended questions, as they were assumed to be more beneficial in getting in-depth information about the theme.

The fourth section titled ‘Opinions about Evaluation’ is also related to the third research question and similar to the third section, this section involves open-ended questions. In fact, evaluation was considered in two respects, student assessment and course evaluation. First, the purpose was to get in-depth information about the implementation and problems of teachers in measuring whether their students achieved the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Next, the teachers were asked to give specific information about the procedures that they employ for the evaluation and progress of the course.

The final section titled ‘Suggestions’ is related to the fourth research question ‘What kinds of problems are encountered by the teachers during the implementation of the curriculum?’ In short, this section aimed to investigate the suggestions of teachers for overcoming the problems encountered in the implementation of the curriculum.

3.4.2. Student Questionnaire

Unlike the Teacher Questionnaire, the Student Questionnaire was not divided into sections in order to ease readability of the instrument for the students. However, the order of questions in the Student Questionnaire is parallel to the Teacher Questionnaire. The Student Questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

The first seven questions in the questionnaire are about the students’ characteristics such as their grade level, gender, parents’ educational level, parents’ English level, the help provided by the family and the English grade in the last record sheet. These questions were asked not only to determine the general profiles of the students but also to examine whether they create a difference in the students’ experiences about the curriculum in terms of its goals, content, instructional and assessment procedures, which is one of the objectives of the study.

The eighth and ninth questions were about the students’ perceptions of the curriculum goals and content, respectively. The eighth question aimed to investigate the extent the goals of the curriculum was achieved by the students by providing information about their difficulties in learning English. The ninth question involved a series of statements about the content of the curriculum. In both questions, similar but simplified versions of the statements in the Teacher Questionnaire were provided.

The questions from ten to seventeen were all about the instructional methods, techniques and materials used to teach the basic language areas (vocabulary and grammar) and skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing), and the problems encountered in learning each. The purpose for asking these questions was to determine the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the common instructional methods and techniques used to learn each knowledge area and skill, which is one of the objectives of the study. While determining the statements in the questions, the suggested methods and techniques in the English language curriculum of Ministry of Education was taken into account (MEB, 2004a) and the related literature about English language teaching was referred (Nunan, 1991; Richards and Rodgers, 1986; Willis, 1983). Actually, information about the problems that students encountered while carrying out the activities and tasks were collected by means of open-ended questions.

The eighteenth question is about the students' perceptions of the assessment procedures, which is again one of the objectives of the study. By asking the students' problems about the exams, it was aimed to diagnose the weaknesses of the exams. The nineteenth and twentieth questions intended to investigate the attitudes of the students towards the course and the language. In fact, one of the goals of the curriculum was to enable students to be motivated to learn and use the language. Again, in the curriculum guidelines, the kind of activities that students could perform outside the school were explained (MEB, 2004a). Thus, the last two questions were asked to examine the students' perceptions in these regards.

3.4.3. Pilot Testing of the Teacher and Student Questionnaires

The validity of the Teacher and Student Questionnaires was sustained in two ways by expert opinion and by pilot-testing. Prior to administration, the two questionnaires were submitted to a group of five experts in the fields of 'Curriculum and Instruction' and 'English Language Teaching.' They were asked to review and judge the questions and statements in the questionnaire and to determine if they adequately sampled the domain of interest.

After being revised in light of experts' suggestions, the Teacher Questionnaire was pilot-tested with English teachers of 11 schools selected from Ankara. After being explained the purpose and significance of the study, twenty-

eight English teachers who participated in pilot testing were asked to reply to the questionnaires in a week. Later, each teacher was interviewed and they were asked the following questions in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Questions Asked to Teachers during Pilot-testing

- | |
|--|
| 1- How long did it take for you to respond to the questionnaire?
2- What kind of problems did you have while answering the questions?
3- Are there any questions that you recommend to be changed? What are your suggestions?
4- What other parts and questions should be included in the questionnaire?
5- Are there any overlapping parts or questions in the questionnaire? |
|--|

Likewise, the Student Questionnaire was pilot-tested with the students studying in the sixth, seventh and eight grades of one of the primary schools in Ankara. Pilot-testing of the student questionnaire was carried out in two ways. First, fifteen students from each grade level was selected considering their level of success and they were asked to answer the questions in 45 minutes under the guidance of the researcher. Then, group interviews were carried out with the students to determine their problems in understanding and replying to the questions. Later, the questionnaires were redesigned considering the students' opinions, problems and suggestions. In the new questionnaires, some of the questions were deleted and the terminology used in some of the statements was changed in order to make it comprehensible for the students. The new questionnaires were piloted tested again with other forty five students (fifteen students from grades 6, 7 and 8), and once more the necessary adjustments were made considering the opinions of the students' in the second group. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the student questionnaire for the close-ended questions was .82.

Once the teachers' and students' opinions, problems and suggestions about the questionnaire were taken, necessary changes were made and the final versions of the two questionnaires were produced. Following the final changes, the questionnaire was sent to the site by Educational Research and Development Directorate (ERDD).

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The two types of questionnaires administered with the teachers and students were analyzed separately. When the overall design of the study is considered, it is seen that the purpose is to determine the commonalities in each group separately. Therefore, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data collected through close-ended questions. Using descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, percentages, means and standard deviations were calculated. Inferential statistics, t-test and ANOVA, were carried out to investigate whether the differences among groups of teachers by background factors were statistically significant. After ANOVA, the follow up test Scheffé was conducted to evaluate differences among the means. The reason for selecting Scheffé as a follow up test was that “it is the most versatile and at the same time the most conservative post-hoc multiple-comparison procedure” (Hinkle, Wiersman & Jurs, 1998, p. 40). In other words, since it was important to compare a combination of means rather than simply pairs of means, Scheffé was applied as a post-hoc test. Inferential statistics, cross-tabulations and chi-square tests, were also conducted to examine whether the differences among groups of students by background factors were statistically significant. The confidence level of ANOVA and Chi-square tests was established as .01.

To analyze the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions in the Teacher and Student questionnaires, first the data were coded under themes which were pre-determined considering the research questions and the sections and/or questions in the questionnaires. The codes under each theme were identified in time from the answers provided and attention was paid to make them suitable for the pre-determined themes. Later, the coded data under thematic categories were converted to frequencies and percentages. While computations were made, the missing responses were taken into account, and the results that are related to each question and obtained from each group of participants were displayed in separate tables.

3.6. Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the English language curriculum offered for the students studying at the sixth, seventh, eighth grades of public primary schools in Turkey during the 2004-2005 school year. Actually, it is limited to the English teachers and students who were selected from all over Turkey and who took part in

the study. By using cluster random sampling and random sampling strategies, and by having large samples of teachers and students, certain external validity threats are assumed to be controlled. It is because the related literature reveals that random selection of participants and having sample size around 360 and 1000 is suitable for making the sample representative of the actual population in such survey studies (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000; Jeager, 1988). Yet, lack of demographic information about especially the student population, and lack of information about the representation ratio of the sample group to the student population may still create a threat for the representation of the population.

Considering the time and cost issues, in such a study whose participants include teachers and students all over Turkey, it was impossible for the researcher to control the situations in which the teacher and student questionnaires were administered. As it was mentioned before, the teachers and students were selected by the Educational Directorates of the towns and cities. Even though, the criteria for selection were explained to them, they and the principals of the schools might not have chosen the two groups of samples by using cluster random sampling, random sampling and systematic sampling. In fact, although almost equal number of participants from each grade level participated in the study, the numbers of students were unequal when their achievement levels were considered. Thus, having equal amount of participants from diverse achievement levels is one of the limitations of this study. Besides, the photocopying and distribution of the questionnaires were facilitated by the Educational Directorates and the principals of schools. Thus, it was not possible to control under which conditions these procedures were employed. Finally, the place where the questionnaires were employed, the time and duration of answering the questions and the type of assistance provided were some of the conditions which were beyond the control of the researcher. Therefore, these are assumed to be other constraints as these conditions may influence and differentiate teachers' and students' responses.

This survey is based on the teachers' and students' perceptions collected directly from themselves, and other people who took part in the design and implementation of the curriculum such as curriculum developers and administrators are excluded from the study. Moreover, the information collected from the participants was not triangulated by means of other instruments such as interviews

and classroom observations. Thus, this might be a final constraint limiting the objectivity of the study. However, this constraint is assumed to be controlled by using open-ended questions and by making use of appropriate data analysis procedures. Furthermore, the measures taken to sustain the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments before application are assumed to exclude the other possible threats.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, the findings of the two questionnaires, Questionnaire for Teachers and Questionnaire for Students are presented and discussed.

4.1. Background of Study Participants

Considering the key groups as participants, this section is subdivided into two as background of teacher participants and background of student participants.

4.1.1. Background of Teacher Participants

The demographic information about the teachers answering the questionnaires is presented in Table 4.1. The table reveals that the highest percentage of teachers who participated in the study was from the Mediterranean (19.3%) followed by the Black Sea (18.5%), Eastern Anatolia (16.3%), Marmara (15.2%) and Aegean (12%), and the lowest percentage of teachers was from the Central Anatolia (10.5%) and Southeastern Anatolia (8.2%). When the developmental levels of the cities and towns were considered, the percentages of teachers from the developed and partially developed ones were equal (35.6%) and formed the greatest number of participants than those of undeveloped cities and towns (28.8%). Among these teachers, a little more than half fell in the age range of 23-28 (52.7%) and majority of them were females (70%). Besides, most of these teachers were graduates of English Language and Teaching (ELT) departments of various universities in Turkey (64.4%). The graduates of English Language and Literature (ELL) departments included nearly one fifth of the teachers (19.6%). There were also few participants who were the teachers of other fields such as math and chemistry (12.2%), or teachers of other languages like German and French (3.8%). The table displays the majority had 1 to 5 years of experience (64.1%) followed by teachers with experience of 6 to 10 years (15.8%). Teachers with more than 10 years of experience formed 20.2% of the

participants. More than half of the teachers were teaching all grade levels (58.7%), but there were teachers teaching only one or two grade levels (41.3% in total).

Table 4.1: Background of Teacher Participants

Background Variables	Categories	F	%
Region	Mediterranean	71	19.3
	Black Sea	68	18.5
	Eastern Anatolia	60	16.3
	Marmara	56	15.2
	Aegean	44	12.0
	Central Anatolia	39	10.5
	Southeastern Anatolia	30	8.2
	N=368		
Developmental Levels of Cities and Towns	Developed	131	35.6
	Partially developed	131	35.6
	Undeveloped	106	28.8
	N=368		
Age	23-28	193	52.7
	29-33	81	22.1
	34-38	27	7.4
	38-42	23	6.3
	42-more	42	11.5
	N=366		
Gender	Female	257	70
	Male	110	30
	N=367		
Educational Background	ELT	237	64.4
	ELL	72	19.6
	Other Fields	45	12.2
	Other Languages	14	3.8
	N=368		
Experience	1-5	236	64.0
	6-10	58	15.8
	11-15	23	6.3
	16-20	21	5.7
	20 -more	30	8.2
	N=368		
Grade Levels Taught	6	20	5.4
	7	15	4.1
	8	18	4.9
	6-7	35	9.5
	7-8	36	9.8
	6-8	28	7.6
	6-7-8	216	58.7
	N= 368		

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses

4.1.2. Background of Student Participants

The demographic information about students responding to the questionnaires is presented in Table 4.2. A close examination of the table reveals that approximately equal percentages of students from each grade level attended the study. In fact, close to one third of the students were from grade 6 (32%) and grade 8 (32.5%), and a little more than one third were from grade 7 (35.5%). The table also displays that majority of the respondents were females (63%). When their parents' educational levels are considered, it is seen that more than half had low educational levels (52%), a little more than one third had medium educational levels (34.5%), and a few had high educational levels (13.5%). In relation to the parents' English levels, majority of them had low level of English (80.4%), a few had medium level of English (16.5%) and very few had high level of English (3.1%). Again, most of the students stated that they do not get help from their families while studying English (79.7%). Finally, as for the English grades in the last record sheets, it is observed that majority of the students were successful in the course (76.9%, with English grades 4 and 5). However, students with medium and low success levels were fewer (10.9% with English grade 3 and 12.2% with English grades 2 and 1, respectively).

Table 4.2: Background of Student Participants

Background Variables	Categories	F	%
Class	6 th Grade	396	32.0
	7 th Grade	438	35.5
	8 th Grade	401	32.5
		N=1235	
Gender	Female	775	63.0
	Male	455	37.0
		N= 1230	
Parents' Education Level	Low	641	52.0
	Medium	425	34.5
	High	167	13.5
		N=1233	
Parents' English Level	Low	992	80.4
	Medium	204	16.5
	High	38	3.1
		N=1234	
Help from Family	Yes	251	20.3
	No	984	79.7
		N= 1235	

Table 4.2 (continued)			
English Grade in the Last Record Sheet	1	60	4.9
	2	90	7.3
	3	134	10.9
	4	284	23.0
	5	664	53.9
		N=1232	

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses

4.2. Teachers' Perceptions of the Curriculum

This section provides information about the teachers' perceptions of the attainment of the goals and content of the curriculum together with differences in these perceptions by their background characteristics.

4.2.1. Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of the Goals and Content of the Curriculum

In relation to the first research question, Table 4.3 demonstrates information about teachers' perceptions of the attainment of the goals of the curriculum. According to the table, the mean scores obtained for each statement reveals that the majority were accomplished almost at the moderate level. In fact, nearly half of the teachers believed that their students were sometimes able to articulate sounds (49.7%), pronounce (47.9%) and dictate words (45.4%), formulate sentences by using the newly learned grammatical structures (45.3%) and vocabulary items (45.2%) accurately, and intonate sentences (42.4%). Again, a little more than half of the teachers claimed that their students were usually able to understand the meanings of vocabulary items (53.5%), comprehend a reading text (52.5%), and enjoy learning English (51.4%). Similarly, close to half stated that their students were usually capable of transforming sentences into various forms (49.7%), understanding the functions and forms of grammatical structures (47.9%) and were motivated to use English (44.6%).

The teachers were divided on three of the statements concerning speaking, writing and using mechanics. While a little more than one-third of the teachers revealed that their students could usually speak in English (38%), another one third claimed this skill was sometimes attained (34.6%). Likewise, close to two-fifths of the respondents believed their students could sometimes write in English (39.1%)

and use spelling and punctuation accurately (39.1%). However, 37.8% of the teachers claimed that their students could rarely write paragraphs in English, and 34.1% believed they were usually able to use the mechanics.

Table 4.3: Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of the Goals of the Curriculum

Goals of the Curriculum	A	U	% S	R	N	Mean	N
Articulating sounds	1.9	36.5	49.2	12.4	-	2.7	362
Pronouncing the vocabulary items	1.4	35.5	47.9	14.9	.3	2.8	363
Intonating sentences	1.8	21.8	42.4	30.9	4.1	3.2	363
Understanding the meanings of vocabulary items	10.9	53.5	30.6	5.0	-	2.3	359
Forming sentences by using the vocabulary items accurately (oral/written)	6.0	31.7	45.2	15.4	1.7	2.8	359
Understanding the functions and forms of grammatical structure	12.7	47.9	32.8	5.8	.8	2.4	363
Forming sentences by using the grammatical structures accurately (oral/written)	7.4	33.7	45.3	11.9	1.7	2.7	362
Transforming sentences into various forms (question-answer, positive-negative, singular-plural etc.)	10.8	49.7	25.1	13.0	1.4	2.5	362
Understanding a listening text which is appropriate for their levels	10.6	37.6	33.2	15.3	3.3	2.6	359
Speaking in English	7.2	38.0	34.6	18.2	2.0	2.7	358
Understanding a reading text which is appropriate for their levels	13.8	52.5	27.9	5.5	.3	2.3	362
Writing paragraphs or compositions	.8	13.5	39.1	37.8	8.8	3.4	362
Using spelling and punctuation accurately	5.5	34.6	39.1	19.1	1.7	2.8	361
Dictating vocabulary items and sentences accurately	1.9	29.5	45.4	20.1	3.1	2.9	359
Enjoying learning English	23.5	51.4	21.0	4.1	-	2.1	359
Being motivated to use English	19.2	44.6	27.0	9.2	-	2.3	359

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses. A= always, U= usually, S = sometimes, R = rarely, N= never.

Again, considering the first research question, Table 4.4 reveals information about teachers' perceptions of the content of the curriculum. An examination of mean scores for each statement measuring teachers' opinions about the content reveals that they either agreed or felt undecided about most of them. As the table indicates, majority of the teachers believed that frequently used vocabulary items were covered (80.1% agreeing/strongly agreeing), grammar contents were sequenced from simple to difficult (75.8% agreeing/strongly agreeing) and the activities of reading texts were designed to test comprehension (70.7% agreeing/strongly agreeing). Again, the majority felt that grammar content was comprehensible for the students (69.1% agreeing/strongly agreeing), and reading and listening texts were used to practice the language structures (66.5% agreeing/strongly agreeing). In addition, more than half of the teachers claimed that the topics of the listening and reading texts were comprehensible (57.5% agreeing/strongly agreeing), and the speaking activities could be performed by the students (56.4% agreeing/strongly agreeing).

The teachers were divided in their perceptions of content on five of the statements. While nearly half believed that vocabulary activities were interesting for the students (47.7% agreeing/strongly agreeing), close to one third either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement (32.4%). Similarly, a little more than one third of the teachers felt that grammar activities encouraged oral practice (39.5% agreeing/strongly agreeing), whereas the other one-third did not feel so (36.7% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing). Although there were some teachers revealing that the topics of the writing activities were not interesting for the students (43.2% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing), there were others finding them interesting (31.7% agreeing/strongly agreeing). Likewise, some teachers felt the topics of the reading and listening texts were not interesting for the students (40.7% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing), but nearly one-third thought the opposite (36.7% agreeing/strongly agreeing). The main contradiction among teachers was about the authenticity of speaking activities and applicability of writing activities. Although a little less than half stated that speaking activities were applicable to real-life situations (47.1% agreeing/strongly agreeing), almost one-third disagreed with this statement (30.2% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing). Similarly, a considerable percentage claimed writing activities could be performed by the students (46.9% agreeing/strongly agreeing).

agreeing), but some disagreed with it (28.9% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing). Yet, close to one-fourth of the teachers felt undecided about the authenticity of speaking activities (22.7%) and the applicability of writing activities (24.2%).

Table 4.4: Teachers' Perceptions of the Content of the Curriculum

Statements on Content			%			Mean	N
	SA	A	U	D	SD		
Frequently used vocabulary items are covered	14.3	65.8	9.9	6.6	3.3	2.2	363
Vocabulary activities are interesting for the students	6.4	41.3	19.9	29.4	3.0	2.8	361
Grammar activities encourage oral practice	7.0	32.5	23.8	30.5	6.2	3.0	357
Grammar contents are comprehensible for the students	7.8	61.3	12.5	15.3	3.1	2.5	359
Grammar contents are sequenced from simple to difficult	16.5	59.3	9.2	12.5	2.5	2.3	359
The topics of the reading and/or listening texts are interesting for the students	2.5	31.7	25.1	32.5	8.2	3.1	363
The topics of the reading and/or listening texts are comprehensible for students	4.7	52.8	22.4	16.2	3.9	2.6	362
The reading and/or listening texts are used to demonstrate and practice the language structures	8.0	58.5	17.0	12.3	4.2	2.6	359
The activities of the reading and/or listening texts are designed to test comprehension	8.3	62.4	14.9	13.3	1.1	2.4	360
Speaking activities are applicable in real-life situations	4.2	42.9	22.7	25.8	4.4	2.8	361
Speaking activities can be performed by the students	5.3	51.1	22.8	18.6	2.2	2.6	360
The topics of the writing activities are interesting for the students	2.5	29.2	25.1	36.5	6.7	3.2	359
Writing activities can be performed by the students	3.6	43.3	24.2	23.3	5.6	2.8	360

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses. SA= strongly agree, A= agree, U= undecided, D= disagree, SD=strongly disagree.

4.2.2. Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of the Curriculum Goals and Content by Background Factors

In accordance with the first research question, T-test and ANOVA were carried out to investigate whether the differences among groups of teachers by background factors were statistically significant. The results showed that region, teachers' age and their teaching experiences were the factors that differentiated teachers' perceptions of the attainment of the goals. Again, the results revealed that education was the only factor creating differences in teachers' perceptions of content.

4.2.2.1. Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of the Curriculum Goals by Region

Table 4.5 displays information about the relationship between the region where teachers attend the study and their perceptions in reaching the goals of the curriculum. The independent variable, region, included seven levels: Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean, Central Anatolia, East Anatolia, South East Anatolia and Black Sea. Teachers' perceptions differed significantly in terms of achieving the goals related to pronunciation ($p=.000$), intonation ($p=.005$), forming sentences by using the grammatical structures accurately ($p=.006$), listening ($p=.007$), speaking ($p=.005$), reading ($p=.002$), and using spelling and punctuation accurately ($p=.001$).

The results of Scheffé, revealed that teachers in Central Anatolia Region seem to perceive pronunciation is achieved more in contrast to the teachers in the Marmara, Mediterranean and Black Sea Regions ($p=.005$, $p=.005$, and $p=.015$, respectively). Again, teachers in Central Anatolia Region seem to perceive intonation is attained more when compared with the teachers in the Marmara and Mediterranean Regions ($p=.034$, and $p=.017$, respectively). Furthermore, these same teachers believed speaking was achieved more as opposed to the teachers in the Marmara region ($p=.048$). Finally, teachers in the Central Anatolia region claimed that the goals related to forming grammatically accurate sentences, reading, and using mechanics mainly spelling and punctuation were attained more when compared with the teachers in the Mediterranean Region ($p=.023$, $p=.006$, and $p=.027$, respectively).

Table 4.5: Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of the Curriculum Goals by Region

	Region	Mean	SD	N
Pronouncing vocabulary items $F(6,356)= 4.157$ $p=.000$	Marmara	2.62	.62	55
	Aegean	2.77	.77	44
	Mediterranean	2.64	.57	67
	Central Anatolia	3.26	.85	39
	East Anatolia	2.78	.76	60
	South East Anatolia	2.87	.63	30
	Black Sea	2.69	.72	68
	Total	2.77	.72	363
Intoning sentences $F(6,356)= 3.128$ $p=.005$	Marmara	3.00	.64	55
	Aegean	3.21	.85	44
	Mediterranean	2.99	.84	67
	Central Anatolia	3.64	.84	39
	East Anatolia	3.18	.89	60
	South East Anatolia	3.17	.83	30
	Black Sea	3.12	.84	68
	Total	3.16	.84	363
Forming sentences by using the grammatical structures accurately (oral/written) $F(6,355)= 3.087$ $p=.006$	Marmara	2.50	.72	54
	Aegean	2.64	.87	44
	Mediterranean	2.43	.88	67
	Central Anatolia	3.08	1.09	39
	East Anatolia	2.77	.91	60
	South East Anatolia	2.63	.85	30
	Black Sea	2.74	.66	68
	Total	2.67	.84	362
Speaking in English $F(6,351)= 3.164$ $p=.005$	Marmara	2.50	.67	54
	Aegean	2.59	.92	44
	Mediterranean	2.55	.91	66
	Central Anatolia	3.18	.98	38
	East Anatolia	2.88	1.01	59
	South East Anatolia	2.62	.98	29
	Black Sea	2.66	.84	68
	Total	2.70	.92	358
Understanding a reading text appropriate for their levels $F(6,355)= 3.575$ $p=.002$	Marmara	2.18	.70	55
	Aegean	2.14	.82	44
	Mediterranean	2.09	.69	67
	Central Anatolia	2.74	.85	39
	East Anatolia	2.30	.75	59
	South East Anatolia	2.30	.88	30
	Black Sea	2.24	.72	68
	Total	2.26	.78	362
Using spelling/ punctuation $F(6,354)= 3.760$ $p=.001$	Marmara	2.77	.89	53
	Aegean	2.64	.87	44
	Mediterranean	2.60	.82	67
	Central Anatolia	3.26	.94	39
	East Anatolia	2.63	.90	60
	South East Anatolia	3.10	.89	30
	Black Sea	2.71	.77	68
	Total	2.77	.88	361

4.2.2.2. Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of the Curriculum Goals by Age

Table 4.6 shows information about the relationship between the teachers' age and their perceptions on reaching the goals of the curriculum. The independent variable, age, involved five levels: 23-28, 29-33, 34-38, 39-43, 44-more. Teachers' perceptions differed significantly in terms of achieving goals related to articulating sounds ($p=.000$), pronouncing vocabulary items ($p=.000$), intonating sentences ($p=.000$), transforming sentences ($p=.008$), listening ($p=.000$), speaking ($p=.000$) and reading ($p=.000$).

The findings of the follow up test, Scheffé, revealed that teachers within the age range of 23-28 seem to perceive that the goals related to articulating sounds, pronunciation and intonation are attained more when compared with the teachers within the age ranges of 34-38 ($p=.008$, $p=.002$, and $p=.001$, respectively), 39-43 ($p=.000$ for all), and 44-more ($p=.001$, $p=.000$ and $p=.000$, respectively). Again, the teachers within the age range of 23-28 seem to perceive that transforming sentences is attained more than the teachers within the age range of 39-43 ($p=.015$). Finally, these same teachers with ages of 23-28 seem to perceive that the goals related to reading and listening are reached more in contrast to the teachers between 39-43 ($p=.001$ and $p=.010$, respectively) and 44-more ($p=.011$ and $p=.014$, respectively).

Table 4.6: Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of the Curriculum Goals by Age

	Age	Mean	SD	N
Articulating Sounds $F(4,356)=11.310$ $p=.000$	23-28	2.92	.71	191
	29-33	2.66	.68	79
	34-38	2.41	.50	27
	39-43	2.22	.52	23
	44-more	2.42	.55	41
	Total	2.72	.70	361
Pronouncing the vocabulary items $F(4,357)=17.820$ $p=.000$	23-28	3.03	.71	192
	29-33	2.66	.66	79
	34-38	2.37	.57	27
	39-43	2.30	.47	23
	44-more	2.32	.57	41
	Total	2.78	.72	362
Intonating Sentences $F(4,357)=18.085$ $p=.000$	23-28	3.42	.81	192
	29-33	3.18	.80	79
	34-38	2.70	.78	27

Table 4.6 (continued)				
Transforming sentences into various forms (question-answer, positive-negative, singular-plural etc.) F(4,356)=3.74 p=.008	39-43	2.44	.51	23
	44-more	2.61	.59	41
	Total	3.16	.84	362
	23-28	2.56	.93	192
	29-33	2.42	.92	79
	34-38	2.39	.85	26
	39-43	1.87	.55	23
Understanding a listening text which is appropriate for their level F(4,353)=8.179 p=.000	44-more	2.32	.82	41
	Total	2.45	.90	361
	23-28	2.85	1.00	190
	29-33	2.54	.95	78
	34-38	2.54	.99	27
	39-43	1.87	.69	23
	44-more	2.32	.82	41
Speaking in English F(4,356)=6.541 p=.000	Total	2.45	.90	361
	23-28	2.90	.95	188
	29-33	2.56	.90	79
	34-38	2.65	1.06	27
	39-43	2.17	.65	23
	44-more	2.34	.53	41
	Total	2.69	.92	358
Understanding a reading text which is appropriate for their levels F(4,356)=6.289 p=.000	23-28	2.39	.84	191
	29-33	2.14	.66	79
	34-38	2.41	.69	26
	39-43	1.65	.57	23
	44-more	2.15	.57	41
	Total	2.26	.77	357

Mean Scores are based on a five point scale where 1= always, 2= usually, 3= sometimes, 4= rarely, 5= never.

4.2.2.3. Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of the Curriculum Goals by Experience

The data on the relationship between the teachers' teaching experience and their perceptions on achieving the goals of the curriculum are shown in Table 4.7. The independent variable, teaching experience, involved five levels: 1-5, 6-10, 11-25, 16-20, 20-more. Teachers' perceptions differed significantly in terms of achieving the goals related to articulating sounds (p=.000), pronouncing vocabulary items (p=.000), intonating sentences (p=.000), listening (p=.000), speaking (p=.000), reading (p=.005), writing (p=.000), using spelling and punctuation (p=.001), and doing dictations (p=.000).

The follow up test, Scheffé, revealed that teachers teaching 1 to 5 years seem to perceive that the goals related to articulation of sounds, pronunciation, intonation, and listening are attained more when compared with the teachers with 6 to 10 years of experience (p=.018, p=.001, p=.011 and p=.008, respectively), those with 11 to 15 years of experience (p=.007, p=.001, p=.001 and p=.027, respectively), teachers

teaching 16 to 20 years in their perceptions ($p=.005$, $p=.005$, $p=.000$, and $p=.003$, respectively) and teachers teaching 20 years and more ($p=.014$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$, and $p=.04$, respectively). Also, teachers teaching 1 to 5 years seem to perceive that the goals related to speaking, reading, writing, use of spelling and punctuation, and dictations are achieved more in comparison with the teachers having 16 to 20 years of teaching experience ($p=.009$, $p=.039$, $p=.020$, $p=.005$ and $p=.013$, respectively). Finally, teachers teaching 1 to 5 years seem to perceive that doing dictations is reached more than the teachers with 20 and more years of experience ($p=.17$).

Table 4.7: Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of the Curriculum Goals by Experience

	Experience	Mean	SD	N
Articulating Sounds $F(4,357)=10.209$ $p=.000$	1-5	2.88	.70	234
	6-10	2.54	.66	56
	11-15	2.32	.48	22
	16-20	2.29	.56	21
	20-more	2.41	.57	29
	Total	2.72	.70	362
Pronouncing the vocabulary items $F(4,358)=15.836$ $p=.000$	1-5	2.97	.71	235
	6-10	2.54	.66	56
	11-15	2.32	.57	22
	16-20	2.38	.50	21
	20-more	2.24	.51	29
	Total	2.77	.72	363
Intonating Sentences $F(4,358)=16.274$ $p=.000$	1-5	3.38	.81	235
	6-10	2.96	.81	56
	11-15	2.64	.58	22
	16-20	2.52	.68	21
	20-more	2.55	.57	29
	Total	3.16	.84	363
Understanding a listening text which is appropriate for their levels $F(4,354)=9.547$ $p=.000$	1-5	2.85	.99	233
	6-10	2.33	.92	55
	11-15	2.14	.85	21
	16-20	2.00	.55	21
	20-more	2.28	.70	29
	Total	2.63	.98	359
Speaking in English $F(4,353)=5.741$ $p=.000$	1-5	2.85	.94	231
	6-10	2.54	.97	56
	11-15	2.48	.68	21
	16-20	2.10	.77	21
	20-more	2.38	.49	29
	Total	2.70	.92	358
Understanding a reading text which is appropriate for their levels $F(4,357)=3.827$ $p=.005$	1-5	2.36	.81	234
	6-10	2.14	.67	56
	11-15	2.09	.75	22
	16-20	1.81	.60	21

Table 4.7 (continued)				
Writing paragraphs or compositions $F(4,357)=6.272$ $p=.000$	20-more	2.10	.62	29
	Total	2.26	.77	362
	1-5	3.56	.85	234
	6-10	3.20	.90	56
	11-15	3.09	.81	22
	16-20	2.90	.54	21
Using spelling / punctuation $F(4,356)=4.755$ $p=.001$	20-more	3.14	.79	29
	Total	3.40	.86	362
	1-5	3.07	.84	234
	6-10	2.85	.80	56
	11-15	2.57	.51	20
	16-20	2.40	.75	21
Dictating vocabulary items and sentences accurately $F(4,354)=7.060$ $p=.000$	20-more	2.51	.69	29
	Total	2.93	.83	361
	1-5	3.07	.84	234
	6-10	2.85	.80	55
	11-15	2.57	.51	21
	16-20	2.40	.75	20
	20-more	2.52	.69	29
	Total	2.92	.83	359

Mean Scores are based on a five point scale where 1= always, 2= usually, 3= sometimes, 4= rarely, 5= never.

4.2.2.4. Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of the Content by Education

Table 4.8 displays the relationship between the departments from which teachers graduated, and their perceptions of content. The independent variable, education, included four levels: English Language Teaching (ELT), English Language and Literature (ELL), Other Languages (i.e. German, French) and Other Fields (i.e. Math, Science). The test was significant only on dependent variable, the topics of reading and/or listening texts are interesting for the students ($p=.004$) proved by the follow up test Scheffé, as it indicated that teachers of other fields seem to perceive that the topics of reading/listening texts are interesting more than the teachers from ELT and ELL departments of universities ($p=.004$ and $p=.035$, respectively).

Table 4.8: Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of the Content by Education

	Education	Mean	SD	N
The topics of the reading and/or listening texts are interesting for the students $F(3,359)=4.596$ $p=.004$	ELT	2.26	.95	231
	ELL	2.33	1.05	69
	Other Languages	2.21	.80	14
	Other Fields	2.11	.91	45
	Total	2.25	.96	359

Mean Scores are based on a five point scale where 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= undecided, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree

4.2.3 Teachers' Implementation of the Curriculum

This section provides information about the methods, techniques and materials used to teach language skills. It also includes information about the teachers' perceptions of student attitudes together with their methods used for enhancing student motivation. Finally, the methods used for student assessment and course evaluation are displayed and discussed in this section.

4.2.3.1. Methods, Techniques and Materials Used to Teach Language Skills

In relation to the second research question, data collected about the instructional methods, techniques and materials used to improve the two language areas, vocabulary and grammar, and the four main skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, are presented and discussed separately considering that each requires implementation of different instructional strategies.

