

# **Evaluation of the CEFR Framed English Language Curriculum in Primary and Secondary Schools in Turkey**

**Ahmet ebi**

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Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

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Prof. Dr. Ali Hakan Ulusoy  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching.

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Fatoş Erozan  
Acting Chair, Department of Foreign  
Language Education

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching.

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Asst. Prof. Dr. İlkey Gilanlıoğlu  
Supervisor

---

Examining Committee

1. Prof. Dr. Murat Hişmanoğlu
2. Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı Mirici
3. Prof. Dr. Ülker Vancı Osam
4. Asst. Prof. Dr. İlkey Gilanlıoğlu
5. Asst. Prof. Dr. Danyal Öztaş Tüm

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## ABSTRACT

The current English language curriculum in primary and secondary schools in Turkey has been framed by The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in an endeavour to bring in a more communication-oriented perspective on language education. This study aimed to evaluate the CEFR framed curriculum from the perspectives of teachers who apply it in the classroom and the students who experience it. An exploratory sequential mixed method research design, which encompassed a 40-item questionnaire (100 participants), a 25-item semi-structured interview (6 secondary and 3 primary school teachers), focus group interviews with students (total of 84 students), classroom observations and document analysis, was employed in primary and secondary schools in Sultanbeyli, Umraniye, and Besiktas districts of Istanbul. The results showed that lack of knowledge about the CEFR and the contextual factors such as overcrowded classrooms and limited class contact hours greatly affected the implementation phase of the curriculum. It was also revealed that there is a remarkable mismatch between the language education policy (communication-oriented) and the classroom practices (exam-oriented). The findings of this study implied that teachers need ongoing in-service training about the CEFR framed curriculum to enhance their understanding of the implementation of its principles in the classroom. The implications of the study, most notably the need for well-tailored in-service training, are also discussed.

**Keywords:** CEFR, English Language Curriculum, Primary and Secondary School, Teachers' Perceptions, Students' Perceptions, Language Policy, Curriculum Evaluation

## ÖZ

Türkiye'deki ilk ve orta okullardaki mevcut İngilizce müfredatı, dil eğitimine daha iletişim odaklı bir bakış açısı getirmek amacıyla Avrupa Dilleri Öğretimi Ortak Çerçeve Programı (ADOÇEP) tarafından çerçevelenmiştir. Bu çalışma, ADOÇEP çerçeveli müfredatı sınıfta uygulayan öğretmenler ve onu deneyimleyen öğrenciler açısından değerlendirmeyi amaçlamıştır. 40 maddelik bir anket (100 katılımcı), 25 maddelik yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme (6 ortaokul ve 3 ilkokul öğretmeni), öğrencilerle odak grup görüşmeleri (toplam 84 öğrenci) içeren keşfedici sıralı karma yöntem araştırma tasarımı, sınıf gözlemleri ve doküman incelemesi, İstanbul'un Sultanbeyli, Ümraniye ve Beşiktaş ilçelerindeki ilk ve orta dereceli okullarda uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar, ADOÇEP hakkında bilgi eksikliğinin ve aşırı kalabalık sınıflar ve sınırlı sınıf temas saatleri gibi bağlamsal faktörlerin müfredatın uygulama aşamasını büyük ölçüde etkilediğini göstermiştir. Ayrıca dil eğitimi politikası (iletişim odaklı) ile sınıf içi uygulamalar (sınav odaklı) arasında dikkate değer bir uyumsuzluk olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, öğretmenlerin ADOÇEP çerçeveli müfredat hakkında, ilkelerinin sınıfta uygulanmasına ilişkin anlayışlarını geliştirmek için sürekli hizmet içi eğitime ihtiyaç duyduklarını ima etti. Çalışmanın çıkarımları, özellikle de iyi uyarlanmış hizmet içi eğitim ihtiyacı da tartışılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** ADOÇEP, İngilizce Müfredatı, İlk ve Ortaokul; Öğretmenlerin Algısı, Öğrencilerin Algısı, Dil Politikası, Müfredat Değerlendirmesi

# **DEDICATION**

To All My Loved Ones

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
ELTP	English Language Teaching Program
HSEE	High School Entrance Exam
MoNE	Ministry of National Education

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of four sections. The first section provides background information to the study. The second section introduces the purpose of the study. The third section explains the significance of the study. Finally, the fourth section provides the definition of terms used throughout the study.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The term ‘lingua franca’ has been assigned to English as it is widely spoken all across the world for education, commercial, political, and everyday purposes. Even though English is not the official language of many countries where it is widely spoken, English is taught as a second or foreign language due to its significance in the international arena. The inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle are three interconnected circles that appeared as a result of the expansion of English, claims Kachru (1998). The three circles referred by Kachru signify the distinct characteristics of English in the aforementioned circles which will be discussed in detail in the subsequent paragraph. Dogancay-Aktuna (1998) assert that colonization is the main cause of the quick spread of English language all across the world. Although the Anglo-Saxon Era in England is when the English language first developed, it was the rise of the British Empire that contributed to the global adoption of the language. The first permanent English-speaking colony came into existence when a group of people arrived in North America to start a settlement in the 1600s. A century later, with the spread of colonization, British English reached the shores of Africa, India, and Oceania

(British Library, 1999). Although the impact of English language was limited to the colonized countries, the popularity of English began to increase after World War II and it became a commonly used language in many countries around the world (Phillipson, 1994). In the colonised world, the dominance of English continued to maintain its position even after the colonisation period. After World War II, the United States became a more influential actor globally. Its socioeconomic and sociocultural role as a global powerhouse has hastened the adoption of the language (Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998). Having mentioned that, Graddol (1997) drew attention to two enduring historical actors that aided in the expansion of English. The first one was Britain and its colonial expansion, which led to the emigration of numerous English speakers to various countries across the world. However, after the colonial era, the role of second actor (i.e., the US) in the expansion of English became more significant than that of Britain. English gradually became the language of scientific and technical knowledge. In addition to that, Bhatt (2001) pinpoints the most prominent aspects of the overall issues and links the expansion of English to the financial factors that gave rise to the commercial dominance of the United Kingdom and the United States in the post war era. On the other hand, Kachru (1996) divided the English language's spread into several distinct stages. The 16th and 17th centuries are the periods when English spread throughout the United Kingdom with the expansion of the British Empire. In the second phase of the expansion, the language became more prominent as people started to travel across countries and continents more than before. As English-speaking populations migrated and colonization gained more importance, English further spread to North America as well as Oceania. The third phase of the expansion, when the language was introduced to colonized regions in the Africa where people had no

contact with the English language before. This eventually had the most remarkable impact on the sociolinguistic character of the language.

The three circles stand for three different speech forms in English. They also represent the stages in the spread of the language. In addition, the model proposed outlines the unique properties of the way the language is used, acquired, and developed (Kachru, 1986). The inner circle is formed by the countries such as United Kingdom and United States of America where English is the mother tongue of the speakers. The outer circle in the model represents the countries where English became a common and accepted language as a result of colonization. Good examples of these countries could be Singapore and India that were the colonies of British empire for decades. The expanding circle, on the other hand, has no colonial background but recognized and accepted the dominance of English as an international language. A good example of this could be China, which is considered as one of the largest economies in the world. Turkey, like China, can be categorized in the expanding circle of Kachru's model because there is only one official language in the country and Turkey had never been colonized by an English-speaking country (Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998). Although there are minority languages (i.e., Kurdish, Zazaki) spoken in Turkey, Turkish has maintained its dominance as the official language of the country (Bear, 1985). However, because of its popularity and dominance in the international arena, English has gained the status as the most commonly accepted and appreciated foreign language (Onalan, 2005).

A brief overview of the foreign language history of Turkey reveals that at the time of the Ottoman Empire, it was French, Persian, and Arabic that were the most accepted and appreciated foreign languages. Persian and Arabic were the two languages that the

Ottoman Turkish was based on. In other words, the alphabet of the official language of the Ottoman Empire was a version of Perso-Arabic script that incorporated aspect of Persian as well as Arabic. The language had borrowed an extensive number of words from both languages. These were the commonly used languages in international relations (Bear, 1985). As French got hold of an international status back then, it was the second language that was commonly taught in the schools. Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye (School for Secular Learning) was founded in 1839 with a purpose of raising public servants and government officials to serve the needs of the empire in establishing and maintaining international relations (Akyuz, 2001). To do that, French was taught as a second language. As the empire spread across three continents, the need for additional foreign languages merged. Therefore, languages such as German, Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian, and Russian were introduced in schools (Demircan, 1988; Sezer, 2003).

As Sezer (2003) indicated, Tanzimat Fermani, which was published in 1839, is considered as the first attempt of the Ottoman Empire in westernization and strengthen its ties with the west. Therefore, more emphasis was placed on western languages. English was one of these languages and became widely taught second language. Kirkgoz (2005) asserts that this acceptance of English could be considered as an attempt to westernize the education system. This period also marked the beginning of American influence on the empire with the increase in trade relations. In line with this, English language became increasingly significant as a foreign language. Twenty-four years after the declaration of Tanzimat Fermani, in 1863, an American missionary established Robert College in Istanbul in 1863. It was the first school (private institution) that adopted English as the medium of instruction (Council of Higher Education, 2001). This was an important attempt in strengthening the status of English

language as well as the America's social and cultural influence. Uskudar American College, which was established in 1871, was the second institution to offer English-medium instruction to students. However, it was not until 1908 that English became one of the subjects taught in public schools. When the Ottoman Empire fell and the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923, the expansion of the impact of English on language education intensified.

The Ministry of National Education was empowered by the law called *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* that was enacted in 1924. This law put the Ministry of National Education in charge of all academic and research institutes. Four years later in 1928, the *Türk Egitim Derneği* (Turkish Education Association- TED) was founded with a vision to enhance the quality of education. It was this organisation that promoted the teaching of English, French, and German as foreign languages (Celebi, 2006). English became the dominant foreign language in Turkey in the 1950s as a result of modernization and the socio-economic influence of the English-speaking countries (Erdogan, 2002). This led to the development of language programs in Turkey (Varis, 1996). In mid 1950s, Anatolian (Anadolu) School opened its doors as the first government secondary school offering English as the medium of instruction (Kirkgoz, 2005). The state began opening more of these schools in response to growing parental pressure. The number of Anatolian (Anadolu) schools that was only twelve in 1970s almost doubled in 1980s (twenty-three schools). In 1956, another initiative was taken and the Middle East Technical University was founded. It made a significant contribution to the teaching of foreign languages in Turkey (Celebi, 2006). Parallel to all these innovations, the government started offering incentive for those government officials who had certain level of foreign language education to reward their language proficiency (Demircan, 1988).

The role of foreign languages and foreign language teaching programs became more evident after the World War II. The concept of ‘globalization’ became more apparent and increased the social and financial interactions among different countries. Therefore, people began to realize how important it was to acquire a foreign language (Demirel, 1987). This, in return, created a dire need for more efficient methods of foreign language education to advance this idea and make it a reality. The Ministry of National Education made an attempt to create a new program in 1972 to accomplish that. A centre called Yabancı Diller Öğretimi Geliştirme Merkezi was founded. Its ultimate aim was to advance foreign language teaching. To do that, the centre created a curriculum that incorporated foreign language teaching resources as well as teaching methods and techniques (Keskil, 1999). As a result of this effort, foreign language instruction gradually became a part of the education system. That is to say that, in 1983, the Foreign Language Teaching Law, which served as the foundation for foreign language instruction, was passed (Ozbay, 2003). It was this regulation that determined the foreign languages that are to be taught in educational institutions. Additionally, it set the guidelines for institutions where English was the medium of instruction. According to this law, it was the duty of the Council of Ministries to decide on the foreign languages to be offered at the educational institutes. Meanwhile, the Ministry of National Education had the power to designate the courses that would be delivered in a foreign language and to grant permissions for the elementary and secondary schools where that language would be the medium of instruction. Higher education, on the other hand, was placed under the authority of the Higher Education Council (YOK). Because of the institutional and legislative innovations, Demircan (1988) claims that English gained a considerably higher status among all other foreign languages taught in schools in Turkey after 1980s.

The brief historical journey of English as a foreign language indicates that its importance as an internationally recognized medium of communication has led to an increased interest in its teaching as a foreign language in non-English speaking countries. It has become an essential instrument to gain access to the global markets. Therefore, having English as a second language has always been considered as an advantage in finding a well-respected and well-paid job. According to Ahmad (1993), English has become a requirement for employment success in an industry that is becoming more and more competitive. He adds that it was the Prime Minister Ozal's vision to create a liberal economy and strengthen the economic ties with the West which contributed to the significance of foreign language in Turkey. This, eventually led parents to encourage their kids to learn a second language to keep up with the ever-changing needs of the competitive job market. Due to the fact that English is undeniably stronger than any other language in the world, it was considered by the Turkish government as a key to modernise the country (Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998). Therefore, the Turkish Ministry of National Education has emphasized the value of foreign language education to achieve this objective. The priority and emphasis placed on learning foreign languages would result in some of the most major policy and curriculum changes in the language education history in Turkey.

In 1997, an eight-year compulsory education was introduced by the government. This marked a major shift for the educational system in Turkey. The existing English language curriculum was updated by the Ministry of National education that was in use in primary and secondary schools (Yal, 2011). This reform had a significant impact on the second language education in Turkey as it introduced a considerably radical change. The curricula in Grade 4 and Grade 5 were updated and English language education was added in 1997 (Kirkgoz, 2005). Children were required to attend

primary school (Grades 1 to Grade 5) and secondary school (Grade 6 to Grade 8) for a minimum of eight years under the eight-year compulsory education reform. In 2012, on the other hand, the length of compulsory education was increased from eight years to twelve years, comprising of four years of primary school (Grade 1 to Grade 4), four years of secondary school (Grades 5 to Grade 8), and four years of high school (Grades 9 to Grade 12) (Ministry of National Education, 2013). This system innovation also brought along the curricula reform. That is to say that, the English language education program had to undergo a comprehensive revision in conjunction with these developments. The school enrolment age for children was lowered to sixty-nine months. Children who are sixty-six, sixty-seven or sixty-eight months old could also be enrolled in Grade 1 with the written permission of their parents. Additionally, English language education was required to be commenced in the second grade rather than the fourth grade (Ministry of National Education, 2013). All these policy changes aimed to enhance the language teaching-learning practices in Turkey. The extent to which they have succeeded is an enquiry yet to be addressed.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

Numerous researchers have noted that despite spending several years learning English in Turkey, students struggle to use and understand the language when speaking or listening (Tuzcu Eken, 2021; Dundar & Merc, 2017; Gunal & Engin-Demir, 2012; Yanik, 2007). The curriculum innovations outlined above, on the other hand, aimed to enhance the teaching learning experiences of the major stakeholders of the English language curriculum namely teachers and students. Having said that, it is widely claimed that even though the theoretical foundation of the current English language curriculum is fairly promising, pupils and teachers are not very pleased with the way the program is being implemented (Yanik, 2008; Gunal & Engin-Demir, 2012).

Considering the fact that Turkey has taken several steps and implemented curriculum changes/innovations and revised the teacher education programs in the past to achieve the ultimate outcome of educating youth that is proficient in English, it would be reasonable to anticipate that significant improvements in language education have been made. However, even after spending nearly 1,000 hours in the classroom learning the language, more than 95% of Turkish students still cannot use English to communicate in order to complete simple tasks, according to a report by TEPAV (Turkiye Ekonomi Politikalari Arastirma Vakfi) and the British Council (Guttman, 2014). The report signifies the language deficiency and refers to some of the reasons behind it. In addition to that, in 2015 Turkey was ranked as the 26<sup>th</sup> country out of 27 countries in Europe and the 50<sup>th</sup> country out of 70 countries all around the world in terms of English language proficiencies (English First, n.d). These findings clearly indicate that there seems to be a mismatch between the actions taken and the outcomes achieved or yet to be achieved.

This particular research study aims to delve into the latest English language curriculum (2018) in Turkey framed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The preliminary purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the CEFR framed English language curriculum in primary (Grade 2-3-4) and secondary (Grade 5-6-7-8) schools in Turkey. More specifically, it intends to examine whether or not the curriculum meets the expectations of the students and teachers as well as the expectations of the Ministry of Education in foreign language education.

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

One of the most significant reasons why curriculum innovations fail or get criticized is because they are ill-conceived, fail to meet the expectations of the stakeholders, pay

no attention to the contextual factors, or contain unrealistic goals and objectives. The implementation of earlier curricula in Turkey had drawn criticism, primarily because some of them were introduced without piloting, which led to a range of different issues at the implementation phase (Kirkgoz, 2005). This clearly indicates that conducting curriculum evaluation is a significant and equally necessary practice. That is to say that, the major components of the curriculum (i.e., goals and objectives, students, teachers, decision-makers, resources and materials, context...etc.) should all be taken into account in the development of the curriculum and constantly revised and evaluated to pinpoint any discrepancies. This process could potentially ensure a successful curriculum innovation. Kirkgoz (2008) outlines three factors that could have an impact on curriculum innovation: cultural, teacher-related, and contextual factors. These factors pinpoint potential issues peculiar to the workplace culture of the teachers and the realities of the classroom setting in which the curriculum is implemented.

Foreign language education in Turkey has undergone remarkable innovations and policy reforms. These reforms incorporated the development of a new curriculum and designing new coursebooks to meet the needs and expectations of the ever-changing language education as well as the students and teachers. However, English language teaching practices in Turkey have always been exposed to criticism. Although Kizildag (2009) believes that the curriculum is perfect, she also describes it as "busy and inflexible". The criticism mainly stemmed from a range of different factors namely teacher efficacy, learner motivation, instructional methods and techniques, learning context, and available resources. The factors identified are all interrelated. For instance, the efficiency of teachers in delivering the new curriculum is somehow related to the implementation of more recent instructional methods and techniques.

This raises the question of whether the context identified and the resources selected are consistent with the instruction method or technique proposed in the curriculum. Aktas (as described in Kizildag, 2009) also pinpoints additional variables including the type of foreign language teaching materials, inadequate teaching hours, unqualified foreign language teachers, and poor quality of the supplied foreign language training that hinder the effective implementation of the curriculum. The ineffectiveness of textbooks and the scarcity of resources like computers, projectors, and videos/CDs are highlighted by Kirkgoz (2008b) as key factors. Isik (2008) adds that the traditional teaching methods adopted and internalised by the teachers, the teaching-learning habits of the students and teachers, and the shortcomings of the language planning are other key contributing factors to the issue. As the new curriculum took a completely different approach to language education in terms of methodology, teachers find it rather challenging to adjust their teaching habits. Besides, the new curriculum was designed to be more learner-centred which required teachers to reconsider their role in the classroom. As Kirkgoz (2008a) asserts, teachers focus less on promoting student participation in language learning process and more on transferring the knowledge about the language. This, in return, causes considerably less attention to be paid on fostering the students' communicative skills. Yanik (2007) also addresses similar factors affecting the implementation of the ELT program and adds that context, lack of resources, textbooks, and even the curriculum itself could be considered as crucial components in the implementation process.

It is clearly evident that, there are still some issues that need to be addressed with regards to the implementation of curriculum reform. This is necessary not only to ensure that the factors affecting the successful implementation of the curriculum are eliminated, but also the standards of foreign language education are improved. Kirkgoz

(2009) highlights the fact that there is a significant discrepancy between the language education policy and its actual implementation in the classroom settings in Turkey. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which has been incorporated into the current curriculum could yield more positive results in long term. However, it is crucially important that such an innovation is required to be closely monitored and evaluated. Having said that, there are unfortunately not many research studies conducted to monitor the progress and evaluate the efficacy of the CEFR framed English language curriculum in primary and secondary schools in Turkey. Although there are some studies that have been conducted (Güneyli & Demirel, 2006 and Ustunluoglu et al., 2012), they are limited in scope and thus unable to provide a comprehensive evaluation of how effective the curriculum is. There is no guarantee that incorporating the principles of CEFR into the language curriculum would ensure a more communicative approach in language education and greater attainment to goals and objectives of language education considering the fact that The CEFR is a framework that promotes the use of foreign languages in an action-oriented manner without prescribing a particular style to language instruction. That is to say that a curriculum evaluation study that is comprehensive enough to include all aspects of a curriculum is most definitely needed in order to identify the effectiveness of the curriculum innovation executed by the MoNE and potentially identify the issues and challenges in classroom implementation. According to the Ministry of National Education (2013), the planned curriculum tends to deviate from the one implemented in classroom in many ways. Contextual factors (i.e., school infrastructure, class size, and available classroom equipment and resources) and human factor (i.e., school administration, teachers, learners, and parents) might influence the implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, such an innovation requires careful preparation and long-

term commitment to succeed. As Olivia (2005) claims, curriculum evaluation is an essential component of a viable curriculum development. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the CEFR framed English language curriculum in primary (Grade 2 to Grade 4) and secondary schools (Grade 5 to Grade 8) in Turkey. More specifically, the study intends to examine whether the expectations of the Ministry of Education and the CEFR criteria, that have been cultivated in the newly released English language curriculum, have been effectively put in practice in the language teaching-learning process. Additionally, the potential factors (internal or external) that might influence the implementation of the curriculum are expected to be revealed in this study.

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

The term ‘primary school’ is used throughout the study to refer to Grade 1, 2, 3, and 4. The age range of the students in primary school is between 6-year-old (66-month-old) in Grade 1 and 9-year-old in Grade 4. In the second year of primary school, students start taking English classes two hours a week. In Grade 2 and 3, the preliminary focus of the English curriculum is on speaking and listening skills. As students grow in their linguistic knowledge and proficiency, reading and writing skills are introduced gradually in higher grades.

In the new English language curriculum, which has been framed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), relevant CEFR proficiency levels (to be defined in detail later) have been assigned to each grade in primary school level. The following table summarises the information that has been given so far.

Table 1: Primary schools in Turkey

<b>Grade/ Year</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>CEFR Level</b>	<b>Hours per Week</b>	<b>Skill Focus</b>
2	6-Year-old	A1	2 Hours	Listening and Speaking
3	7-Year-old		2 Hours	Listening and Speaking Very Limited Reading and Writing
4	8/9-Year-old		2 Hours	Listening and Speaking Very Limited Reading and Writing

The term ‘secondary school’ is used throughout the study to refer to Grade 5, 6, 7, and 8. The age range of the students in secondary school is between 9 or 10 in Grade 5 and 13-14 in Grade 8. The secondary school incorporates the transition phase from A1 to A2. In the 5th and 6th grades (Grade 5 and Grade 6), students continue working at A1 level and the focus is still on speaking and listening with very limited reading and writing. As students get to the 7th grade, they start working at A2 level. Speaking and listening skills continue to be the primary focus at this level, with reading and writing skills serving as the secondary focus. In secondary school, the learners are exposed to the target language more when compared to primary school. Grade 5 and 6 students take English classes 3 hours a week while Grade 7 and 8 students have 4 hours of English classes a week. The following table summarises the information that has been given so far.

Table 2: Secondary schools in Turkey

<b>Grade/ Year</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>CEFR Level</b>	<b>Hours per Week</b>	<b>Skill Focus</b>
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5	9-10- Year-old	A1	3 Hours	Listening and Speaking Limited Reading Very Limited Writing
6	11-Year- old		3 Hours	Listening and Speaking Limited Reading Limited Writing
7	12-Year- old	A2	4 Hours	<b>Primary:</b> Listening and Speaking <b>Secondary:</b> Reading and Writing
8	13-14- Year-old		4 Hours	<b>Primary:</b> Listening and Speaking <b>Secondary:</b> Reading and Writing

The CEFR that stands for the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" refers to the framework created by the European Commission as the most recent set of standardized guidelines for foreign language teaching programs. It is designed to provide a thorough foundation for designing teaching and learning resources and evaluating proficiency in foreign languages. According to the CEFR, proficiency in a foreign language (L2) is described as the capacity to use it in five different domains (i.e., listening, reading, writing, spoken interaction, and spoken production) at six different levels (Council of Europe, 2001). The following table (Table 3) outlines the information given so far.

Table 3: CEFR levels and general descriptors (CoE, 2001)

Level		General Descriptor
Proficient User	C2 Mastery	Highly proficient- can use English very fluently, precise and sensitive in most contexts

	C1	Effective Operational Proficiency	Able to use English fluently and flexibly in a wide range of contexts
Independent User	B2	Vantage	Can use English effectively, with some fluency, in a range of contexts
	B1	Threshold	Can communicate essential points and ideas in familiar contexts
Basic User	A2	Waystage	Can communicate in English within a limited range of contexts
	A1	Breakthrough	Can communicate in basic English with help from the listener

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The "Can Do" statements in the descriptors for every category indicate what learners can perform at each competency level in their L2s. The Council of Europe (CoE) member countries as well as other countries have adopted the CEFR's guiding principles. According to the CEFR framework, the plurilingual and pluricultural competence is the ultimate aim of language acquisition as these are the cornerstone of foreign language education (Khalifa & French, 2008). According to the CEFR, the ability of a bilingual person to fluidly switch from one particular linguistic code to another in order to create and maintain communication under various conditions is known as plurilingualism (CoE, 2001). The goal of language instruction, from the perspective of plurilingualism, is to raise peoples' awareness of this ability so that they can take it as a life-long commitment to improve it. In addition to that, the CEFR emphasizes the value of individuals as learners, thus places significant emphasis on the necessity of developing learner independence (Morrow, 2004). On the other hand, the second concept 'pluriculturalism' is believed to result naturally from plurilingualism. The CEFR claims that "pluriculturalism develops when linguistic and

cultural competencies in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness” (CoE, 2001, p. 43). This is due to the fact that the ability to promote dialogue and interaction between culture, which is also referred as interculturality, develops as a result of plurilingualism. This allows the individual to understand and internalize the cultural and linguistic norms and form a distinct identity that is not limited to a specific cultural viewpoint. The term ‘curriculum’ is used in this study to refer to the academic content of the courses offered in primary and secondary schools by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter begins with a survey of the literature on the Turkish educational system as a whole before delving into the teaching of the English language in the country. This is followed by a specific focus on the English language curriculum in primary and secondary schools in Turkey. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which has been used to frame the English language curriculum in primary and secondary schools, its principles and key competencies have been included in the literature review. Subsequent to this, the innovation of the English language curriculum in Turkey has been analysed and included in the literature review. In addition, the curriculum evaluation models have been revised with the purpose of setting the framework for the evaluation of the CEFR framed English language curriculum in primary and secondary schools in Turkey. In the final section of the literature review, the available English language curriculum evaluation studies in Turkey and in other countries, where the CEFR is utilised in language education, have been examined and included in the literature review.

#### **2.1 The Education System in Turkey**

Formal education and informal education are the two pillars of Turkey's educational system. According to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Turkey, formal education includes preschool for children aged 36-56 months and 48-68 months, primary school for children aged 6 (69 months)–9 years, secondary school for children aged 10–13 years, high school (including vocational or technical schools) for children

aged 14–17 years, and tertiary education that could be at least two years depending on the major.

The formal education has four phases: primary (4 years), secondary (4 years), high school (4 years) and tertiary education. As part of the "compulsory education" legislation that was implemented in 1997 in Turkey, the primary school which included 5 years of schooling and secondary school which included 3 years of schooling were required to be attended by every citizen and they were free of charge. In 2012, the duration of formal schooling was increased from 8 years to 12 years with a new legislation to enhance the overall of quality of the education provided and to increase the rate of participation to formal education all over the country (OECD, 2013). After completing the primary and secondary school levels, there are a variety of high schools such as Anatolian (Anadolu Lisesi), Science (Fen Bilimleri Lisesi), Social sciences (Sosyal Bilimler Lisesi), Anatolian Technical and Vocational (Mesleki ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi), Anatolian High Schools for Imams and Preachers (Anadolu İmama Hatip Lisesi), Military (Askeri Lise), Night (Gece Lisesi), and Open High Schools (Açık Lise) that the students can choose from. However, students are required to take an exam called High School Entrance Exam (HSEE) at the end of Grade 8 and based on their success in the exam, they will be admitted to one of the high schools mentioned above. Upon completion of high school, the students are required to take another exam (University Entrance Exam) if they wish to continue their formal education. Informal education is also offered by the Ministry of National Education. This type of education targets people who, for a variety of reasons, have never been in the formal education system. They are offered basic literacy and numeracy courses to equip them with the essential knowledge that they would need in everyday life. Besides, informal education also serves the purpose of equipping

individuals with practical knowledge to improve their professional skills as well as their long-term living standards. This is done in the form of occupational courses offered by the Ministry of National Education.

## **2.2 English Language Education in Turkey**

### **2.2.1 Foreign Language Education before and after Republic**

Turkish people first came into touch with the English language during the 1530s when the Ottoman Empire had strong trade relationship with the British Empire. To overcome the language obstacle to sustain the relationships, the minority groups (e.g., the Greek, Jewish, and Armenian) in Istanbul and Izmir were used as translators for centuries because Ottomans did not feel it was essential to learn English at the time (Demircan, 1988; Lewis, 1982). Few Muslim Turks are known to have attempted to study a foreign language prior to the eighteenth century, according to Lewis (1982). Indeed, during the eighteenth century, French was widely utilized in trade and diplomacy. Therefore, it was the dominant foreign language of its time. A trade agreement that was signed in 1830s between the United States and the Ottoman Empire initiated the relations between Turks and the English-speaking Americans. These relations would develop during the course of the history and would reveal itself in different forms. Education, more specifically language education, was one of many of these forms. Robert College, which was founded in 1863 by American missionaries, was the very first of its kind. It was the first school that used English as the medium of instruction. Initially, the student portfolio of this school comprised of the children of the ethnic minorities within the Ottoman Empire, but eventually Muslim Turks were also admitted. In 1903, Robert College graduated its very first Turkish Muslim students (Davison as cited in Bear, 1985).

After the Ottoman Empire, the teaching of Arabic and Persian languages in schools was prohibited when the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923. This was an attempt to secularize education following the fall of the Ottoman Empire (Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998). The new Republic's top priority in education was to raise the literacy level of the nation. The fact that just 6% of Turkish citizens were literate at the time meant that education in the mother tongue received greater attention than education in foreign languages. However, as part of the plan to modernize the country and improve its relationships with the western world, foreign language was required to be part of the education system as well. Foreign languages were seen as the key to the new Republic's cultural and technological advancement, but for the time being, they had to be acquired through translations (Demircan, 1988). Additionally, in their efforts to build the nation, the rulers of the time, led by Kemal Ataturk, frequently emphasized the close ties between language and culture. As a result, they placed emphasis on the value of literacy in one's mother tongue and an understanding of its culture as the preliminary goal and on the study of foreign languages as the secondary goal. Turkish was a widely used language for literacy by the 1950s. Meanwhile, some of the Turkey's largest cities had a number of exceptionally competitive English-medium schools. With the declaration of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the modernization and Westernization movements strengthened the links with Europe, particularly with France. However, in the 1950s, Turkey started to shift progressively away from European hegemony more towards American dominance and the use of English as a common tongue. The earlier state of affairs had to change by the middle of the 19th century due to increased linguistic contact and tighter links with the United States.

English was more widely spoken foreign language in Turkey by the middle of the 1950s as a result of the growing socio-economic and political influence of the United States. The desire to establish, maintain, and improve the commercial relations and also access the technological advancements, Turkey felt the pressure to secure better access to English. The idea of globalization became more obvious after 1980, necessitating a robust foundation of international ties. Turkey felt an even greater urgency to keep up with the globalized world in terms of foreign language skills. This initiated the planning process so called ‘language-in-education’ to facilitate the process of learning English. The statistical information from 1987 and 1988 clearly demonstrates that there were 193 English–medium secondary schools in Turkey (103 private and 90 government), 15 German–medium secondary schools (8 private and 7 government), 11 French–medium secondary schools (9 private and 2 government), and 2 private schools where the medium of instruction was in Italian (Demircan, 1988). The disparity between the proportion of schools teaching in English against other foreign languages amply demonstrates the dominance of English in the whole country.

In essence, the necessity to open up to the West for technological breakthroughs and cross-cultural contact was the major driving force behind the expansion of English in Turkey. 1950s marked the beginning of the spread of English language education and it continued until the late 1970s. As a result of growing contact with global market by means of audio-visual materials (i.e., Tv and radio), which brought American culture into Turkey in the form of new products, concepts, and linguistic terms, the spread of English accelerated starting in the middle of the 1980s (Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998).

### **2.2.2 Foreign/ Second Language Policy in Turkey**

It is necessary to look at the historical origins in order to completely understand how second language education has evolved over time in Turkey. After World War I, there

was a fundamental change that led to a rise in admiration for Western culture. In addition to that, there was an increasing involvement of the United States in international affairs. This in long-run led to the spread of its socio-cultural impact on other countries, including Turkey. Therefore, English became a highly demanded foreign language (Eskicumali & Turedi, 2010). Part of the reason why English grew to become increasingly significant in Turkey was its endeavour to keep up with the socio-economic demands of the globalized world.

In 1959, Turkey made an attempt to become part of the European Economic Community (Avrupa Ekonomik Toplulugu) which was established in 1958 in an attempt to create an economic integrity among its member states. When the European Union (EU) was formed in 1993, the European Economic Community (renamed as European Community) was incorporated into European Union. In order to become a member state, the candidate states had to comply with the standards of the European Union. The Council of Europe initiated the development process of a comprehensive framework for languages with an aim of facilitating communication among the people living in the member states. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages that was published in 2001, as a result of this endeavour, made a significant impact on the curriculum design in the member states. Due to its close ties with the European Union and its attempt to become a member state, this would eventually impact the English language curriculum design in Turkey too (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011 as cited in Yal, 2011).

