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**THE EFFECT OF HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF ENGLISH CURRICULUM**

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**LİSE GİRİŞ SINAVININ İNGİLİZCE MÜFREDATININ
UYGULANMASINA ETKİSİ**

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To my family and all the martyrs of education...

ETİK BEYAN

Tezimin içerdiği yenilik ve sonuçları başka bir yerden almadığımı ve bu tezi AÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsünden başka bir bilim kuruluşuna akademik gaye ve unvan almak amacıyla vermediğimi; tez içindeki bütün bilgilerin etik davranış ve akademik kurallar çerçevesinde elde edilerek sunulduğunu, ayrıca tez yazım kurallarına uygun olarak hazırlanan bu çalışmada kullanılan her türlü kaynağa eksiksiz atıf yapıldığını, bu tezde sunduğum çalışmanın özgün olduğunu bildirir, aksinin ortaya çıkması durumunda aleyhime doğabilecek tüm hak kayıplarını kabullendiğimi beyan ederim. 08/08/2022

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF HIGH-SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ENGLISH CURRICULUM

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English language education programs are updated to keep up with the new trends and approaches. Curriculum designers introduce the novel changes into the curriculum. Pre-service and in-service teachers are informed and taught how to apply innovations in their classes. Nonetheless, some complications occur in the implementation process. Since the teachers are expected to prepare their students for the high-stakes exams, these exams are one of the problems that teachers face during their classes because of the preparation process. This study is therefore set out to determine the effects of high-school entrance exams on the implementation of the English curriculum. The methodological approach taken in this prevalent study is a mixed methodology based on the teachers' views. 201 EFL teachers working at lower secondary schools filled the questionnaire regarding their in-class practices. Among the teachers, 10 of the volunteer teachers are interviewed by taking ample notes. The data are collected within 2 months. The questionnaire has 11 items and the interview questions that are applied after the questionnaire encompass 7 items. To collect the quantitative data, web tools are utilized due to the vexatious process of Covid-19 days. The results of the current study reveal that the high-school entrance test has negative effects regarding the approaches and methods employed in the classes. Furthermore, the classroom practices differ in different grades. The negative washback effects of high-stakes tests outweigh the positive washback effects in terms of the use of English language in a communicative way.

Keywords: *Approaches, Classroom practices, Curriculum, EFL teachers, High-stakes exams, Innovations, Washback Effect.*

ÖZET

LİSELERE GEÇİŞ SINAVININ İNGİLİZCE MÜFREDATININ UYGULANMASINA ETKİSİ

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İngilizce eğitim programları yeni trendlere ve yaklaşımlara ayak uyduracak şekilde güncellenir. Müfredat tasarımcıları müfredata yeni değişiklikleri ekler. Hizmet öncesi ve hizmet içi öğretmenler bilgilendirilir ve yenilikleri sınıflarında nasıl uygulayacakları öğretmenlere öğretilir. Yine de uygulama sürecinde bazı zorluklar ortaya çıkar. Öğretmenlerin öğrencilerini yüksek çıtalı sınavlara hazırlamaları beklendiğinden, öğretmenlerin İngilizce eğitim programları yeni trendlere ve yaklaşımlara ayak uyduracak şekilde güncellenir. Müfredat tasarımcıları müfredata yeni değişiklikleri sunar. Hizmet öncesi ve hizmet içi öğretmenler bilgilendirilmekte ve yenilikleri sınıflarında nasıl uygulayacakları öğretilmektedir. Bununla birlikte, uygulama sürecinde bazı zorluklar ortaya çıkar. Öğretmenlerin öğrencilerini yüksek riskli sınavlara hazırlamaları beklendiğinden, bu sınavlar hazırlık süreci nedeniyle öğretmenlerin derslerinde karşılaştıkları sorunlardan biridir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, lise giriş sınavlarının İngilizce müfredatının uygulanması üzerindeki etkilerini belirlemek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Bu araştırmada benimsenen yöntembilimsel yaklaşım, öğretmenlerin görüşlerine dayalı karma bir yaklaşımdır. Ortaokullarda görev yapan 201 İngilizce öğretmeni sınıf içi uygulamalarıyla ilgili olan anketi doldurmuştur. Öğretmenler arasında 10 gönüllü öğretmenle not alınarak görüşme yapılmıştır. Veriler iki ayda toplanmıştır. Anket 11 maddeden oluşmaktadır ve anket sonrası uygulanan görüşme soruları 7 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Nicel verilerin toplanması için Covid-19 günlerinin can sıkıcı süreci nedeniyle internet araçları kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, lise giriş sınavlarının sınıflarda uygulanan yaklaşım ve yöntemlere ilişkin olumsuz etkilerinin olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, sınıf içi uygulamalar değişik kademelerde farklılık göstermektedir. Yüksek riskli testlerin olumsuz ket vurma etkileri, İngilizce dilinin iletişimsel bir şekilde kullanılması açısından olumlu ket vurma etkilerine ağır basmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Müfredat, Yenilikler, Yüksek çıtalı sınavlar, İngilizce öğretmenleri, Yaklaşımlar, Sınıf uygulamaları, Ket vurma etkisi*