4.2.3.1.1. Teaching Vocabulary and Grammar

The two main stages of a vocabulary lesson are "presentation" and "practice" (Willis, 1983, p. 115). That's why the methods and techniques used to teach vocabulary are displayed under these two subtitles in Table 4.9. As the table shows, teachers' use of methods, techniques and materials while presenting the meanings of vocabulary items depend on the nature of the word. In other words, whether a vocabulary item is abstract or concrete, whether it is a verb or noun, and whether it is available in the environment or not determine the technique and material to be used in this stage. Yet, the most frequently used materials at this stage were reported to be visuals such as pictures and drawings (44.3%). Close to one fifth of the teachers stated that they used real objects in the environment and flash cards as materials (18.2%). There were also teachers who used miming and/or dramatization to teach the meanings of verbs (23.4%). Almost half of the teachers claimed, "Vocabulary should be taught in context as it provides opportunity for the students to understand not only the meanings but also the usages of vocabulary items." Therefore, close to one third revealed that they provided example sentences for their students while explaining the meanings and use of vocabulary items (31%). There were also a few teachers reporting that they used the example sentences or the reading texts to enable the students to deduce the meanings of words from context (15.8%).

Other presentation techniques implemented by almost one fifth of the teachers were giving the mother-tongue equivalents and having students make use of dictionaries (21.5%). In this regard, vast majority of respondents claimed, “Turkish is the last resource used when other techniques do not work.” Some also added, “Students find out the meanings of unknown words in a reading text as homework, but in the following lesson the meanings and use of vocabulary items are still discussed.” The least frequently used technique was giving the English definition of vocabulary items, meaning the synonyms and antonyms (12.5%). Some teachers provided the logic behind the minimum use of this skill, “Since students lack the needed background knowledge in vocabulary, they sometimes have difficulties in understanding the given synonyms and/or antonyms.”

An examination of Table 4.9 reveals that teachers make use of several techniques and materials to enable their students to practice the vocabulary items. However, compared with the presentation techniques, fewer teachers reported on this issue. Among the techniques used for practice, the most common ones were stated to be having students pronounce the vocabulary items (29.1%), formulate their own sentences (26.4%) and play games (25.6%). A little more than one fifth stated that they assigned their students to write the vocabulary items a couple of times in order to enable them “to learn the spelling” (21.7%). Though mentioned by a smaller group of teachers, supplementary vocabulary exercises (6.5%), vocabulary notebooks and puzzles (3.8%) were the materials used to practice vocabulary items. Similarly, few teachers stated to be encouraging the students to use the new vocabulary items by getting them to prepare visuals like posters and flash cards (4.4%), and by asking questions which necessitate students to use the new words in their answers (3.8%).

Table 4.9: Methods, Techniques and Materials Used to Teach Vocabulary

	F	%
Presentation of Vocabulary Items		
Using pictures and drawings are used to teach concrete words	163	44.3
Providing example sentences	114	31.0
Presenting verbs through miming or dramatization	86	23.4
Giving Turkish equivalents for abstract words and idioms	79	21.5
Having students find out the meanings of words from the dictionaries	79	21.5
Showing real-objects in the environment	67	18.2

Table 4.9 (continued)		
Using flash cards	67	18.2
Having students guess the meanings of words from the context by reading the passages or the example sentences	58	15.8
Presenting antonyms and synonyms of the vocabulary items	46	12.5
Practicing Vocabulary Items		
Having students listen and repeat the vocabulary items (pronunciation study)	107	29.1
Having students formulate their own sentences in pairs or as homework	97	26.4
Having students play games (i.e. hangman, taboo, scrabble, bingo etc.)	94	25.6
Having students write the vocabulary items five to ten times as homework	80	21.7
Having students do the vocabulary exercises provided by the teacher (i.e. Sentence completions, matching and multiple choice exercises)	24	6.5
Having students prepare wall-charts / flash cards/ posters	16	4.4
Having students keep a vocabulary notebook	14	3.8
Having students do puzzles	14	3.8
Having students use the new vocabulary items while answering the teachers' questions	14	3.8
Others (i.e. Translating the given sentences, weekly quizzes, talking about pictures, demonstrating actions)	14	3.8
	(N=368)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

Similar to a vocabulary lesson, a grammar lesson also involves two main stages that are “presentation” and “practice” (Willis, 1983, p. 94), so the data obtained about the methods and techniques used to teach grammar are displayed in two sections in Table 4.10. The information collected on the materials used to practice the grammar structures are also shown under a separate heading in the same table.

An analysis of the table reveals that between the two main methods of teaching grammar, deductive teaching was the most frequently used one as the majority stated that they explained the grammatical rules and functions themselves (66%). Considering the techniques used to teach grammar, a little more than one third of the teachers implementing this method also revealed that while explaining the grammatical rules and functions, they provided example sentences (37.5%).

There were also some teachers who formulized the rules in charts (20.1%) and compared the Turkish rules with English ones (19.6%). In addition, a few teachers claimed that they explained by forming relations between the new structures with what was already known (9%). Compared with the deductive teaching, inductive teaching was used less frequently. Only a little more than one fifth of the teachers responded that they taught grammar by eliciting the rules and functions from the students through asking questions (22.6%).

Although fewer teachers reported on the strategies they used to have their students practice the grammatical structures, the results were still significant in picturing the general tendencies. As it is seen in the table, the exercises and activities implemented to practice the grammatical structures are divided into four main categories. In this regard, a little more than one third of the teachers revealed that they used mainly meaningful grammar exercises in the form of sentence completion, matching, rewrite and error correction (38%). Besides, a few teachers claimed that they implemented communicative activities in the form of role-plays, games and discussions (15%). There were also few teachers implementing mechanical exercises such as substitution drills (6.8%). Similarly, few teachers used translations (4.3%).

The respondent rate about the materials used to present and practice the grammatical structures was the lowest. Concerning this issue, slightly more than one fifth of the teachers stated that they prepared and delivered worksheets as handouts (21.5%). In addition, a few teachers reported that they made use of other grammar books available in the market (16.5%). Again, a few revealed that they used only the course-book and work-book (12.5%). There were also few teachers responding that they used visuals such as pictures and posters to present the grammatical structures, and administered quizzes to practice them (7.7%).

Table 4.10: Methods, Techniques and Materials Used to Teach Grammar

	F	%
Presentation of Grammatical Structures		
Deductive teaching of grammatical structures by	243	66.0
* providing example sentences	138	37.5
* formulizing the rules on the board	74	20.1
* comparing English and Turkish structures	72	19.6
* comparing the new structures with the learned ones	33	9.0

Table 4.10 (continued)		
Indirect teaching by eliciting from the students by means of questioning	83	22.6
Practicing Grammatical Structures		
Meaningful exercises in the form of sentence completions, matching, rewrites and error correction	140	38.0
Communicative activities in the form of role plays, games, and discussions	55	15.0
Mechanical exercises in the form of substitution drills	25	6.8
Translations	16	4.3
Materials used to Present and Practice Grammatical Structures		
Worksheets prepared by the teacher	79	21.5
Other resource books	61	16.5
Course book and work book	46	12.5
Others (i.e. pictures, posters, quizzes etc.)	28	7.7
	(N=368)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.2.3.1.2. Teaching Listening and Reading

According to the related literature, the types of listening texts, the ways they are presented to the students and the type of activities carried out all play crucial roles in the development of this skill (Lewis and Hill, 1992, pp. 62-63). Thus, the information collected on teaching listening are displayed under these categories in Table 4.11. A close examination of the table reveals that majority of the teachers presented the listening texts in the book by reading them aloud (71.7%). Actually, these same teachers said, “While the students are listening to the texts, they follow from their books.” In other words, listening and reading were conducted together. Only few teachers revealed that they had their students close the books while listening to what was read. Again, a little more than one fifth of the teachers informed that they used CDs and cassettes in the listening lesson (21.5%). In contrast, Videos and/or VCDs were reported to be hardly ever used (9.5%). In relation to this, among the respondents the majority added, “Listening from CDs, cassettes and/or VCD is done rarely, once or twice a semester.” Again, a few teachers claimed that they assigned one or two students to read the texts aloud, and the others followed from the books (15.2%).

Compared with the presentation techniques, the respondent rate for the listening materials was less. Yet, as it is shown in Table 15, the dialogues in the book were the main materials used (29.1%). Again, close to one fifth of the teachers revealed that they used popular songs as materials to conduct their listening lesson (18.2%). There was a small group of teachers claiming that they used listening texts from other English course books available in the market (11.7%). Few teachers stated that they did not conduct a listening lesson at all, and the students had the chance to listen to the classroom talk only, specifically the jokes, anecdotes and stories told by the teacher (6.3%). Similarly, very few added that they read story books at certain time intervals and their students listened to them (3.5%).

As for the listening activities, not much information was revealed by the teachers, but the responses were still important to get a general idea. In this regard, close to one fifth of the teachers stated that they wanted their students to listen and repeat the vocabulary items from the listening text (18.5%). Again, a few teachers revealed that they asked some questions about the listening texts (15.2%). The teachers using this technique added that their open-ended questions were for the comprehension of main ideas in the texts. Moreover, very few respondents required their students to take notes to explain what was understood from the texts (5.4%). Similarly, few teachers informed that they wanted their students to fill in the blanks in the sentences taken from the texts (5.2%). These respondents also claimed that they used this activity in order to enable their students understand the specific information in the texts (5.2%). Among the respondents, only a minority mentioned the use of pre-listening and post-listening activities (2.4% and 1.6%, respectively).

Table 4.11: Methods, Techniques and Materials Used to Teach Listening

	F	%
Presentation of the Listening Texts		
Teacher reading aloud	264	71.7
By using CDs and Cassettes	79	21.5
Students' reading aloud	56	15.2
Through VCDs	35	9.5
Listening Texts		
Reading texts and dialogues in the book	107	29.1
Songs	67	18.2
Listening texts from other resources	43	11.7

Table 4.11 (continued)		
Teacher-talk in the classroom (i.e. Jokes, anecdotes etc.)	23	6.3
Stories read in the classroom	13	3.5
Listening Activities		
Repeating the vocabulary items or sentences from the text	68	18.5
Answering the open-ended questions about the text	56	15.2
Dictation of the studied text or dialogue	28	7.6
Taking notes to explain what is understood from the text	20	5.4
Filling in the blanks in the sentences taken from the text	19	5.2
Pre-listening activities (i.e. pre-teaching unknown words, discussion about topic, talking about pictures and titles)	9	2.4
Post-listening activities (i.e. Role plays, writing the rest of the dialogue using imagination, discussions)	6	1.6
	(N=368)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses

Similar to a listening lesson, the types of reading texts, the ways they are presented to the students and the type of activities conducted are all important in a reading lesson (Lewis and Hill, 1992, pp.106-115). Therefore, data obtained about the methods, techniques and materials used in teaching reading are presented under these subtitles in Table 4.12. The table reveals that majority of the teachers used reading aloud technique while presenting the reading texts. In fact, more than half of the teachers stated that they read aloud and assigned their students to follow from their books (56%). Again, half of the respondents informed that they asked some of their students to read aloud by changing roles (50.8%). These same teachers also added that they applied these two techniques one after the other. In other words, they said, "First, I read the texts more than once. Then, I select some of the students and have them read the texts aloud. While I and their friends are reading the texts, the other students follow from their books by paying attention to pronunciation." Silent reading was reported to be used only by nearly one fifth of the teachers (19.3%).

The most frequently used materials in the reading lesson were the passages and dialogues in the course books as stated by a considerable percentage of teachers (44.8%). Close to one fifth of the respondents revealed they brought in outside reading texts taken from other course books available in the market (19.0%). They also informed that while selecting these supplementary texts, they considered their

students' English level. Similarly, there were a few teachers informing that they delivered stories as handouts or they gave story books to their students to be read at home (15.2%). While some of the respondents told, "Story reading is done as a project work," the others revealed, "Stories are distributed to be read in the semester holidays."

As for the reading activities, question and answer was the most common technique used. Among the respondents implementing this technique, one-fourth stated that they asked comprehension questions enabling the students to find out the main ideas in the reading texts (25.3%). Yet, a little less than one-fifth revealed that their questions were for determining the specific information (18.8%). These teachers also informed that they questioned their students by using various formats such as "true-false, short-answer and matching." Only few teachers claimed that they implemented pre-reading activities before having their students read the texts (8.4%). Again, few teachers admitted that they used reading texts to improve their students' vocabulary knowledge by having them deduce the meanings of unknown words (7.9%). Minority of the teachers reported that they assigned reading texts as homework rather than doing them in the classroom (7.1%). The other techniques like jig-saw reading (3.3%), doing translations (2.7%) and post-reading activities (2.7%) were responded to be used rarely by the teachers.

Table 4.12: Methods, Techniques and Materials Used to Teach Reading

	F	%
Presentation of Reading Texts		
Teacher reading aloud and students following from their books	206	56.0
Students reading aloud (i.e. by changing roles)	187	50.8
Silent reading	71	19.3
Reading Texts		
Reading passages and dialogues in the book	165	44.8
Outside reading materials suitable for students' level	70	19.0
Story books which are assigned as homework	56	15.2
Reading Activities		
Answering the comprehension questions to find out the main ideas	93	25.3
Answering the comprehension questions to find out the details	69	18.8
Pre-reading activities (i.e. pre-teaching vocabulary, discussions, talking about pictures and titles)	31	8.4

Table 4.12(continued)		
Working on the meanings of words (i.e. deducing the meanings of unknown words, looking up in the dictionary)	29	7.9
Reading activities are assigned as homework	26	7.1
Jig-saw reading (reading in groups and analyzing the text)	12	3.3
Translating the reading texts	10	2.7
Post-reading activities (i.e. Summarizing the reading text, role-plays, discussions)	10	2.7
	(N=368)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.2.3.1.3. Teaching Speaking and Writing

As it is displayed in Table 4.13, information about the methods and techniques used to practice speaking skill is categorized into two main sections which are speaking activities and strategies used in order to encourage students to speak in English. Actually, half of the teachers stated that they implemented role-plays in the classroom (50.3%). Majority of the respondents who used role-plays also gave detailed information on the issue. Some claimed, “I want my students to write dialogues similar to the ones they have read in the classroom and act them out in front of the class.” Others informed, “I assign my students to read the dialogues in the book aloud by changing roles.” There were also very few teachers who stated, “I provide students with role-play cards about a situation and want them to write a conversation suitable for it.” Almost all of these respondents believed, “At this level, the students are not able to act out in class before preparing a written dialogue.” Furthermore, two fifths of the teachers stated that speaking in the classroom was done in the form of question and answer (40.2%). Majority of the respondents informed, “Questions are asked in such a way that while answering them, the students are encouraged to use the newly learned grammatical structures and vocabulary items.” In addition, close to one forth of the teachers responded that they enabled their students to carry out discussions on a given topic or picture (23.1%). Few teachers indicated that they assigned their students to do presentations (3.8%) and take part in communicative games (3.5%).

While mentioning the methods and techniques implemented to teach this skill, a few teachers gave additional information about the strategies that they used in class to encourage speaking in English. The main strategy reported to be used was

the application of pair-work and group-work activities (10.9%). Similarly, these respondents claimed they always spoke in English and did not allow their students to speak in Turkish in the class (10.1%). A minimum number of teachers also revealed that they avoided error correction while their students were speaking in English, and they felt they created a positive atmosphere in their classrooms by using this supportive manner (5.4%).

Table 4.13: Methods, Techniques and Materials Used to Teach Speaking

	F	%
Speaking Activities		
Role-plays	185	50.3
Question and answer (i.e. T-S, S-T, S-S)	148	40.2
Discussions	85	23.1
Substitution and chain drills	39	10.6
Presentations	14	3.8
Communicative games	13	3.5
Strategies used to Encourage Students to Speak in English		
Teacher gives importance to pair-work and group work	40	10.9
Teacher always speaks in English in the class and doesn't allow students to speak in Turkish	37	10.1
Teacher creates a positive atmosphere by a supportive manner (i.e. Doesn't correct students while they are speaking)	20	5.4
	(N=368)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

The related literature on teaching writing reveals that writing activities can be of two types as “controlled practice” and “free-practice” writing activities (Willis, 1983, p. 156). Controlled practice writing activities are those types of activities in which guidance from the teachers is provided, whereas during free practice writing activities no guidance or help from the teacher is given (Willis, 1983, p. 158). The related literature also reveals that type of feedback provided is as important as the types of activities that are carried out. Considering this, the information collected about the methods and techniques used in the teaching of writing is displayed under four main sections as free-practice writing activities, controlled practice writing activities, other writing activities, and activities for feedback in Table 4.14.

A careful analysis of the table reveals that free-practice writing activities were implemented more than the controlled practice writing activities. In fact, more than one third of the teachers stated that they wanted their students to write paragraphs on topics about their life styles, families and hobbies (37.5%). On the other hand, a few teachers claimed that their students were not able to write paragraphs or compositions, so they assigned them to write their own sentences instead (11.7%). Similarly, few informed that they wanted their students to write letters (7.6%), prepare post-cards (3.8%), and write summaries (3.8%). There were also teachers who carried out other writing tasks such as describing pictures, keeping journals. (4.1%), but these were reported to be rarely done.

As stated earlier, controlled practice writing activities were mentioned by a smaller group of teachers. Among these activities, getting students to write dialogues similar to the ones in their course books is used by almost one fifth of the teachers (19.6%). A few teachers also revealed that they guided their students by providing linguistic clues such as key vocabulary and example sentences (7.6%). Actually, some of these teachers informed that they wrote on the board together with their students by “building up sentences one after the other” or by “ordering the jumbled sentences to form a paragraph.” Likewise, a very small group of teachers stated that they used brainstorming and grouping techniques to enable their students “find out and organize their ideas” (6%).

Among the respondents, there were also some teachers who mentioned writing activities that fit into neither free practice nor controlled practice. Dictation carried out by close to one fourth of the teachers was the most frequently stated one (23.1%). There were also teachers who perceived writing not as a skill to be taught but as any kind of writing done in the classroom such as writing answers to exercises (12%), taking notes of what was written on board (7.9%) and rewriting the dialogues and texts in the course books (4.6%). These same teachers believed, “These types of practices enable the students to overcome their problems with spelling and punctuation.”

As it is seen in Table 4.14, a very small group of teachers mentioned how they provided feedback to their students. Only few teachers revealed that they collected the writings and provided written feedback for each (6.8%). There were also few teachers who required their students to read what they had written in class to

get feedback from the teacher and their classmates (3.8%). After dictation, teachers made use of either peer-correction (3%) or self correction (2.7%). Other activities for feedback like portfolio assessment and praise were mentioned by only one percent of the respondents.

Table 4.14: Methods, Techniques and Materials Used to Teach Writing

	F	%
Free-practice writing activities		
Writing paragraphs and/or compositions about themselves (i.e. their families, friends, hobbies etc.)	138	37.5
Producing sentences by using the grammatical structures and vocabulary items taught	43	11.7
Writing letters to friends abroad or friends from other classes	28	7.6
Preparing post cards	14	3.8
Summarizing films, stories, reading texts in the books	14	3.8
Others (i.e. describing pictures, keeping journals or diaries, writing poems, jokes, film scenarios)	15	4.1
Controlled practice writing activities		
Writing dialogues similar to what is read or listened to	72	19.6
Writing by using the linguistic clues provided by the teacher (i.e. key vocabulary items, example sentences provided by the teacher)	28	7.6
Brainstorming and organizing ideas about the topic	22	6.0
Other Writing Activities		
Dictation of dialogues, passages and sentences read by the teacher	85	23.1
Writing answers to grammar and vocabulary exercises	44	12.0
Taking notes of what is written on board	29	7.9
Copying the dialogues and reading texts in the book	17	4.6
Activities for Feedback		
Teacher collects the writings and provides feedback to each	25	6.8
Students read their products in front of the class to get feedback	14	3.8
After dictation, peer correction is applied	11	3.0
After dictation, self correction is employed	10	2.7
Others (i.e. Portfolio assessment, Use of praise)	6	1.6
	(N=368)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses

4.2.3.1.4. Problems Faced by Teachers in Teaching Language Skills

While the teachers were giving information about the methods, techniques, and materials that they implemented in teaching the aforementioned language skills, some also discussed their problems in conducting them. Not much trouble was stated in terms of vocabulary and grammar, and reading; however, there were some teachers who faced certain problems while teaching listening, speaking, and writing. The problems in implementing the instructional methods, techniques and materials are displayed in Table 4.15 in relation to these three skills. According to the respondents, the most problematic skill was listening, as a little more than one third of them revealed that the cassettes and CDs of the course book were not available (36.1%). Actually, these teachers told, “MONE has not delivered the cassettes and CDs together with the books.” A few teachers also stated that their schools were not technologically equipped to conduct a listening lesson (15.8%). There were teachers complaining that there were even no tape recorders in their schools. Thus, not only because of these reasons but also due to the time limitations, little time and effort was allocated for the development of this skill (10.1%). There was also a small group of teachers who revealed that there were no listening activities in the course books (5.4%). These teachers added, “I want to use supplementary listening materials, but I still have problems with them, as these outside materials are either above the level of my students or their cassettes are not available” (5.4%). In addition, very few claimed that they did not implement listening in their classes as their students had difficulties in understanding native speakers.

As for speaking, the main problem is insufficient time allocated for the development of this skill (12%). Few teachers stated that their students were reluctant to speak in English as they lacked either the needed background vocabulary and grammar knowledge (10.9%) or self confidence (9.8%). Again, few revealed that their students were not interested in doing the speaking activities (8.3%). They thought, “Especially the discussion topics in the books are not suitable for the students’ interests”. In addition, the respondents admitted that this was the most difficult skill to develop (6.3%) as their students didn’t have the opportunity to use English in real life (4.6%). A minority of teachers also stated that while speaking, their students made serious pronunciation mistakes (3%).

Compared with the aforementioned skills, the problems about writing are mentioned less, but the results may still be important in understanding the situation. The respondents admitted that this skill was generally ignored in the language classroom. In other words, not enough time and energy was allocated for the development of this skill (11.4%). It was because the students either lacked the needed background knowledge in vocabulary and grammar (7.9%) or did not like writing (4.9%). There were few teachers who revealed that their students had difficulties in formulating their ideas even in Turkish (4.4%). Similarly, few also claimed that writing activities in the book were not efficient enough to improve this skill, and their students made serious spelling and punctuation mistakes (2.7%).

Table 4.15: Problems Faced by Teachers in Conducting the Instructional Methods, Techniques and Materials

	F	%
Problems in teaching listening		
The cassettes and CDs of the course-book are not available	133	36.1
School is not technologically equipped (i.e. No language laboratory and no tapes in the school)	58	15.8
Listening is not done effectively because of time limitations	37	10.1
There are no listening activities in the course-book	20	5.4
The outside listening materials are not applicable in the classroom (i.e. they are above the students' levels, their cassettes cannot be found)	20	5.4
Students have difficulties in understanding native speakers	17	4.6
Problems in teaching speaking		
Because of time limitations, teacher focuses on grammar and ignores this skill	44	12.0
Students lack background knowledge in vocabulary and grammar	40	10.9
Students lack self confidence	36	9.8
Students are not interested in doing the speaking activities	29	8.3
It is the most difficult skill to develop	23	6.3
Students can't practice the language in real-life	17	4.6
Students make pronunciation mistakes while speaking	11	3.0
Problems in teaching writing		
Not enough time and energy is spent to develop this skill	41	11.4
Students lack background knowledge in vocabulary and grammar	29	7.9

Table 4.15(continued)		
Students don't like writing	18	4.9
Students can't formulate their ideas even in Turkish	16	4.4
Writing activities in the book are inefficient	10	2.7
Students make a lot of spelling and punctuation mistakes	10	2.7
	(N=368)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.2.3.2. Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Attitudes Towards Lesson

Considering that attitudes are as critical as the instructional strategies in the success of any curriculum, in depth information about the reasons for the students' attitudes are displayed in Table 4.16 under two main headings as positive and negative attitudes. A considerable percentage of teachers stated that their students were interested in learning and using English (44.1 %). However, there was still more than one-third who thought their students were not motivated enough to learn the language (37.7%). Though not displayed in the table, one fifth of the respondents claimed that their students' attitudes towards the lesson varied (20.1%). Actually, the teachers informed, "The 6th and 7th graders are much more motivated than the 8th graders."

The table reveals that the students had positive attitudes towards the lesson, mainly because they found English courses entertaining (13.4%). There were also few teachers who claimed, "Students at these levels tend to love the course when they love the teacher." Therefore, they thought students had positive attitudes, because they loved their teacher (8.7%). Similarly, few mentioned that their students had positive attitudes not especially towards English, but towards learning in general (7%). A small group also believed their students knew English was important for their future needs (6.4%). There was also a small group of teachers stating that their students liked learning English since they were successful in the course (4.8%). In addition, a minimum percentage of teachers believed that English was significant for the students' present needs such as using technology (4.5%).

Much more information was given about the reasons for negative attitudes compared with those of the positive ones (see Table 4.16). In fact, one third of the teachers revealed that little attention was paid to learning English since it was not

assessed in national exams like OKS or LGS (33.8%). In addition, a little more than one-fourth claimed that parents did not pay attention to their children's learning English (26.3%). Similarly, one-fourth also believed that their students did not know how to study English (26%). There were also a few respondents claiming that their students had prejudices about the course (17.3%), did not know the importance of learning English (14.8%), had age related discipline problems (13.4%), and did not have opportunities to use English in real life (12%). Few teachers also stated that students especially in the rural areas did not want to continue their education, so they had no point in learning English (7.3%). Likewise, few believed that learning a foreign language required special abilities which their students lacked (6.7%). There was a small group of teachers mentioning that their students were reluctant to learn English, because they had prejudices about the culture (4.8%), and they knew that they were not going to fail (4.6%). Though rarely mentioned, there were also other reasons for the negative attitudes such as students' getting confused and being unable to concentrate as there was too much content to be learned (7.9%).

Table 4.16: Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Attitudes Towards the Lesson

	F	%
Positive Attitudes	151	44.1
English courses are entertaining	48	13.4
Students love the teacher	31	8.7
Students have a positive attitude to learning in general	25	7.0
English is important for students' future needs	23	6.4
Students are successful in English courses	17	4.8
Learning English is important for students' present needs (i.e. for using technology, talking with tourists)	16	4.5
Negative Attitudes	135	37.7
English is not assessed in national exams	121	33.8
Parents are not encouraging	94	26.3
Learning strategies are not developed	93	26.0
Students have prejudices about the course	62	17.3
Students don't know the importance of learning English	53	14.8
Because of their age, they are not interested in the courses	48	13.4
Students have no opportunities to practice English in real life	43	12.0
Students from rural areas don't want to continue their education	26	7.3

Table 4.16 (continued)		
Students don't have the ability to learn a second language	24	6.7
Students have prejudices about the culture	17	4.8
Because of the system, nobody fails	15	4.2
Others (i.e. Students get confused and can't concentrate as there is too much content to learn, they find the curriculum repetitious)	28	7.9
	(N=358)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

Since teachers play a crucial role in the maintenance of student motivation, information about the methods and techniques implemented to motivate the students is presented in Table 4.17. The table shows that majority of the teachers were using interesting activities (62.6%), and materials (53.6%) to motivate their students. More than one forth of the teachers informed that they talked about the importance English (27.1%). They added that they always reminded their students the Turkish idiom “Knowing one language makes you one person, but knowing two languages makes you two.” In addition, a little more than one fifth stated that they created a positive atmosphere in the class (21.8%), increased student participation (21.0%) and adopted the contents to daily life situations (20.1%). There were also teachers revealing that they simplified their presentations (13.7%), used praise (9.5%), and provided feedback and guidance when there was a mistake (4.2%). There were few teachers who mentioned other techniques such as providing English courses at the weekends, finding letter-friends, and communicating with parents (4.2%).

Table 4.17: The Ways the Teacher Motivates the Students

	F	%
Using interesting activities (i.e. Games, Role-plays, etc.)	224	62.6
Using interesting materials (i.e. Audio and visual materials)	191	53.6
Focusing on the importance of learning English	97	27.1
Creating a positive atmosphere in the class (i.e. use of humor)	78	21.8
Increasing student-participation in the lesson	75	21.0
Adopting the contents to daily life situations	72	20.1
Presenting contents considering the students' levels	49	13.7
Using Praise	34	9.5
Providing feedback and guidance when they make mistakes	15	4.2

Table 4.17 (continued)		
Others (i.e. providing English courses, finding letter-friends, communicating with parents)	15 (N=358)	4.2

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.2.3.3. Teachers' Comments on Student Assessment

Among the 325 respondents, 240 said they were faced with some problems, while 85 indicated that they did not encounter any. The problems related to student assessment are displayed in Table 4.18 under three main headings which are problems about students, problems encountered during test preparation and problems resulting from the curriculum.

The table reveals that a little more than one forth of the teachers had problems about their students (28.9%). In this regard, close to one forth informed that their students had problems in the exams as they showed little interest in the course (22.2%). A few also stated that there was inconsistency between students' classroom attitudes and their test scores (15.9%). In fact, these respondents said, "Though there are some students good at doing the given tasks and activities in class, they become unsuccessful in the exams." The main reason for this was stated to be "test-anxiety." There were also few teachers claiming that their students had problems in the exams, not only because they lacked the needed background in English (5.9%) but also because they tended to forget what was taught easily (5.5%). The most problematic areas in the exams were claimed to be the use of mechanics such as spelling, punctuation and capitalization (5.2%), reading comprehension (4.9%), and the use of vocabulary items (4%) and grammar (3.7%). There was a small group stating that the students had difficulties in understanding the instructions (3.4%).

The table also shows that close to one fourth of the teachers had problems while preparing their tests (24%). Among the respondents, nearly one fifth found it difficult to prepare tests suitable for all levels (19.4%). Actually, they revealed, "There are students with different English levels in the same classroom, so it is difficult to prepare exams that appeal to all." A similar problem occurred even when the students with different levels were put in different classrooms. It was because this time they prepared different tests for each class, which took a lot of time and energy.

Again, a few teachers said, “Students’ levels are lower than what is expected, and this necessitates simplifying the questions according to their levels” (10.2%). In addition, there was a small group of teachers responding, “There are a lot of contents covered in a term, so we have difficulties in determining which one is more important than others” (6.8%). There were teachers who informed that their students preferred objective tests to ones that required them to produce their own sentences. They perceived this as a problem as it limited their scope of questioning (4.9%). Other problems such as finding resources for test preparation, lack of computers, and not being knowledgeable about test preparation were mentioned rarely (4.4%).

Problems resulting from the curriculum were mentioned by almost one fifth of the teachers (19.4%). In relation to this, the teachers’ main problem was time constraint as a few claimed little or no time was left for reviewing contents (16%). They also added, “Focus of the curriculum is on grammar and vocabulary, and little time is allocated to the other four main skills, so they are not tested” (12.6%). There was few informing, “Though difficulty levels of contents are not same, equal time is allocated for the study of each” (2.8%). Moreover, a very small group of teachers complained that because of the system, only written test scores were considered, but classroom attitude, participation and oral exams were ignored in the overall assessment (1.9%). Other problems related to the curriculum like differences between yearly plans and textbook contents, lack of continuity in the curriculum, and inappropriate ordering of content were hardly ever mentioned (2.8%).

Table 4.18: Problems Faced by Teachers in Student Assessment

	F	%
Problems about the students	94	28.9
Lack of interest and home-practice	72	22.2
Inconsistency between the classroom attitude and the test scores	54	15.9
Lack of English background (i.e. vocabulary, grammar)	19	5.9
Memorization and forgetting	18	5.5
Errors on spelling, punctuation and capitalization	17	5.2
Inability to do the reading comprehension questions	16	4.9
Errors on the use of vocabulary items	13	4.0
Inability to formulate grammatically accurate sentences	12	3.7
Inability to understand the instructions given in English	11	3.4
Problems encountered during test preparation	78	24

Table 4.18 (continued)		
Preparing questions considering the level differences	63	19.4
Simplifying the questions according to students' levels	33	10.2
Determining the most important content to be assessed	25	6.8
Need for preparing objective tests	16	4.9
Others (i.e. Finding resources for test preparation, lack of computers, not being knowledgeable about test-preparation)	14	4.4
Problems resulting from the curriculum	63	19.4
No time left for reviewing contents	52	16.0
Focus on grammar and vocabulary /ignorance of other skills	41	12.6
Equal time allocated for each content	9	2.8
Consideration of written test scores only	6	1.9
Others (i.e. Difference between yearly plans and textbook content, continuity in the curriculum, ordering of contents)	9	2.8
	(N=325)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses

As mentioned beforehand, 85 teachers stated they did not encounter any problems while assessing their students. Some also gave in-depth information about the measures taken in order not to come across with difficulties (see Table 4.19). A few claimed that they gave the oral grades considering the students' attitudes towards the lesson in order to overcome the problems resulting from the inconsistency between classroom attitudes and test scores (10.5%). A few also revealed they asked varying levels of questions in the same exam so that "Neither the students with low level of English nor those with high level could be disadvantaged" (6.8%). There were also a few mentioning that their students did not face any problems as they asked what they taught (6%), and they simplified the questions according to students' levels (5.9%). The respondents also told, "Students can understand what is wanted as the instructions are clearly stated in Turkish or by using examples and pictures" (5.5%). There was a small group who added that the types of questions were similar to the exercises and quizzes implemented in class (5.2%). Again, according to a small group, there was no problem with test preparation since there were a lot of resources (4.3%). Very few teachers admitted they prepared different tests for different levels (2.5%). Other techniques to overcome problems were asking questions prepared by the students, and selecting them from the books (1.5%).