These reforms in education introduced in Year 1997 by the Ministry of National Education and the Higher Education Council, which introduced eight years of compulsory education, made it possible to start language learning from the Grade 4

onwards. The assumption behind it was to promote and enhance second language education (Yal, 2011). In 2013, a more radical step was taken, and the Ministry of National Education introduced 4+4+4 system and extended the compulsory formal education to twelve years. The primary, secondary and high school levels were all redesigned and each level comprised four years of education. In light of the most recent reform, the duration of compulsory schooling was raised to 12 years, with four years of primary (Grade 1 to Grade 4), four years of secondary (Grade 5 to Grade 8), and four years of high school (Grade 9 to Grade 12). In addition, the age requirement for registering students for the first grade was lowered by one year, and the English language teaching program was totally changed. English education became mandatory beginning in the second grade rather than the fourth. Children would unavoidably begin English classes approximately three years earlier than they would under the old system (Ministry of National Education, 2013).

Having mentioned the policy changes in English language education in Turkey, it is also necessary to touch upon the teacher education as it is closely tied to these curriculum innovations. The policy changes in English language education made significant impact on the methods and approaches to foreign language education adopted in the curriculum. Therefore, it was necessary to ensure that the teachers, who would embrace the new policy changes and implement the new curriculum, were equipped with the knowledge and skills. The earliest teacher education institution in Turkey was founded in March 1848 and was known as Darulmuallimin (Teacher Education School), according to Bilir (2011). However, there was not really a demand for foreign language teachers until 1938. The changes in the global dynamics in the form of socio-cultural and socio-economic ones made significant impact on foreign language education in Turkey. In 1990s, there had been significant changes in second

language education as well as teacher education. The most notable revolution for teachers also flourished during this decade, along with the 1997 legislation that made English a compulsory subject in the primary grades. The philosophy of teacher education changed significantly. The term ‘technician’ used to define teacher’s role in language education was no longer acknowledged. Rather, an ideal language teacher was described as “autonomous, reflective, informed decision makers, developed to escape from procedures and to form their teaching according to students’ needs” (Altan, 2006, as cited in Ulum, 2015).

The foreign language policy changes in Turkey in the modern era have made significant contribution to the foreign language education. There are increasingly more kindergartens where English is taught to youngsters long before they commence their formal schooling. Additionally, an increasing number of schools and universities employ English as the primary language of instruction. Turkey now has twice as many universities as it did fourteen years ago. Public and private institutions together numbered 76 in 2001, but as of 2015, that number has increased to almost 175 (Güven et al., 2015). As of 2023, this number has increased to 208. Parallel to this, the number of universities offering English as the medium of instruction has increased remarkably. Despite the dominance of private universities, public universities appear to take the same stance and offer English-only or English-Turkish mixed technique as the medium of instruction.

### **2.2.3 The Role and Functions of English Language in Turkey**

The paradigm put forth by Kachru (1985) provides a framework for investigating the numerous functions English performed in various countries and sociolinguistic contexts. The inner, outer, and growing circles of the model are all concentric. Every

circle symbolizes a separate country or culture's use of English, including its type of diffusion, acquisition patterns, and domains of use.

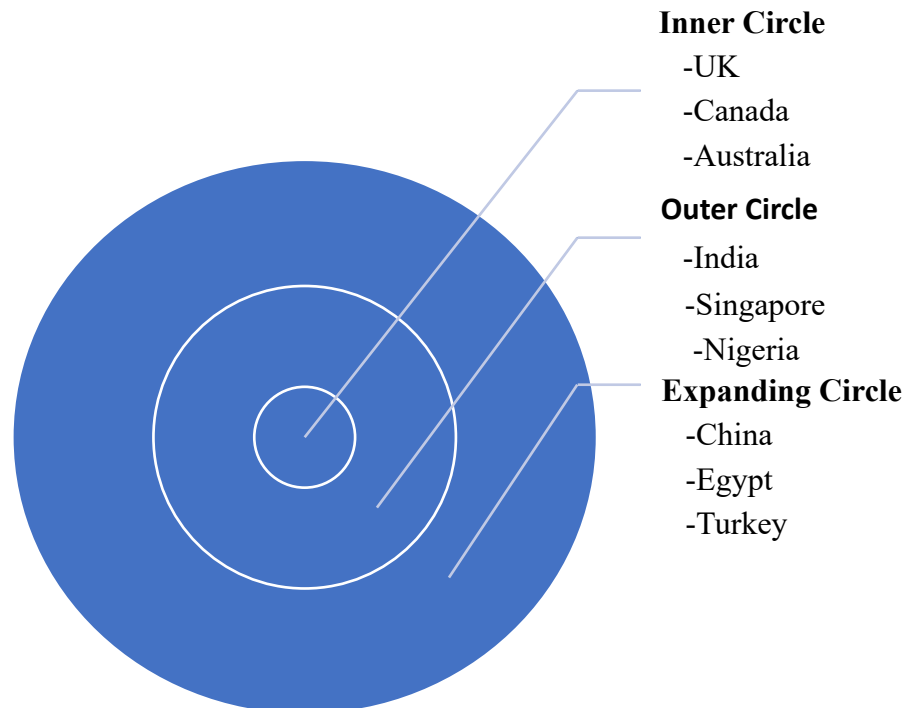


Figure 1: Concentric Circles of World Englishes, adapted from Kachru, 1988

The inner circle countries are those where English is the dominant language and is spoken as the native tongue by the majority of the population. Learners must also study the acceptable behaviours (socio-cultural aspects of the language) in the inner circle countries in addition to the language itself (Fenyo, 2003). Non-native speakers are subject to norms and standards set by the inner circle countries. The countries in the outer circle are those where colonization took place and thus, English is one of two or more official languages. English is either treated as an official language, as it is in Nigeria, or as one of the state languages, as it is in Zambia, according to their language policy. A wide range of social, educational, administrative, and literary realms are included in the function of language. On the other hand, English serves as an international language among the nations of the expanding circle, where speakers

exhibit a variety of performing styles. They are reliant on the inner circle nations that provide the norms and acquire English as a second language. English is getting more and more popular in these nations, and its student population is growing quickly. Therefore, English has the status as an international language in the expanding circle countries and it is currently taught as a foreign language in many.

Unlike outer circle countries where English is fairly institutionalized, Turkey represents a foreign language learning context where English language acts as a 'performance variety' with restricted functional range. Although English is widely taught in schools in Turkey, its primary applications are in education and the private sector, which includes the travel and tourism industry and international business. In Turkey, formal education is the most prevalent setting for learning English, and instruction in the language begins at age six. Outside of the classroom, there are not many opportunities to use the language in regular conversation. However, an increasing number of private and state-owned schools, where the medium of instruction is in English, is being introduced. Besides, English is now a second or additional language that is required in many Turkish-medium institutions. Yet, there are still significant differences in the level and scope of instructions provided. Children who have access to high-quality English instruction are typically affluent, upper middle-class children. English has not been able to reach the lower socioeconomic tiers of society in significant measures because of these problems (Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998). The emphasis placed on English in public and private institutes display significant differences. The time allocated to the target language, the variety of methods and techniques proposed in the curriculum, and the quality of the human resources vary which, inevitably, affect the quality of the language education.

To find out how eager Turkish students are to speak in English, Cetinkaya conducted a research study on young people in Turkey in 2005. About 48% of the 365 participants said they were willing to communicate in English. According to the participating students, speaking English with close friends or in small groups was mostly preferable. However, the participants asserted that using a foreign language in the classroom with a limited audience (other students and teachers) was "absurd" (Cetinkaya, 2005). The research study also revealed that the level of learner motivation to enhance their language skills was considerably low. Students claimed that they did not specifically search for publications, books, newspapers, or television programs in English just for the sake of conversing in it. Instead, materials in other languages were only consulted if they were not already available in Turkish. It is not yet clear if this denotes conservatism in culture. Even those students who had been exposed to English instruction since early elementary school, according to Cetinkaya, lacked a strong command of the language. She ascribes this to a method of instruction that places an excessive emphasis on correctness and language structures while paying little attention to actual communication skills. Students' willingness to communicate in English is ultimately hampered by these ineffective teaching techniques (Cetinkaya, 2005).

### **2.3 English Language Curriculum in Primary and Secondary Schools in Turkey**

According to GURSOY et al. (2013), second language (L2) instruction is required in Europe starting at age 6-7. According to ENEVER & MOON (2009) and ASLAN (2016), the European Union strongly advises its member nations to begin teaching L2 as early as preschool or primary school. Prior to implementing an early start, it is necessary to fully comprehend its justifications. JOHNSTONE (2009) asserts that getting a head start at roughly age 5 provides a number of benefits. First of all, compared to older children,

younger kids would find it much simpler to learn the L2 sound system. Moreover, it is a scientific fact that young learners have lower affective filter, thus are less anxious. In the meanwhile, an early start would imply that younger children would ultimately have more time to master L2. Johnstone (2009) argues that the identity of children that would develop as a result of cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional skills, and their sociocultural awareness would definitely be different if children start learning a second language at an older age.

The foreign language policy change that took place in 2012 aimed to promote an early start in language education. To do that, the decision was taken to incorporate the second and the third graders in language education. The allocated class contact hours for the aforementioned levels were set to be two hours a week (MoNE, 2012). According to the new regulation, primary school students in the second, third, and fourth grades are required to take at least two hours of mandatory foreign language instruction each week. For fifth graders in secondary school, it could also be increased up to 18 hours in the form of optional language courses. Foreign/ second language education is now a topic of significant importance in the international community, as Mirici (2008) stated, and Turkey is no exception given the increasing emphasis on the value of acquiring fluency in foreign languages.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) was closely examined when developing the new English language curriculum. According to the CEFR, students must apply their learning in real-life situations in order to achieve fluency, competency, and language retention (CoE, 2001). As a result, the new curricular model places a strong emphasis on language usage in a natural communicative setting. To achieve success in language education,

the use of English is emphasized in all classroom interactions, assisting students in developing their communicative competence by helping them to become language users rather than learners of another language (CoE, 2001).

### **2.3.1 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**

The European Commission created the CEFR as the most recent standardised guideline for foreign language teaching programs, goals materials, course books, and for the evaluation of the foreign language learning procedure. It is regarded as an invaluable framework pertinent to all levels of foreign language teaching in Europe. According to the CEFR, proficiency in a second language (L2) is defined as the capacity to use it in five different domains (listening, reading, writing, spoken interaction, and spoken production) at six distinct levels, namely A1 and A2 (basic user), B1 and B2 (independent user), and C1 and C2 (proficient user) (Council of Europe, 2001). The "Can Do" statements in the descriptors for each category define what learners can perform at each proficiency level in their L2s. The CEFR is a descriptive framework, thus does not specify any particular language teaching or assessment and evaluation method (Coste, 2007; Little, 2006, 2011; Piccardo, 2010). Therefore, according to Jones and Saville (2009), the CEFR is not meant to be considered as a tool to simplify the language teaching or testing procedures. Instead, the framework has been created in a way that it gives practitioners the opportunity to adapt their approaches to teaching and testing in language education based on the dynamics of the educational context in which they operate.

The Can-Do descriptors in the CEFR document outlines what language learners at different levels of language proficiency can accomplish. The descriptors indicate that the CEFR adopts an approach to language teaching that is "action-oriented" and thus encourages instructors to use "task-based teaching" methods (Little, 2006). The

emphasis here is on the use of the target language to accomplish an activity. In doing so, the learners focus on meaning rather than forms to achieve the objective (Skehan, 2003; Swain, 2005). According to Ellis (2003), Pica (2008), and Skehan (2003), task-based instruction engages students in communication geared towards objectives by simulating scenarios in which they would use the language in everyday life. This method places greater emphasis on successfully completing tasks than learning the language structures, and students take part in “goal-oriented communication to solve problems, complete projects, and reach decisions” (Pica, 2008, p. 71). Therefore, given that the CEFR's theoretical orientation is based on ideas taken from a framework for communicative competence, it would be reasonable to claim that its theoretical foundation is not distinctive. For instance, the CEFR's emphasis on the importance of engagement and language use is supported by the principles of the output hypothesis proposed by Swain (2005). Little (2006, 2011) contends that the innovative nature of the CEFR framework is sourced from not its theoretical framework, but its commitment to bring curriculum, language teaching, and assessment into much closer interaction.

Many countries in Europe and other parts of the world have adopted the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for teaching and evaluating foreign languages (e.g., North, 2007). The framework serves as a beneficial guideline that provides a detailed description of student achievements in the target language (e.g., Little, 2007). The descriptive nature of the framework outlines what students are required to learn to utilise the target language for communicative purposes. Besides, the CEFR framework stresses pluriculturalism and signifies the knowledge and skills the learners must possess to operate effectively in a given cultural setting (Clauet, 2010).

### **2.3.2 The Principles of the CEFR**

As a foundation for teaching foreign languages, CoE member countries along with others have adopted the CEFR's guiding principles: plurilingual and pluricultural competence. The framework emphasises that these competencies are the ultimate aims of language acquisition process (Khalifa & French, 2008). According to the CEFR, plurilingualism is the ability of a bilingual individual to switch swiftly between one linguistic code and another in order to successfully establish and maintain an interaction under particular circumstances (CoE, 2001). Therefore, learner autonomy is considered as a corner stone in developing plurilingualism (Morrow, 2004). In addition to that, pluriculturalism is believed to result naturally from plurilingualism. Pluriculturalism, according to the CEFR, arises when linguistic and cultural competences in accordance with each language are developed and modified in social situations and thereby contributing to cross-cultural awareness (CoE, 2001). As a result, a fresh and unique identity that is not limited by a single cultural perspective is created and the individuals are able to successfully function in a variety of cultural situations. Accordingly, the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has placed significant emphasis on plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in the new curriculum (Mirici, 2008).

### **2.3.3 The Key Competencies of the CEFR Framed Curriculum**

Key competencies serve as the universal and shared goals of all educational initiatives. They are the essential skills that every person is supposed to learn during their formal schooling. The fulfilment of personal as well as professional development through knowledge, skills, and attitudes—which are the cornerstones of the aforementioned core competencies in the CEFR document—is something that students are supposed

to be prepared for. The following are the core competencies defined by the European Commission:

a) Traditional Skills:

- o Communication in mother tongue
- o Communication in foreign languages

b) Digital Skills:

- o Literacy
- o Basic skills in math and science

c) Horizontal Skills:

- o Learning to learn
- o Social and civic responsibility
- o Initiative and entrepreneurship
- o Cultural awareness and creativity (CoE, 2001).

The educational programs of the EU countries now incorporate these core competencies and particular sub-competences. To do that, the educational programs aim to offer effective and engaging learning materials and experiences for learners to ensure that the key competencies are attained by the learners. In order to integrate these crucial competencies into the newly designed curriculum and ensure that they are effectively acquired by the learners, the Ministry of National Education initiated a comprehensive review and revision effort.

Language teaching programs are not restricted to any particular course content as the aims of such programs are to teach language skills and improve the communicative competencies required linguistically and culturally. In other words, a CEFR framed curriculum revolves around language skills. These core skills set the foundation of the

goals and objectives of the content by considering the language proficiency level of the learners as well as the contextual factors (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1996). For that reason, it is rather challenging to incorporate the key competencies in a language education program.

#### **2.3.4 Aspects of the CEFR Framed Curriculum**

Since the CEFR document views language learning as a lifetime endeavour, it is critical that students cultivate a positive attitude toward English from an early age. Therefore, the CEFR-framed curriculum makes an effort to foster a positive learning atmosphere where young English learners and users can feel comfortable and motivated throughout their learning process. The curriculum was designed in a way that the content selection is carried out based on the target learner groups. Besides, there is emphasis on all four skills (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing) at varying degrees based on the age group of the learners. Speaking and listening skills are prioritized in the second and third grades. Reading and writing skills, on the other hand, are introduced when pupils proceed to higher grades. Carefully designed and developmentally appropriate learning activities offer students a purposeful learning experience at every step of the learning process. These activities are also considered as crucial in the development of learner autonomy and other important skills (i.e., problem-solving abilities) that are the cornerstones of communicative competence. The curriculum in primary and secondary schools in Turkey must accommodate both young learners and adolescents from a developmental standpoint because it covers an age range, from 5 to 13 (Pinter, 2006; Rixon, 1999). Bearing in mind the fact that these learner groups in primary and secondary schools are significantly different in terms of their socio-linguistic levels as well as their level of cognitive maturity, the curriculum takes these distinct characteristics into account. This awareness is reflected on the

curriculum design process and shapes the content, context, materials and resources, assessment and evaluation strategies, and the linguistic skills that will be embedded in the curriculum. A "play world" is typically offered to describe young learners. That is to say, kids are required to participate in physical activities to keep them motivated and engaged. To do that, the target language is presented and delivered through hands-on activities by incorporating fun factor (McKay, 2006).

The CEFR framed curriculum serves as a guideline for teachers on how to facilitate the students' learning experiences by means of classroom activities or homework. Additionally, it also addresses the learners and make recommendations for them to manage their own learning both in and outside the classroom. These are in line with the emphasis placed on learner autonomy in the CEFR framework (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1996). The CEFR framed curriculum addresses different aspects of learning strategies. The first aspect is that activities that are appropriate and doable for the specified group of pupils and the learning environment that is engaging were supplied by teachers and also coursebook authors. The second aspect refers to the tasks that are provided in each section of the syllabus to show what is anticipated by instructors and book authors. The curriculum essentially calls for a variety of learning methodologies for both classroom instruction and homework, which can be accomplished through the teacher's methodologically sound instruction and properly chosen tasks (Cohen, 2011). The third aspect, on the other hand, is the focus on testing and evaluation. Creating beneficial and valuable washback effects is one of the curriculum's most crucial components. This is recommended to be maintained by implementing a range of different assessment and evaluation techniques. In other words, due to the formal exams (from Grade 4 onwards), the curriculum severely

forbids excessive use of any particular language assessment technique (e.g., paper-based assessments).

Finally, the new curriculum differs from the old one in that it places a strong emphasis on values education. Friendship, equality, integrity, self-control, patience, kindness, love, responsibility, and patriotism are the fundamental values that learners should internalize in order to achieve the learning outcomes. Having said that, these values should not be considered as separate subjects or topics. Rather, they should be incorporated into the themes and topics of the curricula, as specified in the curriculum document. When choosing the characters, words, and visuals to be used during the design and instructional process, it is important that the characteristics of the target learner group should be taken into account. If the movie poster is to be utilized in a classroom, for example, ethics and values should be considered along with the movie's age appropriateness. Additionally, the characters chosen should adhere to the ethical principles and values of the educational system so that students are exposed to role models that are culturally appropriate. Therefore, the MoNE strongly advises that such values should be considered when the resources are produced and/or chosen for language education purposes (MoNE, 2018).

### **2.3.5 Testing and Evaluation Approach of the Curriculum**

Testing as the superordinate construct, or specifically assessment and evaluation practices, is one of the most important components of the curriculum since a testing method that is not compatible with the nature of the curriculum would imperil all of the linguistic components and pedagogical goals and objectives. This discrepancy may influence how teachers deliver the content and how pupils typically learn, both of which are not reflected in the curriculum. The instructional issue known as negative and harming washback may eventually result from such deviation (Ozmen, 2012).

From this perspective, the theory underlying the testing procedures in the current curriculum is identical to the theory underlying learning and teaching which places a significant emphasis on a variety of assessment and evaluation techniques in the curriculum. Unique and process-oriented testing methods are stressed over traditional methods. The importance of self-evaluation is also highlighted. This is to state that, students are encouraged to take initiative and required to track their own development of communicative competence and success in language learning (Bachman, 1990; CoE, 2001). In order to accomplish this, each unit contains a set of goals that the students must fulfil. These objectives for each unit of work are utilised to create checklists for students so that they can use them to evaluate what they have learned from an action-based perspective. Thus, students are required to respond to queries like ‘What did you learn?’, ‘How much do you believe you learnt?’, and ‘What do you think you can do in everyday life, based on what you took away from class?’ at the end of each unit in their coursebooks.

The curriculum promotes process-oriented testing techniques as well as self-assessment. Individual or group projects could be considered as examples for process-oriented testing method. Additionally, formal evaluation is also conducted using written exams, short quizzes, or homework. The curriculum also emphasises summative and formative assessments. However, as the objective of the curriculum is to promote positive attitude towards language learning, summative assessments are not commonly used with Grade 2 and Grade 3 students (McKay, 2006). Instead of this, formative assessment procedures, that provide ongoing feedback to the instructor are recommended, as they allow teachers to modify their teaching approach (if need be) and improve their students’ learning experiences. However, starting in the fourth grade, a variety of formative and summative testing methods are available to assess

pupils' communication skills and proficiency in the target language. The curriculum document clearly indicates that assessment and evaluation procedures are to:

- cover four language skills and implicit assessment of language components;
- vary in terms of learning styles and cognitive characteristics of the students;
- be in consistent with the learning and teaching methodology depicted in the curriculum;
- be in line with the students' developmental characteristics;
- create positive and beneficial washback effect;
- include self-assessment, reflection and feedback and
- help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work.

(MoNE, 2018, p. 7).

A wide range of testing methods are specifically required for secondary education (from fifth grade to eighth grade) in order to gauge students' proficiency in the language, assist students in monitoring their progress, and foster the teaching process by influencing how students study English outside of the classroom. Specific formative and summative assessment techniques may be emphasized in order to achieve those goals. Formative assessments in English classes are usually conceived as low-value tests with little to no point worth, and they are, therefore, provided to aid in the process of learning. For example, students might be required to create a straightforward poster describing the course and summarize the course's main ideas at the end of the class.

Summative assessment processes, on the other hand, primarily attempt to evaluate how well students have learned after the conclusion of a certain teaching period by comparing the results against previously set criteria or benchmarks. Summative

assessment approaches, which are typically referred to as high-stakes exams (with high point values), must be designed and conducted in conjunction with the nature of teaching-learning practices that are identified in the curriculum and implemented by the instructor. A project, like a visual representation of a process (e.g., recipe book) created within a given period of time, and a standard paper-based test are two examples of summative assessment methods. These particular assessment procedures always take into account the fact that both process- and product-oriented evaluation approaches are offered by the educational programs (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). The emphasis on variation in assessment design in the CEFR-framed curriculum is intended to improve students' learning experiences.

### **2.3.6 Structure of the Curriculum**

No particular teaching approach has been chosen to predominate the English language teaching in the new curriculum model. Rather than that an action-oriented approach has been adopted in the curriculum. The CEFR framed curriculum takes into account the three crucial components of the CEFR framework namely learner autonomy, self-assessment, and awareness of cultural diversity (CoE, 2001).

The instructional design of the curriculum comprises of three stages. Each stage takes into account the language use, functions and learning materials considering the characteristics of the target learner group. Grades 2 through 4 represent the initial levels, where speaking and listening skills are prioritized. Grammatical structures are not their main concern at this point. As Cameron (2001) asserts, young children learn languages best through audio-visual activities such as songs and hands-on activities such as games. Therefore, there are not many tasks involving reading and writing at this stage. Learners are first exposed to English through cognates, which are thought to act as a bridge between their first and second languages. Short texts are introduced

to students in grades 5 and 6, as they strive to improve their language abilities. These students gradually take part in very limited and familiar writing exercises. In the seventh and eighth grades, reading and writing activities become part of the whole process and students continue working on text types that they are familiar with. In light of this, appropriate educational resources and language functions identified are designated for each learning stage. This process is important as it ensures that the types of materials, activities, and language structures embedded in the curriculum are consistent with the developmental stages of the target learner group. Similar kinds of materials and linguistic functions are provided at stages 1 and 2, which correspond to the 2nd - 4th and the 5th - 6th grades respectively. Along with those used in stages 1 and 2, new materials and language functions are introduced at stage 3. This curriculum design offers the versatility needed by the classroom teacher to select the instructional resources and activities they think would be most suited to their pupils' requirements.

A set of ten sample units, organized around similar themes, are offered for each grade level. The thematic representation of the units allows instructors to offer new information in a way that is fascinating to students while also being relevant, engaging, and helpful to them. The themes for each unit have been selected in accordance with concepts and problems that are known to young pupils in order to allow them to establish a connection between what is learned (the language) and how it could be used in daily life. Cultural aspects of the language are also covered either explicitly or implicitly in the units because of the emphasis placed on pluriculturalism in the CEFR framework to foster intercultural competence (CoE, 2001). The theme of each unit includes elements from not only the student's culture, but also the target culture. These elements, either similarities or difference, are presented in a way that it allows the

students to internalize his/her own culture and learn to appreciate different sets of values and norms in other cultures.

The English language curricula that were in use before the current CEFR framed curriculum had been designed based on the principles of the Communicative Language Teaching Method. However, the course materials, especially the textbooks, that were in use failed to meet the needs of the classroom instructions. As a result, some teachers had a propensity to modify the tasks that they were given, frequently disregarding their communication component. Despite careful planning, it frequently happens that a well-designed curricular model differs greatly from the one at the implementation stage. A variety of external variables, such as school administrators, infrastructure, classroom materials and resources, instructors, the size of the class, families, and the pupils themselves, may have an impact on how a curricular model is implemented. Because of this, the long-term success of the curriculum depends on the cooperation of all parties involved, careful preparation, as well as external support. A generic curriculum or curriculum framework does not guarantee a well-tailored English language program. Rather, it requires a through process that includes careful planning and analysis of the needs and expectations of the target learner groups considering the contextual factors.

## **2.4 Innovation of the English Language Curriculum in Turkey**

### **2.4.1 The Foundation of the Curriculum Innovation: The Methodological Shift in Language Education**

In the first half of the 20th century, language teaching has become an independent occupation and the advancements in language teaching has emerged as a result of the studies conducted in the colonised world/ in colonies. As Demircan (1988) indicates,

Grammar Translation Method was most commonly used language teaching method in 1940s which was based on the reading comprehension and translation of written documents. However, there was a major methodological shift with the introduction of Village Institutes (Koy Enstituleri) in 1940s. The emphasis shifted from the structures of the language more towards the functions of the language. Mid 1940s marked the beginning of the Direct Method in language teaching in Turkey. The method became very popular as it was teaching the language exclusively through the usage of the target language. With the introduction of this method, people came to the realization that learning a language means being able to use that language the way the native speakers would do. In the Direct Method, unlike Grammar Translation Method, the use of mother tongue was strictly forbidden. The students were expected to accumulate knowledge about the history, culture, and the geography of those people who speak the language. In other words, Direct Method emphasises the promotion of teaching the target culture.

Audiolingual method that was based on the Behaviouristic Approach emerged in Turkey in mid 1950s. The emphasis of this approach in language education was to use the target language in language education. The use of students' native language was forbidden as in the Direct Method. However, while the Direct Method encouraged students to expand their vocabulary, the Audiolingual Method focused more on practicing and mastering grammar structures through dialogues and intense oral drills based on the behaviouristic theory. In both methods, the culture of the target language was given utmost importance as it was considered as an inseparable component of the target language. In 1980s, Communicative Language Teaching was embedded in the English language teaching syllabus for the first time. The emphasis was placed on the notion that the target language is learned for the purpose of communication, and thus

the native language should not be utilised in the language learning process. The language was considered as a tool for communication, not just an academic subject. The methodological shift in the history of language teaching clearly highlights one particular aspect which is in common in all of them: the emphasis placed on the target language use in language learning process and the presentation of the cultural elements through language teaching activities (Ozdemir, 2006).

#### **2.4.2 The Curriculum Innovation in English Language Education: The CEFR Framed Curriculum**

Due to its strategical and geopolitical location and the alliances Turkey has established over the course of the past decades (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and an associate member to the European Union, the global influence of English from the Western world has affected the language policies of the country. These policies led to three major curriculum innovations in English Language Teaching in Turkey.

In order to keep up with the rising demand for language instruction, the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has published new foreign language policies and revised the existing foreign language curricula. As part of the process, new course materials that were consistent with the philosophy of the new curricula were designed, and introduced in foreign language education (Kirkgoz, 2009). The major assumption was that the language learning process would produce the expected outcomes if the learners commenced language learning as early as possible (Lightbown & Spada, 2003). Therefore, English became a compulsory subject starting in the fourth grade under the legislation passed in 1997 to provide the groundwork for an eight-year compulsory schooling (Demirel, 2005). This policy change, in line with the methodological shift in 1997, led to the creation of a new foreign language curriculum. With the main goal of enhancing the students' communicative abilities, this was an

attempt to depart from the conventional language teaching paradigms and offer a communication-oriented language teaching. This innovation was followed by the 2006 curriculum innovation which Ersoz et al. (2006) reflects as a 'mixed syllabus' type, integrating various types of syllabi such as "the grammatical/structural syllabus, the situational syllabus, the topical/theme-based syllabus, the notional/functional (communicative) syllabus, the procedural/task-based syllabus and the skills-based syllabus" (p.23) to promote the learner's ability to use the language effectively. The foreign language teaching policy enacted in 2006 offered two hours of compulsory and two hours of elective English classes on a weekly basis for Grade 4 and Grade 5 students. It was anticipated that the students would be able to achieve A-1 Breakthrough and A-2 Waystage levels, as described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, before completing Grade 8. Therefore, Kizildag (2009) claimed that such a curriculum might be regarded as "theoretically and philosophically ideal" in accordance with the objectives outlined by the CEFR. The introduction of twelve-year compulsory education in 2012-2013 academic year resulted in the existing curricula to be revised to accommodate the emerging needs. In the twelve-year compulsory education model, foreign language education was decided to be commenced in Grade 2, rather than Grade 4 (MoNE, 2012).

With the introduction of the two foreign language policy changes in 2006 and 2012, the CEFR framework made its way into the foreign language teaching in Turkey and brought along three radical changes (Cakir & Balcikanli, 2012). The first innovation that took place was the design of a new English language curriculum. Accordingly, the coursebooks were redesigned based on the theoretical foundation of the new policy and the principles of the CEFR framework. The final step of the curriculum innovation was to train the practitioner and make them aware of the pedagogical innovations

proposed in the new curriculum. The Common European Framework of Reference and English Language Portfolio were fairly new concepts of language education in Turkey. Therefore, the Ministry of National Education conducted a pilot study in twenty different schools in two different cities in the 2001-2002 academic year. As part of the process, the teachers were provided training about the CEFR framework and the English Language Portfolio. In 2006-2007 academic year, the Ministry of National Education took a radical decision and decided to implement the CEFR framed English language curricula across the entire country (Sahinkarakas et al., 2009). The CEFR framed curriculum aimed to bring a more communicative focus into the language education by emphasising the communicative competence of the learners.

#### **2.4.3 The Philosophy Behind the CEFR Framed English Language Curriculum**

Basic Law of the National Education No. 1739 outlines the overall objectives of the Turkish National Education. Therefore, the most recent English language curriculum was revised in compliance with these objectives. Two major aspects of the current curriculum revised are as follows:

a) Revision of the theoretical framework;

i. Reviewing the curriculum with regards to values education

ii. Including the basic skills as themes

iii. Expanding certain subsections, such as testing and evaluation, and suggestions

b) Revision of each grade by;

i. Revision of the target language skills and their linguistic realisations

ii. Evaluation and the update of the contexts, tasks and activities

iii. Analysis and general update of the curriculum in terms of functions and forms covered (MoNE, 2018, p. 3).

The primary objective of the CEFR framed English language curriculum was to offer high-quality English language education for students in Turkey. Therefore, it was considered as a requirement to conduct regular curriculum revisions to ensure that it maintains its effectiveness in language education. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) was closely consulted when developing the new English language curriculum. According to the CEFR, students must apply their learning in real-world contexts in order to achieve fluency, competency, and language retention (CoE, 2001).

Based on the philosophy of the CEFR framework, there is no particular language teaching methodology that could be comprehensive enough to address the ever-changing needs of the students and their preferred learning styles. Therefore, it would be more effective to be selective in the instructional techniques employed in language teaching process. In addition to that, the CEFR framework encourages students to be active participants in language learning process and use the language for communicative purposes. To do that, it adopts an action-oriented approach.

The CEFR views language learning as an ongoing endeavour, so establishing an optimistic disposition toward English from the very beginning is crucial. Therefore, the CEFR framed curriculum aims to provide an engaging, inspiring, and nurturing environment for the learners where they can feel comfortable and motivated to learn. The CEFR framed curriculum forbids the presentation of the language in an artificial way. Thus, the learning experiences the students are exposed to should reflect real-life scenarios in which the language is utilised for the purpose it stands for.

Speaking and listening skills are prioritized in the second and third grades, while reading and writing are included when pupils proceed to higher grades. Developmentally appropriate educational activities are recommended in the curriculum to foster learner autonomy and problem-solving abilities, which are considered to be the cornerstones for the development of the communicative competence.

