

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW EIGHTH GRADE ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE CURRICULUM  
FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

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## ABSTRACT

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW EIGHTH GRADE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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This study aimed to reveal the perceptions of teachers and students about the implementation of the new 8th grade English language curriculum (NEC) in public primary schools and the challenges and/or problems faced by the teachers and students in the implementation process. This qualitative study was conducted in 9 public primary schools in Polatlı town of Ankara. A total of 10 English language teachers and 73 8th grade students participated in the study. The data were collected through in-depth interviews with the English language teachers and focus group interviews with the 8th grade students. The data were analyzed through utilizing Nvivo 8, qualitative data analysis software. The results indicated that the participants had negative views about some aspects of the new English language curriculum due to the challenges and/or problems that they encountered during the implementation. It was found out that the teachers did not implement the suggested alternative assessment and evaluation techniques and learner-centered instructional methods and strategies in their classes. The challenges and/or problems hindering the effective

implementation of the new English language curriculum were revealed as lack of necessary materials and equipments, large class size, insufficient class hours, lack of gradual implementation of the NEC, lack of guidance and support for the teachers in implementing the NEC and Level Determination Exam (SBS).

**Key words:** English Language Curriculum, Curriculum Innovation, Curriculum Implementation, Constructivism, Challenges

## ÖZ

### İLKÖĞRETİM 8. SINIF YENİ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİM PROGRAMININ UYGULANMASININ ÖĞRETMEN VE ÖĞRENCİ BAKIŞ AÇISINDAN İNCELENMESİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı ilköğretim 8. sınıf yeni İngilizce öğretim programının (YİP) uygulanmasına ilişkin öğretmen ve öğrenci görüşlerini ve uygulama sürecinde öğretmenler ve öğrenciler tarafından karşılaşılan zorlukları ve/veya sorunları ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu nitel çalışma Ankara'nın Polatlı ilçesindeki 9 ilköğretim okulunda gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışmaya ilköğretim okullarında görev yapmakta olan toplam 10 İngilizce öğretmeni ve 73 8. sınıf öğrencisi katılmıştır. Veriler öğretmenlerle yapılan derinlemesine görüşmeler ve öğrencilerle yapılan odak grup görüşmeleri yöntemiyle toplanmıştır. Toplanan verilerin Nvivo 8 nitel veri analiz programı kullanılarak içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları, katılımcıların uygulamada karşılaşılan bazı zorluklardan ve/veya sorunlardan dolayı programın bazı yönlerine ilişkin olumsuz görüşlere sahip olduklarını göstermiştir. Bulgular, öğretmenlerin yeni İngilizce öğretim programında öngörülen alternatif ölçme ve değerlendirme tekniklerini ve öğrenci merkezli öğretim metot ve tekniklerini kullanmadıklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları yeni İngilizce öğretim programının etkili bir şekilde uygulanmasını engelleyen zorlukların ve/veya sorunların, yetersiz materyal ve donanım, kalabalık sınıflar, İngilizce ders saatinin

azlığı, yeni İngilizce öğretim programın kademesiz bir şekilde uygulanması, öğretmenlere YİP hakkında yeterince destek ve rehberlik sağlanamaması ve seviye belirleme sınavı (SBS) olduğunu göstermiştir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** İngilizce Öğretim Programı, Öğretim Programı Yenilenmesi, Öğretim Programı Uygulaması, Oluşturmacılık, Sorunlar

To my beloved family



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

NEC: The New 8th Grade English Language Curriculum

YİP: 8. Sınıf Yeni İngilizce Öğretim Programı

MONE: Ministry of National Education

SBS: Level Determination Exam

MI: Multiple Intelligences Theory

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

ELT: English Language Teaching



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information about the background to the study with a brief summary of the globalization of English language, the curriculum reform and innovated English language curriculum implemented at the eighth grade in the primary schools. It also presents the purpose and significance of the study and definitions of the terms.

#### 1.1. Background to the Study

Globalization, which stands for sharing knowledge for economic cooperation of the nations without the limitation of the national borders, has been an important movement of the era. Held and Thompson (1999) suggest, “Globalization can be thought of as the widening, intensifying, speeding up, and growing impact of worldwide interconnectedness” (as cited in Zhu, 2003, p. 36). The globalization trend has increased the diffusion of English; because nations have needed to use English as an international language to extend their international trade, business and economics (Friedman, 1984; Kachru and Smith, 2009). As there is more and more political, social and technological connection and dependence among the economies and cultures of the world (Graddol, 2007), people have needed English for social or economical causes (Zhu, 2003). Therefore, while English language has contributed to the globalization process by functioning as a tool for international communication, in turn, globalization has facilitated the expansion of the English language (Zughoul, 2003).

Globalization has also started the age of information technology which promotes the use of Internet whose main *lingua franca* (italics original), common language, is English (Crystal, 2003, p. 3). Therefore, there is also a connection between spread of information technology worldwide and the diffusion of English language because, while English has contributed to the progress of this technology, the information technology has fostered the spread of English via Internet

communication (Markee, 2000). Furthermore, as most of the studies in scientific-technological areas have been in English, people need to have a base of English to conduct research (Kachru and Smith, 2009). The fact that people need knowledge of English so as to be informed has increased the status of English to international language which in turn has affected the language teaching in the world (Zhu, 2003). Therefore, many countries have been increasingly giving importance to teaching foreign languages especially teaching English as the foreign language as much as they give importance to teaching their native languages (Bartu, 2002).

As most of the countries regard English as the prior foreign language to learn, English has gained the status of a world language because "a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country" (Crystal, 2003, p.3). The distinctive role of English is also revealed in its being preferred as a foreign language in school curricula (Nunan, 2003). Therefore, globalization process has affected the language policies of the countries by leading them to give more space and importance to English as foreign language in their school curricula. The following excerpt illustrates this situation:

Not surprisingly, English has acquired a special place in school timetables in most countries. Steadily, across Europe, English has become the 'first foreign' language in education systems, often replacing another language from that position (Graddol, 2007, p. 92).

As being one of the countries which is affected by the globalization trends of the world, Turkey changed its foreign language policies by making reforms in English language teaching. Besides the globalization effect, Turkey's being a candidate for the membership of European Union (EU) has also motivated the country to make reforms in English language teaching with the aim of adapting to the EU standards (Akinoğlu, 2008; Akşit, 2007; Kırkgöz, 2008a; MONE, 1997b).

Ministry of National Education (MONE) emphasizes the role and importance of English language in Turkish education system as the following script illustrates:

It is known that foreign language is an indispensable communication tool of our age where the information technologies are developing with a dizzying speed. It is necessary for our country to know a foreign language so as to catch the modernity and take its deserved place in the science world and in its relations with the other countries especially with the European countries. In

the short term, it will be unavoidable to need a second even a third foreign language (MONE, 1997b, p. 590).

Considering the importance and necessity of keeping up with the requirements of modern era, MONE extended the compulsory education period to 8 years in 1997 and combined the primary education with the first cycle of secondary education under primary school. Furthermore, English language curricula of the primary schools were reformed and the age of learning a foreign language was lowered by introducing English in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of public schools in 1997 (MONE, 1997a). The curriculum reform conducted in 1997 was regarded as a turning point for the English language curricula because it brought drastic changes in the goals, nature and methods of language teaching by suggesting Communicative Approach, a new concept for English language teaching in Turkey (Kırkgöz, 2005). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes developing communicative skills of the learners through meaningful activities where the learners are provided with real purposes for using the language (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Changing language policies of the country have continued to trigger the curriculum innovation movements in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The 1997 English language curriculum was also reformed due to the concern of making the school curricula compatible with the standards of EU (Kırkgöz, 2007b). In this regard, MONE redesigned the English language curriculum of the primary schools and put it into implementation starting from 4<sup>th</sup> grade of primary schools gradually in 2005; and in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades of primary schools in 2008 (MONE, 2006).

The innovation conducted in the primary school curriculum was theoretically based on Constructivist Approach, Learner-centeredness and Multiple Intelligences Theory (Erdoğan, 2007; Gökleksiz, 2007; Gömleksiz & Bulut, 2007; Tekışık, 2005; Yaşar et al., 2005). Constructivist learning theory stands for the learners' constructing the knowledge by creating their own meaning rather than receiving them from the teachers (Brooks and Brooks, 1999; Selley, 1999). In Constructivist Approach, learners are expected to be active constructors of the knowledge rather than passive receivers and they are also supposed to construct their knowledge

subjectively (von Glaserfeld, 1991). Besides, constructivists argue for the fact that learning occurs through the learners' making connections between the previous knowledge and the new ideas (Henson, 2006; von Glaserfeld, 1991; Ziegler, 2000). Therefore, constructivism brings a new approach and understanding to the roles of teachers and students, learning environment, instructional methods, and activities and assessment of learning (Kesal & Aksu, 2006).

Constructivist curriculum emphasizes the assessment of learning process, rather than learning outcomes (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Kesal & Aksu, 2006). Therefore, written exams which are widely used in Turkish state primary schools have lost their credibility and popularity in the new English language curriculum (Kırkgöz 2006). In addition, it is given more emphasis on performance-based and authentic assessment procedures such as portfolios, self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, performance based evaluation and project based evaluation (Kırkgöz 2006; MONE, 2006).

Depending mainly on Constructivist Approach and Multiple Intelligences Theory, the new English language curriculum is considered to be "more learner-centered, task-based and process oriented" (Topkaya & Küçük, 2010, p. 41). In learner-centered curriculum, the opinions and the needs of the learners are taken into the consideration in determining the content of the curriculum and the way it is taught (Nunan, 1992; Nunan, 1998). As a learner-centered language teaching method, task based teaching mainly aims to provide the learners with the opportunities for learning the language and developing their skills by cooperative learning (Ellis, 2003). The principles of task based teaching are stated by Willis (1996) as using authentic language, using motivating tasks for active involvement of the learners and focusing primarily on meaning rather than the form of the language.

In accordance with the Constructivist Approach, the new English language curriculum suggests for the use of various activities which are task based, collaborative and communicative such as dramatization, simulations, games, pair work and group work so as to appeal different learning styles as much as possible (see MONE, 2006 for detail). In the implementation of the NEC, learners are

expected to create their own knowledge by doing, living, searching, and reasoning (MONE, 2006). It is also aimed to increase the interaction and active involvement of the learners through these enriched activities (MONE, 2006) because learners are expected to interact with the knowledge, learning environment and with the other learners while constructing the knowledge (Dershem, 1996). In the implementation of the NEC, teachers are suggested to use well-defined and well-experienced activities fostering, learners' interaction, skill training, learner autonomy, critical thinking and research skills as being consistent with the principles of constructivist approach (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; MONE, 2006). It is suggested in the NEC that the teacher has the roles of a guide, facilitator, and motivator in learners' reaching and constructing the knowledge rather than the transmitter of the knowledge as it is required in a constructivist curriculum (Dharmadasa, 2000; Erdoğan, 2007; Grub et al, 1999, MONE, 2006).

As for the syllabus of the NEC, it is stated that NEC has functional-notional and skill-based syllabus which involves goals and objectives related to the language skills together with its functions and topics (MONE, 2006). In the NEC, integration of four main language skills, speaking, listening, reading and writing are emphasized together with the comprehension and use of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (MONE, 2006). The NEC guideline also provides the teachers with the theoretical knowledge about foreign language teaching such as the distinction between language acquisition and language learning, learner-centered approaches and methods in foreign language teaching together with suggested activities (MONE, 2006).

As it could be understood from the summary of the NEC features, it introduces new concepts and understandings to the English language teaching. However, it is essential to prepare the necessary background for the successful implementation of these aforementioned curriculum innovations. As the NEC is considered to be theoretically based on Constructivist Approach, it is necessary that teachers have both theoretical and practical knowledge about constructivist learning because it is stated in the literature that teachers' having constructivist thoughts and

behaviors are determinant in using a constructivist curriculum effectively (Brooks & Brooks, 1996; Dharmadasa, 2000; Ünal & Akpınar, 2006).

Various types of curriculum are stated in the literature such as “intended curriculum” which is planned by the curriculum developers, “implemented curriculum” referring to what is practiced by teachers and “attained curriculum” referring to what is perceived and achieved by the students as a result of the curriculum implementation (Howson & Wilson, 1986, p. 91). It is also increasingly emphasized in the literature that there are gaps among these curricula and one of the reasons underlying these discrepancies is that the teachers, learners and the curriculum planners have different perceptions and expectations related to the curriculum (Bishop, 1991; Cuban, 1993; Glatthorn, Boschee & Whitehead, 2009; Nunan, 1989). Therefore, it is necessary to reveal the perceptions of the teachers and students on the implementation of the new English language curriculum as well as uncovering the implemented curriculum.

Curriculum implementation, where the planned curriculum is put into practice, is the final and the most important phase of a curriculum development process because the effectiveness and the outputs of a curriculum are determined by the learning and teaching acts carried out in this process (Johnson, 1989). However, before determining the effects or outcomes of an innovated curriculum, it is necessary to reveal how and to what extent the curriculum or a curriculum innovation has been implemented in the classroom (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Fullan, 1997; Hall & Loucks, 1977; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Morris & Fitz-Gibbon, 1978a).

## **1.2. Purpose of the study**

Considering the NEC innovations, the constructivist nature of the new curriculum, the theory on the discrepancies among the intended, implemented and attained curricula, and the studies stressing the importance of implementation evaluation, it is necessary to conduct studies concerning the implementation of the English language curriculum of the primary school, which was innovated in 2008. In the light of the aforementioned discussions, this study aims to reveal the perceptions

of the teachers and students about the implementation of the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum. The study also aims to reveal the problems and/or challenges faced by the teachers and students during the implementation process. To attain its purposes the following research questions were designed which guided the data collection and data analysis of this study:

1. What are the perceptions of the teachers about the implementation of the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum?
2. What are the perceptions of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students about the implementation of the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum?
3. What are the problems and/or challenges concerning the implementation of the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum from the perspectives of teachers and students?

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

This study is assumed to be significant in several aspects. First, as English language curricula of the primary school have been recently innovated, it is required to reveal how the new English curriculum is perceived and implemented by its users. Therefore, this study provides feedback on the implementation of the NEC by revealing the perceptions of the teachers and students related to the implementation of the new English language curriculum. This study also uncovers how the planned curriculum differs from the perceived, implemented and the attained curriculum. This is significant as the curriculum designers can see how their decisions are perceived by the teachers and students as well as how their decisions are practiced in the classroom. Therefore, this study is expected to provide insights for the program developers by providing real and descriptive data about the implementation of the new English language curriculum. Besides, this study can also help the teachers see how their classroom practices are interpreted and perceived by the students.

The results of this study also brings to light the problems and/or challenges faced by the teachers and students during the implementation process as well as providing possible solutions to them. Therefore, the authorities can take the

challenges and/or problems preventing the effective implementation of the new curriculum into the consideration and improve the implementation of the new English language curriculum by considering these issues. The other studies concerning the previous English language curriculum found out that there was a gap between the planned curriculum and the attained one due to crowded classrooms, lack of classroom resources and the insufficient class hours (Büyükduman, 2005; İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002; Kırkgöz, 2008b). Concerning these findings, this study also reveals whether the same problems or challenges are faced by the teachers and students in the implementation of the new English language curriculum.

This study could also function as a reference study for MONE in designing in-service or pre-service training programs to the English language teachers as the results of this study illustrates how the teachers perceive and implement the NEC in their classroom practices.

Besides, as this study focuses on the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum, the results of this study could provide considerable basis for the further studies evaluating the other components of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum. This study also bears significance since it contributes to the literature as being the first study conducted on the implementation of the new English language curriculum in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level in the public primary schools in Turkey. Therefore, it can provide a perspective for the other studies concerning the new English language curriculum of the other grade levels as well as providing a contextual perspective for the other educational systems implementing an innovated curriculum.

#### **1.4. Definition of Terms**

**English Language Curriculum:** English language curriculum refers to curriculum that has been recently innovated by the Ministry of National Education and put into implementation in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade of public primary schools in Turkey in 2008. During the study, English language curriculum and the new English language curriculum (NEC) are used interchangeably.



**Curriculum Innovation:** Curriculum innovation refers to the changes of English language curricula of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades of the primary schools in 2008 by the Ministry of National Education. During the study, curriculum innovation, curriculum change and curriculum reform will be used interchangeably.

**Curriculum Implementation:** The process of carrying out the English language curriculum by the teachers and students in the classroom. It includes the instructional practices with respect to attaining the objectives of the new English language curriculum.

**Constructivism:** Constructivism is a theory of learning and knowledge (Fosnot, 2005) which stands for learners' constructing the knowledge by creating their own meaning rather than receiving them from the teachers (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). It is argued that knowledge is actively and subjectively created by the learners through making connections with the previous knowledge (von Glaserfeld, 1991).

**Challenges:** Challenges refer to the difficulties or problems that the teachers and students perceive to be hindering the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents the literature review about historical development of English language teaching in Turkey, the innovation of English language curriculum in the primary schools of Turkey and curriculum evaluation.

#### 2.1 English Language Education in Turkey

This part of the chapter presents foreign language policies and implementations of Turkey from historical perspective with the functions and roles of English language in Turkey.

Foreign language education has always been on the agenda of Turkish national education system (König, 2009). Although Turkey has been endeavoring for foreign language teaching for two centuries by following various teaching methods under different language policies and allocating funds and investments in this field, the learners who are exposed to foreign language instruction from primary to higher education cannot speak a foreign language at the intended level (Erdem, 1997; Erdem, 1998; Çelebi, 2007; Işık, 2008; Kırkgöz, 2008a). This failure in foreign language learning requires examining the foreign language policies and implementations in Turkey as well as their functions and roles in the changing world.

##### 2.1.1. Foreign Language Education before and after Republic

Foreign language education before the foundation of Turkish Republic is presented in terms of the language policies before and after the *Tanzimat* Reform in Ottoman Empire.

Before the *Tanzimat* reform, conducted in 1839 as an administrative reform, it is seen that Arabic language was dominant both as a second language and medium of instruction in public elementary schools and religious schools, respectively “*Sıbyan*”

and “*Medrese*”, together with French taught only in the palace school “*Enderun*” (Demirel, 1999).

Following the *Tanzimat* Reform, the education system was westernized and foreign language policy of the country was renewed as a part of this westernization process. As France was a leading country in the eighteenth century’s Europe, French became the communication tool of commercial and diplomatic relations as an international language (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). Having good relations with France, the government established military schools on a French model, used French as the first western language in the curriculum of these schools as well as using it as a medium of instruction in a medicine school and a public high school, Galatasaray Lycee (Demirel, 1999). However, the French influence in school curriculum diminished when the German influence appeared in 1914 (Koçer, 1974). The German dominance continued during this period till the World War II after which teaching English as foreign language appeared in the curriculum (Cem, 1978). Following the social and economic events in the post World War II, English became common in the non-colonized countries and replaced French by heading for a language of international diplomacy, trade, banking, tourism, the popular media, science and technology (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). However, it did not have a significant place in the curriculum of public schools in the Ottoman Turkey till the 1908 reform, as following this reform English began to be taught as a foreign language in the programs of some high schools and religious schools (Demircan, 1988).

Following the foundation of the Republic, there was not any dominance of a single foreign language, instead various foreign languages German, French, English and Italian were involved in school curriculum from 1924 to 1960 (Demircan, 1988); nonetheless, the priorities given to these foreign languages in the school curricula changed depending on the language policies of the governments in different years as followed (Demircan, 1988):

Table 2.1: The Priorities of the Foreign Languages

Years	1773-1923	1923-1950	1950-1980	After 1980
Foreign Languages	Arabic	French	English	English
	Persian	English	French	German
	French	German	German	French
	English	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic
	German		Persian	Persian

As the foreign run schools which were heading for successful foreign language education were either closed or limited by the Unification of Education Law, “*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*”, in 1924, the deficiency in foreign language education was tried to be compensated by opening schools which offered intensive foreign language education (Demircan, 1988). Depending on this policy, Turkish Education Foundation (TED) was founded in 1928 and opened primary and secondary schools (TED Ankara College) which offered extra-curricular English language teaching (Demircan, 1988).

Considering that learning English language has an important role in speeding up the modernization process, adapting the technological developments and establishing good relations with the western countries, Turkey increased the number of the schools having education with the medium of English: TED started to have English medium instruction in most of its courses since 1951-1952 and following it, various private Turkish colleges having English medium instruction were founded (Demircan, 1988).

The spread of English in the world as well as in Turkey was mostly caused by the great influence of the United States in industry, trade and economy (Tagliabue, 2002; Kırkgöz, 2008a). Besides, becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) whose one of the official languages is English and the cooperation with the Council of Europe in 1968 also increased the importance and

the necessity of English language teaching and this, in turn, initiated the studies for developing English language teaching curriculum in Turkey (Demirel, 2008).

#### 2.1.2. The Functions and Roles of English Language in Turkey

This part of the chapter presents the spread of English with the globalization process and the functions and roles of English language which have been promoted as a result of its increasing status in the world.

Functional values of English language in the non-English speaking countries are stated as instrumental, regulative, interpersonal, and imaginative or innovative (Kachru, 1992). Considering these functions of English language, it can be stated that English has an instrumental function in Turkey. Since it is the most preferred foreign language and medium of instruction after the native language; it has become the requirement in international business tourism and for progressing in competitive jobs in Turkey (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998).

People have been increasingly realizing that it is necessary to have at least a basis of English to be successful in life in terms of having high social status and prosperous jobs (König, 1990). As most of the academic and scientific studies are conducted in English, learning English has become a tool for achieving these goals (Kachru & Smith, 2009). Thus, regarding the fact that Turkish people learn English for instrumental reasons such as for better job opportunities and qualified education (Sebüktekin, 1981; Kızıltepe, 2000), it can be inferred that the popularity of English in Turkey is sourced from these intrinsic incentives, as well as the extrinsic ones such as globalization and modernization (Kachru, 1995; Kırkgöz, 2008a).

Held and Thompson (1999) state that globalization can be regarded as an expanding, increasing and concentrated effect of interconnection in the world (as cited in Zhu, 2003, p.36). One of the most important impacts of the globalization is the increasing international cooperation and worldwide knowledge shared in science and technology which increased the role of English in the world (Warschauer, 2000; Zhu, 2003). The fast dispersion of the information technologies, international commerce and corporations has affected the diffusion of English as it has become the

“lingua franca”, main international language, in various domains such as trade, economics, international travel, and the Internet and information technologies in the world (Crystal, 1997, p. 107; Dovring, 1997; Markee, 2000).

The dominant role of English in these fields increased the challenges and needs to learn English in the non-English speaking countries and they responded to this global influence of English through making reforms in their foreign language education so as to increase their competency in English language (Nunan, 2003). The countries in the Asia-Pacific region, especially China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam have recently conducted some changes in their English language teaching (ELT) policies and implementations so as to become more proficient in English language and this innovation movement is seen in their introducing learning English as a compulsory subject in the primary school (Kachru and Smith, 2009; Nunan, 2003; Zhu, 2003; Jeon and Hahn, 2006). The age to start learning English as a foreign language has been decreased in the world and it was revealed in a survey conducted by British Council in 1999 that most of the countries started to teach English language in the primary school in the 1990s (Graddol, 2007; Mitchell, 2002). Depending on Kachru’s three circles of English, Crystal (1997) points out that English language has been the dominant foreign language spoken by 1.500 million people in the countries which have no historical or colonial connection with English.

Similar to these countries, Turkey has also felt the global influence of English. The emergence of goods of influential trademarks of the western world, new words and conceptions due to the free market economies in 1980s and impact of American culture aroused the need and interest for English language in Turkey (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). Therefore, Turkey endeavored to meet this need through making various reforms in its foreign language policies and implementations (Kırkgöz, 2008a). Although diffusion of English into the non-English speaking countries is mainly caused by the military and economic dominance of the English speaking countries in the world and in the global market, the expansion of English in these countries is perceived as a matter of westernization by these countries

(Tollefson, 1991). Therefore, it can be regarded that the foreign language reforms in Turkey are caused by the modernization and westernization concerns of the governments as well as caused by the increasing role of English in the world (Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998).

### 2.1.3. English Language Policies and Implementations

This part of the chapter presents the English language teaching policies in the primary and secondary schools of Turkey from the mid 1980s to 1997 which were considered as being affected by the globalization and European Union factors.

The global use of English in the world increased the value of English language teaching in Turkey and English became the only compulsory foreign language in the school curriculum (Kırkgöz, 2008a). The government introduced the Foreign Language Policy Act in 1983 and 1984, involving regulations with the foreign language education so as to increase the foreign language teaching in secondary and higher education (Çelebi, 2007). Besides, it was tried to develop modern foreign language teaching programs by MONE and in this regard language programs for the preparation class of Anatolian High Schools were developed to offer English medium instruction (Demirel, 2008). The foreign language advantages of these schools made them prestigious especially for the students who were high achievers but could not afford attending to a private school (Demircan, 1988; Doğançay-Aktuna and Kızıltepe, 2005; Erdem, 2006). However, the practice of English medium education was abolished in Anatolian high schools in 1997 owing to the shortage of qualified teachers for teaching subjects in foreign language (Bartu, 2002).

As well as the globalization and the instrumental value of English language, the fact that English is one of the official languages of (EU) for which Turkey has been struggling to be a full member since 1987 also has an impact in reforming the foreign language policies in Turkey. Considering that becoming a member of EU has been among the most crucial political aims of Turkey, Turkey aims to adapt to EU standards in its educational practices which give rise to the recent reforms, 1997

educational reform and 2004 curriculum reform (Kırkgöz 2007; Kırkgöz, 2008a; Tekeli, 2003).

The 1997 reform conducted with the cooperation of MONE and Higher Education Institution (HEI) extended the duration of primary education, compulsory, to 8 years which was formerly 5 years, in other words, 3 years middle school education was combined with the primary education as the second level of primary education (Başaran, 2008). Furthermore, the 1997 reform lowered beginning of foreign language learning from secondary school to primary school by introducing ELT in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades which was also a common foreign language policy in the world as the countries have been in a tendency to teach a foreign language in the primary school (Mitchell, 2002; Nunan, 2003). MONE (1997b) stated the reasons for teaching English in the first cycle of primary school as:

Turkey's political and economic ambitions and the nation's desire to keep up its relations with foreign countries using English, particularly with countries of the European Union, are the major motivating forces underlying the decision to introduce English to young learners (p. 606).

## **2.2. Innovation of English Language Curriculum**

This part discusses English language curriculum innovation<sup>1</sup> which was conducted as a part of the Primary Education Curriculum Reforms in 2004. However, before discussing English language curriculum innovation in detail, it is necessary to present information about the term innovation and the curriculum innovation movement conducted in primary schools in Turkey.

### **2.2.1. Curriculum Innovation**

While Hord and Austin (1986) and Fullan (1997) consider innovation as a program, process, structure or a policy which is new to the people or emerging for the first time; Nicholls (1983), White, (1988) and Wu (2002) underline its being planned, purposeful, intentional and oriented to modification as well as being new to people. On the other hand, Leithwood (1991) stresses that a technique, material or

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, the term "innovation" is used interchangeably with the terms "reform" and "change."



thought introduced recently can be also regarded as an innovation as well as the ones having no precedent. White (1988) contends that curriculum innovation can be ranged from using a new course book, changing the assessment forms and procedures, replacing the old methods with those which are new and providing the new materials such as video recorders, computers.

It is seen in the related literature that the terms innovation, change and reform are used interchangeably although they are conveyed different meanings by different authors. Fullan (1991a) explains the difference among these terms. Curriculum change refers to alterations related to the instruction and general or particular changes in curriculum however, curriculum innovation most of the time refers to “specific curricular changes” such as bringing a new reading program (Fullan, 1991a, p. 279). On the other hand, reform refers to “more comprehensive and fundamental curriculum change” dependent on great value changes and they are stemmed from the educational policies such as revising the whole curriculum or restructuring the school system (Fullan, 1991a, p. 279). Rich (1988) clarifies the difference between an innovation and reform in educational context by suggesting that innovation aims to improve the system without changing the basis of the system, while reform may change the basis of the system or the total system by replacing it with the new one (as cited in Klein, 1994, p. 20). Nonetheless, there are different views on what constitutes the curriculum reform as it may refer to updating the content, choosing a new text, or revising curriculum by focusing different competencies and information (Klein, 1994).

Different kinds of curriculum innovation are also stated in the literature considering the way it is conducted. The innovation process can be conducted in either *bottom up* or a *top down* (italics original) manner depending on its emergence cause and point (Maciel, 2008a, pp. 125-126). The *bottom-up* (italics original) innovation process occurs when the desire and the initiative for the innovation are sourced from the insiders or suggested by the people working in the institutions such as teachers’ changing the course book, syllabus and adapting technical sources depending on the perceived needs of the local (Maciel, 2008a, p. 125). In this kind of

innovations, teacher can act without taking any assistance from the external agents for change (Markee, 1997). On the other hand, the *top-down* (italics original) innovations happen when the innovation is brought by an external person (Maciel, 2008b, p. 3). Top-down innovations are conducted particularly for broad range curriculum reforms requiring large scale decisions from the high level management (Waters and Vilches, 2001).

Considering tha curriculum innovation has stakeholders in its realization, Lambright and Flynn (1980) suggest five roles for the stakeholders of an innovation which are specified as “adopters”, accountable for the distribution of sources and starting the innovation; “implementers”, conducting the innovation who are teachers; “clients”, receivers of the innovations, students; “suppliers”, accountable for supplying the necessary staff and equipment; “entrepreneurs”, “change agents”, mostly an outsider such as the national or local coordinator providing the connecting between the participants of the innovations (as cited in Kennedy, 1988, p. 334).

Curriculum innovation can be conducted in four stages, *initiation stage*, (italics original) where the need and decision for a specific innovation is determined by an insider or outsider; *development stage*, (italics original) where the innovation is designed; *diffusion stage*, (italics original) where the information and comprehension of the innovated curriculum is spread; and lastly the *implementation stage*, (italics original) where the developed curriculum is put into practice (Kelly, 1970). However, before the implementation stage, the curriculum requires adaptation process which is carried out by teacher and administrators either separately or collaboratively, and with students when necessary (Kelly, 1970). Implementation and adoption of an innovated curriculum will be discussed in detail in the following parts.

#### 2.2.2. Curriculum Innovation Movement in Turkish Primary Schools

This part of the chapter presents information about the recent curriculum reform conducted in 2005 in the primary schools in Turkey and the constructivist

learning theory and learner-centeredness which are considered as the main innovations suggested in the new primary school curriculum.

The aim of the recent curriculum reforms is to change education system and teaching and learning process (Bantwini, 2010). Currently the curriculum reform mainly involves specifying and applying the main essence of knowledge, skills and behaviors that should be learned, as well as keeping up with the advancements in science and technology and improving the curriculum by taking the local, regional and individual needs and interests into the consideration (Kallen, 1996).

The curriculum innovation attempts of Turkey which started in 2004 were inspired by the innovations and developments carried out in the world especially by the curriculum innovations movements in the Far East, North America and EU (Akınoğlu, 2008). Besides, starting the negotiations for the full membership of EU in 2005 motivated Turkey to catch up with the educational standards and objectives of EU through innovations (Akınoğlu, 2008; Akşit, 2007). As well as these external factors, internal or national factors also triggered the curriculum innovation. The academic studies particularly in Math and Science education uncovered that the present program was not effective and in need of urgent revision (Şahin, 2007). Besides, it was revealed in the results of Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) that the Turkish students' level of achievement was lower than the international average and even less than the OECD countries in some subjects (PIRLS, 2001; OECD, 2004). Therefore, in order to enhance the status of educational vision in the world particularly in EU, Turkey introduced curricular innovations in its educational system in 2005 (Akşit, 2007).

The changes in the curricula of the primary school were carried out mainly in the subjects of Science, Social Science, Mathematics and Turkish initially in the grades 1-5 of the primary schools and it was planned to expand to the upper grades gradually by changing considerably the content and the emphasis of the curricula in 2004 (MONE, 2005a). MONE plotted the new curriculum 120 schools in nine provinces in 2004 as well as introducing the educational philosophy of the programs

to the primary school teachers in the same year and it started to implement it in all the primary schools gradually in 2005-2006 education years (Akşit, 2007; Çınar, Teyfur & Teyfur, 2006).

The general aims of this curriculum innovation are determined by MONE (2005b) as:

- decreasing the content and the number of concepts,
- designing the units thematically,
- developing nine main skills across the curriculum,
- replacing teacher-centered didactic teaching with student-centered constructivist one,
- integrating Information and Communication Technology into instruction,
- observing student development by formative assessment,
- replacing traditional assessment with authentic assessment,
- introducing foreign language learning in the primary school, and
- improving citizenship education.

Innovation of the primary school programs was based on adopting a different educational philosophy in the programs as it introduced Constructivist Approach, Learner-centeredness and Multiple Intelligences Theory in content, objectives, learning and teaching situations and assessment procedures of the curriculum (Gökleksiz, 2007; Gözütok, Akgün & Karacaoğlu, 2005; Tekışık, 2005, Yaşar et al., 2005).

### *Constructivist Approach*

Although widely seen in the recent educational reforms, constructivism is not a new paradigm (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). The implications of constructivist theories could be seen in Socrates, Plato and Aristotle's works which focus on composition of knowledge by an individual and Kant's argument in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that "logical analysis of actions and objects lead to the growth of knowledge and one's individual experiences generate new knowledge" (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p. 23). Constructivism has been built on Piaget's cognitive and

developmental theories, Vygotsky's views of learning as cultural and social interaction and Dewey's educational philosophy as well as Bruner and Ausubel's learning theories (Ramos, 1999).