Table 4.19: Measures Taken by Teachers in Student Assessment

	F	%
Oral grades are given considering the students' attitudes towards the course (i.e. Participation, interest and effort)	34	10.5
Varying level of questions are asked in the same exam	25	6.8
Questions are all about what is taught	22	6.0
Questions are prepared considering the students' levels	19	5.9
Instructions are clearly stated (i.e. In Turkish, with examples and pictures)	18	5.5
Types of questions are similar to what is done in class	17	5.2
There are a lot of resources for test preparation	14	4.3
Different exams are administered for different levels	8	2.5
Others (i.e. Students' own questions are asked, Questions are selected from the course book)	5	1.5
	(N=325)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.2.3.4. Activities Used to Enrich Teaching of English

The findings related to the activities used to enrich teaching of English are presented in Table 4.20. In this regard, the majority revealed that they attended regular meetings with other English teachers to share materials and tests (22.3%) and to exchange ideas about the students and course (17.7%). A few also stated they assigned their students project works and displayed them on the boards of the school together with puzzles, jokes, poems and idioms prepared by themselves (15.1%). In addition, a considerable percentage revealed that they were collaborating with teachers of other fields. Among these, Turkish language teachers were reported to be collaborated more (12.8%). In relation to this, the teachers informed, "Since it is more advantageous for students to know Turkish grammar before learning English, we collaborate with teachers of Turkish language while deciding on the grammar content to be taught." Few also mentioned that they got help from teachers of Art and Music while planning their courses (7.2%). In this regard, art teachers helped in preparing visual materials and music teachers assisted in playing the songs. A small group of teachers informed that they arranged competitions among and within classes to enable students to use English (5.9%). Similarly, a small group stated they had

established a language laboratory in the school (5.3%) and they offered English language courses at the weekends or in the afternoons when classes finished (3.9%). There were also teachers who supported students to prepare and publish a school newspaper in English (3.6%). Very few teachers also informed that they found friends abroad or from other schools for their students to whom they could write letters (3.3%). Other activities carried out to improve English in the school were directing a school chorus and school theater, and supplying school library with English books (3.9%).

Table 4.20: Activities Used to Enrich Teaching of English

	F	%
Sharing materials and tests with other English teachers	68	22.3
Regular meetings with other English teachers to exchange ideas	54	17.7
Displaying projects, puzzles, jokes, poetry, idioms on boards	46	15.1
Collaborating with Turkish Language teachers to decide on the grammar content to be taught	39	12.8
Collaborating with teachers from other fields in subject matter knowledge (i.e. Art teacher, Music teacher)	22	7.2
Arranging competitions among and within classes	18	5.9
Establishing a Language laboratory	16	5.3
Offering English courses at the weekends	12	3.9
Publishing an English newspaper	11	3.6
Finding friends for students to write letters	10	3.3
Others (i.e. School theatre, School chorus, English books in the school library)	12	3.9
	(N=305)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.2.4. Problems Encountered By Teachers In Implementing the Curriculum

In relation to the third research question, the problems that teachers face in implementing the curriculum were collected in various sections of the questionnaire. For instance, the teachers were asked to comment on the reasons that hinder the achievement of the stated goals in Question 2 at Part B, the problems about the content of the curriculum in Question 2 at Part C, the problems encountered while teaching the stated language skills in Question 2 at Part D and their overall opinions related to the problems and suggestions in Part F. While examining the data provided

in these aforementioned sections, it was observed that teachers mentioned their problems in general without paying attention to the specific thematic divisions. Besides, there were some teachers who repeated their problems in each section as they thought these affected instruction in several respects. Thus, the information related to the aforementioned questions is presented in the same table (Table 4.21).

A close examination of the table reveals that majority of the teachers complained about lack of materials and equipment (84.5%) and the course book (63.9%). More than half of the teachers stated that their problems resulted from the students (56.3%). Again, close to half had complaints about the curriculum (48.4%), and one forth about the classroom environment (25.3%). There was also a small group of teachers revealing that there was insufficient number of English teachers in their schools (13.3%).

Those teachers claiming that there was lack of materials and equipment in their schools gave further information about the issue. Among the respondents, the majority had difficulties in terms of audio materials such as cassettes, CDs, VCDs, tape recorders and video players (64.1%). There was also a considerable percentage complaining that they did not have readily available visual materials such as OHPs, pictures and flashcards (44.3%). In addition, more than one third told they had problems in providing their students with supplementary materials to practice the language skills (37.8%). In fact, these teachers added that they could not find other resource books, story books and even dictionaries to prepare their own materials.

As for the problems resulting from the course book, a considerable percentage of teachers claimed that the book was very structural and was not communicative (42.1%). In fact, they said, "The book leads to memorization as it involves a lot of mechanical exercises and activities." Moreover, a little more than one third responded that there was too much unknown language in the reading texts which hindered comprehension (34.8%). They said, "Although unknown grammatical structures are not explained in the unit, they appear in the text." They also added, "Some texts involve too much unknown words." There was also one third stating that there was insufficient number of exercises to practice grammar and vocabulary (31%). Besides, close to one forth of the teachers complained about the physical layout of the book (23.6%). Actually, they said, "The course book is not as colorful as other commercial books. It is not full of pictures, and it has serious

problems with print quality. ” According to a little more than one fifth, another problem with the book was the grading of contents (21.7%). In other words, the teachers informed, “The grammar contents logically irrelevant are sequenced one after the other, and the units are not thematically related to one another.” Furthermore, some teachers had problems with reading passages in the book as close to one third believed they were unauthentic, boring and long (19.8%). In relation to these, the course book was claimed to be unsuitable for some students’ English levels by a few teachers (14.1%). Similarly, a few teachers complained that the course book lacked explanations for grammatical structures (17.8%). Besides, there was a small group of teachers informing that the course book was full of language mistakes (10.3%). Finally, few teachers complained about not having a teacher’s manual and using different course books in different grades (9%).

The main problem with the students was their lack of interest in the lesson (42.4%). More than one third of the teachers also informed that their students were unable to perform reading and writing tasks because they were not good at them even in Turkish (37.5%) and they lacked the needed grammar and vocabulary background knowledge (35.9%).

In relation to the problems about the curriculum, a considerable percentage of teachers complained that it was overloaded (40.8%). A little more than one third also revealed that the focus of the curriculum was on the development of grammar and vocabulary rather than the skills (35.1%). In fact, it was stated, “There is little or no opportunity provided for the development of especially listening, speaking and writing.” Some of those teachers complaining about the overloaded curriculum content also claimed that no time was left for review and practice (23.1%). Besides, a few teachers mentioned that there was need for continuity in the curriculum (13%). In other words, teachers believed, “The contents should be repeated in each grade so that students will not forget the previously studied language structures.” A small group of teachers also added, “Some contents are more difficult than the others, so they should be emphasized more; however, equal time is allocated for each unit without considering this issue.” (7.6%) Similarly, few teachers complained about the repetition of content of 4th and 5th grade levels at 6th grade (7.1%). According to these teachers, “The contents of 7th and 8th grades can begin in the 6th grade and this may overcome problems resulting from the overloaded curriculum content.”

Finally, almost all the teachers having problems with the classroom environment complained about crowded classrooms (22.3%). According to them, “Crowded classes mainly restrict the implementation of listening and speaking activities.” There were also teachers who said, “Since our classes are very crowded, we spend too much time to give feedback to students’ writing and to read the exams.” Another problem was having students of various levels in the same classroom (15.2%). Very few teachers stated that the physical qualities of their classrooms were not suitable for carrying out English lessons (4.6%). According to these respondents, “The acoustics of the classes are not appropriate for implementing listening activities, and unmovable desks create problems for conducting pair-work and group-work activities.”

As mentioned earlier, teachers claimed that there was insufficient number of English teachers in their schools, so the lessons were conducted by non-English teachers such as math, science and others. (13%). There were also teachers who complained that due to the lack of English teachers, the course was not provided at grades 4 and 5 (12.2%). That’s why some of the students started the 6th grade without having the background.

Table 4.21: Problems Encountered by Teachers While Implementing the Curriculum

	F	%
Lack of support in terms of materials and equipment	311	84.5
Lack of audio materials (i.e. cassettes, CDs, VCDs, tape recorders, video players)	236	64.1
Lack of visual materials (i.e. OHP, Pictures, Flashcards)	163	44.3
Lack of supplementary materials to develop the language skills (i.e., resource books, dictionaries, story books)	139	37.8
Problems resulting from the course book	235	63.9
Lack of communicative tasks and activities	155	42.1
Having unknown language within the texts(i.e. unknown grammatical structures, too many unknown vocabulary items)	128	34.8
Inadequate number of grammar and vocabulary exercises	129	31.0
Physical layout (i.e. lack of visual support, print quality)	87	23.6
Grading of content	80	21.7
Long and unauthentic passages and dialogues	73	19.8
Not having explanations for grammatical structures	62	17.8
Unsuitable for students’ English level (difficult)	52	14.1

Table 4.21 (continued)		
Full of language mistakes	38	10.3
Not having the teacher's manual	33	9.0
Use of different books in different grades	33	9.0
Problems resulting from the students	207	56.3
Lack of interest in learning English	156	42.4
Inability to perform reading and writing skills even in Turkish	138	37.5
Lack of background in English (i.e. vocabulary, grammar)	132	35.9
Problems resulting from the curriculum	178	48.4
Loaded curriculum content	150	40.8
Focus on the development of grammatical knowledge and ignorance of certain skills (i.e. Listening, speaking, writing)	114	35.1
No time left for review and practice	85	23.1
No repetition of content in 6 th , 7 th and 8 th grades	48	13.0
Equal time allocated to each unit	28	7.6
Repetition of 4 th and 5 th years' content at the 6 th grade	26	7.1
Problems resulting from the classroom environment	93	25.3
Crowded classrooms	82	22.3
Having students of different levels in the same classroom	56	15.2
Physical qualities of the classrooms	17	4.6
Problems related to non-English Teachers or lack of teachers	49	13.3
Having Non-English teachers (i.e. math, science etc.)	48	13.0
Lack of English language teachers in the previous grades	45	12.2
	(N=368)	

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.3. Students' Experiences with the Curriculum

In relation to the fourth research question, the students' experiences related to the curriculum goals, content, instructional methods, techniques and materials, and assessment procedures together with their attitudes towards English are discussed separately in this section. Besides, information about differences in students' experiences by background factors such as grade levels, gender, parents' educational and English levels, and English grade in the last record sheet is provided. In the first three sections, the student answers are discussed considering the total percentages

(N). The differences among the students in relation to grade level will be discussed in the last section in relation to the results of statistical tests.

4.3.1. Students' Difficulties in Attaining the Goals of the Curriculum

Information about students' difficulties in achieving the curriculum goals are displayed in Table 4.22. The table shows that more than half stated that they sometimes had difficulties in articulating sounds and understanding a listening text (56.6% and 52.9%, respectively). There was also close to one-third having problems in articulating sounds (30.3%) and close to one-fourth having troubles with listening (22.4%). Moreover, a considerable percentage sometimes had troubles with speaking and reading (42.4% and 46.7% respectively). However, there was still more than one-third not having any difficulties in these skills (36.1% and 38.3%, respectively).

As for understanding and using vocabulary items, there seemed to be disagreements among the respondents as a considerable percentage indicated that they did not have any difficulties (46.3%), whereas more than one-third revealed they sometimes had troubles with it (35.4%). There were also a few finding it difficult to use the vocabulary items (18.3%). Likewise, a considerable percentage of students believed understanding and using grammatical structures was not difficult (43.9%), while more than one-third thought it was sometimes problematic (35.1%). There was also a little more than one-fifth claiming that this skill was difficult (21%).

The main controversy among the respondents was seen in writing and doing dictations. It is because, although more than one-third sometimes had problems with writing paragraphs (35.1%), a little less than one-third did not have any (31.7%). Moreover, there was still one-third who always had problems in writing (33.2%). Similarly, while nearly two-fifths admitted they sometimes had difficulties in doing dictations (38.5%), another two-fifths did not have any problems at all (40%). Still, there was a little more than one-fifth having troubles with doing dictations (21.5%).

Table 4.22: Students' Difficulties in Attaining the Goals of the Curriculum

Students' Difficulties	Categories	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Articulating sounds	Yes	11.6	13.7	13.8	13.1
	Sometimes	55.8	57.5	56.4	56.6
	No	32.6	28.8	29.8	30.3
		N=387	N=431	N=399	N=1217

Table 4.22(continued)					
Understanding and using vocabulary items	Yes	17.8	19.4	17.5	18.3
	Sometimes	37.0	35.4	33.8	35.4
	No	45.2	45.2	48.7	46.3
		N=387	N=432	N=394	N=1213
Understanding and using grammatical structures	Yes	18.4	22.8	21.6	21.0
	Sometimes	37.8	33.4	34.5	35.1
	No	43.8	43.8	43.9	43.9
		N=381	N=429	N=394	N=1204
Listening	Yes	21.0	22.7	23.4	22.4
	Sometimes	53.0	48.0	58.0	52.9
	No	26.0	29.2	18.6	24.7
		N=385	N=431	N=393	N=1209
Speaking	Yes	15.0	16.1	20.5	17.2
	Sometimes	44.2	49.4	46.2	46.7
	No	40.8	34.5	33.3	36.1
		N=387	N=429	N=396	N=1212
Reading	Yes	19.5	19.4	18.9	19.3
	Sometimes	44.2	40.4	46.4	42.4
	No	40.8	40.2	34.7	38.3
		N=387	N=428	N=392	N=1200
Writing paragraphs	Yes	32.9	31.4	35.4	33.2
	Sometimes	37.0	35.3	40.5	35.1
	No	45.2	35.3	24.1	31.7
		N=387	N=433	N=398	N=1220
Dictation	Yes	22.1	21.9	20.6	21.5
	Sometimes	33.3	40.9	40.7	38.5
	No	44.5	37.2	38.7	40.0
		N=387	N=430	N=398	N=1212

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses.

4.3.2. Students' Perceptions of the Content of the Curriculum

Findings on the students' perceptions of the content of the curriculum are shown in Table 4.23. While a little more than half of the students believed most of the vocabulary items taught were frequently used (53%), more than one-third thought they were sometimes needed (37%). Similarly, half of the students believed that the topics of the listening and reading texts were relevant to real-life situations (50.7%), whereas more than one-third felt that they were sometimes relevant (35.6%). In fact, students seemed to disagree with one another on whether the topics of the listening/reading texts were interesting or not. Although approximately two-fifths thought they were sometimes interesting (38.8%), two-thirds found them boring (37.5%). There were still students believing their topics were interesting (23.7%).

As the table reveals, 53.2% said that majority of the classroom activities were on grammar. There was nearly one-third who claimed that sometimes they mainly studied grammar in their lessons (32.5%). Again, though a little more than half thought that grammar activities done in the classroom were interesting (51.1%), one-third stated they were sometimes interesting (33.2%) and a few claimed they were not interesting at all (14.3%). Most of the students thought that grammar activities were comprehensible (59.4%), but there was still approximately one-third admitting that they sometimes had difficulties in understanding them (32.5%). Although the majority believed that grammar activities were helpful for the development of their speaking skills (63.9%), there was close to one-fourth who found them sometimes helpful (24.8%). The main contradiction among respondents was on writing. Although close to two-fifths found the topics of writing tasks interesting (39.7%), a little more than one-third thought they were interesting at times (34.3%). There was still a little more than one-fourth feeling that they were not interesting at all (26.6%).

Table 4.23: Students' Perceptions of the Content of the Curriculum

Statements on Content	Categories	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Frequently used vocabulary items are taught	Yes	52.4	56.3	50.5	53.0
	Sometimes	38.8	32.3	40.2	37.0
	No	8.7	11.4	9.3	9.9
		N=389	N=430	N=398	N=1217
The topics of the listening/reading texts are relevant to real-life situations	Yes	55.0	46.4	51.1	50.7
	Sometimes	29.9	38.3	38.3	35.6
	No	15.1	15.3	10.6	13.7
		N=385	N=431	N=397	N=1213
The topics of the listening/ reading texts are interesting	Yes	26.0	20.0	25.5	23.7
	Sometimes	36.9	38.7	40.9	38.8
	No	37.1	41.3	33.6	37.5
		N=388	N=431	N=399	N=1218
Majority of classroom activities are on grammar	Yes	53.5	56.1	49.9	53.2
	Sometimes	34.0	30.4	33.2	32.5
	No	12.5	13.5	16.9	14.3
		N=385	N=431	N=397	N=1213
Grammar activities are interesting	Yes	49.6	52.0	51.4	51.1
	Sometimes	37.4	31.8	30.8	33.2
	No	13.0	16.2	17.8	15.7
		N=385	N=431	N=400	N=1216
Grammar activities are comprehensible	Yes	55.8	59.3	62.9	59.4
	Sometimes	34.5	38.3	29.0	32.6
	No	9.6	6.4	8.1	8.0
		N=385	N=435	N=396	N=1216

Table 4.23 (continued)					
Grammar activities are for the development of speaking skills	Yes	69.5	61.9	60.7	63.9
	Sometimes	19.8	26.7	27.5	24.8
	No	10.7	11.4	11.8	11.3
		N= 383	N=430	N=397	N=1210
The topics of the writing activities are interesting	Yes	42.8	39.0	37.4	39.7
	Sometimes	31.0	35.1	36.7	34.3
	No	26.2	25.9	25.9	26.0
		N=390	N=433	N=398	N=1221

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses.

4.3.3. Students' Perceptions of Instruction and Assessment

This section is subdivided into three main sections as students' perceptions of the instructional methods and techniques used in learning language skills, students' perceptions of assessment, and activities that students do to improve their English.

4.3.3.1. Students' Perceptions of the Instructional Methods, Techniques and Materials used in Learning Language Skills

Students' experiences about the instructional methods and techniques implemented for the development of each language area (vocabulary and grammar) and each skill (reading, listening, speaking and writing) were displayed and discussed separately. Moreover, information about student problems in carrying out activities in learning each language and each skill are displayed in separate tables under each section.

4.3.3.1.1. Learning Vocabulary and Grammar

As it is displayed in Table 4.24, students generally had positive opinions about the methods, techniques and materials used in learning vocabulary. In fact, majority claimed that it was helpful when their teachers presented the Turkish equivalents of vocabulary items (94.7%), and when they provided example sentences in which the new words were used (86.6%). Besides, most of the students found it beneficial to practice the pronunciation of vocabulary items (90.1%), rewrite them several times (86.1%), and play games with them (71.4%).

The table reveals that respondents' opinions differed in four of the statements. While more than half claimed that learning synonyms and antonyms was useful

(54.4%), there was one-third who believed it was partially useful (33.3%). Again, more than half felt that use of pictures and realia, looking up in the dictionaries, and producing sentences were useful (57.6%, 57.9%, and 50.4%, respectively). Yet, there was still nearly one-fourth who found these instructional methods and techniques partially useful (28.2%, 23.7% and 27.3%, respectively).

In fact, the percentages of students having doubts about the benefits of majority of these instructional strategies were very low. Again, the results showed except for producing sentences, almost all of these instructional strategies were implemented in majority of the classrooms. It is because few students revealed they did not produce their own sentences with the new vocabulary items (16.4%).

Table 4.24: Students' Perceptions of the Methods, Techniques and Materials used in Learning Vocabulary

Vocabulary Activities	Categories	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Learning the Turkish equivalents of vocabulary items	Useful	96.0	93.5	94.7	94.7
	Partially Useful	3.2	5.1	3.8	4.1
	Not Useful	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Not Done	0.3	0.9	1.0	0.7
		N= 396	N= 434	N=399	N= 1229
Learning the antonyms and synonyms of vocabulary items	Useful	56.9	51.3	56.5	54.4
	Partially Useful	31.2	38.2	30.4	33.3
	Not Useful	2.0	6.1	4.3	4.3
	Not Done	9.9	4.4	8.8	8.0
		N= 392	N=435	N=398	N=1225
Practicing the pronunciation of vocabulary items	Useful	90.6	90.1	89.7	90.1
	Partially Useful	8.1	8.5	9.8	8.8
	Not Useful	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Not Done	0.3	0.9	-	0.6
		N=393	N=435	N=398	N=1226
Teacher's use of vocabulary items in example sentences	Useful	86.4	87.8	85.5	86.6
	Partially Useful	11.3	9.0	11.8	10.6
	Not Useful	0.8	2.1	.8	1.2
	Not Done	1.5	1.1	2.0	1.6
		N=391	N=435	N=399	N=1225
Use of pictures and real objects	Useful	61.2	59.0	52.4	57.6
	Partially Useful	25.2	31.1	28.2	28.2
	Not Useful	5.4	5.3	7.1	5.9
	Not Done	8.2	4.6	12.3	8.3
		N=392	N=434	N=397	N=1223
Looking up vocabulary items in the dictionary	Useful	71.4	72.0	70.8	57.9
	Partially Useful	21.5	21.6	22.9	23.7
	Not Useful	5.4	4.6	3.0	11.0
	Not Done	1.8	1.8	3.3	7.4
		N=391	N=435	N=397	N=1220

Table 4.24 (continued)					
Rewriting vocabulary items (i.e. 5 to 10 times)	Useful	65.6	58.7	49.4	86.1
	Partially Useful	20.7	22.9	27.6	10.0
	Not Useful	9.4	11.8	11.6	0.9
	Not Done	4.3	6.6	11.4	3.0
		N=392	N=433	N=395	N= 1221
Producing sentences by using vocabulary items	Useful	88.9	87.1	82.2	50.4
	Partially Useful	7.7	9.7	12.5	27.3
	Not Useful	1.5	0.9	0.3	5.6
	Not Done	1.8	2.3	5.0	16.4
		N=388	N=434	N=399	N=1222
Playing vocabulary games	Useful	56.2	51.4	43.7	71.4
	Partially Useful	29.0	29.3	23.6	22.0
	Not Useful	5.4	4.4	7.3	4.3
	Not Done	9.5	15.0	25.4	2.3
		N=390	N=434	N=398	N=1223

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses

As it is displayed in Table 4.25, majority of the students had positive opinions about most of the methods, techniques and materials used in learning grammar. In fact, the percentage of students who preferred direct teaching of rules and functions was higher than those who preferred indirect teaching (72.4% and 58.4% respectively). Similarly, though a little more than one-fifth thought direct teaching was partially useful, more than one-fourth felt indirect teaching was useful (28.6%). In relation to the activities done for the improvement of grammar, the majority believed that transforming sentences into various forms, producing sentences and doing meaningful exercises in the form of sentence completions were beneficial (82.4%, 85% and 76.5%, respectively). The percentage of students indicating that these methods and techniques were not useful or not used at all was very low.

Table 4.25: Students' Perceptions of the Methods, Techniques and Materials used in Learning Grammar

Grammar Activities	Categories	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Direct teaching of the functions and forms of grammatical structures	Useful	69.6	73.8	73.4	72.4
	Partially Useful	24.3	20.2	20.6	21.6
	Not Useful	4.1	4.6	4.0	4.2
	Not Done	2.0	1.4	2.0	1.8
		N=395	N=432	N=399	N=1226
Indirect teaching of the functions and forms of grammatical structures	Useful	59.4	59.4	56.3	58.4
	Partially Useful	27.0	27.9	30.9	28.6
	Not Useful	9.7	7.4	6.3	7.8
	Not Done	3.8	5.3	6.5	5.2
		N=392	N=434	N=398	N=1224

Table 4.25 (continued)					
Transforming sentences into various forms (i.e. question-answer, positive-negative)	Useful	81.5	84.4	81.2	82.4
	Partially Useful	14.7	13.3	14.5	14.2
	Not Useful	2.0	0.9	1.5	1.5
	Not Done	1.8	1.4	2.8	2.0
		N=395	N=435	N=399	N=1229
Producing sentences by using grammatical structures	Useful	86.2	85.2	83.7	85.0
	Partially Useful	11.3	13.0	12.0	12.2
	Not Useful	0.5	0.9	2.0	1.1
	Not Done	2.0	0.9	2.3	1.7
		N=391	N=432	N=399	N=1222
Doing sentence completion exercises on grammatical structures	Useful	80.5	74.2	75.1	76.5
	Partially Useful	15.9	21.9	19.6	19.2
	Not Useful	1.8	1.6	2.5	2.0
	Not Done	1.8	2.3	2.8	2.3
		N=395	N=434	N=398	N=1227

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses

As it is shown in Table 4.26, among the respondents 19.3% revealed that they did not face any problems while carrying out the vocabulary and grammar activities. When the responses of the students across grade levels are considered, it is seen that in this respect the percentages of students studying in grades 6 and 8 was lower than those studying in grade 7 (20.2%, 22.4% and 15.9% respectively). However, there was approximately 80% who admitted that they encountered certain problems while carrying out the vocabulary and grammar activities.

The main problem was stated to be the unknown vocabulary items in example sentences and in exercises, as a considerable percentage of the respondents claimed (39.1%). In this regard the respondents revealed, "No matter how much I study for English, I forget the meanings of the words easily. I can't memorize them." When the differences among grade levels are considered, it is observed that nearly half of the students in 8th grade faced difficulties in this regard (51.3%). In fact, the percentages of students having problems with remembering the vocabulary items in exercises in 8th grade were more than the percentages of students studying in grade levels 6 and 7 (32.3% and 35.3%, respectively).

The second problem that was faced by more than one third of the respondents was formulating accurate sentences by using the vocabulary items and grammar structures (35.1%). Actually, a considerable percentage of students studying in 7th and 8th grades indicated that they could not produce their own sentences (39.2% and

37.4% respectively). The percentage of students mentioning this problem in 6th grade was less when compared with those in 7th and 8th grades (28.6%).

According to a little more than one forth of the students, the third problem faced was the difference between spoken and written English (26.1%). In relation to this, the students revealed they did either pronunciation or spelling mistakes while studying the vocabulary items. As it is displayed in the table, more students in 8th grade encountered this problem when compared with those in 6th and 7th grades (30.2%, 13.6% and 17.8%, respectively).

Another problem mentioned by one fifth of the students was the difference between Turkish grammar and English grammar, as they claimed, “Since Turkish and English are very different in terms of grammar, I have difficulties in understanding English rules.” (20.1%) Again, when the differences across grade levels are considered, it is observed that more students from 8th grade had difficulties in this regard (30.2%) when compared with the students of 6th and 7th grades (13.6% and 17.8%, respectively).

The last but not the least important problem that students encountered in studying vocabulary was using dictionaries (13.2%). In this regard, few students told, “When I look up the dictionary, I see that some words have more than one meaning, so I have difficulty in understanding which meaning is suitable in that context.” As it was with other problems, the percentage of students encountering this problem in 8th grade was higher than the percentages of those studying in 6th and 7th grades (20.1%, 13.1% and 9.6%, respectively). Other problems such as insufficient number of exercises, use of similar types of activities, and content’s being above their levels were mentioned by very few students (2.8%). In fact, they were indicated mainly by students studying in 8th grade (2.8%).

To sum up, it can be stated that more students from 8th grade mentioned these six problems about vocabulary and grammar activities. The second group mentioning them was the students of 7th grade. In comparison with the students of 7th and 8th grades, fewer students from grade 6 indicated them as their problems.

Table 4.26: Students' Problems with Vocabulary and Grammar Activities

Problems about Vocabulary and Grammar Activities	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
No problem	20.2	15.9	22.4	19.3
Unknown vocabulary items in example sentences and in exercises	32.3	35.3	51.3	39.1
Formulating accurate sentences by using the vocabulary items and grammatical structures	28.6	39.2	37.4	35.1
The difference between spoken and written English	28.9	22.3	26.3	26.1
Understanding the grammatical structures because of the difference between Turkish and English	13.6	17.8	30.2	20.1
Finding out the meanings of words by using dictionaries	9.6	13.1	20.1	13.2
Others (i.e. Insufficient number of exercises, similar type of activities, contents above the level)	-	1.8	7.1	2.8
	N=346	N=383	N=308	N=1037

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.3.3.1.2. Learning Listening and Reading

Information about the students' perceptions of the instructional methods, techniques and materials used in learning the two receptive skills, listening and reading is presented in Table 4.27. According to the table, although almost an equal amount of students found it useful or partially useful when their teachers presented the dialogues and texts by reading aloud (42% and 40%, respectively), a few indicated that this presentation technique was not beneficial (13.7%). Students revealing that reading aloud technique was not used in their classrooms were very few (4.3%). However, a considerable percentage of students mentioned that they did not listen to dialogues from the tapes (40.7%). In the classrooms where it was implemented, use of tapes was found to be partially useful by more than one forth of the students (28.7%), whereas those finding it useful or not useful were a few (15.5% and 15.1%, respectively).

In contrast to reading aloud and listening from dialogues, silent reading of texts in the classroom was claimed to be beneficial by the majority (74.8%).

However, there was still one-fourth who reported that silent reading in the classroom was partially helpful (19.3%). The students who were against silent reading and who indicated it was not implemented at all were very few (3.2% and 2.5%, respectively). Students who believed in the benefit of reading texts at home was a lot (63.7%), but there was still one-fourth who felt reading at home was partially useful (25.4%). In fact, the students say, “When we read the texts at home and find out the unknown words from the dictionary, we can understand them better in the classroom.” The students who did not believe in the use of reading at home and who indicated it was not implemented was very few (6.6% and 4.3%, respectively).

When the pre-reading and/or pre-listening activities are considered, the most favored one was teachers’ pre-teaching the unknown words. In fact, this was claimed to be helpful by the majority (79.1%) and partially helpful by a few (13.8%). Only a very small group of students stated that pre-teaching of vocabulary was useless or not implemented in their classrooms (3.4% and 3.8%, respectively). Another pre-listening and/or pre-reading technique, discussion, was found to be effective by half of the respondents (50.3%). However, close to one third indicated that this technique was partially useful (31.5%), and a few revealed that discussions were not implemented in their classrooms (11.6%).

The main while-listening and/or while-reading method, answering comprehension questions about texts, was believed to be useful by the majority (67%) and partially useful by a little more than one fifth of the students (22%). The students stating that this method was no useful or not done was very few (3.8% and 7.2%, respectively).

Table 4.27: Students’ Perceptions of the Methods, Techniques and Materials used in Learning listening and Reading

Listening/Reading Activities	Categories	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Teacher’s reading aloud	Useful	46.4	42.7	37.0	42.0
	Partially Useful	37.9	41.3	40.7	40.0
	Not Useful	13.3	10.8	17.2	13.7
	Not Done	2.3	5.2	5.1	4.3
		N=390	N=436	N=396	N=1222
Listening to dialogues from the tapes	Useful	19.2	14.2	12.8	15.5
	Partially Useful	35.7	25.6	25.3	28.7
	Not Useful	16.7	16.4	12.3	15.1
	Not Done	28.4	43.8	49.6	40.7
		N=395	N=434	N=399	N=1228

Table 4.27 (continued)					
Silent Reading dialogues /texts in the class	Useful	75.0	75.6	73.8	74.8
	Partially Useful	17.0	20.5	20.4	19.3
	Not Useful	4.1	2.5	3.3	3.2
	Not Done	3.9	1.4	2.5	2.5
		N=388	N=435	N=393	N=1216
Reading dialogues/texts at home	Useful	65.7	64.7	60.7	63.7
	Partially Useful	22.2	26.1	27.7	25.4
	Not Useful	7.7	6.2	5.8	6.6
	Not Done	4.4	3.0	5.8	4.3
		N=388	N=436	N=397	N=1221
Pre-teaching unknown words	Useful	77.8	81.9	77.2	79.1
	Partially Useful	14.9	13.3	13.2	13.8
	Not Useful	4.1	2.5	3.6	3.4
	Not Done	3.1	2.3	6.0	3.8
		N=388	N=437	N=394	N=1219
Discussions as pre-reading/pre-listening activities	Useful	52.6	53.7	44.4	50.3
	Partially Useful	31.6	29.6	33.3	31.5
	Not Useful	7.3	6.5	6.1	6.6
	Not Done	8.5	10.2	16.2	11.6
		N=386	N=432	N=393	N=1214
Answering comprehension questions about dialogues/texts	Useful	69.1	66.9	65.1	67.0
	Partially Useful	19.6	23.0	23.2	22.0
	Not Useful	4.1	3.2	4.1	3.8
	Not Done	7.2	6.9	7.6	7.2
		N=388	N=435	N=393	N=1216

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses

Table 4.28 displays information about the students' problems in doing listening and reading activities. It is observed that close to one forth of the respondents did not have any difficulties while doing listening and/or reading activities (24.6%). Taking into account the responses of students across grade levels, it can be said that in this respect the percentages of students studying in 8th grade was more than the students studying in 6th and 7th grades (30.9%, 20.6% and 18%, respectively). However, there was approximately 75% admitting that they encountered certain problems while carrying out the listening and reading activities.

The main problem faced while listening and reading was the unknown vocabulary items in the texts as more than half said, "Since we do not remember the meanings of words used in the texts, we have difficulties in understanding what is explained" (52.3%). Lack of vocabulary knowledge was perceived as a problem by

most of the students studying in 8th grade and by close to half of the students studying in grades 6 and 7 (58.4%, 46% and 47.9%, respectively).

Another problem mentioned by a little more than one-third of the respondents was pronunciation mistakes done while reading aloud (34.9%). Again more than half of the students in 8th grade, less than one third of the students in 7th grade and a little less than one fifth of students in 6th grade perceived it as a problem (65.3%, 29.6% and 23.9%, respectively). A few students indicated that they had troubles with understanding texts as they lacked the needed grammatical knowledge (10.8%). This problem was revealed mainly by the students in 8th grade (17.2%), and it was mentioned by fewer students in grades 7 and 6 (9% and 7.4% respectively).

Once more it was reported by only few students that the topics of the listening and/or reading texts were not interesting for them (2.4%). They were found to be uninteresting mainly by students studying in grades 7 and 8 (3.7% and 2.8%, respectively). Other problems such as teachers' reading fast, need for pre-reading activities and little time allocated for the development of these skills were mentioned by a very small group of students (2.2%).

To summarize, it can be stated that more students from grade 8 mentioned these five problems about listening and reading activities. The second group mentioning them was the students of grade 7. In comparison with the students of grades 7 and 8, fewer students from grade 6 indicated them as their problems.