## **2.5 The Evaluation of the CEFR Framed English Language Curriculum in Turkey**

### **2.5.1 Different Conceptions of Curriculum and Curriculum Evaluation**

“Curriculum, in its broadest sense, means what schools teach while in its narrowest sense it means a specific educational activity planned for a particular student at a particular point in time” (Eisner, 2002, p. 25). This indicates that curriculum is a complex system comprising of teaching and learning practices that have peculiar goals and objectives, resources and materials, specific content, teaching-learning strategies, and assessment and evaluation measures. The ultimate aim of curriculum is to ensure that knowledge, skills, and attitudes outlined in the document are attained by the target learner group. Therefore, Tyler (1942) pinpoints a number of issues that need to be addressed when curriculum is created. First of all, the institutions/schools should clarify their purpose, or more specifically goals, that they wish to achieve. Then, the decision needs to be made pertaining to the types educational experiences that would serve their goals and the way they are required to be organized. The final step includes the strategies to determine whether the education goals and objectives have been achieved. Richards (2001) presents the aforementioned issues in a considerably simple model with four key aspects: aims and objectives, content, organization, and evaluation. In the model proposed by Richards (2001), the needs analysis carried out

serves the purpose of identifying the expected outcomes of the teaching-learning process. In order to achieve the outcomes, the educational resources are identified or developed and presented in an ideal context. The final aspect of the whole process is to identify effective assessment and evaluation practices to ensure that the goals and objective of the curriculum have been attained as anticipated. The whole system comprises of elements that are linked to each other. In other words, there needs to be a perfect harmony so that the identified goals and objectives are attained at the end of the process. Having said that, any change in any of the components of the curriculum inevitably affects others. Bearing in the mind the fact that curriculum reflects the needs of the educational institutions and the learners, it can never be complete as these needs tend to change constantly. Therefore, it is a necessity to ensure that systems are in place to revise the components of curriculum on an ongoing basis. Brown (1995) identifies a number of components such as needs analysis, curriculum goals and objectives, assessment and evaluation practices in the curriculum, resources prescribed, and teaching-learning techniques that requires constant revision. The emphasis placed on the significance of evaluation is due to the fact that it serves as the cement that brings and holds all the components together. He further states that “in the absence of evaluation, the elements lack cohesion; if left in isolation, any one element may become pointless. In short, the heart of the systematic approach to language curriculum design is evaluation: the part of the model that includes, connects, and gives meaning to all the other elements” (Brown, 1995, p. 217).

Curriculum evaluation could be considered as a crucial component of the whole process as it helps to improve the educational standards. It is a way of providing data for the decision makers to ameliorate the quality of the educational practices (Worthen and Sanders, 1987). Many scholars have different ways of defining and approaching

the concept of curriculum and curriculum evaluation. Scriven (1967) considers evaluation as merely determining the value of a particular thing. Likewise, Pophem (1975) claims that evaluation is a formal process that determines the overall value of the educational practices. Fitzpatrick et al. (2004), on the other hand, provide a more detailed account of evaluation and assert that evaluation is not merely deciding on the worthiness of the educational practices, but identifying a set of criteria to make this judgement. This implies that the evaluation process should comprise of collecting and analysing the relevant data to make informed decisions about the effectiveness of the curriculum. Based on this evaluation, the outcomes could be utilised to create goals and objectives, more effective assessment and evaluation practices, develop or update the teaching resources, and much more. Therefore, the approach taken by Fitzpatrick et al. (2004) emphasises not only the evaluation of the curriculum, but also the development of it in line with the data collected. Similar to Fitzpatrick et al., Richards (2001) asserts that evaluation focuses on gathering data regarding many facets of a language program in order to comprehend how the program functions and how well it functions.

There is a dire need for more clarification regarding the objectives of curriculum evaluation, the different kind of evaluation, and the evaluation models available because it is such an immense topic. Hence, the section below provides an overview of the literature about evaluation.

### **2.5.2 The Purposes of Evaluation**

The preliminary objective of curriculum, as described by Scriven, is “to determine the worth or merit of whatever is being evaluated” (cited in Worthen and Sander, 1987, p. 5). As the objectives of curriculum are closely tied to the objective of the education,

they are required to be constantly monitored, evaluated, and updated. This is because of the fact that the goals and objectives of education are subject to change.

Rosenbusch (1991) stresses two distinct functions of evaluation. The first one is to find out the extent to which the expected outcomes in the educational program are attained whereas the second one is to determine if different components of the curriculum are in line with each other. In other words, if the goals and objectives, curriculum content, identified classroom activities, and the assessment and evaluation practices are in harmony. Richards (2001) provides a more detailed account on the purpose of evaluation and asserts that there are a number of factors that are required to be addressed to conduct an effective evaluation. First of all, it is important to figure out if the curriculum is achieving the expected goals. Second, the attitudes and perceptions of the stakeholders, who are part of the curriculum, should be taken into account. Third, the learning environment where the curriculum is implemented needs to be closely examined. This wholistic approach would yield more comprehensive data on the effectiveness of the existing curriculum and the areas that are yet to be developed.

Thus, evaluation is an inseparable component of education and depending on its purpose, it may serve a variety of needs. Having mentioned the purpose of evaluation briefly, it would be appropriate to talk about the evaluation approaches identified and put forward by scholars based on the objectives of the evaluation practices which would set the foundation of the evaluation approach in this study.

### **2.5.3 Types of Curriculum Evaluation**

The curriculum evaluation model that would be chosen is determined by the purpose of the evaluation and timing of it. Weir and Roberts (1994) assert that the purpose of

curriculum evaluation is either 'program accountability' or 'program development'. If the evaluation is carried out at the end of the program to find out the positive or negative effects, then the program accountability is the purpose. However, if the evaluation is conducted while the curriculum is in use, then the program development is the primary purpose.

Richards (2001) identifies three distinct types of evaluation namely formative, summative and illuminative. Just as the program development, mentioned above, the formative evaluation places emphasis on ongoing development and enhancement of the curriculum in use. The evaluation in this model is carried out by addressing certain issues such as the time allocated to the curriculum objectives, the course materials used, the methods and techniques utilised by the practitioners and the extent to which they are suitable, and the attitudes and opinions of the teachers and students toward the curriculum. The data collected during the formative evaluation model are utilised to address the potential issues and make necessary alterations to improve the curriculum. Summative evaluation, on the other hand, takes place once the curriculum is implemented. The reason why this model is used at the end is to find out the effectiveness of the curriculum as a whole. The model addresses issues such as the overall effectiveness of the program, learner attainments, the efficacy of the learning resources and materials, the adequacy of the program objectives, the assessment and evaluation techniques used, the sufficiency of the timeframe allocated to the curriculum content, and the overall issues and challenges faced during the implementation phase. The data collected at the end of the implementation phase are employed for the purpose of curriculum evaluation and improvement. The illuminative evaluation, on the other hand, is slightly different from the other two. Its primary concern is to find out how the individual components of the curriculum are put in

practice. As the focus is quite specific, it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the teaching and learning practices that take place in the classroom. In addition to that, unlike summative or formative evaluation models, illuminative model does not aim to alter or update any components of the curriculum as part of the evaluation carried out. Owing to the fact that, the preliminary focus of this evaluation model is on classroom practices, it concentrates on issues such as learner engagements in class, error-correction strategies used by teachers, student-student and student-teacher interaction during the course of lessons, and teaching strategies employed in the classroom.

Gilbert (2004), on the other hand, discussed two different types of curriculum evaluation: intrinsic and extrinsic evaluation. The intrinsic evaluation, proposed by Gilbert, concentrates on the curriculum objectives. Examining the various characteristics of curriculum design, such as the scope, sequence, articulation, balance, and other elements, is part of the intrinsic evaluation as well. The teaching-learning strategies, content, and learning experiences are all assessed as part of the curriculum development process. The evaluation standards, on the other hand, are not predetermined but rather develop as the process goes on. The intrinsic evaluation looks at how well a particular curriculum accomplishes its aims and objectives in addition to its overall value. On the other hand, the extrinsic motivation focuses on the extent to which the goals and objective of the curriculum have been achieved. It also implies that the expected outcomes of the curriculum should be expressed in terms that are measurable.

Among the evaluation models discussed above, summative and formative evaluation stand out. As discussed earlier, the core difference between the two is the time the

evaluation models are executed. While the former one is conducted at the end of the implementation process, the latter is carried out during the implementation process.

#### **2.5.4 Curriculum Evaluation Approaches and Models**

Curriculum evaluation is a delicate process and it serves the particular purpose of the evaluator. Therefore, there are different models and approaches to curriculum evaluation. Worhten and Sanders (1987) identify six different approaches to curriculum evaluation based on the purpose of the evaluator/ evaluation. The first approach is objective-oriented evaluation approach which primarily focuses on the goals and objectives of the curriculum and how well they have been attained. The second approach is management-oriented evaluation approach which aims at providing data for the decision makers to help them make informed decision about the curriculum. The third approach, consumer-oriented evaluation approach, places the target audience in the centre of the evaluation and aims to supply data pertaining to the educational programs. The fourth approach, expertise-oriented evaluation, assesses the overall quality of an educational operation and thus it relies on the expert view of the professionals. The fifth approach, adversary-oriented evaluation, emphasizes both a program's strengths and shortcomings by placing the main emphasis on the deliberate contrast between the points of view of different curriculum evaluators. The last approach, naturalistic and participant-oriented evaluation, signifies that naturalistic inquiry and participant involvement serve as the foundation for identifying the values, standards, requirements, and information needed for the evaluation; thus, the evaluation is dependent on human observation and viewpoint.

Lynch (1990, 1996), on the other hand, proposes a framework called context-adaptive framework that comprises seven steps in the evaluation of a curriculum. The steps outline the significant components of the curriculum that the evaluators should take

into account for an in-depth analysis of the curriculum under investigation. The process is initiated by determining the target audience of the curriculum and the objective identified. Then, based on the data obtained in the first step, the context is examined and the potential issues in the context are taken into account to establish the initial framework. The next step involves identifying and selecting the most appropriate data collection technique considering a number of factors such as the target group, the anticipated outcomes, and the educational context. Upon completing of this step, the data is collected and, if need be, necessary modifications are done to the third and the fourth steps. Then, the collected data are analysed and if there is a need, the third and the fourth steps are revised again. The final step is to compose a report that outlines the results of the overall evaluation. Having mentioned some of the curriculum evaluation approached and models in the literature, it is necessary that the curriculum evaluation models that formed the foundation of this study are examined as well.

#### **2.5.4.1 Stake's Countenance Model**

Stake's countenance model of curriculum evaluation "does not include any prearranged evaluation design but recommends picking up on whatever turns up" (Alderson and Beretta, 1992, p. 16). The evaluation model utilizes both descriptive and judgemental data. In other words, it not only examines the consistency between the goals and objective of the curriculum and the implementation, but also the viewpoints of the major stakeholders such as parents, teachers, learners, and experts (Marcinkoniene, 2005).

The evaluation model incorporates three layers into the evaluation process, starting with antecedents (previous circumstance), transactions (interaction between people), and results (outcomes with an emphasis on the application of learning to real-world

situations). It is important to compare the established curriculum with what really occurs in the classroom while utilizing this model.

#### **2.5.4.2 The Provus Discrepancy Model**

Malcolm Provus created the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) in 1966 with the purpose of providing data for the evaluation and the development of curriculum. The Discrepancy Evaluation Model defines evaluation as the process of comparing a performance to an expectation that must be fulfilled. The term "discrepancy" is used when there is an obvious difference between the performance and the standard. By identifying the gaps between the pre-set requirements of the curriculum and the actual implementation, the discrepancy model allows the evaluator to pinpoint any specific shortcomings of the curriculum and make necessary corrections, if need be.

Inputs, resources, goals, and outcomes are all important to this particular evaluation model.  $I(P)=O$  is the formula proposed by Provus (1973). "I" stands for input, "P" stands for process, and "O" stands for output. It is believed that outputs are a result of the way that inputs and process interact. For instance, interactions between students, teachers, and resources (inputs) result in a change in writing abilities (output). If the gap between "the goal" of the program and "the output" of the program  $[G-O]$  is kept to a minimum, program success could be attained. Therefore, to put it simply, the Discrepancy Evaluation Model investigates the process of objective achievement and measures the gaps between what the pre-determined outcomes and the actual outcomes are so as to determine if any alterations in the curriculum should be made to close the gap.

The discrepancy model does not outline a specific procedure for gathering and processing data during the evaluation. Instead, it describes the steps required to set up

the evaluation itself. With this strategy, inconsistencies may be identified and addressed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. It is also considered to be fairly practical.

#### **2.5.4.3 The Bellon and Handler Model**

Goals, organization, operations, and outcomes were regarded by Bellon and Handler (1982) as the primary dimensions or elements of any curriculum and their evaluation process designates these four aspects as the four focus areas. "Goals" is the first area, and it deals with the program's expected results and desired outcomes. The curriculum goals are required to be aligned to the needs of the target learner group and consistent with the expected outcomes of the curriculum. The second focus area, "organization", covers all of the organization's resources (including time, human resources as well as physical resources). The third area is "operations" which covers the overall planning and decision-making processes with regards to planned or unplanned learning experiences. The fourth and the final area, "outcomes", refers to the either positive or negative effects of the curriculum on the participants as well as the context in which it is implemented.

The Bellon and Handler (1982) model for curriculum design and development offers three more key components in addition to these four focus areas outlined above. The first one, "status description", is the preliminary analysis that includes a detailed account of the curriculum objectives, organization, organizational operations, and expected outcomes. The information gathered provides a clear outline of the current state of the program. The second one, "analysis activities", aims to focus on the existing program and analyse its effectiveness. Goals and objective of the curriculum, the organization itself, its operations, and the anticipated outcomes are all taken into account to evaluate the curriculum and make informed decisions to further improve it.

The third component of the model, “curriculum improvement”, represents “the gradual development of a set of recommendations and action plans” (Bellon and Handler, 1982, p. 14).

#### **2.5.4.4 The CIPP Model**

CIPP model, developed by Worthen and Sanders (1987), is considered as a good example of formative evaluation of a curriculum. It stands for Context, Input, Process, and Product. In this model, decisions are made using four different types of evaluations. The first one, context evaluation, deals with the available resources as well as the background of the program. In other words, when evaluating a program, evaluators look at its resources and history, as well as the supports it has in place and the evaluation's overall purpose. This step includes looking at the overarching objectives, investigating the background data, and examining the cultural context. After evaluating the objectives, the evaluators can proceed to the model's “input evaluation” stage. The information on planning and implementation process is collected. The third stage, “process evaluation”, places a significant emphasis on continuous improvement of the program. To do that, the curriculum activities are evaluated to determine what is being done, if it is being done successfully, and what needs to be concentrated for more improvement. Finally, CIPP is used by evaluators to assess the program's “outcomes”. The evaluators decide how well the curriculum outcomes have been addressed.

To sum up, a variety of evaluation models and approaches have arisen in the literature based on the evaluation's goals, who is conducting it, the questions it asks, and the techniques it employs. The models and various evaluation methods covered above can be modified or adopted for usage in a variety of contexts for the purpose of course evaluation.

## **2.6 English Language Curriculum Evaluation Studies in Turkey**

Most current research on the English language curriculum in public schools focused on the curriculum innovation that took place in 1997. In two of these studies, Buyukduman (2005) and Iğrek (2001), English language instructors' perspectives on the English curriculum in elementary schools were disclosed. The studies conducted by Sevinç (2006) and Tilfarlıoğlu and Öztürk (2007) concentrated on the challenges faced by the teachers in delivering the English language curricula in elementary schools. These studies revealed that the proposed curriculum and its implementation in classroom had significant incongruences due to physical factors such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of classroom resources, and limited class hours. While Er (2006) focused on the viewpoints provided by instructors and inspectors on the same curriculum, Erdoğan (2005) examined the English curriculum for the fourth and fifth grades from the perspectives of instructors and students. Kirkgoz (2008b) conducted a study in public primary schools in Turkey investigating the English language teaching practices of the teachers based on the Communication Oriented Curriculum. The study also looked at how the implementation phase is influenced by the teachers' understanding and the level of training. Mersinligil (2002), who conducted a more thorough study, devoted close attention to how administrators, teachers, and students felt about the English language curriculum that was being used in the 4th and 5th grades. Additionally, Kavanoz (2006) documented the viewpoints, presumptions, and knowledge of English language teachers about the concept of learner-centredness. In contrast to other research, Yanik (2007) described how the English language curricula in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades were implemented from the viewpoints of instructors and learners. Despite the fact that the aforementioned studies' foci and research objectives varied, they all produced results

that were broadly consistent with regard to how the English language curriculum was being implemented. It could clearly be seen that the English language curriculum studies in Turkey is generally centred around the curriculum for grades ranging from 4th to 8th (Buyukduman, 2001; Cihan & Gurlen, 2009; Igrek, 2001; Mersinligil, 2002; Mirici, 2000; Tok, 2003; Topkaya & Kucuk, 2010; Yanik, 2007; Yuksel, 2001; Yuksel & Demiral, 2013). Another commonality that could easily be observed among all these studies was that they evaluated the curricula from the perspective of teachers.

The most frequent issues preventing the successful implementation of the English language curriculum, according to the studies by Buyukduman (2005), Sevinc (2006), Kirkgoz (2008b), Topkaya and Kucuk (2010), Tilfarlioglu and Ozturk (2007), Yanik (2007), Salma (2020), and Basaran et al. (2020), were crowded classrooms and a lack of necessary educational equipment and materials. In addition to these, identified content overload and a lack of time as obstacles to the program implementation. Furthermore, Celik, and Arikan (2016) evaluated the elementary level English curriculum in Turkey from the perspective of the curriculum designers and stated that political, pedagogical and contextual factors affect the success and implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, these factors need to be considered while designing the curriculum.

Regarding the curriculum goals and objectives, Yanik (2007) came to the conclusion that the aforementioned issues impeded the achievement of those goals and objectives. In addition to the overall objectives of the curriculum, Er (2006) found issues with attaining the specific curriculum goals such as the cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor ones. In conjunction with the results highlighted in the aforementioned studies, Buyukduman (2005) conducted a study with the primary school English

teachers to obtain their perspectives with regards to the English language program. The results revealed that nearly half of the participants believed that pupils had failed to accomplish their speaking, listening, and writing goals. In the same vein, Cetin (2018) conducted a study to evaluate Grade 7 English curriculum from the perspectives of the students, teachers, and school administrations. The study concluded that even though the teachers had considerably positive views on the overall content and applicability of the curriculum, they reported concerns about using and putting the four core skills “speaking, listening, reading, and writing” to practice in classroom. Accordingly, Mersinligil (2002) concluded that there is a considerable discrepancy in how teachers and students view the purposes and objectives of the curriculum. Although the majority of the goals and objectives was perceived by the pupils as being accomplished, the teachers believed that they were not achieved at the level that would be acceptable.

Regarding the content, it was discovered that, aside from being overloaded, the curriculum content was found to be inconsistent with the level of the target learner group. It was also asserted that the participants expressed concerns about the relevancy as well as the suitability of the content (Erdogan, 2005; Mersinligil, 2002). When the assessment procedures were taken into consideration, it was revealed that the teachers frequently used traditional assessment techniques. The suggested assessment techniques in the curriculum were not employed by the teachers as they were considered as time-consuming and impractical (Buyukduman, 2005; Mersinligil, 2002). To this end, Er (2006) found that the participating teachers had considerably positive opinions about the assessment tools and techniques proposed in the curriculum. However, teachers asserted that the curriculum failed to promote self-assessment which they considered as crucially important for learner autonomy. In

addition to the issues and concerns outlined above, the study conducted by Yanik (2007) outlined some concerns about students and how it affected the curriculum at the implementation phase. First of all, it was made clear that students had limited literacy skills in their native language. Secondly, the students had limited prior knowledge about the target language. These two factors were attributed to lack of student motivation towards the language.

The studies also revealed that two pillars of the curriculum namely learner-centredness and communicative orientation were not reflected in the classroom practices. Rather, more teacher-centred approaches were adopted and implemented (Buyukduman, 2005; Kavanoz, 2006; Kirkgoz 2008b; Mersinligil, 2002; Sevinc, 2006). Regarding the traditional and teacher-cantered methods implemented in classroom by teachers as opposed to those that are more learner-cantered, various justifications were made known. According to research done by Kirkgoz (2008b) on how teachers perceive and implement the principles of communication-oriented curriculum, there was a discrepancy between the intended and actual application of the curriculum in classroom. She came to the conclusion that the following factors could be used to explain why this learner-centred curriculum could not be implemented effectively: the way teachers perceive the curriculum innovation, their educational background, being unable to receive instructional support, and the physical aspects of the environment where teaching and learning takes place.

On the other hand, Kavanoz (2006) focused on a particular aspect of the curriculum (i.e., learner-centredness) and aimed to delve into the perceptions of teachers in a comparative case study. The study focused on what teachers know about learner-centredness and how they perceive it. She discovered that, in contrast to teachers in

private schools, English language instructors in public schools lacked adequate expertise and held false beliefs about learner-centredness and the concept of active learning. They opted to adopt teacher-centred teaching since they lacked the knowledge and comprehension to apply these concepts in their lessons. The study conducted by Celik and Kasapoglu (2014) to investigate the viewpoints of the school principals revealed that they had quite positive views about the commencement of English language education at an earlier age. The results of the study also showed that the participants (school principals) had serious concerns about the recently changed English language curriculum. They also made clear that the teaching resources and equipment were outdated and thus failed to respond to the needs of the learners. Considering all these factors, a curriculum reform was absolutely necessary, as indicated by the participants. Furthermore, the study by Celik and Kasapoglu (2014) identified a number of issues that had an influence on the implementation of the curriculum in classroom. The teaching materials were found to be inappropriate and unable to meet the needs of the curriculum as well as the students. Besides, language competence of the instructors was found to be an influential factor in effective implementation of the curriculum.

The research studies conducted to examine the innovated English language curriculum from a range of different perspectives made it clear that for such an innovation to succeed, the major stakeholders (i.e., teachers) are required to be equipped with the prerequisite knowledge and skills through pre-service or in-service training. When these practices are carried out prior to the implementation of the curriculum innovation, it would help practitioners form positive attitudes, perceptions, and ideas about the principles of the new curriculum. This, in return, allows teachers to adopt more learner-centred approach in language education as proposed in the revised

curriculum (see Er, 2006; Kavanoz, 2006; Kirkgoz, 2008a; Kirkgoz, 2008b; Sevinc, 2006; Yanik, 2007). Topkaya and Kucuk (2010), in their research study, concentrated on the views of the public primary school English teachers about the curriculum innovation implemented in 2006. They delved into the overall characteristics, objectives, and the content of the new fourth- and fifth-grade English language curriculum. A questionnaire was distributed to 72 teachers from 26 schools in Istanbul in order to collect the data. The program was found to be straightforward and understandable, but there were still issues with its implementation. Participants referred to large classrooms, overloaded content, limited time, and a lack of materials as the most frequently encountered challenges associated with the curriculum (Topkaya & Kucuk, 2010). They recommended that when creating a new program, consideration should be given to the infrastructure of the educational institutions.

The research study conducted by Kizildag (2009) that sought to identify the problems encountered by primary school English teachers in Turkey indicated that there were institutional, instructional, and socio-economic factors that had impact on the language education. The institutional factors incorporated factors such as lack of basic infrastructure for teaching communicative English, heavy workload, overcrowded classrooms, lack of support from the management to solve problems associated with language teaching practices, and lack of professional development practices from the schools/ Ministry of Education on how language is best taught. Meanwhile, the instructional factors included an overloaded curriculum which incorporated the communicative language teaching and framed by the CEFR. The analysis showed that the pre-set learning objectives were unrealistic and that the program lacked flexibility. In the same vein, the curriculum itself was not compatible with the reality of the English language teaching practices and the context where the language is taught in

Turkey. Besides, the socio-economic factors identified were also significant. It was revealed by Kizildag (2009) that there was lack of support from the families partly because of the fact that parents had not a full grasp of the significance of English in their child's education. This issue was more apparent in areas where socio-economic level was remarkably low. There is an important correlation between socioeconomic status and the level of attainment in language education, as found in a different study by Akalin and Zengin (2007). Thus, they concluded that the parents who have considerably higher socio-economic levels tend to show greater awareness of the significance of learning a foreign language.

In conclusion, the goal of the studies listed above was to explore the purposes, objectives, course content, instructional contexts, and evaluation processes of the English language curriculum used in schools from various angles. Even though their research topics and areas of interest were varied, their findings revealed largely the same barriers to English language teaching in public schools. It is considered that the findings of the previous studies add to the current study by having implications for some of the challenges that might arise. Although the majority of the aforementioned studies described the program outcomes from various angles, none of them offered a thorough analysis of the curriculum implementation stage. Additionally, almost all of these studies focused on the English language curriculum, which was gradually phased out in 2006; research has not yet been done to look into how the current CEFR framed English language curriculum, that is in use in primary (Grade 2 to Grade 4) and secondary schools (Grade 5 to Grade 8) as a whole.

### **2.6.1 Evaluation Studies on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in Turkey**

The application of the CEFR in language teaching in Turkey has only been the subject of a small number of research studies. Guneyli and Demirel (2006) conducted pilot research on the application of the CEFR in teaching Turkish as a foreign language in order to evaluate its efficacy in Turkey. The study findings demonstrated that the CEFR had a positive impact on learners in terms of autonomy, motivation, participation and eagerness to learn about the target culture. Although it was not a typical practice in Turkey to establish CEFR-based language teaching programs, the pilot study demonstrated its efficacy, giving the CEFR more significance in course design, teacher education, and assessment related issues. However, research on the CEFR revealed that the major issue with it was that teachers and pupils lacked a comprehensive understanding of how to use the reference tool (Morrow, 2004). A comparative study conducted by Yakisik and Gurocak (2018) to compare the perceptions of the EFL teachers in public and private schools about the CEFR framework revealed that teachers who work at private schools had considerably more comprehensive knowledge about the framework and its principles compared to the ones who work in public school.

Ustunluoglu et al. (2012) conducted a case study to explore the process of creating a new English language teaching program based on the principles of the CEFR framework. They found that choosing program objectives in accordance with the CEFR and incorporating academic skills objectives into these undoubtedly resulted in a better-quality program because students and teachers found language competency to be adequate. The CEFR framework offers a unifying foundation for the explicit definition of goals, content, and procedures, and improves the transparency of

the courses offered, the syllabus used, and the credentials attained (Council of Europe, 2005). Because of this, it is believed that creating a new English teaching program based on the CEFR will result in a solid and well-structured curriculum (Ustunluoglu et al., 2012).

Korhasanogullari (2020) conducted a study examining the 2018 ELT curriculum and its content, assessments, teaching-learning process, and outcomes. The study revealed that even though the objectives of the curriculum, its content and the outcomes expected were in line with the communicative approach emphasised, practitioners (teachers) were subjected to many challenges in the teaching-learning process. Likewise, the study conducted by Kerimoglu (2021) to evaluate the 2018 English curriculum also revealed that the objectives of the curriculum could not completely meet the needs of the learners and it was practically not possible to conduct learner-centred teaching methods. Besides, it was practically not possible to conduct assessments that would measure all four skills. Another study conducted by Basaran et al. (2020) to evaluate the 2018 English curriculum that is used in Grade 8 made it clear that there was an incongruence between the objectives of the curriculum and the teachers. This study also unfolded a number of problems concerning the curriculum implementation (i.e., overloaded content, classroom environment, insufficient class hours, etc.).

Another study conducted by Unlucan Tosun and Glover (2020) delved into the teachers' knowledge and the practical use and influence of the CEFR in classroom practices. The results made it clear that the teachers had a considerably positive view of the CEFR framework and its contribution to language teaching practices. However, it was also revealed that owing to the lack of training about the CEFR framework, the

participants reported difficulty in applying the CEFR effectively in classroom teaching and assessment practices, partly because of not having a clear understanding of the CEFR proficiency levels. Likewise, the case study conducted by Yuce and Mirici (2019) to investigate the applicability of the proficiency descriptors and the principles of the CEFR in language education revealed that although the students' needs and language levels were addressed, the practitioners (teachers) reported problems related to the course materials, inadequate class hours, and the absence of professional development opportunities.

## **2.7 Curriculum Evaluation Studies on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in Other Countries**

The Council of Europe prepared and carried out a questionnaire as a portion of a qualitative research project in 2005 with the intention to determine the extent to which the CEFR is known and used throughout Europe. The study encompasses the member countries in European Union and for sampling purposes, 37 countries in EU, 39 higher education institutes, 18 teacher training institutes, 18 teacher colleges, 16 exam centres, 14 language centres, 12 adult education centres, and 28 primary and secondary schools were selected. The findings of the study showed that the CEFR had significantly influenced not only the teacher preparation programs, but also the assessment and evaluation in general. Within the scale of 0 to 4, the CEFR awareness of the participating institutes were found to be 3,16, and the active use of the CEFR was 2.24. Likewise, Martyniuk and Noijons (2007) conducted a quantitative research study in 2006 which aimed at identifying the extent of use of the CEFR at national level in 46 member countries in EU. The study revealed that 90% of the participating countries believed that the CEFR was "very useful" and helpful in their program development practices and in preparation of their annual plans. 87% of the

participating countries indicated that the CEFR was “very useful” in developing the assessment and evaluation tools. Meanwhile, 78% of the participants indicated that the CEFR was a “very useful” program.

Jaakkola (2000) conducted a study to delve into the applicability of the CEFR within the schools in Finland. The data gathered in 1998–1999 in a case study, through interviews and observations, showed that instructors' knowledge of the essential components of the CEFR in language education significantly influenced their methods for teaching and learning languages. It also highlighted the fact that the CEFR as a framework helped the language teachers to set goals for themselves which were relevant to the cognitive abilities of the learners and allowed the teachers to choose the materials that they would like to use. The literature on the CEFR, on the other hand, also demonstrates that teachers' knowledge, awareness, and understanding of the CEFR and its guiding principles are crucial to the framework's successful implementation in language teaching (Diez-Bedmar & Byram, 2019; Ngo, 2017; Moomen et al., 2013).

In a qualitative and quantitative study about teachers' perceptions of the CEFR, Faez et al. (2011) concentrated on instructors' perspectives of the benefits and drawbacks of implementing CEFR-informed practice in ESL classes. They discovered that teachers in Ontario had an overwhelmingly positive view of CEFR-informed instruction in language classes. They discussed the efficacy and impact of "Can Do" statements in fostering student motivation and confidence as well as raising the students' understanding of themselves as language learners. On the other hand, Nakatani (2012) performed research to determine if the application of communication strategies (CS) from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages can increase the

proficiency level of EFL learners in communicative tasks. The findings of the study showed that the test scores of the participants, their ability to utilize achievement strategies, and their knowledge of strategy use were significantly improved. However, the reference tool is not sufficiently understood by teachers and students, according to Morrow (2004). As Baldwin and Apelgren (2018) assert, the CEFR descriptors are hard to utilize in the evaluation process owing to the fact that the descriptors are difficult to comprehend. In the same vein, the CEFR is a descriptive framework and has been criticized to be too theoretical, not offering tangible examples for the practitioners to comprehend and help them to employ the framework (Mison & Jang, 2011). Likewise, the study conducted by Khair and Shah (2021) aiming to delve into the issues and challenges teachers face in the implementation of the CEFR-aligned curriculum in Malaysian primary ESL classrooms revealed that although teachers held a positive view towards the CEFR-aligned ESL curriculum, they faced significant difficulties and challenges in implementing the curriculum. That is to say that as the teachers were not familiar with the CEFR descriptors, they faced challenges in designing classroom activities based on the CEFR descriptors which was due to lack of undergoing related in-service training. Having said that it was also highlighted that the teachers held positive opinions about the learner autonomy and learner-centred approach adopted in the CEFR-aligned ESL curriculum,

## **Chapter 3**

### **METHOD**

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

Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, this research study was carried out using a mixed method approach. Therefore, a questionnaire was employed to collect the quantitative data, while a semi-structured interview, a focused group interview, document analysis and classroom observations were carried out to collect the qualitative data. Both methods were jointly employed to achieve the ultimate aim of this study and were backed up by document analysis that was carried out throughout the research process. This was due to the notion that the mixed method design in social sciences would be able to obtain a greater understanding of the research problems. Additionally, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods would strengthen and balance each other, thereby reducing the impact of each method's shortcomings.

The study used a naturalistic inquiry approach because the researcher did not utilize any interventions or treatments. According to Allwright and Bailey (1991), this mode of inquiry is a qualitative one and brings a process-focused approach to the explanation of events and processes that are naturally occurring. According to Patton (1987), when evaluating a program, those conducting the evaluation do not make an intervention to influence the program or its participants in any way in order to further their own research. He further explains that “Naturalistic inquiry evaluators focus on capturing

program processes, documenting variations, and exploring important individual differences between various participants' experiences and outcomes... A naturalistic inquiry strategy is selected to describe naturally unfolding program processes and impacts.” (p. 14).

Having said that, the current study is descriptive since the researcher sought to describe the subject groups' real-life behaviours, beliefs, and the processes or activities that they engage in. Reporting the events as they actually occurred was the researcher's ultimate goal. Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1992) refer to this method as a "descriptive data-based approach in the field of program assessment” (p. 58). With this kind of program evaluation, the program undergoes evaluation while it is being administered in order to obtain fresh data and develop fresh understandings of many different facets of language teaching and learning process.

There are many different models that might be used for curriculum evaluation, as was covered in Chapter 2, but the choice of which model to employ should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Although some evaluators who use such models, many do not strictly adhere to any one paradigm when conducting evaluations because “formulating single model fitting different evaluation contexts may not be feasible” (Lynch, 1990, p. 23).