It is stressed in the related literature that constructivism is not a theory of teaching but a theory of learning and knowledge (Blyth, 1997; Fosnot, 2005) and it holds the understanding that the knowledge of the outer world is created through mental process which gives a shape to how the experiences in the outer world are perceived (Ramos, 1999). Constructivist learning theory stands for the learners' constructing the knowledge by creating their own meaning rather than receiving them from the teachers (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Selley, 1999). Therefore, it is considered that knowledge is not passively received rather it is actively and subjectively created by the learners through making connections with the previous knowledge (Henson, 2006; von Glaserfeld, 1991; Ziegler, 2000). For that reason, on contrary to the traditional learning environments, constructivist learning environment regards learners as the active constructors of their own knowledge rather than the passive receivers of it.

Jonassen (1999) puts forward that in constructivist learning, knowledge is built both individually and socially by the learners depending on their understanding of the outer world while Dershem (1996) emphasizes interaction of the learners with the knowledge, their environments, and teachers and peers while constructing the knowledge. Dharmadasa (2000) suggests that constructivist learning is based on the previous knowledge, skills and experiences that students bring to the classroom. Although there are different interpretations of constructivist learning theory, many scientists share the view that it changes the focus of teaching by primarily emphasizing the learners' involvement and attempts in learning (Prawat, 1992). Constructivist approach handles learning, kind of information, competencies and learning experiences, teacher and student roles, the way of setting goals from a different perspective when compared to the traditional ones (Ziegler, 2000). In constructivist learning teacher roles are expanded by a change from being the transmitter of knowledge to the facilitator of learning, being the source of knowledge

to the guide of research and knowledge construction as well as being the coach, collaborator and mentor of learning (Dharmadasa, 2000; Grub et. al, 1999).

In constructivist curriculum, the traditional assessment of students' learning through standardized exams which give rise to rote learning without comprehending the material is replaced by the process assessment (Kesal & Aksu, 2006). Simulations, role-playing games, multimedia learning environments, intentional learning environments, story-telling structures, case studies, learning by teaching, cooperative and collaborative learning are the teaching strategies suggested by Wilson (1997) for a constructivist learning environment.

Brooks and Brooks (1993) specify five basic principles for constructivist teaching:

1. Guiding learners to problems arousing interest in the target subject.
2. Building learning on the frame of the basic terms.
3. Revealing the learner perspectives and valuing these views.
4. Adapting the educational program depending on the learner views.
5. Assessing the learners in the learning context.

### *Learner-Centeredness*

In consistent with the constructivist approach, the new English language curriculum suggests learner-centeredness. Learner-centered curriculum requires that the interests, skills and needs of the learners should not be predetermined in advance but revealed by the learners and they should be given priority while developing the curriculum (Klein, 1994; Nunan, 1992). In learner centered instruction, students are expected create their own knowledge or understanding which is mostly referred in literature as “active instruction, meaning making, progressive, constructivist, holistic and learning” (Grub et al., 1999, p. 31). One of the practices of learner-centered curriculum in the classroom is that teachers help the learners to construct their own interpretation through benefiting from the learners' backgrounds of interpretation, collaborative learning, realistic learning problems and active participation of the

learners in the learning experiences rather than presenting the readymade material (Kavanoz, 2006).

In learner-centered curriculum, learning process is more important than the content and the developing higher-order thinking skills and learner autonomy are promoted in a learner centered learning environment (Cranton, 1998). Learner centeredness requires differentiated curricula for different learners and it aims to develop learning skills as well as teaching the specific subject through effective learning strategies which support learners in determining their own learning styles, developing their own goals, setting realistic objectives and time frames, in developing learners' skills for evaluating themselves (Nunan, 1992).

### 2.2.3. Innovation of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Curriculum

As a part of the constructivist innovation movement in the curriculum of primary education, a new English language curriculum was developed in 2005 and put into implementation starting from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade in 2006 and in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in 2008 in the nationwide (MONE, 2006). Similar to the 1997 ELT reform whose major innovations were that of introducing English language teaching in the 4<sup>th</sup> grades and suggesting Communicative Language Teaching, the recent ELT innovation conducted in 2005 was also resulted from the government's endeavors to conform to the standards of EU specifically in English language teaching (Akınoğlu, 2008; Doğançay-Aktuna & Kızıltepe, 2005; Kırkgöz, 2008a). Besides, the failure of the students in speaking English triggered the revision of English language curriculum by making it more student-centered, comprehensive, and consistent so as to improve English language teaching (Kırkgöz, 2007b).

Although the previous English language curriculum of the primary school, innovated in 1997, was claimed to have the characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and student-centered teaching, it actually had more traditional approach in teaching language as it was mostly based on transferring the knowledge and repeating it through drills and games (MONE, 1997b; Topkaya & Küçük, 2010). Besides, there was not any coherency in the content design and

objectives of the previous English language curriculum (Yanık, 2007); therefore, the new English language curriculum redevelops the content in a functional-notional and skills-based way where the goals and objectives are specified in relation to the target grammar structure, topic and function by taking the individual needs and differences into the consideration (MONE, 2006; Kırkgöz, 2007b).

Depending mainly on Constructivist Learning Approach and Multiple Intelligences Theory, the innovated English language curriculum is regarded as “more learner-centered, task- based and process oriented” (Topkaya & Küçük, 2010, p. 41). The most important factor improving English language curriculum is making it learner-centered as the NEC proposes various activities by considering individual differences in terms of learning styles, competencies and paces and it also suggests for the active engagement of students in their own learning (Kavanoz, 2006). The basic argument of the learner-centered approach in language teaching is that the learners come to the class with different attitudes and beliefs related to language and language learning and they should be considered while choosing the content and learning activities (Nunan, 1998). Therefore, the NEC suggests for the use of different task based and communicative activities like dramatization, conversations, simulations, games, pair work and group work so as to appeal different learning styles as much as possible (see MONE, 2006 for detail).

The NEC emphasizes learner autonomy, giving the responsibility of managing the knowledge independently to the students, and interdisciplinary learning which requires making connections with the previous or other learning from different disciplines (mathematics, science, arts, music, social studies, etc) while creating the knowledge (MONE, 2006). Furthermore, the innovated English language curriculum introduces alternative/authentic assessment techniques as the most significant innovation (Kırkgöz, 2007b; Kutlu, 2005; MONE, 2006). Authentic assessment gives enhanced, more powerful and more sophisticated approach to grasp the development of the students since it functions as a tool for both students and teachers to monitor and follow the students’ growth and improvement by providing evidence for the progress (Janesick, 2006). It is believed that process oriented



assessment fills in the gaps caused by the traditional product-oriented assessment in Turkish education system. (Kırkgöz, 2007b) Most prevalent ways of authentic assessment are stated as performances, demonstrations, simulations, oral presentations, progress interviews, writing samples, formal observations, self-assessment, evaluations of case studies, journal writing, writing folders, role plays and portfolios, the most popular authentic assessment tool (Janesick, 2006).

Related literature highlights the role of portfolio, alternative assessment tool, in improving reflective thinking skills (Bryant & Timmins, 2002; Klenowski, 1998; Spilková, 2001), problem solving skills Mokhtari et al., 1996) and communication skills of the learners (Allen, 1996).

The characteristics of alternative assessment are specified by MONE (2006) as:

- being performance-based and authentic,
- emphasizing recording the students' development,
- focusing on the abilities of the students instead of the inefficiency of them, using criterion-referenced assessment instead of norm-referenced one.
- incorporated into teaching,
- enabling to determine the degree of students' creating, reflecting, problem solving, collecting and using information and composing important questions,
- leading to creative work and thinking,
- taking individual differences into the consideration.

### **2.3. Curriculum Evaluation**

This part of the chapter presents different perceptions of the term curriculum and curriculum evaluation, formative and summative evaluation, approaches and models used in curriculum evaluation, implementation evaluation together with the evaluation studies conducted about English language curriculum of the primary schools in Turkey.

### 2.3.1. Different Conceptions of Curriculum

The emergence of the conception of curriculum which is believed to stem from the Latin word meaning “racecourse”, goes back to the Plato’s and Aristotle’s time when it has been regarded as “the subjects taught during the classical period of Greek civilization” (Marsh & Willis, 2003, p. 7). However, currently the authors convey different meanings and contents to the word curriculum as they have different perspectives or approaches to curriculum. Some of the definitions of the curriculum can be listed as “written document” (Beauchamp 1975, p. 7), “all the experiences learners have under the guidance of the school” (Marsh & Willis, 2003, p. 9) and “a body of subjects or subject matters that are to be covered by the teachers and the students” (Casciano-Savigno, 1978, p. 35). In addition to these definitions which involve only some parts of the curriculum rather than the whole one (Bishop, 1991), there are also broader and elaborative definitions. Hass (1987) defines curriculum as “all of the experiences that individual learners have in a program of education whose purpose is to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives, which is planned in terms of a framework of theory and research or past and present professional practice” (p. 5).

Besides various definitions, different types of curriculum have been specified or differentiated by the researchers. Howson and Wilson (1986) differentiate the curricula as “intended curriculum”, which is planned by its designers, “implemented curriculum”, which is practiced by the teachers, and “attained curriculum”, which is perceived by the learners (p. 91). Other categorizations can also be listed as “official, taught, learned and tested curriculum” (Cuban, 1993, p. 2); “the written, the supported, the taught, the tested curriculum”, which are regarded as “intentional curriculum” in contrast to the hidden curriculum, as well as “the recommended” and “the learned curriculum” (Glatthorn, Boschee and Whitehead, 2009, p. 6). Although there is an expectation that all these curriculum types will correspond to each other in other words, although the planned curriculum is expected to be the practiced or taught one and the taught curriculum is expected to be the learned one (Nunan, 1992) there is often a great discrepancy among these curricula (Bishop, 1991; Cuban, 1993;

Glatthorn, Boschee and Whitehead, 2009). Among the reasons for the gap between the intended and the actualized curriculum, teachers have the biggest pie as it will be discussed later (Bishop, 1991).

### 2.3.2. Different Conceptions of Evaluation

Evaluation has been regarded as a crucial part of the curriculum development process by many (Cronbach, 1982; Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004; Gredler, 1996; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998; Popham, 1993; Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, 1999). However, similar to the definition of curriculum, there is not a consensus among the evaluators on the exact definition of evaluation as a term in educational context (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). It is seen that measurement, assessment, grading, accountability, and appraisal can be used interchangeably with the word evaluation (Popham, 1993, pp. 9-10).

Scriven (1967) defines evaluation as “judging the worth or merit of something” (as cited in Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004, p. 5), while Popham defines it as “*appraisal of quality* (italics original) or a determination of worth” (Popham, 1993, p. 7). Tyler (1950) regards curriculum evaluation as assessing the degree of attainment of the specified objectives of the program (as cited in Wolf, 1991, p. 411). Nonetheless, most of the evaluators regard program evaluation as the activities conducted for determining the value or quality of a curriculum or other aspects of a program such as objectives, outputs, process, student development, instructional strategies (Gredler, 1996; Michaelis, Grossman & Scott, 1975; Popham, 1993; Saylor, Alexander & Lewis, 1981). Worthen (1991) contends that a curriculum evaluation can be regarded as a program evaluation on condition that the curriculum mainly involves an innovation or a modification. Therefore, this study uses the term program evaluation as an alternative to curriculum evaluation as it focuses on evaluation of the implementation of an innovated curriculum.

Most of the evaluation studies in literature emphasize the role of evaluation as the facilitator of decision making (Cronbach, 1982, Popham 1993, Worthen & Sanders, 1987), as well as underlying its role in accountability, management and

improvement processes since it provides information about the impacts and efficiency of the program (Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, 1999). However, the most distinctive roles of evaluation are specified as “summative” and “formative” by Scriven in 1967 (as cited in Payne, 1994 p. 8). Though complementary, these two evaluation types show differences in terms of “purpose, timing, target audience, the evaluator, measures, and frequency of data collection, sample size, questions asked and the major characteristics” (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004, p. 20).

### 2.3.3. Formative and Summative Evaluation

The basic feature of formative evaluation is its being conducted during its implementation or development stage of a program with the purpose of forming or improving the ongoing program (Frechtling, 2007; Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, 1999). Formative evaluation provides a basis for revising or adjusting the “materials, activities and organization” of a program (Morris & Fitz-Gibbon, 1978b, p. 12). On the other hand, summative evaluation is carried out at the end of a program with the purpose of measuring the degree of achievement of the intended goals and determining the outputs of the program (Michaelis, Grossman & Scott, 1975). Depending on the effectiveness and efficiency of the program, summative evaluation concerns giving decision about the “continuation, adoption or expansion” of the program (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004, p. 17).

### 2.3.4. Curriculum Evaluation Approaches and Models

Depending on different understandings and conceptions of evaluation, the evaluators develop various curriculum evaluation approaches and models which are classified differently by different authors (Lewy, 1991). House (1978) classifies evaluation approaches under two general categories as “utilitarian” and “intuitionist/pluralist” while Hamilton (1977) uses the term “management-oriented” instead of utilitarian (as cited in Gredler, 1996, p. 11). The distinction between two approaches is related with their criteria applied for determining the value of a program, in other words, for judging the value of the program intuitionist/pluralist

approaches consider the program's effect on "*each* individual" while utilitarian approaches take into account the "*overall*" (italics original) effect of the program on the ones who or which are affected by the program (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2006, p. 62). Unlike to the utilitarian/management-oriented approaches, which use predetermined common criteria for all evaluation situations, pluralist-intuitionist approaches benefit from plural criteria or perspectives which makes the role of the evaluator to uncover these different values and needs of the audience for whom the evaluation is conducted (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004; Gredler, 1996).

On the other hand, Fitzpatrick and his associates (2004) handle the evaluation approaches from a broader and more detailed perspective and classify them under five categories: "Objectives-oriented", which regards the specified goals or objectives as the criteria for determining the success or failure of a program, "management-oriented", which focuses on the information required by the decision makers, "consumer-oriented", which concerns providing information to the consumers about the value of the evaluation object to facilitate their comparison, "expertise oriented", which depends on the opinion or judgments of the experts, and "participant-oriented" which gives priority to the needs and opinions of the participants (p. 63). Focusing on different dimensions of evaluation as based on the priorities of their developers (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004); they provide the practitioners with multiple perspectives while conducting an evaluative study.

### *The Provus Discrepancy Model*

Depending on the Tyler's objective-based evaluation approach which regards evaluation as measuring the extent of achievement of the program objectives (Worthen, 1991), Provus Discrepancy model focuses on the discrepancies revealed through comparing the *performance* (italics original) of the program with predetermined *standards* (italics original) in the "design, installation, process, product and program comparison" stages of evaluation (Popham, 1993, pp. 37-39). The information or the discrepancy revealed in each stage determines the decisions

whether to continue to the following stage, to modify by changing some aspects of the program or to end the program (Saylor, Alexander & Lewis, 1981).

#### *Stake's Countenance Approach*

This evaluation model involves two main actions, “two countenances” of evaluation, which are *description* and *judgment* (italics original) of the evaluation object (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004). In Stake's model, the relationships between “antecedents, transactions and outcomes” are revealed and the value of a program is determined by comparing the intended “antecedents, transactions and outcomes” with the observed ones in terms of compatibility as well as comparing them with the predetermined standards (Gredler, 1996, p. 50).

#### *Goal-free Evaluation*

Goal-Free evaluation emphasizes that evaluation should be conducted without being dependent or limited to the predetermined goals of the program, in other words the decisions about the program should be based on the present outputs rather than the planned ones (Worthen, 1991). Depending on this approach, a program can be judged as worthy or successful to the extent that its impacts match with the specified needs of its users (Stecher, 1991). This model allows the evaluator to gather the data which is regarded as related to the program by the evaluator (Saylor, Alexander & Lewis, 1981).

#### *The CIPP Model*

The aim of this evaluation is to provide information to the decision makers through carrying out three basic activities identified as determining, gathering and interpreting the information so as to make it utilizable for the evaluation (Popham, 1993). CIPP Evaluation model involves four stages of which first letters are acronym for this model: “Context evaluation”, which assesses the needs or problems to set the goals of the program, “input evaluation”, which intends to determine the most appropriate sources, tools and methods to attain the goals of the program, “process

evaluation”, which aims to assess the implementation process to reveal to what extent the program is being implemented and what needs improvement, and “product evaluation”, which measure the present outcomes of the program by comparing it with the desired ones (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004, p. 90; Glatthorn, Boschee & Whitehead, 2009).

#### *The Judicial/Adversarial Models*

The judicial model involves four stages: revealing the problems or concerns felt by different groups, choosing among the problems to focus, making the contentions ready through examining the evidences and clarifying the complicated issues as well as suggesting recommendations in a panel composed of different groups such as policy makers, school staff and parents (Gredler, 1996). On the other hand, adversary model aims to decide whether to continue to the program or not (Gredler, 1996) by using opposing teams to reveal both the weak and strong sides of the program and keep them in balance (Worthen, 1991).

#### *Eisner’s Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism Perspective*

Eisner constructs his model on two interrelated terms specified as “connoisseurship” which refers to noticing and acknowledging the quality of something depending on experience and “criticism” which refers to uncovering the merits of an object which is perceived by the “connoisseurship” (Glatthorn, Boschee & Whitehead, 2009, p. 317) As the evaluator function as an evaluation tool which will identify and interpret the qualities of the program, the proficiency of the evaluator bears significance for the validity of the evaluation (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004 ).

#### *Stake’s Responsive Evaluation Perspective*

Regarding his previous evaluation approach, countenance approach as inadequate in terms of responding to the “*concerns of the individual for whom the evaluation was conducted*” (italics original), Stake developed *responsive evaluation*

(italics original) in the early 1970s by giving the concerns of stakeholders of the program priority while setting the goals of the evaluation (Popham, 1993, p. 42). The needs and issues felt by the people in or around the program are determined after observing the program activities and interviewing with learners, teachers, parents and administrators (Saylor, Alexander & Lewis, 1981). Thus this model is sensitive to the concerns and informative needs of its stakeholders who are regarded as the main audience of the evaluation (Worthen, 1991).

### *Illuminative Evaluation*

Illuminative evaluation in education mainly focuses on researching and explaining various program applications, perceptions of its users, program related operations in the institution and administration issues to its audience (Parlett, 1991). Emphasizing the whole interconnection instead of determined program characteristics, illuminative evaluation aims to enlighten or improve the comprehension of the relations within the system as well as the operational features of it (Parlett, 1991). The evaluation stages of this approach are suggested as monitor, enquiry and interpretation or drawing basic rules (Gredler, 1996).

### 2.3.5. Implementation Evaluation

This part of the chapter presents information about implementation, factors affecting implementation, implementation evaluation approaches, the reasons for conducting implementation evaluation and models used in implementation and implementation evaluation.

### *Implementation*

Conducting research on implementation is important mainly for two reasons: first to interpret the outputs accurately it is required to know what has happened in the “black box”; second to understand the reasons for the failure or success of innovations (Fullan, 1997, p.22). Despite its crucial role, studies about curriculum implementation started following the expanded research on change and innovation in



the late sixties and even the term implementation was not used before the late 1960s; instead the term “installation” was used to refer to the practice of curriculum policy (Snyder et al., 1992 as cited in Wang, 2006, p. 28). Michaelis and his associates (1975) consider implementation as an interrelated network of various actions performed to transfer the curriculum plan into actual practice. On the other hand, Fullan (1983) describes implementation as “the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities which is new to the people attempting to bring about a change” (p. 216). It is also regarded as the process of decreasing the gap between the present and the planned application of an innovation (Leithwood, 1991).

Although there is not a common view about what implementation involves, most of the research about implementation focus on the application process of the determined curriculum decisions (Fitz, 1994). However, it is essential not to expect any innovated curriculum to be precisely practiced since there are various factors which influence the implementation process (Guskey, 1986). Some of these factors are determined as the understanding and support of the implementation by the people, provision of necessary materials, facilities and support to the teachers (Michaelis, Grossman & Scott, 1975). The literature on the implementation of innovation has found out that different factors and stakeholders of the curriculum implementation play important roles in the success or failure of the innovation and in relation to this, various implementation models elaborating the relations between these variables have been suggested by the researchers (Carless, 1998; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Markee, 1997; Wang, 2006; Wang, 2008).

#### *Factors Affecting Implementation*

Fullan (1991b) specifies factors affecting implementation as “characteristics of the change” in terms of clarity, complexity, need and compatibility, quality and practicality of materials, “local conditions”, concerning the atmosphere and features of the district, school and community, “local strategies” concerning the policies and planning of implementation such as in-service activities and communication-information systems, and “external factors” facilitating or preventing the

implementation such as resources, funding or technical support. Likewise, in Fullan and Stiegelbauer's model (1991) the factors are described as the practicality and understandability of the change, the characteristics and the support of the local such as region, administrators and particularly teachers and the degree of policy makers' effect on the stakeholders.

On the other hand, Carless (1999) categorizes the factors in his model as "teacher-related, innovation-related and change agent-related" while elaborating the teacher-related ones in detail in terms of their "beliefs, attitudes and their understanding and ownership of curriculum innovation" and specifying the change-related factors as communication strategies, change strategies, availability of human, material, and financial sources (as cited in Wang, 2006, pp. 44-46). Wang (2006) regards three main factors affecting the implementation as policy makers, administrators and the teachers in his implementation research and he found out a discrepancy among their intention and implementation. Therefore, Wang (2006) emphasizes that the goals and application procedures of a new program should be precisely understood by its users such as administrators and teachers so as to implement it as it was intended by its designers.

Nonetheless, among the factors determining the quality, success and degree of implementation teachers are regarded as the most crucial factor and stakeholder by the researchers. It is asserted by many that whether the implementation of a curriculum innovation succeeds or not mostly depends on how the teachers perceive and value the innovation and how they are supported in the implementation process (Bishop, 1991; Carless, 1998; Fullan, 1997; Guskey, 1986; Hord & Austin, 1986; Kyriakides, 1997). Leithwood et al., (1994) emphasize that gaining the involvement and support of the teachers is essential as the implementation process will require more work and endeavor from the teachers at least in its early times and he asserts that individual aims, beliefs, attitudes, motivation of the teachers will affect their desire to practice this change. While Bishop (1991) claims that the quality of curriculum directly depends on the quality of teachers as it can be affected by either poor or creative teachers.

It is stated in the literature that in order to implement the change as it was expected, the educational philosophy underlying the innovation and –particularly- the practice of the innovation in the classroom should be clear to the teachers, because of the risk of misconceiving some parts of the goal or application of the innovation (Carless (1998; Fullan, 1991b). In relation to this, Guskey (1986) highlights the importance and necessity of staff development programs to facilitate the change in beliefs, attitudes, and class behaviors of the teachers required for the effective implementation of the innovation.

A design of procedures for implementing an innovation is developed by Leithwood and Montgomery (1982) as “innovation profile” which describes the behaviors of the teachers regarding the innovated curriculum in terms of the progress from not using the innovation to using it wholly (p. 162). Hurst (1978) determines eight criteria which are applied by the users of the innovation while evaluating and deciding whether or not to use the innovation as “availability of information, desirability, feasibility, resources, consequences, costs, efficiency, priority and trialability” (as cited in Morris, 1985, p. 4).

#### *Implementation Evaluation Approaches*

Although there are different views on how to assess the degree of implementation of an innovation, most of the implementation researches utilize one of the two major perspectives for implementation evaluation which are referred as “*fidelity*” and “*mutual adaptation*” (italics original) (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977 p. 340). “Fidelity or programmed approach”, most frequently used, aims to measure to what extent the planned implementation of an innovation match “faithfully” with the actual practiced one and reveal the factors facilitating and preventing this faithful implementation, on the other hand, “mutually adaptive or adaptive approach” proposes that curriculum cannot be implemented as it was designed rather it should unfold depending on the different conditions of its users; therefore, it intends to reveal the change or adaptation occurred in the innovation during its actual practice by its users (Fullan, 1991b, p. 378; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977). There are various

implementation evaluation approaches between “fidelity” and “adaptation” perspectives such as “muddling through”, emphasizing to assess the results of even the little changes before passing to the other stages of change to reveal the problematic sides of implementation (Fullan, 1991b; Leithwood, 1991, p. 447) and the enactment perspective focusing on the curriculum changes stemming from the learner and teacher (Wang, 2006).

### *Reasons for Implementation Evaluation*

Curriculum evaluation studies were oriented on products or effects of curriculum until the early 1970s (Alkin & Lewy, 1991), however, it is meaningless to evaluate the outputs of a curriculum without being informed about its implementation (Morris & Fitz-Gibbon, 1978a). Therefore, it is essential to determine whether and how the curriculum is implemented in the classroom, before giving decision about the effects or outcomes of it (Hall & Loucks, 1977). The necessity of evaluating the extent of implementation of an innovation as part of the educational evaluations has been increasingly emphasized by many researchers (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Fullan, 1997; Hall & Loucks, 1977; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982, Patton, 1987).

Fullan and Pomfret (1977) assert four reasons to conduct research on implementation:

1. to get information about the changed aspects of the innovation,
2. to reveal the problematic or weak sides of an innovation for improving the program,
3. to regard implementation as being different from other dimensions of an innovation,
4. to understand the relations between the program effects and its implementation.

Implementation evaluation can also function as a source of information for accountability, management and research dimensions of an innovation as it provides feedback on the degree of implementation, application procedures, appropriate

conditions, possible implementation problems and solutions, the required user competencies and success or failure of an innovation (Leithwood, 1991).

### *Models used in Implementation and Implementation Evaluation*

The interest in implementation evaluation also brings about initiatives to develop methods and instruments for assessing the implementation process. Rubin, Stuck and Revicki (1982) describe a model “The Field-based Implementation Rating Scale” (FIRS) which is designed for measuring the implementation of a field-based program through gathering accurate information related to implementation process (p. 190). In accordance with the fidelity approach, Hall and Loucks (1977) propose a model for assessing the implementation of an innovation which involves different “*Levels of Use of the Innovation (LoU)*” (italics original) as criteria related to the behaviors of the innovation users (p. 264).

Wang et al. (1984) develop “Adaptive Learning Environments Model (ALEM)” for adapting the implementation to the needs and features of the learners (p. 250). ALEM instruments for implementation are benefited for different reasons: to show that success of a curriculum depends on its implementation, to reveal how implementation differs in different regions, to examine crucial parts of the implementation so as to identify the weak sides of the curriculum (Fullan, 1983). Besides, Hall and Loucks (1978) design “Concerns-based adoption model (CBAM)” to show that the teachers as the users of the innovation go through various “*stages of concern*” (italics original) while implementing an innovation which are identified as “awareness, informational, personal, management, consequences, collaboration and refocusing” (as cited in Wu, 2002, p. 23). Considering that there is a dynamic relation between the teachers’ thoughts and behaviors, CBAM aims to reveal the process a teacher experiences while adopting an innovation (Wu, 2002). The following table, designed by Hall and Loucks (1978) illustrates the stages of concern that the teachers follow in the course of implementation (as cited in Wu, 2002, p. 23):

Table 2.2: Seven Stages of Concern in the CBAM

<b>Stage 0 (Awareness)</b>	Teachers have little awareness of the innovation and are not likely to be concerned about it.
<b>Stage 1 (Informational)</b>	Teachers are seeking an understanding of the innovation itself.
<b>Stage 2 (Personal)</b>	Teachers begin to express concerns about their ability to meet changing expectations
<b>Stage 3 (Management)</b>	Teachers focus on implementation concerns.
<b>Stage 4 (Consequences)</b>	Teachers express concerns about the impact of the innovation on their students or families served.
<b>Stage 5 (Collaboration)</b>	Teachers begin to seek out relationships that will assist them in implementing the innovation.
<b>Stage 6 (Refocusing)</b>	Teachers express an interest in adapting the innovation or considering alternative innovations.

#### 2.4. English Language Curriculum Evaluation Studies in Turkey

This part of the chapter presents a brief summary of the English language curriculum evaluation studies conducted in the primary schools in Turkey. It also compares the findings of these studies which are considered as related to this study.

It is seen that most of the recent studies related to English language curriculum of the public primary schools were about the former curriculum innovated in 1997. Among these studies Büyükduman (2005) and İğrek (2001) revealed the opinions of English language teachers on the English curriculum of the primary schools, while Sevinç (2006) and Tılfarlıoğlu and Öztürk (2007) focused on English language teachers' perceptions of problems concerning the implementation of English language curricula of the primary schools. Erdoğan (2005) evaluated the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades English curriculum from the perspectives of teachers and students while Er (2006) concentrated on the perspectives of teachers and inspectors on the same curriculum. Kırkgöz (2008b, 2008c) investigated instructional practices of English language teachers working in the public primary schools, and the impact of teacher understandings and training upon the teachers' implementation of the

Communicative Oriented Curriculum. Having more elaborative study, Mersinligil (2002) regarded the perceptions of teachers, students and administrators on the English language curriculum implemented in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. Furthermore, Kavanoz (2006) revealed English language teachers' beliefs, assumptions and knowledge about learner-centeredness. Unlike to the previous studies, Yanık (2007) revealed the implementation of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades English language curricula from the perspectives of teachers and students. Although the aforementioned studies have different focuses and research questions, they revealed similar problems related to the implementation of the English language curricula in the primary schools.

The studies indicated that the most common problems preventing the effective implementation of the English language curriculum were crowded classrooms and lack of necessary instructional materials, resources and equipment as revealed by Büyükduman (2005), Sevinç (2006), Kırkgöz (2008b), Topkaya and Küçük (2010), Tılfarlıoğlu and Öztürk (2007) and Yanık (2007). In addition to these, overloaded content and insufficient time were regarded as hindering the implementation of the program as revealed by Büyükduman (2005), Er (2006), Erdoğan (2005), Kırkgöz (2008b), Tılfarlıoğlu and Öztürk (2007) and Yanık (2007).

As for the goals and objectives of the curriculum, Yanık (2007) revealed that aforementioned problems influenced the attainment of goals and objectives and Er (2006) uncovered problems in achieving the cognitive, affective and psychomotor objectives as well as the general aims of the curriculum. In accordance with them, Büyükduman (2005) found out that nearly half of the teachers thought that the students failed to achieve the goals related to listening, writing and speaking skills. On the other hand, Mersinligil (2002) revealed a significant difference between the teachers' and students' perceptions about the purposes and goals of the curriculum; although, the students thought that most of them were achieved, the teachers thought that the objectives were not achieved at the intended level.

As for the content, except its being overloaded, it was revealed that the teachers regarded the content as inappropriate or ineffective in terms of its order, appropriateness to their level, importance, being interesting and relevant for their

purposes (Erdoğan, 2005, Mersinligil 2002). Considering the assessment procedures, it was revealed that the teachers did not use the suggested assessment procedures since they found them as time consuming and it was found out that the teachers often use paper-based tests to assess the achievement of the students (Büyükduman, 2005; Mersinligil, 2002). In relation to this, Er (2006) revealed that although the teachers were content with the assessment methods and tools suggested in the curriculum, they criticized the assessment procedures for being lack of process evaluation and self-evaluation of the learners. Besides these problems, Yanık (2007) uncovered that students prevented 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 studies also found out that although the 1997 English language curriculum was designed as learner-centered and communicative oriented, the classroom practices of the teachers were teacher-centered and traditional where they used whole class activities and individual study rather than group or pair work and regarded their roles as presenter or transmitter of the knowledge (for detail see Büyükduman, 2005; Kavanoz, 2006; Kırkgöz 2008c; Mersinligil, 2002; Sevinç, 2006).

Different reasons were revealed in relation to the teachers' using teacher centered and traditional methods rather than those which were learner-centered. Kırkgöz (2008b, 2008c) conducted studies on the teachers' perceptions and practices of the communicative oriented curriculum and found out that there was a gap between the intended and actual practice of the curriculum innovation. She determined the reasons for non-implementation of the learner-centered curriculum as the teachers' perception of the innovation, their previous training and lack of instructional guidance as well as physical qualities of the learning environment. On the other hand, Kavanoz (2006) conducted a comparative case study to explore English language teachers' beliefs, assumptions and knowledge about learner-centeredness and their practice of learner-centeredness in their classrooms. She revealed that unlike to the private school teachers, public school English language



teachers had insufficient knowledge and misconceptions about learner-centeredness and active learning as well as being unknowledgeable about how to practice them in their classes which lead to their continuing teacher centered instruction.

Considering the effective implementation of the learner-centered or communicative oriented curriculum, the researchers suggested providing instructional guidance to the teachers through continuous in-service or pre-service training, workshops and seminars especially during the first years of the innovation so as to change teachers' teaching beliefs, knowledge and practices from teacher-centered to learner-centered and also for providing guidance for teaching English to young learners (see Er, 2006; Kavanoz, 2006; Kırkgöz, 2008b; Kırkgöz, 2008c; Sevinç, 2006; Yanık, 2007). Among the aforementioned studies, it is suggested to focus on the implementation problems as well as the input and process dimensions of the curriculum (İğrek, 2001). Likewise, Yanık (2007) suggested analyzing the current implementation problems before designing a new curriculum and conducting interviews with the eight graders to get deeper information related to their perceptions and problems in implementation. On the other hand, Büyükduman (2005) suggested redesigning the curriculum with the commitment of the teachers so that it provides more guideline about the instructional methods, strategies and evaluation procedures as well as involving more communicative activities.

Unlike to the previous studies which evaluated the previous curriculum, Topkaya and Küçük (2010) evaluated the innovated English language curriculum which was put into implementation in 2006. They focused on the public primary school English language teachers' opinions about the general features, aims/outcomes and content of the new 4th and 5th grade English language program. To gather the data, questionnaire was conducted with the participation of 72 teachers from 26 schools in Istanbul. It was revealed that the program was clear and understandable, nonetheless, there were factors affecting its implementation such as large classes, loaded content, time constraint, lack of resources which were the common problems of the previous curriculum (Topkaya & Küçük, 2010). They suggested that physical conditions of the schools should be taken into account while

developing a new program. They also suggested using self-reports structured interviews, diary keeping studies, as well as observations to gather more specific data about the new program and its implementation.