Table 4.28: Students' Problems with Listening and Reading Activities

Problems about Listening and Reading Activities	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
No problem	20.6	18.0	30.9	24.6
Lack of vocabulary knowledge	46	47.9	65.3	52.3
Pronunciation while reading aloud	23.9	29.6	54.6	34.9
Lack of grammatical knowledge	7.4	9.0	17.2	10.8
Uninteresting texts	0.6	3.7	2.8	2.4
Others (i.e. Teacher's reading fast, need for pre-reading activities, little time allocated for these skills)	2.1	2.1	2.4	2.2
	N=339	N=378	N=291	N=1008

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.3.3.1.3. Learning Speaking and Writing

Information regarding the instructional methods, techniques and materials used to learn the two productive skills, speaking and writing was collected separately and the results are displayed in different tables.

Table 4.29 displays data about the students' perceptions of the methods, techniques and materials used in learning speaking. A close examination of the table reveals that while majority of the students thought that role-plays were beneficial (73.2%), a few stated they were partially useful (13.4%). There were also students admitting that role-plays were not implemented in their classrooms (11.5%). Although more than half believed in the benefits of talking about pictures (56.5%), close to one forth felt that it was partially useful (24.3%). There were also a few claiming that this type of activity was not done at all (16.3%). Similarly, a little more than half felt that it was useful to take part in discussions in groups (51.7%), whereas one-fourth revealed that this activity was not conducted (25.6%) and nearly one-fifth believed discussions were partially useful (18%).

Table 4.29: Students' Perceptions of the Methods, Techniques and Materials used in Learning Speaking

Speaking Activities	Categories	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Role-plays	Useful	79.2	73.2	67.4	73.2
	Partially Useful	11.5	13.8	15.3	13.4
	Not Useful	0.8	2.2	2.0	1.7
	Not Done	8.5	10.8	15.3	11.5
		N=390	N=436	N=394	N=1218
Talking about pictures	Useful	60.6	57.4	51.4	56.5
	Partially Useful	23.5	26.1	23.1	24.3
	Not Useful	2.8	2.5	3.5	2.9
	Not Done	13.1	14.0	22.0	16.3
		N=391	N=436	N=395	N=1222
Discussion in groups	Useful	54.4	52.8	48.2	51.7
	Partially Useful	17.9	19.3	16.5	18.0
	Not Useful	4.4	4.6	5.1	4.7
	Not Done	23.3	23.3	30.2	25.6
		N=390	N=436	N=394	N=1220

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses

The students' perceptions of the methods, techniques and materials used in teaching writing are shown in Table 4.30. The table reveals that majority of the students believed paragraph-writing was useful (62%) and close to one-fifth thought

it was partially useful (18%). In contrast, a few students indicated that they did not write paragraphs in the lesson (16.7%). As for letter-writing, while half of the respondents felt it was beneficial (49.8%), one-fourth indicated that it was partially helpful (20%). There was also one-fourth who stated that they did not write letters in the class (25.4%). The percentages of students believing that paragraph-writing and letter-writing were not useful were very low (3.3% and 4.8%, respectively). Respondents' perceptions differed in the implementation of dictations. In relation to this, more than one-third felt that dictations were useful (37.4%), whereas close to one-third thought they were partially useful (32.7%). Again, although a few thought that dictations were not useful (12.8%), another few stated they were not implemented in their classrooms (17.1%).

Table 4.30: Students' Perceptions of the Methods, Techniques and Materials used in Learning Writing

Writing Activities	Categories	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Paragraph-writing	Useful	64.3	60.0	61.6	62.0
	Partially Useful	16.1	20.7	17.1	18.0
	Not Useful	2.3	3.0	4.8	3.3
	Not Done	17.3	16.3	16.6	16.7
		N=392	N=435	N=398	N=1219
Dictation	Useful	41.4	36.4	34.6	37.4
	Partially Useful	31.2	34.0	32.8	32.7
	Not Useful	13.3	12.6	12.5	12.8
	Not Done	14.1	17.0	20.1	17.1
		N=391	N=435	N=399	N=1214
Letter-writing	Useful	50.6	49.9	48.9	49.8
	Partially Useful	20.5	20.6	18.9	20.0
	Not Useful	4.6	5.1	4.8	4.8
	Not Done	24.3	24.4	27.5	25.4
		N=391	N=435	N=397	N=1223

N's for each item may vary due to missing responses.

As Table 4.31 displays, when the students' responses related to their problems in doing speaking and writing activities are taken into account, it is observed that almost one-fifth did not experience any (19.1%). Again, the differences among grade levels reveal that more students in 8th grade followed by students of 7th and those of 6th grades indicated that they did not have any difficulties (25.4%, 29.5%, and 13.3%, respectively). Yet, there was still nearly 80% who faced certain problems in doing the speaking and writing activities.

Once more, lack of vocabulary knowledge was reported to be a problem both in speaking and in writing by a little more than one forth of the students (26.4%). In fact, a considerable percentage of students in 8th grade, one forth of the students in 7th grade and few students in 6th grade mentioned lack of vocabulary knowledge as a problem (39.9%, 25.8% and 15%, respectively).

In relation to the speaking skill, the main problem reported by more than one-third of the students was pronunciation mistakes (36.6%). Actually, majority of the students in grade 8, more than one forth of students in grade 7, and approximately one fifth of students in grade 6 faced this difficulty (63.7%, 29.5% and 19.3%, respectively). The other problem encountered while doing speaking activities was formulating grammatically accurate sentences as it was reported by almost one forth of the respondents (24.7%). Again, close to one third of the students in grade 8, a little more than one fifth of the respondents in grades 7 and 6 mentioned this as a trouble (32.1%, 22.5% and 20.1% respectively). Other problems encountered by very few students while speaking were lack of fluency, limited time allocated for its development and lack of self confidence.

As for writing, the main difficulty mentioned by 29.5% of the students was frequently made spelling mistakes. In short, more than one-third studying in 8th grade, close to one third of students studying in class 7 and one fifth of the students studying in class 6 reported that they made spelling mistakes while writing in English (38.6%, 30.7% and 20.1% respectively). The other problem stated by a few was forming grammatically accurate sentences (10.3%). Again, when the differences across grade levels was observed, it was seen that more students from grade 8 reported it as a difficulty compared with grade levels 7 and 6 (14.1%, 6.6% and 7.1%, respectively). Other problems experienced by a very small group of students while writing were organizing ideas and limited time allocated for its development.

In brief, the table displays that more students from grade 8 mentioned these problems about speaking and writing activities. The second group revealing them was the students of grade 7. In comparison with the students of grades 7 and 8, the students from grade 6 mentioning them as their problems were very few.

Table 4.31: Students' Problems with Speaking and Writing Activities

Problems about Speaking and Writing Activities	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Pronunciation mistakes	19.3	29.5	63.7	36.6
Spelling mistakes	20.4	30.7	38.6	29.5
Lack of vocabulary knowledge	15.0	25.8	39.9	26.4
Formulating grammatically accurate sentences while speaking	20.1	22.5	32.1	24.7
Formulating grammatically accurate sentences while writing	9.9	7.0	14.1	10.3
Others (i.e. organizing ideas, fluency in speaking, limited time allocated for the development of these skills, lack of self confidence while speaking)	7.1	6.6	6.2	6.2
No problem	13.3	19.5	25.4	19.1
	N=353	N=329	N=311	N=993

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.3.3.2. Students' Perceptions of Assessment

The students' perceptions of the assessment procedures were collected by asking them to reveal their problems in this respect and the results are displayed in Table 4.32. The table shows that a little more than one third of the students did not encounter any problems with written and oral exams (34.7%). When the differences across grade levels are considered, it is seen that a considerable percentage of students in grade 8 stated that they did not have any problems (45.7%). Again, fewer but still close to one third of the students in grades 6 and 7 revealed that they did not have any difficulties with written and oral exams (30.4% and 29.6%, respectively).

The main problem encountered by nearly one forth of the students was remembering the meanings of words (24.2%). More students in grade 8 experienced this problem when compared with the students of 7th and 6th grades (39.3%, 21.7% and 13.4%, respectively). Another problem was text-anxiety (16%). In relation to this, the students said, "No matter how much I study for the exams, I get excited when I sit an exam, so I get confused and forget everything I know." Similar to the first problem, text anxiety was felt mainly by students in grade 8 (23.5%), whereas fewer students from grades 7 and 6 indicated it as their problems (13.4% and 12.1%, respectively). The third difficulty of the students was understanding the instructions, questions and sentences in the exams (15.4%). Although a little more than one-fourth

stated that they had problems in this respect (21.7%), fewer students from grades 6 and 7 mentioned it as their difficulties (14.8% and 10.8%, respectively). The forth but not the least important difficulty of students was remembering the grammatical rules and formulating grammatically accurate sentences as it was mentioned by 12.2% of the respondents. This problem was faced mainly by students of 8th grade followed by those of 7th and 6th grades (15.3%, 12.9% and 8.9%, respectively).

In addition, a small group of students revealed that they did spelling mistakes in the written exams (6.9%). Actually, more students in grade 8 encountered this problem compared with 6th and 7th graders (11.6%, 5.7% and 4%, respectively). Similarly, a few students mentioned that they made pronunciation mistakes in oral exams (4.4%). Again, more students in grade 8 encountered this problem compared with 6th and 7th graders (7.3%, 3.6% and 2.7% respectively).

Other problems mentioned to be encountered by very few students were undeveloped learning strategies, teacher's handwriting, the level of the exams and inconsistencies in grading (4%). Almost equal percentages of students from grades 8 and 7 faced these problems (4.7% and 4.4%, respectively). In relation to learning strategies, there were students saying, "I do not know how to study for the English exams and I can't get help from my family since they do not know English." As for inconsistencies in grading, they said, "My teacher did not give the grade that I deserved. I was expecting more than I got."

Table 4.32: Students' Problems about Assessment

Problems with written and oral exams	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Remembering the meanings of words	13.4	21.7	39.3	24.2
Test-anxiety	12.1	13.4	23.5	16.0
Understanding the instructions, questions and the sentences	14.8	10.8	21.7	15.4
Remembering the grammatical rules and formulating grammatically accurate sentences	8.9	12.9	15.3	12.2
Spelling mistakes in written exams	4.0	5.7	11.6	6.9
Pronunciation mistakes in oral exams	2.7	3.6	7.3	4.4
Others (i.e. undeveloped learning strategies, teacher's handwriting, written exams' being above the level and problems with grading system)	2.7	4.4	4.7	4.0

Table 4.32 (continued)				
No problem	30.4 N=372	29.6 N=388	45.7 N=328	34.7 N=1088

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.3.3.3 Activities Students Carry out to Improve Their English

Information about what students do after class in order to improve their English was collected in order to investigate the extend they feel motivated to use English in real life and to get an overview of the assignments that were given. The results obtained in this regard are shown in Table 4.33. The table reveals that there were students who admitted that they did nothing once the lesson was over (16.3%). In relation to the differences across grade levels, it can be stated that although almost one third of the students in grade 8 revealed that they did nothing to improve their English (29.5%), fewer students from grades 7 and 6 indicated to be doing nothing (11.6% and 8.8%, respectively). Still, there were respondents mentioning certain activities that they conducted at home.

The activity that was most frequently done was reviewing what was done in class by studying from the notes as it was mentioned by almost one third of the respondents (29.7%). In fact, more students in 8th and 7th grades revealed they studied from their notes when compared with those in 6th grade (35.1%, 30.8% and 23.3%, respectively). There were also students mentioning that they got help from other people while studying English (20.1%). These students said, “I especially talk with my siblings, cousins, and friends in order to improve my English”. Actually, almost equal percentages of students from grades 6, 7 and 8 reported that they carried out this activity (18.3%, 20.7% and 21.5%, respectively).

Another activity that was implemented by close to one fifth of the students was reading story books in English (17.3%). This activity was mentioned by more students in grade 7 when compared with the 6th and 8th graders (20.7%, 15.4% and 15.6%, respectively). Actually, some of the respondents said, “After I read the story books that I borrow from my teacher or from the school library, I write their summaries and give them to the teacher.” There were also a few students who claimed they studied extra vocabulary items by looking up in the dictionaries (16.3%). In this regard, the respondents informed, “I can’t perform certain skills due

to lack of my background vocabulary knowledge, so I try to develop myself by looking up words in the dictionary.” More students in grade 8 used this strategy when compared with 6th and 7th graders (20.1%, 15.9% and 15%, respectively).

The third activity that was mentioned by a few students was studying from other resource books (16.9%). In fact, the students revealed that they mainly studied the grammar rules from these resources by doing the exercises in them. Almost equal amount of students from grades 8 and 7 studied from other books (15% and 13.3%, respectively), but the number of students making use of resource books were less in grade 6 (10.1%).

Other activities mentioned by fewer students were listening to songs (8.2%), watching TV (6.7%), doing assignments (6.4%), writing paragraphs and/or letters (6.4%), playing computer games (3.5%) and attending English courses at the weekends or in the evenings (3.4%). Again, when the differences across grade levels were examined, it was seen that majority of these activities were mainly conducted by the students in grade 8, followed by the students in grades 7 and 6. Actually, 11.4% of students in grade 8, 9.6% of students in grade 7 and 3.7% of students in grade 6 mentioned that they listened to popular English songs in their free times. Again, 11.7% of students in 8th grade, 6.9% of students in 7th grade and 1.6% of students in 6th grade said that they watched films and/or curriculums designed to teach English. Besides, 12.5% of students in grade 8, 4.9% of students in grade 7 and 2.1% of students in grade 6 claimed they did nothing instead of doing their assignments. Moreover, 4.7% of 8th graders, 2.5% of 7th graders and 3.4% of 6th graders said, “I need English while playing computer games so they help me to develop my English, especially vocabulary knowledge.” Finally, almost equal percentages of students from grades 8, 7 and 6 stated to be attending courses after school to improve their English (3.3%, 3.2% and 3.7%, respectively).

Table 4.33: Activities Students Carry out to Improve Their English

Activities carried out to improve English	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Nothing	8.8	11.6	29.5	16.3
Reviewing what is done in the class by studying from the notes	23.3	30.8	35.1	29.7
Studying especially talking with people who know English	18.3	20.7	21.5	20.1

Table 4.33 (continued)				
Reading story books	15.4	20.7	15.6	17.3
Studying extra vocabulary items from the dictionaries	15.9	15.0	20.1	16.9
Studying from other course books and resource books	10.1	13.3	15.0	12.8
Listening to songs	3.7	9.6	11.4	8.2
Watching TV (i.e. Films)	1.6	6.9	11.7	6.7
Doing assignments and project works	2.1	4.9	12.5	6.4
Writing (i.e. Paragraphs, Dialogues, Letters)	2.7	3.0	8.1	4.5
Playing computer games	3.4	2.5	4.7	3.5
Attending English courses	3.7	3.2	3.3	3.4
	N=377	N=406	N=359	N=1142

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.3.4. Students' Attitudes Towards English

In relation to the fifth research question, the students' attitudes towards English are displayed in Table 4.34. As the table reveals, majority of the students had positive attitudes towards English (83.7%). Among the respondents more students in grades 6 and 7 had positive attitudes when compared with the students in grade 8 (88.4%, 85.5% and 77.7%, respectively). However, there were also a few admitting that they did not like English at all (16.3%).

Among the students having positive attitudes, a considerable percentage revealed that English was important for their future and present needs such as finding jobs, using technological devices and speaking with tourists (42.9%). There were also students saying, "I like English so much that I want to be an English teacher." In fact, more than half of the students in grade 8 commended on the significance of knowing English (58.6%) compared with nearly one third of the students in grades 6 and 7 (35.4% and 34.7%, respectively). Besides, a little more than one third of the respondents stated they liked English, because they liked the course. In fact, they said, "It is an entertaining course full of interesting activities such as songs, games and role-plays" (35.5%). Again, more students in grade 8 found the course entertaining in comparison with the students of grades 6 and 7 (45.6%, 28.1% and 32.8%, respectively). The third reason for the positive attitudes was mentioned to be the teacher. In this respect, a few students told they liked the course, because they

loved their teachers (12.3%). Actually, although 16.2% of students in grade 8 indicated that their teachers had positive attitudes towards them, only 9.6% of students in grade 6 and 11.6% of students in grade 7 thought like that. In addition, very few students believed learning English was easy (8.5%). Almost equal percentages of students in grades 7 and 8 believed it was easy to learn English (10.6% and 10.9% respectively). However, only 3.4% of 6th graders mentioned it as a reason for their positive attitudes. A final reason for the positive attitudes mentioned by very few students was learning about other cultures (2.4%). In fact, 5.4% of 7th graders, 1.9% of 8th graders and only 1.1% of 6th graders said, “I am interested in learning about other cultures.”

When compared with the positive attitudes, less information about the reasons for negative attitudes was provided. Yet, the results seem to be significant in picturing the situation. Actually, 8.2% of students said the course was difficult for them. More students in grade 8 followed by students in grades 7 and 6 said, “I do not understand anything in this course, so I don’t like it.” (11.9%, 7.4% and 5.4%, respectively). There were also few who complained about their teachers’ negative attitudes (3.5%). In relation to this, 5% of 8th graders, 3% of 7th graders and 5.4% of 6th graders told, “Our teacher shouts at us when we do not know anything, so because I do not like him/her, I do not like the course.” Another complaint related to the course was the way it was implemented. Very few students revealed that it was a boring course (2.7%) and this was believed by almost equal percentages of students in each grade level. In fact, 3.4% of students in grades 6 and 7, and 1.3% of students in grade 8 said, “We need to memorize a lot of words and this makes the course very boring.” There was also a small group who asked, “Why do we learn their languages? Let them learn ours!” (1.3%) This prejudice towards culture belonged mainly to the students in grades 6 and 7 (2.3% and 1.2%, respectively). Finally, very few students revealed that they did not understand the rationale behind having such a course, because they could not use it in real-life (0.9%). This issue was raised mainly by the students in grades 7 and 8 (1.5% and 1.1%, respectively).

Table 4.34: Students' Attitudes Towards English

Attitude Towards English	6 %	7 %	8 %	N %
Positive	88.4	85.5	77.7	83.7
It is important to know English (in order to find jobs, to become an English teacher, to use technological equipments, to speak tourists)	35.4	34.7	58.6	42.9
It is an entertaining course with interesting activities	28.1	32.8	45.6	35.5
Teacher has a positive attitude	9.1	11.6	16.2	12.3
It is an easy course	3.4	10.6	10.9	8.5
It provides opportunities to learn other cultures	1.1	5.4	1.9	2.9
Negative	11.6	14.5	22.3	16.3
It is a difficult course	5.4	7.1	11.9	8.2
Teacher has a negative attitude	2.6	3.0	5.0	3.5
It is a boring course	3.4	3.4	1.3	2.7
There is prejudice for the culture	-	0.7	3.2	1.3
There is no opportunity to practice it in real life	-	1.5	1.1	0.9
	N=353	N=406	N=377	N=1136

The total number of responses may exceed the total number of respondents due to multiple responses.

4.3.5. Differences in Students' Perceptions of the Curriculum by Background Factors

In relation to the fifth research question, Chi-Square was conducted to investigate whether the differences among groups of students by background factors were statistically significant. The results showed that grade level, gender, parents' educational and English level and students' English grades in the last record sheet were the factors that differentiated students' perceptions of their difficulties, content, instructional methods, techniques and materials. Thus, this section is subdivided considering each background characteristic.

4.3.5.1. Differences in Students' Perceptions by Grade Level

Grade level was a factor differentiating students' perceptions of the difficulties, content and instruction. As Table 4.35 displays, there were significant differences among 6th, 7th and 8th graders in their perceptions of difficulties with listening and

writing ($p=.007$ and $p=.000$, respectively). More 8th graders seem to have or sometimes have difficulties with listening followed by the 6th and 7th graders. In fact, 6th graders having and 7th graders sometimes having problems with listening were fewer. Besides, more 8th graders seem to have or sometimes have troubles with writing paragraphs followed by 7th and 6th graders. This time 7th graders having and 6th graders sometimes having problems with writing paragraphs were fewer. In brief, it can be claimed that more 8th graders were encountering difficulties with listening and writing when compared with the other two groups.

Table 4.35: Differences in Students' Difficulties by Grade Level

Listening	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
6	21.0	53.0	26.0
7	22.7	48.1	29.2
8	23.4	58.0	18.6
X^2 (df=4, N=1209) =14.197, p=0.007			
Writing paragraphs	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
6	32.9	29.3	37.8
7	31.4	35.3	33.3
8	35.4	40.5	24.1
X^2 (df=4, N=1220) =20.008, p=0.000			

As Table 4.36 shows, there were significant differences among 6th, 7th and 8th graders in their opinions about the benefits of utilizing pictures and real objects, rewriting vocabulary items, producing sentences, playing vocabulary games, listening to dialogues from tapes and role-playing ($p=.001$, $p=.000$, $p=.008$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$ and $p=.008$, respectively). As for the use of pictures and realia, more 6th graders found it useful followed by the 7th and 8th graders. Another difference in this regard was that more 8th graders revealed that pictures and realia were not used in their classes when compared with the other two groups. Next, more students in grade 6 seem to believe in the benefit of rewriting vocabulary items followed by the students in grades 7 and 8. Again, more students in grade 8 stated that it was ignored in their classrooms. Thirdly, almost equal percentages of students from grades 6 and 7 found it useful to produce sentences with new vocabulary items, and their percentages were a little higher than the percentage of students in grade 8. In this

regard, 8th graders mainly thought it was partially useful. Furthermore, while more students in grade 6 believed in the use of games when compared with those in grades 7 and 8, more students in class 8 admitted that they were not implemented in their classrooms followed by students in grade 7. Besides, a little more 6th graders thought listening to tapes was useful or partially useful followed by 7th and 8th graders. However, much more students in grades 7 and 8 conceded that tapes were not used in their classes. Finally, more students in grade 6 believed that role-plays were beneficial followed by the students in grades 7 and 8. Yet, more students in grade 8 claimed that role plays were not implemented in their classes when compared with the 6th and 7th graders. In short, it can be stated that 6th graders had more positive opinions about the implemented instructional methods, techniques and materials followed by the 7th and 8th graders.

Table 4.36: Differences in Students' Perceptions of Instructional Methods, Techniques and Materials by Grade Level

Use of pictures and real objects	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
6	61.2	25.3	5.4	8.1
7	59.0	31.1	5.3	8.6
8	52.4	28.2	7.1	12.3

X^2 (df=6, N=1223) =21.785, p=0.001

Rewriting vocabulary items (i.e. 5 to 10 times)	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
6	65.6	20.7	9.4	4.3
7	58.7	22.9	11.8	6.6
8	49.4	27.6	11.6	11.4

X^2 (df=6, N=1223) =43.356, P=0.000

Producing sentences by using vocabulary items	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
6	88.9	7.7	1.6	1.8
7	87.1	9.7	0.9	2.3
8	82.2	12.5	0.3	5.0

X^2 (df=6, N=1221) =17.236, p=0.008

Playing vocabulary games	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
6	56.2	29.0	5.4	9.4

Table 4.36 (continued)				
7	51.4	29.3	4.3	15.0
8	43.7	23.6	7.3	25.4
X² (df=6, N=1222) =43.356, p=0.000				
Listening to dialogues from tapes	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
6	19.2	35.7	16.7	28.4
7	14.3	25.6	16.4	43.7
8	12.8	25.3	12.3	49.6
X² (df=6, N=1228) =42.525, p=0.000				
Role-plays	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
6	79.2	11.5	0.8	8.5
7	73.2	13.8	2.3	10.7
8	67.3	15.3	2.0	15.4
X² (df=6, N=1218) =17.222, p=0.008				

4.3.5.2. Differences in Students' Perceptions by Gender

Another background factor that created differences in students' perceptions of difficulties, content and instruction was gender (see Table 4.37). There were significant differences between males and females in their perceptions of difficulties with understanding and using vocabulary items and reading ($p=0.003$ and $p=0.007$, respectively). More males seem to have or sometimes have problems with understanding and using vocabulary items when compared with females. More males seem to have or sometimes have troubles with reading in comparison with females.

Table 4.37: Differences in Students' Difficulties by Gender

Understanding and using vocabulary items	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Female	17.2	32.6	50.2
Male	20.0	39.8	40.2
X² (df=2, N=1208) =15.521, p=0.003			
Reading	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Female	17.5	40.9	41.6
Male	22.4	44.6	33.0
X² (df=2, N=1195) =9.958, p=0.007			

As Table 4.38 reveals, there were significant differences between females and males in their opinions about the relevancy of the listening/reading texts to real life situations, the amount of grammar activities, the interest level of grammar activities and the comprehensibility of grammar activities ($p=.004$, $p=.005$, $p=.005$ and $p=.002$, respectively). First, more females believed that the topics of the listening/reading texts were relevant to real-life situations when compared with the males. Next, more females agreed with the idea that classroom activities were mainly on grammar, but more males thought this assertion was sometimes true. Thirdly, more females revealed grammar activities were interesting, yet more males believed this was sometimes true. Finally, more females claimed that grammar activities were comprehensible, whereas more males revealed the opposite. In brief, it can be stated that females had more positive opinions about the content of the curriculum when compared with males.

Table 4.38: Differences in Students' Perceptions of Content by Gender

The topics of the listening/reading texts are relevant to real-life situations	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Female	53.4	35.2	11.4
Male	46.1	36.2	17.7
X^2 (df=2, N=1208) =10.999, p=0.004			
Majority of classroom activities are on grammar	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Female	56.7	29.2	14.1
Male	47.7	37.9	14.4
X^2 (df=2, N=1208) =10.756, p=0.005			
Grammar activities are interesting	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Female	54.8	30.6	14.6
Male	45.2	37.8	17.0
X^2 (df=2, N=1211) =10.609, p=0.005			
Grammar activities are comprehensible	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Female	62.2	31.6	6.2
Male	54.7	34.1	11.2
X^2 (df=2, N=1211) =12.224, p=0.002			

As Table 4.39 shows, there were also significant differences between females and males in their perceptions of the techniques and materials used for the development of vocabulary and grammar knowledge like learning the Turkish

equivalents and pronunciation of vocabulary items, and producing sentences by using the vocabulary items, transforming sentences into various forms, producing sentences by using grammatical structures and doing sentence completion exercises ($p=.003$, $p=.000$, $p=.001$, $p=.000$, $p=.002$ and $p=.004$, respectively). To begin with, little more females thought learning the Turkish equivalents was useful, and little more males thought this was partially helpful. Next, while more females found it beneficial to learn pronunciation, more males believed this technique was partially useful. Similarly, more females found it useful to produce sentences by using the new words, but more males believed that it was useful at times. Then, although more females believed in the benefit of transforming sentences into various forms; little more males thought it was partially useful. Moreover, little more females felt producing sentences was beneficial, but more males claimed this technique was partially helpful. Finally, little more females believed in the benefit of sentence completion exercises, yet little more males stated they were partially useful.

Considering listening/reading and writing, there were significant differences between females and males in terms of pre-teaching of unknown words, answering comprehension questions about the listening/reading texts, paragraph writing and letter writing ($p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$ and $p=.000$, respectively) . Firstly, little more females believed pre-teaching of unknown words was useful; however, little more males felt this was partially useful. Again, while slightly more females thought answering comprehension questions was beneficial, little more males believed it was partially helpful. Thirdly, more females found paragraph writing helpful, but more males thought it was partially useful. Likewise, more females believed letter writing was beneficial, yet more males felt it was partially useful. Finally, as for paragraph and letter writing, almost equal percentages of females and males indicated that they were not implemented in their classes. In short it can be stated that females had more positive opinions about the instructional methods, techniques and materials implemented when compared with males.

Table 4.39: Differences in Students' Perceptions of Instructional Methods, Techniques and Materials by Gender

Learning the Turkish equivalents of vocabulary items	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
Female	96.4	3.1	0.1	0.4

Table 4.39 (continued)				
Male	91.9	5.7	1.1	1.3
X² (df=3, N=1224) =14.249, p=0.003				
Learning the pronunciation of vocabulary items	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
Female	92.7	6.9	0.1	0.3
Male	85.6	12.2	1.1	1.1
X² (df=3, N=1221) =19.802, p=0.000				
Producing sentences by using vocabulary items	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
Female	89.2	7.8	0.7	2.3
Male	80.7	13.7	1.3	4.3
X² (df=3, N=1216) =16.870, p=0.001				
Transforming sentences into various forms	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
Female	86.1	11.4	0.8	1.7
Male	75.9	19.0	2.6	2.5
X² (df=3, N=1224) =22.691, p=0.000				
Producing sentences by using grammatical structures	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
Female	88.0	9.6	0.9	1.5
Male	80.0	16.2	1.6	2.2
X² (df=3, N=1217) =14.325, p=0.002				
Doing sentence completion exercises on grammatical structures	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
Female	79.6	17.2	1.7	1.5
Male	71.1	23.0	2.4	3.5
X² (df=3, N=1222) =13.275, p=0.004				
Pre-teaching of unknown words	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
Female	80.6	13.2	1.8	4.4
Male	76.3	15.0	6.0	2.7
X² (df=3, N=1214) =18.468, p=0.000				
Answering comprehension questions about dialogues/texts	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
Female	69.1	21.2	2.1	7.6
Male	63.4	23.4	6.7	6.5
X² (df=3, N=1211) =18.201, p=0.000				

Table 4.39 (continued)				
Paragraph-writing	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
Female	66.1	15.3	2.0	16.6
Male	55.2	22.6	5.8	16.4
X^2 (df=3, N=1220) =26.046, p=0.000				
Letter writing	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
Female	53.2	17.2	3.5	26.1
Male	44.4	24.8	6.9	23.9
X^2 (df=3, N=1218) =19.910, p=0.000				

4.3.5.3. Differences in Students' Perceptions by Parents' Educational Level

Parents' educational level was a factor creating differences in students' perceptions of difficulties and content. As it is displayed in Table 4.40, there were significant differences among students with low, moderately and highly educated parents in their difficulties with articulating sounds, learning vocabulary and grammar, speaking, reading and doing dictations ($p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$ and $p=.001$, respectively). In fact, in all of these areas, much more students with low educated parents seem to have or sometimes have problems followed by students with moderately educated and highly educated parents. In other words, a considerable percentage of students with highly educated parents revealed that they did not encounter any difficulties in the accomplishment of the aforementioned skills. As for students with moderately educated parents, there was diversity depending on the skill to be learned. The students with moderately educated parents mainly have problems in articulating sounds, speaking and reading, respectively.

Table 4.40: Differences in Students' Difficulties by Parents' Educational Level

Articulating sounds	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Low	16.7	58.8	24.5
Medium	10.2	57.3	32.5
High	6.6	47.0	46.4
X^2 (df=4, N=1215) =39.340, p=0.000			
Understanding and using vocabulary items	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Low	23.0	37.9	39.1

Table 4.40 (continued)			
Medium	16.3	33.7	50.0
High	6.0	29.9	64.1
X²(df=4, N=1211) =44.665, p=0.000			
Understanding and using grammatical structures	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Low	24.2	33.4	42.4
Medium	20.2	39.1	40.7
High	10.4	31.7	57.9
X² (df=4, N=1202) =23.593, p=0.000			
Speaking	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Low	19.6	47.9	32.5
Medium	18.4	44.4	37.2
High	5.4	47.9	46.7
X² (df=4, N=1210) =24.174, p=0.000			
Reading	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Low	22.6	44.4	33.0
Medium	18.2	43.1	38.7
High	9.6	33.2	57.2
X² (df=4, N=1198) =36.014, p=0.000			
Dictation	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Low	25.2	38.9	35.9
Medium	18.7	39.4	41.9
High	14.5	34.9	50.6
X² (df=4, N=1210) =17.745, p=0.001			

As Table 4.41 reveals, there were significant differences among the students with low, moderately and highly educated parents only in their perceptions regarding the comprehensibility of the grammar activities ($p=.000$). In relation to this, more students with highly educated parents believed that grammar activities were or sometimes were comprehensible followed by the students with moderately and low educated parents.

Table 4.41: Differences in Students' Perceptions of Content by Parents' Educational Level

Grammar activities are comprehensible	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Low	51.2	38.9	9.9
Medium	63.7	29.4	6.9
High	79.0	17.4	3.6

$X^2(df=4, N=1214) = 47.339, p=0.000$

4.3.5.4. Differences in Students' Perceptions by Parents' English Level

Parents' English level created differences in students' perceptions of difficulties and content. As it is displayed in Table 4.42, there were significant differences among students having parents with low, medium and high English levels in their difficulties with articulating sounds, reading and doing dictations ($p=.000$, $p=.000$ and $p=.000$, respectively). First, although little more students with highly educated parents had problems with articulating sounds followed by students with low and moderately educated parents, much more students with low educated parents had difficulties in this regard followed by students with moderately and highly educated parents. Next, more students with low educated parents seem to have or sometimes have troubles with reading, followed by the students with highly and moderately educated parents. Finally, more but almost equal percentages of students with low and highly educated parents encountered problems with doing dictations when compared with those having moderately educated ones. Again, more but almost equal amount of students with low and moderately educated parents sometimes faced difficulties with doing dictations. In short, more students with low educated parents were encountering problems in all of the three skills.

Table 4.42: Differences in Students' Difficulties by Parents' English Level

Articulating sounds	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Low	13.2	60.5	26.3
Medium	11.4	42.6	46.0
High	18.9	29.7	51.4

$X^2(df=4, N=1216) = 42.811, p=0.000$

Reading	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
Low	20.5	44.8	34.7

Table 4.42(continued)			
Medium	13.4	32.4	54.2
High	16.2	35.2	48.6
X² (df=4, N=1199) =28.772, p=0.000	20.5	44.8	34.7
Dictation	Yes	Sometimes	No
	%	%	%
Low	23.3	39.1	37.6
Medium	12.8	39.4	47.8
High	24.3	16.2	59.5
X² (df=4, N=1211) =21.584, p=0.000			

As Table 4.43 shows, there were significant differences among the students having parents with low, medium and high English levels in their perceptions of the comprehensibility of grammar activities ($p=.000$). In fact, more students having parents with high English level found grammar activities comprehensible followed by those having parents with medium and low English levels.