As Fitzpatrick et al (2004) state “the value of the alternative approaches lies in their capacity to help us think, to present and provoke new ideas and techniques, and to serve as mental checklists of things we ought to consider, remember, or worry about. Their heuristic value is very high; their prescriptive value seems much less” (p. 159). Therefore, rather than using just one particular approach, the evaluators can use a

number of different approaches, known as "an eclectic approach" which was adopted in the design of the current study. The curriculum evaluation models suggested by Stake (1967), Bellon and Handler (1982), Provus (1996) and Stufflebeam (1971) which were explained in Chapter 2, were the most suitable models for the present study. The three components of the Stake's Countenance Model (1967); antecedents, transactions, and outcomes, set the framework of the evaluation model. The antecedents, also known as prior conditions, are the starting point of the evaluation as they refer to the context prior to the commencement of teaching practices. As the study aimed to evaluate the current English language curriculum, the context was kept broader and aspects such as the history of English language teaching in Turkey, language policy changes as well as the socio-political changes that had either direct or indirect impact on the curriculum were included. The second level of the Stake's Countenance Model, which is transactions, was expanded by including elements from the Discrepancy Model and Bellon and Handlers' model. The flow chart (Figure 2) indicates the aspects of the models adopted/ adapted to provide a comprehensive framework for an effective curriculum evaluation. As for the second step, the standards were required to be identified- the ones set by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the ones mentioned in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In line with the standards, the goals (Bellon and Handler's model) were identified. Then, a detailed analysis of a range of factors such as the environment, learners, and teachers were carried out. Once the environmental factors were taken into account, the transactions (Stake's Countenance Model) which incorporate events and experiences (teaching/ learning experiences) as well as the instructions were required to be included in the evaluation process. This led to the assessment of performance (Discrepancy Model) which aimed to identify the potential,

if any, discrepancies between performance and standards. Eventually, the evaluation process led to a stage where certain ideas could be put forward pertaining to the effects of the curriculum on the relevant parties. This, in return, provided some ideas pertaining to the effectiveness of the curriculum in achieving the pre-set goals. As for the last step, the data collected and analysed revealed significant information and provided feedback on the curriculum to inform the decision makers.

The curriculum evaluation model adapted for this particular research study incorporated the following aspects:

a) Antecedents (Stake's Model)

- Historical development of ELT in Turkey
- Policy changes in Turkey
- Socio-political changes

b) Develop and Define Standards (Discrepancy Model)

- The standards of the English language set by MoNE
- Antecedents (Stake's Model)
- Historical development

c) Goals (Bellon and Handler, 1982)

- Desired outcomes and expectations of the program

d) Organisation (Bellon and Handler, 1982)

- Review and analysis of factors influencing curriculum effectiveness
- Resources and how they are used
- Environment

e) Transactions (Stake's Model)

- Events and experiences

- Teaching- learning experiences

- Instructions

f) Assessing Performance (Discrepancy Model)

- Comparison between performance and standards to determine discrepancies

g) Outcomes (Stake's Model/ Bellon and Handler, 1982)

- The effects of the program on participants
- Educational settings in which the program operates

h) Feedback/ Decision (Discrepancy Model)

- Information for decision makers to alter, change or terminate

### **3.2 Research Questions**

This research study aimed to investigate the following research questions:

- Do stakeholders (i.e., teachers) have a clear understanding of the impact of the CEFR framed English language curriculum on the language teaching/ learning process?
- Are the assigned CEFR levels and the relevant learning outcomes achievable for the learners considering the number of class hours, types of instruction, and resources used?
- To what extent are the MoNE's recommendations related to the language teaching practices put in practice?
- What are the perceptions of the students pertaining to the course content, the course conduct, and the assessment procedures of the CEFR framed curriculum?
- What are the perceptions of the teacher pertaining to;
  - a) the goals and objectives of the CEFR framed English language curriculum?
  - b) -the curriculum content and the materials recommended in the CEFR framed English language curriculum?

- c) -the application of the CEFR framed English language curriculum in language teaching practices?
- From the perspective of the teachers, has the CEFR framed English language curriculum enhanced the language teaching practices/ course conduct?

The CEFR-based English language teaching is far from being implemented effectively in Turkey, despite its popularity, prestige, and acceptance. This study aimed to reveal potential problems and challenges (if any) by referring to not only the perceptions of the language teachers regarding their current teaching practice on the basis of the CEFR and the CEFR framed curriculum at primary and secondary school levels, but also the perceptions of the learners pertaining to the extent to which the CEFR framed curriculum meets their expectations.

### **3.3 Research Context**

The research study was conducted in selected primary and secondary schools in Istanbul, Turkey. The reason being was that Istanbul is a metropolitan city which attracts migrations from all across Turkey. Situated in one of the seven geographical regions of Turkey, İstanbul is divided into 39 district municipalities. The boundaries of the city of Istanbul constitute the entire metropolitan region, which is around 5.500 km<sup>2</sup> in size and has a population density of 2.400 people per km<sup>2</sup>. İstanbul forms the largest agglomeration in Europe with a population over 15.9 million. With around 1 million population in 1945, the population projections for İstanbul in 2025 is 16.7 million due to migration. The research study will be carried out in Istanbul due to the fact that Istanbul, as a metropolitan city, is the best sample that represents the socio-economic characteristics of the whole country. Thus, it would be easier to sample the different socioeconomic levels of the society.

### **3.3.1 Socio-economic Zones in Istanbul**

Through its website, <http://www.mahallemistanbul.com>, the Mahallem (My District) Istanbul project, run by the Faculty of Economics at Istanbul University with assistance from the Istanbul Development Agency, provides a comprehensive analysis of the districts of Istanbul. The project provides insights into the demographics of the population: age, marital status, population density, education, health, social life, infrastructure, transportation, economy, political tendencies, and level of socio-economic development as some of the major areas. The project encompasses 14 major headings and further 54 subheadings allocated to the major categories. The data in this project were cross compared with the data obtained from other resources to allocate three districts in Istanbul based on their socio-economic status: one high socio-economic, one medium/average socio-economic, and one low socio-economic district. The criteria that were set to identify the districts were as following; population and population density per household, level of education which incorporates the ratio of literacy/ illiteracy, rate of higher education commencement/ completion, life quality, and the economic status. In order to provide an objective evaluation of the district, data from a range of resources were cross compared.

The district that was selected as the high level socio-economic one in Istanbul was Besiktas which is located on the European part of Istanbul. The population of the district, as of 2017, was 185.447 people which encompasses 85.134 male (45.91%) and 100.313 female (54.09%) residents (Nufusu, 2018). This was also evident in the data presented in the Mahallem (My District) Istanbul project. On the other hand, Umraniye, which was selected as the medium socio-economic district in Istanbul had considerably higher population; 699.901 residents which encompasses 350.688 male (50.11%) and 349.213 female (49.89%) residents. The third district that was selected

as the low socio-economic districts in Istanbul was Sultanbeyli. The population ratio in Sultanbeyli was 329.985 which included 169.441 male (51.35%) and 160.544 female (48.65%) residents as of 2017 (Nufusu, 2018). The Mahallem (My District) Istanbul project also confirms the data presented above.

When these districts were evaluated based on the level of education, Besiktas was the district with the highest level of education as well as the lowest level of illiteracy. The data presented (Figure 2) below clearly indicates the ratio of illiteracy, uneducated people, primary, secondary and high school education as well as higher education.

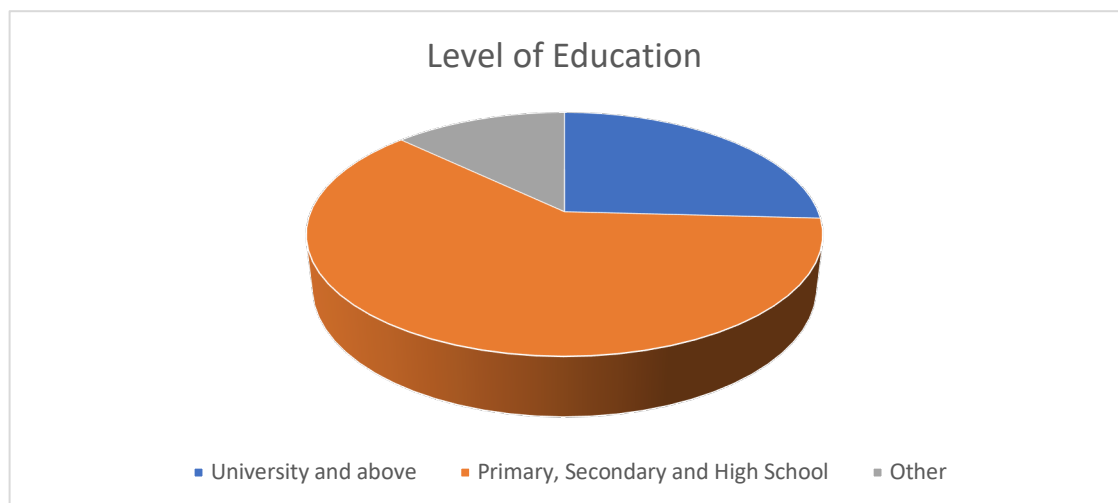


Figure 2: Level of Education in Besiktas, Istanbul (Endeksa, 2017)

It is clearly evident that the number of people attended university and completed undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate degrees are considerably higher compared to the medium socio-economic district (Umraniye) and low socio-economic district (Sultanbeyli). It was also evident in the data provided by The Mahallem (My District) Istanbul project that the literacy rate, as of 2015, in Besiktas, Umraniye, and Sultanbeyli clearly signifies the differences. The literacy rate of the occupants who were 6-year-old and above in Besiktas was ranked as 0.98 in Besiktas. However, the

was 0.97 in Umraniye and 0.96 in Sultanbeyli (Mahallem SEGE). In addition to that the female literacy rates in the aforementioned districts clearly indicates the level of difference at educational level. In Besiktas, the female literacy rate was reported as 0.97. Whereas this was significantly lower in Umraniye with only 0.95 female literacy rate. Sultanbeyli had the lowest female literacy rate with only 0.93 (Ingev, 2017; Yilmaz et al., 2017).

The data presented above was also confirmed by other sources. It was also mentioned that with 34% of higher education ratio, Besiktas is the district that has the highest ration of higher education in Istanbul (Turkiye Gazetesi, 2014). The same resource indicated Sultanbeyli as having the lowest higher education ration with as little as 3%. Furhermore, the data obtained from The Mahallem (My District) Istanbul project clearly indicated that the average duration of education in Besiktas was between 10 to 12 years. Whereas, in Umraniye, it was ranging from 7 to 10 years. Sultanbeyli, on the other hand, had the lowest aver duration of education with 7 years and below (Mahallem SEGE). The following figure (Figure 3) indicates the ratio of illiteracy, uneducated people, primary, secondary and high school education as well as higher education in Umraniye.

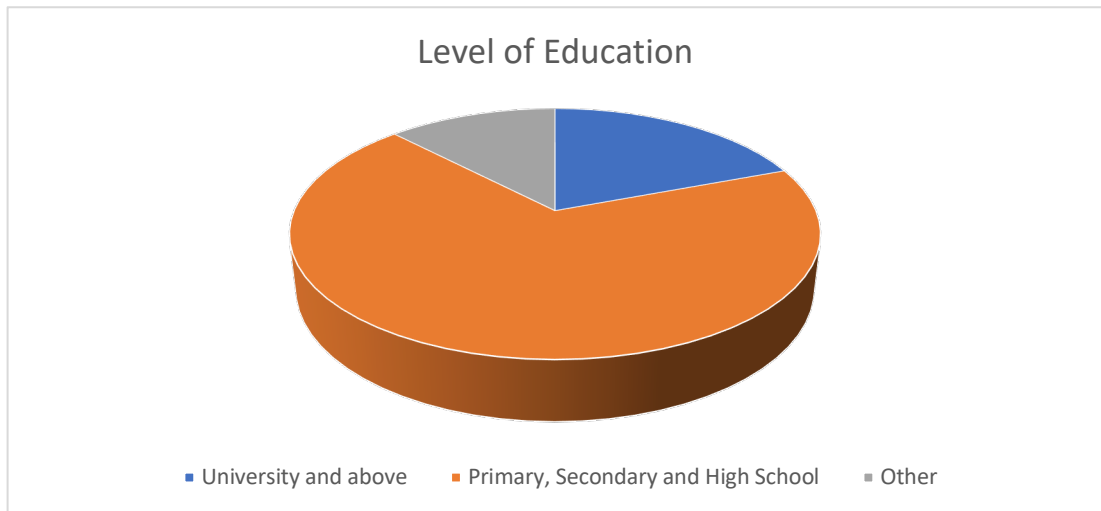


Figure 3. Level of Education in Umraniye, Istanbul (Endeksa, 2017)

It is clearly evident that the number of people attended university and completed undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate degrees are considerably lower than Besiktas bearing in mind the fact that the population of Umraniye is almost three times larger than Besiktas. As mentioned above, the level of education in Umraniye is considerably lower than Besiktas, but significantly higher than Sultanbeyli.

Sultanbeyli, on the other hand, displays significantly different demographics when we look at the level of education in that district. It is clearly evident in the following figure (Figure 4) that the ratio of illiteracy in Sultanbeyli is significantly high when the population is taken into account and when these numbers are cross compared with the one in Besiktas and Umraniye. It could easily be seen that the difference is obvious. Meanwhile, it is also evident that there is a significant variance in higher education in Sultanbeyli when compared to Umraniye or Besiktas. This was also supported by the data obtained from The Mahallem (My District) Istanbul project. It was indicated that the average duration of education in Sultanbeyli was 7 years and below which was significantly lower than Umraniye (7 to 10 years of education), and considerably less than Besiktas (10 to 12 years of education) (Mahallem SEGE).

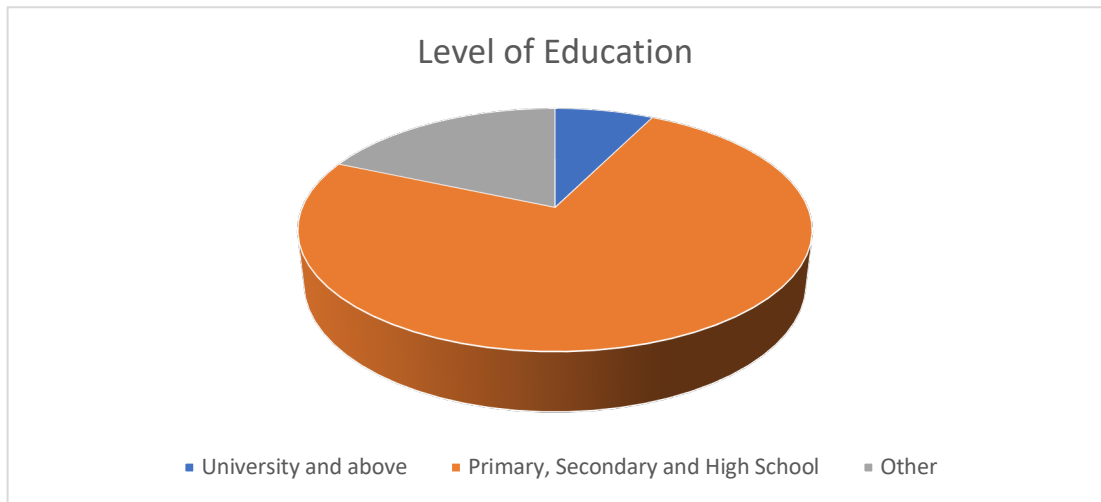


Figure 4. Level of Education in Sultanbeyli, Istanbul (Endeksa, 2017)

Another criterion that was taken into account while selecting the districts in Istanbul for this particular research study was the life quality index as this criterion is closely linked to the level of socio-economic development. Based on the results of the Humanitarian Development Index-Districts (IGE-I) that was released by the Humanitarian Development Foundation (INGEV), Besiktas is one of the eight districts in which the humanitarian development was ascertained to be the highest (Ingev, 2017). This was also confirmed with the statistical data provided. The life quality index in Besiktas, Istanbul was declared to be 0.911 which placed this district to the top of the list. Whereas Umraniye got the score of -0.028 which positioned this district as the 23rd district in Istanbul. Sultanbeyli, on the other hand, scored considerably less and got the 38th position with the score of -0.601 in life quality index in Istanbul (Milliyet, 2015). Based on the data revealed by REIDIN Socio-economic Classification (SED), the districts were classified as A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C- which indicate their superiority in terms of socio-economic variables. Besiktas was among the districts in which the socio-economic status was ranked as A+ which indicates the district as the most liveable district in Istanbul whereas Sultanbeyli was ranked as C- which clearly

indicates that the district has achieved the lowest score in socio-economic variables (socio-economic, financial, and environmental variables) (REIDIN, 2014).

### 3.3.2 Sampling

The schools that were selected for this particular research study were chosen from these three socio-economic zones in Istanbul. From each zone, there were three public primary schools (covering Year 2 to Year 4) and three public secondary schools (covering Year 5 to Year 8) included. The schools selected were the ones where primary and secondary school levels were delivered within the vicinity of the same school in different buildings. In total, there were nine primary and nine secondary schools in the socioeconomic zones selected. Within the selected schools, the research study covered Year 2 to Year 8 groups. The following table represents the selection process and the overall numbers included.

Table 4: Selection of schools based on the socio-economic indicators

<b>Socioeconomic Area/Zone</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>Number of Classes per school</b>	<b>Total</b>
High (Besiktas)	3 Public Schools (Year 2-3-4 and Year 5-6-7-8)	7 classes	Total= 21 classes
Medium (Umraniye)	3 Public Schools (Year 2-3-4 and Year 5-6-7-8)	7 classes	Total= 21 classes
Low (Sultanbeyli)	3 Public Schools (Year 2-3-4 and Year 5-6-7-8)	7 classes	Total= 21 classes

### 3.4 Participants

The research study encompassed language teachers, students in the aforementioned levels, and the relevant documentation (the CEFR document, English Language

curriculum mandated by the MoNE). The research study was designed to include the primary and secondary school levels (Grade 2 to Grade 8) excluding the high school levels (Grade 9 to Grade 12). This was due to the fact that high school education comprises of general, vocational and technical secondary education and their emphasis on language education varies (e.g., class hours per week). Therefore, it becomes extremely difficult to conduct an evaluation study and come to a conclusion based on the data collected. On the other hand, the inclusion of all the grades in the primary and secondary school levels, where the English language education is more streamlined (i.e., standard class hours per week), was expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of how the curriculum implementation process was taking place and to what extent the expectations of the MoNE were met in the language classrooms. Meanwhile, the teachers who were teaching the aforementioned levels were among the primary participants in this research study. In addition to that, the students were also included in this study in order to incorporate their perspective into the research study. Effective program evaluation, according to Scriven (1991), is a time-consuming and expensive procedure that calls for information from all parties involved, including teachers, students, and their parents as well as all other potential stakeholders.

### **3.4.1 Students**

The research study encompassed students at the primary school level (Grade 2, 3, and 4) and the secondary school level (Grade 5, 6, 7, and 8). The age range for the primary school level participants was 5.5/ 6-year-old for Grade 2 students, 7-year-old for Grade 3 students, and 8-year-old for Grade 4 students. For the secondary school level, the age range would be between 9-year-old (for Grade 5 students) and 12-year-old (for Grade 8 students).

For the group interviews, convenience sampling method (Kothari, 2004) was utilized to pinpoint the participants in the randomly selected primary and secondary schools in three districts (Sultanbeyli, Umraniye, and Besiktas) in Istanbul. In order to conduct the focus group interviews, one primary (comprising Grade 2 to Grade 4) and one secondary school (Grade 5 to Grade 8) were selected from each socioeconomic zone mentioned earlier. The total number of schools identified for the focus group interviews were three. The grades included in the study were from Grade 2 to Grade 8. Therefore, there were total of 6 students in primary schools and 8 students in secondary school participated in the focus group interviews in each zone. The interview participants selected, a total of 42 students from all three socioeconomic zones, were active students in the primary and secondary schools at the time of the research study. In selecting the participants, the researcher consulted the subject teachers to identify two participants from each grade; one considerably active and another less active student in English classes. The reason being was to capture the different perspectives of the students who were engaged in the subject and the ones who were considerably less engaged. A mix of male and female students were urged to take part in the interviews in order to neutralize any potential bias brought on by the students' gender.

As the study incorporated primary and secondary school students from three different districts of Istanbul (i.e., socio-economic zones), a coding system was developed to distinguish the students and the socio-economic zone in which their school was located. The initials of the primary or secondary school (i.e., P or S) were followed by the participant number. Additionally, the initials of the socio-economic zones were added to provide clarity.

Table 5: Participant coding system

School		Participant	Socio-economic Zone	
Primary	P	1, 2, etc.	Low	L
Secondary	S	1, 2, etc.	Medium	M
			High	H

**P2-L** refers to the second participant in a primary school in low socio-economic zone (Sultanbeyli)

### 3.4.2 Teachers

The study was conducted in three different socioeconomic zones in Istanbul and it covered three public primary and secondary schools in each zone. The approach that was taken in this research study was to select schools where primary and secondary schools were offered under the same roof. This was due to the fact that the teacher who teach Grade 2 to Grade 4 Primary level might also be teaching Grade 5 to Grade 8 which allows the researcher to see how the CEFR framed curriculum is being interpreted and put into practice by these teachers. The fact that the curriculum has been designed in a way that the successful completion of a particular grade (i.e., Grade 2) is a prerequisite for the success in next grade. Therefore, being able to work with a teacher who teaches all these levels would reveal significant data pertaining to the interpretation and the application of the curriculum.

In selecting the participating teachers, the data collection instruments (semi-structured interview, classroom observation, and questionnaire) determined the number of participants that would be included. As it would be more feasible, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the teachers who were also involved in the classroom observations. This, in fact, provided a better opportunity for the researcher and the

participants to delve into the issues and challenges that were faced in the implementation of the curriculum in class.

In addition, the research study included quantitative data collection instruments such as questionnaires. Therefore, the aforementioned number of teachers would not be sufficient to collect the data. In order to ensure the adequacy of the number of participants, teachers who work in other primary and secondary schools all across Turkey were invited to take part in the questionnaire via online questionnaire tools. The questionnaire was sent to a total of 120 teachers, out of whom 112 teachers (primary and secondary schools combined) responded. The response rate was 93.3%. Of the 112 teachers who completed the questionnaire, 12 teachers were excluded from the analysis due to missing data, ending up with a total of 100 teachers from 47 different cities in 7 different geographical regions in Turkey. The teachers were teaching in primary and secondary schools at the time of the study. The diversity in terms of origin not only contributed to the representativeness of the sample but also it made it possible to extract quantitative data from such a sample, which would otherwise have been logistically impossible in the current study. A simple random sampling method (Cohen et al., 2007) was utilized to ensure that equal chance was given to the members of the target group (primary and secondary school teachers). Participation was on a voluntary basis. Table 6 outlines the background of the questionnaire participants.

Table 6: Background Information

<b>Gender</b>	Female 65%	Male 35%
<b>School Type</b>	Primary School 44%	Secondary School 56%

<b>Education Level</b>	Bachelor 82%		Master 14%		PhD 4%	
<b>Program Graduated</b>	ELT* 77%		ELL** 17%		Other Languages 6%	
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	Less than 1 Year	1-4 Years	5-9 Years	10-14 Years	15-19 Years	20+ Years
	4%	23%	22%	25%	16%	10%

\* *ELT (English Language Teaching)*; \*\**ELL (English Language and Literature)*

For the semi-structured interviews, convenience sampling method (Kothari, 2004) was utilized to pinpoint the participants in the randomly selected primary and secondary schools in three districts (Sultanbeyli, Umraniye, and Besiktas) in Istanbul. The interview participants selected, a total of nine participants (six female and three male teachers), were actively teaching in primary and secondary schools at the time of the research study. The nine participants ranged in experience from one to five years (five participants), six to ten years (two participants), and eleven to fifteen years (two participants). Six of them were secondary school teachers while three were teaching in primary schools. Therefore, the participants were coded with a corresponding letter (i.e., 'P' for primary and 'S' for secondary school teachers). Additionally, different codes were used to distinguish the participants based on the grades they teach (i.e., 'A' for primary, 'B' for secondary and 'C' for both primary and secondary school). In the same way, the participants were coded as X (who took a seminar/course on the CEFR) and Y (who did not take any seminar/course on the CEFR).

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

A mixed method approach was employed to conduct the research study, and both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were utilized. The preliminary goal was to utilize the data that the mixed method approach produced to gain insight

into the research problems which would lead to a better understanding of the issues investigated. While doing so, it allows the researcher to be more certain about the interpretations, results, or claims that compose the findings because it provides data from the same research problems. By utilizing the advantages of one research model to make up for the methodological weaknesses of the other, it also produces more reliable research (Ponce & Pagan-Maldonado, 2015).

The research study adhered to a paradigm known as "sequential phases design". According to the paradigm, the researcher starts his study with a particular approach (phase I) and then utilizes the results to develop phase II, which uses a different research approach. For instance, the study starts with a quantitative phase and designs the qualitative phase based on its findings. According to Ponce and Pagan-Maldonado (2015), the basic principles of studies with sequential phases use a research approach to thoroughly investigate the research problem before incorporating the results of the first phase to create the second phase.

The research questions assigned to this particular study and the overall purpose of it required an in-depth analysis of the issues addressed. Therefore, four different data collection techniques were employed; questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observation/ field notes and document analysis. As part of the research design, the data collection instruments were utilized in a specific order, with the outcomes of the first one informing the content of the second and so on. First of all, the document analysis was conducted to identify the goals and objectives, content, materials suggested, learning context described, and assessment and evaluation techniques recommended in the English Language Teaching Program (MoNE, 2018) and well as the CEFR framed curriculum. The data obtained were used to design the questionnaires,

interviews (teacher and student), and the classroom observation guideline. The following section explains the data collection techniques and the instruments in details.

### 3.5.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted with the language teachers who were teaching at the primary and secondary school levels. In order to ensure that the questionnaire addresses the research questions, the items that were included in the questionnaire were strictly related to the content of the primary and secondary school English language curriculum and the CEFR document. By doing so, the collected data produced a more comprehensive answer to the research questions.

The questionnaire comprised of two main parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, the participants were required to provide personal information regarding their gender, education, teaching experience, place where they work, and the level that they teach...etc. The second part was related to the different aspects of the English language curriculum that was going to be evaluated and thus comprised of five sub-sections: goals and objectives, course content and materials, course conduct, assessment, and the application of the curriculum. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire was .94, with alpha values for sub-scales ranging from .78 to .85 (as shown in Table 7 below), signifying high internal consistency.

Table 7. Cronbach's Alpha values

<b>Subscales</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Knowledge about the CEFR framed English Curriculum and its Goals and Objectives	.84
Course Content and Materials	.84
Course Conduct	.85

Assessment and Evaluation	.83
Application of the Curriculum	.78

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In the second part of the questionnaire, there were 40 close-ended items on 5-point Likert scale; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neither Agree nor Disagree (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). Because they restrict the respondent to the set of possibilities being presented (Foddy, 1993), close-ended questionnaire items were used for this study. Closed-ended questions, on the other hand, subject every respondent to the same response categories and enable uniform quantitative analysis. The main goal of using the closed-ended questions was to confirm the existence of specific components that contributed to the overall problem (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

### **3.5.2 Interview**

The interview may undertake three different tasks as a unique research technique. First of all, it might serve as the main strategy for acquiring data that directly relates to the primary objectives of the research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). As Tuckman (1972) describes it, the interview provides insights into ‘a person’s head’ which, in return, makes it accessible to measure the knowledge or the information retained, the values and preferences of the subject matter as well as the attitudes and the beliefs. Second, it can be applied as an explanatory tool that allows the researcher to discover variables and the connection between them, or it can be used for testing hypotheses and proposing new ones. Third, in a research study, the interview may be used in conjunction with various other methods. In this regard, Kerlinker (1970) proposes that interviews, particularly unstructured ones, may be used to explore unexpected

results, to verify other methods, or to have a more thorough understanding of the respondents' motivations and the reasons underlying the responses they gave.

### **3.5.2.1 Types of Interviews**

There are different types of interviews that can serve peculiar needs of the researchers. For example, six different forms of interviews are described by LeCompte et al. (1992), including standardised interviews, in-depth interviews, ethnographic interviews, elite interviews, life history interviews, and focus groups. On the other hand, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) introduced two more: semi-structured interviews and group interviews. Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed structured interviews. Exploratory interview, on the other hand, was put forward by Oppenheim (1992). In addition, four kinds of interviews are described by Patton (1980: 206): informal conversational interviews, interview guide approaches, standard open-ended interviews, and closed quantitative interviews.

Kvale (1996) arranges the different types of interviews along a continuum, contending that they vary in the degree of openness of their purpose, the degree of structure, and whether they inquire about descriptions or interpretation. The degree of structure in the interview, which itself reflects the aims of the interview, such as to gather a number of respondents' opinions about a certain topic or to suggest distinct, alternate opinions about a particular matter, appears to be a significant distinction. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), structured interviews are beneficial when investigators have an awareness of what they lack information about and can thus formulate questions that will provide the necessary knowledge. The unstructured interview, on the other hand, is helpful when researchers rely on the respondents to fill them in on what they do not know.

### **3.5.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

In a research study, interviews are employed to elicit the interviewee's ideas and interpretations rather than the researchers enforcing their own by using questionnaires. This is the main justification for choosing semi-structured interviews in addition to the questionnaire for this research project. Besides, semi-structured interviews were also used for this research study for a number of other reasons. First off, semi-structured interviews are useful tools for facilitating a more thorough investigation of the experiences of the respondents, allowing for the collection of more complex and detailed data. Additionally, semi-structured interviews give the interviewee the flexibility they require to reply to the questions and provide the interviewer the degree of control they require over the entire interview process.

The semi-structured interview that was designed for this research study comprised of two main sections: background information of the participant in the first section and the interview questions in the second section. The first section aimed to gather the background information of the research participant. The participants were expected to provide information pertaining to their age, faculty graduated, place where the participants currently work, years of teaching experience, and years of experience teaching the current level. On the other hand, the second section comprised of the 23 interview questions listed under the following sub-categories; awareness of the CEFR-framed English language curriculum, goals and objectives of the CEFR-framed curriculum, course content and materials, course conduct, and assessment and evaluation.

### **3.5.2.3 Focus Group Interview**

Researchers who are interested in problems surrounding education have looked into research methodologies that may open up new avenues for comprehending significant

problems, and thus they have started to advocate the use of qualitative research method (Vaughn et al., 1996). One notable example is the focus group interview. Focus group interviews aim to delve into the beliefs of a particular group of people about a particular research problem in a non-threatening environment (McLachlan, 2005). The pattern of inquiry is where the concept of "focus" originates. Focus group interview adopts a deductive approach. the questions start at a broader level and become more steadily detailed and specific. Focus groups are described by Kitzinger (1996) as gatherings of people organized to discuss a particular set of issues. It is described by McDaniel and Bach (1996) as a discussion that takes place in a social atmosphere, is supervised by a group leader, and aims to produce data that is descriptive or explanatory. The definition consists of three crucial parts. First, it explains unequivocally that focus groups are a type of research methodology used to gather data. Second, it identifies the interaction within a group conversation as the data source. Thirdly, it recognizes the researcher's active engagement in developing the group discussion for the aim of gathering data (Morgan, 1996). Focus groups are meant to foster a relaxed environment where people can freely express their thoughts, experiences, and views towards a subject, as noted by Kruger and Casey (2000). Focus groups can be utilized in conjunction with other qualitative and quantitative research methods to confirm the validity of data from various sources—a process known as triangulation (Saulnier, 2000). This is crucial in that the researcher must either gather data from a variety of sample groups or triangulate the data using various ways of data collection to increase validity and reliability of the data (McLachlan, 2005).

The use of focus groups has increased over the past few decades due to a variety of important factors: “as is the case for most qualitative methods, it is the focus group's ability to access the knowledge, ideas, story-telling, self-presentation, and linguistic

exchanges within a given cultural context" (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1998, p. 5). As Schratz indicated "quantitative work (such as the collection of survey data) through a process of measurement, experimentation, variables, and operationalisation, transfers the original 'voices' of its research subjects into statistical data, mathematical relations, or other abstract parameters, leaving little understanding of the context in which particular social practices occur" (p. 1). Focus groups, participant observation, case studies, and individual interviews are examples of qualitative methods that give participants' real voices in their everyday lives more weight. This gives researchers the chance to observe and present a broader view of the social environment within their research practices (Schatz, 1993). Stated simply, "focus groups help to capture those experiences that cannot be "meaningfully expressed by numbers" (Berg, 1995, p. 3). The focus group should be created using a sampling technique that accurately represents the study population in terms of characteristics like age, sex, and socioeconomic status in order to get a wide range of viewpoints. If the group is intended to be representative, random sampling proves to be highly challenging (Lane et al., 2001). Because of this, purposeful sampling was employed to create focus groups. Six to eight people are typically considered to be the ideal group size (Morgan, 1997; Morgan, 1996; Bloor et al, 2001; Kruger, 1994; Gill et al., 2008; McLachlan, 2005; Eder & Fingerson, 2002; Mauthner, 1997). Considering the fact that the target group consisted of young children who were not cognitively as mature as adults, it would not be feasible to have groups smaller than this. When individuals have 'expertise' that can contribute to the group, a smaller group size is advised, as stated by Thornton & Faisandier (1998). Another important criterion to be considered is the demographics of the focus group to be composed. According to Patton (1990), creating groups with little in common are less likely to produce rich data than

homogeneous groups who have considerably a lot in common. Likewise, Gibson (2007) emphasizes the necessity of keeping focus group interview participants' ages and developmental stages no more than two years apart. This is in line with the opinion put forward by Christensen (2004) and Holmes (1998) who claimed that young participants would feel more comfortable in a focus group that comprises of similar age group participants and the conversation with them would be more natural to the young participants.