Besides, Yıldız (2006) investigated the implementation of constructivism in English language teaching for Turkish learners by applying pre-tests and post-tests to two 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes (n=50) one of which was subjected to constructivist teaching and the other was subjected to traditional teaching. He revealed that although constructivist language teaching methods were more effective and successful than the traditional language teaching, constructivist teaching had drawbacks. It was revealed that constructivist teaching required more time, material and technological equipment which made constructivist teaching less economical and it also caused difficulty to control the class (Yıldız, 2006). Besides, he further concluded that memorization and rote learning based on behaviorist learning principles were more useful than the constructivist teaching for learning some aspects of language such as pronunciation.

To sum up, the aim of the aforementioned studies was to investigate the goals/objectives, content, learning and teaching situations and assessment procedures of English language curriculum implemented in the public primary school from different perspectives. Although they had different focus and research questions, they shared the results by revealing more or less the same factors inhibiting English language teaching in public primary school. It is assumed that the results of these studies contribute to the present study through their implications for the problems encountered in the implementation process of an innovated curriculum. However, despite the fact that most of these aforementioned studies revealed the program outcomes from different perspectives, none of them has provided an in-depth investigation of implementation stage where the curriculum outcomes are achieved. Furthermore, nearly all of these studies examined the English language curriculum which was abolished gradually in 2006 and a research has not yet been conducted to investigate the implementation of the new English language curriculum implemented at the sixth, seventh and eighth grades of public primary schools in Turkey.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

In this section, design of the study, research questions, participants, research context, data collection methods and instruments, data gathering and analysis procedures, trustworthiness of the research, role of the researcher and limitations of this study are described in detail.

#### **3.1. Design of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to reveal the views of the teachers and students about the implementation of the new 8th grade English language curriculum and the challenges and/or problems faced by the teachers and students in the implementation process. Depending on its purpose, it revealed the perceptions of the 10 English language teachers and 73 8<sup>th</sup> grade students about the implementation of the NEC in public primary schools in the spring term of 2009-2010 academic year. The major data gathering tools were in-depth interviews conducted with the teachers and focus group interviews carried out with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

Since this study intends to uncover the views of the teachers and the students in relation to the implementation process of an innovated curriculum, it can be regarded as an implementation research which describes how the program is being implemented in detail and gives feedback on the ongoing process of the program implementation (Patton, 1987). Qualitative methods are most appropriate for this study as they enable the researcher to study the implementation process in depth and in detail (Patton, 1990).

Qualitative methods have five basic characteristics that differentiate them from the quantitative methods: Unlike to the quantitative methods, qualitative methods focus on the process rather than merely with the outcomes; they use the researcher as the key instrument and the actual setting as the direct data source; they analyze the data inductively; they have descriptive data as they represent the data in

words rather in numbers and they concern how the meaning is constructed and given to the experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In qualitative research data can be gathered through observations, interviews and documents (Merriam, 2009). In this study, data were collected through face to face interviews as it provided direct record of people's experiences, views, feelings and knowledge (Patton, 2002).

### **3.2. Research Questions**

The research questions are designed to reveal the perceptions of the teachers and students about the implementation of the new English language curriculum and the challenges and/or problems faced by them during the implementation process. The research questions are given below:

1. What are the perceptions of the teachers about the implementation of the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum?
2. What are the perceptions of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students about the implementation of the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum?
3. What are the challenges and/or problems concerning the implementation of the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum from the perspectives of the teachers and students?

### **3.3. Participants**

A total of 10 English language teachers from nine different public primary schools in Polatlı and 73 students from two different classes of these teachers participated to this study. The participants of the study were selected using purposeful sampling strategy as it provides "*information-rich*" cases (italics original) to study the topic in depth (Patton, 1990, p. 169). In purposeful sampling, it is essential to determine initially the criteria important for the study to select the participants (Merriam, 2009). Since this study concerns the implementation process of the new English language curriculum in the public schools, the selection criterion for the participants was that of the participants' currently using new 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum in the public primary schools. Therefore, all the participants

were utilizing the NEC when this study was conducted. Besides, maximum variation sampling strategy was applied as much as possible in selecting the participants for the purpose of increasing the range and richness of the data. The teacher participants had maximum variety in terms of age, gender, educational background, years of experience, achievement level of the schools in the Level Determination Exam (SBS) held for 8<sup>th</sup> graders and their positions in the schools. Maximum variety may not be met for the student participants; however, the student participants had variety in terms of gender, school, achievement level in English language course and attitudes towards learning English language. Through this sampling strategy, it was not aimed to generalize the results of the study; rather it was aimed to find the information which revealed the diversity among the participants and the common patterns in this diversity (Patton, 1987).

The characteristics of the teacher participants were given in the Table 3.1.

### **3.4. Research Context**

The population of Polatlı is 92.000 which can be considered as a big town. The economy of the town is mostly based on agriculture. In the inner district of Polatlı, there are 17 primary schools where 36 English language teachers work. In the course of this study, nineteen out of 36 English language teachers were teaching English to the 8th grades in the public primary schools and four out of 19 English language teachers had temporary positions (ücretli) in these schools.

In public primary schools of Turkey, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are subjected to compulsory English language course in four hours a week. The students can also take elective English language course for two hours a week if it is offered by the school authority. English language course is covered by one teacher however; the students can be subjected to different teachers in an academic year due to the teachers being appointed to another school.

Public primary schools in Polatlı show variety in terms of the kind of districts and socio-economic status of the students' parents. Some of the schools are located in the districts where the parents are seasonal laborers coming from the east part of

Table 3.1: The characteristics of the participating teachers

Participants	Age	Gender	Program*	University	Experience**	NEC Experience ***	Position ****	SBS *****
T 01	38	Female	CE	ODTÜ	14	2	P	341.4
T 02	40	Female	ACE	Hacettepe	20	2	P	341.4
T 03	30	Male	ELT	Doğu	3	1	T	262.5
			TIRL	Kazakistan				
T 04	29	Female	ELT	Gazi	7	2	P	272.8
T 05	26	Female	ELT	Anadolu	4	1	C	263.7
T 06	27	Female	ELT	Anadolu	4	2	P	277.9
T 07	31	Female	ELL	Atatürk	7	2	P	278.6
T 08	43	Female	ELT	Uludağ	19	1	P	309.3
T 09	27	Female	ELT	Konya Selçuk	5	2	P	264.3
T 10	25	Female	TIEL	Kırıkkale	2	2	T	312.6

\* CE= Chemical Engineering, ACE=American Culture and Literature, ELT= English Language Teaching,

TIRL=Translation and Interpreting Russian Language, ELL=English Language and Literature, TIEL=Translation and Interpreting English Language

\*\* Teachers' Experience of Teaching English Language in public primary schools.

\*\*\* Teachers' Experience of the New 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Curriculum

\*\*\*\* P=Permenant position (*Kadrolu*), C=Contractual position (*Sözleşmeli*), T=Temporary position (*Ücretli*)

\*\*\*\*\* Achievement of the schools in the Level Determination Exam held for the 8<sup>th</sup> grades in terms of the arithmetic mean of student's points over 500.

Turkey and some of the schools are located in poor districts where the parents have lower income when compared to the others. Unlike to these, there are also some prestigious schools which have students whose parents have high socio-economic level.

### **3.5. Data Collection Methods**

The data for this study were collected through in-depth interviews with ten teachers and focus group interviews with seventy-three students. The data collection methods, instruments and procedures are explained here in detail.

#### **3.5.1. In-depth Interview**

Interview mainly aims to gather a special type of information and it is the most common data gathering technique used in qualitative research in education (Merriam, 2009). It involves various kinds and usages however, the most prevalent interview forms are individual and face-to-face interviews although it can be in the form of group, self-administered questionnaires and mailed or telephone survey (Fontana & Frey, 2003). Interviews enable the researcher to discover what is “in and on someone else’s mind” however; the quality of the information gathered from an interview depends to a great extent on the interviewer (Patton, 1990, p. 278).

In-depth interviews mostly involve face-to-face interaction between the interviewer and the respondent and they intend to gather deeper information such as the respondents’ personal experiences, values, decisions, knowledge or perspectives when compared to the other types of interviews (Johnson, 2002). For this study, in-depth interview was used for the teacher participants, because it enabled the researcher to go beneath the surface, to reach the details and to understand the teachers’ perspectives related to the implementation process (Patton, 1987).

Semi-structured interview schedule was utilized for in-depth interviews as it was convenient to interpret the answers objectively. The interview schedule was developed by the researcher through benefitting from the related literature and researcher’s own teaching experiences as an English language teacher. In the

development process of the interview schedule, four experts in Curriculum and Instruction field at METU and two English language teachers implementing the new English language curriculum were consulted. The interview schedules were revised in the light of the feedback and suggestions received from the experts and English language teachers following its pilot study. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a list of questions or topics to cover, called as interview guide; however, the respondents are given freedom to explore his or her experiences and views in his or her own words and the interviewer has the freedom of asking new questions on the emerging topic (Bryman, 2008).

The semi-structured interview schedule used for this study involved twenty-one structured questions which were also open ended questions and related sub questions or probes and seven demographic questions to identify the characteristics of the interviewees such as age, experience in teaching, the educational background, the year of using the new English language curriculum etc. Open ended questions aimed at uncovering the teachers' views about the implementation of the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum. Following the questions asking for the demographic information, the teachers were asked about how they perceived the curriculum change and the new curriculum as well as how they perceived the guidance and support provided to them. Then, they were asked about how they reflected the innovated curriculum into their classroom practices. Following these questions, the teachers were directed questions exploring their views about the content, objectives of the NEC and the instructional activities and materials suggested in the new English language curriculum and/or practiced by the teachers. Then continued with the questions about how they used portfolio assessment, project and performance tasks, Cooperative working, learner-centeredness and Multiple Intelligences theory, suggested in the new curriculum. Additionally, teachers' views about textbook, teachers' book, curriculum guidebook, Level Determination Exams (SBS) and lack of gradual implementation of the curriculum were also addressed. Finally, the teachers were asked to express the challenges and/or problems that they encountered during the implementation process. They were also encouraged to



express their suggestions and opinions about what was required in terms of the schools, teachers and students for the effective implementation of the new curriculum. The Interview schedule utilized for in-depth interviews is given in Appendix B.

### 3.5.2. Focus Group Interview

Focus group interviews were conducted with seventy-three 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to explore their views in relation to the implementation process. Focus group interviews aim to increase self-disclosure among participants and they function well particularly in determining the perceptions, feelings and opinions of the participants about an issue (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus group interview enables the researcher to learn the range of the views from various perspectives and it is beneficial especially when participants might not give considerable talk about the topic when interviewed individually (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). When used appropriately and carefully, focus group interviews provide rich qualitative evaluation information and it facilitates quality control through the group participants' checking and balancing each other's answers (Patton, 1987).

Semi-structured interview schedule was developed for the focus group interviews by the researcher through following the same procedures of in-depth interview schedule. The schedule was revised depending on the feedback taken from four experts in Curriculum and Instruction field at METU and two English language teachers implementing the new English language curriculum. It was also fine tuned depending on the feedback received from the students in the pilot study. The interview schedule utilized in this study involved fifteen open ended questions to explore students' opinions in relation to the implementation of the new English language curriculum. The questions aimed at revealing the experiences and opinions of the students about the instructional methods and strategies used by the teachers, activities that they carried out in the lesson, content of the new curriculum, attainment of the objectives, measurement and evaluation procedures used by the teachers, portfolio assessment, project and performance tasks and materials used in

the classroom practices. Additionally, their classroom experiences related to cooperative working and learner-centered teaching were also addressed. Besides, the students were encouraged to share their feelings and opinions about problems encountered in the practice of the new curriculum and particularly about Level Determination Exams (SBS) and how SBS affected their learning English, homework and classroom practices. Finally, the students were asked what was required in the classroom practices and how the classroom practices should be for improving their learning. The Interview schedule utilized for focus group interviews is given in Appendix C.

### 3.5.3. Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure started following the necessary permission was obtained from the Ministry of National Education and Research Center for Applied Ethics in Middle East Technical University. Before data collection, the researcher collected information about the number of the English language teachers teaching English to the eight grades in the public schools of Polatlı and their characteristics. Then, the teachers were determined on the basis of maximum variety as well as the voluntary basis. Interview schedule was piloted with two English language teachers using the NEC. Considering the problems emerged in the pilot study and the reflections of the teachers, the questions in the interview schedule were refined. The topics emerged in the pilot study were added to the Interview schedule to make it more comprehensive and the questions were fine tuned to make them more clear and understandable. Then, the researcher took appointments from 10 teachers to conduct the interviews in three weeks time. One of the teachers with whom the study was piloted was also among these participant teachers. In-depth interviews were conducted with the teacher participants in the settings where the interviewees chose and felt most comfortable. One interview was conducted in the researcher's house, three interviews were conducted in the house of the interviewees, four interviews were held in a room of the school and two interviews were conducted in a café. Though conducted in different settings, all the interview settings had common

atmosphere in terms of participants' feeling free to express their opinions as the settings were determined by the interviewees.

At the beginning of each interview, the participants were informed about the value and importance of their contribution to the study and the purpose of the research to make sure the subjects about the confidentiality of their responses. Then, all the interviewees were asked whether they minded the audio recording or not and the participants were assured that the record would not be used for any other purposes except this study. All of the interviews were recorded by using audio recorder and the interviewer took notes for the nonverbal data during the interviews such as the setting of the interview, the reactions of the respondents and any cues to help the interpretation of the interview. The interviewer must be detectives collecting and bringing the pieces of information gathered from conversations, personal stories and experience to have an accurate understanding of the participants' perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

The first talk was built on a common topic or ground shared by the researcher and the participants to break ice and establish a relationship (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Then, the respondents were directed demographic questions and open ended questions which were non-threatening and put the interviewees at ease. The interviewees were encouraged to explore their opinions and experiences through some probes such as "Can you give me an example?", "What do you mean?", "Can you tell me a classroom experience about it?" or "Can you tell me more" to get the details or the examples related to the topic. The interviewer listened to the respondents very carefully and attentively and asked for the clarifications when necessary. The interviews were conducted in a neutral and comfortable environment and no problem aroused during the interviews. It took between sixty and eighty minutes to complete each in-depth interview during where a break was given for refreshment of the interviewees.

For the focus group interviews the researcher cooperated with the participating teachers to choose their students on the basis of variety as much as possible in terms of gender, achievement level in English language course and

attitudes towards learning English. The number of the students participating to one focus group was determined as four to make the group more manageable. The pilot study was conducted with two focus groups of two participating teachers and focus group interview schedule was refined in the light of the feedback gathered from the pilot study. A total of eighteen focus group interviews were carried out with seventy-three students of ten participating teachers. In other words, two focus group interviews were conducted with the students of each participating teacher except two teachers because only one focus group was conducted with the students of two participating teachers.

All the focus group interviews were conducted in a room of the school where the students felt comfortable to express their ideas freely. The researcher made sure that there was nobody else in the room and there was no interruption during the interviews. Similar to the in-depth interview, the interviewees were made sure about the purpose of the research, the importance of their sincerity in reflecting their views and confidentiality of their answers. The necessary permission was taken for using the audio record and all of the focus group interviews were recorded.

The researcher started the focus group interview with chat like talking with the group participants to build a rapport and relationship such as “How are the lessons like?”, “How do you feel yourself in the lessons” etc. Following them, the researcher encouraged the students to articulate their experiences and opinions about program implementation through open ended questions but at the same time the researcher guided the discussion as a moderator to keep the talk on the topic through some probes. Each focus group interview took thirty or forty minutes.

Following the interviews, the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. The researcher typed the interviews herself to make it accurate and to avoid bias related to different typists. Then, the transcriptions were reviewed by the researcher carefully to check whether there is a missing part or vagueness in the conversations. Detecting incomplete answers, vagueness in meaning or unanswered questions, the researcher went back to the setting and carried out shorter interviews with the participants to make the data complete. The researcher re-conducted one of

the face-to-face interviews totally in another setting to have a better quality in conversation as well as telephoning some of the teacher interviewees to clarify the uncertainties or ambiguities in their answers. The process of reviewing the data and going back to the participants continued until the completeness and the quality of the data was ensured. Including this process, all the data were gathered completely in six weeks.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis involves three sub-processes: Data reduction where the data are summarized through codes, themes and categories, data display, where the data are shown in visual forms, and conclusion drawing and verification, where the data are interpreted and the meaning of the data is inferred (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The transcriptions of ten in-depth interviews and eighteen focus group interviews comprised the data source of this study. Thus, the accumulated raw data involved ten hours of individual interview and nine hours of focus group interview. The researcher analyzed 150 pages data transcription in three weeks time. The data were analyzed through using Nvivo 8 software, a qualitative data analysis program. Nvivo 8 program enabled the researcher to analyze each interview separately and to reveal the connections among the interviews by maintaining the identity of the interviews during the analysis. In other words, the program made it clear from which interview the quotations of the codes were cited. Therefore, the data gathered from student groups were coded in relation to their teachers who were also the participants of this study.

The data were analyzed through content analysis which required finding the coherent and significant themes and patterns in the data (Patton, 1987). Although the structured questions initially guided the analysis, both deductive and inductive coding was used in determining the categories. As determining a list of coding categories following the data collection is an important level of data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), the researcher prepared descriptive codes depending on

the interview questions asked to the interviewees. Besides, recurring statements and issues in the answers of the interviewees were identified and they were brought together by using the aforementioned software which also indicated the frequency of the statements and the participants who were the owners of these statements. The most recurring issues were concluded as the codes for data analysis. This process was performed for both in-depth interviews and focus group interviews separately. Some of the transcriptions were also coded by a different analyst who had master's degree in Mathematics Education and the codes of each analyst were compared to find the differences or similarities among the interpretations. Then, the reasons underlying the different codings were discussed to attain a common coding by two analysts. Determining the codes, the researcher looked for the similar codes in the answers or reflections of one interviewee. Then, the researcher took pain in finding the similar or different codes -if any- in all of the interviews. After the codes were finalized, all the codes were checked once more to ensure the consistency of the coding and to avoid the repetitiveness.

Following the coding of the data, themes were identified where the similar codes were accumulated. Some of the themes for the in depth interviews were identified as the perceptions of the curriculum change, views about the guidance for the NEC, views about teaching and learning situations practices in the class and/or suggested in the NEC, views about assessment procedures including projects and performance tasks, portfolio evaluation, self evaluation or peer evaluation considered as innovative in the NEC, views about the content of the curriculum, such as its order, level, appropriateness, views about the objectives of the curriculum in terms of their attainment, teachers' challenges and difficulties in implementing the NEC and perceived requirements in terms of teachers, students and schools, and final theme was teachers' suggestions for the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum.

### 3.7. Trustworthiness of the Research

The practical standards that help researchers in judging the quality of the conclusions from the findings of the research can be referred as the quality of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The terms reliability and validity are essential criteria for quality in quantitative paradigms; however, in qualitative paradigms the terms credibility, consistency/dependability, neutrality/conformability and applicability/transferability lead for the important criteria in determining its quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 601). While validity is related to the correctness and appropriateness of the results of the study, reliability concerns consistency of the results in a different time, location and situation (Fraenkel & Wallan, 2005). However, qualitative studies do not necessarily yield the same results when the study is replicated and they cannot attain an objective “truth” or “reality” (emphasis original), rather, in qualitative studies it is expected and given importance that the results are consistent with the collected data (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative studies ensure the credibility/internal validity, consistency and transferability of the results through applying various strategies (Merriam, 2009).

Triangulation which essentially stands for utilizing “two or three measurement points to enable the convergence on a site” is one of the strategies applied for ensuring the quality of the study (Merriam, 2009, p. 215). Denzin (1978) identifies four main kinds of triangulation: *triangulation of methods*, (italics original) checking the consistency of the results attained by different methods; *triangulation of sources* checking the consistency of the different data sources within the same method; *analyst triangulation*, (italics original) involving different analysts and *theory/perspective triangulation*, (italics original) using multiple theories or perspectives (Patton, 1990, p. 464).

This study used triangulation of data sources to ensure the credibility, consistency and dependability or reliability; that is the data were cross checked in terms of consistency of information gathered from different people who have different points of view as student views and teacher views. To make it more clear, the answers of the teacher were checked with the answers of her or his students on

the same issue to reveal the discrepancies. Denzin (1970) argued that “by combining multiple observers, theories, methods and data sources” it is intended to “overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single methods, single-observer, and single-theory studies (cited in Patton, 1990, p. 464).

Another prevalent way of increasing credibility is the use of “member checking” which is also known as *respondent validation* (italics original) (Merriam, 2009, p. 217). For ensuring the respondent validation, the researcher went back to the setting and asked some of the respondents to check the researcher’s interpretation or coding of their responses in terms of matching with the reality or reflecting their perspectives. Third strategy applied by the researcher to ensure credibility is *adequate engagement in data collection*, (italics original) which required allotting enough time for each interview as well as seeking alternative or opposite explanations in the data during the analysis (Merriam, 2009, p. 219). The fourth strategy used for credibility and consistency was that of asking a colleague to review the findings and reflect on the plausibility of the results by comparing them with some of the raw data which is called as “external audit” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005, p. 463). Besides, use of maximum variation sampling facilitated the transferability as “it allows for the possibility of a greater range of application by readers or consumers of the research” (Merriam, 2009, p. 227). Furthermore, speaking common vocabulary with the respondents increased its validity and recording the questions as well as the answers prevented distortions or selective forgetting (Fraenkel & Wallan, 2005). Finally, the interviewees were asked the same questions with the same wording and order to make the data comparable which also enhanced reliability.

In qualitative studies *the researcher is the instrument* (italics original) thus the validity and reliability mostly depends on the skill, competence and effort of the researcher (Patton, 1990 p. 14). Therefore, the researcher’s role in the quality of the data can be described here. The researcher conducted interviews with the participants and provided very comfortable setting to all the interviewees where they expressed their opinions freely. As the researcher worked as an English language teacher in a primary school in the same city with the participant teachers, she had many common



grounds with the interviewees and she made friendship with most of them before conducting the interviews. This situation might have affected participants' responses in both positive and negative way. While some of the participants might have answered the questions with sincerely, some of them might have hidden his or her real thoughts or answers so as not to reveal his or her possible lack of knowledge about the curriculum innovation or possible inadequacy in effective implementation of it. However, in order to reduce any possible researcher impact, the researcher provided many sub-questions or probes. For example, when the researcher asked whether the teachers used learner-centered approach in their teaching, she also posed sub-questions revealing the practice of learner-centeredness in the class. The sub-questions enabled the researcher to capture the participants' possible difficulties and teachers' efficiency in implementing the new English language curriculum.

During the interviews, when the questions were not clear for the participants, the researcher tried to express these questions clearly through probes. Most of the time, the researcher shortly summarized participants' responses before asking the next question and asked approval from the participants. Furthermore, when the participants' responses were ambiguous or when the researcher felt that the interviewees misperceived the questions, the researcher redirected the question in different wording until the researcher thought that the participants' responses addressed the interview questions. After all the data were gathered, the researcher checked the data and turned to participants when there were incomplete or ambiguous responses and the researcher completed them by carrying out telephone or face-to-face interviews.

### **3.8. Role of the Researcher**

Considering that the researcher took part in each and every stage of this study such as developing the data collection instruments, conducting the interviews, analyzing and interpreting the collected data, it would be meaningful to present some information about the researcher. The researcher has been teaching English in a public primary school in Polatlı where the data was collected. As the researcher has

been using the new English language curriculum since 2008, she has experienced some challenges and problems related to the implementation of the NEC. Therefore, the researcher had common grounds and similar experiences with the teacher participants of this study which enabled her to approach to the issues of this study from a teacher's perspective as well as from that of a researcher.

### **3.9. Limitations of the Study**

The participants of this study were limited to ten English language teachers and seventy-three 8th graders who lived in Polatlı. The external validity of the study was very small, because the limited number of participants did not allow for the generalization of the findings to a larger group of teachers and students. Another limitation resulted from the voluntary nature of the study as the study was limited to the teachers and students who wanted to participate to this study.

The third limitation was that the data for this study were collected only through interviews. As the interview data were not supported with the observation, the findings of the study were limited to the views or responses of the students and teachers; that is, whether teachers and students were honest or sincere about their answers could never be proved.

Lastly, as this study concerned the implementation process of new English language curriculum, the effectiveness of the program and the program outcomes were not examined in this study. Therefore, the study was limited to only the implementation part of the new English language curriculum.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

This chapter presents the results of the study, the purpose of which is to reveal teachers' and students' views about the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language teaching curriculum and challenges and/or problems faced by students and teachers during the implementation process. Teachers' and students' views about the new 8th grade English language curriculum (NEC) were analyzed under eight major categories. These categories were (i) teachers' and students' views about the curriculum change and its classroom practices, (ii) teachers' and students' views about teaching and learning situations in the NEC, (iii) teachers' and students' views about the instructional objectives, (iv) teachers' and students' views about the content of the NEC, (v) teachers' and students' views about the materials, (vi) teachers' and students' views about the assessment procedures (vii) teachers' and students' challenges faced in the implementation process of the NEC and (viii) teachers' and students' suggestions for the effective implementation of the NEC.

In the first category, teachers' views were classified in terms of teachers' perception of the curriculum change, views about the NEC and implementation approach used for the implementation of the NEC while the students' views were classified in terms of their views about learning English language and classroom practices. In the second category, teachers' and students' views about teaching and learning in the NEC were classified as views about instructional approaches suggested by the NEC, views about the methods and techniques, views about instructional activities and views about the classroom climate. In the third category, students' and teachers' views about the objectives of the NEC were described in terms of their views about difficulty and the attainment of the objectives related to the primary language skills, reading, listening, speaking and writing and the reasons behind the failure in the achievement of the objectives. In the fourth category, teachers' and students' views about the content were given in relation to the

vocabulary, grammar subjects and themes of the NEC. In the fifth category, teachers' and students' views about the textbook and the supporting materials were given. In the sixth category, students' and teachers' views about the assessment procedure were analyzed under the themes of peer evaluation, self evaluation, performance, and project assessment and portfolio assessment techniques. In the seventh category, problems or challenges faced by the teachers and students were classified as Level Determination Exam (SBS), lack of gradual implementation of the NEC and lack of guidance for the implementation of the NEC. Finally, in the eighth category teachers' and students' suggestions for the effective implementation of the NEC were presented.

#### 4.1 Organization of the Results

This chapter presents the findings of this study by using the teachers' and students' paraphrased statements or direct quotes. During the translation of transcripts from Turkish to English, some additional phrases were added to increase readability. This was performed because of loss of meaning while translating the excerpts from Turkish to English. Table 4.1 shows the examples of additions to participants' quotes and their usage.

Table 4.1: Examples of Specific Additions to Participants' Quotes

Addition	Usage
<i>We did not receive [the guide book]</i>	Completing the meaning of the quote
<i>[...]</i>	Claims between two statements which are not included in the quote

In reporting the results if the participants' responses were similar or close, their views were reported together. If there were differences between their views, they were given separately with code of the teachers. While describing the participants certain abbreviations were used: The teacher participants were labeled as "T" with numbers- for example "T01" and the student participants were labeled as "TG" referring to the student group of the particular teachers to clarify the possible

similarities or differences between the views of the teachers and their students- for example “T1G1” represents the first student group of the first teacher.

## **4.2 Views about the Curriculum Change and Its Classroom Practice**

This part of the chapter presents teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum change, teachers’ views about the NEC and their views about the implementation approach used for the NEC. Following teachers’ views, students’ attitudes towards English language and their views about the classroom practices of the NEC are presented.

### **4.2.1 Teachers’ Perceptions of the Curriculum Change**

Due to the fact that two out of 10 teachers did not use the previous 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum, this study revealed the change perceptions of the eight English language teachers. Six out of 8 teachers (T01, T02, T05, T07, T08, T09) stated that the new curriculum changed its focus from teaching grammar structures to integrating four language skills, reading, listening, speaking and writing. Two out of 8 teachers (T06, T04) stated that NEC focused on improving vocabulary knowledge of the students. A teacher stated (T06) “we convey too much vocabulary knowledge while implementing the NEC.” On the other hand, two teachers (T01, T04) considered the curriculum change in terms of the content offered in the textbook since they answered this question by stating that the textbook involved more up-to-date reading passages when compared to the previous one. To exemplify these views a teacher (T01) stated that “before using this textbook, we used to implement a program which was grammar focused, [the content] was not related to the daily life. This textbook is speaking oriented [...]”

Another teacher (T08) stated:

There is a change in the target grammar structures. In former [implementation] we used to give more space to [teaching] grammar. The NEC does not allow this because [the content of] the textbook is overloaded. In some places [of the book] it is written not to emphasize the grammar. When compared to the previous program, [new

curriculum] is more largely about speaking and writing rather than grammar.

On the other hand, four teachers (T01, T05, T06, T08) stated that NEC required active involvement of the students into the learning activities while two out of 8 teachers (T05, T08) mentioned about the changing roles of teachers and students in the NEC. Three out of 8 teachers (T01, T05, T09) stated that new curriculum was learner-centered unlike to the former. To exemplify these views, the teachers stated:

I always want to involve the students into the activities because this program is not the one that we can lecture alone on the board. It is all student-centered. It is a program where we are to give the students more opportunities and more time to speak. (T01)

[Previous curriculum] was much more different [than NEC]. [In new curriculum] students' making role play is stressed. It has a lot of activities. There is a task at the end of each unit. The students are very active. In previous [implementation] the teachers had the role of presenter now the teachers have the role of guide [...] (T05).

Two out of 8 teachers perceived the curriculum change in terms of alternative assessment techniques and process evaluation. To exemplify this view one of the teachers (T09) stated "[...] in previous [curriculum] there used to be yearly tasks, now there are performance and project tasks." On the other hand, one teacher (T08) perceived the curriculum change in terms of theoretical bases of the NEC and instructional method as she stated "in the new curriculum, it is tried to apply the Multiple Intelligences (MI), but it is open to question how much it attains its aim [...] we use question and answer sessions in two ways [from teacher to student and from student to teacher] it is like Communicative Approach."

In brief, it was revealed that most of the teachers who implemented the previous 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum perceived the change in the curriculum as its focusing on primary language skills, speaking, reading, writing and listening and as its ignoring teaching grammar. A few teachers also perceived the change as the NEC's focusing on teaching vocabulary. The teachers also perceived the curriculum change as the active involvement of the students, changing roles of the teachers from presenter of the knowledge to the guide of learning and the

curriculum's becoming learner-centered. Besides, a few teachers perceived the curriculum change in terms of the alternative assessment techniques, MI theory, instructional method and textbook' involving more up-to-date reading passages which were related to daily life.

#### 4.2.2 Teachers' Views about the New English Language Curriculum

When the teachers were asked what they thought about the NEC, nine out of 10 teachers expressed positive views about the NEC. The positive views expressed by the teachers can be listed as the NEC's appealing to four (primary) language skills (T01, T02, T05, T07, T08, T09), encouraging active involvement of the students into the learning activities (T01, T05, T06, T08), teachers' having the role of guide rather than knowledge presenter (T05, T08), being learner-centered (T01, T05, T09), focusing on speaking (T01, T02, T09), encouraging research (T05, T09), and reasoning (T09), having coherency with the content of the English curricula of the lower grades (03), applying Multiple Intelligences (T08), the textbook's having up-to-date topics and reading passages (T04) and the textbook's being more enjoyable and involving less grammar structures (T07).

However some of the teachers also expressed negative views about the textbooks, content and implementation of the NEC. The most frequently expressed negative view was about the content of the textbook as six out of 10 teachers (T02, T03, T04, T06, T09, T10) stated that the vocabulary and themes offered in the textbook were above the level of the students and they were not appealing to the interests of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders. To express this lacking a teacher (T02) stated:

[...] The students' interests, ages, social situations and [background] knowledge were absolutely not taken into the consideration. [...] the vocabulary is so difficult that it overloads the kids. The kids do not understand the paragraphs [in the book] and [they] become bored when it does not appeal to their interests. [...] some themes are above their level. They do not even know the Turkish of those themes [...].

Two out of 10 teachers (T06, T10) expressed that the content of the NEC was overloaded while two out of 10 teachers (T03, T07) stated that the content of the new curriculum was not coherent with SBS as the NEC did not have grammar focus. To

express this perceived contradiction, one of the teachers (T07) stated “grammar is ignored [in the NEC] however our [examination] system is not very appropriate for this.” Furthermore, two teachers (T01, T09) reflected that the program did not achieve its aims due to the implementation problems.

Four out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T06, T08) expressed that the NEC required more responsibilities from the teachers which led to increase in their workload. The following excerpt exemplified this view:

It is required for the teachers to be prepared for each lesson so as to implement the NEC effectively. In the previous curriculum, it was also required to do preparation however, there were not various activities. The previous curriculum did not use to require much work from the teachers (T01).

In brief, it was seen while most of the teachers were content with the NEC; they had negative views about the content of the NEC which was offered in the textbook and the implementation of the NEC. The most frequently stated negative views were about the content’s being above the level of the students and leading to increase in workload of the teachers and the contents’ being overloaded and irrelevant to the interests of the students and to SBS. The most frequently stated positive view was about the NEC’s integrating four (primary) language skills, reading, listening, speaking and writing and the learner-centered characteristics of the NEC.

#### 4.2.3 Teachers’ Views about Implementation Approach

When the teachers were asked how they implemented the NEC whether through adapting the NEC in the classroom instruction or being faithful to the suggested use of the NEC, the majority of the teachers (9 out of 10) expressed that they adapted the curriculum in their classroom instruction because of its being above the level of the students. Three out of these teachers also mentioned time constraint as the reason for adapting the curriculum within the class. One out of 10 teachers stated that she adapted the content due to its being inappropriate in terms of the local culture of the students. One of the teachers (T10) stated that “I adapt [new



curriculum content] depending on the situation of the class. For example the theme of *party* is not appropriate for our culture. I leave out that part. I compensate for it by reaching that objective in another way.”