Table 4.43: Differences in Students' Perceptions of Content by Parents' English Level

Grammar activities are comprehensible	Yes	Sometimes	No
	%	%	%
Low	56.2	34.2	9.6
Medium	71.1	27.9	1.0
High	81.1	16.2	2.7
X² (df=4, N=1215) =31.341, p=0.000			

4.3.5.5. Differences in Students' Perceptions by English Grade

A final factor differentiating students' perceptions of the difficulties, content and instruction was English grade in the last record sheet. As table 4.44 shows, there were significant differences among students with English grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in their difficulties with articulating sounds, learning vocabulary and grammar, speaking, reading, writing and doing dictations ($p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$ and $p=.007$, respectively). First, more students with English grade 1 had difficulties in articulating sounds, learning vocabulary, speaking and reading followed by the students with English grades 2, 3, 4 and 5. Next, more students with English grade 2 had problems with learning grammar followed by the students with English grades 1, 3, 4 and 5. Thirdly, more students with English grade 3 had

troubles with writing followed by the students with English grades 4, 2, 5 and 1. The case was more complicated with dictations in that more students with English grade 2 had problems with it followed by students with English grades 1, 3, 4 and 5. However, more students with English grade 2 and 4 sometimes encountered troubles with doing dictations followed by students with English grades 3, 5 and 1. In short, it can be claimed that as the students got higher grades, they tended to face fewer difficulties in majority of the stated goals except for writing and doing dictations.

Table 4.44: Differences in Students' Difficulties by English Grade

Articulating sounds	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	30.5	59.3	10.2
2	19.1	69.7	11.2
3	14.7	59.7	25.6
4	14.6	58.2	27.1
5	9.7	53.4	36.8

X^2 (df=8, N=1214) =56.558, p=0.000

Understanding and using vocabulary items	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	39.0	40.7	20.3
2	35.6	35.6	28.7
3	25.2	45.0	29.8
4	22.5	40.7	36.7
5	11.1	30.7	58.2

X^2 (df=8, N=1210) =110.663, p=0.000

Understanding and using grammatical structures	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	31.6	40.4	28.1
2	38.2	36.0	25.8
3	31.2	37.6	31.2
4	27.3	41.4	31.3
5	13.2	31.1	55.7

X^2 (df=8, N=1201) =97.663, p=0.000

Speaking	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	34.5	36.2	29.3
2	25.3	51.7	23.0
3	20.5	51.2	28.3
4	19.0	50.2	30.8

Table 4.44 (continued)			
5	13.2	44.7	42.1
X² (df=8, N=1209) =40.143, p=0.000			
Reading	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	32.8	43.1	24.1
2	29.1	48.8	22.1
3	25.0	44.5	30.5
4	24.3	42.5	33.2
5	13.7	40.8	45.5
X² (df=8, N=1197) =48.965, p=0.000			
Writing	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	25.9	25.9	48.2
2	31.8	29.6	38.6
3	42.3	25.4	32.3
4	39.5	29.5	31.0
5	29.5	40.9	29.6
X² (df=8, N=1217) =32.153, p=0.000			
Dictation	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	29.8	29.8	40.4
2	32.2	42.5	25.3
3	25.8	38.3	35.9
4	20.9	42.1	37.0
5	18.7	37.3	44.0
X² (df=8, N=1209) =21.218, p=0.007			

As shown in Table 4.45, there were significant differences among students with English grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in their opinions regarding the frequently used vocabulary items, the relevancy of the topics of listening/reading texts to real-life situations, the amount of grammar activities on grammar, the interest level and comprehensibility of grammar activities and the interest level of writing topics ($p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$ and $p=.000$, respectively). Actually, in all of the given statements, the differences among students who got 1 and 2, those who got 3 and those who got 4 and 5 as their English grades was clear cut, meaning the higher their English grades were, the more students said “yes” to these statements. And, the lower their grades were, the more students said “sometimes” or “no” to

them. This trend was shaken only between the students who got 1 and who got 2 in four of the statements which were about the frequently used vocabulary items, the interest level and comprehensibility of grammar activities and the interest level of writing topics. In other words, more students who got 1 agreed with these statements than those who got 2, and more students who got 2 partially agreed with them than those who got 1. Again, only for the relevancy of listening/reading texts to real-life situations, more students who got 2 said “no” to it when compared with the others. However, it will still not be wrong to say that high achievers, meaning those with English grades 4 and 5 had more positive opinions about the content of the curriculum followed by the medium level achievers, meaning students with English grade 3 and low achievers, those with English grades 1 and 2.

Table 4.45: Differences in the Students’ Perceptions of Content by English Grade

Frequently used items are taught	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	38.6	38.6	22.8
2	36.4	46.6	17.0
3	46.6	42.7	10.7
4	50.9	39.1	10.0
5	58.9	33.5	7.6

X^2 (df=8, N=1214) =36.035, p=0.000

The topics of the listening/reading texts are relevant to real-life situations	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	28.6	46.4	25.0
2	30.2	39.5	30.2
3	44.5	35.9	19.5
4	51.8	34.4	13.8
5	56.1	34.7	9.3

X^2 (df=8, N=1210) =54.922, p=0.000

Majority of classroom activities are on grammar	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	28.6	46.4	25.0
2	34.8	43.8	21.3
3	42.2	38.3	19.5
4	54.8	29.2	16.0
5	59.5	29.9	10.7

X^2 (df=8, N=1210) =47.045, p=0.000

Grammar activities are interesting	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
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Table 4.45 (continued)			
1	41.8	34.5	23.6
2	33.7	44.9	21.3
3	45.3	35.2	19.5
4	47.3	33.8	18.9
5	56.8	30.9	12.3
X² (df=8, N=1213) =28.902, p=0.000			
Grammar activities are comprehensible	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	35.1	45.6	19.3
2	29.9	50.6	19.5
3	38.0	46.5	15.5
4	48.9	41.5	9.6
5	74.2	22.6	3.2
X² (df=8, N=1213) =156.821, p=0.000			
The topics of the writing activities are interesting	Yes %	Sometimes %	No %
1	43.9	17.5	38.6
2	36.7	27.8	35.6
3	35.4	35.4	29.2
4	35.5	32.3	32.3
5	42.5	37.3	20.2
X² (df=8, N=1218) =31.600, p=0.000			

As Table 4.46 demonstrates, there were significant differences among students with English grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in their perceptions of the instructional methods, techniques and materials used to learn vocabulary items such as learning the Turkish equivalents and pronunciation of vocabulary items, teachers' use of vocabulary items in example sentences, producing sentences with vocabulary items and playing vocabulary games ($p=.000$, $p=.002$, $p=.000$, $p=.000$ and $p=.000$, respectively). Actually, except for playing games, in all of these instructional strategies the trend was upwards. In other words, the higher their English grades were, the more students had positive ideas about these methods. Considering use of games, the trend was shaken between students who got 1 and those who got 2 meaning little more students who got 1 found it beneficial and little more students who got 2 admitted that it was not implemented in their classrooms.

Considering grammar, there were also significant differences among students with English grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in their opinions regarding direct teaching of grammatical structures, transforming sentences into various forms and producing sentences by using the grammatical structures accurately ($p=.002$, $p=.000$ and $p=.000$, respectively). In relation to almost all of these instructional strategies, it can be revealed that the higher the students' English grades were, the more positive opinions they had about them. Only for direct teaching of grammar it should be noted that although almost equal percentages of students who got 1 and 2 as English grades found it beneficial, more students with English grade 2 claimed it was not useful when compared with the others.

As for listening and reading, there were significant differences among students with English grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in their perceptions regarding reading dialogues/texts in class, reading dialogues/texts at home, pre-teaching of unknown words and answering comprehension questions about dialogues/texts ($p=.000$, $p=.000$, $p=.001$ and $p=.001$, respectively). In fact, in accordance with all these instructional strategies it seems hard to tell that the higher the students got English grades, the more positive their opinions were. First, in relation to reading texts in class, it could be revealed that more students with English grade 5 felt they were beneficial followed by the students with grades 4, 3, 1 and 2. Again, more students who got 1 thought this was not useful. Next, in relation to reading texts at home, more students with English grade 3 believed in its benefit followed by the students who got 5, 1, 4 and 2. Third, in relation to pre-teaching of unknown words, more students who got 5 felt it was helpful followed by the students who got 3, 4, 2, and 1. Again, more students who got 1 believed it was not beneficial at all. Finally, in relation to answering comprehension questions more students who got 5 found it useful followed by students who got 2, 4, 3 and 1. Once more, more students who got 1 believed this was not helpful at all.

Taking into account speaking and writing, there were significant differences among students with English grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in their perceptions of talking about pictures, paragraph-writing and letter writing ($p=.000$, $p=.001$ and $p=.000$, respectively). Except for paragraph writing, the trend was upwards meaning as the students got higher grades, more positively they felt about talking about pictures and writing letters. Again, the lower grades the students got, the more they admitted that

it was not done in their classrooms. However, in relation to paragraph writing, it was not possible to say there was such trend. In fact, more students with English grade 5 believed in its benefit followed by the students who got 2, 4, 3, and 1.

In short, it can be stated that the high achievers meaning the students with English grades 5 and 4 had more positive opinions about almost all of the instructional strategies when compared with the medium level achievers and low achievers. The main contradictions were among students who got 1, 2 and 3 in that in some of the strategies the medium level achievers had more positive opinions, in some the students who got 2, and in some those who got 1.

Table 4.46: Differences in the Perceptions of Instructional Methods, Techniques and Materials by English Grade

Learning the Turkish equivalents of vocabulary items	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	85.0	13.3	-	1.7
2	81.1	12.2	2.2	4.5
3	95.5	3.0	0.7	0.8
4	95.4	3.5	0.7	0.4
5	97.0	2.6	0.2	0.2

X^2 (df=12, N=1226) =61.815, p=0.000

Learning the pronunciation of vocabulary items	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	65.0	26.7	17.7	6.6
2	76.4	22.5	1.1	-
3	90.1	6.9	2.2	0.8
4	90.8	8.1	0.4	0.7
5	93.9	6.1	-	-

X^2 (df=12, N=1223) =111.781, p=0.000

Teacher's use of vocabulary items in example sentences	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	76.7	13.8	1.7	7.8
2	83.1	10.1	4.5	2.3
3	81.7	14.5	1.5	2.3
4	84.4	11.3	1.1	3.2
5	89.8	8.9	0.8	0.5

X^2 (df=12, N=1222) =30.386, p=0.002

Table 4.46 (continued)				
Producing sentences by using vocabulary items	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	73.3	20.0	5.0	1.7
2	76.4	19.1	1.1	3.4
3	85.4	10.8	0.8	3.0
4	84.9	9.0	0.7	5.4
5	89.4	7.9	0.6	2.1
X² (df=12, N=1218) =39.185, p=0.000				
Playing vocabulary games	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	39.0	32.2	13.6	15.3
2	34.8	31.5	9.0	24.7
3	43.5	24.4	10.7	21.4
4	48.6	30.0	4.3	17.1
5	55.6	25.9	3.9	14.6
X² (df=12, N=1219) =39.301, p=0.000				
Direct teaching of the functions and forms of grammatical structures	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	64.4	23.7	5.1	6.8
2	64.4	23.3	11.1	1.2
3	69.2	27.1	3.0	0.7
4	70.0	25.1	2.8	2.1
5	75.8	18.5	4.1	1.6
X² (df=12, N=1223) =30.900, p=0.002				
Transforming sentences into various forms	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	68.3	15.0	10.0	6.7
2	76.7	22.2	-	1.1
3	72.2	21.1	6.0	0.7
4	79.9	15.9	1.1	3.1
5	87.6	10.9	0.2	1.3
X² (df=12, N=1226) =89.352, p=0.000				
Producing sentences by using grammatical structures	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	71.7	21.7	1.6	5.0
2	79.8	18.0	1.1	1.1

Table 4.46 (continued)				
3	75.0	18.2	3.8	3.0
4	84.0	12.4	1.1	2.5
5	89.5	9.0	0.6	0.9

X^2 (df=12, N=1219) =39.581, p=0.000

Reading dialogues /texts in the class	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	64.4	18.6	11.9	5.1
2	61.8	30.3	5.7	2.2
3	69.2	20.0	3.9	6.9
4	72.4	21.9	2.8	2.9
5	79.9	16.6	2.1	1.4

X^2 (df=12, N=1213) =47.823, p=0.000

Reading dialogues /texts at home	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	61.7	33.3	5.0	-
2	56.2	32.6	7.9	3.3
3	67.4	22.0	3.8	6.8
4	58.4	23.7	9.3	8.6
5	66.6	25.1	5.9	2.4

X^2 (df=12, N=1218) =35.295, p=0.000

Pre-teaching unknown words	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	68.3	18.3	11.7	1.7
2	69.7	16.9	4.5	9.0
3	80.2	10.7	3.1	6.0
4	77.9	13.2	3.9	5.0
5	81.5	13.9	2.3	2.3

X^2 (df=12, N=1216) =33.953, p=0.000

Answering comprehension questions about dialogues/texts	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	49.2	32.2	10.2	8.4
2	66.3	22.5	5.6	5.6
3	61.4	22.0	5.3	11.3
4	62.1	24.3	3.2	10.4
5	72.1	19.8	2.9	5.2

X^2 (df=12, N=1213) =32.461, p=0.001

Table 4.46 (continued)				
Talking about pictures	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	41.7	28.3	5.0	25.0
2	43.8	36.0	5.6	14.6
3	45.5	30.3	4.5	19.7
4	53.5	26.6	2.1	17.7
5	63.1	20.0	2.4	14.5
X² (df=12, N=1219) =67.195, p=0.000				
Paragraph-writing	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	46.7	20.0	8.3	25.0
2	56.3	17.2	4.6	21.8
3	55.3	18.9	2.3	23.5
4	55.7	20.9	5.0	18.4
5	67.8	16.6	2.3	13.3
X² (df=12, N=1222) =33.581, p=0.001				
Letter writing	Useful %	Partially Useful %	Not Useful %	Not Done %
1	33.9	25.4	5.1	35.6
2	36.4	30.7	9.1	23.9
3	41.7	24.2	3.0	31.1
4	48.2	17.0	7.4	27.3
5	55.1	18.7	3.5	22.8
X² (df=12, N=1220) =37.676, p=0.000				

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter discusses the main results and provides implications for practice and research.

5.1. Discussion of the Results

This section summarizes the teachers' and students' perceptions of the attainment of the curriculum goals, content, student attitudes towards English and instructional strategies. The teachers' and students' perceptions are presented and discussed comparatively through summary tables. It also involves a summary of the problems faced in curriculum implementation together with their effects on the attainment of curriculum goals, teaching-learning practices and student assessment. The brief information about the differences of teachers' and students' perceptions by their background characteristics is also provided. The results are discussed considering the relevant theories and research on English Language Teaching (ELT).

5.1.1. Discussion of the Results About Teachers' and Students' Perceptions on the Attainment of Curriculum Goals, Content and Student Attitudes towards English

According to teachers and students, most of the curriculum goals were achieved at a moderate level. The only disagreement between the two parties was on the reading skill in that teachers believed it was the most attained skill, whereas students felt reading like other skills was sometimes achieved. In terms of phonological knowledge, teachers believed articulation of sounds and pronunciation as curriculum goals were achieved a little more than intonation, but still not at the desired level. Comprehension of vocabulary and grammar was attained more when compared with their application in the form of formulating sentences. There were more problems with paragraph writing than the use of mechanics (i.e. spelling and

punctuation) and doing dictations. Actually, writing was stated to be the least attained skill.

Considering the curriculum content, both teachers and students seem to agree with each other in that they believed frequently used vocabulary items were taught, majority of the classroom activities were on grammar, and these grammar activities were comprehensible. Again, both groups thought the topics of listening/reading texts and writing activities were sometimes interesting. However, there was disagreement between the two parties in that while teachers were undecided about the relevancy of the texts to real-life situations, the grammar activities' being interesting and their aim in improving speaking skills, the students stated that these were true. The detailed information obtained from the teachers about the content of the curriculum also revealed that they were undecided about the motivation level of vocabulary activities, the comprehensibility of the texts, their aims, whether they were for the improvement of grammar or listening/reading comprehension, and the applicability of speaking and writing activities in the classroom environment.

In relation to students' attitudes towards English, there were differences between the teachers and students as more teachers revealed that the attitudes were negative than the students. The two groups seem to agree with each other about the reasons for the positive attitudes. In fact, the teachers reported that in order to motivate their students, they used interesting communicative activities and materials, talked about the importance of knowing English and encouraged a positive classroom atmosphere by helping the students and by using humor. All these efforts seem to be recognized by the students as they were reported them to be the reasons of their positive attitudes. However, more teachers reported on the reasons for the negative attitudes than the students. The main reasons for the negative attitudes raised by the two groups were students' being unsuccessful in the course, having prejudice for the culture and having no opportunity to practice it in real life. In addition, the teachers claimed that the sixth graders were more interested in the course followed by the seventh and eighth grades. The main reasons put forward were English's not being assessed in national exams, and the grading system in which nobody fails.

There can be several reasons for the differences in the two groups' perceptions of motivational intensity. One main reason could be that majority of the students who participated in the study were mainly high achievers who generally

have positive perceptions when compared with the low achievers and this will most probably be influencing the results in this respect. Another reason might be that some of the students might have thought their teachers would read their answers and felt hesitated to tell the truth as it is not known under which conditions the data collection procedures have been carried out. Again, the students might be having positive attitudes towards English, but may be having difficulties with it. Therefore, the teachers could be interpreting these difficulties as their being not interested in the course. While stating their problems about curriculum implementation, almost all the teachers had a tendency to criticize outside factors, one of which is students, rather than their own classroom procedures. In fact, while commanding on the students' attitudes, a considerable amount of teachers revealed that it was not possible to say that all the students were interested or all are uninterested in the course. What they actually revealed was that there were both motivated and de-motivated students in every class and the de-motivated ones were affecting the general atmosphere.

Some of these findings on the teachers' and students' perceptions of the attainment of the curriculum goals, content and student attitudes towards English are consistent with the results of similar studies done at the 4th and 5th grades of public primary schools in Turkey. First, they also revealed that according to the teachers, the reading skill was the most attained one, whereas the achievement of phonology, grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking and writing were not at the desired level (Büyükduman, 2005; İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002). Again, the reasons for the negative attitudes towards English courses as English's not being assessed in national exams, the impact of the grading system and parents' being unknowledgeable about the course were raised in the related literature and it was especially recommended to set up regulations in the content of these exams and the grading system (Gökdemir, 1991; Kaş, 1991; Mersinligil, 2002; Sunel, 1991).

However, unlike this study, the others showed that students had more positive opinions about the attainment of the goals than the teachers (Mersinligil, 2002; Tok, 2003). This difference may be resulting from the fact that the others were investigating another curriculum whose goals were different from those of the previous one. It may also be resulting from the fact that the 4th and 5th graders are not as mature as the 6th, 7th and 8th graders in reaching more valid perceptions. Actually, the findings of this study are in accordance with the findings of Yıldız (1996), which

revealed that the goals of the curriculum were attained at a moderate level. Again, in contrast to the present study, the others demonstrated that students had more positive opinions about most of the content than the teachers (Büyükduman, 2005; İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002; Tok, 2003). However, in Mersinligil's research (2002) the classroom observations showed that the teachers seemed to be more reliable in their assertions about the content in comparison with the students. Furthermore, the related literature states that teachers have more in-depth information about any curriculum when compared with the learners (Nunan, 1993). Therefore, in such a study teachers' perceptions regarding the attainment of the goals and content of the curriculum could be more indicative of this process.

Again, the ways used by the teachers to motivate the students seem to be in line with the recommendations made in the related literature on the importance of focusing on the aims of learning English, and the use of enjoyable activities and materials in teaching English to learners at these age groups (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006; Deniz, Avşaroğlu and Fidan, 2006; Durukafa, 2000; Ergür, 2004; Çakır, 2004; Moon, 2000; Philips, 2001). The related literature also reveals that the use of pleasing activities not only encourages positive learner attitudes but also reinforces a communicative and collaborative learning environment by encouraging students to actively involve in classroom practices and this in turn will facilitate the learning of English (Jeon and Hann, 2006; Hu, 2005; Liao, 2004; Littlewood, 2004; Oller and Richard-Amato, 1983; Richards and Rodgers, 1990).

The findings related to the the teachers and students perceptions of the attainment of goals, content and student attitudes are summarized in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Comparison of the Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of the Attainment of Goals, Content and Student Attitudes Towards English

Categories	Similarities	Differences
Attainment of Goals	Both groups perceived phonology, vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, writing and doing dictations were attained at a moderate level.	Teachers believed reading was the most attained skill, but students sometimes had difficulties with it.
Content	Both groups had positive opinions about the frequency of new words, and the amount and comprehensibility of grammar activities.	Teachers were undecided about the authenticity of texts and the motivational level of grammar

Table 5.1 (continued)		
	Both groups had doubts about the motivation level of texts and writing activities.	activities, but students had positive perceptions of them.
Student Attitudes	Both groups believed the main reasons for positive attitudes were importance of knowing English, course's being entertaining, teachers' positive attitude and success in the course.	Teachers believed more students had negative attitudes towards the course, but majority of the students stated that they loved English.
	Both groups believed the main reasons for negative attitudes were being unsuccessful in the course, having prejudices about the culture and having no opportunity to practice the language in real life situations.	According to the teachers, students had negative attitudes because of the effects of the national exams, their parents' attitudes and the grading system.

5.1.2. Discussion of the Results on Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Instructional Methods, Techniques and Materials

Teachers make use of different instructional methods, techniques and materials to teach different skills, which is supported by the related literature (Lewis and Hill, 1992; McDonough and Shaw; Nunan, 1993; Richards and Rodgers, 1991; Willis, 1983). Therefore, the instructional strategies used for the teaching and learning of each skill are discussed separately.

The related literature reveals that the two main stages of a vocabulary lesson are "presentation" and "practice" (Willis, 1983, p.115). Thus, the instructional strategies used to teach vocabulary are grouped under these two categories. In relation to presentation techniques, the teachers revealed that they made use of visual materials such as pictures, drawings, mimes, real objects and flash cards to demonstrate the meanings of concrete terms. They also claimed to be giving the Turkish equivalents of words only when they were teaching abstract concepts. There were some teachers asking their students to come prepared to the lessons by finding out the unknown words in the texts and exercises. This was believed to save time for other classroom practices. The least frequently used technique for the presentation of vocabulary items was using synonyms and antonyms as it was believed that the students' background knowledge was not developed enough to understand them.

Most of the teachers supported the teaching of vocabulary in context, so they revealed to be providing example sentences to their students in order to make them aware of not only the meanings but also the uses of new words. Again, there was considerable number of teachers making use of the context provided in the texts to teach new vocabulary items. As for practice, the teachers stated that they made use of pronunciation practice by using listen and repeat activities, meaningful vocabulary exercises such as sentence completions and matchings, vocabulary games and puzzles, and tasks that enable students to formulate their own sentences like asking questions which require answers with new words. In addition to these, some teachers stated that since the students were making serious spelling mistakes, they asked them to write the vocabulary items several times in their notebooks. Almost all these instructional techniques were found to be useful by majority of the students except for the use of synonyms and antonyms and rewriting new words as they were claimed to be partially useful for the most part. The teachers seem to be right in their perceptions regarding the lack of background knowledge that hindered the use of this technique, as some students revealed they could not and might not be able to understand new words if synonyms and antonyms were given. Again, in relation to the use of visuals, games and puzzles, there were some students admitting that they were not implemented in their classrooms.

Again, the related literature states that similar to a vocabulary lesson, a grammar lesson has two main stages as “presentation” and “practice” (Willis, 1983, p. 94). Therefore, the instructional strategies for teaching grammar are again grouped under these two headings. In this regard, most of the teachers stated that grammar was taught deductively by providing example sentences, formulizing rules, comparing English and Turkish structures and comparing the new structures with the already known ones. There were also some teachers preferring the inductive teaching of grammar through eliciting the rules and functions from the students by providing context and asking questions about it. When the two methods were compared, deductive teaching was used more frequently than inductive one. In fact, teachers using inductive teaching revealed that it was used in combination with deductive teaching or it was implemented at times, not always. While enabling the practice of grammar, teachers stated that they made use of meaningful exercises such as sentence completions, matchings, rewrites and error corrections; communicative

activities such as role plays, discussions and games, and mechanical activities like substitution, transformation and chain drills. Among these three types of grammar activities meaningful activities were used more frequently, followed by communicative and mechanical ones. Actually, mechanical activities were mentioned by a very small group of teachers. The teachers also stated that in order to encourage grammar practice, they sometimes prepared their own materials from other readily available resource books and distributed them as worksheets. Considering the students' perceptions on the issue, it could be stated that deductive teaching of grammar was preferred over the inductive teaching. In relation to this, most of the students stated that they got confused when they were asked to derive the rules and functions themselves. As for practice, all three forms of grammar exercises, meaningful, communicative and mechanical, were found beneficial.

When the instructional strategies of listening and reading skills are considered, it is observed that they were taught and learned in combination. In fact, as the teachers and students admitted, reading was emphasized more than listening due to the lack of materials and equipment such as cassettes, CDs, videos and tape recorders. In other words, the number of teachers and students revealing that the classroom talk was the sole listening activity was considerable. Listening was mainly conducted by teachers' reading aloud the texts two or three times either with books closed or open, or by students' reading aloud the texts by changing roles and others' following from their books. Thus, reading aloud was more frequently used than silent reading. There were also teachers who assigned their students to read the texts at home, but to leave the reading exercises for classroom practice. Most of the teachers stated that they sometimes let their students listen to songs in English. As for reading activities, the most frequently used ones were listening and repeating the vocabulary items read aloud by the teacher, and asking and answering comprehension questions about the text. The purposes of the questions ranged from identifying general ideas to recognizing detailed information, on rare occasions from skimming to scanning. Again, unknown vocabulary items in the texts were studied at either while-reading stage or post-reading stage. A few teachers claimed that they were asking their students translate the texts to Turkish, do jig-saw readings to have them share and/or summarize information. The pre-reading and post-reading activities that encourage integrated skills approach were hardly ever used. When the students' answers were

examined, it was found that they had positive perceptions of most of these activities apart from teacher reading aloud and reading at home, which were stated to be partially useful. There were some students admitting that audio materials, comprehension questions, pre- and post- reading activities were not implemented in classes was considerable.

In relation to the improvement of speaking skills, the most frequently used activities were revealed to be the role plays, question and answer sessions and discussions. Some teachers gave further information about how they were conducted. In relation to role plays, some claimed to be assigning their students to write dialogues similar to the ones in the book in groups, some claimed to be asking their students to read the dialogues in the book by changing roles, few stated they made use of role-play cards in which the situations were provided. The question-answer sessions were most of the times in one way, from the teacher to students. Topics and pictures were used to carry out the group or whole class discussions. The other activities such as drill works, presentations and communicative games were mentioned by a very small group of teachers. Few teachers also told strategies that they employed to encourage speaking in their classrooms. These were the use of collaborative activities such as pair and group work, decreasing the use of native language in teacher's talk and even in student's talk. A close examination of the students' responses revealed that they found role-plays and discussions useful but they were rarely or never done in the classrooms.

Finally, writing activities were claimed to be one of the least frequently used practices. Some teachers stated that they mainly implemented dictation practice, paragraph-writing and letter or postcard writing in an ascending order of frequency. The number of teachers claiming that at this level they assigned their students to produce sentences rather than paragraphs was considerable. Again, a few teachers stated that they implemented paragraph writing in a controlled way by providing guidance to the students in the form of outlining, jumbled sentences, building-up sentences rather than encouraging free practice. In this regard, most of the students stated that they had serious problems with writing, so they found dictations, paragraph-writing and letter-writing partially useful. The number of students admitting that these writing practices were ignored was considerable.

This summary of instructional strategies used for the improvement of each skill reveals that teachers use various techniques derived from different approaches and methods of the basic language and learning views. In other words, depending on the situation, some teachers favor “structural view” and employ mechanical activities such as drills, some favor “functional view” and incorporate meaningful exercises and some believe in “communicative view” and make use of activities that encourage interaction among students such as role plays and discussions (Richards and Rodgers, 1991, p. 17). There are also some teachers implementing all three forms depending on the content to be learned, the students and the availability of resources. Thus, it could be stated that there is no fixed approach and method that is applied in all the classrooms by all the teachers. In short, it could be revealed that Eclectic Method, the proposed method of the curriculum of public primary schools, is the main methodology used (MEB, 2004a). This sounds logical considering the related literature stating that there is no best method that is applicable to all educational contexts (CEFR, 2001; McKay, 1992).

However, a close examination of the instructional strategies reveals that majority of the classroom activities used in the curriculum implementation seem to encourage teacher-centered practices and “structural” and “functional” syllabuses rather than learner-centered, communicative and task-based practices and “process oriented” syllabuses (Nunan, 1988, p. 36-40; Richards, Platt and Weber, 1985; p. 289). This is contrary to the suggestions made in the curriculum guidelines about the significance of learner-centered approaches (MEB, 2004a). This seems to be also problematic considering the extended literature stressing the importance of learner-centered approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching and Task-based instruction (Littlewood, 2004; Murphy, 2003; Nunan, 1988; Nunan, 1993; Oller and Richard-Amato, 1983; Richards and Rodgers, 1991). Again the ignorance of listening and writing skills together with pre- and post- reading activities, which are assumed to improve mainly speaking and writing, reveal that Integrated Skills Approach, one of the most valued approaches in the related literature is not used (Lewis and Hill, 1992; McDonough and Shaw, 1998; Nunan, 1993; Willis, 1983). Again, the limited use of audio and visual materials and the communicative games is contrary to the emphasis put on them in the literature about their advantages in promoting the student motivation and being effective in teaching and learning

English at this grade level and for this age group (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006; Çakır, 2004; Durukafa, 2000; Ergür, 2004; Hismanoğlu, 2000; Moon, 2000; Philips, 1997; Sunel, 1994).

In short, all the information about the limited use and for the most part the negligence of listening and writing skills, pre- and post-activities, audio and visual materials, and communicative games reveal that the main goals of the implemented curriculum are for the development of phonological, grammatical and lexical knowledge and reading skill. Actually, this has been reflected in the teachers' comments as they have given more information on the instructional strategies used for the improvement of these skills when compared with listening, speaking and writing. Besides, as it has been discussed previously, they have revealed that the goals related to these skills are attained more than the others.

The students' positive comments about most of the instructional strategies whether they are teacher-centered or learner-centered reveal that they are ready to accept what is required from them. Again, their suspicions of some instructional strategies which require higher level of English knowledge such as the use of antonyms and synonyms, indirect teaching of grammar, paragraph writing, dictations and letter writing seem to reflect that they may not feel confident enough to conduct them. Furthermore, their doubts about other instructional strategies like rewriting vocabulary items and reading at home might be attributed to their being not ready to do assignments that require too much effort. Again, the more frequent use of the teacher-centered practices over learner-centered ones and the students' having positive perceptions of both types of practices might be resulting from the impact of the students' learning styles and strategies. In other words, as being more close to the Asian culture, the students may be preferring and learning better with teacher-centered practices considering the related literature which states that Asians are introvert, analytical, field dependent and sequential (Gupta, 2004; Hu, 2005; Lewis and McCook, 2002; Littlewood, 2000; Liao, 2004; Zhenhui, 2001).

In conclusion, some of these findings about the instructional strategies are consistent with what is stated in the related literature as studies conducted at other grade levels have also indicated that teacher-centered classroom practices were applied more than the learner-centered ones and the students have positive

perceptions of any instructional strategy (Büyükduman, 2006; İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002; Tok, 2003).

The aforementioned findings related to the comparison of the teachers instructional strategies and students' of their uses are summarized in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Comparison of Teachers' Instructional Strategies and Students' Perceptions of Their Uses

Goals to be Attained	Instructional Strategies	Student Perceptions
Vocabulary	Presentation strategies (i.e. use of visuals, example sentences, Turkish equivalents, antonyms and synonyms)	All presentation activities are useful except for the use of antonyms and synonyms.
	Practice strategies (i.e. playing games, doing puzzles, practicing pronunciation, formulating sentences, looking up in the dictionary, rewriting vocabulary items)	All practice activities are helpful except for the rewriting of vocabulary items Visuals, games and puzzles are not used in some of the classrooms
Grammar	Presentation strategies (i.e. direct teaching, indirect teaching)	Direct teaching is preferred to indirect teaching
	Practice strategies (i.e. meaningful, communicative and structural activities)	All types of activities for practicing grammar are beneficial
Listening and Reading	Presentation strategies (i.e. teacher's reading aloud, students' reading aloud, silent reading, listening to audio materials, reading at home)	All presentation activities are very useful except for teacher's reading aloud and reading at home
	Practice strategies (i.e. use of comprehension questions, pre-reading and post-reading activities, vocabulary practice)	All practice activities are beneficial but audio materials, comprehension questions, pre and post reading activities are not used in some classes
Speaking and Writing	Speaking activities (i.e. role plays, discussions, question and answers)	All speaking activities are very helpful, but role plays and discussions are not used in some classes
	Writing activities (i.e. dictation, paragraph and letter writing, formulating sentences)	All writing activities are partially useful and paragraph and letter writing are not implemented in some classes

5.1.3. Discussion of the Results on the Teachers' and Students' Problems About the Implementation of the Curriculum

The results obtained from the teachers and students reveal that there are certain factors influencing the implementation of the curriculum. These factors can be divided into five main categories in an ascending order of occurrence as school level factors, course book(s), students, curriculum and classroom environment. Each of these factors results in specific problems that have direct and indirect effects on the attainment of the curriculum goals, implementation of certain instructional strategies and assessment procedures. Actually, some of these factors have impact on one another. Again, since teachers have more opinions about the curriculum, majority of the problems have been raised by them, so most of these results will be discussed considering teachers' comments rather than the students.