Considering all these factors, the target levels (Grade 2 to Grade 8) have been divided into 2 groups: Grade 2, 3, and 4 students in one group and Grade 5, 6, 7, and 8 students in another. The fact that the students who participated in this research study were considerably young (Grade 2= 5.5 /6 years old & Grade 8= 12 years old), it was believed that the students would feel more comfortable to be in groups comprising of similar age range. In order to ensure that all grades were included in the focus group interview, the grades were grouped together and the interview participants were selected accordingly. The following table represents the grouping process and the number of participants.

**Table 8: Focus Group Interview Participants- Students**

Primary School & Secondary School	Year 2, 3, and 4	6 participants
	Year 5, 6, 7, and 8	8 participants

The table above represents the number of students who participated in the focus group interviews carried out in one of the three primary and secondary schools. The research literature indicates that the number within the range of 6 to 10 is the ideal number for

focus group interviews (Morgan, 1997; Morgan, 1996; Bloor et al, 2001; Kruger, 1994; Gill et al., 2008; McLachlan, 2005). The overall number of focus group interviews conducted in the participating schools were six bearing in mind the fact that a primary and a secondary school were selected for focus group interviews in each socioeconomic zone.

The focus group interviews composed of 15 items incorporating open-ended and close-ended questions. Bearing in mind the purpose of the research study, the interview questions were formed around the major themes that would serve the purpose of the curriculum evaluation that the research study aimed to achieve. These themes were as following;

- overall impression (of the students regarding English as a subject)
- course content
- course conduct
- educational methods and techniques (used by the teacher in classroom teaching)
- materials (coursebooks, supplementary materials provided, audio-visual materials, etc.)
- assessment and evaluation
- assistance and support received throughout the learning process

### **3.5.3 Document Analysis**

The research study encompassed the following documentation: English language Teaching Program (Primary and Secondary schools) (MoNE, 2018), Primary and Secondary School Syllabi, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, Assessment (CoE, 2001), and relevant classroom teaching materials (e.g., coursebooks). Document analysis, according to Bowen (2009), is a systematic process for examining or evaluating printed

or electronic documents. In this research study, the rationale behind using document analysis was to allow the data triangulation and link the three major elements (students, teachers and the curriculum) and how they interact.

The document analysis conducted (i.e., Ministry of Education Secondary School English Language Curriculum) as part of this research study was used as the means of identifying the focus areas, objectives and the expected outcomes for the primary and secondary school levels (Grade 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8). Simultaneously, the CEFR document and the focus areas highlighted in the document were identified. The content analysis of both documents revealed the extent to which they aligned and/or corresponded to each other. As Bowen (2009) clearly indicates, 'content analysis' will help organise the information that is related to the research questions. Furthermore, the coursebook of each grade was carefully analysed in the line with considering the goals and objectives of the CEFR framed curriculum to determine whether there was a consistency between both documents. The fact that the coursebook is the prime tool in delivering the content of the curriculum and shaping the classroom teaching practices, its content (i.e., activities, tasks, projects, assessments...etc) is required to meet the needs of the teachers as well as the learners so that the goals and objectives of the curriculum are attained.

#### **3.5.4 Classroom Observation**

"Observing is about beginning with the noticeable, that which the casual observer sees, then going beyond that to that which you weren't noticing, that which the casual observer misses" (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 104).

Marshall and Rossman (1999) define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p. 79).

Through observations, the researcher can create a detailed picture of the situation under investigation by describing it utilizing all five senses (Erlandson et al., 1993). The distinctive feature of observation as a method of research is that it enables a researcher to get 'live' data from the social settings that are naturally occurring (Cohen et al., 2007). Observations could focus on facts, events as they occur in the natural environment, or it could even focus on the behavioural pattern depending on the needs of the researcher and the purpose of the research study. Observational data are context-sensitive and exhibit high ecological validity (Moyles, 2002). This makes it possible for researchers to get individualized knowledge in addition to perception-based data, such as comments from interviews. Additionally, it allows researchers to be open-ended and inductive, discover details that could otherwise go unnoticed, and expose problems that participants might be reluctant to discuss in an interview setting.

Bearing in mind the aspects of the observation as a data collection instrument in educational research and the purpose of the research study in hand, it would be viable to incorporate classroom observation as a data collection tool in this study. This was due to the fact that the research study itself aimed to find out the practical implementation of the CEFR framed English language curriculum in classroom in conjunction with the theoretical and ideological foundations of the curriculum document itself. Therefore, there were certain areas that need to be noted down: the course content (including the materials used), the course conduct (including the activities/drills, student-teacher, student-student interaction, instructional techniques, the use of target language, and the feedback during the language learning process), and learner motivation and engagement. These categories set the framework for the classroom observations. Other than that, the unforeseen aspects of the observation

were noted as they occurred. Field notes were the common method of recording data when the classroom observations were carried out.

The classroom observation was carried out in all three socioeconomic zones. The observation of each grade was planned to be carried out for a week which means that depending on the number of classes each grade had per week (Grade 2, 3, and 4 had two classes, Grade 5, and 6 had three classes, and Grade 7 and 8 had four classes per week), the classroom observations were required to be completed in two days for some of the grades. This was partly because students can only have two consecutive English classes in one day. In Grade 2, 3, and 4, there are two hours of English class per week. In Grade 5 and 6, there are three hours of English class and in Grade 7 and 8, it is four hour of English class per week. In other words, Grade 2, 3, and 4 observations could be completed in a single day. However, Grade 5 to Grade 8, observations were required to be completed in two different days.

As it would be necessary to conduct classroom observations in all three schools in the selected three socioeconomic zones, the selected primary and one secondary schools in each socioeconomic zone accommodated the classroom observations. Considering the fact that there were three different grades in primary schools (Grade 2, 3, and 4), four different grades in secondary schools (Grade 5, 6, 7, and 8), and each grade had different weekly class hours (e.g., two class hours per week for Grad 2 or four class hours per week for Grade 8), the completion of the classroom observation for some of the grades would take two attempts to complete. Twenty-one hours of classroom observations in each socioeconomic zone (total of 63 observations in all three zones) were conducted. It took approximately four weeks to complete the classroom observations in all three socio-economic zones.

### **3.6 Translating the Data Collection Instruments**

Certain epistemological and methodical difficulties are lessened when the participants and the researcher are of a similar culture and could communicate in the same language (Temple and Young, 2004). It is important that in qualitative research, the interpretation of the data collected by the researcher should match with the information shared by the participants so that the data could be considered as valid (Polkinghorne, 2007). Thus, the interview questions (both teacher and student) and the questionnaire items, as the data collection instruments, were carefully translated into the target language which was, in this case, Turkish. According to Schmieding and Kokuyama (1995) and Mason (2005), “conceptual equivalence is what translation aims to achieve and conceptual equivalence implies that an item may be translated into different words, but the original meaning or conceptual framework remains intact” (Mason, 2005, p. 70). Meanwhile, it is also emphasised that “the translation strives for equivalence of item meanings and idioms in both cultures” (Yu et. al, 2004, p. 310). However, “the wider apart the structures of the two languages, the less simple the task” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 21). It is also recommended that the translation process should include multiple (Hambleton & Kanjee, 1993; Maneesriwongul and Dixon, 2004) and it is equally important that the translators familiar with not only the target language, but also the culture itself (Hambleton and Kanjee, 1993; Schmieding and Kokuyama, 1995; Hofstede, 2001). Having stated that, they must also be knowledgeable about the topic at hand (Hambleton & Kanjee, 1993).

A typical threat to internal validity known as "instrumentation" must be avoided while translating instruments (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Shadish et al., 2002). Modern translation methods frequently combine numerous different procedures, including back translation and back translation with decanting. Thus, the following steps were

followed in the translation of the both qualitative and the quantitative data collection instruments namely questionnaire, teacher interview, focus group interview.

### **Step 1 Multiple-Forward Translation**

According to Nasser (2005), this process, also known as the committee method, entails multiple bilingual people working separately to translate a data collection instrument from the source language into the target language. Discrepancies are handled by a group of translators and academics. The committee approach offers the benefit of bringing together people with language skills and subject-matter experts. Together, they determine whether the chosen terms in the target language have the same implications as the words in the source language by doing extensive analysis.

### **Step 2 Back Translation**

Back translation is currently the most used method when researchers seek alternatives to direct translations (Brislin, 1970). This is how the back translation technique operates: One person (or a team of translators) translates from English into Turkish to create a Turkish version of an instrument that was initially developed in English, while a separate individual (or a team of translators) translates from Turkish back to English. It is advised to perform numerous back translation until the final back translation is compatible with the original language. The main drawbacks of back translation are the lack of input from subject-matter experts.

### **Step 3 Back Translation with Decentering**

This method starts with a back translation from the original language to the target language and vice versa. Using "decentering," inconsistencies between the source and back-translated versions are resolved. By modifying both the source and target language versions over the course of numerous rounds, the instrument is decentered (Werner & Campbell, 1970). Decentering is more likely to provide a

functionally identical instruments than back translating. Decentering is considered to be inappropriate for translating existing instruments when researchers feel obliged to maintain the original terminology in the source language, making it more ideal for translating newly created instruments.

In order to ensure the quality of the data extracted, it was significant that the participants were given the opportunity to access the data collection instruments in the language that they would feel the most comfortable and confident. Therefore, the data collection instruments (i.e., questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews) were translated into Turkish (the process followed is explained in section 3.7 The Pilot Study below). The questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews were offered in both languages to the participating teachers and they were given the chance to select the language that they prefer. Whereas, the focus group interviews with the primary and secondary school students were conducted in the mother tongue (Turkish).

### **3.7 The Pilot Study**

Owing to the fact that the data collection instruments designed to be used in this research study was created by the researcher himself, it was crucially important to pilot test them. First of all, the pilot study allowed the researcher to test the administration of the data collection instruments and identify the shortcomings. Secondly, the researcher gained an invaluable experience which would definitely improve the quality of the data collection process in the actual study. The last, but not the least, the raw data collected through the pilot study allowed the researcher to pinpoint the shortcomings of the data collection instruments in respond to the research inquiries. In addition, the results of the pilot study, according to Mackey and Gass (2011), are an

important component of a research study because they aid in the development of the final version of the data collection instruments by removing items that are unclear, too easy or too difficult, or insignificant items. It is also a process that allows the researcher to practice the data collection procedures and ultimately improving the clarity of the instruments and the data collected.

### **3.7.1 Location and Participants**

The pilot phase of this study was conducted in Arakli/ Trabzon in the month of October through November in 2018. The town, Arakli, was selected because of easy access from the location where the researcher resides and, in many respects, the socioeconomic characteristics of the town represents the districts selected for the actual research study which were described in Chapter 3.

A total of 10 English teachers and 181 primary and secondary school students in Grade 2 through Year 8 took part in this pilot study. Two primary schools and two secondary schools in the town were selected and included in the pilot phase. Selection process was based on convenience sampling, but extra care was taken to ensure that the selected participants represent the various dimensions that are significant to the study.

### **3.7.2 Objective**

The pilot study incorporated several components which will be discussed in this section in details. First of all, one of the most striking purposes in conducting the pilot study was to test the feasibility of the study in small scale. Secondly, the pilot phase was significant to test the participant recruitment process and thus this pilot study was an effective way of identifying the process associated with it. Owing to the fact that the pilot study incorporated a number of different schools in the town, quite a few teachers who teach different levels in these schools, and a fairly large number of students who takes English as a subject, it was important to identify the steps that

would be followed to meet the potential participants, create a roadmap to carry out the data collection procedures and have minimal impact, if not any, of the flow of the teaching/learning practices in these schools. Meanwhile, the pilot study allowed the researcher to test the effectiveness of the data collection instruments that were composed by the researcher himself. Having said that, it was crucially important to pilot test these instruments for validity and reliability purposes. Therefore, the pilot study allowed the researcher to observe these instruments in action, take constructive notes during the application phase, and make necessary alterations in the light of these observations and notes. The last, but potentially one of the most significant, purpose of this pilot study was to pilot test the data entry and the data analysis process. The data analysis was crucially important owing to the fact that it would help the researcher in the review process of the data collection instruments. In other words, the collected and analysed data would yield the shortcomings of the data collection instruments in addressing the research questions that were under investigation.

### **3.7.3 Piloting the Data Collection Instruments**

The preliminary stage of the pilot study began with the composition of the data collection instruments. In order to do that, two primary documents were closely examined; the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the English Language Teaching Program for primary and secondary schools that was created in accordance with the Turkish National Education's main objectives and guiding principles as stated in Basic Law of the National Education No. 1739. These two documents helped us draw the framework of the basis for this research study. The following aspects of the program that were under evaluation was aimed to be examined to carry out this program evaluation study:

- the philosophy/ideology behind the CEFR framed English language curriculum

- the goals and objectives of the CEFR framed English language curriculum
- the content of the CEFR framed English language curriculum
- the conduct of the CEFR framed English language curriculum
- assessment and evaluation in the CEFR framed English language curriculum

These five key aspects of the curriculum shaped the content of the data collection instruments including the teacher questionnaires, semi-structured teacher interviews, focus-group student interviews, classroom observation/ field notes as well as the semi-structured interviews with the policy makers. The content of the aforementioned data collection instruments was organised accordingly.

The instruments created by the researcher were exposed to several revisions by the thesis supervisor. When the final versions of the data collection instruments and the consent forms for the participants were created, the documents were sent to the Research and Development Unit (AR-GE) of the MoNE in Trabzon to seek permission to conduct the pilot study. Once the research permission was granted by the MoNE in Trabzon, the researcher contacted the MoNE's local office in the town and informed them about the pilot study. Then the information was sent over to the principles of the schools where the study would be conducted. Following up on this, the researcher visited all four schools to meet the principles and the teachers to inform them about the purpose of the pilot study, the scope of the study, and the process that will be followed. Then the researcher revisited the schools individually to set the date/time for the classroom observations with the individual teachers. 6 classroom observation were conducted within a period of one week (in the week of October 15). Upon completion of the classroom observations, semi-structured teacher interviews were carried out within the week of October 29 and November 5 with 9 teachers in total. Focus group

interview with the students was the final stage of the piloting process. The primary and secondary school students were interviewed based on the criteria mentioned in Chapter 3. The primary school children were grouped together (Grade 2, 3, and 4), three students from each level (nine participants in total), in the focus group interview phase. Likewise, the participants from the secondary school level were placed in two different groups; the first group comprised of the students from Grade 5 and 6 (six participants in total), and in the second group, there were students from Grade 7 and 8 (six participants in total).

#### **3.7.4 Reviewing and Revising the Data Collection Instruments**

The review and the revision process of the data collection instruments during and after the piloting phase would be described in this section. The researcher paid utmost attention to the reflection of personal experience in the process of piloting the data collection instruments in order to ensure that the direct or indirect feedback extracted from either the participants or the personal observation of the researcher contributed to the revision of the data collection instruments. Having said that, in an attempt to ensure enhance the validity and the reliability of the data collection instruments, the researcher ensured that the same protocols were followed in the data collection process. That is to say that, while conducting the teacher interviews, all participants were asked the same questions in exactly the same order and they were given the same amount of time to respond to the enquiries. Once the pilot data collection process was completed, the data collected were exposed to a pilot data analysis process to be able to identify the extent to which the collected data would sufficiently respond to the research questions. This process was significant as it revealed the aspects of the data collection instruments that needed to be further improved/ developed. Accordingly, the data collection instruments were reviewed and revised.

### 3.7.4.1 Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire comprised of two sections. The first section involved the demographic information of the participants. The second section incorporated five sub-sections with 51 items on a 5-point Likert Scale. The teacher questionnaire was piloted with 36 participants either face-to-face or through the internet. The questionnaire was employed to evaluate the different aspects of the English language curriculum; course goals and objectives, course conduct and materials, course content, assessment, and the application of the curriculum which consisted of 51 items on a Likert Scale. With a Cronbach's alpha of .971, the scale exhibited a high level of internal consistency, exceeding the recommended minimum of 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) and displaying excellent reliability and internal consistency.

Table 9. Reliability statistics

<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>N of items</b>
.971	51

The SPSS analysis of the pilot questionnaire was not only required for the appropriate evaluation of the reliability of the instrument, but also the validity of it. That is to say that appropriate statistical treatment of the data could be considered as a step in the achievement of validity in quantitative research studies (Cohen et al. 2007). Meanwhile, the importance of careful sampling and appropriate instrumentation, which received utmost attention in this research study, were highlighted by scholars as ways of improving the validity in quantitative research studies. In light of all these, a two-folded process was followed in the revision of the questionnaire.

First of all, the data needed for the revision of the questionnaire was acquired during the execution of the questionnaire with the target audience. The feedback on the overall design of the questionnaire and the individual items in the questionnaire was obtained from the participants by the researcher himself. On the other hand, the participants who completed the online version of the questionnaire provided their feedback in writing. That is to say that, the researcher added an extra section to questionnaire so that the participants could express their opinions and provide feedback. The participant feedback and the researcher's personal observations revealed that there were certain aspects of the questionnaire that had to be revisited and revised. One of the major concerns of the participants was on the length of the questionnaire. In addition to that, it was also emphasised that some of the questionnaire items were not clear to the participants as the statements were either too general or decontextualised.

Secondly, the data collected through the questionnaire were analysed in light of the research questions to find out the extent to which the questionnaire items were sufficient enough to address the research questions. Meanwhile, the feedback obtained from the participants in the first phase of the review was incorporated into the process to ensure that the respondents' concerns were addressed, and the relevant sections/items were reviewed. As a result, eight items were removed for the questionnaire owing to the fact that some of those items were addressing issues that were too broad or were similar to other items that were already present in the questionnaire. Therefore, seven of these items in the questionnaire were reviewed in the form of addition and only one item removed permanently. Words or phrases were added to the existing items to enhance their clarity. The review process also revealed the necessity to categorise some of the items (four of them) in the sub-sections that were most relevant

to each other in terms of content. Therefore, these four items were replaced under the relevant sub-sections in the questionnaire. The final stage in the review process was to add some extra items to the questionnaire in order to ensure that the questionnaire items address the research questions adequately and the data that would be obtained would serve the needs of the research study in the best way possible.

#### **3.7.4.2 Semi-structured Teacher Interview**

The semi-structured interview comprised of twenty-three questions with some additional prompts encompassing five key aspects of this program evaluation study: awareness of the CEFR framed English language curriculum, goals and objectives of the CEFR framed English language curriculum, course content and materials, course conduct, and assessment and evaluation. The semi-structured interview was executed with nine participants: two primary school teachers and seven secondary school teachers. A two-folded process was followed in the revision of the semi-structured teacher interview questions.

First of all, the researcher took notes during the interviews to identify the potential issues, misinterpretation of the questions by the participants, questions that were not clear to the participants, and also the feedback received from the participants themselves pertaining to the clarity and the effectiveness of the interview items. As the data collection instrument was designed as a semi-structured interview, additional prompts/ questions that emerged during the application process were noted down and reconsidered during the review process.

The second phase of the review process was to put together the researcher's notes, participant feedback, the interview transcripts (participant responses), and the research questions in order to evaluate the extent to which the collected data were sufficient

enough to address the concerns of the research questions. Meanwhile, the researcher had a chance to revise the individual items in the interview in light of the participant feedback and the researcher's personal observations and the experience during the interview process. The review process highlighted the potential shortcomings of the interview items and led to the development of the content to ensure that the interview items allow the researcher to elicit sufficient amount of information to respond to the research questions.

As a result, only one item was removed from the semi-structured interview as it was made clear in the pilot data analysis process that the existence of the item did not serve the purpose of this research study. Other than that, eleven out of twenty-three items were required to be revised and developed in order to improve their clarity and the focus on the research questions. Meanwhile, two items that were closely related to the same category were added to another question as additional prompts. Throughout the whole review process, an utmost attention was paid to the calibration of the semi-structured interview items to the research questions. Therefore, some of the questions were rephrased with additional prompts, some were either removed or embedded in other questions, and some additional items were added as extra items to the interview.

#### **3.7.4.3 Focus Group Interview with Students**

The focus group interview with the students incorporated fifteen items within six categories namely overall impression about the curriculum, course content, course conduct (including the methods and techniques), materials, assessment and evaluation, and the support throughout the language learning process. The primary school students (Grade 2, 3, and 4) were placed in the same focus group which comprised three students from each grade. For the secondary school students, two groups were formed; the first one included the Grade 6 and 7 students (three students from each grade), and

the second group included the Grade 7 and 8 students (three students from each grade). A two-folded process was followed in the revision of the focus group interview questions. First of all, the researcher identified the questions that were not clear to the participants and recorded the paraphrased versions of these questions. Additional questions that were asked at the time of the interview based on the responses provided by the participants and the flow of the interview were recorded for further consideration during the review process. The interview data were transcribed to further analyse the responses of the participants and evaluate the alignment of the questions asked/ the responses provided with the aim of the research questions. This led to the recalibration of the research questions in order to ensure that the interview incorporates questions that would help the researcher extract data from the respondents to provide a comprehensive answer to the research questions.

The second stage of the process was to review the interview questions/prompts in light of the researcher's observation/ notes during the interview process, the interview transcripts, and the research questions themselves. As a result, it was concluded that five out of sixteen items served the purpose of the research study quite well and thus remained as they were whereas ten out of sixteen items were required to be developed in the form of rephrasing to increase the level of clarity and precision. On the other hand, while one item was decided to be removed as it had no contribution to the purpose of the study, two additional items were added as the review process revealed that the existing items in the interview were not sufficiently responding the concerns of the research questions. Therefore, the shortcomings of the interview questions were eliminated by the addition of the two extra questions to the interview. This ensure that the data collected through the interview would sufficiently address the research questions.

#### **3.7.4.4 Classroom Observation**

The classroom observations were carried out in two primary and two secondary schools in Arakli, Trabzon. A total of six classes were observed (two hours of observation for each grade) as part of the piloting process. The classroom observation guide that was used incorporated the following key aspects of the evaluation study conducted:

- description of the physical environment;
- lesson content (materials, tasks, etc.);
- lesson conduct (including activities/ drills, language use, instructional technique, feedback. Etc);
- assessment and evaluation;
- learner motivation/ engagement.

There were particular evaluation criteria listed under the categories above and the observation notes were taken accordingly. A two-folded process was followed in the revision of the classroom observation guide. First of all, the researcher aimed to complete the observation guide based on the criteria listed. While doing this during the classroom observations, notes were taken regarding the practical aspects of the observation guide and the potential ways of simplifying it to make it more user friendly. The content of the observation guide was experienced to be fairly too long and confusing for the researcher to follow, thus needed further simplification. Meanwhile, the observation guide was not practical enough to grasp and record significant data that could be necessary to respond to the relevant research questions. For example, even though there was a criterion in the observation guide pertaining to the use of target language in the classroom, the classroom observation template failed

to provide a comprehensive record of the language (either L1 or L2) used by the teacher and the students.

In the second phase of the process, the observation guide used in the pilot study was evaluated in light of the research questions, and the extent to which it serves the purpose of the study which is to capture a true image of what is happening in the classroom and relate the data to the relevant research questions to provide more comprehensive answers. The completed classroom observation documents were examined closely, and the content of the data recorded were analysed as part of the pilot data analysis process. The most striking result that merged out of the data analysis was the fact that the observation guide, as it was, failed to allow the researcher to record/keep the detailed data that would be needed to respond to the research queries. Therefore, the content of the observation guide and the criteria that were included in the guide were reviewed and reformatted accordingly. While the main categories in the observation guide were retained, the criteria listed under these categories were simplified and channelled more towards the research questions in order to ensure that what was recorded during the classroom observations would serve the purpose of the research study in the best way possible.

As a result, similar research studies were investigated to examine the strategies and tools that were used. The one that was found to be the most user-friendly classroom observation guide was the one used by Erozan (2005). The tool incorporated an observation guide which outlines the main categories of the program evaluation as well as the specific criteria that need to be observed and recorded by the researcher. Therefore, the tool was adopted by the researcher to be used in this particular research study. In addition to that, the researcher developed a simple tool (a visual layout of the

classroom) to capture and record other useful information such as learner engagement and participation, teacher-student / student-student interaction...etc.

### **3.7.5 Pilot Study Data Analysis Procedures**

In this research study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Qualitative data were collected from the open-ended questions in the teacher/ student interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis whereas quantitative data were collected from the closed items in the teacher questionnaires.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data from the closed items in the questionnaires by showing the frequency counts of the replies for each item. For this analysis, SPSS Program was utilised. On the other hand, all raw data (all the individual responses) for the open-ended questions in the surveys were listed under the relevant item, and then responses that showed similarities were grouped together, common themes identified, and frequencies were calculated.

The research study incorporated two different interviews with two distinct stakeholders namely the teachers and the students. A slightly different approach was adopted in the analysis of the collected data. Case analysis and cross-case analysis are two methods for analysing interviews that Patton (1987) outlines. When using case analysis, a case study must be written for each subject or topic covered. However, employing cross-case analysis entails analysing and combining various viewpoints on important issues or grouping responses to particular inquiries from various individuals. In this study, interviews were analysed by using cross-case analysis.

Both interviews and the questionnaires in this research study had been designed based on the four focus areas (with additional sub-focus areas) in which some were

interrelated. Thus, the data from the interviews and questionnaires were grouped in three major categories: Awareness of the CEFR framed English language curriculum, Alignment of the CEFR framed curriculum to the assigned grades/levels, and the Application of the CEFR framed curriculum.

Table 10: Main categories identified in the data collection instruments

<b>Semi-structured Teacher Interviews</b>	<b>Teacher Questionnaire</b>	<b>Semi-structured Student Interviews</b>
-Awareness of the CEFR framed English language curriculum	-Awareness of the CEFR framed English language curriculum	-Course content and materials
-Course content and materials	-Goals and objectives	-Course content, methods, and techniques
-Course conduct	-Course content and materials	-Assessment and evaluation
-Assessment and evaluation	-Course conduct	-Assistance throughout the language learning process
	-Application of the curriculum	
	-Assessment and evaluation	

The observational data collected in this study were analysed on the bases of the key events: the techniques used in classroom teaching, tasks or activities carried out in the classroom, medium of instructions, resources available/used, and teacher and student interaction. In other words, the categories listed on the observation form served as the foundation for the analysis of observational data.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

According to Burns (2000), data analysis refers to “finding meanings from the data and a process by which the investigator can interpret the data” (p. 430). Similar to this, Marshall and Rossman (1999) pointed out that data analysis is a method of obtaining the meaning ingrained in the data gathered, placing it in an order and a structure. In this research study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Qualitative

data were collected through the semi-structured interviews, observations, filed notes and document analysis whereas quantitative data were collected from the closed items in the questionnaire.

Reading the information acquired from the completed questionnaires and the semi-structured interview transcripts served as the first step in the data analysis process. Then, the document (English Language Teaching Program) along with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages was analysed. The results of the questionnaire were analysed using the statistical analysis tool SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Version 26, particularly the teachers' responses to the closed-ended questions. Before conducting any statistical analysis on the quantitative data, it was indispensable to peruse the normality of distribution. Thus, Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test of normality was run to check the normality of data. The results indicated that Items 3, 4, 5, 23, 37, and 39 displayed a normal distribution as shown in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality

Item Number	Statistic	df	Sig.
Item 3	.239	100	.09
Item 4	.322	100	.06
Item 5	.223	100	.42
Item 23	.252	100	.07
Item 37	.301	100	.21
Item 39	.316	100	.054

According to Ghasemi & Zahediasl (2012), if the  $p$  values of the variables are smaller than 0.05, the data are not normally distributed. Since the  $p$  values were larger than .05, it could be concluded that the distribution of data had been normal. Therefore, it was safe to proceed with a parametric test (i.e., One-way Analysis of Variances (henceforth one-way ANOVA) and the Independent Samples t-test). On the other hand, two major non-parametric tests were also used: Mann-Whitney U test (a non-parametric test used to compare the differences between two independent groups) and Kruskal-Wallis test (a non-parametric test used to determine the statistically significant differences, if any, between two or more groups of an independent variable). The standard range used to interpret the average scores in the scale was adopted from Yuksel and Demiral (2013), and Munoz (2005).

1.00-1.80      Strongly Disagree

1.81-2.60      Disagree

2.61-3.40      Not Sure

3.41-4.20      Agree

4.21-5.00      Strongly Agree

To provide a broad overview of the instructors' responses, descriptive central tendency statistics were created using frequency calculations (e.g., the number of teachers who chose each option). In addition, parametric and non-parametric tests were used to analyse the statistical data. On the other hand, a similar technique was used to analyse the data from the semi-structured interviews. The information gathered was organized into the topics and emerging themes suggested by the research questions. In the process of data analysis, patterns were identified. Then the patterns and emerging issues were compared with the document analysis results.

The methodologies, classroom activities, and teacher and student behaviours that were determined as the important events were used to analyse the observational data that was gathered for this study. Thus, the categories listed on the observation form served as the foundation for the analysis of observational data. The commonalities or tendencies within each group were noted, and conclusions were drawn.

The framework created by the Qualitative Research Unit at the National Centre for Social Research in the United Kingdom was used to analyse the focus group interview data. The focus group consists of a number of participants, hence the group as opposed to the individual is the unit of analysis. The content analysis technique, which is commonly defined as creating a list of coded categories and linking the retrieved data with these categories, was used to conduct the document analysis. Content analysis will make it possible to categorise the information and make it easier to analyse. It also enables inferences to be drawn, as indicated by Merriam (2001), which can then be confirmed using other techniques for gathering data. The data from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews highlighted the key areas. Then a cross-comparison was possible not only among the responses provided by the participants but also the data extracted from the document analysis.

Finally, the results accumulated from the careful review of both qualitative and quantitative data were merged and presented in the study's findings and discussion chapters.

### **3.8.1 Strategies for Enhancing the Validity and the Reliability of The Study**

“Validation is the offering of evidence that the persons answering the questionnaire items understood what the items were asking in a way reasonably the same as the

questionnaire developer” (Griffiee, 2001, p. 2). Reliability, on the other hand, refers to overall consistency of a particular measure.

First of all, both qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments were composed in English and translated into the native language of the participants via the steps mentioned previously (forward translation, backward translation and back translation with decentering) by qualified translators. Meanwhile, the researcher himself and the thesis supervisor monitored the process and made contributions as needed. Among all the data collection instruments that were used in this research study, teacher interview, focus group interview and the interview with the administrators. policy makers were conducted in Turkish. The questionnaire was composed and presented in both languages; English and Turkish.

Table 12: The process followed in developing the data collection instruments

**Step 1.** drafted by the researchers;

**Step 2.** presented to 3 experts (one professor and two assistant professors) in the field for preliminary review;

**Step 3.** redrafted based on the experts ’feedback;

**Step 4.** translated into Turkish (forward translation, back translation, and back translation with decentering);

**Step 5.** pilot tested (the questionnaires with 36 participants, the semi-structured interviews with 8 participants);

**Step 6.** revised based on the results of the pilot study;

**Step 7.** rechecked by experts; and

**Step 8.** finalized by researchers based on the expert opinion.

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In order to ensure that accuracy was achieved, to get the precise words of the respondents, all of the focus group interviews and individual teacher interviews

were audio recorded. Field notes were taken on those important moments during all the interviews, focus group interviews and classroom observations. Various techniques were used during the analysis and interpretation phases of this research study to assure the reliability of the findings. In an effort to maximize authenticity, all of the field notes, individual interviews, focus group interviews, and classroom observations were analysed to provide a clear interpretation of the participants' expressions and perceptions. Another procedure that was employed was triangulation to assure the trustworthiness of the findings. That was the reason why classroom observations, teacher interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis were employed concurrently to collect the data.

### **3.9 Contribution to the Field**

As Hargraeves and Fink (2006) indicate, educational change is a complex phenomenon. It is fairly easy to propose, but not equally straightforward to put in practice and maintain in long term. It was anticipated that this research study would help us understand the current situation in the implementation of the CEFR in English language teaching in Turkey. Bearing in mind the fact that CEFR is a broad framework and it does not prescribe a particular language pedagogy, there is no guarantee that it will make a significant difference when it is integrated into the language curriculum. Therefore, this research study would reveal the extent to which it has met the expectations of the policy makers, served the needs of the learners and altered the language teaching practices in Turkey.

In addition, as the purpose of this research study was to evaluate the CEFR framed curriculum, the findings shed light on the potential issues associated with the interpretation and the application of the CEFR principles in framing an English

language curriculum in a particular context and the potential future considerations for more successful application in curriculum development practices. In addition to that, this study allowed the evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the newly introduced CEFR framed English language curriculum in the primary and secondary schools in Turkey from the perspective of the major stakeholders: teachers and learners.

In general, local government organizations and policymakers took the initiative to embrace the CEFR. For instance, studies conducted in Argentina (Porto, 2012), Canada (Faez et al., 2012; Wernicke and Bournot-Trites, 2012), Colombia (Meja, 2012), Mexico (Despaigne and Grossi, 2011), and the United States (Byrnes, 2012) have comprehensive analyses of pilot studies which mainly focused on the alignment of curricula to the CEFR proficiency scales. A number of Asian nations have actively participated in the adaptation/localization of the CEFR, and academic accounts of their experiences are readily available. These reports have been specifically linked to the adaptation of the CEFR in China (Bellassen and Zhang, 2008), Japan (O'Dwyer and Nagai, 2011), Korea (Finch, 2009), and Taiwan (Wu, 2012). In contrast, there are few studies describing the "adaption or adoption" of the CEFR in the Middle East and similar contexts such Iran (Normand-Marconnet, 2013), Turkey (Glover, 2011; Ustunluoglu et al. 2012). Therefore, this study had the potential to reveal the extent to which the CEFR and its principles had been interpreted and embedded in the English language curriculum in Turkey, and whether the integration of the CEFR framework has been successful in creating the expected impact on language education.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

This research study was conducted in public primary and secondary schools in Istanbul, Turkey and it encompassed teachers, students, and the relevant

documentation (The CEFR document and the current English language curriculum). Therefore, formal permissions were obtained from the relevant bodies of the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. Upon receiving the relevant permissions, the identified participants were approached and they were informed about the research study. The researcher informed the potential participants about the aim and the scope of the research study and sought the written consent of the teachers to take part in the study. As the students were all underaged, the researcher got in contact with their parents/ guardian to obtain their written consent to allow them to participate in the research study. Only those who provided a written consent were included in this study. It was made clear to the participants (both teachers and students) that their responses would be kept confidential and not to be shared with any third parties. In the meantime, their personal information would not be made public in any part of this thesis.