Half of the teachers (T02, T04, T07, T08, T09) stated that they left out speaking and writing activities in their classroom practices due to the time constraints and the insufficient level of the students. The following quotations illustrated this view:

I replace some of the activities with the others. I provided them with the easier ones. Sometimes we follow the book, sometimes we do extra activities and sometimes if we do not have enough time, we miss out the speaking and writing activities in the book because having 16 units is too much (T08).

I cannot implement [NEC] without adapting. At the beginning of the year, I tried to follow the textbook strictly so that the students became familiar with the textbook. [I implemented] listening activities, writing activities and then when the subjects became more difficult and when I covered all of [the content] in detail I could not keep [the curriculum] pace and I could not finish one unit in two weeks. After 4-5 units, when the students got used to the textbook, I carried out reading activity in one unit and speaking activity in the other unit if I like them [...] (T02).

Half of the teachers (T01, T04, T07, T08, T09) expressed that they simplified the content, activities and objectives of the curriculum. To express the need for adaptation a teacher (T09) stated:

The biggest deficiency is that I cannot conduct speaking activities. I direct the students to write before speaking because they cannot speak immediately [...]. All the students cannot do performance works. It is necessary for me to adapt it, we try to make them as simple as possible but it is above their level in terms of vocabulary and reading passages. No matter how much we simplify them, the students are discouraged and have prejudices.

Three out of 10 teachers (T04, T07, T08) reflected that although they stood for following the curriculum as it was suggested, they needed to adapt the curriculum. A teacher (T04) explained the reasons for this view:

In our previous practices, we used to adapt [NEC] however now since there is Level Determination Exams our priority is to follow the textbook [NEC] strictly so as not to miss any word. If we leave out a

word, we do not feel comfortable. I implement [the new curriculum] in terms of grammar and vocabulary but I implement extra things in the form of worksheet. However, if there is unnecessary things which are included neither in SBS nor in my exams I skip it.[....] There are things [in the textbook] which will contribute nothing to the students. I leave them out. There is usually writing, I leave it out [...] When I first saw the book, I thought that this book was difficult for the 8th grade students. But when we started to cover the units, I simplified the things that they had difficulty [...].

Two out of 10 teachers (T05, T06) stated that owing to the students' lacking the necessary prior knowledge, they were required to teach them prerequisite knowledge about the topics before implementing the new English language curriculum. To exemplify this view a teacher (T06) stated:

From time to time, I adapt [the NEC] rather than implementing the program as it is given I teach the information that the students do not know or which were required to be covered in the previous grades. Sometimes, they might have that information and we may leave it out.

To sum up, it was found out that the teachers adapted the content of the NEC in their classroom instruction. The comments of the teachers indicated that they adapted some of the activities and content offered in the textbook because of insufficient time and students' lacking necessary language background. Though they had common views for the reasons of adapting the curriculum, their views diversified in terms of the way they adapted the curriculum. While half of them simplified the content and activities, more than half of the teachers also preferred leaving out some of the activities that they regarded as unnecessary. Some of the teachers adapted the curriculum by providing prerequisite information about the curriculum subjects to the students.

#### 4.2.4. Students' Attitudes towards Learning English and Classroom Practices

When the students were asked why learning English was important for them, twenty-three out of 73 students claimed that learning English was important for having better job opportunities in the future. Twenty out of 73 students stated that learning English was important for communication because it was an international

language. Eight out of 73 students stated that they valued English because it was a part of SBS. Six out of 73 students regarded English as unnecessary to learn because they thought that it was useless in Turkey. One of the students (T2G1) stated that “it is meaningless to learn English in Turkey, because I do not think that we can use it, how can it be useful for us.”

When the students were asked about the classroom practices, thirty-six out of 73 students stated that English lessons or the activities conducted in English lessons were boring and not enjoyable. One of the students (T8G2) stated that “when we understand the subjects, [the lesson] is good but it is boring particularly in the subjects that we do not understand.”

Another group of students (T2G2) stated:

Learning through games would be more enjoyable therefore learning only through rules [grammar structures] is boring. It is boring to learn both in “*dershane*” and in the school through grammar rules [structures]. It would be better to encourage [our learning] through games.

Nineteen out of 36 students also stated that the activities in English lessons were difficult to carry out. To exemplify this view one of the students (T1G2) stated “even the most hardworking [students of the class] usually cannot do [the activities].”

The reasons for the students’ having negative attitudes towards the English lessons were stated by the students as teacher’s inefficiency and teaching style, kind of activities conducted in the lesson, insufficient time allocated for learning English in the school and lack of necessary practice due to the time constraint, unfamiliarity with English language, subjects’ not appealing to their interests and classroom management problems occurred during the lesson.

To exemplify the reason for having negative attitudes towards the activities, one of the students (T2G2) stated that “the [teaching] style of the teacher is a little different. She tells us to learn grammar but we confuse speaking.”

Another student (T2G1) expressed the lack of enjoyable activities: “We do not do any activity [where the students are active]; it is required to conduct the lesson

quickly. We write the subject on our notebooks, we do the activities of the book. There is no time for an enjoyable activity.”

To express the need for learning English in the lower grades some of the students (T1G2) stated:

We have been learning English since 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Our incompetence in [English] does not depend on the students; it depends on the education system. The private schools offer English from the 1st grade, we start learning English from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

On the other hand, thirty-seven out of 73 students had positive views about English lessons. They stated that English lessons were enjoyable and easy to understand. Some of these students (4 out of 37) also expressed that their enjoying the lesson was dependent on the subjects, their understanding the lesson and carrying out the activities successfully. One of the students (T5G1) stated “English lessons are enjoyable most of the time. Sometimes there are questions that we can answer, they are enjoyable but we are bored when we cannot do [the activities].” Another student (T6G1) stated that “I like it very much. I enjoy while studying English. Our teachers help us very much. Our most successful lesson is English.”

It was seen that most of the students (57 out of 73) had positive attitudes for learning English as they gave importance to learning English for having more job opportunities, having better score in SBS and for international communication. Although having positive attitudes towards English language learning, only half of the students (37 out of 73) had positive attitudes towards the classroom practices. On the other hand, half of the students had negative attitudes towards the English lessons. The most frequently stated negative views were the students’ regarding the English lessons as boring or not enjoyable and considering the activities as difficult. The other negative views were related to the teacher, instructional activities, insufficient time, subjects, and students’ feelings of being unfamiliar with the English language.

### **4.3. Views about Teaching and Learning Activities**

In this part, students' and teachers' views about the instructional approaches, methods, strategies and activities used in the class and/or suggested in the new curriculum and views about the classroom climate are presented.

#### **4.3.1 Teachers' and Students' Views about Instructional Approaches**

In this part teachers' and students' views about Multiple Intelligences theory, Learner-centered teaching and Cooperative Language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) which are suggested in the NEC are described in detail.

#### *Multiple Intelligences Theory*

When the teachers were asked how their classroom practices appealed to different learning styles and different intelligence types, all of the teachers shared the view that the instructional approaches applied in their lessons did not appeal to different types of intelligence. One of the teachers (T06) stated:

We do not do activities in accordance with [MI]. We use projection and posters, and we have the listening part. But it is not particularly to appeal to different intelligence types. I use them because it is required to use them as a material in the activity. We don't have any [visual] posters for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. We have posters in order to give the grammar rules but they are not visual. We project not the pictures but the information, examples and sentences on the board.

Although they had common views about not considering the multiple intelligences while designing or conducting their activities, they asserted different reasons for not reflecting MI theory into their teaching acts. Three out of 10 teachers (T02, T04, T10) contended that it was impossible to conduct the lessons considering different intelligences: To illustrate this view, one of the teachers (T02) stated:

When I first heard about it, I thought it was useless. How could it be possible to do it when there are different intelligence types [in the class]? It is something imaginary. I was shocked [when I heard about it] [...] It might be [possible] but it is impossible to appeal all [of the intelligences] in each subject. If it is possible, [curriculum specialists] should show it because I do not know [how to apply multiple intelligence theory in the class].

Four out of 10 teachers (T04, T05, T08, and T09) claimed that they did not put multiple intelligence theory into practice because the curriculum was not designed accordingly. To express this view one of the teachers (T04) stated:

It is not possible to apply MI theory in my classroom; there are eight types of intelligences but how many of them could be addressed, maybe three of them, not all of them. For example, how can I involve rhythmic intelligence [into my lesson plan]? I cannot sing songs everyday because it is not involved in my plan or besides teaching songs, I cannot let them listen to music; it is not [involved] in the curriculum. So, what will the students having rhythmic intelligence do?"

Two out of 10 teachers (T03, T07) stated that they could not implement MI theory because of lack of necessary sources. To express this reason, one of the teachers (T07) stated:

During the activities, the students can perceive something but in terms of learning the essence of the topic, there is nothing the students can do. Or it is not provided to us. Why cannot we be student-centered in our classes? I wish we had a video book where the students could watch what is covered in the textbook. I had many students who want to do listening activities. I wish we could appeal to more students as visually and musically. Then the students having visual intelligence can learn something what s/he saw and share it with me [...].

On the other hand, it was revealed that one of teachers made use of different materials and communicative activities which could appeal to visual or rhythmic intelligence types. To exemplify this view he stated (T03) "we have visual activities like watching cartoons. There is both music and listening in the CDs we selected. [The students] play guessing game in the class."

On the other hand, thirty-seven out of 73 students claimed that they did not carry out activities which were appealing to different intelligences such as visual or musical intelligence in English lessons and nine out of 73 students stated that they rarely had musical or visual activities. To express this situation one of the students (T10G1) stated that "the activities that we like are not involved [in the lessons]. There isn't any activity with music or pictures." Another student (T1G2) stated that "[musical or visual activities] are not conducted enough. Once, we listened to a

foreign song at the very beginning of the year. It was very nice. We did only this and then no more.”

To summarize, both teacher and student participants expressed that the instructional activities were not designed and/or conducted by considering the different intelligence types. All of the teachers agreed in that they did not appeal to different intelligence types in their lessons, they had different reasons though. The most frequently stated reasons by the teachers for not using MI theory in their lessons were design of the curriculum, lack of knowledge about implementation of MI or considering it as impossible to apply, lack of necessary sources and materials in an ascending order of frequency. Despite their negative opinions about the implementation of MI theory in the class, it is revealed that one of the teachers appealed to different intelligences through using different materials and activities in the class. On the other hand, half of the students stated that the lessons did not appeal to different intelligence types, while a few of them expressed that the lessons rarely involved musical or visual activities.

### *Learner-centered Teaching*

When the teachers were asked about how they perceived learner-centeredness, eight out of 10 teachers (T02, T03, T04, T05, T06, T07, T08, T09) expressed that they perceived learner-centeredness as the students’ having more active role and more responsibility. The following excerpts illustrated the perceptions of the teachers:

When learner-centeredness is asked, [it comes to my mind that] the subjects is covered by the students through some activities under the guidance of the teacher in a classroom. The student will learn the subject, answer the questions and ask for help if necessary. S/he will find his/her way through the feedback that the teacher will give (T07).

I know learner-centeredness. The teacher is a little more passive. The kid [student] knows what he/she has to do about the subjects, he/she also takes much more responsibility in class; that is he/she shares the subjects [among his/her peers] and for this he/she needs to do some preparation (T04).

It is required to involve the students' talking more. The teacher is to keep himself/herself in the background. The students can learn through games, speaking, asking and answering. The teacher utters the sentence and the students find the rules. Learner-centeredness means that the students are at the foreground while the teacher remains in the background (T02).

Half of the teachers (T02, T04, T05 T06, T08) also defined learner-centeredness in terms of the method used in the class. They expressed that in learner-centered instruction the students are expected to discover the subject or the grammar structures by themselves. To illustrate this view one of the teachers (T08) stated "[Learner-centeredness] is that the rules are revealed by the students rather than given by the teacher. [This is carried out] through question and answer, through visuals if there is any in the book"

Four out of 10 teachers (T05, T06, T07, T09) reflected that they perceived it as teacher's having the role of "guide" who directs the students in the background: One of the teachers (T05) stated "learner-centeredness means that the students are at the center and I remain in the background and act only as a guide." Another teacher (T06) stated:

The students are at the center. Teachers carry out only a little guidance [to the students] as having the role of guide. The students will ask the questions and find the subject by themselves. During the dialogue activities, even if I realize their mistakes, I remain in the background so that they could find [their mistakes] by themselves and I do not intervene them. I wait for their doing [the correction] directly.

Two out of 10 teachers (T01, T10) perceived learner-centeredness as adapting the lesson by considering the levels of the student and enabling students' participation. One of the teachers (T10) stated:

[Learner-centeredness] means looking from their perspectives. [It means] guiding the lesson through adapting it to the level of the students. [For example], I try to involve the students who do not want to participate [to the lesson]. I try to direct them.

Although the teachers had different perceptions of learner-centered teaching, they shared negative opinions about the implementation of learner-centeredness in



the classroom. When the teachers were asked how they applied learner-centered teaching in their classroom practices, eight out of 10 teachers stated that they could not implement learner-centeredness in their classes.

As for the reasons for not implementing learner-centeredness, three out of 8 teachers (T01, T02 and T06) expressed that they could not carry out learner-centered teaching because of lack of necessary time. Mentioning also about the class size, one of the teachers (T01) stated:

Due to the lack of time, we cannot reach a lot of students. We do not have enough time for all of the students' participating to the lesson. We cannot let all of the students read the material [loudly]. We can just let 7-8 students read (loudly), we do not know what 40 students are doing. [...] The unsuccessful students do not participate to the lesson, all the time the successful students [participate to the lesson]. If there were two hours of English everyday, rather than four hours a week, we could be more learner-centered. We cannot be learner-centered with 6-7 successful students in a class.

Regarding the learner-centered activities as time consuming, one of the teachers (T06) stated:

In the activities that the students carry out in peers, I remain in the background and I do not interrupt. Even if I realize their mistakes, I wait for them to find out their mistakes. We wait for their direct doing like this way. Some of the activities were appropriate for this. However, considering that it would consume time, I tell about the subject on my own. I ask them to find out the rules but eventually I lecture on [the subject].

Three out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, and T08) expressed that the overcrowded classes were handicaps for their conducting learner-centered activities. One of the teachers (T08) stated that "we had obstacles in student-centered teaching due to overcrowded classes. I do something and they [the students] do another thing. It is one [teacher] against forty-four [students]." Another teacher (T02) stated:

To say it openly, as it happened in previous (curriculum), the size of the classes and the time is the biggest problem. I cannot conduct enjoyable lesson because of these constraints. I wanted to implement a game that I learned in a seminar but a game cannot be played with 30 students.

Two out of 8 teachers (T05, T08) reflected that it was difficult to have learner-centered teaching because the students were not familiar with such an approach in previous grades. One teacher (T08) stated “the teacher always has to be more active. The reason is that the students have not been educated with this system from the beginning.” Another teacher (T05) stated:

I am active in %70 of a lesson hour and the students are active in the %30 of the lesson hour. It is due to the fact that the students have not encountered [learner-centered teaching] before. Since they were used to have the role of listener or writer [receiver] on their desks in the class, they couldn't comprehend learner-centeredness. I do not think that this is because of the teachers [...].

The other reasons stated by the teachers were the students' level and lack of interest towards English (T10) and lack of necessary materials (T07). To explain this view, one of the teachers (T10) stated:

[...] If the students are interested in the lesson, activities are carried out very fruitful. However, as most of the students are not interested in the lesson, we cannot do learner-centered activities. [...] I want all the students to do something [actively]. But the levels of the students are not appropriate for this. This means that there are some [knowledge] deficiencies in previous grades. I have to review [the previous subjects] and it consumes time.

Two out of 10 teachers (T02, T04) reflected that if the subject was difficult or if the students were not familiar with the subject before, they preferred teacher-centered teaching where the teachers had active roles as the presenter of the lesson. A teacher (T04) stated:

We are carrying out teacher-centered instruction at the moment. This is a reality. Because we have to teach most of the subject through Turkish and because it is the first time that the students hear about [the target subject], it has to be teacher-centered. When the students are familiar with the subject before, they start the lesson [by saying] “it means this....” Then [the lesson] could be learner-centered.

Two out of 10 teachers (T03, T09) expressed that despite having difficulties in implementing the learner-centered teaching in their classes, they could reflect this approach into their teaching. One of teachers (T09) illustrated this view:

It cannot be said that I give the entire load to the students. I do my best for being student-centered, for the students' finding out or being active in the %70 of the lesson time, however, this system gives more workload to the students in a way. Except the grammar teaching sessions, I think that the students are more active [than the teacher] in writing and speaking activities on condition that first I provided them with a sample. But this is not valid in grammar teaching. In grammar session, the teacher is more active.

On the other hand, when the students were asked about the roles of teacher and students in the classroom practices, most of the students (51 out 73) reflected that the teacher had more active role during the lesson. One of the students (T2G1) exemplified this view by comparing the teacher with an object. "The teacher is the source of knowledge and we are the cups filled by the teachers. Teacher is the jug that is continuously filling us and transmitting knowledge to us but his/her knowledge does not diminish."

Another student (T5G2) stated:

The teacher is active most of the time in the lesson but when the bell rings [for break] we are active.[...]The teacher does not give us opportunity to use the dictionary. We bring it everyday without using it, it becomes a burden for us. [...] The teacher brings [test book] and writes [the exercises] on the board. She asks one of us and while we are taking notes, she gives the answer. She does not consider us.

When these students were asked about supposing a figurative role to their teachers considering his/her role in the lessons, the mostly stated roles were the main character of a movie or a theatre show, interpreter, lecturer, president and the master. They also claimed that the students' roles would be co-actor, figurants, apprentice, assistant and listener. One of the students (T4G1) stated "teacher is more active because she is managing [us] like a moderator. We are listeners and the teacher is the lecturer."

Another student (T7G1) stated that "the teacher has the main role because it is always the teacher who lectures in the lesson. She would be lawyer in terms of decision making [in the class]. She would also be an interpreter because she translates the most."

Eleven out of 73 students stated that they considered themselves more active than their teachers in the class. When the students were asked how they perceived being active, they reflected that they were active when translating the sentences, doing the exercises, finding the unknown vocabulary, doing question and answer drills on the board. One of the students (T6G1) stated “we are more active. There are unknown words and we go to the board to write its meaning. [Finding the meaning of] the unknown vocabulary is homework. [...] If I can translate a word or a text, I feel myself active. We do the most of the translations.”

Eleven out of 73 students claimed that both the students and the teachers were active during the lesson. Considering the teachers and students’ talking time, one of the students (T4G1) stated:

Both the teacher and the students are [active]. The teacher is active because she lectures [...] She talks more than us but when the questions are asked, we take turns to answer. We take turns in every question because it is very enjoyable lesson and we can do it.

It was found out that, teachers’ perceptions of learner-centered teaching differed. Most of the teachers perceived learner-centeredness as giving the students more active role and more responsibilities such as the students’ asking and answering the questions, doing the activities as being prepared, playing games, having more talking time than the teachers and sharing the target subjects with their peers in order to present them in the class. Half of these teachers perceived learner-centeredness as using discovery method where the students found out the rules or the subject through discussing or where the teacher did not lecture on the subject. Some of the teachers perceived learner-centeredness as teachers’ having the role of “guide” and remaining in the background during the activities. Some of the teachers considered learner-centered teaching as participation of the students to the activities by taking turns and teachers’ adapting the lesson by considering the students’ perspectives.

Despite having different perception of learner-centeredness, the majority of the teachers stated that they carried out teacher-centered methods owing to the insufficient time, large size of the classes, students’ being unfamiliar with the learner-centered approach, difficulty of the target subjects or low achievement level

of the students, students' lacking interest in the lesson and lack of necessary materials and equipment in the class. However, despite these challenges, some of the teachers claimed that they conducted learner-centered activities where the students were active by playing games and carrying out speaking and writing activities and doing the activities as being prepared before.

On the other hand, in accordance with the teachers' views, the majority of the students reflected that teacher was more active during the lessons when compared to the students. Depending on their perception of their teachers' role in the class, they attributed more active roles to their teachers than the roles that they attributed for themselves in the class. A few students considered themselves more active than the teachers during the lesson. However, it was revealed that similar to teachers, the students who regarded themselves more active than the teachers perceived "being active in the lesson" as translating the sentences, finding the unknown vocabulary from the dictionary, answering the questions and going to the board to write the answers.

### *Cooperative Learning*

When the teachers were asked how and when they made use of cooperative learning, six out of 10 teachers (T02, T04, T06, T08, T09, T10) stated that they didn't prefer using group work. Two out of 6 teachers (T02, T04) expressed that they couldn't benefit from group work since it took time to organize and manage the groups. To express this view a teacher (T02) stated "I do not use group work. It requires time and it requires organizing level groups [by considering the level of the students]. I used it once or twice not more than it."

Four out of 6 teachers (T06, T08, T09, T10) reflected that they did not conduct group work activities because of management problems such as the noise of the students in crowded classes and unequal participation of the group members. To explain this situation one of teachers (T08) stated:

The students do not work cooperatively. When the students are asked to work in groups, they create chaos. The students start complaining about unequal participation of the group members. Then I realize that

some of them are busy with talking about computer games and some are doing irrelevant things. Group work misses its target. [Group work] is good but it is not applicable in crowded classes. I tried it [group work], [...] the students learn better individually and it is easy in terms of controlling the class.

Four out of 10 (T01, T03, T05, T07) teachers stated that they used group work activities in spite of its challenges. Some of these teachers (T03, T07) reflected that they preferred group work for homework or performance tasks. A teacher (T07) stated:

We usually have problems in group work. Some of the students join the group work and some do not [...] I usually give performance tasks as group work. [...] we can do group work in reading activities as long as we have enough time. Dividing [the students] into groups, [I ask] them to read silently and ask: What did you understand? Which groups have understood?

On the other hand, one of the teachers stated that she preferred group work for successful classes (T01) as she stated “if the class is successful, group work works well.”. Another teacher (T05) stated that she used group work for research tasks: “Group work is problematic when it is required to do at home. I conduct group work in the last activity [of the book], as research task.” One teacher (T03) stated that he used group work for challenging subjects.

However, despite having negative opinions about group work, the teachers reflected positive opinions about using pair work. All of the teachers stated that they utilized pair work and individual study.

Four out of 10 teachers (T06, T08, T09, T10) stated that they used pair work in dialogue activities or if it was asked in the activities of the book to work in pairs. One of the teachers (T06) stated that “[The students] do pair work when the activity requires working in pairs. I ask them use pair work in dialogue activities which requires asking and answering questions.” Another teacher (T09) stated:

I usually use pair work. Sometimes when the dialogue activities require groups of four people, I design it as pair work because I think that the students have more responsibilities in pair work [when compared to group work].

Unlike to the other teachers, one teacher (T07) stated that she benefited from cooperative learning in performance tasks while another teacher (T02) expressed that she used pair work for the tasks which were challenging or difficult for the students: “The activity is usually done in pairs when conducted in the class. It depends on the level of the students, if [the task is] simple I use individual work, if [the task is] difficult, I make them work in pairs.”

When asked to the student participants whether cooperative learning was applied in the instructional activities or not, fifty-seven out of 73 students expressed that the teachers used individual activities rather than cooperative ones. One of the students (T5 G1) stated: “[We] do individual activities and solve multiple choice questions. We rarely do a group work or a pair work”

The most frequently stated reasons by the students for teachers’ preferring individual work were the class noise, unequal participation of the students, lack of necessary time, different levels among the students and group management problems. One of the students (T1G2) stated that “group or pair activities are not conducted due to the occurrence of high amount of noise. It is impossible to do work in groups because there are various levels of students. The lazy ones cheat from our work.” Another student (T2G1) stated:

We do not do group work because only one person in the group has the workload. It is like cheating for the rest of the group members. There is not equal distribution of the group work. We do not have any opportunity to meet after school for group work [...] Even if we had a good team, we cannot produce a good work due to the lack of time.

Eleven out of 73 students stated that the teacher used group work in performance or project tasks or when there was any group activity in the book. On the other hand, twenty-one out of 73 students claimed that the teacher used pair work activities in English classes. One of the students (T8 G2) stated that “we work in pairs when there is a dialogue activity [in the textbook]. Working in pairs is usually carried out as dialogues.”

Although the majority of the students, stated that the teachers used individual activities more than cooperative ones, most of the students have positive opinions

about cooperative learning. Forty-four out of 59 students stated that they would prefer group work rather than individual activities. One of the students (T4 G1) stated “if we work in pairs or group, we can understand better. We can ask each other about the things that we do not know.”

Fifteen out 59 students who answered the question about cooperative learning had negative opinions about working in pairs or groups. One student (T8G2) stated that “group activity is very complex. The group can be a good or it can be bad. It depends on the people [in the group].” Another student (T7G2) stated that “the teacher asks us how the activity is going to be [and] we usually prefer individual [activity] [...] there are the ones who want to benefit from the others through working in group.”

In sum, most of the teachers had negative opinions about group work because they regarded it as inapplicable in crowded classes and inappropriate for low achiever students as well as its being time consuming. However, all of the teachers had positive opinions about pair work. Nearly half of the teachers stated that they benefited from pair work for the activities requiring working in pairs, while two of them prefer using pair work in challenging subjects or performance tasks. In accordance with the teachers’ views, the majority of the students expressed that teachers used individual activities more than cooperative activities. Similar to the teachers, the students expressed the reasons for not carrying out group activities as noisy of the class, unequal participation of the group members, different levels among the students and group management problems. Despite the problems faced during the group activities, the majority of the students had positive opinions about working cooperatively in groups as they stated that they would prefer cooperative learning rather than individual learning.

#### 4.3.2 Teachers’ and Students’ Views about Instructional Methods and Techniques

In this part, teachers and students’ views about instructional methods and techniques used in the class are described in detail.



### *Grammar Translation Method*

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is a language teaching method which focuses on teaching grammar structures and translating the texts from target language to the native language through the knowledge of these structures (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In GTM, students' native language is used as the medium of instruction, grammar is taught deductively, vocabulary is presented with its equivalence in the native language of the learners and the language skills of reading and writing are emphasized while the skills of speaking and listening are ignored (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

It was revealed that teachers mainly used Grammar Translation Method (GTM) as seven out of 10 teachers (T02, T04, T05, T06, T07, T09, T10) and fifty-nine out of 73 students stated that they translated the reading texts as a classroom practice. A teacher (T04) stated:

After covering vocabulary and grammar, we read the reading text of that unit together with kids and we translate it together. It is like Grammar Translation Method. We lecture and the students write and understand it. Then s/he [the student] accompanies [to the teacher] with his/her studies.

Three out of 10 teachers stated reasons for using Grammar Translation Method. While a teacher stated lack of material and equipment, other teachers stated the lack of time and backgrounds of the students for using GTM. A teacher (T04) stated "Communicative Approach cannot be used that much. If the English levels of the students were better or if we had more lesson hours such as 10 hours and then we could use it."

Another teacher (T02) stated that she used Grammar Translation Method because the reading texts were above the level of the students as seen in the following quotation:

If the questions were not translated into Turkish, the students would not attain the [expected] objective in reading. If the paragraphs [in the textbook] were easier, we would not use translation method; the students would read [the text] and answer [the questions about the text] on their own.

Eight out of 10 teachers (T02, T03, T04, T05, T06, T07, T09, T10) stated that they used Turkish as the medium of instruction. One of the teachers (T02) stated "I

lecture [with the medium of] Turkish. First, I present verbally, I write many examples on the board. I make them write the [grammar] rules one by one as Turkish.” Half of the teachers explained their reasons for using mainly Turkish in the class as the students’ lack understanding or learning the target subject unless it was presented in Turkish. The following excerpt exemplified this view:

When I instructed completely in English, the students did not understand anything [...] The students do not understand even I teach through the simplest structures in terms of pronunciation and grammar [...] I tried to make them familiar [with English] But the students do not understand English. Therefore, I changed it to Turkish (T03).

The other reasons stated by the teachers for using Turkish were that of insufficient time and the existence of SBS. To exemplify it, a teacher (T04) stated “actually we do not want to do [use of Turkish]. But as obligatory we have to teach in Turkish. If we instruct in English and if the students do not understand and if they do not achieve in SBS, then we will get into trouble.”

Consistent with the teachers’ views, seventy-two out of 73 students reflected that teacher used Turkish while teaching the target subjects. One of the students (T9G2) stated:

We write in Turkish. We never write in English. The examples are English but the lecture is in Turkish [...] [Our teacher] translates all she reads. [Our teacher] writes the questions on the board and we take notes. We cannot find [the answers] easily; unless [our teacher] translates into Turkish [Our teacher] makes explanations in Turkish.

In brief, the majority of the teachers and students stated that the teachers used GTM for teaching English. Besides, almost all of the students and the majority of the teachers stated that Turkish was used as the medium of instruction. The reasons for using GTM and Turkish were stated as lack of background of the students, insufficient time, lack of equipment and materials and existence of SBS in an ascending frequency.

### *Lecturing & Discovery Method*

In lecturing method, which is considered as a teacher-centered instruction, the content is delivered by the teacher through presenting the knowledge and the

students learn what is dictated by the teachers (Ornstein & Lasley, 2004). It was revealed that all of the teachers used lecturing as the main instructional method for teaching grammar. A teacher (T09) stated “I usually use lecturing method. Indeed, the method that we use changes depending on the activities. Especially we use lecturing for teaching grammar subjects.”

Being aware of the learner-centered teaching methods suggested in the NEC, another teacher (T06) stated:

Sometimes, the methods I used in the class match with the instructional methods suggested in the program. The program expects that the students find out, participate and the teachers guide. We can sometimes achieve this. But there are times when the student cannot do anything. At this time, the previous system reappears and we had to use lecturing, presentation again.

Similar to the teachers’ views, when the students were asked about the instructional methods used in the class, the most frequently stated instructional method was lecturing since fifty-two out of 73 students expressed that the teacher lectured while presenting the grammar structures. A student (T6G1) stated:

[...] the teacher lectures on the grammar subject. First she tries to tell us what present perfect tense corresponds to in Turkish [...] She gives information about what it corresponds to in Turkish and then she presents the rule, which verb form will come to which subject [...].

Another student (T5G2) stated:

The teacher came to the board and wrote the topic of the lesson as present perfect tense and then she wrote the Turkish meaning of it. [Following it] she wrote a sentence as an example and continued. She lets us do example sentences only for a few times. [...] we rarely give example.

In accordance with the lecturing method, nine out of 10 teachers reflected that they used deductive grammar teaching method. Under this method, seven out of 10 teachers (T02, T03, T05, T06, T07, T08, T09) stated that they presented the grammar rules through comparing it with the Turkish structures. A teacher (T09) stated “while presenting the grammar structures, I present the Turkish equivalence of the structures by relating it with the Turkish structures. Then I explain the English equivalence of the target structure.”

Considering the strategies used for presentation and practice of grammar, six out of 10 teachers (T03, T04, T05, T07, T08, T10) stated that they presented the grammar structures by formulizing the rules while three teachers (T02, T04, T10) stated that they drew tables showing the grammar structures. Five teachers (T03, T05, T07, T09, T10) stated that they provided grammar practice through example sentences formed by the teachers and students while two teachers (T03, T05) stated that they used sentence transformations as well. To exemplify these views a teacher (T03) stated:

For example, as for presenting the Present Perfect Tense, at first I give the rules, the usages and the negative, positive and question forms of it. Then we practice them with examples. At first I give the examples and then I want the students to build up their own sentences.

Consistent with the teachers' views, fifty-two out of 73 students stated that the teacher made use of deductive grammar teaching method. The most frequently stated strategies for presenting grammar by the students was that of formulizing the rules (38 students), and teachers' comparing the structures with the Turkish structures (20 students). As for the practice of the grammar, the most frequently stated strategy was teachers' giving examples (39 students), students' giving examples (19 students), doing grammar drills (17 students), doing multiple choice tests (13 students), filling in the gaps (12 students) and ordering the jumbled sentences (4 students).

A group of students (T1G1) stated:

At first the teachers tell us which subject we will learn by translating it into Turkish. But some structures cannot be translated into Turkish for example Present Perfect Tense. She writes the subject on the board and gives the rules. Then, she writes examples on the board and following, we give examples to the teacher.

Discovery method, which is considered as learner-centered instruction, requires the students to explore the structures or the ideas on their own and construct their own understanding by inducing their own conceptions (Ornstein & Lasley, 2004). The findings of this study revealed that three teachers (T02, T08, T09) made use of discovery method for teaching the grammar subjects inductively. However,

the teachers admitted that they used this method partially for unchallenging subjects or for the subjects that the students had background knowledge.

We do not carry out activities through discovery but nevertheless we try to apply discovery method. Actually, the instructional method that we used changes depending on the activity. There are some activities that we apply discovery method. If the students were familiar with the subject before, then I let them find out [the rule] otherwise I do not use this [method] (T09).

Considering the strategies related to the discovery method, the teachers stated that they provided the example sentences to the students and elicited the rules and functions of the structures from them. The following quotations illustrated this view:

We try to use discovery method as much as we can but we are not successful [in applying this method] especially for [teaching] the challenging subjects like Present Perfect Tense. In some subjects, I gave the sentence and waited for the students' finding out the [grammar] rule [...] For teaching simple past tense, I provided them example sentences and asked them to find out [grammar structure]. But for the difficult subjects, I presented the grammar rule [deductively] (T02).

Another teacher (T08) highlighted the indispensability of the teacher-centered instructional methods:

I use presentation [lecturing] technique. I use the sentences from the reading text or from the listening text [...] for example, for teaching "for and since"; I wrote a sample sentence with a time line, the students were able to induce the rules. Nonetheless, this may not be the case in every subject [...] I do not think that we can avoid classical teaching methods [lecturing].

On the other hand, none of students mentioned about use of inductive method in the classroom practices.