The first factor influencing curriculum implementation is the problems with the facilities of the school, especially lack of audio, visual and supplementary materials and the lack of teachers. In this respect, lack of audio materials such as tapes, videos, cassettes and CDs hinders especially the acquisition of phonological knowledge and listening skill. Again, lack of visuals such as pictures, flash cards, OHPs, and supplementary materials like dictionaries, story and resource books influence the attainment of not only listening and phonology but also vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing and speaking. The teachers have revealed that they wanted to prepare exercises and communicative activities from outside resources, but the readily available ones on market were above the level of the students. The teachers working in partially developed and undeveloped cities and towns stated that they could not reach materials for teaching English in their environments. In addition, they stated that as there was not enough number of English teachers in their schools, towns and/or cities, they were teaching a lot and did not have enough time to prepare their own materials. In relation to this, the teachers also told that due to lack of teachers, some lessons, especially at grades 4 and 5, were either not carried out or carried out by teachers of other fields. All these problems related to the lack of materials, teachers and having non-English teachers were claimed to be affecting the assessment procedures, especially test-preparation. Specifically, lack of materials and teachers results in too much time spent on test preparation and giving feedback. The

non-English teachers also complain that they have problems in this regard as they lack the needed knowledge in preparing English tests.

The second factor that affects curriculum implementation is the various types of course books recommended by MEB, as they have serious limitations in terms of their content and layout. First, the course books were found to be problematic in terms of the selection and grading of content. Specifically, the reading and listening texts were found to be long, unauthentic and full of language mistakes. In addition, the amount of communicative tasks and even number of examples, explanations and structural exercises for the improvement of grammatical and vocabulary knowledge was believed to be insufficient. Again, some of the unknown grammatical structures and vocabulary items were claimed to be appearing in texts without reference to them in the exercises. Furthermore, the themes and topics between and within units were stated to be irrelevant to one another. Considering all these, the content of the course books was argued to be above the level of the students. Next, the teachers complained about the layout of the course books, especially their lack of visual support and print quality. The teachers also complained about lack of teacher's manual and use of different course books in different grades. Lack of teacher's manual was stated to be problematic for their lesson planning. The use of different series of course books in different grade levels was revealed to be problematic in attaining continuity and integration in the curriculum within and among grade levels.

The third factor having an impact on curriculum implementation is the students. They were revealed to be preventing the effective implementation of the curriculum, mainly because they lacked interest in the lesson, skills in performing reading and writing even in Turkish, and background vocabulary and grammar knowledge in English. The issue related to the lack of interest seemed to be in line with the findings about the teachers' perceptions of the students' attitudes, as they have already shown there were some students not interested in the lesson. By lack of interest, the teachers meant that some students were not doing their assignments and not studying at home, but were willing to participate in the activities provided. Not only teachers but also students complained about lack of vocabulary and grammar background in English. This seems to be the consequence of overloaded curriculum content, lack of integration and continuity among and within grade levels, insufficient time allocated for the course, all of which result in lack of repetition and

practice, ignorance of especially listening, speaking and writing practices. In fact, all these problems about the curriculum were raised by the teachers.

All these problems about the course books, students and curriculum are also affecting the assessment procedures in several respects. The aforementioned problems resulting from the students were leading to not only inconsistencies between classroom performance and their test scores but also their failures in the exams. Firstly, it was revealed that the students had a tendency to forget anything they had learned. The main causes for this were stated to be the students' likelihood to memorize everything before the exams, and their being not knowledgeable about the study skills. Actually, the students admitted that they could not be successful though they studied hard. They claimed that their main reason for not being successful in exams was test anxiety. Another reason might be their not knowing how to study English. Next, the students' lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge hindered their performance in formulating sentences and using vocabulary items accurately, and their understanding of the instructions and sentences provided. Finally, the two groups revealed that there were serious spelling and punctuation mistakes in the exams. The course-books, especially the curriculum, were revealed to be creating problems for test preparation and student failure. The teachers claimed that due to the overloaded curriculum content in accordance with the time allocated for the course, they did not spend enough time for revision and practice. Thus, the students were stated to be having problems in exams as they could not internalize the curriculum content. Besides, it was argued that since the curriculum content was mainly on the improvement of grammatical knowledge and reading skill, other skills such as listening, speaking and writing were ignored in the exams. Again, because of the overloaded curriculum content, the teachers conceded to be having problems with determining what to ask in the exams. Finally, the teachers admitted that they were assessing the students with structural tests as their students preferred them over process oriented, communicative ones.

The last but not the least important problem having an impact on the implementation of the curriculum was claimed to be the classroom environment. The classrooms were reported to be crowded with mixed ability students and their physical qualities were claimed to be unsuitable for conducting certain instructional methods. Actually, the crowded classrooms were argued to be influencing the use of

speaking and writing activities as the teachers found it hard to monitor each student during pair-work and group-work activities. Besides, the teachers complained about the noise in the classroom when conducting these collaborative tasks. Finally, the teachers stated that crowded classrooms prevented their giving feedback to students' mistakes, especially in writing. Actually, all these are common problems for teachers teaching crowded classrooms and have been raised in the related literature. The mixed ability groups within and among classrooms were also reported to be affecting the assessment procedures as some teachers revealed they were having problems in preparing tests that appealed to students with different levels of English and in simplifying the questions according to students' levels.

All these factors about the facilities of schools, course-book(s), students, curriculum and classroom environment and some of the aforementioned problems resulting from these factors and their effects on instruction and assessment have already been raised in studies conducted to investigate curriculum implementation at lower grades, especially 4th and 5th grades, of public primary schools. Specifically, other studies have already found out that there were problems related to the lack of materials, the selection and order of content in course-books, and the overloaded curriculum content in accordance with the time allocated for the course and crowded classrooms (Acar, 2006; Büyükduman, 2005; İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002, Tok, 2003). The problems about the quantity and quality of English teachers and the lack of continuity and integration in curriculum have also been mentioned by the educational authorities (Gökdemir, 1991; Demirel, 1994; Kaş, 1991; Sunel, 1991). Except for these, other aforementioned findings have not been raised in these studies.

According to the related literature, the lack of audio and visual materials, insufficient number of communicative activities, ignorance of especially listening, speaking and writing practices are all important factors influencing the student motivation and the effective teaching/ learning of English at this level and to students at this age group; therefore, they should be encouraged in curriculum implementation (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006; Çakır, 2004; Deniz, Avşaroğlu, Fidan, 2006; Durukafa, 2000; Ergür, 2004, Moon, 2000; Önal, 2000; Turanlı, 2000; Philips, 2001).

In addition, the related literature states the importance of collaborative teaching environment and reveals that crowded classrooms and mixed ability groups are not obstacles for enhancing such environment in English lessons. In other words,

the related literature is also revealing information about practical suggestions to deal with mixed ability groups such as varying teaching styles to meet several learning styles, changing unconscious learning styles to conscious learning strategies by instructing the students on them, having contingency plans for early finishers, and scaffolding and differentiating tasks for students with diverse abilities and levels (Çopur, 2005; Dellicarpini, 2006; Hismanoğlu, 2000; Littlewood, 2000; Onur, 2005; Zhenhui, 2001).

The related literature is full of practical solutions for the aforementioned problems in terms of student assessment. Actually, it is revealed that the inconsistency between classroom attitude and success is a serious problem, but can be overcome by applying 'process assessment' in which the learners are measured on their performance in classroom activities and assignments rather than 'product assessment' which focus on outcomes or the attainment of goals through objective tests (CEFR, 2001; Ergür, 2004; Nunan, 1993; Weir, 1990). This solution was recognized by a small group of teachers who revealed they did not encounter problems with assessment as they gave their oral grades considering the students' classroom performance. As for test anxiety, the related literature emphasizes the significance of not only considering classroom performance but also motivating students to improve their self confidence by encouraging a positive classroom atmosphere (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006; Çakır, 2004; Deniz, Avşaroğlu, Fidan, 2006; Durukafa, 2000; Ergür, 2004).

Furthermore, the related literature gives importance to the 'construct validity' of the achievement tests, which is concerned with matching assessment procedures to the content and activities studied in the classroom (CEFR, 2001; Ergür, 2004; Nunan, 1993; Weir, 1990). This was considered by few teachers who revealed not having any problem with assessment. In fact, they told that they asked what was done in class by varying the difficulty level and types of questions. In relation to the use of structural tests, the related literature states that this is a major problem due to the 'backwash effect' of assessment procedures on instructional strategies (CEFR, 2001; Nunan, 1993; Weir, 1990). No matter to what extent the communicative tasks and activities are carried out in the lesson, if the students are assessed by means of such tests involving multiple choice, true-false, fill in the blanks and matching items, the students will most probably consider those types of exercises and ignore the

communicative ones. In relation to students' preference of those types of objective tests to communicative ones, it may be stated that students may have got used to them rather than the communicative ones. However, with training they might get used to learner centered communicative assessment (Gupta, 2004; Hu, 2005; Lewis and McCook, 2002; Littlewood, 2000; Liao, 2004; Zhenhui; 2001).

Finally, the pronunciation and spelling mistakes of students are mainly caused by the difference between writing and speaking system in English. However, pronunciation might be overcome by applying suitable instructional methods such as listening practice, drill work, speaking activities. The spelling can be improved by focusing on more controlled and free writing practices such as dictations, taking notes, writing paragraphs, dialogues and letters (CEFR, 2001; Lewis and Hill, 1992; McDonough and Shaw, 1998; Nunan, 1993; Richards and Rodgers, 1990).

The aforementioned findings related to the factors and problems influencing the implementation of the curriculum are summarized in Table 5.3 on page and in Figure 5.1 on page.

Table 5.3: Summary of the Factors Influencing the Implementation of the Curriculum, Specific Problems Resulting from These Factors and Their Effects on Curriculum Implementation

Factors Influencing the Curriculum Implementation	Specific problems resulting from these factors	Effects on Curriculum Implementation
School Level Factors	1- Lack of audio, visual and supplementary materials 2- Lack of teachers, having non-English teachers	* Lack of materials affect the implementation of communicative activities for the development of especially listening, speaking and writing activities * Both affect the preparation of language tests
Course-book(s)	1- Selection of content in terms of texts (i.e. motivation and difficulty levels, authenticity, length) and tasks (i.e. quantity and quality of meaningful and communicative activities) 2- Ordering of content in terms of linguistic knowledge (i.e. grammar and vocabulary) and thematic relevancy 3- Support provided in the form of physical layout (i.e. visuals and print quality) and sets of course-book (i.e. teacher's manual, workbook, series of student books)	* Selection and ordering of content lead to lack of integration and continuity in curriculum within and among grade levels, which in turn lead to student failure in exams * Lack of teacher's manual influence the teacher's lesson planning and materials development
Students	1- Lack of interest and home practice 2- Undeveloped study skills and strategies 3- Lack of grammar and vocabulary background in English 4- Inability to perform reading and writing even in Turkish	* All lead to student failure in the exams * Lack of background knowledge influences the students' understanding of instructions, sentences and texts in tests
Curriculum	1- Overloaded curriculum content in accordance with the time allocated for the course and each unit 2- Focus on grammar, vocabulary and reading, ignorance of other skills (i.e. listening, speaking, writing) 3- Lack of integration and continuity in terms of curriculum content within and among grade levels	* Overloaded curriculum content hinders review and practice, which in turn leads to student failure. It also affects test preparation in terms of identifying the important content to be asked
Classroom Environment	1- Crowded classrooms 2- Mixed-ability groups within classes 3- Physical features of classrooms	* All affect the implementation of practice activities. * Crowded classes influence feedback sessions * Mixed ability groups affect test preparation in terms of simplifying questions

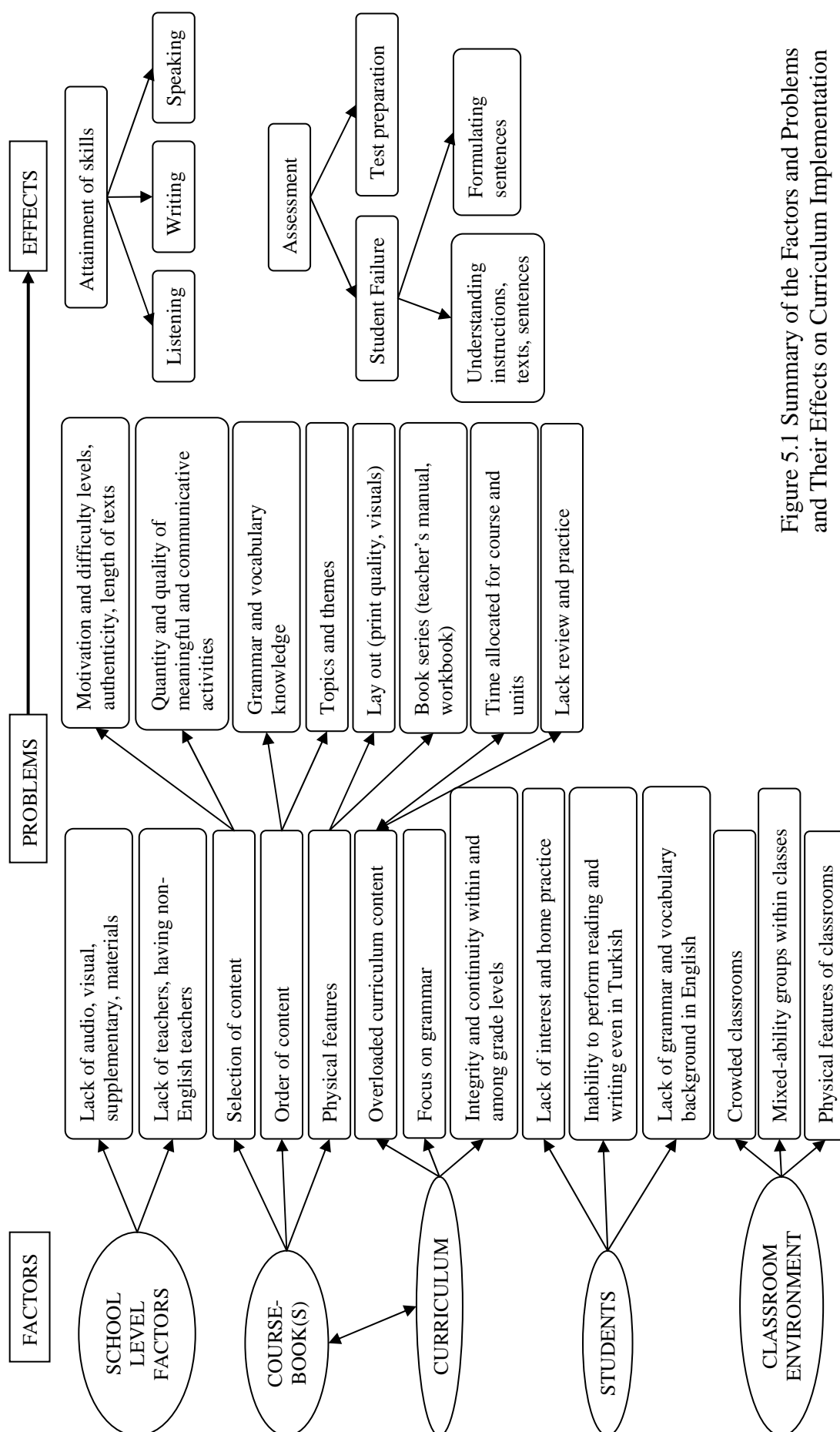


Figure 5.1 Summary of the Factors and Problems and Their Effects on Curriculum Implementation

5.1.4. Discussion of the Results on Differences in Perceptions by Teachers' and Students' Background Characteristics

When the background characteristics of teachers are examined, their location of school, age and teaching experience are found to be differentiating their perceptions of the attainment of goals. However, education is the only factor differentiating their perceptions of content. Specifically, the teachers in Central Anatolia seem to perceive that certain goals such as pronunciation, intonation, forming grammatically accurate sentences, speaking, reading, and using mechanics are attained more when compared with the teachers in other regions. Again, teachers within the age range of 23-28 and teachers with 1 to 5 years of experience seem to perceive that the goals on the articulation of sounds, pronunciation, intonation, listening and reading are achieved more in contrast to the teachers in other age ranges and with more than 5 years of teaching experience. Teachers less than 5 years of teaching experience seem to differ from others in their perceptions of the attainment of goals like speaking, writing, use of mechanics, and doing dictations as they believed these were reached more. In relation to educational level, teachers of other fields seem to perceive that the topics of reading and/or listening texts are interesting for the students more than the teachers who graduated from ELT and ELL departments of universities. In short, it could be stated that teachers in Central Anatolia, teachers within the age range of 23-28 and teachers with 1 to 5 years of experience have more positive opinions about the curriculum in terms of the attainment of the goals. Again, teachers from other fields have more positive perceptions regarding the motivation level of the listening and reading texts.

One main interpretation of this finding could be that teachers between ages 23-28 and 1 to 5 years of experience may be too novice to fully grasp the curriculum and the factors affecting its implementation. Again, these novice teachers who have just graduated from universities may be using the current learner-centered practices more than the experienced ones who got used to the traditional way of teaching. Similarly, the teachers of other fields may not be knowledgeable about whether these topics are suitable for the teaching and learning of English. Finally, more novice teachers from Central Anatolia might have participated in the study or teachers in Central Anatolia might be having fewer problems about the implementation of the curriculum, which needs further investigation. These findings seem to be consistent

with the related literature about the effect of certain background characteristics on teacher perceptions (Akalin, 1990; Başkan, 2001; Demirel, 1994; Wayne and Youngs, 2003). The aforementioned findings about the differences in teachers' perceptions by background characteristics are presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Summary of the Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of Curriculum Goals and Content by Background Characteristics

Teacher Characteristics	Categories that Differ	Goals Attained More	Perceptions on Content
Location of school	Teachers in Central Anatolia vs. teachers in other regions	1- Phonology 2- Grammar 3- Speaking 4- Reading	
Age	Teachers within the age range of 23-28 vs. teachers older than 28	1- Phonology 2- Grammar 3- Listening 4- Reading	
Experience	Teachers with less than 5 years of experience vs. teachers with more than 5 years of experience	1- Phonology 2- Listening 3- Speaking 4- Reading 5- Writing	
Education	Teachers of other fields vs. teachers of English		Motivation level of texts

Information about the differences in students' perceptions of their difficulties, content and instructional strategies by background characteristics shows that more 8th graders seem to experience difficulties in listening and writing followed by 7th and 6th graders. Again, more 8th graders reveal that certain instructional strategies such as visuals, games, audio materials and role plays were not implemented in their classrooms and fewer 8th graders claimed that rewriting new words and producing sentences with new words were useful. It was also found that 8th graders reflected more on the reasons for their positive and negative attitudes and their problems in assessment. This might be attributed to their being more mature in interpreting the curriculum goals, content and instructional strategies. Another reason might be that more demanding activities related to listening, writing and producing sentences might be used by the teachers teaching this group. As the teachers revealed that the 8th grade's curriculum was more loaded than the curricula of other grade levels, especially 6th grade; therefore, in an attempt to catch up with the pacing, the teachers might be using certain instructional strategies less.

Besides, more males seem to experience difficulties in vocabulary and reading than females. In addition, little more males tend to have negative perceptions of the content of the curriculum in terms of the relevancy of texts to real life situations, amount of grammar practice, and motivation level and comprehensibility of grammar activities in contrast to females. Similarly, little more males have negative perceptions about certain instructional strategies such as learning Turkish meanings and pronunciation of words, producing sentences with new words and grammar structures, doing transformations and comprehension questions, and writing paragraphs and letters when compared with females. One main reason might be that females can be studying more than the males, so they might be encountering fewer problems in this regard. Again, the females might be participating more in the classroom practices, which might lead to their being more knowledgeable about the curriculum. Finally, the females participated in the study might be selected from high achievers, which have not been examined but needs further investigation.

Next, the students with highly educated parents seem to have fewer problems with the articulation of sounds, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, reading and doing dictations followed by the students with moderately and low educated ones. Again, students having parents with high level of English tend to experience fewer difficulties with articulating sounds and reading than the students with medium and low levels of English. In addition, students with highly educated parents and having parents with high English level seem to encounter fewer problems in understanding the grammar activities. One main reason for this might be that their parents can be encouraging them about the significance of the course, providing guidance in their learning strategies and their improvement of these skills.

Finally, the high achievers have fewer problems in the articulation of sounds, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, reading and doing dictations than the medium level and low achievers, which is quite normal considering the related literature on the issue (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006; Çopur, 2005, Hismanoğlu, 2005). What is interesting at this point is that even high achievers were encountering troubles with listening, speaking and writing. One reason for this might be that these skills may not be practiced adequately in the classroom. Finally, high achievers have more positive opinions on almost all of the content and instructional strategies than the medium level and low achievers, which is consistent with the related literature stating the

significance of motivation, learning styles and strategies (Aslanargu and Sng, 2006; pur, 2005; Hismanoęlu, 2005, Kuşkonmaz and Toksz, 2004; Turanlı, 2000). However, even the high achievers revealed that audio and visual materials and role plays were not used in their classes.

Table 5.5: Summary of the Differences in Students' Perceptions of their Difficulties, Content and Instructional Strategies by Background Characteristics

Background Characteristics	Categories that differ	Difficulties	Perceptions on Content	Perceptions on Instructional Strategies
Grade level	8 th graders vs. 7 th and 6 th graders	1- Listening 2- Writing		1- Use of audio and visual materials 2- Use of games and role plays
Gender	Males vs. Females	1- Vocabulary 2- Reading	1- Authenticity of texts 2- Amount, comprehensibility and motivation level of grammar activities	1- Presentation of the Turkish equivalents and pronunciation of words 2- Producing sentences 3- Reading activities (esp. pre-teaching of unknown words and answering comprehension questions) 4- Paragraph and letter writing
Parents' Educational Level	Having low educated parents vs. having moderately and high educated parents	1- Phonology 2- Vocabulary 3- Grammar 4- Speaking 5- Reading	Comprehensibility of grammar activities	
Parents' English Level	Having parents with low level of English vs. Having parents with moderate and high levels of English	1- Phonology 2- Reading	Comprehensibility of grammar activities	
Achievement in English Course	Low achievers vs. moderate and high achievers	1- Phonology 2- Vocabulary 3- Grammar 4- Speaking 5- Reading 6- Writing	1- Frequency of vocabulary items 2- Authenticity of texts 3- Amount, comprehensibility and motivation level of grammar activities 4- Motivation level of writing activities	1- Presentation of the Turkish equivalents, pronunciation and example sentences of words 2- Producing sentences 3- Direct teaching of grammar 4- Reading activities (esp. reading in class and at home, pre-teaching of unknown words and answering comprehension questions) 5- Use of games and visuals 6- Paragraph and letter writing

5. 2. Implications for Practice

Suggestions for practice are offered in this section regarding the curriculum design, school and classroom contexts and teacher development based on the major findings of the study.

The results have revealed that what teachers perceive as their curriculum is the yearly plans and the course book. Therefore, they should be provided with a written curriculum in which its purposes, goals and objectives are clearly defined. Attention should be paid to make the written curriculum, yearly plans and the course-book(s) parallel to one another. Actually, there seems to be a need for reviewing and making changes in the present curriculum. In such an attempt, the first step should be the needs analysis. In this analysis not only the needs and interests of the students but also the problems that hinder the implementation of the existing one, which are raised in the present study, should be considered. During the next step, the content should be selected and ordered considering not only the continuity and integration within and among grade levels but also the time allocations for the course. In other words, alterations should be made to decrease the curriculum content so that time can be left for review and practice. Actually the content should be selected and ordered considering a process oriented approach which centers on tasks and activities. In short, the purpose should be the attainment of four main skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) in an integrated way but not only on the attainment of grammatical and lexical knowledge as in the present one.

The instructional design should be conducted taking into account the recent approaches, methods and techniques in English language teaching, the school and classroom contexts and the learner needs and interests. Learner-centered approach can be followed. In relation to this, more communicative activities that encourage oral practice should be involved. Specifically, more problem solving and information gap activities, and more interactive tasks such as games, role plays and discussions can be included. The topics of the listening and reading texts and the speaking and writing activities should be selected considering the students' needs, interests, and age levels. Besides, while designing classroom activities, it should be considered to involve those that appeal to a variety of learning styles and strategies.

Assessment and evaluation in this new curriculum model should also be considered. In this regard, the teachers should be encouraged to incorporate a more

process oriented assessment strategy. In other words, importance should be given not only to the written tests but also classroom practices. In other words, the teachers should be given autonomy to assess participation and interest of the students. One main criticism in this regard might be teachers' being subjective in their assessments or their over-grading the students. However, this may have positive effects on student motivation as the higher grades the students get, the more motivated they become to learn and use the language. Finally, the teachers should be encouraged to use more communicative tests by providing more guidance to them in the curriculum guidelines. Attention should be paid to continuous course evaluation.

In the design of the new curriculum, teachers and students should be incorporated in the process. This could be achieved in several ways. The volunteering teachers can be selected and can be incorporated in the team who is responsible for the curriculum design. This type of research can be carried out at certain time intervals to investigate the problems and suggestions of teachers and students, continuously. A questionnaire that is feasible, valid and reliable with to the point questions can be posted on the web-site of the MONE at certain time intervals and the interested teachers can be asked to fill it in. This might be more practical and economical in carrying out such an investigation.

Taking into account the fact that teachers have a tendency to accept the course book as their major syllabus, the course books should be redesigned in terms of its objectives, content and methodologies. In the design of new course books, the limitations of the existing ones in terms of content, layout and methodology should be considered. The new course books should involve four components, particularly a student book which will be studied in the course, a work book which can be used for assignments and reviews, a CD that involves listening texts and a teacher's book which may help the teachers with lesson planning by providing information about presentation and feedback techniques, meaningful examples and exercises, and communicative activities and even readily available reliable and valid tests that teachers can make use of while preparing their own tests. Actually, the suggestions put forward for the new curriculum are valid for the design of the course-book(s)

The physical qualities and facilities of the schools emerged as one of the major factors constraining the implementation process of the curriculum. In fact, they should be equipped with the necessary audio, visual and supplementary materials

that facilitate the teaching and learning of English. The provision of audio materials such as cassettes, CDs, tape recorders and even videos together with visual materials like OHPs and flash cards, and supplementary materials like resource books involving communicative and meaningful exercises suitable for this level, dictionaries and story books may enable each school to create their own language laboratories. If it is not possible to spare a budget for this, the schools can be provided with internet facilities at least for the teachers who can be trained to produce their own materials. The MONE can provide information about the readily available websites for teachers so that they can download their own materials. Or, MONE may create a new website where teachers from different schools all over Turkey can share their own materials.

Again, the classrooms for this course should be rearranged by decreasing the number of students. The Ministry of Education (MONE) may supply schools with reliable and valid proficiency or diagnostic English tests to be implemented at certain time intervals in order to arrange the classrooms according to students' level of English so that the problems with mixed ability groups could be overcome.

A final but not the least important suggestion could be that the teachers can be informed about the recent approaches and methods in instruction, evaluation and assessment by continuous pre and in service training. The teachers of other fields can be asked to attend a pre-service training in which the basic principles for ELT and the current trends in instruction and evaluation are introduced. At the end of such training the successful teachers can be provided with certificates that enable them to become English teachers. Again, all the English teachers whether they are graduates of ELT, literature or other departments should be provided with continuous in service training sessions in the form of seminars and workshops in which the current approaches, methods and techniques for the teaching and learning of English are introduced. More importantly in an attempt to redesign the curriculum and course books, the newly designed one should be introduced to the teachers by means of in service training sessions.

5.3. Implications for Further Research

Considering the aforementioned implications for practice, in an attempt to redesign the present curriculum, a needs assessment study should be conducted and

similar studies like the present one should be carried out to investigate the implementation of the newly designed English curriculum. Again, in an attempt to make changes in the course books, other studies should be conducted to evaluate the present course book(s). Actually, in terms of course-book(s), certain important issues have been presented and discussed in this present study. However, there seems to be a need for another study which focuses specifically on this dimension. It is because the evaluation of course book was beyond the scope of this piece of study. In such a course-book evaluation study, the opinions of not only the students and teachers but also the writers can be incorporated.

In order to collect rich data with the purpose of improving English language education, it may be useful to combine the findings of these survey questionnaires with teacher and student interviews and classroom observations, which is assumed to validate the findings of this present study. Again, considering the rich information obtained from the eighth grades, another study can be carried out with them in the form of interviews to get deeper information about their perceptions and problems.

The findings of this study can be triangulated by incorporating the opinions of the school principals who participate in the implementation process by sustaining the needed facilities for schools and classrooms and by directing the teachers towards the policies, rules and regulations of the Ministry of Education. It may also be triangulated by incorporating the opinions of school inspectors who are responsible for observing classrooms to evaluate curriculum implementation.

This study has been carried out to investigate the implementation of English language curriculum in public primary schools. However, there seems to be a need for another investigation with private primary schools as they are claimed to be good at teaching and learning of foreign languages. After such an attempt, the results of the present study can be compared with the findings of a research carried out with private schools in order to check whether similar issues are encountered in them or not. Such kind of comparison can also help to identify how the problems encountered in public schools are overcome in private ones if there are any solutions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİMİNE İLİŞKİN ÖĞRETMEN ANKETİ

Sevgili Öğretmenler,

Bu anket İlköğretim İkinci Kademedede (6., 7. ve 8. sınıflarda) uygulanan İngilizce öğretime ilişkin görüşlerinizi almak amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın öğretim programlarının ve süreçlerinin geliştirilmesine katkıda bulunması beklenmektedir. Bu nedenle sorulara vereceğiniz yanıtların eksiksiz olması çok önemlidir. Yanıtlarınız araştırmacı dışında başka hiç kimse tarafından okunmayacağı gibi yalnızca araştırma amacıyla kullanılacaktır.

Anketteki kapalı uçlu soruları dikkatlice okuduktan sonra seçeneklerden size en uygun olanını soruların karşısındaki boşluklara (X) işareti koyarak yanıtlayınız. Açık uçlu sorulara vereceğiniz ayrıntılı cevaplar, alt başlıklar hakkında derinlemesine bilgi elde etmekte araştırmacıya yarar sağlayacak ve araştırmaya derinlik kazandıracaktır. Bu nedenle açık uçlu soruları da dikkatlice okuyup cevaplandırmanızı rica ederim. Anketin değeri, sizin ne kadar içten ve doğru yanıt verdiğinizle bağlıdır. Soruları ilginç bulacağınızı düşünüyor, araştırmama yapacağınız katkılardan dolayı sizlere teşekkür ediyorum.

ASLI ERSEN YANIK

Eğitim Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı Doktora Öğrencisi

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi / Ankara

A. KİŞİSEL BİLGİLER: Aşağıda size ait kişisel sorular yer almaktadır. **Bu soruları ilgili kutucuğa (x) koyarak yada verilen boşluğa yazarak yanıtlayınız.**

1. Görevli olduğunuz il / ilçe :

2. Yaşınız :

3. Cinsiyetiniz : Kadın () Erkek ()

4. Mezun olduğunuz Fakülte veya Yüksek Okul:

5. Mezun olduğunuz Bölüm : a. İngilizce Öğretmenliği ()

b. İngilizce Öğretmenliği dışında bir bölümden
mezun iseniz belirtiniz

6. İngilizce Öğretmenliği Deneyiminiz : a. 1-5 () b. 6-10 ()

c. 11-15 () d. 16-20 ()

e. 20> ()

7. İngilizce Öğrettiğiniz Sınıflar : a. 6. sınıf () b. 7. sınıf () c. 8. sınıf ()

B. HEDEFLERE VE AMAÇLARA İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLER:

1. Aşağıda İlköğretim İkinci Kademedeki (6., 7. ve 8. sınıflardaki) İngilizce Dersi Programlarının ortak hedeflerine ve amaçlarına ilişkin bazı ifadeler yer almaktadır. **Lütfen öğrencilerinizin belirtilen hedefleri ve amaçları ne düzeyde gerçekleştirdiğini ilgili kutucuğa çarpı (X) koyarak işaretleyiniz.**

	Çok iyi	İyi	Orta	Az	Hiç
a. İngilizce sesleri doğru çıkarabilme.					
b. İngilizce kelimeleri doğru telaffuz edebilme.					
c. İngilizce cümleleri doğru tonlama yaparak söyleme. (intonation)					
d. İngilizce cümlelerde geçen kelimelerin anlamını kavrayabilme.					
e. Öğrendiği İngilizce kelimeleri doğru kullanarak cümle kurabilme (sözlü/yazılı).					
f. İngilizce dilbilgisi (gramer) kurallarının işlevini (function) ve yapısını (form) anlayabilme.					
g. İngilizce dilbilgisi (gramer) kurallarını doğru kullanarak cümle kurabilme (sözlü / yazılı).					
h. Günlük iletişimde kullanılan basit cümleleri değişik anlatım biçimlerine dönüştürebilme(soru-cevap, olumlu-olumsuz, tekil-çoğul).					
ı. Basit cümlelerden oluşan İngilizce bir metni/diyalogu dinlediğinde anlayabilme.					
i. Basit cümlelerle İngilizce sözlü iletişim kurabilme.					
j. Basit cümlelerden oluşan İngilizce bir metni/diyalogu okuduğunda anlayabilme.					
k. İngilizce paragraflar (kompozisyon) yazabilme.					
l. Sınıf düzeyine uygun noktalama işaretlerini/yazım kurallarını kullanabilme.					
m. Dinlediği kelimeleri / cümleleri doğru yazabilme (dictation).					
n. İngilizce öğrenmekten zevk alma.					
o. İngilizceyi kullanmaya istekli olma.					