## **Chapter 4**

### **FINDINGS**

The research study aimed to answer a number of research questions to evaluate the current CEFR framed English language curriculum from the perspective of the teachers and the students. Some of these questions aimed to delve into the participating English teachers' perceptions. These questions focused on the teachers' awareness of the CEFR framed English curriculum, goals and objectives of the curriculum, course conduct and the materials used, assessment and evaluation practices, and the overall application of the curriculum. There were particular research questions targeting the perceptions of the students with regards to the three key aspects of the CEFR framed curriculum: course content, course conduct, and the assessment procedures. The results will be presented for each aspect individually.

#### **4.1 Teachers' Perspectives**

##### **4.1.1 Awareness of the CEFR Framed English Language Curriculum**

The English Language Teaching Program published by MoNE (2018) outlines the overarching objectives of English language education, makes references to the principles of the CEFR framework, provides a detailed description of the skill focus areas, makes recommendations pertaining to the teaching-learning process, and recommends assessment and evaluation techniques for the effective implementation of the current curriculum. Some of the striking aspects of the document pertaining to English language teaching are as following;

- the new curricular model is focused on language learning as communication.

-the emphasis is on language use in an interactive setting, rather than learning the grammar rules and linguistic functions of the target language.

-the curriculum strives to make learning enjoyable while also taking into account the different needs of learners at various developmental levels.

-the curriculum aims to serve not only young learners, but also adolescents

-a variety of learning techniques for both classroom instruction and homework are emphasised in the curriculum.

-the curriculum is based on an assessment and evaluation philosophy which dictates that assessments, whether summative and formative or product- and process-oriented exams, are to;

- incorporate Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening;
- differ based on the cognitive level as well as the learning styles of the target learner group;
- adhere to the teaching and learning methods described in the curriculum;
- be consistent with the developmental characteristics of the students;
- create positive and beneficial washback effect;
- incorporate self-evaluation, reflection, and feedback and
- assist learners in identifying their areas of strength and weakness and the ones that are required to be improved.

-English is used as a means of communication as much as possible.

-students speak and listen the way they would in a community where the target language is spoken.

-learners are exposed to English by means of audio and visual resources.

-activities like arts and crafts and drama help students enjoy the language learning process.

-the language learning process is focused on enhancing communication rather than the completion of the curricular items within a certain period of time.

-by completing demanding yet doable tasks, students strengthen their motivation for learning.

-instead of only "learning about" the language, students improve their conversational abilities in English by "doing things with the language".

-the concept of spiral curriculum is emphasised allowing the learners to revise the previously learned content through fun activities in order to internalize them.

-as the emphasis is solely on listening and speaking skills in the second and third grades, learners are not required to have notebooks (MoNE, 2018, p.13).

The first aspect of this study was to explore the extent to which the participants were aware of the CEFR framed curriculum. Hence, the participants were asked about their opinions of the CEFR document, how the CEFR has impacted the language curriculum and how the CEFR framed curriculum has enhanced the language teaching practices for them. The data are summarized in the following table.

Table 13: Knowledge about the CEFR framed English language curriculum

<b>Items</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
1. I have a clear understanding of the CEFR document.	100	2.67	1.08
2. I have a clear understanding of how the CEFR has impacted the English language curriculum that is in use now.	100	3.46	1.13
3. I have a clear understanding of how the CEFR framed English language curriculum has enhanced the English language teaching practices for me as a teacher.	100	3.56	.94

The participants had positive opinions in their understanding of the impact of the CEFR on the curriculum (M=3.46, SD=1.13) and how the language teaching practices had been enhanced (M=3.56, SD=.94). However, it was also reported that a majority of the participants did not know much about the CEFR document itself (M=2.67, SD=1.08). Indeed, 72% of the participants indicated that they had not had a course/seminar on the CEFR. The remaining 28% reported that their knowledge about the CEFR framework and its influence on the current curriculum was rather limited. The Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to compare the scores of Group X (the participants who took a seminar/course on the CEFR) and Group Y (the ones who did not) scores on items 1 and 2 which followed a non-normal distribution. Accordingly, an Independent Samples t-test was conducted on item 3 which followed a normal distribution.

Table 14: The Mann-Whitney U test for Item 1 & 2

		<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Z-Value</b>	<b>2-tailed Sig.</b>
Item 1	Group X	70.37	-4.45	.000
	Group Y	42.80		
Item 2	Group X	63.77	-2.96	.003
	Group Y	45.34		
	Group Y	47.61		

The results in Table 14 indicate a statistically significant difference at the  $p \leq 0.05$  level ( $p=.00$ ) in item 1 and ( $p=.003$ ) in item 2. However, the Independent Samples t-test conducted to compare the scores of Group X (M=3.82, SD=.86) and Group Y (M=3.45, SD=.96) teachers revealed no statistically significant difference at the

$p \leq 0.05$  level in item 3;  $t(98) = 1.74$ ,  $p = .08$ ). Therefore, while both groups had a different level of knowledge about the CEFR document, they demonstrated similarities in their level of understanding of its impact on the curriculum and teaching practices. All of the nine teachers interviewed reported that they had attended an in-service training in 2017 which was not specifically on the CEFR, but on the new curriculum and covered the changes that took place such as the coursebooks and the units added or omitted. Teachers' knowledge about the CEFR stemmed from their "personal effort to learn about it (P1, P3, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6)" which indicates that their perceptions about the current curriculum framed by the principles of the CEFR were formed around this accumulated knowledge. In light of this, the interview participants referred to the CEFR framed curriculum as "more communication-oriented (P1, P2, & P3)", "less grammar focused (S5 & S6)", "unlike the old ones, containing plenty of listening and speaking activities (S2)", and "promoting learner independence through self-study activities and projects (S1, S3, & S4)."

To me, it is quite obvious that the curriculum aims to promote communicative language teaching compared to the ones we used to have. Even the coursebooks include a lot of listening and speaking activities as well as self-study ones. (S1)

The most striking aspect of the English curriculum is the emphasis placed on the productive skills. I remember my secondary or high school years when we had a heavily grammar-based curriculum plus coursebooks. (S5)

The interview excerpts above made it clear that the coursebooks incorporate a range of different activities including speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities. The participants further stated that these activities are essential in "developing all four skills" (S2, S4, S5, and S6), "making learning an enjoyable experience" (S1, S5, and S6), and "ensuring a wholistic language development" (S2, S3, S5, and S6). The participants' responses confirmed that the course materials (i.e., coursebooks), that are

in use in secondary school grades, and their content are in line with the principles of the English Language Teaching Program (ELTP) as well as the CEFR framework. The reason being is that both documents encourage the development of positive attitudes towards language learning and the inclusion of all four skills (at various degrees in different grades) in language teaching process.

On the other hand, the interview excerpts from the primary school teachers shed light on different aspect of the curriculum that was under investigation: the extent to which the goals and objectives of the curriculum are achievable for the learners, and whether they are consistent with the content of the coursebooks or not.

The coursebooks are well-designed and fun to work with. I teach Grade 2, 3, and 4 students. These kids like to have fun, sing songs, do hands-on activities, as you know. The coursebooks have a lot of these activities. We mostly do listening and speaking. The learning outcomes in the curriculum are pretty straightforward and achievable in my opinion.” (P2)

I like the coursebooks that we use know. They are more interesting and engaging. The activities, visuals, presentation...everything is good. The curriculum outcomes are also achievable. However, we should not forget that not all students have the same capacity for language learning. The only concern I have is the class time. We only have 2 hours of English in Grade 2 and 3. I wish it was a bit more so that we could do more.” (P3)

The data collected from the interview participants (primary school) clearly confirmed that the curriculum outcomes in primary school levels were considered as achievable. Participants also confirmed that the content of the course materials provided interesting and engaging learning activities for children to attain the learning outcomes. Having said that, it is also important to highlight the fact that ‘limited-class time’ merged as an important issue in the delivery and the attainment of the curriculum outcomes.

#### 4.1.2 Goals and Objectives of the CEFR framed Curriculum

The second part of this research study explored the participants' opinions about the curriculum goals and objectives of the CEFR framed English language curriculum in primary and secondary school levels. The data are summarized in Table 15 below.

Table 15 : Goals and Objectives of the CEFR framed Curriculum

Items	N	M	SD
4. The CEFR framed curriculum enables students to work towards achievable goals.	100	3.59	.92
5. The CEFR framed curriculum has increased the student interest in the subject (English).	100	3.33	1.02
6. The curriculum provides aspects of cultural awareness.	100	3.52	.91
7. The objective statements in the curriculum are consistent with the CEFR levels (A1, A2, B1, etc.).	100	3.41	.87
8. The CEFR framed curriculum promotes communicative language teaching (CLT).	100	3.68	1.06
9. The use of English is emphasized in classroom interactions of all types, supporting learners in becoming language users, rather than students of the language.	100	3.70	.96
10. The Communicative Language Teaching approach recommended in language teaching by MoNE is applicable in my context.	100	2.67	1.21
11. The CEFR framed curriculum promotes learner autonomy; the ability of studying independently in the process of language learning.	100	3.33	1.02
12. The curriculum objectives are in accordance with the daily lives of the learners.	100	3.29	1.11

As seen in Table 15, teachers had positive opinions on certain aspects of the curriculum such as promoting cultural awareness (M=3.52, SD=.91) and enabling students to work towards achievable goals (M=3.59, SD=.92). In terms of goals (learning outcomes), the interview results provided better insights. While five of the interview

participants indicated their unconditional agreement, others highlighted their concerns as: "... appropriate for their level, but learners at different levels are in the same class (S1 & S5)" and "lack of time to fully achieve the outcomes (S2 & S6)." A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore the perceptions of teachers working in primary schools (Group A), secondary schools (Group B), and of those working in both primary and secondary school levels (Group C) on item 4. There was no statistically significant difference among the three categories of participants at the  $p \leq 0.05$  level ( $F(2-97)=2.58, p=.08$ ). Group A ( $M=3.75$ ) and Group C teachers ( $M=3.87$ ) who work in secondary schools expressed their concern about the time constrain and the curriculum overload.

The curriculum offers clear and achievable goals, but within a very limited time. We have students at different level of proficiency and we need to ensure that they get the most of what we give them. Meanwhile, there are ten units that we need to cover and the High School Entrance Exam that the students take at the end of Grade 8. This places more pressure on us. (S2)

I teacher Grade 6 and 8 this year. I could very well say that if I did not have the exam pressure, I could have focused more on the communicative aspect of the target language. However, I need to make sure that all topics are covered before the end of second term, multiple choice tests are conducted in class to familiarize the students with the exam format and so on. This gives me little, if none, time to focus on communication. (S5).

As for the consistency between the curriculum objectives and the CEFR levels, the participants had positive opinions ( $M=3.41, SD=.87$ ). In line with the questionnaire data, the classroom observations and the document analysis revealed that the CEFR proficiency level aligned to the primary school (A1- Breakthrough) and its 'Can Do' descriptors as well as the focus skill areas (listening and speaking with limited reading and writing) was considerably appropriate to the language level of the target learner group. In other words, the curriculum content in primary school was congruous with the age range of the learners (6-year-old to 8-year-old) and their level of cognitive

maturity. The units embedded in the coursebooks used in Grade 2 (e.g., Friends, Body Parts, Animals), in Grade 3 (e.g., Greetings, My Family, Feelings), and in Grade 4 (e.g., My Day, Jobs, Food and Drinks) were observed to be relevant to the interests of the target learner group. Likewise, the units in the coursebooks in Grade 5 (e.g., My Town, Games and Hobbies), in Grade 6 (e.g., Life, At the Breakfast), in Grade 7 (e.g., Sports, Television), and Grade 8 (e.g., Friendship, Teen Life) were appropriate to the age range (9-year-old to 12-year-old) and their level of cognitive maturity. The analysis of the curriculum for each grade also revealed that the learning outcomes assigned to the grades were in line with the 'Can Do' descriptors in the CEFR document. Further, the Mann-Whitney U test was conducted for the participants who took courses/seminars on the CEFR (Group X) and the ones who did not (Group Y) with regards to their viewpoints on the consistency between the curriculum objectives and the CEFR levels. The results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference,  $U(N_{\text{Group X}}=28, N_{\text{Group Y}}=72)=773.50, z=-1.92, p<.054$ .

Meanwhile, the participants reported positive opinions on the use of English in classroom interactions ( $M=3.70, SD=.96$ ) and believed that the curriculum promotes CLT ( $M=3.68, SD=1.06$ ), but they were unsure about the applicability of CLT in their context ( $M=2.67, SD=1.21$ ). The interviewees pinpointed three major reasons: overcrowded classrooms (67%), limited class contact hours (89%), and physical conditions (56%). In the meantime, four out of six secondary school teachers indicated that the exam-oriented nature of teaching in secondary school is another reason why CLT is neglected in language education.

I used to teach Grade 6 and 7 in a secondary school, but now I teach Grade 2, 3, and 4. I can say that I feel more like an English teacher now. As there is no exam pressure on us and the curriculum is more focused on listening and speaking, we can embrace communication in the classroom. Yet, class contact

hours are not obviously sufficient. If we had more time, we could make better progress bearing in mind the fact that these kids have no contact with English outside the classroom. (P3)

I would really love to see my students using the target language in the classroom and have that ideal communicative atmosphere, but the reality is that we have tons of units (10 units) to be completed in a short time, and exam (HSEE) ahead of us and so on. Another issue is the size of our classrooms. I have classes with 35 students. How could I implement a communicative approach in such a class? I do not really know. (S6)

As for learner autonomy, the questionnaire data revealed that the participants were doubtful ( $M=3.33$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ). Indeed, the secondary school teachers considered their students as more dependent on their teachers because of the High School Entrance Exam (henceforth HSEE) ahead of them. In exploration of the learner interest in the subject from teachers' perspective, descriptive statistics showed that the mean score of Group A (primary school teachers) ( $M=3.45$ ) was slightly higher than Group B (secondary school teachers) ( $M=3.23$ ). Further, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the differences in the perceptions of Group A ( $M=3.50$ ), Group B ( $M=3.23$ ), and Group C ( $M=3.41$ ) teachers on item 5. There was no statistically significant difference among the three categories of participants at  $p \leq 0.05$  level ( $F(2-97)=.61$ ,  $p=.54$ ). The interview data highlighted the underlying reasons as “more streamlined and focused content (P1)”, “fun content: games and songs (P2 & P3)”, and “age-appropriate content (P2).”

#### **4.1.3 Course Content and Materials**

Another important aspect of this study was related to the teachers' opinions regarding the course content and the materials used. Hence, the participants were given statements extracted from the English Language Teaching Program (MoNE, 2018) and asked to express their opinions. Table 16 outlines the data collected.

Table 16: Course Content and Materials

<b>Items</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
13. The curriculum content and the CEFR levels (A1, A2, etc.) do match.	100	3.21	.94
14. The curriculum content is in accordance with the daily lives of the learners.	100	3.29	1.03
15. The content of the curriculum is relevant to the language learning needs of the learners.	100	3.35	.94
16. The materials selected are authentic.	100	3.10	1.04
17. The curriculum equally combines all four language skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening).	100	3.08	1.08
18. The curriculum incorporates the themes/ topics that are familiar to young learners.	100	3.70	.84
19. The material (coursebook) used allows the students to achieve the learning outcomes in the curriculum.	100	2.96	1.11

The questionnaire results revealed that the participants were unsure about the alignments of the curriculum content and the CEFR levels ( $M=3.21$ ,  $SD=.94$ ), the relevancy of the content with the daily lives of the learners ( $M=3.29$ ,  $SD=1.03$ ) and the relevancy of the content to the language learning needs of the learners ( $M=3.35$ ,  $SD=.94$ ). The Kruskal-Wallis Test conducted to compare the opinions of the primary (Group A) and secondary school teachers (Group B) as well as the ones who teach both levels (Group C) on the relevancy of the content to the language learning needs of the learners revealed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $H(3)=9.73$ ,  $p=.008$ ). Group A was considerably more positive about the content relevancy with a mean rank of 65.68 than Group B ( $M=44.12$ ). Group C which comprised of teachers who teach both primary and secondary school levels had the mean rank of 52.75. A look at the interview data showed that one of the major concerns of the secondary

school teachers was the HSEE which unavoidably shapes the language learning needs of the students.

In my opinion, the most obvious discrepancy between the curriculum and our educational system is what each one aims to achieve. The curriculum aims to promote communicative competencies, but the system dictates an exam (HSEE) which is a multiple-choice test. (S4)

As I taught both primary and secondary grades, I can compare. We had exam pressure in secondary school, but now I have no such concern. My students can enjoy learning the language. The coursebooks at both levels are very well organized, but the circumstances (e.g., HSEE exam) dictate the direction you go. (P3)

As for the sufficiency of the materials to allow the learners to achieve the learning outcomes, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to explore the opinions of primary and secondary school teachers as well as the ones who teach both levels. The results indicated a statistically significant difference ( $H(3)=8.02$ ,  $p=.01$ ) among the three categories of participants. This clearly indicated that the primary school teachers considered the course material (coursebook only) more adequate to achieve the learning outcomes compared to their secondary school counterparts. However, secondary school teachers pinpointed “limited resources (coursebook only) (S1 & S6)” as well as “time constraints (S1, S2, S3, & S5)”, “large class size (S1, S2, S3, S5, & S6)”, and “exam pressure (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, & S6)” as the leading reasons for perceived incapacity to achieve the learning outcomes in the curriculum.

#### **4.1.4 Course Conduct**

The implementation phase of the curriculum was significant so as to see how the theory was put into practice in classroom. Therefore, the participants were asked about their opinions on aspects of the course conduct. The data accumulated are presented in Table 17 below.

Table 17. Course Conduct

Items	N	M	SD
20. The curriculum is applicable in general.	100	3.53	.98
21. Communication is carried out in English as much as possible.	100	3.14	1.11
22. Student-centred rather than teacher-centred approach has been adopted in the curriculum.	100	3.43	1.04
23. The learning/ student-centred approach that the program proposes can be applied effectively in the classroom.	100	2.66	1.12
24. The Communicative Language Teaching method can easily be used in the classroom.	100	2.72	1.17
25. A range of different language teaching techniques can easily be used in the classroom.	100	3.08	1.03
26. The curriculum promotes active use of technology.	100	3.81	.98
27. Communicative competencies are promoted in the classroom teaching activities over grammatical competencies.	100	3.68	1.06
28. The curriculum offers engaging learning environments for the learners, taking into account the diverse needs of the students at different developmental levels.	100	3.23	1.13

The questionnaire results indicated that the participants had positive opinions on the overall applicability of the curriculum (M=3.53, SD=.98). As for the language teaching techniques recommended in the English Language Teaching Program (MoNE, 2018), the questionnaire data clearly revealed that the participants were doubtful about the applicability of different language teaching techniques (M=3.08, SD=1.03) and the CLT in classrooms (M=2.72, SD=1.17). The Kurskal-Wallis test conducted to explore the impact of the classroom size on the practical application of the CLT in classrooms showed a statistically significant difference at the  $p \leq 0.05$  level ( $H(3)=12.61, p=.05$ ) based on the class size. In Table 18 below, a detailed account of group based mean scores were provided. It could easily be inferred from the data that

there is an inverse ratio between the class size and the perceived applicability of the CLT in classrooms. Indeed, class size was mentioned by the interview participants on multiple occasions to highlight its detrimental impact on curriculum implementation and the attainment of the learning outcomes.

One of the biggest problems in language education in Turkey is the number of students we have in classrooms. We have overcrowded classrooms which is obviously not ideal for language education. The curriculum implies communicative competencies, but, in an average class, each person has approximately one minute to talk, including the teacher. Then the 40-minute lesson would be over. Sad, but true. (P2)

The questionnaire data also indicated that the participants were positive about the learner-centred nature of the curriculum ( $M=3.43$ ,  $SD=1.04$ ). However, they expressed rather negative opinions on its applicability in the classroom ( $M=2.66$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact of class size on implementing a learner-centred approach in classroom. Table 18 clearly demonstrates that the teachers who had smaller class sizes were substantially more positive about the learner-centred approach in classrooms. Another questionnaire item which was directly proportional to the class size was the use of English in classroom communication. The Kruskal-Wallis test was carried out to explore the relation ( $H(3)=11.39$ ,  $p=.077$ ). It is evident in Table 18 that the participants' perceptions were negatively affected by the increase in class size.

Table 18: Teachers' opinions on the application of CLT, learner-centred approach, and the use of English in classroom communication based on class size

Questionnaire Item	Class size (Number of Students)	Number of Questionnaire Participants	M	SD
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	10-15	14	3.14	1.35
	16-20	7	3.42	1.51
Application of CLT in the	21-25	15	2.60	1.12
classroom	26-30	34	2.52	1.16
(Item 24)	31-35	16	2.12	.80
	36-40	9	3.00	1.00
(H(3)=12.61, p=.05)	41+ above	5	3.60	.54
	10-15	14	3.21	1.25
Learner-centred approach in the	16-20	7	3.14	1.46
classroom	21-25	15	2.66	.97
(Item 23)	26-30	34	2.44	1.21
	31-35	16	2.37	.71
(F =2.12, p=.058)	36-40	9	2.22	.83
(6-93)	41+ above	5	3.60	.54
	10-15	14	3.71	.91
	16-20	7	3.28	1.38
Communication carried out in	21-25	15	2.60	1.05
English	26-30	34	3.11	1.14
(Item 21)	31-35	16	3.06	1.12
	36-40	9	2.77	.97
(H(3)=10.43, p=.005)	41+ above	5	4.00	.00
TOTAL: 100				

As for the use of English in classrooms, the Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to compare the perceptions of the primary (Group A), secondary school (Group B), and teachers who work at both levels (Group C) revealed a statistically significant difference ( $H(3)=10.43, p=.005$ ) among the three categories. Group A ( $M=3.60$ ) was seemingly more positive about using English in the classroom compared to Group B ( $M=2.82$ ). The classroom observation records indicated that the use of English in primary and secondary school levels in a single lesson (40 minutes) were considerably different. While the average timeframe of target language use in single lesson was 23 minutes in primary school level, it was only 11 minutes in secondary school level. The difference between primary school and secondary school was considerably significant.

The interview data indicated that out of nine participants, three referred to “the language level of the learners (S1, S4, & S6)” as not being sufficient to comprehend English when used in classroom instructions. Meanwhile, all interview participants pointed out ‘class contact hours’ as a potential reason for using L1. Two interview participants reported that because of having limited class hours, they prefer to complete the curricular content rather than spending “extra time explaining things in English (S2 & S5).” Furthermore, the interview data obtained from the secondary school teachers (6 out of 9) also pointed out their mutual concern about the exam (HSEE) and clearly showed that as the teachers feel obliged to complete the curricular activities on a timely manner and allow enough time to do practice to prepare for the exam, they tend to place less emphasis on the communicative competencies. It was also evident in classroom observations that some of the secondary school teachers (S5 and S6) included tests in their lessons to revise the previously taught content which inevitable took a considerable amount of the class time. Those participants indicated that tests are required to be part of the lessons to ensure that the students are familiar with the types of questions that they would need to respond in the HSEE exam. It was also pointed out by the teachers that such practices (i.e., revision tests) carried out in the classroom take time and place more pressure on the teachers to complete the units on a timely manner.

#### **4.1.5 Assessment and Evaluation**

In this section, the participants were requested to give their opinions about the assessment and evaluation component of the curriculum. The results obtained from the relevant questionnaire items were statistically analyzed and presented in Table 19 below.

Table 19: Assessment and evaluation

Items	N	M	SD
29. The objectives identified in the curriculum are measurable.	100	3.45	1.18
30. Various types of assessment and evaluation techniques are emphasized in the CEFR framed English language curriculum.	100	3.56	1.00
31. The explanations in the curriculum for the assessment and evaluation components are enough.	100	3.03	1.05
32. The assessment and evaluation instruments used are sufficient enough to assess the student achievements.	100	2.77	1.10
33. “One of the most important aspects of the program is to create positive and beneficial washback effect” (MoNE, 2018).	100	3.17	.99

The questionnaire data revealed that the mean score on the measurability of the curriculum objectives (learning outcomes) was 3.45 (SD=1.18). Although the mean value indicated an agreement on the questionnaire item, the standard deviation revealed significant variation in the data set. Therefore, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to compare the teachers’ perceptions (Group A, B, and C) on the measurability of the learning outcomes. It revealed a statistically significant difference ( $H(3)=11.01, p=.004$ ) among the three categories with a mean rank score of 65.50 for primary (Group A), 42.73 for secondary (Group B), and 56.13 for teachers who work at both levels (Group C). The primary school teachers were considerably more positive than the secondary school teachers, which was also evident in the interviews. The participants pointed out that “objectives are skill based, simple and achievable (P1 & P2)”, “objectives can easily be assessed (S3 & S4)”, “they are linked to the curricular content (P1)”, “they can easily be demonstrated by the students in the classroom (P2 & P3).” In contrast, two secondary school teachers expressed negative opinions highlighting two major factors: “using paper-based assessment to assess the learners

(S1)” and “overcrowded classrooms that do not allow the teacher to measure the learning outcomes for listening and speaking skills in the classroom (S3)”. The following extract from the document analysis of the English Language Teaching Program, on the other hand, showed that the CEFR framed curriculum promotes various types of assessment techniques for different core skills (MoNE, 2018). The explicit philosophy of the curriculum toward testing is that all kinds of testing procedures, including summative and formative assessment techniques or product and process-oriented tests are to:

- incorporate Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening;
- differ based on the cognitive level as well as the learning styles of the target learner group;
- adhere to the teaching and learning methods described in the curriculum;
- be consistent with the developmental characteristics of the students;
- create positive and beneficial washback effect;
- incorporate self-evaluation, reflection, and feedback and
- assist learners in identifying their areas of strength and weakness and the ones that are required to be improved. (MoNE, 2018, p. 8)

The questionnaire data revealed that the participants had considerably positive opinions on the emphasis placed on the variety of assessments in the curriculum ( $M=3.56$ ,  $SD=1.00$ ). However, they had doubts about the adequacy of the explanations regarding the assessment techniques in the curriculum ( $M=3.03$ ,  $SD=1.05$ ). Likewise, the teachers also reported that they were unsure about the adequacy of the current instruments that they used in assessing the learner achievement ( $M=2.77$ ,  $SD=1.10$ ). One of the interview participants referred to a website ([www.egitimhane.com](http://www.egitimhane.com)) as “the source of assessment tasks” and added that “the tasks uploaded by other teachers can

be retrieved from the website and used with minor alterations (S6).” The same informant also reported that the tasks chosen are determined by factors such as the class size and class contact hours. Thus, written assessment items in the form of question-answer, gap filling, and multiple-choice items are the suitable and common ones. To further explore the content of the tasks used, samples were extracted from the specified website for different grades (only for Grade 4 through 8 as no formative assessment in Grade 2 and 3) and the content of the assessment tasks were analyzed using a rubric to reveal the types of items the tasks included. The outcome revealed that vocabulary, gap filling, question-answer, and reading comprehension were the most commonly used activities all across 50 samples (10 samples for each grade, respectively) examined. Another interesting finding was the inclusion of multiple-choice items in the assessment tasks. Fifty per cent of the samples from Grade 6, 7, and 8 included multiple choice items which was significantly more than Grade 4 and 5 (10%). The participants (S1, S3, S5, & S6) noted this as a strategy to familiarize the learners with the question types that they would encounter in the exam (HSEE). Informants expanded on this assertion, pointing out: “I do two exams with my students; one traditional and one multiple-choice exam. The students need to learn how to deal with multiple choice questions as they will have to do in HSEE (S2)” and “I tend to include more multiple-choice items for the 7th and 8th graders because they need to be familiar with these kinds of questions (S6).” The overall results indicated that the assessment techniques chosen were greatly affected by the needs of the learners as well as the variables in the immediate environment (e.g., class size, class contact hours, resources available, etc.). In other words, the HSEE that the students are required to undertake at the end of Grade 8 mostly shaped the assessment techniques implemented by the teachers.

#### 4.1.6. Application of the Curriculum

The participants were asked about their overall impression pertaining to the CEFR framed curriculum and its implementation in classroom environment. The data obtained from the questionnaire are presented in Table 20 below.

Table 20: The overall application of the curriculum

Items	N	M	SD
34. Students are continuously exposed to English through audio materials.	100	3.41	1.23
35. Students are continuously exposed to English through visual materials.	100	3.58	1.21
36. Enjoyment of language learning is fostered through arts and crafts.	100	3.28	1.23
37. L1 (first language) usage is employed only when necessary (i.e., for giving complex instructions or explaining difficult concepts).	100	3.25	1.15
38. The focus of language learning is on deepening communication, rather than on completing curricular items within a given period of time.	100	3.02	1.35
39. The class hours assigned to the level I teach (Grade 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8) are enough to achieve the learning outcomes.	100	1.96	1.26
40. Students develop communicative skills in English by “doing things with the language” rather than by “learning about the language”.	100	3.45	1.21

The CEFR framed curriculum places greater emphasis on the development of the communicative competencies. Thus, more activities around listening and speaking skills have been incorporated into the curriculum. Meanwhile, in order to make it more appealing for the target learner groups, more age-appropriate visuals were also used in the coursebooks. The questionnaire participants were asked if the students are exposed to audio and visual materials enough. As Table 20 indicates, the participants had

positive opinions on the availability of the audio (M=3.41, SD=1.23) and visual (M=3.58, SD=1.21) materials.

Another important aspect of the curriculum was the emphasis placed on the limited use of L1 in classroom instructions. A one-way ANOVA conducted to explore the opinions of Group A (M=3.50), Group B (M=3.01), and Group C (M=3.58) pertaining to L1 use in the classroom revealed no statistically significant difference among the three categories of participants  $p \leq 0.05$  level ( $F(2-97)=2.67$ ,  $p=.07$ ). Having said that, the interview results showed that secondary school teachers prefer to use L1 to “provide explanations, give complex instructions, and give feedback”. Out of nine interviewees, three stated “language level of the learners (S1, S4, & S6)” while two addressed “the time limitation (S2 & S6)” as the underlying causes of L1 use. Although the English Language Teaching Program (MoNE, 2018) emphasizes that improving communication is the main goal of language learning rather than completing the required curricular tasks, the questionnaire results indicated doubts about it (M=3.02, SD=1.35). Indeed, the interviews conducted showed that all interview participants felt the pressure to complete the curriculum content within the given period of time. This is partly because of the spiral approach adopted in the CEFR framed curriculum. In other words, being unable to complete the curricular content in Grade 6 would be rather problematic in Grade 7 as the content to be learned in Grade 7 requires the prerequisite knowledge acquired in Grade 6. This problem was evident in the interview data as reported below.

We have 4 hours per week with Grade 7 and 8 whereas we have 3 hours per week with Grade 5 and 6. However they have 10 units at each level. I feel like I have to complete each one of those units, especially with Grade 8 students as they will take the exam (HSEE) and there could be exam questions from any of these units. It is the same with other grades. I have to complete Grade 5 units so that the students have the prior knowledge required in the next grade. (S3)

You can think of our curriculum content from Grade 2 to Grade 8 as a whole. That is how it is designed. A missing part in the puzzle could lead to further difficulties down the line. (P3).

The CEFR framed curriculum also aims to develop the communicative competencies of the learners by allowing them to experience the language rather than simply learning about it (MoNE, 2018). The research participants were asked about this aspect of the curriculum. The questionnaire data revealed that the participants ( $M=3.45$ ,  $SD=1.21$ ) had positive opinions on the action-oriented nature of the curriculum. The document analysis data provided further supporting evidence. The content of the curriculum and the coursebooks incorporated significant numbers of activities to empower the development of the communicative skills (listening/speaking activities) and also activities (self-study, project, etc.) to encourage learners to “do things with the language”. The interview data also indicated that teachers considered the CEFR framed curriculum as being “a more communication-oriented curriculum” compared to the previous ones. All interview participants reported that the CEFR framed curriculum promoted the development of the communicative skills, but they also highlighted factors that hinder the application of such a curriculum: overcrowded classrooms (P1, P3, S2, S4, & S5), inappropriate physical conditions (i.e., traditional seating arrangement) (P1, P2, P3, S2, S4, S5, & S6), and lack of sufficient time (P1, P2, P3, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, & S6).