In sum, considering the instructional methods, all of the teachers and most of the students stated the lecturing method as the main method of instruction. Although a few teachers stated that they partially used discovery method, none of the students mentioned about it. Considering grammar, almost all of the teachers and the students stated that grammar is presented through deductive teaching method. The most frequently stated presentation strategies by the teachers under deductive grammar teaching were that of relating the target structures with the Turkish ones, formulizing the rules and drawing tables in an ascending frequency. On the other hand, the most

frequently stated grammar presentation strategies by the students were teachers' formulizing the rules and giving the Turkish equivalence of the structure in an ascending order of frequency. Considering the practice of grammar, while giving examples and transformations were the most frequently stated strategies by the teachers, the most frequently stated strategies for grammar practice by the students were that of giving examples, doing grammar drills, doing multiple choice tests, filling in the gaps and ordering the jumbled sentences. However, although none of the students mentioned about inductive grammar teaching, a few teachers stated that they partially used inductive method for teaching grammar when the subject was not challenging or unfamiliar for the students. The strategy used for inductive grammar teaching was stated as eliciting the rules from the students by providing context and asking about it.

#### 4.3.3 Teachers' and Students' Views about Instructional Activities

In this part students' and teachers' views about the activities conducted for improving the reading, listening, speaking and writing skills of the students are described as well as the kinds of activities and strategies used to improve those language skills.

It was revealed that thirty-nine out of 58 students expressed negative views about the activities carried out in English lessons and nineteen out of 58 students reflected positive views. The most frequently stated negative view was about writing activities as seventeen out of 39 students stated that they regarded writing activities as difficult and uninteresting. Fifteen out of 39 students expressed that the most unpopular activities were that of listening and speaking activities while some of the students (7 out of 49) contended answering the questions about the reading text as the most unpopular activity in the class. The most frequently stated negative views about the activities (16 out of 39 students) were about their being boring. The following quotations illustrated these views:

**T1 G2:** It does not grab our attention. All of them are the same [...] the most boring activity is answering the questions.

**Researcher:** Why [do you think so]?

**T1 G2:** The answers can be found directly in the text. We just underline the words and write. [...] We would like that [the activities were] more interesting.

Thirteen out of 39 students contended that the activities were difficult and twelve out of 39 students mentioned about lack of variety in the activities while eight out of 39 students stated that they were useless or unnecessary. The following scripts revealed these views:

**T7G1:** We do not like [the activities] very much. Some of them are unnecessary. For example, writing, we cannot write. The teacher wrote on the board and we wrote on our notebooks. We translated and then it was over. It was not useful for us. For example, there was a story in the textbook. We were going to write our opinions about it but we could not write it; therefore, the teacher wrote [it] on the board.

**Researcher:** Why don't you like writing activity?

**T7G1:** We do not like because it is difficult for us.

Thirty-two out of 59 students reflected that the teacher assigned reading text as homework to find the Turkish equivalence of the words in the text or exercises. A student (T1G2) stated "we find the [unknown] words at home on the previous day. First the teacher reads and then makes a few students read [the text]. If we know the words, we say it [to the teacher] [...] The teacher translates the sentences [...] we translate some of them."

Consistent with the students' views, seven out of 10 teachers (T02, T03, T04, T05, T06, T09, T10) stated that they asked the students come prepared to lesson by finding out the unknown words in the text or exercises. A teacher (T09) stated:

We do translation but most of the time I translate it by myself. Sometimes if we had already started the unit, I gave the text [as a homework], they tried to find [the meaning of] the new words and translate them.[...] They do [the translation] at school by cooperating with their friends. Indeed, they cannot translate perfectly, so I ask the students to translate a sentence [from the text]. Finally, I translate the sentence.

Considering the reading activity, nine out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T03, T04, T05, T06, T07, T09, T10) stated that at first the teachers and then the students read the text aloud. Two teachers (T03, T06) stated that they asked the students to read it silently as well. In consistent with the teachers, forty-nine out of 73 students stated that the teachers read the text aloud in the class and twenty out of 73 students stated

that the teachers asked students read the text aloud while four students mentioned about silent reading in the class. A student (T5G1) stated “first, the teacher reads [aloud], then she asks us read [aloud] and then [she] translates [the text] into Turkish. She reads a paragraph and translates it. She gives the unknown words as homework [...].”

It was stated by seven out of 10 teachers (T02, T04, T05, T06, T07, T09, T10) and fifty-nine out of 73 students that the students and the teachers translated the text together by uncovering the Turkish equivalence of the unknown words. Following, it was stated by nine out of 10 teachers and twenty-nine out of 72 students that the students answered the comprehension questions related to the text. A group of students T7G2 stated that:

First the teacher reads the text. Then, we translate each sentence into Turkish. We do it together [How?] Our teacher reads the sentence [loudly] and we translate it into Turkish. If [the translation] is wrong, the teacher translates; otherwise the teacher gives turns to the other [students]. When [the translation] is wrong, the teacher does not say that it is wrong, she tells us the correct one [...] After reading and translating the text, we answer the questions [about the text].

Regarding the listening activity, it was stated by five out of 10 teachers (T02, T03, T05, T09, T10) and thirty-one out of 72 students that the teacher read the listening text aloud due to the lack of CD player in the class. It was stated by twenty-six out of 72 students and two teachers (T05, T09) that the teacher translated the listening text after reading. On the other hand, four out of 10 teachers (T01, T03, T04, T07) and thirty-four students expressed that the teachers skipped the listening activities as the following quotation indicates:

Listening [texts] are good but we cannot implement [them] because “*dershane*” keeps ahead of us in terms of [finishing] the units [of the NEC]. The questions asked in the tests [offered by *dershane*] are related to those units [covered by *dershane*]. If the students cannot do [the questions of the test offered by *dershane*], the parents complain about it. We have to face with this. The parents expect their kids to succeed [in those tests] [...] When the second term approaches, we leave out the listening texts. We cover two units at a time. Listening is not involved [in those tests] so I skip it (T01).

Considering the post-listening activity, five teachers (T02, T03, T05, T06, T09) stated that the students conducted question and answer drills and two teacher



(T08,T09) stated they filled in the chart as a post listening activity. A teacher (T09) stated “if there is completion part or question and answer drill, the students carry out this and then I translate the listening text to make them complete their answers.” Similarly, the most frequently stated post-listening activity by the students was that of answering the questions (26 students) and filling in the blanks (11 students).

As for the writing activities, one of the teachers (T10) and twenty-two out of 72 students perceived writing activity as writing the answers of the questions or writing what was written on the board. A group of students (T2 G2) exemplified this view:

The teacher writes [the answer on the board] and then she tells us [to write on our notebooks] and we write on our notebook. We do not carry out writing activity very much. Only, when we start to a new unit we write some exercises and we write the rest [of the exercises] on the book.

On the other hand, half of the teachers (T02, T05, T06, T07, T08) and fourteen out of 72 students stated that writing activities were carried out as homework. One of the teachers (T02) stated “I choose writing tasks which are appropriate for the level of the students and gave homework to the students. I let the volunteer students read their texts in the class” and likewise a group of students (T2G1) stated:

Most of the time [we do writing] as homework because it would take time [to do it in the class]. In the class, the teacher gives the correct version of writing and asks us to correct our mistakes or some of our friends read their paragraphs. [How could your teacher check that you wrote correctly?] The students check by themselves. It is impossible for the teacher to follow all of us [check the homework]. We usually take turns and answer the questions in the activities and if we have any mistake the teacher corrects us

Three out of 10 teachers (T02, T06, T08) and eighteen students reflected that they sometimes skipped writing activities of the NEC while one of the teachers and twenty-eight out of 72 students stated that they never conducted writing activities. A student (T1 G2) stated “we never write our own opinions. We skip the writing parts at the end of each unit. [...] It is not given as homework” and similarly a teacher (T08) stated “if I like [the writing task], we occasionally carry out [it] in the class. I

do a sample writing and give it as homework [...] [We] usually miss out [writing activity] because we are short of time.”

Considering speaking activity, six out of 10 teachers (T02, T03, T05, T06, T08, T09) and twenty-seven out of 72 students expressed that dialogues were used for the speaking activity as the students prepared and then read their dialogues in the class. Two out of 10 teachers (T07, T09) and thirteen out of 73 students stated that the students spoke English for answering the questions. Four out of 10 teachers (T02, T06, T08, T10) and thirty-one out of 72 students reflected that speaking activities were not conducted in the lesson while a teacher (T10) stated that she turned into writing activity. A teacher (T07) stated “if there is any question-answer activity in the book, the students speak about it. This cannot be said to be effective at all. There is not any occasion that can be regarded as a speaking activity” and a student (T5G2) stated that “we never speak English [in the class]. The teacher spoke English once and said ‘come here’.”

Considering the reasons, three out of 10 teachers (T02, T07, T08) mentioned about overloaded content and insufficient lesson hours, three out of 10 teachers (T02, T06, T09) mentioned about insufficient student level and three out of 10 teachers (T05, T06, T10) considered the large class size as hindering the effective implementation of speaking activities. Furthermore, two teachers regarded SBS (T07, T09) as the obstacles for the implementation of speaking activities.

To summarize, it was seen that the majority of the students had negative views about the activities implemented in English lessons. Considering the activities as difficult, boring and unnecessary, the students also complained about the lack of variation in the activities. The most frequently stated negative view by the students was about writing activities. Following it, some of the students reflected negative views about speaking, listening and reading activities.

Regarding the reading skill, it was seen that loud reading, answering the comprehension questions, and translating the text by giving the Turkish equivalence of the words were the most frequently stated reading activities and/or strategies by the students and teachers. As for the listening, teachers’ loud reading, question and

answer drills, translating the listening text, filling in the chart was the most frequently stated listening activities and/or strategies by the students and teachers in an ascending frequency. However, it was mentioned by nearly half of the students and teachers that listening activities were not conducted due to insufficient time and overloaded content.

Considering writing activity, writing answers of the questions was the most frequently stated writing activity/strategy by the students. Half of the teachers stated that writing activities were carried out as homework rather than a classroom practice while nearly half of the teachers stated that they skipped the writing tasks. Similarly, more than half of the students stated that the teachers skipped the writing tasks while some of them stated they carried out it as homework.

As for the speaking activities, the most frequently stated speaking activity/strategy by the teachers and students was dialogues and question and answering sessions. However, almost half of the students and teachers stated that the speaking was not used as a classroom practice as the teacher skipped it. The reasons for not implementing the speaking activities were stated by the teachers as overloaded content, insufficient time, lack of background of the students, large class size and existence of SBS.

#### 4.3.4. Teachers' and Students' Views about Classroom Climate

The teachers and the students were asked who the decision makers were in the classroom practices and how and when the students' views were taken into the consideration in the decision making process. The answers of the students and the teachers revealed whether there was a democratic learning environment or not.

Eight out of 9 teachers (T01, T02, T03, T04, T05, T06, T07, T10) reflected that they were the decision makers in the class as they decided for the kinds of the activities and the way they were carried: "All the students are doing the same kind of activity at the same time. I decide which activity to carry out in the class" (T03). Nonetheless, two of these teachers (T02, T06) claimed that they also took the opinions of the students into the consideration as well as admitting that they decided

for the activities. A teacher (T02) stated “I do not offer any alternative to the students [for cooperative work]. If they had an idea, I would consider it. They usually prefer working in pairs.” Considering the performance or project tasks, six out of 8 teachers reflected that they decided for the performance tasks in terms its kind, topic and evaluation without giving any alternative to the students as the following statements exemplify: “We choose the theme of the performance tasks with the colleagues in the school. The presentation type is file. It is absolutely in the written form. I determine [this]” (T05).

On the other hand, three out of 8 teachers (T02, T07, T08) claimed that they provided alternatives to the students for the performance or project tasks. A teacher (T08) stated:

I sometimes leave them free [for choosing the project topics]. I give different topics for project works. There are different kinds which are in the form of dialogues and which are in the forms of poster.

Another teacher (T07) stated:

In performance tasks, [the students] choose the subjects and decide the groups on their own. They can do the tasks either individually, in pairs or as a group. I don't limit the students about this. For example, last year three students were going to introduce a famous person. They wanted to sing a song of this celebrity and they sang and I evaluated them in this way. I do not intervene with the presentation type, they decide on their own.

Likewise the teachers, most of the students (50 out of 73) reflected that the teachers were the decision makers in the class. A student (T5G1) stated:

The teacher decides. She doesn't ask for our opinions for which activity to carry out. We do [the activities] depending on the subjects in the students book. She made us buy a test book, we follow it. [...] Sometimes we want to do solve [multiple choice] test, the teacher wants to cover the subject, sometimes the teacher wants us to solve test and we want to cover the subject. But [finally] the teacher's decision is considered.

Another student from a different group (T2G1) stated:

The teacher decides how to do [pair or individual]. Our opinions are not considered at all. [...] Even if [our opinions are] taken into the consideration, the final decision belongs to the teacher. We do what she offers [...] which one of us can be considered [in terms of opinion] in a class with 35 students?

Thirty-one out of 50 students also contended that the teachers did not take their opinions into the consideration for the activities. A student (T1G2) stated that “the teacher decides [for the activity types, individual or pair]. While doing the activities, the teacher does not ask for our opinion. Most of the time the teacher’s decision is applied.” Another student (T9G1) stated that “the teacher does not consider our wishes and ideas while doing the activities. That is why we regard the lesson as boring.”

On the other hand, twenty-one out of 72 students reflected that the teachers gave them possibilities for working in pairs. The following script indicated this view:

The teacher asks us to do [the activity] with our friends. She also leaves [working cooperative or individually] up to our desire. But this [leaving up to our desire] is valid rather in project or performance tasks (T2G1).

Nineteen out of 72 students reflected that the teacher gives options or alternatives to the students for the performance or projects tasks: The following script reveals this view:

Our ideas are considered for choosing the theme of the performance tasks. The teacher writes options [for the performance tasks] on the board and asks for the volunteers to raise their hands [for the topics]. The volunteers form a group. The presentation type depends on the task. We determine [it], we can choose [among the options] (T7G1).

In brief, most of the teachers expressed that they were the decision makers which indicated the lack of democratic atmosphere in the class. Nonetheless, some of the teachers revealed that the opinions of the students were asked for performance or project works and deciding to do the activities either individually or in pairs. It is seen that students’ opinions were also consistent with the teachers’ statements as most of the students contended that teachers had the role of decision making in the class. While some students claimed that their views or desires were not taken into the consideration by the teachers, some of the students expressed that they were given alternative for the performance or project tasks and cooperative working.

#### **4.4. Views about Attainment of the Objectives**

Teachers' and students' perceptions about the attainment of the curriculum objectives related to four language skills, reading, speaking, listening, writing are presented in this part of the chapter.

When the students were asked in which skill they perceived themselves less competent, most of the students (48 out of 73) contended that they regarded themselves incompetent at most in speaking and pronunciation as the following quotations exemplify: "We have difficulty in speaking at most; we do lots of pronunciation mistakes" (T2G2).

Following speaking skill, twenty-seven out of 73 students contended that they perceived themselves as least competent in writing skill. To express this perception of incompetence, a student (T5G2) stated "workbook is enjoyable but sometimes it is required to write a paragraph and this becomes a problem for us. That is as we can not carry out writing in the class, the teacher writes [on the board] and then we write what she has written."

Twenty-two out of 73 students stated that they felt incompetent in listening skill as they found listening activities as difficult. A student (T9G2) stated:

If the teacher does not translate [the listening text], we cannot find [the answers of the listening questions] [...] the teacher reads [the listening text]; we do not understand anything from what the teacher reads as she reads in English.

Thirteen out of 73 students stated that they perceived themselves incompetent at most in reading skill. A group of students (T9G1) stated "we feel incompetent at most in understanding what we read. [Why?] because we are short of vocabulary knowledge."

Consistent with the students' views, all of the teachers claimed that the students could not attain the objectives related to development of speaking skill. A teacher (T05) stated:

Students do not attain speaking objectives. When a student speaks English in the class, his/her peers make fun of him. When I speak English in the class, it seems strange to them. I think this is because of the fact that they do not live English.

Another teacher stated:

In terms of speaking there are not any questions [in the textbook] to make the students speak. The questions are very general. In NEC it is expected from the students to speak and comment like an adult [advanced in English]. For example it is asked “what do the dreams mean for you? Are they real” [Speaking objectives] are not appropriate for the level of the students. Moreover, as the students did not learn [these structures], [it] becomes much harder [for them] to attain speaking objectives. The students are not at this level (02).

Besides speaking, half of the teachers (T01, T03, T04, T05, T07) stated students did not attain listening objectives. A teacher (T03) stated “one of the unattained objectives of NEC is about listening skills. They cannot reach the listening objectives [because] they do not have any knowledge acquired through listening.”

Considering the reading skill, all of the teachers regarded that it was the most attained skill when compared to the other skills. A teacher (T02) claimed that the students were able to attain the reading objectives with the support of her.

As for the writing objectives, six out of 9 teachers (T01, T02, T05, T06, T08, T09) stated that the students were not successful in attaining the writing objectives of the NEC. A teacher (T08) stated “the students are unsuccessful at the most in writing skills. It can be seen in their homework. They do not achieve writing objectives.”

Concerning the reasons for the students’ regarding themselves incompetent in four language domains, reading, listening, speaking, writing, thirty-three out of 73 students mentioned lack of adequate practice and lack of time to have adequate practice of these language skills in the lessons. To express this reason a student (T1G2) stated “it is because of speaking Turkish in the class. The lesson hour is very insufficient. Time is insufficient. Which one will we learn speaking or vocabulary or the subject [in the lesson time]?”

Twenty-three out of 73 students stated lack of vocabulary knowledge as the reason for their feeling incompetent in aforementioned language skills. To express this view, a group of students (T6G1) stated “we cannot express ourselves while [we are] speaking, as we do not know the vocabulary and the [grammar] rules.”

Eleven out of 73 students mentioned about education system, lack of experience of listening to native speakers, crowded classes and change of the teachers in semester in an ascending order of frequency as the reasons for the failure of achievement of the NEC objectives.

A student (T8G2) stated:

Not all the students can take turn to speak. Therefore, there is no speaking occasion. The class is very crowded, 45 students [...] It depends on the number of the students. The more [the students] take turns [to speak], the more speaking can be reinforced.

Another student (T2G2) stated “we are learning a foreign language but we do not know how [native speakers] speak and pronounce [the language].

On the other hand, considering the reasons underlying the students’ failure in achieving the objectives of the NEC, teachers expressed various factors preventing the achievement of the objectives.

Similar to the students, seven out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T04, T06, T07, T08, T09) reflected that the students did not achieve the language objectives because the teacher did not provide the adequate practice of those skills due to the insufficient class hours. To illustrate this view a teacher (T06) stated “we do not allocate sufficient time for writing and speaking. The students’ not achieving the objectives in these language skills causes from us as well as it causes from the [examination] system.” Another teacher (T02) stated:

The aim [of the NEC] is very good. If we had at least 8 hours [to implement the NEC], we would implement it better. At the beginning of each term, I started to teach listening and writing with great enthusiasm but after a while I had to ignore most of them.

Six out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T05, T07, T08, T09) expressed lack of gradual implementation of the NEC and lack of background knowledge or low level of the students as the factors affecting the students’ achieving the objectives of the NEC. The following excerpt indicated these views:

The reason is that the textbook [NEC] was not implemented gradually [...] Writing and speaking are based on students’ forming very simple sentences. The NEC starts with posing high level questions to the students who do not know even forming very simple sentences because the students did not use the NEC in the 6th grade (T02).



It was also stated by six teachers (T01, T03, T05, T06, T07, T10) that students' lacking interest in the lesson and having negative opinions for English affected the achievement of the objectives of the NEC. A teacher (T03) stated that "there is also this fact: The students have the opinion that English will not serve to their individual objectives in the future. This situation can be observed very clearly" and another teacher (T01) stated "the students want to have tests rather than doing listening activities."

On the other hand, three out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T06,) stated the negative effect of SBS or examination system both on the objectives of the lesson and students' attitudes for language skills.

To express this effect, a teacher (T01) stated:

The [examination] system and the implementation of the objectives are different [...] we do not reach the writing objectives due to SBS. The more students have upper grades, the more they become distant from reaching the objectives of NEC. In terms of giving importance to those language skills, both the students and the parents consider SBS more [than the curriculum objectives]. If there were writing and listening in the exam, the students would give more importance to those skills. This examination system [SBS], decreased the popularity of these skills. The textbook considers these skills, but the students and the parents do not care about [those skills].

Four of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T07, T10) claimed that the students did not achieve the objectives of the NEC, because the objectives of the NEC were not clear or understandable for the teachers. The following quotation exemplified this view:

The students' not attaining the objectives may also be resulted from the teachers' not understanding the program accurately because the program was not explained to the teachers. We learned it with our own efforts. [...] We could not find the [target] grammar structures in the book and we could not understand what was intended to teach [to the students]. In previous, we used to have yearly plans. There used to be objectives related to the skills [in the previous curriculum] however, there are not any objectives [written] in the book [in NEC]. The teachers have to find out the [objectives] on their own (T02).

On the other hand, one of these teachers admitted that she was not sure about the student's achievement of the objectives as she could not observe or assess the objective achievement of all the students in her class (T10). Besides, lack of

authentic materials, (T03, T04, T08) and not using English in real life (T03, T04), false education system (T07) were also the reasons stated by the teachers as preventing the achievement of objectives.

In sum, the majority of the students perceived themselves as incompetent in speaking skill and pronunciation sub-skill. Following, the students felt themselves less competent in writing, listening and reading in an ascending order of frequency. Likewise, all of the teachers regarded that the students were unsuccessful in attaining speaking and pronunciation objectives at most. Besides, it was stated by the teachers that the students could not achieve the objectives of writing and listening skills in an ascending order of frequency. Unlike to the students, the teachers regarded reading as the most attained skill. The most frequently stated reasons by the teachers for the students' not attaining the NEC objectives at the expected level were inadequate time and practice, students' lacking interest in the lesson, and having negative opinions for English, objectives' being not understandable for the teachers, SBS, lack of authentic materials and students' not having opportunity to use English in real life and false education system. On the other hand, the students stated inadequate practice of the skills, lack of vocabulary knowledge, false education system, not experiencing authentic use of language, crowded classes and change of teachers as the reasons for perceiving themselves as incompetent in four language skills.

#### **4.5. Views about the Content of the NEC**

As for the content of the new curriculum, teachers' and students' views about the target vocabulary, grammar structures and themes used in the content are revealed in terms of its sequence and being appropriate to the levels, interests and needs of the learners. However, as the teachers mainly followed the content offered in the textbook, they perceived the textbook's content as the original content of the NEC which was revealed in their answers to the interview questions.

Considering the vocabulary, six out of 10 teachers stated negative views about the target vocabulary used in the content as they regarded that the content involving excessive words which were above the level of the students. A teacher

(T06) stated “it would be better if the vocabulary is reduced in number and into the level of the students [...] the unknown words are very excessive.” Another teacher (T08) reflected:

The number of [unknown] words in the book is excessive. In some units, the students were asked very detailed questions. The words were very difficult for the students. If we are expected to teach daily language, then the number of vocabulary can be decreased. If NEC expects the students to understand what they listen and to speak, then [unknown words] should be lessened. I think that the number of vocabulary is very excessive and it is difficult.

Two teachers stated positive views about the vocabulary of the content as stated by T05 “the vocabulary [of the NEC] is easy. There are few words, not many. Unknown vocabulary consist 4 or 5 words. The rest of the words are known. The NEC does not have too much vocabulary.”

On the other hand, twenty-three out of 73 students stated that the unknown words in the paragraphs were very difficult and excessive, while only six of them stated positive views about the vocabulary. A group of students (T7G1) stated:

There are too many [unknown] words in the textbook. It is difficult to keep al of them in mind. We cannot study all of them. They are all confused. We like grammar more than vocabulary because vocabulary is more difficult. We feel ourselves incompetent in vocabulary.

As for the grammar subjects, half of the teachers (T01, T02, T03, T08, T09) reflected positive views as they stated that grammar subjects were appropriate for the levels of the students in terms of difficulty and number while one teacher (T10) had negative views as she regarded the grammar subjects as insufficient for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. A teacher (T02) stated “the [grammar] subjects are reduced in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. They are simplified. The difficult subjects are given in the second term.” On the other hand, eight out of 24 students reflected negative views as they contended grammar subjects as difficult, while 16 out of 24 students had positive opinions as they regarded the grammar subjects as appropriate for their levels.

Considering the themes of the units, eight out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T03, T04, T06, T07, T08, T09) contended that some of the themes were above the level of the students. Seven out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T03, T06, T07, T09, T10)

mentioned that some of the themes did not appeal to the needs and interests of the students. On the other hand, four out of 10 teachers (T01, T03, T06, T08) expressed positive opinions such as the themes' being complementary of the lower grades, grabbing the students' attention and appropriate for the age levels of the students. A teacher (T03) stated "the themes appeal to the students' needs in terms of reinforcement because all the themes taught in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade are revised in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade." Another teacher (T08) stated:

The choice of themes is good. They appeal to their ages. Some of the themes could be made more interesting. The themes are interesting but they could be made more interesting. Their level is above the level of the students. Generally both the order and appealing to the ages of the students are good. It starts from 7<sup>th</sup> grade and it is related to the themes of 7<sup>th</sup> grade. There is coherency [between the grades]

Twenty-four out of 73 students had positive opinions about themes of the units such as grabbing their attention, being enjoyable and easy. A student (T3G1) stated "there are themes that can be searched because when you search you want to learn more. We like all of the themes. They are the units that we are curious about." On the other hand, twenty-three out of 73 students had negative opinions about the themes such as their being difficult, useless and uninteresting. A student (T7G1) stated "some themes are absurd. The modern version of the tales does not appeal to us. Most of the units are not the ones that we are curious about. We do not think that we will use them in real life."

As for the order of the units, nineteen students contended that it was designed from easy to difficult while ten students regarded the themes were designed as mixed. A student (T1G1) stated "it was easy at the beginning and then it became harder. The difficulty of the themes was from easy to difficult." On the other hand, eight out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T04, T05, T06, T07, T09, T10) reflected that the themes were designed as mixed with easy and difficult units while one teachers (T03) perceived that the units were sequenced from difficult to easy. A teacher (T06) stated "they tried to balance [the difficulty level]. It involves first easy and then difficult but there are also easy themes in between units which only involve vocabulary not a challenging grammar subject at all." Another teacher (T04) stated:

It should not involve multiple intelligences theme in the second unit. The subject is anyway difficult as the students do not know the Turkish of this subject. If it were in the following units, the students would adapt to it better. But we got through from very complex unit to a simple one. Therefore, the students struggled with [the complex themes] [...].

Eight out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T03, T04, T05, T06, T08,T10) claimed that the content was overloaded and the units and the tasks were very long. To express the overloaded content a teacher (T05) stated “the students could not concentrate for a long time. We hardly cover all the units. It is very intensive. Sometimes I am confused about what to do in the class. Because 4 hours lesson time is not enough for one unit.”

In brief, it was revealed by the results that more than half of the teachers and some of the students found vocabulary as excessive and as above the level of the students. Considering grammar subjects, half of the teachers and some of the students contended that the target grammar subjects were appropriate for the levels of the students while one teacher regarded the grammar subjects as insufficient for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

As for the themes of the units, the majority of the teachers and some of the students had negative opinions as they regarded the themes as above their levels, useless and irrelevant for the needs and interests of the students. On the other hand, some of the teachers and some of the students contended that the content of the NEC was appealing to the needs and interests of the students and enjoyable while some of the teachers regarded the content as complementary with the content of the lower grades. As for the order of the content, the majority of the teachers stated that it was sequenced as mixed with difficult and easy subjects. Besides, it was found out that most of the teachers perceived the content as overloaded as they had difficulty in covering all of the units.

#### **4.6. Views about the Materials**

Teachers and students’ views about the textbook, workbook, teacher’s book and supporting materials that the teachers made use of during the classroom practices are presented in this category.

#### 4.6.1 Teachers' and Students' Views about the Textbook

When the teachers were asked about the textbook, nine out of 10 teachers (T01,T02, T03, T05, T06, T07, T08, T09,T10) expressed negative opinions about the textbook. Six out of 10 teachers (T02, T03, T08, T05, T06, T10) contended that the textbook had unauthentic and insufficient visuals or pictures. A teacher (T08) stated that “considering multiple intelligences, the textbook lacks visuals as it does not have enriched visuals. There are only small pictures in each unit at most.” Another teacher (T06) stated that “the pictures are nice but if there were real photos it would me more realistic. The visuals of the book are usually in the form of drawing. These students are not young learners.”

Four out of 10 teachers (T01, T05, T06, T09) stated the characters used in the textbook were uninteresting for the students and not appealing to the ages of the students. A teacher (T05) stated:

The visuals of the book are not authentic. [The students] regarded Spotty [character] as irrelevant to their interests. They think that the characters are below their level. It would be better if the characters were various [...] It is problematic when all the themes were about the same characters.

Following them, the most frequently stated negative opinions about the textbook was complex presentation of the grammar subjects as it was stated by half of the teachers (T01, T02, T05, T08,T10). A teacher (T02) stated that “the book is very complex” and another teacher (T03) stated:

The textbook does not provide the necessary clarification for grammar. For example, there was a part named as spot light for grammar [in the textbook] but there were not enough examples or explanations for grammar structures [...] I would change the presentation style of the textbook.

Three out of 10 teachers (T02, T07, T08) regarded the workbook as insufficient. To express this view a teacher (T08) stated “they can enrich the work book. Work book is inadequate that is it is very narrow [in terms of its content] There are some parts that students have difficulties and these can be omitted.”

Two out of 10 teachers (T08, T10) mentioned about the insufficient grammar drills and examples in the textbook. To exemplify this view a teacher (T08) stated:

[...] the grammar parts [of the textbook] are inadequate. There are not any grammar drills or exercises [in the textbook] for the students to practice. [The textbook] does not have anything in terms of exercise; it just has speaking and writing tasks [...] [For example] the textbook does not give anything about the grammar structures of “such that” and “so that.” It only gives a few sentences involving “such that” and “so that” which are used in the listening text. Then it expects the students to speak by using these structures. If I do not lecture on these structures, how could the kids differentiate these structures from one another.

Consistent with the teachers, twenty-four out of 73 students had negative opinions about the characters used in the textbook as they reflected that they were fed up with having the same characters. They also stated that the characters were uninteresting, unrealistic and not appealing to their ages. To express this view a group of students (T1G2) stated “the characters are always Tessa and Trevor. They do not grab our attention. They are for younger kids.”

Nearly half of the students (32 out of 73) reflected that they did not like the activities of the textbook at most since they regarded them as difficult and boring. A group of students (T5G1) stated:

Sometimes, there are very long paragraphs which are very complex. There are questions related to the reading texts and it is difficult to answer them. [...] It is boring because it has so many exercises about a subject and they [the exercise types] are always the same [kind].

Twenty three out of 73 students expressed that the reading texts and the vocabulary of the textbook were above their level. A student (T6G1) stated “reading passages are the parts that I do not like the most in the textbook. There are excessive unknown vocabularies in the reading text with which we deal a lot.”

Similar to the teachers, eight students also mentioned about complex presentation and insufficient grammar drills. A student (T1G2) stated “it is very difficult to infer the subjects covered in the book. The book is very complex. It was regarded that as if we were English.” Another student (T2G2) stated:

The textbook does not include the adequate information. It is always expected from the teachers to provide the information. When a teacher makes a mistake, we cannot check it from the textbook. There is nothing [about grammar explanations] in the textbook. There is a character called Spotty and we only listen to its speaking. [...] The textbook is not interesting and not

good. It is designed according to a dog. There are some unnecessary activities in the book and then we suddenly encounter a difficult subject like present perfect tense. It is not good for us.

Considering the positive views, four out of 10 teachers (T01, T05, T06, T07) stated positive opinions such as activities' requiring research (T05), the textbook's having good presentation and giving importance to knowledge (T06) and appealing to multiple intelligences (T07). A teacher (T06) stated:

The presentation [of the textbook] is good. The exercises are good as well. It is also good that it gives a short summary of the grammar subjects. Indeed, this textbook is better than the previous textbook. The level of the previous textbook was lower than the students' level and it was very superficial. The dialogues and the visuals of this book are more realistic. Information is given more importance in this [textbook].

When asked to the students, the most frequently stated positive view about the textbook was its involving visuals inside as stated by eighteen out of 73 students. A student (T5G2) stated "it is good that the textbook involves a lot of pictures."

Besides, thirteen students stated that they liked crosswords of the book at most while seven students stated that they liked the songs of the book at most. A student (T2G2) stated

The crosswords are the most popular parts of the book. We like challenging and enjoyable activities for example finding the robber or the detective stories. We like the activities, when the activities are different from each other.

#### 4.6.2. Teachers' Views about The Teacher's Book

As for the Teacher's Book, six out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T05, T07, T09, T10) had negative opinions about teacher's book. They stated that teacher's book was so insufficient in terms of guidance for the implementation of methods and activities that it functioned only as an answer key to the exercises in the textbook. A teacher (T07) stated "teacher's book is not clear enough. It is not clear what to teach, which objectives the students are expected to attain and which methods to apply. They only provide the answers and most of the answers are false." Another teacher (T02) stated:



Teacher's Book is not clear. There are lots of language mistakes. There is not any guidance about how and what the teachers are expected to do. An experienced teacher can know [what and how to do the activities] however, it is challenging for a novice teacher to carry out the activities as expected from the teachers in NEC on her own.

#### 4.6.3. Teachers' and Students' Views about the Supporting Materials

Considering the kinds of materials used for the classroom activities, forty-nine out of 73 students expressed that the teachers used test books, worksheets or grammar book as supporting material as well as the textbook in the class. On the other hand, twelve out of 73 students stated that the teachers used only the textbook as the material. Twelve out of 73 students reflected that posters or flashcards were used as visuals in the class and only fourteen students expressed that the teacher used tape recorder or CD recorder in the class. A student (T3G2) stated that "the teacher used to follow his own grammar book that he brought to the class. He used to bring worksheets and grammar book. He used to hand out some photocopies after presenting the lesson."