PREFACE

The importance of English as a communication tool is in the limelight throughout the world. High-stakes exams affect the students' career, on the other hand. In this respect, this study named "The effect of high-school entrance exam on implementation of English curriculum" is conducted gathering the views of secondary school EFL teachers.

First and foremost, I am greatly indebted to my outstanding supervisor, Asst. Prof. Hayriye Avara, who guided me with her invaluable and noteworthy comments and for being a source of support during that challenging process. She was always open to me whenever I needed help.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR	: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLL	: Communicative Language Learning
CLT	: Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
ELL	: English Language and Literature
ELT	: English Language Teaching
GPA	: Grade Point Average
LGS	: High School Entrance Exam
MoNE	: Ministry of National Education
OSS	: Student Selection Examination
OSYM	: Student Selection and Placement Center
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TEOG	: Transition from Primary to Secondary School
USYM	: Interuniversity Student Selection and Placement Center
YOK	: Council of Higher Education

I. CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language curriculum is amended in line with the vicissitudes that aim to facilitate the language teaching and learning process. Pre-service and in-service teachers are apprised and trained to achieve the goals of the designed curriculum accordingly. At the end of the academic years, the students are assumed to be able to communicate in the target language by exploiting the points they covered throughout the academic year. Notwithstanding the fact that the curriculum seems absolute, in general, the graduates cannot communicate in the target language.

1.1. Significance of the Study

High-stakes tests are regarded as milestones in students' lives. The impacts of the exams on individuals' lives are expressed as "washback effect". The washback effect can be both negative and positive for the individuals. Extensive research shows that high-stakes tests affect the teachers and students considerably.

There are several important areas where this study makes an original contribution to teaching English to EFL learners. Compendiously, this study fills a gap in the literature as it is unique in conferring on the teacher views by both employing questionnaire and interview with the object of correlating preparation for high school entrance exam in Turkey and the teachers' classroom practices across the curriculum during Covid-19 process.

Not a few studies dwell on the difference between the classroom habits and curriculum requirements (Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Kirkgöz, 2008; Orafi & Borg, 2009; Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison, 2009). It is one of the most frequently stated problems that high-stakes exams cause to change the way teachers used to teach. Up to now, despite the importance of the topic, very little attention has been paid to the teachers' views on high-school entrance exams' impact on the communicative classes. From this aspect, this study is specific as it accommodates teacher views from qualitative and quantitative data at the same time. On the flip side, this study is conducted not only with the 8th grade teachers that prepare their students for the high school entrance exam, but with minor grade secondary school teachers, too. Therefore, the present study makes a major contribution to research on the effects of LGS by demonstrating the lower

secondary school (from the fifth to the eighth grade) EFL teachers' perceptions on the relationship between LGS exam and implementation of curriculum.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

Based on the effects of LGS, the central thesis of the instant study is to share the effect of the high school entrance exam on implementing curriculum and communicative classes. The study uses a mixed study approach in an attempt to investigate the reflections of EFL teachers' on LGS and its backwash on communicative classroom practices.