The assigned class hours in the curriculum were 2 hours per week (Grade 2, 3, & 4), 3 hours per week (Grade 5 & 6), and 4 hours per week (Grade 7 & 8) (MoNE, 2018). The participants were asked if the class hours were sufficient to achieve the expected learning outcomes. The questionnaire results revealed that majority of the participants

( $M=1.96$ ,  $SD=1.26$ ) considered the class hours as insufficient. A one-way ANOVA conducted to explore the perceptions of Group A ( $M=1.15$ ), Group B ( $M=2.17$ ), and Group C ( $M=1.79$ ) teachers revealed no statistically significant difference at the  $p \leq 0.05$  level ( $F(2-97)=2.15$ ,  $p=.12$ ). Thus, it can be said that neither primary nor secondary school teachers considered the designated class hours as sufficient. Two interview participants highlighted the inadequacy of the allocated time to “make learning permanent (P1 & S6)” which refers to the lack of time to practice what is taught in the classroom while three participants stressed the difficulty to “complete the curricular activities and keep up with the syllabus (S2, S5, & P3).”

The findings of this research study were significant in the sense that, unlike its counterparts conducted to evaluate the curriculum in particular grades (e.g., Grade 2 or Grade 8), it approached the evaluation process as a whole, incorporating the primary and secondary school levels (from Grade 2 to Grade 8). This ‘wholistic’ approach allowed us to investigate the implementation of the curriculum at different levels based on the principles of the CEFR framed curriculum. With its wider scope, the research study not only allowed us to identify the strengths and the shortcomings of the curriculum in practice, but also to compare the implementation of the CEFR framed curriculum across different levels, namely, primary and secondary school levels. The primary school level where there is no exam pressure was compared to the secondary school level where the students and the teachers are under constant pressure of the high school entrance exam (HSEE). In addition, the design of this study made it possible for us to compare three groups of teachers (i.e., teachers teaching at primary, teachers teaching at secondary, and teachers teaching at both levels). Therefore, it could be clearly inferred from this study that when the process-oriented approach rather than product-oriented approach is taken while embracing the core principles of the CEFR

framework in language education, there is a strong possibility that the implementation phase would be carried out more effectively to achieve the expected outcomes and the practitioners would be more positive in embracing the principles of the CEFR framework in language education.

## **4.2 Students' Perspectives**

The research study aimed to answer three questions with regard to the participating students' perceptions on the CEFR framed curriculum. These questions focused on the students' perceptions about the course content, course conduct, and the assessment and evaluation practices in the CEFR framed English language curriculum. Meanwhile, the study aimed to identify the positive or negative impact of the family assistance the students receive on language learning experiences. Lastly, the study aimed to reveal the impact of the socio-economic zones in which the students live and learn the language on their perception about the CEFR framed English language curriculum. The results will be presented for each aspect individually.

### **4.2.1 Overall Impression about the Subject**

The first aspect was to explore the overall perception of the participants about English as a subject. The participants were asked to express their opinions about the necessity of English as a subject. The results clearly indicated that regardless of the level in which they study or the socio-economic zone in which they live, the participants showed great awareness of the significance of English as a subject. While the primary school students referred to the language as an instrument that allows them to 'communicate with tourists', the secondary school students referred to its necessity for their future. Sample extracts gathered from the face-to-face interviews are as follows:

P1-L: "... to be able to talk to some people. Because they speak English."

P2-H: "When we have a job, there could be an English guy there or we might need to speak English. Therefore, we need to learn."

S3-M: “To me, it is very important as we need a common language with other nations, and it is English. We need it to establish a dialogue and relations. I believe that this would help us for both in our jobs and in our daily lives.”

The excerpts from the students interview clearly indicated that the participants had significantly positive opinion and attitude towards the subject.

#### 4.2.2 Course Content and Materials

Another important aspect of this study was related to the students’ opinions regarding the course content and the materials used. Hence, the participants were asked about the materials (coursebook, CD, DVD, smartboard, etc.) used in the lessons, the skills (reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, etc.) that they learn, their opinions about the coursebook used, and overall opinions about the content of the coursebook.

First of all, the document analysis (course syllabi of primary and secondary schools, the CEFR document and the associated performance levels (A1-Breakthrough and A2-Waystage), and the coursebooks) clearly indicated that in line with the associated CEFR performance levels, the preliminary emphasis in primary school level (A1) is on listening and speaking skills while reading and writing is introduced gradually in Grade 5 onwards. When the students achieve A2 (Waystage) in Grade 7, listening and speaking remain as the primary, and reading and writing as the secondary skill focus area. The following table (Table 21) represents the mean value of the number of activities in four core skills in the coursebooks of Grade 2 to Grade 8.

Table 21: Mean value of the number of activities in the coursebooks

<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>
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Grade 2	7.1	9	1.6	2.4
Grade 3	9.8	8.3	4.6	1.7
Grade 4	5.2	9.3	2.6	1.4
Grade 5	6.4	6.8	5.2	2.7
Grade 6	5.7	4.6	3.4	3.7
Grade 7	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.3
Grade 8	6.5	4.1	4.1	2.3

It is clear in Table 21 that speaking and listening skills remain as the primary skills both in primary and secondary school levels. Whereas, while the reading activities are expected to be very limited, they were observed to be significantly high in Grade 3 and 5.

The participants were asked about the types of activities that they engage in language class. Out of eighteen primary school students, a significant number of the them (69.4%) indicated that they do speaking activities in the form of songs and games. The remaining 30.6% of the participants added listening activities as the most frequently conducted activities in the classroom. The classroom observations revealed that in none of the primary schools in the three socio-economic zones included in this study, the audio-visual equipment was available in the classroom. A projector was available in primary schools in Sultanbeyli, Umraniye, and Besiktas, but there was no computer attached to it. However, it was significantly different in secondary school level as the classes in Umraniye and Besiktas were equipped with smartboards that could play audio and video and function as a computer to provide more interactive learning environments. Having said that, smartboards were not available in the low socio-

economic zone (Sultanbeyli). The student interviews in Sultanbeyli revealed that the absence of such equipment greatly affected the types of activities carried out in the classroom. The extracts gathered from the face-to-face interviews provide further details:

S1-L: “We do a lot of reading and vocabulary activities. We try to do speaking as well. Listening is a bit hard as we don’t have a smart board and the teacher needs to bring a laptop and speaker.”

S3-L: “We do speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, and writing. We learn a lot of vocabulary. Listening...mmmm... is difficult. Sometimes the teacher brings a Bluetooth speaker and connect her phone, but it doesn’t happen a lot.”

However, the interview excerpts from the students in Umraniye and Besiktas revealed that more skills are simultaneously carried out with the help of the smartboards available in the classrooms.

S4-M: “We can do all of the activities in the coursebook and more as we have the smartboard. We do vocabulary activities, speaking activities, reading, and even writing activities. We also do tests to prepare for High School Entrance exam.”

S3-H: “In our class, we try and do listening, reading, vocabulary and writing activities most of the time. We have an interactive copy of the coursebook on our smartboard and do all these activities easily.”

As in the excerpts above, out of 24 secondary school students who participated in the study, 82.6% (approx. 20 students) of them highlighted ‘vocabulary and reading’ as the most commonly addressed skills in the classroom. Meanwhile, a significant majority of the participants (69.5%) indicated that certain proportion of their class time is allocated to practice tests (at the end of each unit) to revised the completed unit and to practice for the High School Entrance Exam (henceforth HSEE).

Another question that was directed to the participants were about their opinions on the relevancy of the course content to their daily lives. The participants from the primary school level indicated that the content they learn in the classroom such as greetings, vocabulary, and simple sentences are quite useful in real life. The excerpt from one of the participants is as following:

P2-M: “we learn how to tell our names and ask others name. It is good. Last week I saw a tourist at the shopping centre and I asked his name. He talked to me and smiled. I also learned the names of rooms in my house and the words for weather. It is interesting.”

However, the data collected from the secondary school participants indicated that even though what they learn can be used in real life, there is not always enough time and chance to practice and master the language structures. In that regard, out of twenty-four participants, seventeen stressed the overcrowded classrooms and not being able to take turn to speak up, fifteen of them highlighted the ‘HSEE pressure’ and more emphasis placed on ‘vocabulary and reading’, and fourteen participants pinpointed the irrelevancy of some of the units to their daily needs.

S2-H: “In our lessons, we learn useful things. We do listening and speaking activities, but we have 25 students in the classroom and it may not always be possible for everyone to take turn to speak. Even if we do, we only have limited time to speak. I have foreign friends on social media. I speak English with them.”

S1-L: “Most of the time, we don’t do the listening activities as we don’t have smartboard, but try to do the speaking activities. I am sure we can use them in daily life, but I never had a chance.”

#### **4.2.3 Course Conduct**

Another significant aspect of this study was related to the students’ opinions regarding the course conduct. Hence, the participants were asked questions about the type of

activities carried out in the classroom, the extent to which they find a chance to use the target language in the classroom, and the use of native language (L1) versus target language (L2) in classroom instructions/ interactions.

First of all, the data collected from the primary school participants indicated that fifteen of them indicated ‘songs and games’ as the most commonly used activities in the classroom. In the meantime, a great majority of the participants (65%) highlighted simple ‘question-answer drills and vocabulary’ as the most frequent activity carried out. However, the participants from the secondary school level indicated different opinions. The participants from the low-socioeconomic zone indicated that reading and vocabulary are the core activities carried out in the classrooms while listening activities are not frequently practice due to lack of technological equipment in the classroom. Likewise, speaking is neglected owing to the fact that the number of students in the classroom is far too many to conduct communicative activities. Whereas the participants in medium and high socio-economic zones indicated slightly different opinions. The presence of smartboards in the classroom enabled them to practice the listening activities in their coursebooks with great ease. However, the class size in all three socio-economic zones (average 30 students in each class) merged as a significant factor embedding the implementation of speaking activities. Having said that, the classroom observations and the field notes also made it clear that in all six schools that were attended and in all 60 classroom observations carried out, it was made clear that the classroom seating arrangements in all schools and classes were the traditional seating (i.e., rows). Bearing in mind the number of students present and the classroom layout, it would be reasonable to say that conducting speaking activities either as a pair or group work would be rather challenging and time consuming.

Besides asking the participants about the activity types, the researcher also asked them about their preferences: types of activities they would like to do and skills they would like to focus more on. While the responses in primary school students did not differ significantly, the secondary school students indicated a range of different activity types and skills they would like to focus more on. The following excerpts from the interviews provide a detailed account of the participant responses.

S2-L: “We mostly do reading and vocabulary activities because we don’t have the tools to do listening. Sometimes, our teacher brings a speaker but not all the time. I wish we could do more listening and speaking as I really want to be able to speak the language.”

S1-M: “We mostly do listening, reading, vocabulary, and writing and... speaking as well. However, when we do speaking, we say a few sentences. That’s it. We don’t have enough time. Sometimes our teacher tries to do pair and group work in the class, but it gets too noisy as the students try to rearrange the desks and so on. I wish we could have done more speaking and learned how to use the language rather than just learning the vocabulary.”

S4-H: “We try to cover all the activities in the coursebook as we have only four classes per week. We do speaking, but I don’t think we spend enough time to practice...once again we don’t have enough time. We also need to prepare for HSEE so we need to learn more words and improve our reading comprehension. I would really like to be able to learn English without having the exam pressure. If you ask about the skills, I would say speaking and listening first, then vocabulary, reading, and writing. I want to be able to get out there and say a few things to a tourist...you know.”

The interview excerpts clearly indicated that the goals and objectives of the CEFR framed English language curriculum aligns the needs and expectations of the learners at the theoretical level. However, the implementation phase of the curriculum is where the practices deviate from the goals and objectives as well as the expectations of the learners.

The last significant aspect concerning the course conduct was the use of L1 and L2 in the classroom. The participants were asked if L1 or L2 is used in classroom

interactions and their opinions about it. The majority of the primary school students in all three districts (82%) indicated that teacher uses L2 and L2 in the classroom, which has also been confirmed in the classroom observations that there was a pattern of using L2 in giving instructions and translating them into English to ensure comprehension. The participants' opinion on L1 use in English classroom was noted to be rather positive owing to the fact that L1 use helps them comprehend the instructions and engage in classroom practices. However, L2 dominance in classroom instructions, which is recommended in the English curriculum, was less apparent in secondary school levels. Some of the students indicated 'lack of comprehension if L2 is used solely' (S2-L, S1-H, S4-M, and S4-L), 'teachers' preference to use L1 in classroom instructions/ interaction' (S3-L and S2-M), and 'being unable to articulate themselves or ask questions if need be' (S5-L, S3-M, S2-H, and S5-M) as the prime reason of teachers and students not being able to utilize the target language in the classroom. In the meantime, some of the participants (S4-L and S1-M) made it clear that when English is used as the medium of instruction in the classroom, they tend to stay quiet as they do not feel comfortable enough to contribute. One of the participants (S5-L) indicated that she had recently migrated to Istanbul from a town near Mardin (a city in the southeast of Turkey). She made it clear that the language education in her school back in the town was so superficial that she lacks basic knowledge of the target language, but is expected to cope with the content of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### **4.2.4 Assessment and Evaluation**

The CEFR, which emphasizes different kinds of assessment and evaluation techniques, serves as the theoretical foundation for testing, assessment, and evaluation processes. They place a lot of emphasis on alternative and process-oriented testing methods. Formal evaluation will be performed by means of written and oral exams,

quizzes, assignments, and projects in order to provide an accurate account of students' progress. For the second and third grades, no summative tests are given (McKay, 2006). Instead, to develop positive attitudes, beliefs, and motivations for learning English, formative assessment mechanisms function in conjunction with regular in- and outside-of-class assignments. However, starting in the fourth grade, a variety of formative and summative testing methods are available to gauge pupils' language proficiency and communication skills.

As the focus in primary school levels is on engaging the learners in learning a language and helping them enjoy the process and develop positive attitudes, formative assessment is recommended to be a suitable practice at these levels. Regular in-class and outside-of-class assignments and formative testing together produce positive attitudes, beliefs, and motivations for learning English (MoNE, 2018). The focus group interview with Grade 2, 3, and 4 students revealed that a range of different assessment practices are employed in the classroom: tests, picture matching, dialogue, and question -answer.

From the fourth grade onward, a series of formative and summative testing procedures are provided to assess pupils' communicative competencies and, eventually, their proficiency level in the target language (MoNE, 2018). The focus group interview with secondary school students revealed that they are exposed to written exam, as it was mentioned in the English Language Teaching Program (MoNE, 2018), and also other summative assessments such as quizzes, vocabulary tests, and unit revision tests at the end of each unit.

S2-L: “we haven’t had a written exam yet. Our teacher did quizzes. I am not sure about the written exams, but the quizzes were easy.”

S3-M: “She gives us a test like papers. There are options there, there are pictures, we choose the option that is appropriate for the picture.”

S2-H: “We will have a written exam. The teacher will ask us vocabulary, question-answer, gap filling kind of activities. We also have tests to prepare for HSEE.”

However, it was obvious that the range of assessment techniques used in the classroom was rather limited. Whereas, the English Language Teaching Program as well as the CEFR framework encourages the practitioners to combine a wide variety of assessment tools and strategies in order to ensure that all four skills, depending on the level or the grade of the students, are assessed. The classroom observations along with the interview data revealed that formative assessments are utilized more effectively in primary school levels (Grade 2 and Grade 3) as prescribed in the English Language Teaching Program (ELTP). However, the students are required to take formative assessments from the fourth grade onward as recommended in the ELTP document. Thus, it was observed that summative assessment procedures were neglected. Out of 42 participants (secondary school level), 38 of them referred to formative exams: question-answer (25 of them), gap filling activity (18 of them), and keeping diary (8 of them). Only 2 participants referred to summative assessment procedures. The following excerpts from the interviews provide a detailed account of the participant responses.

S5-M: “Our class is not that crowded. We have 16 students in the class. Sometimes we do speaking activities towards the end of the lesson to practice what we learn. We ask each other questions and try to answer.”

S3-H: “I like the listening activities. Our teacher gives us a set of pictures and then we listen to the audio recording and try to choose the picture that matched with what we hear. It is fun.”

To sum up, the assessment and evaluation techniques adopted by teachers in primary or secondary school levels vary because of a number of factors. The analysis of these factors indicates a significant discrepancy between the recommendations in the curriculum pertaining to the assessment and evaluation techniques and the ones implemented in the classroom by teachers.

#### **4.2.5 Support and Assistance in Language Learning Process**

The participants were asked about their experiences regarding the English classes, the assistance they receive in language learning process/ completing their homework, and any additional language classes they take, if any. The interview results pinpointed that the participants stressed four major elements as reasons for enjoying the English classes. First of all, regardless of their socio-economic zones, participants referred to ‘fun factor’ which refers to the games, songs, and other hands-on activities included in the lessons. Secondly, the participants highlighted the ‘interactive nature of the content’ by referring the speaking and listening activities which allow them to practice the language. The third element was about the ‘materials’ used. The participants indicated that the coursebooks and the extra materials brought by teachers (puppets, flashcards, etc.) incorporate lots of interesting and engaging visuals which grab their attention. The final point made was related to the ‘teaching approach adopted by teachers’ which highlighted the variety of activities conducted in the classroom, the way the activities are designed and delivered, and the materials used (puppets, musical instruments, flashcards, etc.) in the language learning process.

On the contrary, the positive opinions observed in the primary school participants were not present among the secondary school participants, especially in Grade 7 and 8 students. While the Grade 5 students highlighted the ‘content’ (S1-L, S2-L, S2-M, S4-M, S2-H), ‘coursebook’ (S4-L, S2-M, S3-M, S1-H, S3-H), and ‘classroom activities’

(P2-L, P3-L, S4-L, S2-M, S1-H, S4-H, S5-H) as the underlying reasons for their positive perceptions about the subject. On the other hand, Grade 7 and 8 students highlighted ‘overloaded content’, ‘exam pressure’, and ‘not being able to understand some of the content’ as the underlying cause for placing pressure on them and not feeling comfortable in the classroom. This level of ‘anxiety’ was more apparent among the participants in low socio-economic zone and less in high socio-economic zone. The reason being was made clear in participant responses to the research question in this section which was about the support and assistance they receive in language learning process. While some of the participants (P1-H, P5-H, P3-M, P4-M) clearly indicated that a family member as able to provide the required assistance in their homework and self-study activities. This support mechanism was less apparent in low socio-economic zone which inevitably placed more pressure on the learners and affected their confidence in the classroom. The following interview extracts provide a more detailed account of the point raised above.

S2-L: “We came to Istanbul from Mardin two months ago. I used to live in a village and go to school there. We learned English at school, but when I came here, I realized that my English was not as good as my other friends. There are a lot of things that I don’t understand. I sometimes ask the teacher, but at home there is nobody I can ask.”

S3-L: “I like English, but it is a bit difficult. I don’t have anybody at home who can help me. My father and mother don’t know English either. I sometimes ask our neighbor’s son who is in high school.”

In the meantime, it was revealed in the student interviews that the students in medium and high socio-economic zones had access to external support mechanisms such as additional language classes/ private lessons considerably more than their counterparts in low socio-economic zone. Among all the secondary participants interviewed in low socio-economic zone (eight participants), only two participants had access to language

courses/ private classes, while this ratio was five participants in medium socio-economic zone and considerably higher (seven participants) in high socio-economic zone.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Teacher's Perspective

At the outset of the discussion, it should be noted that the majority of the participants (teachers) had not had any in-service training on the CEFR. This, in return, caused certain inconsistencies between the recommendations of the CEFR framed curriculum and its actual implementations in the classroom. This was also evident in the study conducted by Aksoy (2020) which made it clear that although the curriculum was considered to be suitable and effective, the classroom observations revealed that there was a significant gap between theory and practice. This basic finding is consistent with research showing that ongoing in-service training is vital to the successful implementation of the curriculum innovation (Malderez & Wedell, 2007; Mohamad Uri & Adb Aziz, 2018). Parallel to the findings of previous studies, this study pinpointed a lack of teachers' familiarity and understanding of the CEFR document as the most common issue with the implementation of its principles in language education (Morrow, 2004; Elder & O'Loughlin, 2007; Faez et al., 2011; Moonen et al., 2013; Ngo, 2017; Diez-Bedmar & Byram, 2019; Kanchai, 2019; Alih et al., 2020; Nishimura-Sahi, 2022). Bearing in mind the fact that insufficient knowledge about the CEFR document and the CEFR framed English language curriculum had a significant impact on language teaching practices, it could be concluded that carefully planned (based on the needs analysis of the practitioners) and well-structured in-service training practices are a prerequisite for an effective implementation of the core

principles of the CEFR framed English language curriculum. As Hazar (2021) mentioned, it is crucially important for the practitioners to comprehend the CEFR document and its implications in language education so that the practitioners make the most of its offerings. Besides, the implementation of various language teaching techniques in the classroom, as recommended in the CEFR framed curriculum, was found to be rather challenging due to large class sizes and limited class contact hours. In conjunction with the studies conducted by Kizildag (2009), Topkaya and Kucuk (2010), and Hazar (2021), the results of this study stressed the importance of class size on the implementation of learner-centred teaching as well as communication-oriented language education.

The data collected through teacher interviews/ questionnaires, focus group interviews with students, document analysis, and classroom observations clearly indicated that even though the curriculum places a significant emphasis on communication in the target language, the practical implementation of such a principle in classroom environment is obstructed by the physical conditions (e.g., class size, technological equipment) as well as the academic requirements (HSEE exam). The data collected pinpointed the fact that the HSEE exam places a significant pressure on not only teachers, but also students, especially in secondary school level. Because of the academic requirements for this exam (HSEE), which are reading, vocabulary, and grammar, the teaching/ learning practices revolve around these areas rather than focusing on the communicative aspect of the target language. While both levels (primary and secondary) indicated the relativity of the learned content to real life, it was secondary school students who indicated that lack of sufficient time to practice the language (Er, 2006; Erdogan, 2005), overcrowded classrooms which prevented students to take turn to practice productive skills, and the HSEE exam pressure caused

the students to focus more on the academic skills rather than the communicative skills which is ideally the philosophy behind the English Language curriculum. The points raised by the participants were also evident in other studies (Buyukduman, 2005; Sevinc, 2006; Kirkgoz, 2008; Topkaya & Kucuk, 2010; Tilfarlioglu & Ozturk, 2007; Yanik, 2007). Whereas, this exam pressure was observed to be less severe in primary school level, thus teachers are considerably less concerned about the exam and more focused on the communication. The English Language Teaching Program (ELTP) signifies a learner-centred teaching in language education. However, considering the factors such as classroom population, physical environment, the overloaded curriculum, and the exam-oriented teaching in secondary schools, it may not be considered as practical in classroom teaching. First of all, the classroom observations revealed that the number of students present in the classrooms was too much to effectively implement the principles of the CLT. Besides, the physical environment in the classrooms (e.g., traditional seating arrangements in all classes observed) does work against the philosophy of the CLT. The findings of this study indicated that lack of technological equipment such as smart boards in classroom, especially in secondary grades, traditional seating arrangements owing to the number of students in each class, prevented the teachers from conducting speaking and listening activities. Bearing in mind the significant impact of audio-visual materials on language learning, it could easily be inferred from the results of this study that lack of technological equipment such as smartboards in primary school levels and in secondary school levels in low socio-economic zone creates an inequality in the quality of course delivery. In addition, as indicated by Salma (2020) physical constraints in the classroom environment cause serious drawbacks in the implementation of the curriculum. Having said that, this causes teachers to deviate from the core principles of the curriculum

(emphasis on oral skills) and focus more on the academic skills which could be carried out in the absence of IT equipment. Thus, it merges as a necessity to strengthen the infrastructure in classrooms so that the exposure to the target language takes place in every form possible. Secondly, the overcrowded classrooms make it almost impossible to focus on communication in language classes bearing in mind the fact that teachers are obliged to complete a significantly overloaded curriculum (10 units for each grade) within the allocated period of time (2hours/pw for Grade 2, 3, and 4, 3 hours/pw for Grade 5 and 6, and 4 hours/pw for Grade 7 and 8).

As for the use of English in the classroom, the findings pinpointed that the exam-oriented teaching practices in secondary school forced teachers to concentrate more on the completion of the curriculum content on a timely manner rather than aiming to enhance the communicative competencies. Therefore, the use of English was observed to be less in classroom instructions in secondary school level compared to the use of the target language in primary school level. The study also revealed that the use of L1 in classroom was a common practice among teachers and this was evident in classroom observations and student interviews. This incongruence, especially evident in secondary grades, between the philosophy behind the English language curriculum and its implementation in classroom proves that the practitioners alter their approach in language teaching based on the needs of the learners. That is to say that, bearing in mind the limited time and the overloaded content that is to be delivered, the practitioners choose the language that would transmit the message across in the most efficient way possible. In line with this finding, Grim (2010, p. 207) clearly indicates that L1 is utilised in the classroom to “facilitate comprehension, overcoming grammatical obstacles, and saving time in lengthy L2 task explanations”.

Regarding the assessment and evaluation practices, which were in line with the findings of previous studies (Alkan & Arslan, 2014; Ozudogru & Adiguzel, 2015), this study suggested that even though the participants were aware of different “recommended assessment techniques” in the curriculum, they preferred to use certain types of assessment due to lack of knowledge, information, and training on the assessment techniques suggested in the curriculum. This study also made it clear that the HSEE has a remarkable impact on not only the assessment practices, but also the teaching practices in secondary school. This dual effect of the HSEE results in an undesirable shift of focus – from one on meaning to one on form, or from learner-centeredness to teacher-centeredness. It is evident that there is a mismatch between the prescribed language teaching approaches in the CEFR framed curriculum and the assessment practices in use. This discrepancy does not appear to be specific to the Turkish context but has been reported to exist more internationally, namely in Dutch secondary education context (Moomen et al., 2013), in Vietnamese context (Nguyen & Hamid, 2015), in the Thai context (Kanchai, 2019), and in Malaysian context (Ishak & Mohamad, 2018; Alih et al., 2020). As highlighted by Van den Branden “A shift toward a competence-based approach to foreign language teaching calls for a related approach to assessment” (as cited in Moomen et al., 2013, p.243). Therefore, it is particularly important that the alignment between the language teaching and the assessment practices are to be established in order to ensure that the process leads to the designated learning outcomes.

While the action-oriented nature of the curriculum was acknowledged by the participants, the allocated class time was considered as inadequate in achieving the learning outcomes by the majority of the participants. According to Nunan (2003), learners need sufficient exposure to L2 – at least 200 hours of instruction per year – in

order for them to observe measurable improvement in L2. With the present teaching hours in Turkey, Grade 2, 3, and 4 students receive 74 hours per year (2 hours per week) while this is 111 hours per year for Grade 5 and 6 (3 hours per week) and 148 hours for Grade 7 and 8 (4 hours per week), which is much less than the minimal number of hours required for noteworthy improvement in the target language. Such limited contact hours seem to be further curtailed by HSEE at high school level, remarkably reducing opportunities to use language communicatively.

## **5.2 Students' Perspective**

First of all, it should be noted that regardless of their grades and level, all participants in the study showed great awareness of the importance of English as a subject. In line with the English Language Teaching Program, the core skills emphasized in all grades were speaking and listening, which was also evident in the coursebook analysis. However, it should also be noted that based on the English Language Teaching Program, there was a misalignment in Grade 3 and 5 in which reading activities was expected to be very limited, yet overemphasized in the coursebook.

Bearing in mind the significant impact of audio-visual materials on language learning as indicated by Mayer (as cited in Dolati, 2010), it could easily be inferred from the results of this study that lack of technological equipment such as smartboards in primary school levels and in secondary school levels in low socio-economic zone creates an inequality in the quality of course delivery. Having said that, this also causes teachers to deviate from the core principles of the curriculum (emphasis on oral skills) and focus more on the academic skills which could be carried out in the absence of IT equipment. In the meantime, the study made it clear that the High School Entrance Exam has a significant impact on the course content and delivery as students pay more

attention on the vocabulary and reading, which are the key skills required in the exam, and place less emphasis on speaking and listening skills.

Another important finding was the relevancy of learning to real life. Out of 36 participants (primary school students), a great majority of them (29 participants) considered the curriculum content “relevant, interesting, engaging, and familiar”. Likewise, approximately 80% of the participants (secondary school students) indicate that the content of the coursebook is “interesting, useful, and practical for everyday use”. However, while both levels (primary and secondary) indicated the relativity of the curriculum content to real life, it was secondary school students who indicated that lack of sufficient time to practice the language (Er, 2006; Erdogan, 2005), overcrowded classroom which prevent students to take turn to practice, and the HSEE exam pressure caused the students to focus more on the academic skills rather than communicative skills which is ideally the philosophy behind the English Language curriculum. These points raised by the focus group interview participants were also evident in other studies (Buyukduman, 2005; Sevinc, 2006; Kirkgoz, 2008; Topkaya & Kucuk, 2010; Tilfarlioglu & Ozturk, 2007; Yanik, 2007).

The study also revealed that the use of L1 in classroom was a common practice among teachers and this was evident in classroom observations and student interviews. This incongruence, especially evident in secondary grades, between the philosophy behind the English language curriculum and its implementation in classroom proves that the practitioners alter their approach in language teaching based on the needs of the learners. That is to say that, bearing in mind the limited time and the overloaded content that is to be delivered, the practitioners choose the language that would transmit the message across in the most efficient way possible In line with this finding,

Grim (2010, p. 207) clearly indicates that L1 is utilised in the classroom to “facilitate comprehension, overcoming grammatical obstacles, and saving time in lengthy L2 task explanations”.

The final major finding was related to the assessment and evaluation practices. The document analysis (English Language Teaching Program) revealed that while the recommended assessment and evaluation techniques were a mixture of formative and summative assessment, formative assessment was the common practice in almost all grades. When the interview data is triangulated with the document analysis, it was revealed that the assessments mainly focused on reading comprehension, writing, and vocabulary. However, the English Language Teaching Program that sets the foundation of the English language curriculum clearly promotes the formative and summative assessments of all four skills by means of various assessment types. The findings clearly pointed a number of different factors that shaped the assessment methods chosen namely class size, limited class time, student needs, and technological equipment available.

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSION

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, abbreviated as CEFR or CEF or CEFRL, is a guideline that describes the achievements of language learners across Europe and, increasingly, in other countries. This study evaluated the CEFR framed English language curriculum that is in use in public primary and secondary schools in Turkey from the perspective of the teachers and students, and aimed to find out:

- the extent to which they are aware of the CEFR framework underpinning the current curriculum,
- the extent to which they are aware of the goals and objectives of the curriculum, - their opinions about the course content and the materials used,
- their opinions about the course conduct,
- their opinions about the assessment and evaluation practices
- and the overall applicability of the CEFR framed curriculum in classroom context.

Since the studies previously conducted in Turkey and in other countries regarding the implementation of the CEFR and CEFR framed curricula have shown that the implementation phase is not problem-free, it was extremely important to allow the practitioners(teachers) to make their voices heard. This study revealed that lack of knowledge about the CEFR, certain contextual factors, insufficient in-service training on the current curriculum, and the mismatch between the language education policy

and its implementation caused the teachers to deviate from its principles and adjust their language teaching practices idiosyncratically. This study also evaluated the CEFR framed English curriculum that is in use in primary and secondary schools in Turkey from the students' perspectives. Since the previously conducted studies to evaluate the English language curriculum in Turkey focused primarily on the perceptions of the practitioners (Buyukduman, 2005; Demirlier, 2010; Er, 2006; Erbakan, 2001; Erbilien Sak, 2008; Erdogan, 2005; Kandemir, 2016; Dincer & Saracaloglu, 2018), it was crucially important to make the students' voice heard. Such feedback provided by the recipients of the designed curriculum would not otherwise be available and the perspective of students, that would clearly indicate the extent to which the curricular changes had reached the expected outcomes, would be missing.

The findings of this study indicated that a significant majority of the participants (teachers) were unaware of the principles of the CEFR framed curriculum and its implications for language education due to unavailability of formal training. Besides, lack of knowledge about the CEFR and the curriculum itself, contextual factors such as class size, class contact hours, and materials hinder the effective implementation of the CEFR framed curriculum in Turkey. The study conducted by Yakisik and Guroacak (2018) made it clear that private school EFL teachers had access to training about the CEFR framework and thus displayed greater awareness of the framework, its principles and implications in language educations. It was also stressed that due to its demanding and competitive nature, private schools place more emphasis on the professional development of teachers. As indicated by Moomen et al. (2013), it is a common practice that teachers adapt the CEFR to meet their specific needs as well as the contextual requirements. Therefore, the findings clearly showed that the problems teachers face do not seem to be local (i.e., specific to the Turkish primary and

secondary education) but more global, applying to international contexts where the CEFR has been adapted or adopted. The main implication here is that teachers are in dire need of well-tailored comprehensive in-service training to help them internalize the principles of the CEFR and apply them in language teaching practices.

Another key finding stemming from the current study is insufficient training provided for in-service teachers. As Hazar (2021) suggests, it is vitally important to ensure that teachers have a better understanding of the CEFR in order to make the most of it in English teaching in Turkey. Lack of professional training seems to deprive teachers of a sound knowledge of the CEFR principles impacting the classroom practices in the Turkish context. Even though the teachers find the goals and objectives of the CEFR framed curriculum quite positive and promising, the practical implications of such goals and objectives in their context were rather challenging. The most obvious example was the application of CLT in classroom. Such professional development activities for practitioners have the potential to enhance the implementation of the CEFR in language education if they take into account the degree to which the CEFR is put into practice so that the support that is most feasible for their professional context is provided. Therefore, teacher trainers should identify the needs of the practitioners and organize effective in-service training programs to address these needs. That is to say that, teachers are required to be equipped with practical knowledge bearing in mind the contextual factors that they deal with. In attempting to do so, it is vital to carefully identify external factors specific to individual contexts where the CEFR is applied and determine the extent to which such factors influence classroom practices. Therefore, evidence from this study should raise the awareness of the decision-makers to identify the needs of the in-service teachers and provide training for them so that they not only embrace the CEFR and its core principles in language education, but also learn how to

overcome the limitations posed by the context in which they are required to teach. Bearing in mind the fact that teachers operate in different contexts constrained by various factors (e.g., lack of resources and overcrowded classrooms), these in-service training programs are required to be organized and delivered considering the realities of the contexts and the needs of the teachers. Meanwhile, it is equally important that such professional development activities are executed on an ongoing basis in line with the changing needs of the teachers and the impact of such training practices are required to be closely monitored and evaluated by policymakers at macro level (e.g., state level).