Twenty-four out of 73 students also mentioned that the lessons were boring or not enjoyable due to the lack of audio-visual material. Nineteen out of 73 students stated that they could not keep their attention for a long time when they used only the books in the class as the material while seven out of 73 students contended that the lessons did not appeal to students who had different learning styles in the class. Twenty-one out of 73 students contended that if the teachers had used audio-visual materials in the class, it would have facilitated their learning of the language as it would be easier to understand and keep the lesson in their minds. Some of the students stated that the lessons could be fluent and enjoyable if there were various materials in the class. To exemplify these views a student (T2G2) stated:

If there had been [various] materials, it would have been more enjoyable and more permanent [learning]. Half of the students in our class are visual learners. For this reason, it would be better [to have visual materials]. However, this was not considered [by the teacher] at all [...].

On the other hand, unlike to the students only three out of 10 teachers (T02, T05, T08) expressed that they used grammar books or worksheets as extra material in the class. A teacher (T08) stated:

There will be multiple choice questions and grammar questions in SBS but there is nothing about grammar in the textbook. We would rather that the book involved grammar exercises in the book. I need to bring worksheets to the class considering that the parents will blame us for the students' not achieving in SBS.

Eight out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T03, T05, T06, T07, T08, T09) mentioned that they used flashcards or posters as visual material in the class while one of them (T06) stated that she used projection as audio-visual material in the class. Seven out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T04, T07, T08, T09, T10) reflected that the lack of materials and equipment in the classes had affected implementation of the NEC in a negative way. A teacher (T01) stated:

The classes are very poorly equipped. We do not find the materials or equipment in the class. We implement [NEC] with our own efforts. The materials and equipment of the classes were better 20 years ago. We do listening by our own efforts [reading the listening texts] Indeed, the students like listening activities very much. But we do not have electricity in some of our classes even though this is the best [state primary] school of Polatlı.

To summarize, the majority of the teachers had negative views about the textbook. The most frequently stated negative views were the textbook's unauthentic visuals, complex presentation of the grammar subjects and uninteresting characters which were irrelevant for the age levels and interests of the students. Besides, lack of grammar exercises, inadequacy of the work book, insufficient guidance for the teachers in the teachers' book and language mistakes of the book were also stated by the teachers. Similar to the teachers, some of the students contended that the textbook had irrelevant and uninteresting characters, complex presentation of the subjects and lack of grammar drills. Besides, half of the students contended that activities of the book were difficult and lack of variety as well. On the other hand, some of the teachers had positive views about the textbook in terms of its activities and presentation; however the most frequently stated positive view by the students were about the visuals, crosswords and songs of the book. As for the teacher's book, half

of the teachers had negative opinions about the teacher's book as they regarded it insufficient in terms of the guidance.

Considering the supporting materials, most of the students reflected that the teacher used test books, worksheets or grammar book as well as the textbook in the class while only a few teachers stated that they used such kind of materials. On the other hand, although the majority of the teachers expressed that they used visual materials in the class only a few students stated that the teacher used posters, flashcards and CD recorder in the class. Nevertheless both the majority of the teachers and the students reflected that lack of audio-visual materials and equipment in the class had a negative effect on students' learning English language.

#### **4.7 Views about Assessment Procedure**

In this part students' and teachers' views about peer evaluation, self evaluation, portfolio assessment, performance and project assessment which were considered as innovative in the NEC are presented.

##### **4.7.1 Teachers' Views about Peer-Evaluation and Self-evaluation**

When the teachers were asked how they made use of peer evaluation and self-evaluation in their classroom practices, eight out of 10 teachers expressed that they did not use peer-evaluation or self-evaluation techniques. The most frequently stated reason for not using the self-evaluation or peer-evaluation was their lack of knowledge and guidance about how to implement these techniques. A teacher (T01) stated "we did not involve [alternative assessment procedures] because we were not informed about new assessment methods. We evaluate the students as the same with how we did previously."

One of the teachers stated lack of financial support for not using peer-evaluation and self evaluation as they required separate sheets for each student:

Two out of 10 teachers (T03, T07) reflected that they used self-evaluation. A teacher (T03) stated:

I ask the students to evaluate themselves. Gathering the homework, I do marking for their mistakes and ask them to pay attention to their mistakes. I

give them time for a few days. When they bring me their homework back after checking, I can see that most of their mistakes disappear.

Although two out of 10 teachers (T03, T05) claimed that they used peer-evaluation, it was revealed that they did not use peer-evaluation techniques for assessment purposes. A teacher (T05) stated:

I sometimes use [peer evaluation]. There are some lower achievers in our class. Her/his desk mates can help him/her. They can tell about the subjects that s/he does not understand. They can evaluate [give feedback] him/her homework.

In brief, it was revealed that the majority of the teachers did not use peer-evaluation and self evaluation-techniques although they were suggested in the NEC.

#### 4.7.2. Teachers' and Students' Views about Portfolio Assessment

Considering the portfolio assessment, three out of 10 teachers (T05, T07, T09) stated that they used portfolio assessment. However, when the teachers were asked how they made use of portfolio assessment, it was found out that the teachers used portfolio to follow whether the tasks were kept by the students or not rather than for observing or assessing the development of the students. The following quotation illustrated this view:

I do not keep portfolios [of the students]. However, I tell the students to keep all the task papers till the end of the term. I check their tasks that they have carried out when I collect them. I tell them to keep their portfolio till the end of the semester and then I mark their portfolios. I check whether they keep all the tasks and do them correctly [...]. They put the performance tasks into their folder (T09).

It was revealed that all of the teachers perceived portfolio as the folders for the students' keeping worksheets or tasks in a sequenced way. To express her perception a teacher (T06) stated "I tell the students to keep all the tasks into their folders. I did not assess their portfolios but this semester I plan to collect their portfolios and assess its order, organization and whether they kept or not [...]."

Seven out of 10 teachers stated that they did not use portfolio assessment in their classes. Four out of 10 teachers stated that they did not know how to use it effectively as an alternative assessment technique while three out of 10 teachers

stated that they could not use it due to the insufficient class hours and crowded classes. The following script illustrated this view:

I did not use it because I think it is unnecessary and waste of paper. The students do their homework either on the textbook or on their notebooks. They could put only the worksheet into their portfolio not anything else. [...] We are not class teachers. How could it be possible to check portfolios of 300 students and when? There is no point in making the students keep portfolio if I am not going to check it. Then the students would do it just for taking plus or negatives [as grades]. If I had 15 hours lesson in a week, I would check their portfolios (T02).

Likewise to the teachers, forty-four out of 73 students stated that that they did not use portfolio while eight out of 73 students stated that they had portfolio for keeping their worksheets. A group of students (T1G1) expressed:

Portfolio is something that we did not keep. [What does it mean to you?] It is something which includes information about the lessons. If we had portfolio, we would look at the difficult issues inside it to remember them. [...] We don't have time for it.

It was revealed that the students had the same perceptions of the portfolio with the teachers because similar to the teachers, thirty-nine out of 73 students regarded portfolio as the folders to keep their worksheets, performance works, tasks and tests. A group of students (T8G1) stated "it is the folder where we put our tasks, worksheets and performance works after the teacher check. We do not use it for anything else we just keep it at home."

On the other hand, unlike to the other students eight out of 73 students contended that keeping portfolio enabled them to see and correct their mistakes. To express this perception a group of students (T7G1) stated:

Keeping portfolios enable us to be tidy and more competent for the subjects. It summarizes the unit. As we check it after each unit, it provided a revision for us. [...] It enables us to see our mistakes. The teacher corrects our mistakes in the texts and we rewrite the texts. If we do not revise the text, the teacher gives lower marks. The teacher follows each of us one by one.

In brief, all of the teachers and half of the students reflected that they perceived portfolio as a folder to keep or store the materials used in the class. It was revealed by the majority of the teacher and most of the students that portfolio was not used as an alternative assessment technique in the lesson. Lack of time, crowded

classes, lack of necessary guidance and knowledge about using portfolio assessment were the reasons stated by the teachers for not implementing portfolio assessment. Although some of the teacher claimed to have used portfolio as an alternative assessment, the students of these teachers reflected that they did not use portfolio. Only the views of a teacher (T07) and her students were consistent as they reflected that the teacher used portfolio as an alternative assessment technique.

#### 4.7.3. Teachers' and Students' Views about Performance and Project Tasks

When the opinions of the teachers were asked for the performance and project tasks, eight out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T03, T04, T05 T06, T08, T09) stated positive views about the performance and project tasks suggested in the NEC. The most frequently stated positive views were about their motivating the students to do research about a subject (T03, T06, T08, T09).

To illustrate this view a teacher (T09) stated:

I think that performance tasks are good for the students who carry out these tasks. They need to do vocabulary research [while doing the research] Even if they learn a few words, it is beneficial for them. I can say that performance works improve their research skills.

The other positive views stated by the teachers were about these tasks' improving vocabulary and writing skills of the students (T08, T09), enabling revision (T04) and awareness of their mistakes (T01), learning the target subject as it required effort and time (T02, T05). Some of the teachers (T05, T08) stated that the students cared about performance or project tasks because they would be graded.

On the other hand, three out 10 teachers (T08, T09, T10) had negative views about the performance and project tasks in the NEC. The negative views were the students' having another person do their performance or project tasks, doing just for taking grades and improper dictionary usage. To express this problem a teacher (T08) stated:

**Researcher:** Do you encounter any problem related to performance or project tasks?

**T08:** To have someone make their performance or the students' copying the tasks [were the problems] There are only 1 or 2 students who carry out the tasks by themselves out of 44 students. Even if they carry out the tasks, they

misuse dictionary and have lots of mistakes. Nevertheless, one student carries out the [performance tasks] well in each class. If I insist on their doing the tasks well, then they get someone else to do their tasks.

When the students were asked how they perceived or what they thought about the performance and project tasks, fifty out of 73 students stated positive views about the performance or project tasks that they carried out. The most frequently stated positive views about performance task were its contribution to their grades (20 students) and to their learning English (20 students). The other positive views were about the tasks' requiring research (6 students), its contribution to their learning daily language (6 students), improving their vocabulary (6 students) and providing revision (2 students).

A group of students (T2G1) stated:

[Performance tasks] have a big contribution because the tasks are designed for daily use [of English]. When I prepare performance tasks, I learn how the language is used in real life. For example I did a performance work about body care. I spent one month for it. It is the subject that I know best [...].

On the other hand, seventeen out of 73 students had negative opinions about performance and project tasks. The most frequently stated negative view was its being not beneficial for their learning language (11 students). Some of the students regarded these tasks as unnecessary (8 students) and uninteresting (3 students). The following scripts exemplify these views:

**T1G1:** We regard them as unnecessary. It is a waste of time. We deal with preparing carton papers rather than getting prepared for SBS. We do not think that it is beneficial.

**Researcher:** What do you learn by doing performance works?

**T1G1:** We do not think that we learn something. We do performance works on the subjects that we already know. For example, making vocabulary catalogues or preparing carton papers which show the tenses. As the teachers give importance to visual of the work, we ornament it. What the performance task involves is not that much important.

When the students were asked how they prepared their performance or project tasks, fifty-one out of 73 students expressed that they got extra help or support while fourteen out of 73 students reflected that they did not conduct research for doing their performance or project tasks. Eighteen out of 51 students expressed that they

asked help from their “*dershane*” teachers, while fifteen out of 51 students stated that they got support from their relatives, acquaintances or friends. Eighteen out of 51 students admitted that they downloaded their tasks from the Internet.

A group of students (T5 G2) stated:

It is not based on research because we take it from the Internet. We had to copy it from the Internet. Sometimes we translated [the tasks] when [the translation programs] could not translate. We carried out some of the performance tasks on their own but sometimes we took them from the Internet.

In brief, the majority of the students and teachers had positive views about performance or project tasks. Although the most frequently stated positive view by the teachers was the role of performance tasks on improving the students’ research skills, the most frequently stated positive views by the students were contribution of these tasks to increase their grades and learning. As for the negative view, students’ getting somebody to do their tasks, misuse of dictionary and considering performance tasks as a tool for increasing their grades were stated by the teachers. Consistent with the negative views of the teachers, most of the students reflected that they got extra help from the Internet, their acquaintances and “*dershane*” teachers rather than doing the tasks by themselves.

#### **4.8 Views about Challenges in Implementation**

Besides the challenges such as low level of the students, crowded classes, lack of equipment and materials, insufficient time and overloaded content mentioned by the teachers and the students in the previous categories, some other challenges faced in the implementation of the NEC were revealed from the perspectives of students and teachers.

##### **4.8.1. Level Determination Exam (SBS)**

Following the curriculum change conducted in the other subjects such as Mathematics, Science etc. in the second level of the primary education, a new assessment procedure named as Level Determination Exams (SBS) were introduced to second level of the primary schools. Level Determination Exams were



implemented for the first time in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades in June in 2008 and in the 8<sup>th</sup> grades in 2009. On the other hand, the implementation of the new English language curriculum was initiated in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in September in 2008, after the Level Determination Exams were implemented in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. When this study was conducted, the student participants of this study had already entered in Level Determination Exams in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades and they were getting prepared for the Level Determination Exam which was expected to be held for the 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The researcher asked how the existence of Level Determination Exam effected the implementation of the new English language curriculum.

Forty-four out of 73 students expressed that SBS had an influence on the content and activities of the lesson as well as the assessment techniques used by the teachers. Most of the students revealed that the teachers focused on teaching grammar and vocabulary and allocated considerable time to students' answering multiple choice questions in the lesson to practice the target subject.

To express the effect of SBS, a group of students (T1G1) stated:

[SBS] affects the activities in our lesson very much. Considering that we had a short time preparing the students for SBS, we could not carry out the activities that we liked. We mentioned here various activities [games, songs, roles plays] that we could do in the lesson [but we could not do them in the lesson]. The most important reason for not doing such kind of activities was SBS. We always had grammar activities [in the lesson]. Our teacher is also worrying about [covering all the units before SBS], therefore we do not have time left for such kind of activities like theatre in the lessons.

Twenty-five out of 73 students expressed that SBS had a negative effect on their doing homework as the students spent most of their time on being prepared for SBS which gave rise to doing their homework carelessly and improperly. A group of students (T2G1) exemplified this view by stating "When the time of SBS gets sooner, I start to give up doing homework because homework takes my time. Homework does not have any contribution to me. If there were not SBS, I could do much better homework."

Consistent with the students' views, all of the teachers perceived SBS as a challenge for the effective implementation of the NEC. All of the teachers expressed

the dilemma about whether to implement the NEC as it was expected or to prepare the students for SBS which has turned to be competition among the students. Nine out of 10 teachers expressed that they had to either omit or allocate less time for listening, speaking and writing activities so as to focus on reading and grammar activities as SBS involves vocabulary and grammar knowledge rather than four language skills. Eight out of 10 teachers expressed that they used answering multiple choice test questions both as an activity and assessment technique to practice the course's subject. Seven out of 10 students reflected that SBS created psychological pressure on themselves as it gave more responsibility and workload to them.

A teacher (T06) expressed how SBS affected the teachers:

SBS absolutely affects us. We usually cover the subjects by focusing on the SBS and avoiding loss of time. If I cannot cover all the subjects, I feel responsibility and endeavor to finish all the units. Our lessons are usually focused on reading, vocabulary and grammar due to SBS. I try to allocate test activities once a week. [...] It also affects me as the students failed in the achievement tests, I feel as if I failed in the exams. [SBS] brought extra workload [to the teachers].

The same teacher (T06) also highlighted that SBS brought about a competition not only among the students but also among the teachers: "The success of the teachers is determined through regarding the SBS results. The teachers are compared in terms of the achievements of the students in SBS."

To sum up, all of the teachers and the majority of the students expressed that SBS had a negative effect on the implementation of the NEC. It was revealed by most of the teachers and students that SBS affected the activities and focus of the lesson as the teachers allocated most of the lesson time for vocabulary and grammar activities as well as solving multiple choice tests. While some of the students reflected that due to SBS, they gave less importance to their homework, most of the teachers stated that SBS brought more responsibilities and workload which lead to psychological pressure on them.

#### 4.8.2. Lack of Gradual Implementation of the NEC

The new English language curriculum was put into implementation in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades of the primary school in 2008-2009 education year (MONE, 2006). In other words, new English language curricula were introduced to these grades without implementing them gradually which might have created challenges for the teachers and students in the implementation process. The student participants of this study had been subjected to the new English language curriculum in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and some of the teachers (T03, T05, T08) were experiencing it for the first time when this study was conducted. In this part, teachers' and students' challenges which were considered as caused by the lack of gradual implementation of new English language curriculum are presented.

Seven out of 10 teachers (T01, T02, T06, T07, T08, T09, T10) reflected that lack of gradual implementation of the NEC lead to difficulties for the teachers and students. Considering the students, seven out of 10 teachers stated that the students had difficulty in understanding and comprehending the subjects in the NEC as they were lack of background knowledge about subjects and vocabulary. One of the teachers (T09) also stated that it decreased the motivation of the students: "Neither teacher nor the students could be motivated. We had difficulty to adapt [the students] and to guide [the students]. I felt that the students' background was not ready for the program as they got used to another method."

Four out of 10 teachers (T02, T07, T08, T09) reflected that they had difficulty in understanding and adapting themselves to the NEC in terms of methods and instructional approaches suggested in the NEC. A teacher (T07) stated:

First of all, the teachers didn't understand the program so that it would be hard for them to reflect it to the students. Last year we were like trial and error. I conducted a lot of research about what to cover in each unit. As I came from an Anatolian High School, I had difficulty to adapt myself.

Four out of 10 teachers expressed that (T01,T02, T06, T08) lack of gradual implementation of the NEC lead to an increase in their workload and loss of lesson time as the teachers had to allocate some parts of the lesson to cover the subjects that

the students did not learn in the previous grades. A teacher (T02) described this view in detail:

It was hard for us too; we were not familiar with the book [the program]. It was necessary to examine the content of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades so as to teach the subjects they didn't learn in the previous grades, therefore; we hardly covered [the content of] curriculum. We revised the previous subjects of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, when the students did not understand. [...] The students have deficiencies about the subjects. There was a discontinuity [between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We tried to teach a subject of which prerequisites weren't covered in the previous grade. Last year was a missing year and it was up to the skills of the teacher indeed [to cover the subject effectively]. We covered the deficiencies [of the students] as much as we noticed.

In brief, the majority of the teachers reflected that both the teachers and students had difficulties since the NEC was not implemented gradually. The most frequently stated negative view was the students' lack of background knowledge sourced from the discontinuity with the content of previous grades. Some of the teachers also expressed the loss of time and increase of workload as a challenge since they tried compensating for this discontinuity in their lessons. Concerning the teachers, nearly half of the teachers stated that they had difficulty in understanding the program and adapting themselves according to the program.

#### 4.8.3. Lack of Guidance for the Implementation of the NEC

In this part, teachers' opinions related to the lack of guidance and support for the implementation of the new English language curriculum are presented.

When the teachers were asked whether they received the curriculum or its guide book, eight out of 10 teachers stated that they did not receive the new English language curriculum or the curriculum guidebook. One of the teachers (T10) who did not receive the curriculum stated that "we were not given any information [about the curriculum change]. We just received the textbooks and started to teach." Another teacher (T09) who received the curriculum stated that "in my previous school the teachers were asked to get the curriculum guidebook from board of education in the province but in this school there was not any [curriculum guide]."

When the teachers were asked how they became aware of the curriculum change, four out of 10 teachers reflected that they noticed the curriculum change through textbook change. One of the teachers (T01) stated:

We did not understand what happened. [They] only gave us the textbooks. In previous years, the curriculum guide was used to be given [to the teachers]. We used to know what the objectives and objectives [of the program] were. We did not have any information in relation to [curriculum] change. We only understood it through reading from the teachers books.

Three out of 10 teachers expressed that they became aware of the curriculum change through hearing from their colleagues and one out of 10 teachers stated that she learned about the curriculum change from the inspectors coming to school. Two out of 10 teachers (T03, T10) stated that they were not aware of the curriculum change as they did not implement the previous curriculum in the 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

When the teachers were asked how they became knowledgeable about the new English language curriculum and its innovations, all of the teachers indicated that they tried to understand the new English language curriculum with their own efforts either by reading the teachers' book or textbook. When the teachers were asked how they perceived the guidance for the new English language curriculum, eight out of 10 teachers considered that the guidance for the implementation of the NEC as insufficient. A teacher (T07) stated:

I did not attend any course or seminar [related to NEC] and I did not receive any guidance for NEC and the inspectors did not come to our school. We tried to understand the new program from the textbook. I read all the explanations in the book [...] I tried to learn it by myself.

Six out of 10 teachers expressed that they did not attend any course related to the NEC. On the other hand, four out of 10 teachers expressed that they attended a one week or two weeks course offered by MONE two years ago. However the teachers attending the in service training course claimed that it was not related to the implementation of the NEC and they commented that it was about instructional methods and activities that they were already familiar with. To express this challenge a teacher (T02) stated:

I was not informed about the implementation of the NEC. There was not any seminar related to the NEC in Polatli. There were seminars in other subjects

but not for English teachers. Two years ago, we attended a course. It was about teaching through games and oral English. It lasted two weeks. But it was not about the NEC. Each participant presented an activity with a game at the end of the seminar. We needed a seminar related to the implementation of the NEC but we learned it by ourselves. No one has learned it through seminar. A colleague told me that he applied for a seminar for the NEC but his application was not accepted. There is in service training but it has limited quota.

One of the teachers (T07) stated that she searched about NEC in the internet while another teacher (T09) stated that although she received the curriculum guide book, she learned about the implementation of the NEC from her colleagues:

I think that the curriculum guide book program not explanatory at all. They could have used another method [for describing the implementation of the NEC] It gives information only about the methods but not about which method to use in which parts of the lesson. It could have shown us [implementation of the methods] through examples or in the units. I examined the curriculum guide book when I received it but I could not benefit from it. I expected that it would be beneficial for me but it was not indeed. I tried to implement the changes in the NEC by negotiating with my colleagues.

. In sum, it was found out that the majority of the teachers received neither the curriculum nor the curriculum guidebook. It was revealed that while some of the teachers became aware of the curriculum change through change of the textbooks, some of them heard about it from their colleagues. Some of the teachers were not even aware of the curriculum change. As for the guidance, the majority of the teachers stated that they were not provided any guidance for the implementation of the NEC. All of the teachers reflected that they tried to understand the implementation of the NEC through textbooks or teacher books. While more than half of the teachers reflected that they did not attend a seminar or course related to the NEC, some of the teachers stated that although they attended a course or seminar before the NEC, they were not related to the NEC.

#### **4.9. Suggestions on the Implementation of the NEC**

In this part of the chapter, suggestions and the requirements for the effective implementation of the NEC are presented from the perspectives of teachers and students.

#### 4.9.1. Teachers' Suggestions on the Implementation of the NEC

Teachers were asked what was required in terms of schools, teachers and students for the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum. They were also asked what they would suggest if their opinions were involved in the development process of the NEC.

Nine out of 10 teachers reflected that the teachers should be provided with in service training or seminar which gives information about the NEC and implementation of it while two of them stated the teachers and the students should not be left alone in the implementation process of the NEC. The following scripts exemplify the suggestions of the teachers:

In service training is necessary [for the implementation of the NEC]. This training should also include the practice of the implementation. Through concrete examples, it should consider the views of the teachers. If there were a seminar related to the implementation of each unit, all the teachers in Polathl would participate to it (T07).

Considering the implementation of the NEC, I think that most of the teachers were generally incompetent [for the desired implementation of the NEC]. [Why do you think so?] It [the incompetence] is sourced from lack of understanding of the curriculum. Seminars should be organized and the curriculum guide book could be more explanatory (T09).

Eight out of 10 teachers suggested that the content of the NEC should be simplified in terms of the themes and vocabulary and the number of the units should be reduced. A teacher (T04) stated “some of the themes were above the level of the students. There should not be MI theme in this curriculum. There are 22 units and the number of units should be reduced.” Another teacher (T03) suggested that “The program should be simplified for the students. If the students had covered the previous subjects, the program could have been more effective. I suggest reducing the level of the program to the level of the students.”

Seven out of 10 teachers suggested that it is required to have audio-visual materials and equipments in the classes such as language classes, computers, smart boards, VCD players, TVs and flashcards so as to implement the NEC effectively. To express this need a teacher (T10) stated that “there should be language class

which has TV, DVD and visual materials in the cupboards so as to motivate the students. We had to prepare the materials and it took a considerable time.”

Half of the teachers suggested that the lesson hours allocated for implementing the NEC should be increased. To express this suggestion a teacher (T05) stated “through increasing the lesson hours, we could find a solution to this problem [not implementing the NEC effectively] Then, I would spend one hour for listening and one hour for writing.”

Three out of 10 teachers suggested that each language skill should be taught by different teachers in each class. To express this need a teacher (T01) stated:

I would make the teachers attend to in service training courses. I would make them specialize in the skills which they feel more competent such as speaking or reading [...] I would supply 2 or 3 different teachers to each class. [This curriculum] is not the one that only one teacher could manage. We only do what is required from us and we cover the unit [which means that we cannot focus on each skill.

One of the teachers (T06) suggested having alternative textbooks which could be designed for different levels of students:

They could design Spot on [the textbook] for different levels. They should consider the levels of the students while preparing the textbook. Both the students of Çankaya [which has relatively higher achievement levels] and the students of the eastern region of Turkey use the same book. It is not realistic. They should provide an opportunity of choosing among the textbooks. We do not choose this book; MONE makes us use this book.

Other suggestions were about the textbook such as its providing multiple choice tests, including more enjoyable activities and providing more samples or example to the students.

#### 4.9.2. Students’ Suggestions on the Implementation of the NEC

The suggestions of the students were revealed by asking them what was required in the classroom practices and how should the English lessons be conducted for improving their learning.

Likewise to the teachers, twenty-seven out of 73 students suggested that the lesson should involve audio-visual materials. To express this need one of the students



(T8G1) stated that “listening to a dialogue in English or watching a movie [in English] would grab our interest.” Another student (T7G1) stated:

We haven’t done any activities involving music, picture, drawing and games. If these are involved we could understand better. Especially it would be better for the ones who understand visually or musically better.

Twenty-eight out of 73 students stated that the lessons should have enjoyable activities which enable them to be more active in the lesson such as drama, songs, games, competitions and social activities. To express this need one of the students (T8G1) stated that “we always follow the activities of the textbook. [The lesson] becomes boring. We can do dramatization and it would be very interesting.” Another student (T8G1) stated:

We have no activities with music and games that we like. If we had, [our lessons] would be more fruitful and more entertaining. We could remember [the target vocabulary] easier. It is boring to do always the same activities. We forget [the vocabulary] easily.

Twenty-three out of 73 students stated that the lessons should consider SBS and therefore the lesson should focus on grammar and the textbooks should involve more tests. A student (T4G2) stated “I would rather that the textbook is designed according to SBS. It should involve test questions [...]”

Fifteen out of 73 students suggested that the textbook should have less and shorter reading texts while thirteen out of 73 students suggested that the textbook should provide the Turkish translation of the words or texts: To express this suggestion, a group of students (T8G1) stated that “we would rather that the reading texts included the words that we know. We would rather that it involved also the Turkish translations and visuals of the texts so as to understand better [...]. If our opinions are asked, we would make the reading texts shorter.”

Ten out of 73 students suggested that the characters used in the textbook should be more interesting and familiar to them and fifteen out of 73 students reflected that the themes should be more appealing to their needs and interests.

A group of students (T2G1) stated:

We would rather that the textbook were more colorful and enjoyable. If the characters [used in the textbook] were the singers or actors/actresses that we knew, we would listen to the teacher more attentively and we would like the

lessons more [...] we would rather that the themes grabbed our attention [...] [What would you like to do about English language teaching program if your opinions were asked?] I would like to put some texts related to daily life; it could be news from a foreign newspaper.

The other suggestions were about having more speaking activities, increasing the lesson time and having more challenging questions in the activities. A student (T3G2) stated “we would like to conduct various activities. We would like to carry out speaking [activities] rather than tests [...] more enjoyable activities would be better.”

To sum up, it was revealed that the majority of the teachers suggested in service training about the implementation of the NEC and simplifying the content of the NEC. More than half of the teachers suggested that the schools should have the necessary material and equipment for the effective implementation of the NEC. Half of the teachers suggested to increase the lesson hours while some of the teachers suggested to allocate different teachers for teaching different skills in the class. The other stated suggestions were about having alternative textbooks for different student levels, textbooks’ providing multiple choice tests, enjoyable activities and more samples or examples for the students. On the other hand, the students’ suggestions showed more variety than teachers. The most frequently stated suggestions of the students were revealed as having audio-visual materials and enjoyable activities to which they participate actively. Some of the students suggested that the lessons should focus on grammar and test activities by considering the SBS. The other stated suggestions were about making the reading passages shorter, making the themes and the characters used in the book more appealing to their interests, having more speaking activities and the textbook’s including the Turkish translation of the words or the texts in it.

Table 4.2 shows the summary of the findings about the implementation of the new English language curriculum from the perspectives of teachers and students.

Table 4.2: Summary of the Findings

Aspects of the curriculum	Findings	
	Teachers' views	Students' views
<b>Perception of Curriculum Change &amp; New English language curriculum</b>	<u>Positive Views</u>  Integrated four language skills Focused on vocabulary Became learner-centered Introduced alternative assessment Teachers had the role of guide Focused on speaking	
	<u>Negative Views</u>  The content presented in the textbook was above the level of the students, Themes were irrelevant. The content was overloaded and inappropriate for SBS. Could not achieve its aims due to implementation problems. Led to increase in their workload	
<b>Students' Attitudes</b>	The students lacked interest in the lesson and had negative opinions for learning English.	<u>Positive Views</u>  Learning English was important for having better job opportunities in the future, for communication and SBS.  English lessons were enjoyable and easy to understand.  <u>Negative views</u> The activities were boring, difficult and lack of variety.

Table 4.2 (continued)

Aspects of the curriculum	Findings	
	Teachers' views	Students' views
<b>Implementation Approach</b>	<p>Teachers adapted the curriculum:</p> <p>Speaking, listening and writing activities were usually skipped.</p> <p>Content, activities and objectives were simplified.</p> <p><u>The reasons:</u></p> <p>Time constraint Insufficient level and background of the students.</p>	<p>Teachers skipped writing, speaking and listening activities due to time constraint.</p>
<b>Instructional Approach</b>	<p><u>Multiple Intelligences Theory</u></p> <p>Classroom practices did not appeal to different intelligence types and learning styles.</p> <p><u>The reasons:</u></p> <p>Inappropriate design of the curriculum Lack of knowledge Lack of sources and materials.</p> <p><u>Learner-centeredness</u></p> <p>Teachers perceived learner-centeredness as:</p> <p>Students' having more active role Students' having more responsibilities Using discovery method Teachers' having the role of guide</p> <p>Teachers mostly made use of teacher-centered approaches.</p> <p><u>The Reasons:</u></p> <p>Insufficient time Crowded classes Students' lack of background Students' unfamiliarity with learner-centered teaching Lack of materials and sources</p>	<p><u>Multiple Intelligences Theory</u></p> <p>Classroom practices did not appeal to different intelligence types and learning styles</p> <p><u>Learner-centeredness</u></p> <p>Students perceived "being active in the lesson" as:</p> <p>Translating the sentences Finding the unknown vocabulary from the dictionary Answering the questions Going to the board to write the answers</p> <p>Teachers had more active role during the lesson.</p> <p>Teachers' roles: Main character of a movie Interpreter Lecturer President</p> <p>Students' roles: Co-actor Figurants Apprentice Assistant Listener</p>

Table 4.2(continued)

Aspects of the curriculum	Findings	
	Teachers' views	Students' views
<b>Instructional Approach</b>	<p><u>Cooperative Learning</u></p> <p>Teachers made use of individual study and whole class activities.</p> <p>Teachers used pair work for dialogue activities, challenging subjects or performance tasks.</p> <p><u>The reasons:</u> Crowded classes Unequal participation of the group members Time consuming nature of cooperative working</p>	<p><u>Cooperative Learning</u></p> <p>Students preferred working in groups.</p> <p>Teachers used individual activities rather than cooperative ones.</p> <p>Teachers used group work in performance or project tasks or when there was any group activity in the book.</p> <p><u>The reasons:</u> Class noise Unequal participation of the students Lack of necessary time Mixed levels among the students Group management problems</p>
<b>Methods</b>	<p>Lecturing was the main instructional method.</p> <p>Teachers used deductive grammar teaching.</p> <p>Teachers partially used discovery method for teaching grammar inductively/indirectly.</p> <p>GTM was the most used language teaching method</p> <p>Turkish was used as the medium of instruction.</p>	<p>Lecturing was the main instructional method.</p> <p>Teachers used deductive grammar teaching.</p> <p>Teacher taught the target subjects with the medium of Turkish</p> <p>Teachers and students translated the reading text as a classroom practice.</p>
<b>Strategies and/or activities</b>	<p><u>Presentation of grammar</u></p> <p>Comparing English grammar structures with the Turkish structures Formulizing the rules Drawing tables Giving examples Making sentence transformations</p>	<p><u>Presentation of grammar</u></p> <p>Formulizing the rules Giving Turkish equivalence of the structures</p>

Table 4.2 (continued)

Aspects of the curriculum	Findings	
	Teachers' views	Students' views
<b>Strategies and/or activities</b>	<u>Strategies for inductive method</u>  Eliciting the rules from the students Giving example sentences.  Students' finding out the unknown words from the dictionary.	<u>Practice of grammar</u>  Giving examples Doing grammar drill Solving multiple choice tests Students Filling in the blanks, Ordering the jumbled sentences
	<u>Reading strategies</u>  Loud reading Answering the comprehension questions Translating the text	<u>Reading strategies</u>  Loud reading Silent reading Translating the text Answering the comprehension questions
	<u>Listening strategies</u>  Answering the questions, filling in the blanks were the listening strategies.	<u>Listening strategies</u>  Teachers read loudly and translated the text.
	<u>Speaking strategies</u>  Dialogues and question and answering sessions.	<u>Speaking strategies</u>  Preparing dialogues Reading dialogues
	<u>Writing activities</u>  Homework Writing the answers of the comprehension questions.	<u>Writing activities</u>  Homework Writing the answers of the comprehension questions Writing what was written on the board.
		<u>Negative views</u> Not enjoyable or boring Difficult Uninteresting Unnecessary Lack of variety

Table 4.2 (continued)

Aspects of the curriculum	Findings	
	Teachers' views	Students' views
<b>Classroom Climate</b>	<p>Teachers decided for the kinds of the activities and the way they were carried.</p> <p>Teachers provided alternatives to the students for the performance or project tasks.</p>	<p>Teachers were the decision makers in the class.</p> <p>Teachers did not take students' opinions into the consideration for the activities.</p> <p>Teachers gave possibilities for working in pairs.</p> <p>Teacher gave options or alternatives to the students for the performance or projects tasks</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Speaking and pronunciation were the least attained skills.</p> <p>Students were less competent in writing and listening skills.</p> <p>Reading skill was the most attained skill.</p>	<p>Speaking and pronunciation were the least attained skills.</p> <p>Students were less competent in writing and listening skills.</p> <p>Some of the students perceived themselves incompetent in reading skills.</p>
<b>Content</b>	<p><u>Negative views</u></p> <p>The vocabulary items were excessive and above the level of the students.</p> <p>Some of the themes were irrelevant for the needs and interests of the students and above the level of the students.</p> <p>Content was overloaded and inconsistent with SBS.</p> <p><u>Positive views</u></p> <p>Complementary of the lower grades Grabbing students' attention Appropriate grammar structures</p> <p><u>Sequence</u></p> <p>Mixed order and sequenced from difficult to easy.</p>	<p><u>Negative views</u></p> <p>The vocabulary items were excessive and above the level of the students.</p> <p>The themes were difficult, useless and uninteresting.</p> <p><u>Positive views</u></p> <p>Grabbing attention Enjoyable activities Easy grammar structures</p>

Table 4.2 (continued)

Aspects of the curriculum	Findings	
	Teachers' views	Students' views
<b>Materials</b>	<i>Textbook</i>	<i>Textbook</i>
	<u>Negative views</u>	<u>Negative views</u>
	Had unauthentic and insufficient visuals Had language mistakes.	The activities of the textbook were difficult and boring.
	The characters used in the textbook are irrelevant to the ages and interests of the students.	Students fed up with having the same characters.
	Reading texts and the vocabulary of the textbook were above the students' level.	Reading texts and the vocabulary of the textbook were above their level.
	Presented the grammar in a complex way without giving the necessary explanations and examples.	Reading texts were lengthy.
		Had complex presentation and insufficient grammar drills.
		Did not appeal to different learning styles.
	<u>Positive views:</u>	<u>Positive views:</u>
	Textbook activities required research.	Students liked textbook's involving visuals.
	Had good presentation Gave importance to knowledge Appealed to multiple intelligences. Involved up-to-date topics and reading passages.	Students liked crosswords and songs of the textbook.
	<i>Supporting Materials</i>	<i>Supporting Materials</i>
	Flashcards Posters Worksheets	Grammar book Worksheets Test books
	Lack of materials and equipment in the classes had affected implementation of the NEC in a negative way.	Teachers followed only the textbook.  The lessons were boring or not enjoyable due to the lack of audio-visual material.