2. Yukarıda belirtilen hedef ve amaçlardan gerçekleşmeyenler varsa bunun nedeni sizce nedir?

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C. İÇERİĞE İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLER

1. Aşağıda İlköğretim İkinci Kademedeki (6. , 7. ve 8. sınıflardaki) İngilizce Dersi Programlarının içeriğine/konularına ilişkin bazı ifadeler yer almaktadır. **Lütfen bu ifadelere ne derece katıldığınızı ilgili kutucuğa (X) koyarak yanıtlayınız.**

	Tamamen katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılmıyorum	Tamamen katılmıyorum
a. Öğretilen kelimeler öğrencilerin günlük hayatta sık kullanabileceği türdendir.					
b. Kelime ile ilgili alıştırmalar öğrencilerin ilgisini çekecek niteliktedir.					
c. Gramer ile ilgili alıştırmalar öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşmasını sağlamaya yöneliktir					
d. Gramer ile ilgili konular öğrencilerin anlayabileceği düzeydedir.					
e. Gramer ile ilgili konular basitten zora doğru sıralanmıştır.					
f. Okuma ve/ veya dinleme parçalarının konuları öğrencilerin ilgisini çekecek niteliktedir.					
g. Okuma ve/veya dinleme parçalarının konuları öğrencilerin anlayabileceği düzeydedir.					
h. Okuma ve/veya dinleme parçalarıyla ilgili alıştırmalar gramer bilgisini geliştirmeye yöneliktir.					
i. Okuma parçalarıyla ilgili alıştırmalar okuduğunu anlamaya yöneliktir.					
j. Konuşma becerisine yönelik alıştırmalar öğrencilerin günlük yaşamı ile ilişkilidir.					
k. Konuşma becerisine yönelik alıştırmalar öğrencilerin yapabileceği türdendir.					
l. Yazma becerisine ilişkin konular öğrencilerin ilgisini çekecek niteliktedir.					
m. Yazma becerisine ilişkin alıştırmalar öğrencilerin yapabileceği türdendir.					

2. Yukarıda belirtilenler dışında İngilizce Dersinin içeriği / konuları hakkında yaşadığınız problem, eksik bulduğunuz yön ya da eklemek istediğiniz boyut varsa belirtiniz

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D. ÖĞRETİM SÜREÇLERİNE İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLER:

1. Aşağıda yer alan bilgi ve becerileri nasıl öğretiyorsunuz? (Kendinizin ve öğrencilerinizin sınıf içi etkinlikleri, kullandığınız yöntemler ve materyaller hakkında bilgi veriniz.)

KELİME BİLGİSİ:

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GRAMER BİLGİSİ:

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DİNLEME BECERİSİ:

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KONUŞMA BECERİSİ:

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OKUMA BECERİSİ:

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YAZMA BECERİSİ:

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2. Yukarıda belirtilen bilgi ve becerileri öğretirken ne tür problemlerle karşılaşıyorsunuz? (Sınıf içi etkinlikler, kullandığınız yöntemler ve materyaller, öğrenci vb. açılarından.)
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3. Öğrencilerinizin İngilizce dersine karşı tutumları nasıl? (Verdikleri önem, gösterdikleri ilgi ve istek açılarından.)
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4. Öğrencilerinize İngilizce dersini sevdirmek için **siz** neler yapıyorsunuz?
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E. DEĞERLENDİRMEYE YÖNELİK GÖRÜŞLER

1. Öğrencilerinizi değerlendirirken ne tür problemlerle karşılaşıyorsunuz? (Sınav hazırlarken karşılaştığınız güçlükler, öğrencilerinizden kaynaklanan güçlükler ve programdan kaynaklanan güçlükler.)
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2. Okulunuzda İngilizce derslerinin değerlendirilmesine ve geliştirilmesine yönelik ne tür çalışmalar yapıyorsunuz? (Bireysel ve diğer öğretmenlerle birlikte)

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F. ÖNERİLER

1. 6. , 7. ve 8. Sınıflar düzeyinde İngilizce öğretiminde karşılaşılan sorunlar, süreçler ve uygulamalar ile ilgili görüş ve önerileriniz nelerdir?

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TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Dear Teachers,

This questionnaire is prepared to get your opinions about English language Curriculum implemented at the 6th, 7th and 8th grades of primary schools. This investigation is expected to contribute to the improvement of the curriculum. It is important that you provide full answers for each question. Your responses will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other business except for the present study.

After you carefully read the items, please respond to them by marking them with (x). The detailed answers provided for the open-ended questions are expected to enable the researcher to obtain in-dept information about the given subtitles. Therefore, please answer the open-ended questions carefully, as well. The significance of this questionnaire depends on your honesty. I hope you will enjoy answering the questionnaire. I would like to thank you for your contributions.

ASLI ERSEN YANIK

PhD Student in Educational Sciences Department

Middle East Technical University / Ankara

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION: The following questions are about your personal information. **Respond to them by either marking them with (x) or by filling in the blanks.**

1. Location of School (City/Town):
2. Age :
3. Gender : Female () Male ()
4. The Faculty or Vocational School of Graduation:
5. The Department of Graduation : a. English Language Teaching ()
b. If you are a graduate of any other department, please indicate:
6. English Teaching Experience : a. 1-5 () b. 6-10 ()
c. 11-15 () d. 16-20 ()
e. 20> ()
7. The Grade Levels Being Taught : a. 6th grade () b. 7th Grade () c. 8th Grade ()

B. OPINIONS ABOUT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. Below, there is a list of items about the common goals and objectives of the English language curriculum of the 6th, 7th and 8th grades of public primary schools. **Please indicate how often the following goals and objectives are achieved by your students by marking the related box with (x).**

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a. Articulation of sounds					
b. Pronunciation of vocabulary items					
c. Intonation of sentences					
d. Understanding the meanings of vocabulary items					
e. Formulating sentences with newly learned vocabulary items (spoken/written)					
f. Understanding the functions and forms of grammatical structures					
g. Formulating grammatically accurate sentences (spoken/written)					
h. Transforming sentences into various forms (i.e. question-answer, positive-negative, singular-plural)					
i. Understanding a listening text suitable for their levels					
j. Speaking					
k. Understanding a reading text suitable for their levels					
l. Writing paragraphs					
m. Using spelling and punctuation accurately					
n. Doing dictations					
o. Being interested in learning English					
p. Being motivated to use English					

2. What are the reasons for not achieving the aforementioned goals and objectives if there are any?

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C. OPINIONS ABOUT CONTENT

1. Below, there is a list of items about the content of the English language curriculum of the 6th, 7th and 8th grades of public primary schools. **Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following items by marking the related box with (x).**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. Frequently used vocabulary items are taught					
b. Vocabulary activities are interesting for the students					
c. Grammar activities encourage the improvement of students' speaking skills					
d. Grammar content is comprehensible for the students					
e. Grammar content is ordered from simple to complex					
f. The topics of the reading and/or listening texts are appealing to the interests of the students					
g. The reading and/or listening texts are comprehensible for the students					
h. The reading and/or listening activities are for the improvement of students' grammatical knowledge					
i. The reading and/or listening activities are for the improvement of students' comprehension of the texts					
j. The speaking activities are relevant for the real-life situations					
k. The speaking activities are applicable for the students					
l. The writing activities are appealing to the interests of the students					
m. The writing activities are applicable for the students.					

2. If you have any other problems and suggestions about the content of the English language curriculum, please indicate them.

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D. OPINIONS ABOUT THE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:

1. How do you teach the following language skills? (Please inform about your and students' classroom practices, your approaches, methods and materials)

VOCABULARY:

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GRAMMAR:

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LISTENING:

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SPEAKING:

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READING:

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WRITING:

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2. What kind of problems do you encounter while teaching the aforementioned language skills? (About your approaches, methods and materials, students etc.)

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3. What are your students' attitudes towards the lesson? (About the significance attributed, the motivation level etc.)

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4. What do you do in order to increase student motivation?

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E. OPINIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

1. What kind of problems do you encounter while assessing your students' performances? (Your problems about the preparation of exams and your troubles resulting from students and program etc.)

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2. What kinds of procedures do you employ in your schools to evaluate and improve the curriculum?(Individual efforts and efforts with other teachers)

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F. SUGGESTIONS

1. What are your opinions about the problems, procedures and suggestions on English language teaching and learning in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades?

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APPENDIX B

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENİMİNE İLİŞKİN ÖĞRENCİ ANKETİ

Sevgili Öğrenciler,

Bu anket okulunuzda gördüğünüz İngilizce dersine yönelik görüşlerinizi almak amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Anketin amacı İngilizce dersini daha anlaşılır kılmak, sizlerin ilgi, istek ve beklentileri doğrultusunda verilmesini sağlamak için çözüm önerileri geliştirmektir. Bu nedenle vereceğiniz cevapların doğru ve içten olması sizler için önemlidir.

Vereceğiniz cevaplar araştırmacı dışında başka hiç kimse tarafından okunmayacağı gibi yalnızca araştırma amacıyla kullanılacaktır. Bu nedenle ankete lütfen isminizi yazmayınız. Yardımlarınızdan dolayı çok teşekkür ederim.

ASLI ERSEN YANIK

Eğitim Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı Doktora Öğrencisi

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi / Ankara

Aşağıda size ait kişisel sorular yer almaktadır. Soruları dikkatlice okuyup size uygun gelen cevabın başındaki parantez içine (X) işareti koyunuz. Boşluk bırakılan sorulara ise cevabınızı yazınız.

1. Okulunuzun bulunduğu il veya ilçe:

2. Kaçınıcı sınıfta okuyorsunuz? : 6. sınıf () 7. sınıf () 8. sınıf ()

3. Cinsiyetiniz: KIZ () ERKEK ()

4. Anneniz ve babanızın öğretim durumu nedir?

	<u>ANNENİZ</u>	<u>BABANIZ</u>
a. Hiçbir okul mezunu değil	()	()
b. İlkokul mezunu	()	()
c. Ortaokul mezunu	()	()
d. Lise mezunu	()	()
e. Üniversite mezunu	()	()

5. Anneniz ve babanız ne derecede İngilizce biliyor?

	<u>ANNENİZ</u>	<u>BABANIZ</u>
a. Hiç bilmiyor	()	()
b. Biraz biliyor	()	()
c. Orta derecede biliyor	()	()
d. İyi biliyor	()	()
e. Çok iyi biliyor	()	()

6. Anneniz yada babanız İngilizce dersine çalışırken size EVET () HAYIR ()
yardım ediyor mu?

7. İngilizce Dersi en son karnenizde kaç geldi? 5 () 4 () 3 () 2 () 1 ()

8. İngilizce derslerinde aşağıdakilerden hangilerini yapmakta zorlanıyorsunuz?

	EVET	BAZEN	HAYIR
a. İngilizce sesleri doğru çıkarmak.			
b. İngilizce kelimelerin anlamlarını öğrenmek.			
c. İngilizce dilbilgisi (gramer) kurallarını anlamak.			
d. Dinlediğim İngilizce bir konuşmayı anlamak.			
e. İngilizce konuşmak.			
f. İngilizce okuduğumu anlamak.			
g. İngilizce paragraf/kompozisyon yazmak.			
h. Öğretmenim İngilizce bir şey okurken aynısını yazmak (dikte).			

1. Başka (lütfen yazınız) :.....
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9. İngilizce derslerindeki konular /alıştırmalar hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

	EVET	BAZEN	HAYIR
a. Öğretilen İngilizce kelimeleri derste sık kullanıyorum.			
b. Okuma parçalarındaki konular günlük yaşantımızla ilişkili.			
c. Okuma parçalarının veya diyalogların konuları ilginç.			
d. Derste daha çok İngilizce cümlelerin kuralları (gramer kuralları) ile ilgili alıştırmalar yapıyoruz.			
e. İngilizce cümlelerin kuralları (gramer kuralları) ile ilgili alıştırmalar ilgimi çekiyor.			

	EVET	BAZEN	HAYIR
f. İngilizce cümlelerin kuralları (gramer kuralları) ile ilgili alıştırmaları anlayabiliyorum.			
g. İngilizce dersindeki alıştırmalar daha çok İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik.			
h. İngilizce yazı yazma (kompozisyon) konuları ilgimi çekiyor.			

1. Başka (lütfen yazınız) :

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10. Aşağıdaki İngilizce kelime (sözcük) çalışmaları size ne derece yararlı oluyor? Hiç yapılmıyorsa belirtiniz.

	Yararlıdır	Biraz Yararlıdır	Yararlı Değildir	Hiç Yapılmıyor
a. İngilizce kelimelerin Türkçe anlamlarını öğrenmek				
b. İngilizce kelimelerin eş ve zıt anlamlılarını öğrenmek				
c. İngilizce kelimelerin nasıl okunduğunu (telaffuzunu) öğrenmek				
d. Öğretmenimizin İngilizce kelimelerle ilgili örnek cümle vermesi				
e. Öğretmenimizin İngilizce kelimelerle ilgili resimler veya gerçek nesneler göstermesi				
f. İngilizce kelimelerin anlamlarını sözlükten kendimizin bulması				
g. İngilizce kelimeleri beş-on kez defterimize yazmak				
h. İngilizce kelimeleri kullanarak kendimizin cümle kurması				
ı. İngilizce kelimelerle ilgili oyunlar oynamak				

i. Başka (lütfen yazınız) :

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11. Aşağıda belirtilen İngilizce cümleler ilgili çalışmalar (Gramer Çalışmaları) size ne derece yararlı oluyor? Hiç yapılmıyorsa belirtiniz.

	Yararlıdır	Biraz Yararlıdır	Yararlı Değildir	Hiç Yapılmıyor
a. Öğretmenimizin İngilizce cümlelerin kurallarını ve anlamını (gramer kurallarını) kendisinin açıklaması				
b. Öğretmenimizin İngilizce cümlelerin kurallarını ve anlamını (gramer kurallarını) bizim bulmamızı istemesi				
c. İngilizce cümleleri soru-cevap, olumlu-olumsuz gibi değişik şekillere dönüştürmek				
d. Kendimizin İngilizce cümleler kurması				
e. İngilizce cümlelerle ilgili boşluk doldurma çalışmaları yapmak				

f. Başka (lütfen yazınız) :

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12. İngilizce kelimeler ve cümleler ile ilgili çalışmaları yaparken ne tür problemler yaşıyorsunuz?

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13. Aşağıda belirtilen İngilizce diyalog ve okuma parçaları ile ilgili çalışmalar size ne derece yararlı oluyor? Hiç yapılmıyorsa belirtiniz.

	Yararlıdır	Biraz Yararlıdır	Yararlı Değildir	Hiç Yapılmıyor
a. İngilizce diyalogları öğretmenimizin okuması ve bizim dinlememiz				
b. İngilizce diyalogları teypten dinlemek				
c. İngilizce diyalogları veya okuma parçalarını sınıfta kendimizin okuması				
d. İngilizce diyalogları veya okuma parçalarını evde okuyup gelmek				

	Yararlıdır	Biraz Yararlıdır	Yararlı Değildir	Hiç Yapılmıyor
e. Öğretmenimizin İngilizce diyaloglardaki veya okuma parçalarındaki zor kelimeleri önceden öğretmesi				
f. İngilizce okumaya başlamadan önce konu hakkında kendi aramızda konuşmak				
g. Öğretmenimizin İngilizce diyalogların veya okuma parçalarının konusu hakkında ayrıntılı sorular sorması				

h. Başka(lütfen yazınız):

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14. İngilizce diyaloglar ve okuma parçaları ile ilgili çalışmaları yaparken ne tür problemler yaşıyorsunuz?

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15. Aşağıdaki İngilizce konusma çalışmaları size ne derece yararlı oluyor? Hiç yapılmıyorsa belirtiniz.

	Yararlıdır	Biraz Yararlıdır	Yararlı Değildir	Hiç Yapılmıyor
a. İngilizce diyaloglar canlandırmak				
b. Bir resim hakkında İngilizce konuşmak				
c. Bir konu hakkında grup (küme) halinde tartışmak				

d.Başka (lütfen yazınız):

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16. Aşağıdaki İngilizce yazı yazma çalışmaları size ne derece yararlı oluyor? Hiç yapılmıyorsa belirtiniz.

	Yararlıdır	Biraz Yararlıdır	Yararlı Değildir	Hiç Yapılmıyor
a. Bir konu hakkında İngilizce paragraf/kompozisyon yazmak				
b. Öğretmenimiz İngilizce bir şey okurken aynısını yazmak (dikte)				
c. İngilizce mektup yazmak				

e. Başka (lütfen yazınız):

17. İngilizce konuşma ve yazı yazma ile ilgili çalışmaları yaparken ne tür problemler yaşıyorsunuz?

.....

.....

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.....

.....

18. İngilizce yazılı veya sözlü sınavlarda ne tür problemler yaşıyorsunuz?

.....

.....

.....

.....

19. İngilizcenizi geliştirmek için ders dışında neler yapıyorsunuz?

.....

.....

.....

.....

20. İngilizceyi seviyor musunuz? Neden?

.....

.....

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.....

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Dear Students,

This questionnaire aims to get your opinions about the English course given in your school. The purpose of the questionnaire is to make the course more comprehensible and to find solutions in order to give it according to your needs, interests and expectations. It is important for you to give honest answers

Your responses will not be read by any other person except for the researcher and will not be used for any other purpose except for this study. Please do not write your names. Thank you for your help.

ASLI ERSEN YANIK

PhD Student in Educational Sciences Department

Middle East Technical University / Ankara

Below you will find questions about yourselves. Read the questions carefully and mark the most suitable answer for you by putting (x) next to the questions. Please write your answers in the blanks.

1. Location of School (City/Town):

2. What is your grade level? : 6th Grade () 7th Grade () 8th Grade ()

3. Gender : FEMALE () MALE ()

4. What is your parents' educational level?

	<u>MOTHER</u>	<u>FATHER</u>
a. Not a graduate of any school	()	()
b. Primary School Graduate	()	()
c. Secondary School Graduate	()	()
d. High School Graduate	()	()
e. University Graduate	()	()

5. What is your parents' English Level?

	<u>MOTHER</u>	<u>FATHER</u>
a. Not knows	()	()
b. Low	()	()
c. Medium	()	()
d. High	()	()
e. Very High	()	()

6. Do your parents help you with English? YES () NO ()

7. What was your English grade in the last record sheet? 5 () 4 () 3 () 2 () 1 ()

8. What kind of difficulties do you have in the English course?

	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
a. Articulating sounds (pronunciation)			
b. Understanding the meanings of vocabulary items			
c. Understanding the grammatical rules			
d. Understanding a listening text			
e. Speaking in English			
f. Understanding a reading text			
g. Writing paragraphs in English			
h. Doing dictations			

1. Others (Please specify):

.....

9. What do you think about the content and activities of English course?

	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
a. I use the new words frequently in the English course			
b. The topics of the reading texts are related to our real life			
c. The topics of the reading texts are interesting			
d. Most of the time we do grammar exercises and/or activities in the English course			
e. The grammar exercises and/or activities are interesting			
f. I can understand the grammar exercises and/or activities			
g. The exercises and/or activities in the English course are for the improvement of our speaking skills			
h. The topics of the writing activities are interesting			

1. Others (Please specify):

.....

10. To what extent are the following vocabulary exercises useful for you? If they are not done, please indicate.

	Useful	Partially Useful	Not Useful	Not Done
a. Learning the Turkish meanings of the new words				
b. Learning the synonyms and antonyms of the new words				
c. Learning the pronunciation of the new words				
d. The use of example sentences with new words by the teacher				
e. The use of pictures and real objects about new words by the teacher				
f. Finding the meanings of new words from the dictionary				
g. Rewriting the new words in our notebooks five to ten times				
h. Our forming sentences with the new words				
i. Playing games with new words				

j. Others (Please specify):

.....

11. To what extent are the following grammar exercises useful for you? If they are not done, please indicate.

	Useful	Partially Useful	Not Useful	Not Done
a. Teachers' explaining the grammar rules himself/herself				
b. Teachers' wanting us to guess the grammar rules ourselves				
c. Transforming sentences to different forms like question-answer, positive-negative				
d. Our forming sentences with the new grammar structures				
e. Doing fill-in-the-blanks exercises with the grammar structures				

f. Others (Please specify):

.....

12. What kind of problems do you have while doing the vocabulary and grammar exercises?

.....

.....

.....

13. To what extent are the following listening and reading activities useful for you? If they are not done, please indicate.

	Useful	Partially Useful	Not Useful	Not Done
a. Listening to the dialogues and texts read by the teacher				
b. Listening to the dialogues and texts from the tapes				
c. Reading the dialogues and texts silently in the classroom by ourselves				
d. Reading the dialogues and texts at home before coming to the course				
e. Our teacher's teaching the unknown words in the dialogues and texts before we start reading them				
f. Talking among ourselves about the topic of the dialogues and texts before we start reading				
g. Answering questions about the content of the dialogues and texts asked by the teacher				

h. Others (Please Specify):

.....

14. What kind of problems do you have while doing the listening and reading activities?

.....

15. To what extent are the following speaking activities useful for you? If they are not done, please indicate.

	Useful	Partially useful	Not Useful	Not Done
a. Acting out English dialogues				
b. Talking about a picture in English				
c. Discussing a topic among groups in English				

d. Others (Please specify):

.....

16. To what extent are the following writing activities useful for you? If they are not done, please indicate.

	Useful	Partially useful	Not Useful	Not Done
a. Writing a paragraph about a given topic				
b. Dictating what is read by the teacher				
c. Writing a letter in English				

e. Başka (lütfen yazınız):

.....

17. What kind of problems do you have while doing the speaking and writing activities?

.....

.....

.....

18. What kind of problems do you have with the oral and written English exams?

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19. What do you do to improve your English ?

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.....

20. Do you love English? Why?

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APPENDIX C

TURKISH SUMMARY

(ÖZET)

Yabancı dil öğrenme küreselleşmenin egemen olduğu günümüzde en önemli gereksinimdir. Bu nedenle, yabancı dil dersleri dünyanın birçok ülkesinde çeşitli eğitim ve öğretim programlarında yer almaktadır. Dünyada var olan pek çok dil arasından özellikle İngilizce öğrenme bugün çok daha önemlidir. Geçmişten bugüne İngilizcenin etkin bir biçimde öğretimi için çeşitli kuramlar ortaya atılmış; farklı öğretim yaklaşımları, yöntemleri ve teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Richards ve Rodgers'ın (1990) da belirttiği gibi, bu öğretim yaklaşımları, yöntemleri ve tekniklerinin ortaya çıkışında İngilizcenin öğrenilmesindeki kişisel ve toplumsal amaçların, eğitim ve öğretimde ortaya çıkan genel kuramlar ile dilbilim alanında yer alan yabancı dil edinimi konusundaki kuramların etkisi büyüktür. Ortaya çıkan tüm öğretim yaklaşımları, yöntemleri ve teknikleri yalnızca sınıf içi uygulamaları değil, aynı zamanda konu ve beceri seçimi ve dağılımlarını, öğrenim sürecinde kullanılan materyalleri ve ölçme-değerlendirme sürecini etkilemiştir.

İlgili yazında yabancı dil edinimi üzerine üç temel görüşten söz edilmektedir. Bunlardan ilki “yapısalcı” diye adlandırılan ve yabancı dil edinimini söyleyiş, dilbilgisi ve sözcük gibi yapısal olarak birbirleriyle ilişkili bilgilerin kazanılmasını içeren görüştür. Bu görüş, “dilbilgisi-çeviri,” “düz anlatım,” “kulak-dil alışkanlığı/dinle-konuş,” “sessizlik” ve “tüm fiziksel tepki” yöntemlerinin temelini oluşturmuştur. İkincisi, dilin işlev ve anlamının kavranmasını vurgulayan ve “Bilişsel Öğrenme” yaklaşımının ortaya çıkmasını sağlayan “işlevselci” görüştür. Son olarak, dil edinimini yalnızca yapısal ve işlevsel bilgi ve becerilerin edinilmesiyle sınırlandırmayıp, aynı zamanda sosyal ilişkilerin kurulması ve yürütülmesinin de temeli olarak gören “iletişimsel” görüştür. Bu görüş, “iletişimci,” “göreve-dayalı

öğretim” ve “tümleşik beceri öğretimi” yaklaşımlarının ortaya çıkması ve kullanılmasında etkili olmuştur. Tüm bunların yanı sıra belirli bir yabancı dil edinimi kuramına dayandırılmayan, genel eğitim ve öğretim yaklaşımlarından doğan “Telkin” ve “Grupla Dil Öğrenimi” yöntemleri İngilizce öğretiminde rol oynamıştır (Richards ve Rodgers, 1990, s.17).

Yine ilgili yazında, İngilizce eğitim ve öğretim programlarının planlanması ve uygulanmasında tüm bu yaklaşım ve yöntemlerin sentezlenerek her birinin iyi taraflarının farklı eğitim durumlarında kullanılmasını öngören yöntemin esas alınması gerektiği vurgulanmıştır. “Seçmeci” yöntem diye adlandırılan bu görüşe göre, her eğitim ortamına uygun tek bir yaklaşım ve yöntemin olmadığı, her yaklaşım ve yöntemin güçlü ve zayıf yönlerinin bulunduğu esas alınmıştır (CEFR, 2001; Demirel, 1990; McKay, 2000). Günümüz dünyasında en yaygın kullanılan yaklaşımlar ise “iletişimsel” ve “tümleşik beceri öğretimi” yaklaşımlarıdır (Nunan, 1993).

Ancak, özellikle Asya ülkelerinde, İngilizce öğretiminde kullanılan “iletişimsel” ve “göreve-dayalı öğretim” yaklaşımlarının bu ülkelerdeki eğitim durumlarına uygunluğu halen tartışılan bir konudur (Alptekin, 2001; Gupta, 2004; Hu, 2005; Lewis ve McCook, 2002; Littlewood, 2000). Yapılan akademik çalışmalarda ortaya atılan bir başka boyut ise, öğrenci merkezli bu öğretim yaklaşımlarının daha çok öğretmen merkezli bir öğretim sistemine alışkın Asya kültüründeki öğrencilerin öğrenme stilleri ve stratejilerine uygun olup olmadığıdır (Gupta, 2004; Hu, 2005; Lewis ve McCook, 2002; Littlewood, 2000; Liao, 2004; Zhenhui, 2001). Ancak, yapılan çalışmaların pek çoğunda uygun yöntem ve teknikler kullanılarak özellikle genç yaşlardaki öğrencilerin öğrenme stil ve stratejilerinin değiştirilip geliştirilebileceği de vurgulanmaktadır. Bunu sağlamanın en iyi yolu öğrenci merkezli; iletişimi ve etkileşimi temel alan; problem çözme, oyun ve araştırmaya dayalı etkinliklere ağırlık verilen bir program olduğu belirtilmektedir (Aslanargu ve Süngü, 2006; Çakır, 2004; Durukafa, 2000; Ergür, 2004; Hismanoğlu, 2000; Önal, 2003).

Asya ülkelerinde bu akademik tartışmalar sürerken, gelişmiş Avrupa ülkelerinde ise yabancı dil eğitimi, dolayısıyla İngilizce öğretimi, Avrupa Konseyi’nin ortaya koyduğu “ortak Avrupa dil çerçevesi (CEFR)” ile şekillenmektedir. Bu çerçevenin amacı çeşitli düzeylerde, yabancı dil öğretiminde edinilmesi gereken standartları

ortaya koymaktır. Kısaca, çerçevede, belirli bir yaklaşım ya da yöntem savunulmadan değişik öğretim durumlarında kullanılabilecek çok çeşitli yaklaşım, yöntem ve teknikler açıklanmaktadır (CEFR, 2001). Ancak, yapılan bir çalışmada çerçevenin anlaşılması ve uygulanmasında çeşitli sorunlarla karşılaşıldığı ortaya konulmuştur (LPD, 2005).

Bu tartışmaların tam ortasında, Asya ve Avrupa arasında bir köprü olan Türkiye yer almaktadır. Türkiye’de, bir yandan kültürel anlamda Asya’ya daha yakın olması nedeniyle iletişimci yaklaşımın ülkenin eğitim ve öğretim durumuna uygunluğu tartışılırken, öte yandan, Avrupa birliğinde yer alma çabalarından dolayı İngilizce öğretimindeki uygulamalarını CEFR’de belirtilen standartlara göre düzenleme konusu gündemdedir (Alptekin, 2002; Aslanargu ve Söngü, 2006; Ergür, 2004).

Aslında, ülkemizde uzunca bir süredir İngilizce diğer yabancı dillere oranla daha çok ilgi görmektedir. Özellikle, 1997-1998 yıllarında uygulanmaya başlanan sekiz yıllık kesintisiz eğitime geçilmesinden sonra tüm resmi ilköğretim okullarında İngilizce zorunlu ders olarak 4. sınıftan itibaren okutulmaya başlanmıştır. İngilizce ders programlarında çeşitli düzenlemeler yapılmıştır. Bu düzenlemelerle, ilköğretim ikinci kademe İngilizce ders programları amaçlar, konu, öğretim ve değerlendirme teknikleri açısından yeniden düzenlenmiştir (MEB, 2004). Yapılan düzenlemeler, özellikle 6. , 7. ve 8. sınıflarda okutulan İngilizce derslerinin amaç ve hedefleri, konuları, öğretim ve değerlendirme yöntem ve teknikleri açısından bir bütünlük ve süreklilik göstermektedir.

Türkiye’deki İngilizce öğretiminde geçmişten bugüne “Bilişsel Öğrenme” ve “iletişimsel” yaklaşımlar etkili olmuş ve yaygın olarak dilbilgisi-çeviri, düz anlatım ve dinle-konuş yöntemleri kullanılmıştır (Demircan, 1990; Demirel 1990). Sekiz yıllık kesintisiz eğitime geçilmesinden sonra ilköğretim ikinci kademe İngilizce ders programlarının belirtilen ilkelerinde, iletişimci yaklaşımın ve seçmeci yöntemin önemi vurgulanmıştır (MONE, 2004). Kısaca, dört temel dil becerisinin (dinleme, konuşma, okuma, yazma) geliştirilmesini amaçlayan, öğrenci merkezli ve gerek bütüncül gerekse biçimlendirici değerlendirme yöntemlerinin benimsendiği bir öğretim yaklaşımının önemine değinilmektedir. Programın ilkelerinde, özellikle işbirlikli öğrenme yönteminin kalabalık gruplarda da uygulanması ile konuşmaya yönelik rol yapma, oyun ve tartışma gibi sınıf etkinliklerine yer verilmesi vurgulanmaktadır. İlköğretim ikinci kademe İngilizce dersi programında yer alan

amaç ve hedeflerinin ne denli gerçekleştiğinin, konuların amaç ve hedeflerin gerçekleşmesinde nasıl bir rol oynadığının ve önerilen tüm bu öğretim ve ölçme-değerlendirme yöntem ve tekniklerinin ne denli uygulandığının araştırılmasında yarar vardır.

Temelde Türkiye’deki resmi ilköğretim okullarındaki İngilizce öğretimi üzerinde yapılan araştırmalar bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırmalar program değerlendirme çalışmaları ve İngilizce öğretimini etkileyen faktörlerin araştırıldığı çalışmalar olarak sınıflandırılabilir. Yapılan bu çalışmalar Türkiye’deki resmi ilköğretim okullarında İngilizce öğretimi hakkında önemli bulgulara ulaşsa da kendi içerisinde bir takım sınırlılıklara sahiptir. Öncelikle var olan bu araştırmalar ya sekiz yıllık eğitime geçilmeden önce belli bir sınıfla (Yıldız, 1996) ya da sekiz yıllık eğitime geçilmesinden sonra yalnızca 4. ve 5. sınıflarla yapılmıştır (Büyükduman, 2005; İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002; Tok 2003). Bu çalışmalar, yöntemleri açısından da sınırlılıklara sahiptir. Bu araştırmaların yalnızca tek bir ilde ve birkaç okulda yapılmış olması nedeniyle evreni temsil etme açısından sınırlılıkları bulunmaktadır (Acar, 2006; Büyükduman, 2005; Deniz, Avşaroğlu ve Fidan 2006; Genç, 2002; İğrek, 2001; Konuşmaz ve Toksöz 2004; Mersinligil, 2002; Onur, 2005; Tok 2003). Yine, özellikle yapılan değerlendirme çalışmalarının bir bölümünde ya yalnızca öğretmen görüşlerine ya da yalnızca öğrenci başarı düzeylerine veya görüşlerine bakılmıştır (Büyükduman,2005; İğrek, 2001; Tok 2003; Yıldız, 1996).

İlgili yazında bir öğretim programının en kapsamlı açıklaması “amaçlanan program” ve “yaşanan program” diye adlandırılan iki temel terimin açıklanmasıyla sunulmuştur. “Amaçlanan program”, programı hazırlayanların belgelerinde yer alan açıklamalarını içermektedir. “Yaşanan program” ise öğrenciler, öğretmenler, materyaller ve sınıf içindeki günlük yaşamdan etkilenecek biçimlenen programdır (Öztürk, 2003). Bu iki tanım “amaçlanan” ve “yaşanan” programlar arasında farklılıklar olabileceğini göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, uygulanmaya başlanan bir programın amaçlar, konular, öğretim ve değerlendirme süreçlerinin amaçlanan programda yer alan ölçütlere uygunluğu sürekli incelenmeli ve uygulama sürecinde ortaya çıkan sorun ve öneriler saptanmalıdır. Bu saptamalar programın güvenilirliğinin, geçerliliğinin ve etkililiğinin belirlenmesinde çok büyük önem taşımaktadır. Yine, Deneyimlenen programın açıklamasına bakıldığında programın uygulanmasında iki önemli grup ortaya çıkmaktadır: Öğretmenler ve öğrenciler. Bu

nedenle, var olan bir programın incelenmesinde her iki grubun görüş ve önerilerine yer verilmelidir.