This research study also made it possible for us to compare the implementation of the CEFR framed English language curriculum both in primary and secondary school levels considering a range of different factors such as class contact hours, the content of the curricula in primary and secondary school levels, the implementation of the principles of the English Language Teaching Program (MoNE, 2018), etc. The overall results indicated that the impact of the curriculum was observed to be more positive at primary school level, it did not leave the same impact at secondary school level owing to the fact that the teachers and students were observed to be more exam-oriented. This exam-driven approach in language teaching in secondary school level stood out as the most dramatic inconsistency between the curriculum that is communication oriented and the educational system that is exam-oriented. A decision at macro level is required to be taken whether to equip the learners with communicative competencies in the best way possible or to equip them with the academic skills (reading) and knowledge (vocabulary) to succeed in the exam (HSEE). The discrepancy emerges as the most significant cause of the deviation from the principles of the CEFR in language teaching practices. For policy makers, such evidence would be of immense importance in

reviewing and revising macro level language education policies. The conflict of interest between the exam-oriented nature of the education and the communication-oriented nature of the language education is a problem that needs to be addressed at the policy level. This is a valid argument also for other contexts (e.g., Vietnam, Netherland, and Malaysia) where the CEFR is adopted to bring a more communication-oriented approach in language education (Nguyen & Hamid, 2015; Moomen et al., 2013; Ishak & Mohamad, 2018). Therefore, there are a number of inferences that could be made from the issues outlined above. First of all, as context is a component of a given curriculum, the realities of the context are required to be taken into consideration. Due to the fact that the number of students accommodated in classrooms is considerably large, the implementation of the current curriculum seems to be rather challenging. In addition to that, the HSEE exam, which adds a different layer to the overall implementation of the curriculum, makes it rather difficult to follow the principles of the CEFR framed curriculum. The comparison of the implementation of the curriculum in primary and secondary school levels made it clear that the principles of the CEFR framed English language curriculum are better implemented in primary school level where there is no exam pressure. Eliminating this factor in secondary school level could also enhance the implementation of the curriculum and increase the motivational level of the learners, not to mention their communicative competencies. Having said that, the design of the curriculum as a spiral entity also creates certain challenges. The coursebooks in all grades contain 10 units that are to be completed in two semesters. The overloaded content of the coursebooks, especially in secondary school levels, puts more pressure on the teachers owing to the fact that being unable to complete the units in a particular grade would put the students in a disadvantageous position in the next grade. Rather than that, a modular curriculum

that focuses on the four core skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) at various degrees could be an alternative. This allows the teachers to focus on the skills that are required by the target learner group based on the recommendation made in the ELTP program. Additionally, HSEE exam which has no positive impact on students' linguistic competencies are required to be eliminated so that teachers and students focus more on improving communicative competencies to become language users rather than learners of the language.

Additionally, there is a misconception between the CEFR proficiency levels (i.e., A1 to C2) and the terminology (e.g., Breakthrough, Waystage or Threshold) assigned to these proficiency levels. Although the CEFR does not explicitly specify the difference, the proficiency levels refer to the language learning outcomes while the latter refers to the input in language learning process. In 1970s, 'Threshold Level' specifications were developed as part of a project to specify the objectives for language learning with the aim of achieving communicative competence in the target language. Vantage (higher level), Breakthrough and Waystage (lower levels) were developed for English language (Van Ek, 1975). The Threshold Level was the very first attempt to embark on what learners should be able to do by means of language in certain situations, what feelings or ideas they would need to express, ask about or negotiate. Based on the identified needs, it made recommendations as to the language functions and notions needed. This view set the foundation of the next phase of the Council of Europe's work on the specification of language learning objectives, focusing on scope (i.e., linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, sociocultural, and social competence), and pointed forward to one of the central innovative features of the CEFR, the scaled description of L2 proficiency levels. As it could be seen clearly, the CEFR and the 'Threshold Level' specifications are, indeed, two separate documents. Therefore, it is crucially important

that practitioners have a sound knowledge of both documents. To do that, it is highly recommended that the Ministry of National Education should provide online resources for teachers to familiarize themselves with the CEFR document, its descriptors, levels, and content alignment. Having said that, it should also be embedded in the teacher education programs in order to ensure that pre-service teachers develop a thorough understanding of the principles of the CEFR framework and its implications in language education.

The scope of the current study was limited to the evaluation of the CEFR-framed English language curriculum in primary and secondary schools in three different socio-economic zones/districts of Istanbul, Turkey. Though those socio-economic zones were purposefully chosen as representative of the population, the results may not fully represent the perceptions of the primary and secondary school teachers across the country. Therefore, more extensive research is required to ascertain the level of understanding (or lack thereof) shared by instructors regarding the subject matter of the English curriculum that is structured in accordance with the CEFR and its ramifications for language teaching. Further, comparative studies examining the implementation of the CEFR framed curriculum in public and private schools could also reveal significant insights. The lessons learned from these studies could set the foundation of the in-service training practices and acknowledge the content of them. Besides, carefully designed longitudinal studies with multiple data collection techniques, particularly classroom observations, could yield significant insights into the implementation phase. Only then would we be able to have a good grasp of the challenges that practitioners face in curriculum implementation and produce effective solutions.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix 1: Teacher Questionnaire (English- Turkish)

### Öğretmen Anketi (İngilizce-Türkçe)

This bilingual (English-Turkish) questionnaire is designed to evaluate the CEFR framed English language curriculum that is in use in primary (Year 2,3, and 4) and secondary schools (Year 5, 6, 7, and 8) in Turkey.

(Bu ikidilli (İngilizce-Türkçe) araştırma çalışması Türkiye'deki İlk ve Ortaokullarda kullanılan Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programı ile şekillendirilmiş İngilizce dil müfredatının değerlendirilmesi amacıyla hazırlanmıştır.)

### Part 1 Background Information

#### (Bölüm 1 Genel Bilgiler)

**Instructions:** Please tick the appropriate option.

(Yönerge: Lütfen uygun seçeneği işaretleyiniz.)

<b>Sex (Cinsiyet):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> Male (Erkek)</li><li><input type="radio"/> Female (Kadın)</li></ul>	<b>Level of Education (Eğitim Seviyesi):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> Bachelor (Lisans)</li><li><input type="radio"/> Master (Yüksek Lisans)</li><li><input type="radio"/> PhD (Doktora)</li><li><input type="radio"/> Other (Diğer):</li></ul>
<b>Program graduated (Mezun olduğunuz program):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> English Language Teaching (İngilizce Öğretmenliği)</li><li><input type="radio"/> English Language and Literature (İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı)</li><li><input type="radio"/> Other languages (German, French, etc.) (Diğer diller; Almanca, Fransızca, vs.)</li><li><input type="radio"/> Other (Diğer): _____</li></ul>	<b>Years of Teaching (Öğretmenlikteki Hizmet Yılı):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> Less than a year (Bir yıldan daha az)</li><li><input type="radio"/> 1-4 Years (1-4 yıl)</li><li><input type="radio"/> 5-9 Years (5-9 yıl)</li><li><input type="radio"/> 10-14 Years (10-14 yıl)</li><li><input type="radio"/> 15-19 Years (15-19 yıl)</li><li><input type="radio"/> 20 + Years (20 + yıl)</li></ul>
<b>Have you ever attended a course or a seminar about the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages? (Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programı ile ilgili bir kursa veya seminere hiç katıldınız mı?)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> Yes (Evet)</li><li><input type="radio"/> No (Hayır)</li></ul>	
<b>The school where you work is located (Çalıştığınız okulun bulunduğu yer) :</b> City (Kent): _____ Town (İlçe): _____	
<b>What level/ levels do you teach? (Hangi seviyede/seviyelerde ders veriyorsunuz?)</b>	<b>Number of Students in the Classroom (Sınıftaki Öğrenci Sayısı):</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Grade 2 (2. Sınıf)</li> <li>○ Grade 3 (3. Sınıf)</li> <li>○ Grade 4 (4. Sınıf)</li> <li>○ Grade 2-3-4 (2-3-4. Sınıf)</li> <li>○ Grade 5 (5. Sınıf)</li> <li>○ Grade 6 (6. Sınıf)</li> <li>○ Grade 7 (7. Sınıf)</li> <li>○ Grade 8 (8. Sınıf)</li> <li>○ Grade 5-6-7-8 (5-6-7-8. Sınıf)</li> <li>○ Both Grade 2,3,4 and Grade 5,6,7,8 (Hem 2-3-4. Sınıflar hem de 5-6-7-8. Sınıflar)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10-15</li> <li>• 16-20</li> <li>• 21-25</li> <li>• 26-30</li> <li>• 31-35</li> <li>• 36- 40</li> <li>• 41 and above (41 ve üzeri)</li> </ul>				
<b>Part 2 Curriculum Evaluation</b> <b>(Bölüm 2 Müfredat Değerlendirme)</b>					
<b>Instruction:</b> Please tick the response that reflects your opinion. <i>(Yönerge: Lütfen fikrinizi yansıtan yanıtı işaretleyiniz.)</i>					
<b>SA:</b> Strongly Agree <b>A:</b> Agree <b>N:</b> Not Sure <b>D:</b> Disagree <b>SD:</b> Strongly Disagree					
<i>SA: Kesinlikle Katılıyorum    A: Katılıyorum    N: Emin Değilim    D: Katılmıyorum    SD: Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum</i>					
<b>Knowledge about the CEFR framed English Language Curriculum(Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programının (ADOÇP) şekillendirdiği İngilizce dil müfredatı hakkında bilgi)</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
1. I have a clear understanding of the CEFR document. <i>(ADOÇP dokümanını tam olarak anlıyorum.)</i>					
2. I have a clear understanding of how the CEFR has impacted the English language curriculum that is in use now. <i>(ADOÇP'in kullanımında olan İngilizce dil müfredatını nasıl etkilediğini tam olarak anlıyorum.)</i>					
3. I have a clear understanding of how the CEFR framed English language curriculum has enhanced the English language teaching practices for me as a teacher. <i>(Bir öğretmen olarak ADOÇP'in şekillendirdiği İngilizce dil müfredatının İngilizce dil eğitimi uygulamalarını nasıl geliştirdiğini tam olarak anlıyorum.)</i>					
<b>Goals and Objectives of the CEFR framed Curriculum (ADOÇP ile şekillendirilmiş müfredatın amaç ve hedefleri)</b>					
	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
4. The CEFR framed curriculum enables students to work towards achievable goals. <i>(ADOÇP ile şekillendirilmiş müfredat, öğrencilerin ulaşılabilir hedeflere yönelik çalışmasını sağlar.)</i>					

5. The CEFR framed curriculum has increased the student interest in the subject (English). (ADOÇP ile şekillendirilmiş müfredat öğrencinin derse (İngilizce) olan ilgisini artırmıştır.)					
6. The CEFR framed curriculum has provided aspects of cultural awareness. (ADOÇP ile şekillendirilmiş müfredat kültürel farkındalık unsurlarını sağlamıştır.)					
7. The objective statements in the curriculum are consistent with the CEFR levels (A1, A2, B1, etc.). (Müfredattaki amaçlar ADOÇP seviyeleri (A1, A2, B1, vs.) ile uyumludur.)					
8. The CEFR framed curriculum promotes communicative language teaching. (ADOÇP ile şekillendirilmiş müfredat iletişimsel dil öğretimini teşvik eder.)					
9. The use of English is emphasised in classroom interactions of all types, supporting learners in becoming language users, rather than students of the language. (Sınıf etkileşimlerinde İngilizce'nin kullanımı vurgulanarak öğrencilerin dil öğrencileri olmak yerine dil kullanıcıları olmalarına destek olunmaktadır.)					
10. The Communicative Language Teaching approach recommended in language teaching by MoNE is applicable in my context. (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından önerilen İletişimsel Dil Öğretimi yaklaşımı bulunduğum bağlamda uygulanabilir.)					
11. The CEFR framed curriculum promotes learner autonomy defined as the ability of studying independently in the process of language learning. (ADOÇP ile şekillendirilmiş müfredat dil öğrenim sürecinde bağımsız çalışabilme olarak nitelendirilen öğrenci özerkliğini teşvik eder.)					
12. The curriculum objectives are in accordance with the daily lives of the learners. (Müfredat hedefleri öğrencilerin günlük yaşamları ile uyumludur.)					
<b>Course Content and Materials (Ders İçeriği ve Materyalleri)</b>					
	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
13. The curriculum content and the CEFR levels (A1, A2, etc.) do match. (Müfredat içeriği ve ADOÇP seviyeleri (A1, A2, vs.) örtüşmektedir.)					
14. The curriculum content is in accordance with the daily lives of the learners. (Müfredat içeriği öğrencilerin günlük hayatları ile uyumludur.)					

15. The content of the curriculum is relevant to the language learning needs of the learners. (Müfredatın içeriği öğrencilerin dil öğrenme ihtiyaçları ile bağlantılıdır.)					
16. The materials selected are authentic. (Seçilen öğretim materyalleri özgündür.)					
17. The curriculum equally combines all four language skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening). (Müfredat, dört beceriyi eşit olarak birleştirmektedir (Okuma, Yazma, Konuşma, Dinleme).)					
18. The curriculum incorporates the topics that are familiar to young learners. (Müfredat genç öğrencilerin aşına olduğu konuları içermektedir.)					
19. The material (coursebook) used allows the students to achieve the learning outcomes in the curriculum. (Kullanılan materyal (ders kitabı) öğrencilerin müfredatta belirlenen öğrenim çıktıklarına ulaşmasını sağlar.)					
<b>Course Conduct</b> (Ders İşlenişi)					
	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
20. The curriculum is applicable in general. (Müfredat genel olarak uygulanabilir.)					
21. Communication is carried out in English as much as possible. (İletişim mümkün olduğunca İngilizce olarak yürütülür.)					
22. Student-centred rather than teacher-centred approach has been adopted in the curriculum. (Müfredatta öğretmen merkezli yaklaşımdan ziyade öğrenci merkezli bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir.)					
23. The student-centred approach that the program proposes can be applied effectively in the classroom. (İngilizce öğretim programının önerdiği öğrenci merkezli yaklaşım sınıfta etkili bir şekilde uygulanabilmektedir.)					
24. The Communicative Language Teaching method can easily be used in the classroom. (İletişimsel Dil Öğretim metodu sınıf içerisinde kolaylıkla uygulanabilir.)					
25. A range of different language teaching techniques can easily be used in the classroom. (Bir dizi farklı dil öğretim tekniği sınıf içerisinde kolaylıkla kullanılabilir.)					
26. The curriculum promotes active use of technology. (Müfredat teknolojinin aktif kullanımını teşvik eder.)					
27. Communicative competencies are promoted in the classroom teaching activities over grammatical competencies. (Sınıf içi öğretim aktivitelerinde dilbilgisi yeterliliğinden ziyade iletişimsel yeterlilik teşvik edilir.)					

28. The curriculum offers engaging learning environments for the learners, taking into account the diverse needs of the students at different developmental levels. <i>(Müfredat, farklı gelişim düzeylerinde öğrencilerin farklı ihtiyaçlarını göz önünde bulundurarak onlara ilgi çekici öğrenme ortamları sunmaktadır.)</i>					
<b>Assessment &amp; Evaluation</b> <b>(Ölçme &amp; Değerlendirme)</b>					
	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
29. The objectives identified in the curriculum are measurable. <i>(Müfredatta belirlenen hedefler ölçülebilirdir.)</i>					
30. Various types of assessment and evaluation techniques are emphasised in the CEFR framed English language curriculum. <i>(ADOÇP ile şekillendirilmiş İngilizce dil müfredatında çeşitli ölçme-değerlendirme teknikleri vurgulanmaktadır.)</i>					
31. The explanations in the curriculum for the assessment and evaluation components are enough. <i>(Ölçme-değerlendirme bileşenleri için müfredatta yer alan açıklamalar yeterlidir.)</i>					
32. The assessment and evaluation instruments used are sufficient enough to assess the student achievements. <i>(Kullanılan ölçme-değerlendirme araçları, öğrenci başarısını değerlendirmek için yeterlidir.)</i>					
33. “One of the most important aspects of the program is to create positive and beneficial washback effect” (MoNE, 2018). The curriculum promotes such an effect. <i>(“Programın en önemli yönlerinden biri olumlu ve yararlı bir geri dönüt etkisi yaratmaktır” (MEB, 2018). Müfredat böyle bir etki yaratmaktadır.)</i>					
<b>Application of the Curriculum</b> <b>(Müfredatın Uygulanması)</b>					
	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
34. Students are continuously exposed to English through audio materials. <i>(Öğrenciler dinleme materyalleri (işitsel materyaller) ile sürekli olarak İngilizce'ye maruz kalmaktadırlar.)</i>					
35. Students are continuously exposed to English through visual materials. <i>(Öğrenciler görsel materyaller ile sürekli İngilizce'ye maruz kalmaktadırlar.)</i>					
36. Enjoyment of language learning is fostered through arts and crafts. <i>(Sanatsal ve el sanatları etkinlikleri aracılığıyla dil öğreniminden keyif alınması teşvik edilmektedir.)</i>					

<p>37. L1 (first language) usage is employed only when necessary (e.g., for giving complex instructions or explaining difficult concepts). <i>(1. dil (ana dil) yalnızca gerekli olduğunda kullanılır (örn. karmaşık talimatlar vermek ya da zor kavramları açıklamak için).)</i></p>					
<p>38. The focus of language learning is on deepening communication, rather than on completing curricular items within a given period of time. <i>(Dil öğrenmenin odak noktası, verilen zaman dilimi içerisinde müfredattaki içeriğin tamamlanmasından ziyade iletişimin derinleştirilmesidir.)</i></p>					
<p>39. The class hours assigned to the level I teach (Grade 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8) are enough to achieve the learning outcomes. <i>(Öğrettiğim seviyeye (2., 3., 4., 5., 6., 7. veya 8. sınıf) atfedilen ders saatleri öğrenim çıktularına ulaşmak için yeterlidir.)</i></p>					
<p>40. Students develop communicative skills in English by “doing things with the language” rather than by “learning about the language”. <i>(Öğrenciler, "dil hakkında bir şeyler öğrenmek" yerine "dil ile bir şeyler yapmak" suretiyle İngilizce iletişim becerilerini geliştirirler.)</i></p>					

## Appendix 2: Semi-structured Interview with Teachers

Lütfen gerekli kısımları doldurunuz.

<b>Yaş :</b>	<b>Cinsiyet:</b>
<b>Fakülte/ Mezun Olunan Yıl :</b>	
<b>Çalıştığınız Okul :</b>	
<b>Toplam Öğretmenlik Tecrübeniz (Yıl/Ay olarak) :</b>	
<b>Öğrettiğiniz Sınıf Seviyesi :</b>	
<b>Sınıflarınızdaki Ortalama Öğrenci Sayısı::</b>	
<b>Kaç Yıldır Bu Seviyede Öğretmenlik Yapıyorsunuz? (Yıl/Ay olarak) :</b>	
<b>Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programının Şekillendirdiği İngilizce Dil Müfredat Farkındalığı</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. İlk ve ortaokul seviyeleri için yeni yayımlanmış olan İngilizce dil eğitimi programı hakkında bilgilendirildiniz mi?</li><li>2. Kullanımda olan yeni müfredat ile ilgili herhangi bir hizmetiçi eğitim aldınız mı?</li><li>3. Yeni yayımlanan dil müfredatı Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programı tarafından şekillendirilmiştir. Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programının içeriğini iyi derecede bildiginizi/ anladığınızı düşünüyor musunuz?</li><li>4. Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programının halihazırda kullanımda olan İngilizce dil müfredatını nasıl etkilediği hususunda iyi bir kanaate sahip olduğunuzu düşünüyor musunuz?</li><li>5. Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programı 6 seviyeden oluşur (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2). Bu seviyelerin içerik ve performans kriterleri ile alakalı bilgilendirildiniz mi?</li></ol>	

## **Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programının Şekillendirdiği Müfredatın Hedef ve Amaçları**

6. Halihazırdaki İngilizce dil müfredatının iletişimsel dil öğretimini desteklediğini düşünüyor musunuz? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

İletişimsel dil öğretimi metodunu sınıf içerisinde etkin olarak kullanabiliyor musunuz? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

7. İngilizce dil müfredatında hangisinin vurgulandığını düşünüyorsunuz: dilin iletişimsel amaçlı kullanımı mı yoksa dilbilgisi (gramer) yapılarının öğretilmesi mi?

- hedef dili kullanarak öğrenme (doing things with the language)
- hedef dil hakkında öğrenme (learning about the language)

8. İngilizce dil müfredatının yerel ve yabancı kültürel unsurları iyi derecede barındırdığını düşünüyor musunuz? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

9. Sizce müfredat öğrencide hedef kültür ile alakalı yeterince farkındalık oluşturuyor mu? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

10. İngilizce dil müfredatının dil öğretiminde öğrencileri bağımsız olma konusunda teşvik ettiğini düşünüyor musunuz? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

Müfredat öğrencileri dersin dışında öğrenmeye sevk edici içerik barındırıyor mu? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

## **Ders İçeriği ve Materyaller**

11. Ders içeriği açısından, müfredatın öğrencilerinizin ihtiyaçları ile alakalı olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?

İçeriği çeşitlendirmek hususunda esnekliğe sahip misiniz yoksa belirlenmiş içeriği katı bir biçimde takip etmek zorunda mısınız? Ne tür avantajlar ve/veya dezavantajlar görüyorsunuz?

12. İngilizce dersinizde önceliğinizin sınıf içi öğrenci iletişimini ve dil kullanımını artırmak/ çeşitlendirmek mi yoksa müfredatta belirlenen konuları

verilen süre içerisinde tamamlamak mı olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?  
Lütfen detaylandırınız.

13. Öğrencilerinizin seviyesini ve müfredatın içeriğini göz önüne aldığımızda (belirlenmiş ders içeriği, sağlanmış olan materyaller de dahil), müfredatın öğrencilerinizin seviyesine uygun olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?

14. Müfredatın içeriğinin genç öğrenciler için ilgi çekici olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Bazı örnekler verebilir misiniz?

Yeni İngilizce dil müfredatının öğrencilerin derse olan ilgisini arttırdığını düşünüyor musunuz? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

15. İngilizce derslerinizde ne tür materyaller kullanırsınız? Lütfen örnekler veriniz.

(Örn. ders kitabı, kuklalar, objeler, drama, sanatsal etkinlikler...vs)

Dil eğitiminde teknolojiyi aktif olarak kullanabiliyor musunuz? Avantajları ve dezavantajları nelerdir? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

Kullanılan ders materyalleri öğrencilerin iletişimsel dil yeterliliğini geliştirmek için yeterli görsel ve işitsel içerik barındırmakta mıdır? Lütfen örnekler ile detaylandırınız.

16. Kullandığımız ders kitabının müfredatta yer alan ana becerileri yansıttığını düşünüyor musunuz? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

17. Ders kitabındaki bölüm (ünite) ve aktivitelerin öğrencilerin günlük hayatta hedef dili (yani İngilizceyi) kullanmaları beklenen durumları yansıttığını düşünüyor musunuz?

### **Ders İşlenişi**

18. Yeni müfredatta tavsiye edilen eğitsel metod (yöntem) ve teknikler, belirlenmiş ders içeriği, sağlanmış olan sınıf materyalleri ve ölçme/ değerlendirme uygulamaları ile alakalı olarak genel izleniminiz nedir?

Sizin öğrettiğiniz seviyeye atfedilen Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve Programı seviyesinin ne ölçüde ulaşılabilir/ gerçekleştirilebilir olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

Öğrettiğiniz kademedeki size sağlanan ders saati müfredatta belirlenen hedeflere ulaşabilmeniz için yeterli midir? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

Müfredatta belirlenen hedeflerinin öğrenciler için ulaşılabilir/gerçekleştirilebilir olduklarını düşünüyor musunuz? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

İngilizce dersinizde değişik dil öğretim tekniklerini (grup çalışması, çift çalışması) etkin olarak kullanabilmekte misiniz? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

Size sağlanmış olan ders materyalleri öğrencilerin müfredatta belirlenen hedeflere ulaşmasını sağlayabilmekte midir? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

19. Kullandığınız müfredatın mevcut koşullar altında uygulanabilir olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Karşılaştığınız zorluklar var mıdır? Varsa bahseder misiniz?

Öğrenciler ders içerisinde dili aktif olarak kullanma fırsatı buluyor mu? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

Müfredat dil eğitiminde öğrenci merkezli bir yaklaşımı tavsiye etmektedir. Sınıfınızdaki öğrenci sayısını, sınıftaki fiziksel ortamın elverişliliğini ve diğer faktörleri göz önünde bulundurduğunuzda, bu yaklaşımın sınıfınızda uygulanabilir olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?

20. İngilizce derslerinizde ana dili mi yoksa hedef dili mi kullanırsınız? Neden? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

Ders içerisinde ana dili kullanma sebepleriniz nelerdir?

Ders içerisinde öğrencilerin ana dili kullanımlarına karşı olan tutumunuz nedir?

21. İngilizce derslerinizde öğrenci motivasyonunu nasıl sağlarsınız? Lütfen örnekler ile açıklayınız.

Dersin işlendiği sınıf ortamının (fiziksel ortamın) öğrenci motivasyonunu artırıcı unsurlar barındırdığını düşünüyor musunuz? Lütfen detaylandırınız.

**Ölçme/ Değerlendirme**

22. Mfredatta belirlenen hedeflerin (đrenci kazanımlarının) llebilir olduđunu dşnyor musunuz?

23. Dil đretiminizde ne tr lme-deđerlendirme metodları (yntemleri) kullanırsınız?

Kullandıđınız lme-deđerlendirme aralarının đrencinin iletiřimsel dil yeterliliđini lme-deđerlendirme hususunda yeterli olduđunu dşnyor musunuz?

## Appendix 3: Focus Group Interview with Students

<b>Focus Group Interview</b>
(To be completed by the Interviewer)
Grade(s) interviewed: _____ Number of participants: _____ Date of the interview: ___/___/_____
<b>Genel İzlenim</b>
1. İngilizce dersinin sizin için önemli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? 2. Genel olarak İngilizce dersi sizin için kolay mı yoksa zor bir ders midir?
<b>Ders İçeriği</b>
3. İngilizce öğrenmenin eğlenceli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Neden? 4. İngilizce derslerinde ne tür şeyler öğrenirsiniz? Örneğin; -Kelime -Konuşma -Yazma 5. İngilizce dersinde öğrendiğiniz şeylerin ilginç olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Neden?
<b>Ders İşlenişi &amp; Öğretimsel Method ve Teknikler</b>
6. İngilizce dersinizde ne tür aktiviteler yaparsınız? Okuma Yazma Dinleme Konuşma Oyunlar..vs Hangi aktivite/ aktiviteler sizin için daha ilginçtir? Neden? 7. Sınıfta bulunan öğrencilerin sayısını göz önünde bulundurduğunuzda, derste yeterince İngilizce konuşma şansınız oluyor mu? 8. Ders içerisinde genelde İngilizce mi yoksa Türkçe mi konuşuyorsunuz?

## **Materyaller**

9. İngilizce öğretmeniniz derslerde ne tür materyaller kullanır?  
(Kitap, CD, Video, Akıllı tahta, oyuncaklar...vs)
- İlgi çekici olduklarını düşünüyor musunuz? Lütfen açıklayınız.
10. Öğretmeniniz İngilizce derslerinde teknolojiyi (örn. akıllı tahta) kullanır mı?  
Teknoloji kullanımını derse olan ilginizi artırıyor mu? Neden?
11. İngilizce ders kitabınız hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?  
Ders kitabınızdaki ünitelerde öğrendiklerinizin günlük hayatta kullanılabilir olduklarını düşünüyor musunuz?
12. Sınıfta İngilizce öğrendiğinizde, o dili konuşan insanların kültürleri hakkında da bir şeyler öğrenebildiğinizi düşünüyor musunuz?  
Diğer kültürler hakkında bilgi edinmenin önemli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?

## **Ölçme ve Değerlendirme**

13. Öğretmeniniz İngilizce sınavlarını nasıl yapar/uygular?  
Yazılı sınav  
Sözlü sınav  
Proje (sınıf arkadaşlarınız ile birlikte hazırladığınız projeler)  
Quiz..vs
14. Sınavların kolay mı yoksa zor mu olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz? Neden?

## **Dil Öğrenim Sürecinde Alınan Yardım ve Destek**

15. Dil öğrenirken sınıf içerisinde kendinizi rahat ve mutlu hissediyor musunuz?  
Lütfen detaylandırınız.
16. Evde İngilizce ödevlerinizi yaparken yardıma ihtiyaç duyuyor musunuz?  
Yardıma ihtiyaç duyduğunuzda genellikle size kim yardımcı olur?
17. İngilizcenizi geliştirmek için ek İngilizce dersleri alıyor musunuz? (Özel ders ya da özel dil okulları gibi)

## Appendix 4: Classroom Observation Guideline

### SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVATIONS

Time Frame	Course Conduct	Materials	Methods & Techniques	Teacher	Student	Overall Comments
The timeframe allocated to teach task/activity in the lesson	<p><b>Activities/Tasks</b>            -Speaking: ask and answer a question            -Listening: listen and fill the gap            -Reading: read and answer the questions            -Writing: write about daily routines            -Vocabulary: revise vocabulary            -Grammar: language functions            -Games: Bingo            -Communicative activities.</p> <p><b>Aim of the Activities/ Tasks</b>            -to practice forms/ functions            -to practice speaking            -to practice listening            -to learn new vocabulary            -to revise learned vocabulary            -practice asking and answering questions            -to initiate and maintain a short conversation            -to practice grammar functions learned            -to write a short paragraph.</p>	<p><b>Types of Materials Used</b>            -course book            -real life materials: balloons, toys, puppets.            -interactive board            -interactive content (e.g., interactive activities)            -worksheets            -extra resources.</p>	<p>- Communicative Language Teaching            -Grammar Translation Method            -Audio Lingual Method...etc.            -Individual work            -Pair work            -Group Work            -Whole class activities            -Drama            -arts and crafts            -other: _____</p>	<p><b>Actions</b>            -What the teacher says/ does            -eye contact with the learners            -encourage students            -equal attention to all students            -use of different materials            -use of audio-visual materials.  <b>Teacher's Role</b>            -planner -            -organiser -            -assessor -            -prompter            -resource -tutor            -observer -            participant            -facilitator -            diagnostician            -Rapport builder</p> <p><b>Use of Language</b>            -L1 -L2</p> <p><b>Error Correction</b>            -immediate correction            -encourage peer correction            -correct after the activity is completed</p> <p><b>Assessment and Evaluation</b>            -quiz            -question- answer.</p> <p><b>Starting the activity</b>            -introduce the activity            -give instructions            -organise the classroom</p> <p><b>Monitoring the activity</b>            -ensure the process runs smoothly            -maintain learner engagement            -motivate the learners            -intervene appropriately if necessary</p> <p><b>Ending the activity</b>            -wrapping up the activity</p>	<p><b>Actions</b>            -What the student says/ does            -listen to teacher            -participate            -work in pairs, group/ individually            -ask questions            -cause troubles/issues</p> <p><b>Use of Language</b>            -L1            -L2</p> <p><b>Learner Motivation</b>            -motivated by the activities            -motivated by the resources            -engage in the lesson</p> <p><b>Learner Participation</b>            -engages in the activities            -carries out/ completes the tasks</p>	<p><b>Tasks and Activities</b>            -authentic            -interesting            -appropriate of the learners' level and age            -relevant other daily needs of the learners            -encourages the use of L2            -focus on becoming a language user rather than a language learner</p> <p><b>Materials</b>            -relevant to the learners' needs            -interesting and motivating            -active use of ICT</p> <p><b>Methods &amp; Techniques</b>            -varies based on the leaner group            -focus on communicative competencies</p> <p><b>Language Use</b>            -emphasis on the use of L2</p> <p><b>Teacher</b>            -simplifying and using L2            -motivating learners            -organising activities/ tasks to engage learners</p> <p><b>Student</b>            -active/passive            -interested and motivated            -have the chance to practice L2 in class</p>
(Adapted from Erozan, 2005)						

## Appendix 5: Classroom Observation Form

### OBSERVATION FORM

**Observation Number:**..... **Date** :.....  
**School** :..... **Class** :.....  
**Teacher's Name** :..... **Lesson Subject:**.....  
**Number of Students** :.....  
**Male** :.....  
**Female:**.....

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS						
<b>Size of the classroom</b>						
<b>Number of students</b>						
<b>Classroom arrangement/ Seating arrangements</b>						
<b>Materials available (e.g interactive board, white board, computer...etc)</b>						
<b>Teacher complaints/ comments about the physical conditions</b>						
<b>Student complaints/ comments about the physical conditions</b>						
<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Course Conduct</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Methods &amp; Techniques</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Overall Comments</b>

(Adapted from Erozan, 2005)