1.3. Research Questions

Main questions that guided this research are:

1. To what extent are the aims of the curriculum followed in EFL classes?
2. Are the classes with the 8th grades communicative?
3. Is there a relationship between LGS and classroom practices?
4. Does LGS have any washback effect on the implementation of English curriculum?

1.4. Limitations of the Study

Though the present study collects data from the secondary school teachers to explore the influence of high school entrance exam on the implementation of curriculum, this thesis doesn't engage with the students, who are the leading role in the exam preparation process.

Though the participants of the current study work in 10 different provinces, it could be better if the participants volunteer from all around Turkey. Besides, it is beyond the scope of this study to incorporate the effects of university entrance exam on implementing curriculum and on communicative classes. Even so, this study has striking results on the effects of LGS on following curriculum.

II. CHAPTER

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study first gives a brief overview of the importance of high-stakes exams. It is composed of five themed chapters. The main issues addressed are as follows: a) washback effects of the exams, b) definitions of washback effect, c) washback effect in language education, d) washback effects of the exams in Turkey, e) factors effecting school choice, f) high stakes exams in Turkey g) high school entrance examinations in Turkey, h) English curriculum in Turkey, i) communicative components of the English curriculum, j) LGS and English curriculum relationship, k) studies related to the English curriculum and LGS preparation process in Turkey. The first part examines the explanation of the washback effect including negative washback and positive washback examples in Turkey. It deals with, by the same token, the examples of washback effects shared in the studies of related researchers. The second chapter is concerned with the definitions of washback effect and the third one with washback effect in language education. Then, washback effects of the exams in Turkey are discussed. After that, factors that affect school choice are introduced. The following chapter gives an account of the high stakes testing in Turkey and the next one specifically gives information about LGS exam. The next chapter encompasses the latest changes in curriculum and student placement in Turkey which is highly related to the topic of the study. The following section sets forth the communicative components of the English curriculum and the relationship between the curriculum and LGS examination. The last chapter deals with similar studies related to the English curriculum and high school entrance exam in Turkey. All chapters are closely associated with each other in terms of the overall structure.

Schools play an important role in students' careers throughout their life. Sorokin (1959) describes 'school' as a type of machine that assays the learner's abilities and thereby designates their future plans. The prestige of a school has an inevitable influence on the following school the students would attend. Though this chain seems interactive, there is a possibility of attending a good school after the less preferred one or the other way round. Indeed, the tendency towards choosing a well-training school is directed by lots of factors. These factors include the decisions of not only the students and teachers but the parents and administrators, as well.

Registering for a school commonly requires exams throughout the world. These exams are described as placement tests or placement exams. The paths that students take during their education and the challenges they encounter in receiving their diplomas are being paid rising attention and the placement of learners as they start high school or university is a crucial phase on the student path (Belfield, C., & Crosta, P. M. 2012: 1). If the placement tests are not developed for a specific concern, they serve the same purpose: to place the students into the schools they deserve. Many people have misunderstandings about what placement exams are meant to assess, including students, faculty, staff, counsellors, administrators, and policymakers (Llosa, L., & Bunch, G. 2011: 3). The aim of a placement test for Morante (2012) is to allow students to choose suitable courses in line with their abilities.

A foreign language class organized according to the communicative approach aspires to present the culture of the target language as well. This reflects the widespread acceptance of the dissociability of language and culture. The discrepancies that emerged from the interpretation of behaviors, body language, taboo states, and formal and informal relations are underscored in communicative classes as for Aktaş (2005). This point recapitulates that the culture of society mirrors the values of that society and language learning cannot be isolated from the culture of the target language.

High-stakes tests for Akpınar and Cakildere (2013) are designed to have a conclusion on test takers, students, administrators, parents, and policymakers. According to the related exam results and sometimes other factors such as grade point average (GPA) and level of a foreign language, students are placed into a high school or university. This placement mostly occurs in the students' last year of education at primary, secondary, and high schools. By virtue of this fact, students' grades after the exams directly affect their lifelong career and as Brown (1989) states, these decisions are of utmost importance in individuals' lives and should be decided meticulously given the current data. Students that are regarded successful in placement tests are considered successful in their academic activities, correspondingly (Şen, B., Uçar, E., & Delen, D., 2012: 1).