Table 4.2 (continued)

Aspects of the curriculum	Findings	
	Teachers' views	Students' views
<b>Materials</b>	<p><i>Workbook</i></p> <p><u>Negative views:</u></p> <p>Insufficient in terms of providing exercises for the practice of grammar.</p> <p>Lacked grammar exercises.</p> <p><i>Teacher's Book</i></p> <p>Lacked guidance to the teacher.</p>	
<b>Assessment Procedures</b>	<p>The teachers conducted traditional assessment techniques such as written exams, quizzes and tests.</p> <p>The teachers did not use peer evaluation, self evaluation and portfolio as alternative assessment techniques.</p> <p>The teachers perceived the function of portfolio as a folder just for keeping the worksheets or performance tasks.</p> <p><u>Reasons for not using the suggested assessment techniques:</u></p> <p>Insufficient time Crowded classes Lack of necessary guidance Lack of knowledge</p> <p>The performance and project works improved the research skills of the students.</p>	<p>The teachers conducted traditional assessment techniques such as written exams, quizzes and tests.</p> <p>The teachers did not use peer evaluation, self evaluation and portfolio as alternative assessment techniques.</p> <p>The students perceived the function of portfolio as a folder just for keeping the worksheets or performance tasks.</p> <p>The performance and project tasks were perceived as a tool for improving their grades.</p> <p>The students get extra help from the Internet, their acquaintances and "dershane" teachers rather than doing the tasks by themselves</p>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>Low level of the students Crowded classes Lack of equipment and materials Insufficient time Overloaded content</p>	<p>Crowded Classes Lack of equipment and materials Insufficient time</p>

Table 4.2 (continued)

Aspects of the curriculum	Findings	
	Teachers' views	Students' views
<b>Challenges</b>	<u>SBS</u> It brought workload for the teachers. Teachers focused on vocabulary and grammar drills and they ignored the listening, speaking and writing activities. Teachers used multiple choice tests as an assessment technique. The teachers felt psychological pressure and dilemma.	<u>SBS</u> Teachers focused on teaching grammar and vocabulary Teachers allotted considerable time to students' answering multiple choice questions. Students spent most of their time on getting prepared for SBS which gave rise to doing their homework carelessly and improperly.
	<u>Lack of gradual implementation of NEC</u> Students were lack of background knowledge about subjects and vocabulary.	
	Discontinuity of the content decreased the motivation of the students.	
	Led to increase in teachers' workload and loss of lesson time.	
	<u>Lack of Guidance for NEC</u> Teachers received neither the curriculum nor the curriculum guidebook.	
	Teachers perceived textbook as curriculum.	
	Teachers were not provided any guidance or support.	
	Teachers had difficulty in understanding the program and adapting themselves to the program.	

Table 4.2 (continued)

Aspects of the curriculum	Findings	
	Teachers' views	Students' views
<b>Suggestions</b>	<p>The teachers need in service training. The teachers demand simplifying the content of the NEC.</p> <p>The necessary material sources and equipment to the schools should be provided.</p> <p>The lesson hours should be increased.</p> <p>Each language skill should be taught by different teachers in each class.</p> <p>Alternative textbooks might be used.</p>	<p>Teachers should use audio-visual materials</p> <p>Teachers should use enjoyable activities such as drama, songs, games, competitions and social activities.</p> <p>The lesson should focus on grammar</p> <p>The textbooks should involve more tests.</p> <p>The textbook should have less and shorter reading text.</p> <p>The textbook should provide the Turkish translation of the words or texts</p>

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The main purpose of this study is to reveal teachers' and students' perceptions about the implementation of the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language curriculum and the challenges and/or problems faced by the teachers and students during the implementation process. Specifically, this study focuses on teachers' and students' views on the objectives, content, materials, assessment procedures, instructional methods, approaches and strategies used and/or suggested in the NEC. This study also reveals teachers' and students' suggestions for the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum. This chapter provides the discussion of the findings followed by the implications for practice and for future research.

#### **5.1. Discussions and Conclusions**

##### **5.1.1. Teachers' Perceptions of the Curriculum Change and the NEC**

It was found out that teachers' perceptions of curriculum change and their views about the NEC varied. The stated perceptions and/or positive views about the NEC can be listed as the NEC's integrating four language skills, promoting active involvement of the learners, becoming learner-centered, regarding the teachers' role as guide, focusing on speaking skill, encouraging research and reasoning, having coherent content with the lower grades' curricula, introducing alternative assessment and MI theory and the textbook's involving up-to-date topics and reading passages. It was revealed that the perceptions of the teachers were consistent with the NEC guideline which suggests integrating primary/four language skills specified as reading, listening, speaking and writing, improving creative thinking, reasoning, and research skills of the learners, using learner-centered teaching methods and alternative assessment techniques (MONE, 2006). Furthermore, teachers' positive views about the NEC indicated that most of the teachers were content with the

innovation of English language curriculum. This finding of the study was consistent with Topkaya and Küçük's study (2010) which revealed the perceptions of English language teachers about the innovated 4th and 5th grade English language curriculum. It was also consistent with the other studies conducted in different subject areas (Baturay & Karaca 2008; Çınar, Teyfur & Teyfur, 2006; Gömleksiz & Bulut, 2007) since they also revealed that the teachers had positive views about the curriculum change and perceived the new English language curriculum as better than the former.

However, despite being content with the curriculum innovation, when the teachers were asked how they perceived the new English language curriculum and/or curriculum change, some of the teachers stated negative views about its implementation and the content offered in the textbook. The teachers commented that the themes and vocabulary offered in the textbook were above the level of the students, irrelevant to the learners' interest, overloaded and inappropriate for SBS. This finding of the study could be discussed from two perspectives. First, it indicated that the teachers perceived the curriculum change in terms of the content offered in the textbook. Teachers' perceiving the curriculum change in terms of the content of the textbook might be caused by the teachers' perceiving the textbook as the curriculum which is also stated in the related literature (O'Neill, 1982; Macian, 1986; Sheldon, 1988) This finding of the study was also consistent with the other studies which revealed similar findings (Öztürk, 2006; Tılfaroğlu & Öztürk, 2007; Zincir, 2006). Secondly, despite being content with the curriculum change, teachers' having negative views about some aspects of the NEC could be sourced from the challenges that they encountered during the implementation of the new English language curriculum as it will be discussed later. Similar findings were also revealed by Büyükduman (2001, 2005) and Topkaya and Küçük (2010) as they also found out that although the teachers were content with the curriculum, the teachers had implementation problems.

Another point is that, the number of the teachers who perceived this change in terms of alternative assessment and process evaluation was very few. However, the

new English language curriculum introduced authentic/alternative assessment techniques such as portfolios, performance and project works, peer-evaluation and self-evaluation techniques as major innovations against the traditional assessment (MONE, 2006; Kırkgöz, 2007b; Kutlu, 2005). Likewise, although new English language curriculum underlines the importance of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as well as promoting the other learner-centered approaches such as Multiple Intelligence Theory (MI), Cooperative and Task based Learning (MONE, 2006), only one teacher mentioned that new English language curriculum considered MI theory and CLT. Furthermore, another important finding is that although the innovation of the new English language curriculum is considered to be theoretically based on Constructivist Approach (Gökleksiz, 2007; Gözütok, Akgün & Karacaoğlu, 2005; Hatipoğlu, 2005; Tekişik, 2005, Yaşar et al., 2005), none of the teachers perceived the curriculum change in terms of its constructivist nature. Therefore, it can be argued that teachers are not much aware of the philosophy of the program and the innovations brought by this new approach. Teachers' lack of knowledge about the innovations introduced by the new English language curriculum, could be caused by insufficient guidance and support provided for them before and during the implementation of the new English language curriculum. Fullan (2007) suggests that teachers need more time, training and ongoing support to change their classroom practices for an innovation to succeed. These finding of this study were also consistent with the other studies which revealed the perceptions of primary school teachers about the new primary school curriculum (Erdoğan, 2007; Gökleksiz, 2007; Senger, 2007, Yaşar et al., 2005). They also found out that due to the insufficient guidance provided for the teachers, the teachers were not knowledgeable about the new English language curriculum and its innovations which were also considered as preventing the effective implementation of the NEC.

#### 5.1.2. Students' Attitudes towards Learning English and Classroom Practices

The findings revealed that most of the students gave importance to learning English which indicated that they had positive attitudes towards learning English.

However, more than half of the teachers stated that the students lacked interest in the lesson and had negative opinions for learning English. This could be caused by the teachers' perceiving students' negative attitudes for the classroom activities as if they were the attitudes for learning English. This finding of this study was also consistent with the other studies which revealed students' lacking interest in classroom activities (Erdoğan, 2005; Çakıt, 2006; Sevinç, 2006; Yanık, 2007). On the other hand, it was also found out that half of the students perceived the classroom activities as boring, difficult and lack of variety which could be the reason for their having negative opinions and attitudes for English lesson. However, it is extensively emphasized in the literature that it is important to use enjoyable and interesting activities in teaching English to young learners for increasing learners' involvement into the activities and creating positive learner attitudes towards learning (Çakır, 2004; Moon, 2000; Klein, 1993; Phillips, 2001; Thornton, 2001).

From another perspective, it can be argued that students' having negative attitudes towards the lesson could also be caused by the lack of democratic atmosphere in the class as most of the teachers and students revealed that teachers were the only decision makers in the class. A few teachers and some students stated that the students were given alternatives for performance and project tasks and pair work. However, the number of students and teachers reflecting that the students were not involved in the decision making process related to the activities or stating that students' opinions were not considered by the teachers were considerable. This classroom practice was contrary to the learner-centeredness suggested in the NEC which highlights the importance of creating democratic atmosphere and autonomous learning environment where the students are given responsibilities for their own learning (MONE, 2006). Furthermore, it is also contrary to the existing literature stressing the importance of creating learner-centered classroom environment where the needs and the attitudes of the learners are considered while designing the content and the learning activities (Cranton, 1998; Nunan, 1992; Nunan, 1998; Nunan, 2000). Nunan (2000) stresses the importance of creating learner-centered classroom environment and defines learner-centered classrooms as the places where "key

decisions about what will be taught, how it will be taught, when it will be taught, and how it will be accessed will be made with reference to the learner” (p. 11).

#### 5.1.3. Teachers’ and Students’ Views about the Attainment of the Objectives

Considering the perceptions of the students and teachers on the attainment of the NEC objectives, the findings of this study revealed that all of the teachers and the majority of the students perceived speaking and pronunciation as the least attained skill. Following, both the teachers and the students stated that the students were less competent in writing and listening skills in an ascending order of frequency. The only disagreement between two parties was on the reading skill in that while all the teachers believed that it was the most attained skill, some of the students perceived themselves incompetent in reading skill as well as in the other skills. The findings of this study were confirmed by Büyükduman’s study (2005) which revealed the opinions of the teachers who teach English at the first level of the primary school. Büyükduman (2005) found that half of the teachers regarded the objectives related to listening, writing and speaking skills as unattained by the students while most of the teachers contended that the objectives related to reading skill were attained by the students. Besides, the findings of this study were also consistent with the findings of Yanık’s study (2007) which focused on the perceptions of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and English language teachers. Yanık (2007) also found that the teachers perceived reading as the most attained skill while the students regarded reading like the other skills as sometimes achieved. It was also revealed in the other studies conducted in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades that English language teachers perceived the students as not attaining the curriculum objectives (Er, 2006; Öztürk, 2006).

#### 5.1.4. Teachers’ and Students’ Views about the Content of the NEC

Due to the fact that the teachers perceived the textbook as the curriculum, they perceived the content of the textbook as the original content of the NEC which has been previously discussed. Therefore, teachers’ perceptions about the content of the NEC could be considered as reflecting their perceptions of the content offered in



the textbook. It was revealed that half of the teachers and some of the students contended that the target grammar subjects were appropriate for the levels of the students. On the other hand, most of the teachers and some of the students stated negative views about the vocabulary and themes offered in the content. They both regarded the vocabulary items and themes as above the level of the students. Besides, both parties complained about the excessive vocabulary and the themes' being irrelevant for the needs and interests of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. However, it is emphasized in the literature that in constructivist learning environments the content of the curriculum should be of interest for the learners (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

This finding of the study was confirmed by the other studies which were conducted in the other grade levels about the former English language curriculum (Erdoğan, 2005; Mersinligil, 2002; Tılfaroğlu & Öztürk, 2007) since they found out that the content of the English language curriculum was perceived as inappropriate or ineffective by the teachers in terms of the level and the interests of the students. Besides, this finding of this study was also confirmed by the other studies conducted about the new English language curriculum of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades (Akcan & Tatar, 2009; Topkaya & Küçük, 2010). They also found out that the teachers perceived some of the units as above the levels of the students in terms of the vocabulary and structures used in the texts.

The reason for both parties' perceiving the themes and vocabulary as above the level of the students could be the lack of gradual implementation of the NEC since it might have created discontinuity in themes and vocabulary as it will be discussed later. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers perceived the content as overloaded while the students did not mention about it. This might be caused by the insufficient time allocated for teaching English in the primary school. The finding of this study was confirmed by the other studies conducted about the previous English language curriculum (Erdoğan, 2005; Mersinligil, 2002; Yanık, 2007) as they revealed that most of the teachers were complaining about the overloaded content of the curriculum.

Overall, it can be argued that the perceptions of the teachers related to the content of English language curriculum have not changed despite the change of curriculum.

#### 5.1.5. Teachers' and Students' Views about the Materials

As for the materials expected to be used in the implementation of the new English language curriculum, both the students and the teachers had negative views about the textbook. The teachers and the students complained about the textbooks' involving lengthy passages with too many unknown vocabulary which made it difficult for the students to comprehend the passages and do the text related activities. This finding of this study was confirmed with Çakıt's study (2006) who evaluated the 9<sup>th</sup> grade's English language textbook. Furthermore, both the teachers and the students regarded that the textbook involved themes which were irrelevant to the needs and interests of the students as well as being above the level of the students. This finding of this study was consistent with the other studies conducted about the 5<sup>th</sup> grade's English language textbook (Akcan & Tatar, 2009) and 9<sup>th</sup> grade's English language textbook (Çakıt, 2006). However, this was contrary to the existing literature which emphasizes that textbooks should involve the topics or themes which are relevant to the needs of the learners and which could grab the learners' attention and interest (Cunningsworth, 1995; Breen & Candlin, 1987). It is also stated that the content's being appropriate to the needs and the interests of the learners had an important role in increasing students' motivation (Cunningsworth, 1995). Furthermore, it is strongly emphasized in the related literature that the materials should be designed as appropriate to language levels of the students (Breen & Candlin 1987; Cunningsworth, 1995; Dougill, 1987; Sheldon, 1987; Skierso, 1991).

Both the teacher and the students reflected that the textbook lacked grammar exercises for the improvement of grammatical knowledge and it presented the grammar in a complex way without giving the necessary explanations and examples. This finding of the study was confirmed by Yanık's study (2007) which revealed that

the number of examples, explanations and structural exercises of the textbook was perceived as insufficient by the teachers. It was also consistent with Çakıt's study (2006) which revealed that both the students and teachers perceived the textbook as involving unclear and incomprehensible grammar sections and lacking the sufficient grammar exercises. However, it is necessary that textbook designers consider the need of the learners while choosing the grammar items that the textbooks involve (Cunningsworth, 1995). Besides, clarity, effectiveness and simplicity of the presentation and illustrations of the materials are considered as important for evaluating the physical appearance of the materials (Skierso (1991).

The teachers also expressed that the textbook included unauthentic and insufficient visuals and language mistakes. They also regarded the characters used in the textbook as irrelevant to the ages and interests of the students. Similarly, in the other studies (Çakıt, 2006; Yanık, 2007) the teachers complained about the layout of the textbook especially its lack of visual support. However, it is stated in the literature that the visual attractiveness of the materials and the textbooks are important in increasing the motivation and the interest of the students towards the lesson (Donough & Shaw, 1993).

Another perception of the teachers about the course materials was about the teachers' book. It was revealed that the teachers regarded the teachers' book as lacking guidance to the teachers and complained about its serving only as an answer key. This finding of this study was also confirmed by Çakıt's study (2006) which revealed that the teachers complained about the teacher's book functioning only as an answer key to the exercises in the textbook. However, teacher's book's providing guidance to the teachers and its usefulness are among the criteria used for evaluating a teacher's book (Dougill, 1987; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Sheldon, 1987). It is also indicated by Cunningsworth (1995) that 'a good teacher's book is invaluable in offering, among other things, guidelines on how to make the best use of the course (p.112). This finding of the study indicates that the teachers expect from the teachers' book to provide them more guidance in implementing the textbook. This might be caused by the teachers' need of guidance for implementing the activities and the

methods of the textbook as it was expected to be prepared in accordance with the new English language curriculum' philosophy.

Considering the workbook, half of the teachers also regarded workbook as insufficient in terms of providing the exercises for the practice of grammar. This view can be sourced from the teachers' giving more importance to practice of grammar rather than language skills as it will be discussed later.

As for the supporting materials, there was a disagreement between two parties about the use of supporting materials in the class; that is while most of the students reflected that the teachers used a grammar book and test book to practice the grammar subjects in the class, most of the teachers stated that they only followed the book. This might be caused by the teachers' concern, as MONE prohibited using another textbook instead of the pre-determined textbooks in the schools. Another disagreement is that while most of the teachers stated that they made use of visual materials such as flashcards and posters in the class, most of the students complained about the lack of visual and audio material in the lessons. The difference in their views might be caused by the teachers' perceiving the question asked about the use of different materials as a threatening question. That is, although the teachers did not use the suggested curriculum materials other than the textbook in the classes, they might have hesitated to admit it to the interviewer. The finding of this study was confirmed by the other studies (Öztürk, 2006; Sevinc, 2006; Tılfaroğlu & Öztürk, 2007) which revealed that the teachers did not make use of audio or visual material in their classes. However, this was contrary to the existing literature which widely emphasizes the role of using various materials and audio visual materials in effective teaching and learning English particularly for young learners (Crawford, 2001; Aslanargu & Süngü, 2006; Çakır, 2004; Moon, 2000).

#### 5.1.6. Teachers' and Students' Views about the Assessment Procedures

As for the assessment procedures, both the teachers and the students reflected that the assessment of the students' learning was mainly conducted through traditional assessment techniques such as written exams, quizzes and tests. However, the traditional assessment of students' learning through standardized exams leads

rote learning without comprehending the material (Kesal & Aksu, 2006). Both parties stated that the teachers did not use peer- evaluation, self- evaluation and portfolio as alternative assessment techniques which were considered as innovative in the new English language curriculum (MONE, 2006). Furthermore, it was found out that both parties perceived the function of portfolio as a folder just for keeping the worksheets or performance tasks which were used and evaluated rather than as a tool for observing and assessing students' progress. However, the function of portfolio is stated in the related literature as a tool for both students and teachers to monitor and follow growth and improvement of the students through providing evidence for progress (Janesick, 2006; Ornstein & Lasley, 2004). Furthermore, the importance and the necessity of using portfolio for assessing students' learning foreign language is widely emphasized in the related literature (Chen, 2000; Fenwick & Parsons, 1999; Singer, 1993; Wolf, 1989).

Insufficient time, crowded classes, lack of necessary guidance and lack of knowledge about alternative assessment techniques were stated by the teachers as the factors preventing the implementation of these alternative assessment techniques. Teachers' not using portfolio as an alternative assessment technique could be caused by their misperception of the portfolio as it is emphasized in the related literature that teachers' perceptions and understanding of an innovation has an important role in the effective or desired implementation of the innovation (Bishop, 1991; Fullan, 1991b; Wang, 2006). Furthermore, the teachers and students' misperception of portfolio assessment and nonuse of these authentic assessment techniques could be caused by the fact that they were not informed and guided about the effective use of these alternative assessment techniques as it is also stated by the teachers. These findings of this study were confirmed by Büyükduman' study (2005) and Mersinligil's study (2002) as they found out English language teachers using the previous curriculum in the primary school did not use the suggested assessment procedures due to insufficient time and it was found out that the teachers often used paper and pencil tests to assess the achievement of the students. Furthermore, this finding of the study was also consistent with Hatipoğlu's study (2005) which revealed that English

language teachers' lack of knowledge about portfolio assessment led to their non-using this assessment technique effectively in the public primary schools.

Considering the performance and project tasks, most of the students had positive views as they expressed that these tasks improved their scores. On the other hand, while the teachers contended that these tasks improved the research skills of the students, most of the students stated that they did not prepare their projects by themselves. They stated that got extra help from the Internet, their relatives and friends and “*dershane*” teachers rather than doing the tasks by themselves. Similarly, students' getting somebody to do their tasks and perceiving performance tasks as a tool for increasing their scores were stated by the teachers as problems hindering the effective implementation of performance and project tasks. The reason for the students' getting someone else to do their performance or project tasks could be their lack of background skills and knowledge for doing the tasks properly by themselves. Besides, the teachers' assigning the same performance and project tasks without considering the individual differences of the students could have an effect in students' regarding these tasks as challenging to do individually. These findings indicate that although alternative or authentic assessment is the most significant innovation of the new English language curriculum (Kırkgöz, 2007b), teachers could not implement this innovation effectively in their classrooms.

#### 5.1.7. Teachers' and Students' Views about the Instructional Approaches

New English language curriculum suggests Multiple Intelligences Theory, Cooperative Learning, and Learner-centered teaching (MONE, 2006). As for the Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory, one of the suggested instructional approaches of the new English language curriculum (MONE, 2006), both parties seem to agree in that the instructional activities did not appeal to different intelligence types and learning styles. The most frequently stated reasons by the teachers for not reflecting MI theory into their activities were inappropriate design of the curriculum, lack of knowledge about implementation of MI theory and lack of necessary sources and materials in an ascending order of frequency. Considering cooperative learning,

although the majority of the students stated that they preferred working in groups in class activities, all of the teachers stated that they mostly made use of individual study and whole class activities, while a few teachers stated they also used pair work for dialogue activities, challenging subjects or performance tasks. The reasons for not preferring group activities stated by the teachers as crowded classrooms, regarding group work as time consuming and inappropriate for the low achiever students. This finding of the study was also confirmed by the other studies (Kırgöz, 2008c; Öztürk, 2006; Tılfaroğlu & Öztürk, 2007) which found out that the teachers preferred and/or conducted individual study rather than group work in their classroom practices. This might also be caused by the teachers' lack of knowledge about the benefits and importance of cooperative learning. However, this finding of this study was contrary to the existing literature stressing the importance of using cooperative learning. Cooperative learning not only increases the possibilities of interaction but also fosters the students' commitment to learning as the students will have more possibilities of perceiving and producing the language which may not be possible in whole class activities (Brumfit, 1989; Ergür, 2004; Jacobs & Hall, 2001; McCafferty, Jacobs & Iddings, 2006).

It can be concluded from the findings that the teachers did not reflect MI theory and Cooperative learning into their instructional practices although they were suggested in the new English language curriculum (MONE, 2006). This might be caused by the teachers' not receiving the curriculum guideline and lack of knowledge about how to implement them effectively in large classes as it will be discussed later.

Considering learner-centeredness, the most frequently stated perceptions of learner-centered teaching by the teachers were students' active participation to activities, teachers' using discovery method and having the role of "guide", in an ascending order of frequency. Nonetheless, all of the teachers and the majority of the students reflected that the teachers mostly used teacher-centered approaches through being the source and transmitter of the knowledge. The findings of this study revealed that although the teachers seem knowledgeable about learner-centered teaching; they did not reflect it into their classroom practices. This finding of the

study was consistent with Kavanoz's study (2006) which revealed that English language teachers did not implementing the learner-centered teaching in their classroom practices although they seem knowledgeable about learner-centered teaching. Besides, the findings of this study were also consistent with Kırkgöz's studies (2008b, 2008c) which revealed that English language teachers maintained their traditional roles as presenter and the source of knowledge as well as using teacher-centered instruction.

This seems problematic considering the constructivist nature of the new English language curriculum because in constructivist learning, teacher's roles has changed from being the transmitter of knowledge to being facilitator of learning and from being the source of knowledge to being the guide for the learners' researching and constructing the knowledge (Dharmadasa, 2000; Grubb et al., 1999). Furthermore, the practices of the teachers were also inconsistent with the related literature emphasizing the importance of learner-centered approaches for teaching English (Moon, 2000; Nunan, 1992; Nunan, 1998; Philips, 2001). The most frequently stated reasons for not using learner-centered teaching were stated as insufficient time or regarding learner-centered activities as time consuming, crowded classes, students' lack of background and unfamiliarity with the learner-centered teaching in their previous grades and lack of necessary materials and sources.

The findings of the study about the instructional approaches were consistent with the other studies conducted at the other grade levels which found that the practices of the teachers were teacher-centered and traditional where the teachers used whole class activities and individual study rather than cooperative work and regarded their roles as presenter or transmitter of the knowledge rather than a facilitator (Büyükduman, 2005; Kavanoz, 2006; Kırkgöz 2008b; Mersinligil, 2002; Senger, 2007; Sevinç, 2006). In conclusion, it can argued that teachers maintain their traditional roles and teacher-centered methods in language teaching despite the curriculum innovation which brought learner-centered approaches in teaching and learning language. Prawat (1992) points out that although teachers are considered as important change agents in a curriculum innovation, they are also viewed as main



obstacles hindering the change because of their maintaining traditional forms of instruction which focuses on presenting factual or procedural knowledge.

#### 5.1.8. Teachers' and Students' Views about Instructional Methods and Strategies

Considering the instructional methods and strategies used for teaching grammar, the majority of both the students and the teachers stated that lecturing was used as the main instructional method. Besides, both parties reflected that grammar was taught deductively/directly by formulizing the rules, giving the Turkish equivalence of the structures or relating it with the Turkish ones. Considering learner-centered methods, a few teachers stated that they partially used discovery method for teaching grammar inductively/indirectly particularly when the grammar structure was not challenging or when the students were already familiar with the target structure. The strategy used for inductive grammar teaching was stated by a few teachers as eliciting the rules from the students by providing context and asking about it. However, none of the students mentioned about the use of discovery method or inductive/indirect grammar teaching in the classroom practices. This might be caused by the teachers' rarely using this method. Considering the practice of grammar, giving examples and transformations were the most frequently stated strategies by the teachers while the students stated giving examples, doing grammar drills, doing multiple choice tests, filling in the blanks and ordering the jumbled sentences as for the strategies used for the practice of grammar.

The summary of these findings about the methods and strategies revealed that lecturing was the main method heavily used by the teachers. However, in the related literature, lecturing is regarded as a teacher-centered instruction, and not suggested especially for young and low achiever students for more than a few minutes as well as suggested to mix it with other visual, audio or physical activities (Ornstein & Lasley, 2004). Comparing the two methods, it was revealed that deductive teaching was used more frequently than inductive one and the teachers using inductive teaching reflected that it was implemented occasionally, not always. However, in the new English language curriculum it is suggested to use discovery method or

inductive grammar teaching by providing the students opportunities to induce or infer the meaning and form from the context rather than presenting the target subject by lecturing or explaining (MONE, 2006). The reason for the teachers' using lecturing or teacher-centered instruction could be crowded classes and lack of sources as lecturing is more economic and practical for large groups when compared to the learner-centered methods (Ornstein and Lasley, 2004). This finding of the study was confirmed by Yanik' study (2007) which found out that the teachers used deductive teaching more than inductive teaching in teaching English in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in the primary school.

Considering language teaching methods used for teaching four language skills, both parties indicated that Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was the most used language teaching method in the class and Turkish was used as the medium of instruction. The reasons for using GTM and Turkish were stated as lack of background of the students, insufficient time, lack of equipment and materials and existence of SBS by the teachers in an ascending order of frequency. These findings of this study was consistent with Oflaz's study (2009) which found out that the English language teachers and students were in favour of using Turkish in their classroom practices and with Sevinc's study (2006) and Kavanoz's study (2006) which revealed that the majority of the teachers used Grammar Translation Method for teaching English in the 4th and 5th grades. Furthermore, Kırkgöz (2008b, 2008c) also found out that English language teachers were mostly using Grammar Translation Method rather than Communicative Language Teaching and utilizing Turkish as the main language of instruction.

However, this finding is contrary to the extending literature emphasizing the importance of learner-centered approaches in teaching English such as Communicative Language Teaching and Task-based instruction (Beglar & Hunt, 2001; Littlewood, 2004; Murphy, 2003; Natinger, 1984; Nunan, 1991; Nunan, 1999; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Savignon, 1991). Although not being offered or justified in the literature, Grammar Translation Method is stated to be used for translating the written texts into the native language, where speaking

skill is ignored, grammar is taught deductively and native language of the students is used as the medium of instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Furthermore, using Turkish as the medium of instruction in the English lessons is strongly criticized in the guideline of the new English language curriculum since it will decrease the communicative value of English for the students, as well stating that GTM hardly contributes to language learning (MONE, 2006). The reason for teachers' using GTM and Turkish rather than using learner-centered approaches and methods for teaching the language could be the students' lacking necessary vocabulary background, GTM's not requiring as much preparation and planning as the learner-centered methods require.

#### 5.1.9. Teachers' and Students' Views about the Instructional Activities

Considering the instructional activities, it was found out that loud reading, answering the comprehension questions, and translating the text by giving the Turkish equivalence of the words were the most frequently stated reading strategies used for improving the reading skill as stated by teachers and students. As for the listening, teachers' loud reading, question and answer drills, translating the listening text, filling in the chart were the mostly used listening strategies as stated by two parties in an ascending order frequency. Regarding the strategies used for improving speaking skill, the most frequently stated speaking strategy by the teachers and students were dialogues and question and answer sessions. However, while the dialogues were written and read by the students, question and answer session is conducted through one way, from teacher to student.

Considering the writing activities, both parties stated that writing activities were carried out as homework rather than a classroom practice while writing the answers of the comprehension questions was the most frequently stated writing activity by the students. However, both the majority of the teachers and the students reflected that speaking, listening and writing activities were most of the time skipped by the teachers. The teachers stated insufficient time, overloaded content, lack of background of the students, large class size and SBS as the reasons for not

implementing these activities. Teachers' omitting some of the activities and allocating less time to speaking, listening and writing activities revealed that the teachers adapted the content of the NEC in their classroom instruction (Smylie, 1991)

These findings of this study also revealed that the practice of language skills were mostly based on the same activities such as loud reading, translation, and question and answer drill while the grammar practices were mainly based on mechanical activities such as transformation, grammar drills, multiple choice tests and fill in the blanks rather than meaningful or communicative activities. The findings of this study were consistent with Kırkgöz' studies (2008b, 2008c) which revealed that the majority of the English language teachers utilized translation, gave the Turkish meaning of the words and applied vocabulary and grammar drills which lacked variety rather than using communicative activities.