Özetle, dünya’da ve Türkiye’de ortaya konulan tüm bu kuramlar ve araştırma bulguları dikkate alınarak ilköğretim ikinci kademe (6. , 7. ve 8. sınıf) İngilizce dersi programının uygulanmasının tüm Türkiye’den uygun örneklem yöntemleriyle seçilen öğretmen ve öğrenci görüşlerine dayanılarak incelenmesinde yarar vardır. Bu bağlamda, sekiz yıllık eğitim sürecinde, ilköğretim ikinci kademe İngilizce dersi programının nasıl uygulandığına yönelik bir çalışmaya araştırmacı tarafından henüz rastlanmamıştır.

Bu araştırmanın amacı sekiz yıllık kesintisiz temel eğitim sürecince yer alan ilköğretim ikinci kademe İngilizce dersi öğretim programının (İDÖP) etkililiğinin öğretmen ve öğrenci görüşlerine dayanarak incelenmesidir. Bir başka deyişle, ilköğretim ikinci kademe İngilizce ders programlarındaki eğitim süreci incelenecektir. Bu genel amaçtan yola çıkarak, araştırmanın alt problemleri veya soruları sırasıyla şunlardır: 1. İDÖP’nin hedef ve konularına yönelik öğretmen görüşleri nelerdir? (İDÖP’nin hedef ve konularına yönelik öğretmen görüşleri çalıştıkları bölge, yaş, öğretmenlik deneyimleri ve eğitim durumlarına göre farklılık göstermekte midir?) 2. Öğretmenler İDÖP’yi nasıl uygulamaktadır? 3. Öğretmenler İDÖP’yi uygularken ne tür sorunlarla karşılaşmaktadır? 4. Öğrenciler İDÖP’yi hedefleri, konuları, öğretim ve değerlendirme süreçleriyle nasıl deneyimlemektedir? (Öğrencilerin program hakkındaki görüşleri sınıf düzeyleri, cinsiyetleri, ailelerinin eğitim ve İngilizce bilgi düzeyleri ve en son karnelerinde yer alan İngilizce notuna göre farklılık göstermekte midir?).

Bu araştırma tarama modelinde betimsel bir çalışmadır. Betimsel bir çalışmada amaç var olan durumu üzerinde değişiklik yapmadan olduğu gibi tanımlamaktır. Bu çalışmada kullanılan iki temel veri toplama aracı ise öğretmen ve öğrenci anketleridir. Araştırmanın evreni 2004-2005 öğretim yılında, Türkiye’deki resmi ilköğretim okullarının ikinci kademesinde İngilizce dersini veren öğretmenlerin ve bu dersi alan öğrencilerin tümüdür. Araştırmanın evreni çok büyük olduğundan tümünün araştırılması olası değildir. Bu nedenle, çalışma örneklem üzerinde yapılmıştır. Örneklem belirlenmesinde birden fazla örneklem seçme yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

Öncelikle sosyoekonomik gelişmişlik düzeyinin Türkiye'deki İngilizce eğitimine etkisi göz önünde bulundurularak Devlet Planlama Teşkilatının istatistiklerinden yararlanılmıştır. İl ve ilçelerin sosyoekonomik gelişmişlik düzeyleri dikkate alınarak, tabaka örnekleme ve maksimum çeşitlilik yöntemleriyle Türkiye'nin yedi bölgesinden üç il (bir gelişmiş, bir az gelişmiş ve bir orta derecede gelişmiş il) ve bu illere bağlı ikişer ilçe (bir gelişmiş, bir az gelişmiş ilçe) belirlenmiştir (DPT, 2003). Daha sonra, belirlenen il ve ilçelerin eğitim müdürlüklerine gönderilen bir üst yazıda öğretmen ve öğrenci anketlerinin nasıl çoğaltılacağı ve uygulanacağı açıklanmıştır. Kendilerinden, bağlı bulundukları il veya ilçelerdeki okullardan beşer öğretmeni seçkisiz yöntemle belirlemeleri ve öğretmen anketlerini uygulamaları istenmiştir. İl ve ilçe eğitim müdürlerine gönderilen yazıda öğrencileri seçerken her üç sınıftan (6., 7. ve 8.) yeterli ve başa çıkılacak sayıda öğrenciyi araştırmaya katmaları vurgulanmıştır. Bu nedenle, öğrenci anketlerinin araştırmaya katılan bir öğretmenin okulundan seçilen beş 6. sınıf, beş 7. sınıf ve beş 8. sınıf olmak üzere toplam on beşer öğrenciyle uygulanması istenmiştir. Okullardaki öğrencileri belirlerken sistematik örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak okul veya sınıf listelerindeki ilk beş öğrencinin seçilmesi istenmiştir.

Öğretmen ve öğrenci anketleri hazırlanırken öncelikle araştırma sorularından, İngilizce öğretimine ait yazından ve daha önceleri çeşitli araştırmalarda kullanılan İngilizce ders programlarını değerlendirme anketlerinden yararlanılmıştır (İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002; Tok 2003). Anketler araştırma sorularına uygun olarak alt başlıklara ayrılmıştır. Öğretmen ve öğrencilere ait anketlerde hem kapalı uçlu hem de açık uçlu sorulara yer verilmiştir. Açık uçlu sorulara yer verilmesindeki amaç, kapalı uçlu sorularla elde edilmesi güç olan derinlemesine bilgiye ulaşabilmektir. Diğer bir neden ise açık uçlu soruların anketlerin iç tutarlılığını sağlamadaki rolüdür (Jaeger, 1988).

Bu araştırmada kullanılacak anketlerin geçerliliği ve güvenilirliği iki yöntemle sağlanmıştır. Geçerliliğin sağlanmasında öncelikle uzman görüşlerine başvurulmuştur. Anketlerin geçerliliğinin sağlanmasındaki ikinci yöntem ise veri toplama araçlarının seçilen pilot guruplarla uygulanarak öğretmen ve öğrencilerin anketlerin içeriği hakkında görüşlerinin alınmasıdır. Öğretmen anketleri, Ankara il merkezinden seçilen 11 okulun İngilizce öğretmenlerine uygulanmıştır. Pilot uygulamaya 28 İngilizce öğretmeni katılmıştır. İngilizce öğretmenlerinden anketleri

cevaplandırmaları istenmiş, her birinden anketler hakkındaki görüşleri alınmış ve anketler öğretmenlerin önerileri doğrultusunda yeniden düzenlenmiştir. Öğrenci anketleri ise Ankara il merkezinden seçilen bir okuldaki 6. , 7. ve 8. sınıf öğrencileriyle uygulanmıştır. Pilot uygulama iki aşamada yapılmıştır. İlk aşamada, her sınıftan on beşer öğrenci olmak üzere toplam 45 öğrenciden anketleri cevaplandırmaları istenmiştir. Öğrenciler anketleri cevaplandırdıktan sonra kendileriyle grup görüşmesi yapılmış, anketi cevaplandırırken ne tür güçlüklerle karşılaştıkları sorulmuştur. Daha sonra, öğrencilerin görüşleri doğrultusunda anketler yeniden düzenlenmiştir. Yeni düzenlemeler yapıldıktan sonra, aynı okuldan 45 farklı öğrenciyle (on beş 6., on beş 7. ve on beş 8. sınıf öğrencisiyle) anketler yeniden uygulanmış ve ilk pilot uygulamada olduğu gibi öğrencilerin anketler hakkında yeniden görüşleri alınmıştır. Öğrenci anketlerindeki kapalı uçlu sorular için iki pilot uygulama arasındaki güvenilirlik katsayısı 0.82 bulunmuştur.

Bu araştırma sekiz yıllık kesintisiz eğitime geçildikten sonra düzenlenen ilköğretim ikinci kademe İngilizce ders programlarının incelenmesi, tüm Türkiye’den araştırma kapsamına alınan öğretmenler ve öğrencilerle sınırlıdır. Araştırmanın yönteminden kaynaklanan diğer sınırlılıklar da bulunmaktadır. Öncelikle, örneklemin belirlenmesi ve veri toplama araçlarının uygulanması il ve ilçe eğitim müdürlükleri tarafından sağlanmıştır. Her ne kadar uygulanması istenen örneklem yöntemleri üst yazıyla kendilerine iletilmiş olsa da, il ve ilçe eğitim müdürlerinin belirtilen yöntemleri nasıl uyguladıkları kontrol altına alınamamıştır. Aynı zamanda, gerek öğretmen gerekse öğrenci anketlerinin uygulandığı koşullar (zaman, süre, yer) araştırmacının bilgisi ve kontrolü dışındadır.

Araştırma sonucunda öğretmenlerden ve öğrencilerden elde edilen veriler ayrı ayrı incelenmiştir. Kapalı uçlu soruların incelenmesinde betimsel istatistiksel yöntemleri kullanılarak her bir soru için frekans, yüzde, ortalama ve standart sapma hesapları yapılmıştır. Öğretmen görüşlerinin belirli özelliklere göre farklılık gösterip göstermediği ANOVA ve T-test ile öğrenci görüşlerinin belirli özelliklere göre farklılık gösterip göstermediği ise Ki-kare ile hesaplanmıştır. Açık uçlu soruların değerlendirilmesinde ise öncelikle verilerin dökümü yapılmış, daha sonra dökümü yapılan veriler, araştırmanın amaçları ile ilişkilendirilerek daha önceden belirlenen temalar altında kodlanmıştır.

Öğretmen ve öğrencilerden elde edilen bulgular birbiriyle kıyaslanarak şu şekilde özetlenebilir. Öncelikle, programın hedeflerinden seslendirme, kelime ve gramer bilgileri ile dinleme, konuşma, yazma ve dikte etme becerileri öğretmen ve öğrencilere göre orta düzeyde gerçekleşmektedir. Programın hedefleri açısından öğretmen ve öğrenciler arasındaki tek görüş farklılığı okuma becerisi üzerinedir. Öyle ki, öğretmenlere göre okuma becerisi en çok edinilen beceri iken, öğrenciler bu beceriyi orta düzeyde elde ettiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Yine, öğretmenlere göre duyuşsal alanla ilgili hedefler bilişsel alana yönelik olanlara kıyasla daha çok edinilmektedir. Nitekim öğrencilerin büyük bir bölümü de İngilizceyi sevdiklerini, gerekliliğine inandıklarını ve ders dışında İngilizcelerini geliştirmek için çeşitli faaliyetlerde bulunduklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bu çalışmadan elde edilen programın hedeflerine yönelik bulgular şimdiye dek yapılan diğer araştırmaların bulgularıyla büyük ölçüde örtüşmektedir. Diğer çalışmalarda da öğretmenlere göre okuma becerisi dışında hemen hemen tüm program hedeflerinin orta düzeyde gerçekleştiği, duyuşsal alana yönelik hedeflerin bilişsel alana yönelik hedeflere kıyasla daha çok gerçekleştiği saptanmıştır. Ancak, bu çalışmaya kıyasla diğer araştırmalarda öğrenciler program hedeflerinin büyük bir bölümünün gerçekleştiğini ifade etmişlerdir (Büyükduman, 2005; İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002; Tok, 2003). Bunun nedenleri diğer çalışmaların 4. ve 5. sınıflarla yapılmış olması, farklı bir programı incelemeleri ve bu yaş grubunun 6., 7. ve 8. sınıflara göre program hakkındaki bilgi ve algı düzeylerinin farklı oluşu biçiminde sıralanabilir.

Programın konuları dikkate alındığında ise öğrencilerin öğretmenlere kıyasla daha olumlu bir tutum sergiledikleri ve anketlerde yer alan ifadelerin pek çoğuna katıldıkları görülmektedir. Buna karşın, öğrenci ve öğretmenlerin birbirlerine katıldıkları noktalar da vardır. Örneğin, öğretmen ve öğrenciler programda yer alan dinleme/okuma metinlerinin ve yazma çalışmalarının öğrencinin ilgisini çekecek düzeyde olup olmadığına kararsızdır. Yine, öğretmen ve öğrenciler programda yer alan sözcüklerin sık kullanılan türden olduğunu, dilbilgisi alıştırmalarına daha çok yer verildiğini ve dilbilgisi alıştırmalarının anlaşılabilir olduğunu düşünmektedir. Ancak, öğretmenler dilbilgisi alıştırmalarının daha çok konuşmaya yönelik olup olmadığı ve bu tür çalışmaların öğrencilerin ilgilerini çekecek düzeyde olup olmadığı konusunda kararsız kalırken, öğrencilerin büyük bir bölümü bu ifadelere katılmaktadır. Programın konularına yönelik bu bulgular şimdiye dek yapılan diğer

araştırmaların bulgularıyla büyük ölçüde örtüşmektedir. Diğer çalışmalarda da öğrencilerin öğretmenlere kıyasla konular hakkında daha olumlu düşüncelere sahip olduğu saptanmıştır (Büyükduman, 2005; İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002; Tok, 2003).

Öğretim süreçleri dikkate alındığında programın hedeflerinde yer alan her bilgi ve beceri için farklı ve çok çeşitli yöntem, teknik ve materyallerin uygulandığı görülmektedir. İlk olarak, öğretmenler sözcük bilgisinin öğretiminde sözcüğün anlam ve yapısına göre farklı sunum tekniklerine başvurduklarını ifade etmişlerdir. En yaygın kullanılan sunum teknikleri sırasıyla, resim, gerçek obje ve taklit gibi görsel materyaller ile örnek cümleler kullanarak anlatmak, Türkçe anlamlarını açıklamak ve İngilizce karşılıklarını vermek olarak sıralanabilir. Sözcük bilgisinin pekiştirilmesi için ise kullanıldığı ifade edilen çalışmalar sırasıyla sözcük oyunları, telaffuz aktiviteleri, öğrencilerin kendi cümlelerini oluşturmaları, sözlük çalışmaları ve sözcüklerin beş-on kez yazılmasıdır. Sözcüklerin İngilizce karşılıklarının verilmesi ve sözcüklerin beş-on kez yazılması dışında belirtilen diğer tüm çalışmalar öğrenciler tarafından yararlı bulunmuştur. Yine, görsel materyaller ve sözcük oyunlarının sınıflarında uygulanmadığını belirten öğrenci sayısı da dikkate alınacak düzeydedir. Şüphesiz, belirtilen tüm bu öğretim süreçleri sözcük bilgisinin ediniminde çok önemli rol oynamaktadır. Ancak, bu düzeyde sözcük oyunlarına daha fazla yer verilmelidir (CEFR, 2001; Lewis ve Hill, 1992; Willis, 1983).

Dilbilgisi ediniminde yaygın olarak tümevarım yöntemi kullanılmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin pek çoğu dilbilgisi kurallarını örnek cümleler vererek, formüllerle, kimi zaman Türkçe ve kimi zaman da bilinen İngilizce dilbilgisi kurallarıyla kıyaslayarak açıkladıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Tümdengelim yöntemi ise diğer yöntemle kıyasla daha az öğretmen tarafından uygulanmaktadır. Zaten pek çok öğrenci de tümevarım yöntemini tümdengelim yöntemine kıyasla daha etkili bulmaktadır. Dilbilgisinin geliştirilmesi için en çok boşluk doldurma, eşleştirme gibi anlamlı çalışmalar uygulanmaktadır. Daha az kullanıldığı ifade edilen çalışmalar ise sırasıyla öğrencilerin kendi cümlelerini oluşturmaları ve öğrencilerin verilen cümleleri farklı anlatım biçimlerine dönüştürmeleridir. Öğrencilerin büyük bir bölümü tüm bu çalışmaları yararlı bulmaktadır. İlgili yazın dikkate alındığında belirtilen tüm bu öğretim süreçlerinin yerinde ve gerektiği kadar kullanılması dilbilgisinin ediniminde çok önemli rol oynamaktadır (CEFR, 2001; Lewis ve Hill, 1992; Willis, 1983). Öğrencilerin tümevarım yöntemini tümdengelim yöntemine tercih etmeleri de Asya

kültüründeki öğrencilerin öğrenme stil ve stratejileri üzerine yapılan çalışmaların bulgularını doğrular niteliktedir (Gupta, 2004; Hu, 2005; Lewis ve McCook, 2002; Littlewood, 2000; Liao, 2004; Zhenhui, 2001).

Gerek öğretmenler gerekse öğrenciler dinleme becerisinin en az gelişen beceri olduğunu ifade etmiş ve özellikle öğretmenler kitapta yer alan dinleme metninin daha çok okuma becerisini geliştirmek için kullanıldığını belirtmiştir. Sınıf içi etkinliklerde iç içe geçen bu iki beceriye yönelik öğretim süreçlerinin beraber tartışılmasında yarar vardır. Bu bağlamda, öğretmenlerin büyük bir çoğunluğu metinleri önce kendilerinin yüksek sesle iki ya da üç kez okuduklarını, bu esnada öğrencilerin kitaplarından telaffuz ve tonlamaya dikkat ederek takip ettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Kullanılan ikinci yöntem ise öğrencilerin sırayla ya da diyaloglarda yer alan rolleri üstlenerek metinleri okumaları ve diğer öğrencilerin kitaplarından takip etmeleridir. Sessiz okuma yöntemi en az başvurulan yöntemdir. Yine, öğretmenlerin bazıları öğrencilerden metinleri evde okuyup bilmedikleri sözcüklerin anlamlarını bularak derse hazır gelmelerini istemektedir. Okuma sonrasında, bazı öğretmenler tarafından telaffuz çalışmaları ve/veya okuduğunu anlamaya yönelik soru-cevap türünden çalışmalar yapılmaktadır. Bilinmeyen anahtar sözcüklerin önceden öğretilmesine, konu hakkında fikir edinilmesini sağlayan tahmine yönelik okuma öncesi çalışmalara ve özellikle konuşma ve yazma becerileri ile bütünleşmeyi sağlayan okuma sonrası çalışmalara oldukça az yer verilmektedir. Öğrenciler öğretmenin sesli okuması ve metinlerin evde okunması dışında belirtilen yöntemleri çok yararlı bulmaktadır. Bazı öğrenciler, dinlemeye yönelik ders araç ve gereçlerinin, okuduğunu anlamaya yönelik soruların, ön okuma ve son okuma çalışmalarının sınıflarında kullanılmadığını ifade etmektedir. Oysaki ilgili yazında tüm bu sınıf içi etkinliklerin gerekliliği defalarca vurgulanmaktadır. Yine, okuma becerisinin gerçek hayatta sessiz okuma şeklinde yapılan bir çalışma olduğu belirtilmektedir. Aynı zamanda, okuma becerisinin konuşma ve yazma becerileriyle kaynaştırılmasında ön-okuma ve son okuma çalışmalarının önemi büyüktür (CEFR, 2001; Lewis ve Hill, 1992; McDonough ve Shaw, 1998; Willis, 1983).

Öğretmenlere göre konuşma becerisinin geliştirilmesi için kullanılan iki teknik rol yapma ve tartışmadır. Bazı öğretmenler bu teknikleri ne şekilde uyguladıkları konusunda detaylı bilgi de vermişlerdir. Rol yapma tekniği bazı öğretmenler tarafından iki öğrencinin kitaptaki diyalogları okumaları olarak, bazı

öğretmenler tarafından öğrencilerin bu diyaloglara benzer diyaloglar yazıp canlandırmaları olarak belirtilmiştir. Yine, tartışma tekniği bazı öğretmenler tarafından grup çalışmaları olarak uygulanırken, bazı öğretmenler tarafından soru cevap şeklinde uygulanmaktadır. Öğrencilerin büyük bir bölümü konuşma becerisinin geliştirilmesine yönelik bu çalışmaları yararlı bulurken, bazıları ise bu tür çalışmaların sınıflarında uygulanmadığını ifade etmişlerdir. Oysaki ilgili yazında iletişimci bir yaklaşımın temel unsurunun konuşmaya yönelik, öğrenci merkezli ve işbirlikli öğrenmeyi sağlayan bir yaklaşım olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Yine, ilgili yazında bu tür etkinliklerin daha yaygın kullanılmasının İngilizce öğretimine olumlu etkisi özellikle belirtilmektedir (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006; Çakır, 2004; Durukafa, 2000; Ergür, 2004; Hismanoğlu, 2000; Moon, 2000; Philips, 1997; Sunel, 1994).

Yazma becerisinin geliştirilmesinde kullanılan teknikler sırasıyla paragraf yazma, dikte çalışması ve mektup yazmadır. Öğretmenlere göre paragraf ve mektup yazma çalışmaları daha çok serbest yazma olarak uygulanmaktadır. Çok az sayıda öğretmen öğrencilerine gerekli yönlendirmeyi sağlayarak kontrollü yazma tekniğini uyguladıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Öğrencilerin de büyük bölümü bu üç tür yazma çalışmalarını ya bazen yararlı bulmakta ya da bunların hiç kullanılmadığını belirtmektedir. Zira pek çok öğretmene göre, yazma becerisi de dinleme becerisi gibi sınıf içerisinde en az üzerinde durulan beceridir. İlgili yazında başlangıç düzeyindeki öğrencilerin yazma becerisinin geliştirilmesi için kontrollü yazma tekniğinin kullanılması önerilmektedir (Lewis ve Hill, 1992; McDonough ve Shaw, 1998).

Öğretmenlerin yarıya yakını öğrencilerinin İngilizce dersine karşı olumlu bir tutum içerisinde bulunduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlere kıyasla daha fazla sayıda öğrenci İngilizceyi sevdiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Öğretmenler öğrencilerinin dersi sevmelerini sağlamak için İngilizce bilmenin önemini vurguladıklarını, ilgi çekici etkinlikler ve materyaller kullanarak dersi eğlendirici bir hale getirdiklerini ve öğrencilerinin kendilerini sevmelerini sağlayarak sınıf içerisinde pozitif bir atmosfer oluşturduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Aynı zamanda, öğrencilerinin derste ne kadar başarılı olurlarsa o kadar olumlu tutumları olduğunu da vurgulamışlardır. Öğretmenlerin izledikleri bu yöntem ve teknikler başarılı olmaktadır, çünkü pek çok öğrenci İngilizceyi bu nedenlerden dolayı sevdiklerini ifade etmişlerdir.

Ancak, öğretmenlerin üçte birinden fazlası öğrencilerinin derse karşı olumsuz tutumlar içerisinde bulunduklarını ifade ederken dörtte birine yakını ise

öğrencilerinin dersi bazen sevdiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlere kıyasla çok daha az sayıda öğrenci İngilizceyi sevmediklerini belirtmiştir. Öğretmenlere göre, İngilizce dersine karşı olumsuz tutumların nedenleri öğrencilerin dersteki başarısızlıkları, İngilizce konuşulan kültürlerle karşı önyargıları, İngilizce bilmenin öneminin kendileri ve aileleri tarafından yeteri kadar anlaşılmaması ve gerçek hayatta İngilizceyi kullanacakları ortamların olmamasıdır. Aynı zamanda, İngilizce bilgisinin ulusal sınavlarda ölçülmemesi ve yeni not sistemine göre öğrencilerin dersten kalmayacaklarını bilmelerinin de derse ilgiyi azalttığı belirtilmiştir. Öğretmenlere kıyasla öğrenciler, dersi sevmemelerinin nedenleri olarak derste başarısız olmalarını, İngilizce kullanılan ülkelerin kültürlerine karşı önyargılarını, gerçek hayatta İngilizceyi kullanma olanaklarının bulunmamasını ve dersin oldukça sıkıcı geçmesini göstermektedirler. Öğretmenlerin öğrencileri motive etmek için kullandıkları bu yöntem ve teknikler ilgili yazında önerilen yöntem ve tekniklerle tutarlıdır (Aslanargu and Süngü, 2006; Deniz, Avşaroğlu and Fidan, 2006; Durukafa, 2000; Ergür, 2004; Köning, 1991; Önal, 2003). Ancak, derse karşı olumsuz tutumları olduğunu ifade eden öğrencileri de kazanmak için daha fazla sınıfta uygulanmalıdır.

Tüm bunların yanı sıra, öğretmenler ve öğrenciler, programın uygulanması sırasında çeşitli güçlüklerle karşılaştıklarını da ifade etmişlerdir. Karşılaştıkları bu güçlüklerin hedeflere ulaşmakta, öğretim yaklaşım, yöntem ve tekniklerinin uygulanmasında, ölçme ve değerlendirme yöntemlerinin kullanılmasında etkili oldukları belirtilmiştir. Öğretmenler tarafından karşılaşılan en büyük sorun ders araç ve gereçlerinin yetersizliğidir. Öğretmenler özellikle görsel materyallere; teyp, kaset, CD ve video gibi dinleme becerilerini geliştirmekte kullanılabilecek ders araç ve gereçlerine ve sözlük, öykü kitapları ve kaynak kitaplar gibi materyallere sahip olmadıklarından şikâyetçilerdir. İkinci problem ise Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından düzenlenen ders kitaplarıdır. Ders kitapları özellikle konu seçimleri ve dağılımları açısından eleştirilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, dinleme ve okuma metinlerinin öğrencilerin ilgi ve ihtiyaçlarına uygun olmadıkları, çok fazla bilinmeyen sözcük ve yapı içerdikleri ve hatta bazı cümlelerin hatalı olduğu belirtilmektedir. Aynı zamanda, dilbilgisi ve sözcük bilgisinin geliştirilmesine yönelik iletişimsel, anlamlı ve mekanik çalışmaların da yetersiz olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Bu bağlamdaki diğer eleştiriler ise kitapların baskı ve görsel açıdan yetersiz olduğu, her sınıfta farklı kitapların kullanıldığı ve öğretmen kitaplarının bulunmadığıdır.

Programın uygulanması açısından öğrenciler de güçlükler yaratmaktadır. Öğretmenlere göre öğrenciler İngilizcelerini geliştirmek için yeterli çabayı göstermemektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, öğrencilerin özellikle sözcük ve dilbilgisi eksiklikleri ve ana dillerinde dahi okuma ve yazma becerileri konularında sorun yaşamaları belirtilen başlıca sorunlardır. Zira öğrenciler de sınıf etkinliklerini gerçekleştirmekte ve özellikle sınavlarda sözcük ve dilbilgisi eksiklikleri nedeniyle sorunlar yaşadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Öğretmenlere göre bu problemin nedenleri programın çok yüklü olması, buna rağmen ders saatinin azlığı nedenleriyle yeteri kadar alıştırma ve tekrar yapılamamasıdır. Bu sorunlar yalnızca sınıf içi etkinlikleri değil, sınavların hazırlanması ve uygulanmasını da etkilemektedir. Öğretmenler hangi konuların ölçülmesi gerektiği konusunda sorunlar yaşamakta ve öğrencilerinin sınavlardaki başarısızlığını yeteri kadar alıştırma yapılamamasına bağlamaktadır. Diğer bir neden ise, İngilizce öğretmeni sayısının azlığı, İngilizce derslerine alan dışından öğretmenlerin girmesi ve özellikle alt kademede öğretmen yetersizliği nedeniyle derslerin işlenememesidir.

Son olarak sınıf ortamından kaynaklanan güçlükler de yaşanmaktadır. Bunlar sırasıyla sınıfların kalabalık oluşu, sınıflardaki öğrencilerin İngilizce düzeylerinin farklılığı ve sınıfların fiziksel koşullarının derse uygun olmadığı şeklinde ifade edilmiştir. Sınıfların kalabalık olması, öğretmenlerin her bir öğrenciyle yeteri kadar ilgilenmesini, ödev ve sınavların güvenilir şekilde kontrol edilip geribildirim verilmesini engellemektedir. Öğrenciler arasındaki düzey farklılıkları da yalnızca sınıf etkinliklerinde değil, sınavların hazırlanıp uygulanmasında da sorunlara neden olmaktadır. Öğretmenler sınavları hazırlarken hangi düzeyi temel alacakları konusunda çelişkiler yaşamaktadır. Yukarıda belirtilen ve öğrencilerden, kitaplardan, programdan ve sınıf ortamından kaynaklanan bu sorunlar alt kademede yapılan diğer çalışmalarda da saptanmıştır (Acar, 2006, Büyükduman, 2005; Genç, 2002; İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002). Ancak, bu çalışmayı diğerlerinden farklı kılan bu sorunların ne tür uygulamaları nasıl etkilediği konusunda verilen detaylı bilgilerdir.

Araştırma sorularından biri de öğretmen ve öğrencilerin hangi özelliklerinin programın uygulanışında etkili olduğudur. Bu bağlamda, öğretmenlerin bağlı oldukları bölge programın telaffuz, tonlama, dilbilgisinin doğru kullanıldığı cümlelerin oluşturulması, konuşma, okuma ve yazma becerilerine ulaşılması konularında öğretmenler arasında farklılık oluşturmaktadır. Kısaca, iç Anadolu

bölgesinden katılan öğretmenler diğer bölgelerden katılan öğretmenlere kıyasla, bu hedeflere daha çok ulaşıldığını ifade etmektedirler. Yine, 23–28 yaşları arasında bulunan ve 1 ile 5 yıllık öğretmenlik deneyimine sahip öğretmenler diğer öğretmenlere kıyasla, seslendirme, dinleme ve okuma becerilerine ilişkin hedeflerin daha çok gerçekleştiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Öğretmenlik deneyimi 5 yıldan az olan öğretmenler diğer öğretmenlere kıyasla konuşma, yazma, yazım kurallarının doğru kullanılması ve dikte etme hedeflerinin daha çok gerçekleştiğini belirtmişlerdir. Aynı zamanda, diğer dalların öğretmenleri İngilizce öğretmenliği ve İngiliz dili ve edebiyatı bölümlerinden mezun olan öğretmenlere göre kitaplardaki metinlerin öğrencilerin ilgilerini çekecek düzeyde olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir.

Öğrencilerin özelliklerine bakıldığında ise okudukları sınıf, cinsiyetleri, ailelerinin eğitim ve İngilizce düzeyleri ve başarı durumları karşılaştıkları güçlükleri, konular, öğretim ve değerlendirme süreçlerini etkilemektedir. Kısaca, 8. sınıflar 7. ve 6. sınıflara kıyasla, dinleme ve yazma becerilerinin gerçekleşmesinde daha çok sorunla karşılaşmakta ve görsel-duyuşsal materyaller ile oyun ve rol yapma gibi iletişimsel etkinliklerin sınıflarında uygulanmadığını savunmaktadırlar. Yine, 8. sınıflar, diğer sınıflara kıyasla İngilizceye karşı daha olumsuz tutuma sahip olup, ders ve sınavlarda daha çok sorunla karşılaşmaktadırlar. Bunların yanı sıra, erkek öğrenciler kız öğrencilere kıyasla sözcük ve okuma becerilerini gerçekleştirmekte daha zorlanmaktadır. Yine, erkek öğrenciler kız öğrencilere göre, programın konusu ve öğretim teknikleri açısından daha olumsuz düşüncelere sahiptirler. Ailelerinin eğitim durumları ve İngilizce düzeyleri iyi olan öğrenciler, program hedeflerinin pek çoğunu gerçekleştirmekte ve dilbilgisi alıştırmalarını anlamakta daha az sorun yaşamaktadırlar. Son olarak, İngilizce dersinde başarılı olan öğrenciler orta düzeyde başarılı olanlara ve başarısız olanlara kıyasla, programın hedeflerinin hemen hemen tamamını gerçekleştirmekte daha az güçlük yaşamakta ve programın konu ve öğretim süreçleri hakkında daha olumlu düşünmektedir. Bu anlamda karşılaşılan en ilginç sonuç ise başarılı öğrencilerin de dinleme ve yazma becerilerinde sorunlar yaşamaları, görsel ve işitsel ders araç ve gereçleri ile oyun ve rol yapma gibi etkinliklerin sınıflarında pek uygulanmadıklarını savunmalarıdır.

Tüm bu araştırmalar ilköğretim ikinci kademe İngilizce ders programları hedefleri, konuları, öğretim ve değerlendirme süreçleri açılarından yeniden gözden geçirilerek gerekli düzenlemelerin yapılması gerektiğini göstermektedir. Özellikle

programın konuları azaltılarak sınıf içerisinde ve sınıflar arasında daha fazla tekrar ve bütünlük sağlanmalı. Ders kitapları yeniden düzenlenerek yukarıda belirtilen sorunlar giderilmeli. Okullar gerekli ders araç ve gereçleriyle donatılmalı ve sınıfların fiziksel koşulları iyileştirilmelidir. Tüm bunların yanı sıra, öğretmenlere hizmet içi eğitim verilerek İngilizce öğretiminde kullanılan ve programda yer alan yeni ve en etkili öğretim ve değerlendirme yaklaşım, yöntem ve teknikleri tanıtılmalıdır. Bu çalışmanın sınırlılıkları göz önünde bulundurularak ve konu hakkında daha ayrıntılı bilgi edinilmesi için daha sonraki çalışmalarda öğretmen ve öğrencilerle görüşmeler yapılabilir ya da sınıf içi gözlemlerle programın uygulanması hakkında daha derinlemesine bilgi edinilebilir.

APPENDIX D

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Yanık Ersen, Aslı
 Nationality: Turkish (TC)
 Date and Place of Birth: 25 March 1973, Balıkesir
 Marital Status: Married
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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU English Language Teaching	2001
BS	METU Foreign Language Teaching	1996
High School	İzmir Fatih Private High School, İzmir	1991

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
1996- Present	English Language School of Başkent University (ELDBU)	Instructor, Testing Unit Leader, Curriculum Unit Member

CONFERENCES ATTENDED

Date	Name of the Conference	Presentations Done
2004, September	INGED ELT Conference	A poster presentation titled “Modifying Our Lessons According To The Learners’ Needs”.
2004, July	3 rd International Trakya ELT Balkan Conference	A presentation titled “Implicit Priorities in the Holistic Grading of Writing and Their Potential Impact”
2004, May	8 th METU International Conference	A presentation titled “From Learner Needs To The Main Target In An Oral Communication Skills Course”