These findings of the study were also consistent with the students' views about the activities as the majority of the students perceived the activities as uninteresting, unnecessary, and lack of variety. The most spoken negative views about the activities were about writing and then about speaking, listening and reading activities in an ascending order of frequency. This finding of this study was consistent with Çakıt's study (2006) as she revealed that the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students regarded the activities conducted in English classes as boring and uninteresting. Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) indicate that learners should be provided with various activities which appeal to different learning styles so that the learners are not restricted to one way of thinking or learning. The practices of teachers were also contrary to what was suggested in new English language curriculum as it proposes using not only the mechanical activities but also the meaningful, communicative and task based activities such as games, role-plays, songs, puzzles, drama, simulations, visualization, cooperative learning, etc. (MONE, 2006). However, use of communicative games or enjoyable activities was mentioned by only one teacher. This was contrary to the related literature which stresses the importance of enjoyable, communicative and cooperative activities in fostering the students' active

participation and positive attitudes for learning (Jeon & Hann, 2006; Littlewood, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Furthermore, the number of teachers and students admitting that speaking, listening and writing, practices were ignored was considerable. The ignorance of listening, speaking and writing skills revealed that Integrated Skills Approach, one of the most valued approaches in the related literature and in the guideline of the new English language curriculum was not implemented by the teachers (McDonough & Shaw, 1998; MONE, 2006; Nunan, 1992). This finding was also consistent with the other findings of this study, as the students felt less competent in speaking, writing and listening skills which were ignored in the classroom practices. In other words, students' perceptions of low competencies in speaking, writing and listening skills and teachers' perception about students' not achieving the goals related to these skills could be attributed to the lack of necessary practice as it has been discussed previously. These findings of this study were consistent with Yanık's study (2007) which found out that the teachers ignored listening and writing skills while emphasizing reading and grammar activities and it was also consistent with the other studies (Öztürk, 2006; Tılfaroğlu & Öztürk, 2007) which revealed that teachers omitted speaking and listening activities or allotted less time for practicing these skills.

In overall, it can be argued that although the new English language curriculum is considered to be more learner-centered and task based (Kavanoz, 2006; Kırkgöz, 2007b; Topkaya & Küçük, 2010), a close examination of the instructional practices of the teachers revealed that the classroom activities used in the implementation of new English language curriculum were mostly teacher-centered rather than being learner-centered or task-based. The findings of the study were confirmed by the other studies which were conducted about the previous English language curriculum of different grade levels as those studies have also revealed that teacher-centered classroom practices were applied more than those which were learner-centered (Büyükduman, 2005; İğrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002; Tok, 2002; Yanık, 2007). Furthermore, the same findings were also revealed in South Korea (Li,

1998) and in Greece (Karavas-Doukas, 1995), which found out that teachers were unsuccessful in implementing learner-centered curricula due to being adherent to traditional teacher-centered methods.

#### 5.1.10. Teachers' and Students' Views about the Challenges faced during the Implementation

It was revealed that lack of necessary sources, equipment and materials were among the challenges faced by the teachers and students in the implementation process. Both the teachers and students stated that that lack of necessary materials and equipment in the class had a negative effect on the implementation of NEC and students' learning English language. This finding of this study was consistent with the other studies conducted about English language teaching curriculum of the primary schools (Büyükduman, 2005; Er, 2006; Kırkgöz 2008b; Sevinç, 2006; Topkaya & Küçük, 2010; Tılfarlıoğlu & Öztürk, 2007; Yanık, 2007). Another challenge was that both the teachers and the students regarded the class hours as insufficient for fulfilling the requirements of the new English language curriculum and achieving its objectives. It was also revealed by the other studies (Er, 2006; Erdoğan, 2005; Topkaya & Küçük, 2010) that the teachers perceived insufficient class hours as a problem in implementing the English language curriculum.

It was also found out that both the teachers and the students regarded crowded classes as hindering the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum in terms of conducting learner-centered activities, cooperative working, assessment and evaluation procedures and attainment of the objectives. Therefore, class size was an obstacle in implementing learner-centered instruction (Karavas-Doukas, 1995). This finding of this study was consistent with the other studies (Büyükduman, 2001; Büyükduman, 2005; Hatipoğlu, 2005; Sevinç, 2006; Topkaya & Küçük, 2010; Kırkgöz 2008c) which revealed class size as a problem in implementing the English language curriculum in the primary school.

Therefore, it can be argued that the new English language curriculum had the same challenges or problems with the former English language curriculum. The

findings of this study revealed that Level Determination Exam, referred as SBS, was one of the major challenges for the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum. It was reflected by most of the teachers and students that considerable part of the lesson was allocated for vocabulary and grammar practices and multiple choice tests which were the major domains of SBS. Most of the teachers reflected that they ignored listening, speaking and writing activities, as these skills will not be assessed in SBS and they used multiple choice tests as an assessment technique. Half of the teachers agreed in that the new English language curriculum was contradictory to SBS in terms of its content and focus which lead to increase in their workload as they had to prepare extra materials for the purpose of preparing the students for SBS. However, all of the teachers reflected that they felt dilemma between whether to implement the new English language curriculum by teaching four language skills as integrated as it was expected in the new English language curriculum or preparing the students for SBS through grammar and vocabulary drills as it was expected by the parents and even students. They also reflected that they felt psychological pressure due to SBS, as the parents and students valued or considered the achievement of the students in SBS more than the implementation of the new English language curriculum.

The summary of this finding indicates that SBS affects the implementation of the new English language curriculum in terms of the assessment types, activity types, methods and strategies used by the teachers. The reason for SBS's becoming a considerable challenge for the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum could be its creating competitive atmosphere among the students, among the teachers and even among the schools which in turn might have led to both parties' giving more importance to covering the content of the SBS rather than implementing the curriculum effectively. Furthermore, it was also revealed that due to SBS, the teachers felt the parent' pressure on them and on their classroom activities. This finding of this study was confirmed by Hatipoğlu's study (2005) which revealed that the teachers had difficulty in conducting learner-centered teaching due to the parents' pressure on teachers. However, parents' support and

understanding is important for managing a learner-centered teaching (Marlowe & Page, 1998).

This finding of this study was contrary to Keleş's study (2009) who found out that most of the teachers had positive opinions about the existence of SBS. The teacher participants in his study expected that SBS would be more process oriented when compared to OKS, the previous examination system and expected that school learning would gain more importance (Keleş, 2009). The reason for the teachers' having positive opinions in Keleş's study might be caused by the fact that SBS had not been implemented but planned when Keleş's study was conducted which means that the teachers did not experience the existence of SBS together with the implementation of the new Mathematics curriculum. Furthermore, the teachers might have regarded that SBS is process oriented because it would be held gradually at the end of each year unlike to OKS, which was perceived as product oriented as it was conducted at the end of last year. Therefore, they would have expected that SBS would support the implementation of the new Mathematics curriculum which was process oriented. Nonetheless, the findings of this study were partly consistent with the findings of Keleş's study (2009) as some of the participant teachers in his study reflected that SBS was contradictory to the approaches of the new Mathematics curriculum such as MI theory.

Another major challenge for the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum was lack of gradual implementation of it. As the new English language curriculum was introduced to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades at the same year, the students were subjected to the NEC in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade without experiencing it in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The majority of the students reflected that lack of gradual implementation of the NEC led to discontinuity of the content which in turn caused students' lacking background knowledge about the structures and vocabulary introduced in the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. The teachers stated that as the students were not subjected to the NEC in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the students had difficulty in understanding and comprehending the subjects in the NEC as they were lack of the background knowledge. Nearly half of the teachers also expressed that lack of gradual



implementation of the NEC created difficulty not only for students but also for themselves as they allocated considerable time to compensate for the students' lacking knowledge and skills which in turn lead to increase in their workload and loss of time.

These findings of the study revealed that students' lacking knowledge of vocabulary and grammar could be the reason for the teachers' focusing on teaching grammar and vocabulary instead of conducting speaking, listening and writing activities as they require background knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Furthermore, students' lacking background could also have an effect in teachers' mainly applying practice and drill activities in the class because it has been stated in the related literature that practice and drills are particularly used for teaching fundamentals to the learners who still lack basic skills or knowledge of the subject matter (Ornstein & Lasley, 2004).

Another major challenge was lack of support or guidance to the teachers about the implementation of the NEC. It was revealed that the majority of the teachers received neither the curriculum nor the curriculum guidebook therefore most of the teachers became aware of the curriculum change either through textbook change or through hearing from their colleagues. The number of teachers perceiving the textbook as the curriculum was considerable as it has been previously discussed. Teachers' not receiving the written curriculum could have an effect in their perceiving the textbook as the curriculum (Nunan, 1992). This finding of this study was confirmed by Yanık's study (2008) which found out that the teachers perceived the textbook as the curriculum since they did not receive it. Furthermore, all of the teachers reflected that they did not attend any in-service training or seminar related to the NEC or its implementation. Therefore they reflected that they understood what is expected from the teachers and students in the NEC with their own efforts by reading the teachers' book or the textbook. While half of the teachers stated that they had difficulty in understanding the program and adapting themselves to the program, the majority of the teachers reflected that they were not provided any guidance or support for the implementation of the NEC. However, it was contrary to the related

literature which increasingly emphasizes the importance and the necessity of the in-service training or staff development programs to facilitate the change in beliefs, attitudes and classroom practices of the teachers required for the effective implementation of an innovated curriculum (Bishop, 1991; Carless, 1999; Guskey, 1986).

Teachers' lacking support or guidance for the NEC could be the reason for their having insufficient knowledge about the learner-centered approaches, methods, activities and assessment procedures suggested and/or innovated in the NEC. Therefore, it was revealed that the teachers were in need of in-service training on the NEC. This finding of this study was also consistent with the studies about the new curriculum of the other grades. Topkaya and Küçük, (2010) revealed that the English language teachers needed in-service training on the new program. Baturay and Karaca (2008), in a small scale study, reported that primary school teachers were in need of training about the new curriculum. Similarly, Akşit (2007) pointed out that one of the major challenges that the new primary school curriculum change encountered was the lack of information regarding the new content, objectives, teaching strategies and assessment types introduced by the curriculum innovation.

Furthermore, Teachers' insufficient knowledge about the NEC and its innovations, Constructivist Learning Approach, Multiple Intelligences Theory, Cooperative Learning and Alternative Assessment or process assessment could be the reason for their non-using these innovations in their classroom practices and continuing previous classroom practices which were teacher-centered. In other words, teachers' not using the curriculum innovations could be caused by their not being provided with the necessary guidance and support for the implementation of the curriculum innovation, because the success of an innovation depends on how the teachers were supported in the implementation process and how they perceive and value to innovation (Bishop, 1991; Carless, 1998; Fullan, 1997; Guskey, 1986; Hord & Austin, 1986; Kyriakides, 1997).

These findings of the study were consistent with the findings of the other studies which were conducted about the previous English language curriculum in the

lower grades (Hatipoğlu, 2005; Kavanoz, 2006; Kırkgöz 2008b; Kırkgöz 2008c). In Hatipoğlu's study (2005) and Kavanoz's study (2006) it was revealed that teachers' having insufficient knowledge about learner-centeredness and use of portfolio and their lacking knowledge and understanding about how to practice them in their classes led them to continue teacher-centered instruction and traditional assessment. In Kırkgöz' studies (Kırkgöz 2008b, Kırkgöz 2008c) it was found out that there was a gap between the intended and the actual practice of the curriculum innovation due to the teachers' perception of the innovation, their previous training and lack of instructional guidance.

In overall, it can be argued that the classroom practices of the teachers were different from what was expected in the NEC which led to a gap or discrepancy between the intended curriculum and the implemented one as it has been stated in the extended literature (Bishop, 1991; Cuban, 1993; Glatthorn, Boschee & Whitehead, 2009; Howson & Wilson, 1986; Nunan, 1989).

As for the requirements and suggestions for the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum, the most frequently stated suggestions by the teachers were revealed as in service training, simplifying the content of the NEC, providing the necessary material sources and equipment to the schools and increasing lesson hours. On the other hand, most of the students suggested teachers' using audio-visual materials and enjoyable activities to which they could participate actively. The findings of this study revealed that the suggestions of the teachers and students were consistent with the challenges or problems that they faced during the implementation of the new English language curriculum which could be taken into account by discussing the implications for future practice.

## **5.2. Implications for Practice**

Based on the teachers' and students' suggestions and discussion of the results of this study, the following suggestions and recommendations can be stated for the practitioners to improve the implementation of the new English language curriculum in the primary schools.

The findings indicated that the teachers mostly used teacher-centered methods and strategies for teaching language although new English language curriculum suggests for learner-centered approaches and methods such as Task based Learning, Collaborative Learning, Communicative Language Teaching, and Integrated Language Skills. Therefore, the teachers need to redesign their activities by taking the suggested approaches and methods into the consideration. It was also revealed that the teachers did not use the alternative assessment techniques such as portfolio assessment, self assessment and peer assessment which were innovative in the new English language curriculum. Teachers should incorporate these alternative assessment techniques into their classroom practices so as to monitor and assess the students' learning or progress rather than mainly depending on the traditional ones which assess only the products of learning.

Another major implication of this study is focused on the issue of educational reform. It was evident that there was a gap between the designed or intended implementation of the NEC and the practiced and the attained one due to the challenges faced during the implementation. Therefore, before bringing a curriculum innovation, the authorities should consider these issues and take the necessary precautions related to its implementation before introducing a top down innovation. It is seen that teachers continued their traditional teacher-centered methods and practices despite the learner-centered emphasis of the new English language curriculum. Therefore, it is required to give attention to the teachers' existing practices and understandings for the successful implementation of a curriculum innovation.

In fact, the findings of this study indicated that teachers received neither the curriculum nor the curriculum guide which gave rise to their not using the innovations of the new English language curriculum as well as having misperceptions about these innovations. Therefore, it is required that MONE should provide all the teachers with the new English language curriculum and the curriculum guideline so as to increase their awareness of the curriculum innovations. Furthermore, continuous in-service training should be designed on the basis of needs

assessment of teachers and the teachers should be introduced with the learner-centered instructional approaches, methods, strategies and activities as well as the constructivist learning principles and alternative assessment techniques. However, the teachers should not only be provided with the theoretical knowledge about these innovations, but also they should be provided with the practical knowledge about how to implement these innovations in real classroom environment especially for crowded classes. Therefore, to meet these needs it is necessary that in-service training be in the form of both workshop and seminar where the teachers will have the opportunity of practicing these innovations, discussing issues emerge in the implementation of the new English language curriculum and suggesting solutions for the problems that they encounter during the implementation.

Furthermore, Education Faculties should provide pre-service education to the English language teachers through courses where the teachers are given the opportunity of practising the principles of constructivist learning and learner-centered language teaching. Besides, the education faculties should redesign their courses on the base of constructivist approach so that the teachers become familiar with constructivist learning and creating constructivist learning environment.

Regarding the learning atmosphere, it was revealed that teachers were the decision makers in the class. The teachers should provide democratic learning environment where the students are also actively involved in the decision making process related to the learning and teaching practices in the class. Therefore, teachers should consider the opinions of the students not only for performance and project works but also for the other dimensions of the curriculum. It was also revealed that teachers had more active role in the lesson by being the source and transmitter of the knowledge. However, they should function as guide and facilitator of the learning by providing opportunities to the students for their active participation to the activities. Therefore, the teachers should encourage learner autonomy by giving some responsibilities to the students for their own learning as well as providing them opportunities to discover their own learning styles through making use of various

activities in the class. This would also increase the motivation and active participation of the students to the activities.

As for the problems concerning the performance and project tasks, it was revealed that the students make someone else do their performance tasks. So as to use these alternative assessment tools effectively, the teachers should provide the students with different alternatives or options for doing these tasks by taking the individual differences of the students into the consideration. If the students' opinions are involved in the decision-making process for the performance and project tasks, the students could try to do it on their own by researching as they will choose the one that they feel more competent. Besides, teachers should make use of cooperative learning especially for performance and project tasks as it can facilitate mixed levels of students' working cooperatively for tasks which could be challenging when prepared individually.

It was also found out that the existence of Level Determination Exam, SBS, is one of the major challenges for the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum. Functioning as a product oriented assessment tool, SBS is contrary to the process oriented approaches of the new English language curriculum. Besides, it leads to the ignorance of the language skills such as writing, speaking and listening not only by the teachers but also by the students and parents which in turn prevented the attainment of the curriculum objectives by the students. Therefore, a new examination system which is more consistent with the learning approaches and practices of the new English language curriculum should be introduced to primary schools instead of Level Determination Exam. The new examination system should not only assess the vocabulary and grammar knowledge of the students, it should also assess reading, speaking, writing and listening skills which are the major domains of the language teaching.

It was found out that concerning the class hours allocated for teaching English, the content of the new English language curriculum was perceived as overloaded by the majority of the students. The number of the units should be decreased or the content of the curriculum should be lessened by concerning the class

hours. Besides, regarding the time consuming nature of the constructivist learning environment and learner-centered teaching, class hours should be increased so that the teachers did not have time related concerns or problems for the implementation of the learner-centered methods.

In addition the physical qualities of the schools were among the challenges constraining the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum. The schools should be equipped with the necessary audio-visual materials such as CD player, DVD player, TV, OHP, Posters and flashcards as well as the supplementary materials such as resource books involving worksheet and exercises for communicative and meaningful activities. If possible, each school should have a language class involving all the necessary materials, equipment and sources all together. This would also lessen the workload of the teachers as they will not need to prepare or look for the materials and they will not need to carry these materials all the time from one class to another.

The findings of this study also revealed that the majority of the teachers regarded the crowded classes as an important factor hindering the effective implementation of the new English language curriculum. Therefore, the class sizes in the primary schools should be lessened so as to implement the new English language curriculum effectively. As an alternative, the students can be divided into two groups for language course where the half of the students can be subjected to another subject in a different class. Furthermore, teachers should make use of cooperative learning activities to facilitate learning and teaching in crowded classes (McCafferty, Jacobs & Iddings, 2006; Jacobs & Hall, 2001)

Another suggestion is about the need for revision of the textbook. It was found out that the themes and the characters were perceived as irrelevant for the interests and age of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders by both the students and the teachers. Besides, it was revealed that the excessive unknown vocabulary in the reading passages caused to the content's being regarded as above the level of the students. It is important that textbook writers consider the needs, interests and language levels of those who will use these materials (Crawford, 2001; Cunningsworth, 1995; Breen & Candlin, 1987).

Therefore, the textbook should be redesigned by taking the needs, interests and language levels of the students into the consideration. Regarding that these age groups are adolescents, the characters of the book should not be cartoon characters rather they should be real life characters that could grab the attention of the adolescences. Besides, workbooks and teachers' book should also be redesigned so as to make it more compatible with the expectations and needs of the teachers. Furthermore, it is necessary to provide alternatives to the teachers or involving the opinions of the teachers in determining the textbook as it is also emphasized in the related literature (Angell, DuBravac & Gonglewski, 2008; Masuhara; 1998).

Last but not least suggestion is about the textbooks. The textbooks should be provided to the schools in a package involving authentic audio visual materials such as CDs, DVD, flashcards and posters to facilitate creating learning environment which is rich in linguistic and cultural input about the target language (Crawford, 2001).

### **5.3 Implications for Further Research**

This study was based on the perceptions of the students and teachers about the implementation of the new English language curriculum and it had a qualitative study design as the data was collected through interviews. The findings of this study can be triangulated through involving different data collection methods such as classroom observations.

Furthermore, this study concerned only the perceptions of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and the teachers implementing the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Other studies can be conducted about the implementation of the new English language curriculum in the other grade levels and the results of this study can be compared with the findings of the studies conducted in the other grade levels.

The current study focused on the implementation dimension of the new English language curriculum, rather than evaluating the curriculum itself. Therefore, other studies can be conducted to evaluate the curriculum in terms of its efficiency and effectiveness in reaching the curriculum objectives. Again, this study did not



give detailed information about which objectives are attained to what degree by the students. Therefore, other studies can specially focus on the level of attainment of the objectives.

The findings of this study revealed that there seems to be a need for assessing the in- service training needs of the teachers. Therefore, other studies can be conducted for revealing the attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of the teachers related to the new English language curriculum.

Likewise, the findings of this study revealed that textbook needs revision. However as evaluating textbook was not the focus of this study, it did not involve detailed information about the textbook. Therefore, other studies can be conducted to evaluate the present textbooks.

Lastly, as the data for this study were gathered from Polatlı district of Ankara, other studies can be conducted in other districts and cities to compare the findings of this study.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

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T.C.  
ANKARA VALİLİĞİ  
Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü

BÖLÜM : İstatistik Bölümü  
SAYI : B.B.08.4.MEM.4.06.00.06-312/ 7621  
KONU : Araştırma İzni  
Özge DÖNMEZ

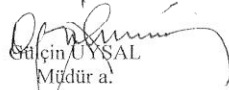
22../01/2010

#### ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİNE

İlgi : a) MEB Bağlı Okul ve Kurumlarda Yapılacak Araştırma ve Araştırma Desteğine  
Yönelik İzin ve Uygulama Yönergesi.  
b) Üniversitenizin 29/12/2009 tarih ve 111 sayılı yazısı.

Üniversiteniz Eğitim Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Özge DÖNMEZ'in "İlköğretim 8. sınıf İngilizce programının uygulanmasının öğrenci ve öğretmen bakış açısıyla incelenmesi" konulu tez ile ilgili çalışma yapma isteği Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmüş ve araştırmanın yapılacağı İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğüne bilgi verilmiştir.

Mühürlü anketler (2 sayfa) ekte gönderilmiş olup, uygulama yapılacak sayıda çoğaltılması ve çalışmanın bitiminde iki örneğinin (CD/disket) Müdürlüğümüz İstatistik Bölümüne gönderilmesini rica ederim.

  
Gülçin UYSAL  
Müdür a.  
Müdür Yardımcısı

EKLER :  
Anket (2 sayfa)

İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü-Beşevler / ANKARA  
İstatistik Bölümü  
istatistik06@meb.gov.tr  
Bilgi İçin : Nermi ÇELENK

Tel : 223 75 22----212 66 40-200  
Fax: 223 75 22

T.C.  
ANKARA VALİLİĞİ  
Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü

BÖLÜM : İstatistik Bölümü  
SAYI : B.B.08.4.MEM.4.06.00.06-312/ 7622  
KONU : Araştırma izni  
Özge DÖNMEZ


22/01/2010

POLATLI KAYMAKAMLIĞINA  
(İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü)

- İlgi: a) M.E.B. Bağlı Okul ve Kurumlarda Yapılacak Araştırma ve Araştırma Desteğine Yönelik İzin ve Uygulama Yönergesi.  
b) MEB EARGED' in araştırma izinlerine ilişkin 11/04/2007 tarih ve 1950 sayılı yazısı.  
c) 02/09/2009 tarih ve 74835 sayılı Valilik Onayı.  
d) 05/11/2009 tarih ve 98610 sayılı Valilik Onayı.  
e) Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesini 29/12/2009 tarih ve 111 sayılı yazısı.

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Özge DÖNMEZ'in "**İlköğretim 8. sınıf İngilizce programının uygulanmasının öğrenci ve öğretmen bakış açısıyla incelenmesi**" konulu tez çalışması ile ilgili anketi, ek listedeki ilçeniz okullarında uygulama yapılması isteği Müdürlüğümüz Değerlendirme Komisyonunca uygun görülmüştür.

Mühürlü anket örnekleri (2 sayfa) araştırmacıya ulaştırılmış olup, uygulama yapılacak sayıda araştırmacı tarafından çoğaltılarak, araştırmanın ilgi (a) yönerge çerçevesinde gönüllülük esasına göre uygulanmasını rica ederim.

  
Gülçin UYSAL  
Vali a.  
Müdür Yardımcısı

**EKLER :**  
1-Okul Listesi (1 Sayfa)

İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü-Beşevler / ANKARA  
İstatistik Bölümü  
istatistik06@meb.gov.tr  
Bilgi İçin : Nermin ÇELENK

Tel : 223 75 22----212 66 40-200  
Fax: 223 75 22

## APPENDIX B

### Teacher Interview Protocol

Sevgili Meslektaşım,  
Ben Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Program ve Öğretim bölümünde Yüksek Lisans yapmaktayım. Yeni 8. sınıf İngilizce Programı hakkında görüşlerinizi öğrenmek istiyorum. İstedığınız zaman görüşmeyi yarıda kesebilir, beğenmediğiniz sorular hakkında görüş belirtmeyebilirsiniz. Kişisel bilgileriniz ve yeni program hakkında görüşleriniz kesinlikle gizli tutulacaktır. Teşekkür ederim.

ÖZGE DÖNMEZ  
ODTÜ, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü  
Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi

#### Kişisel Bilgiler:

Görevli olduğunuz okulun adı:

Yaşınız:

Mezun olduğunuz Fakülte veya Yüksek Okul:

Mezun olduğunuz Bölüm

İngilizce Öğretmenliği Deneyiminiz

Kaç yıldır 8. sınıflara İngilizce öğretiyorsunuz?

1. Yeni 8. sınıf İngilizce öğretim programı elinize geçti mi?
2. Yeni programı bir önceki programla kıyaslarsak bu programı nasıl buluyorsunuz?
3. Programı ders planlarınıza nasıl yansıtıyorsunuz? (birebir uygulama/adapte etme)
4. Yeni programın gerek değişen yönleri gerekse nasıl uygulanacağı konusunda nasıl haberiniz oldu?

Yeni programla ilgili herhangi bir seminere ya da hizmet içi eğitime katıldınız mı?

Katıldıysanız bu seminerin sınıf içi uygulamalarınıza nasıl bir katkısı oldu?

5. İngilizce dersini nasıl işlersiniz? Sınıfta yaptığınız etkinlikleri anlatır mısınız?

Okuma, dinleme, yazma, konuşma etkinliklerini ele alırsak

Siz ne yaparsınız/öğrenciler ne yapar?

6.Yeni programın öğrencilerden öğrenmesini/ulaşmasını beklediği dil becerileriyle - okuma, yazma, dinleme, konuşma ile- ilgili hedeflerini ele alırsak öğrenciler tarafından başırlamadığını ya da yeterince gerçekleşmediğini düşündüğünüz bir hedef var mı? Sebebi nedir?

7. Yeni programdaki etkinlikleri yaparken ne tür sorunlarla karşılaşılıyorsunuz? (Zaman, sınıf mevcudu, sınıfın fiziksel özellikleri, materyaller, öğrenciler, metotlar açısından)

8.Yeni programda verilen konuları, gramer yapılarını ve kelimeleri teke tek ele alırsak bunların programa göre olan sırası, sunuluşu, öğrencinin ilgi ve ihtiyaçlarına hitap etmesi, zorluğu-kolaylığı bakımından nasıl buluyorsunuz?

İçerikle ilgili yaşadığınız bir problem ya da içeriğin değiştirmek istediğiniz bir yönü var mı?

9.Sınıfınızda bireysel çalışma, grup çalışması, ikili çalışmaların hangilerini kullanılıyorsunuz? Bunları nasıl kullanılıyorsunuz anlatır mısınız?

Hangi etkinliğin kullanılacağına nasıl karar veriliyor?

10. Öğrenci merkezliliğini denince aklınıza ne geliyor?

11.Ders işlerken öğrencilerin bireysel farklılıklarını (öğrenme hızı, öğrenme stili açısından) nasıl göz önüne alılıyorsunuz?

12. Çoklu Zeka Kuramını sınıf içi etkinliklerinize nasıl yansıtıyorsunuz?

13. Programın kullanmanızı öngördüğü araç-gereç-materyallerdenler hangilerini kullanılıyorsunuz? Bunları nasıl kullanılıyorsunuz?

14.Öğrencilerinizin öğrenmesini ya da gelişmesini nasıl ölçüyorsunuz?

Yazılı dışında başka hangi ölçme yöntemlerini kullanılıyorsunuz? Nasıl kullanılıyorsunuz? Sondalar:

Akran değerlendirme:

Kendini değerlendirme:

Ürün dosyası (öğrenmeye katkısı ne derece ve nasıl oluyor)

15.Öğrencilerinizin başarısını ölçerken ne tür problemlerle karşılaşılıyorsunuz

16.Performans ve projeyi ölçme aracı olarak nasıl uyguluyorsunuz?

Öğrenme sürecine katkısı nasıl oldu?

Performans ve proje ödevlerinde ne tür problemlerle karşılaşıyorsunuz?

17. Programın kademeli olarak değil de 6. 7.ve 8. sınıflarda aynı anda değişmesi size ve öğrencilere nasıl yansıdı?

18. SBS bu programı uygulamanızı nasıl etkiliyor?

19.Programın zayıf ve güçlü yönleri neler? Değiştirmek isteseydiniz neleri değiştirdiniz?

20. Bu programı daha etkili kullanabilmek için neler gerekli/neye ihtiyaç var?

öğretmen açısından

öğrenciler açısından

okul açısından:

21. Başka söylemek istedikleriniz....

## APPENDIX C

### Student Interview Protocol

Sevgili öğrenciler,  
Ben Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Program ve Öğretim bölümünde Yüksek Lisans yapmaktayım. Yeni 8. sınıf İngilizce Programı hakkında görüşlerinizi öğrenmek istiyorum. İstedığınız zaman görüşmeyi yarıda kesebilir, beğenmediğiniz sorular hakkında görüş belirtmeyebilirsiniz. Kişisel bilgileriniz ve yeni program hakkında görüşleriniz kesinlikle gizli tutulacaktır. Teşekkür ederim.

ÖZGE DÖNMEZ  
ODTÜ, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü  
Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi

#### Kişisel Bilgiler:

Okulu:

Sınıfı:

1. İngilizce dersini nasıl buluyorsunuz? Zevkli mi, sizin için neden önemli?
2. Bana bir İngilizce dersinizin nasıl geçtiğini anlatır mısınız? (yeni bir konuyu işlerken)

#### Sondalar:

Neler yapıyorsunuz/Derse nasıl başlıyorsunuz?/öğretmen neler yapıyor?/öğrenciler neler yapıyor?

3. Sınıfta etkinlikleri nasıl işliyorsunuz? (Dinleme, Okuma, Yazma, Konuşma, Dilbilgisi) Bu etkinlikleri yaparken ne tür problemlerle karşılaşıyorsunuz?

Bunların hangisinde en çok zorlanıyorsunuz? Neden?

4. Sınıfta daha çok hangi tür çalışmalar yapıyorsunuz?

Tek başınıza (Tüm sınıf aynı türde mi yapıyor?)

Bir arkadaşınızla

Grup çalışması

Nasıl yapıyorsunuz? Bir örnek verir misiniz?

Kimin hangi tür çalışma yapacağına kim karar veriyor?

5. Etkinlikler yapılırken daha çok öğretmen mi aktif yoksa siz mi aktifsiniz?

Yeni bir konuyu işlerken en çok siz mi çaba sarf ediyorsunuz yoksa öğretmenin mi?

Daha çok kim konuşuyor?

Dersi tiyatro oyunu gibi düşünürsek sizin ve öğretmenin rolü bu oyunda ne olurdu?

Kim başrolde/kim arka planda?

6. Sınıfta yapılan etkinlikleri nasıl buluyorsunuz? Etkinliklerde sizin tercihleriniz göz önüne nasıl alınıyor?

Sınıfta hoşlandığınız etkinlikler neler?

Sınıfta hoşlanmadığınız etkinlikler neler?

Öğretmen dersi anlatırken sizin hoşunuza giden etkinliklere nasıl yer veriyor?

7. İngilizce dersinde hangi materyalleri kullanıyorsunuz?

Nasıl kullanılıyor? ( kitap,CD çalar, resimli kartlar, bilgisayar)

Materyal kullanımı (varlığı/yetersizliği) sizi nasıl etkiliyor?

8. İngilizce dersindeki konuları nasıl buluyorsunuz? Sırası nasıl sizce?

9. Kitabınızın en sevdiğiniz ve en sevmediğiniz kısımları neler?

Nasıl bir kitabınız olsun isterdiniz?

Değiştirmek isteseydiniz kitabın neresini değiştirmek isterdiniz?

10. İngilizce dersinde ne tür ödevler veriliyor?

Ödevleri hazırlarken neler yapıyorsunuz?

Nasıl hazırlıyorsunuz?

Ödev yapmanızın size ne katkısı oluyor?

11. Öğretmen size not vermek için hangi yöntemleri kullanıyor?

12. İngilizce dersinde ürün dosyasını nasıl kullanıyorsunuz?

Ürün dosyanızın size olan katkıları nelerdir?

13. Proje ya da Performans ödevlerinizi size nasıl bir katkısının olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

Neler öğreniyorsunuz bu tür ödevlerle?

Performans ve proje ödevinin konusunun ve hazırlanmasının seçiminde sizin fikriniz nasıl alınıyor?

Proje ya da performans konunuzla ilgili ne kadar süre araştırma yapıyorsunuz?

Bu ödevleri hazırlarken ailenizden ya da yakınınızdan nasıl yardım alıyorsunuz?

14. SBS'ye hazırlanma İngilizce dersine çalışmanızı nasıl etkiliyor?

Derste etkinliklerinizi nasıl etkiliyor?

Ödevleriniz nasıl etkiliyor?

Öğretmenlerinizi nasıl etkiliyor?

15. İngilizceyi daha iyi öğrenmeniz için sizce İngilizce dersleri nasıl olmalı?

Başka söylemek istedikleriniz...