To pursue their academic aims, institutions determine the best way to select students. Due to the need for placing students into the groupings under their skills, placement is delineated as an essential part of the programs, as Brown (1989) represents. Two criteria are put forward by Green and Weir (2004) concerning the placement tests' measurement. The first criterion deals with measurement dimensionality. Students placed in a class should usually learn the same content because they all join the class at a similar stage or level. To support this statement, it should be assured that the tasks vary in

difficulty level and this rating is suitable for all learners regardless of their background information. The second criterion is that tests should be valid (Green & Weir., 2004: 469). It differentiates between students who could properly answer the questions and those who couldn't answer. This touchstone necessarily means that items in a test measure the information that is supposed to be checked. Taylor (2005) claims that high-stakes tests have an influence on educational systems and society at large: test results, for instance, are used to take action about school curriculum scheduling, and the popularity of a test can lead publishers and institutions to produce test preparation materials and conduct test preparation sessions.

Some schools perform their own exams to choose students. The aim of the school affects the preparation and evaluation process of the placement tests. Colleges generally have two points whilst utilizing the placement tests (Belfield & Crosta, 2012: 2). Whether a student needs improvement to be selected or good at any specific subject determines the eligibility of that student. That is to say, if a student achieves a certain point in a test, the student is deemed as ready to take classes in a college (Belfield, C., & Crosta, P. M., 2012). Awareness of the teachers exerts an influence over the stress level of the students and teachers. Many teachers are confused about what the exam is measuring or what the textbook is teaching (Wall, D., & Alderson, J. C., 1993) which in turn causes bemusement among students and teachers.

In light of the concerns given above, the need to juxtapose some headlines arose. Firstly, the washback effects of the high-stakes tests would be handled including the definitions and examples in the world and in Turkey. Secondly, factors that affect school choice would be touched upon. Thirdly, high stakes exams and high school entrance exams in Turkey would be covered. After that, English curriculum and communicative components of the English curriculum would be addressed, and LGS exam and English curriculum relationship would be shared. Finally, related studies would be introduced.

2.1. Washback Effects of the Exams

Anxiety is the experiences people have had throughout their lives and are the emotions they experience as for Karayaşar (2019). The tests the learners take during their educational background raise the anxiety state or have a reverse situation. Still, though anxiety is a distressing situation, it also has a satisfying feature for being motivating.

Şenel and Tütüniş (2011) share that there are several causes of language anxiety, including test anxiety and failure anxiety. One of these causes that stands out the most is test anxiety. Test anxiety is a worry of failing exams and an unpleasant emotion experienced by students in a variety of settings, either unconsciously or consciously.

Given the viewpoint of the student, Kılıçkaya (2016) discusses that tests might influence what the students learn, how they prepare for exams and their study practices. On the nonetheless, particularly nationwide tests could result in alterations to teachers' methods of instruction and evaluation as Kılıçkaya contends. Taken together, the effects of the exams could have both positive and negative sides. Washback effect is frequently taught in language testing courses and all test designers need to pay attention to it since washback effect have a big influence on language classes, according to Alderson and Wall (1993).

2.1.1. Definitions of Washback Effect

For test-takers, organizations that create tests, and of course for employers and other institutions that use these tests to teach people, understanding the effects of high-states assessments is crucial as for Özmen (2011). The effects of the tests on teaching and learning process are described as the "washback effect". Similarly, the term "washback" is often used to describe how exams affect teaching and learning as for Yi-Ching (2009). To put it in a different way, the washback effect, following Alderson and Wall's (1993) definition, is a set of classroom behaviors of teachers and learners. Instead of using the term "washback"; "impact" and "backwash" terms could also be used according to Spratt (2005). Heyneman (1987) also identifies washback effect as follows:

"It is true that educators prepare students for tests. Regarding this 'backwash effect', national leaders have three options: they can fight it, ignore it, or use it. The advice given to developing nations is to maximize the impact of exams on classroom instruction and to create assessments with a well-balanced mindset toward pedagogical concepts."

Manjarres (2005) supports the idea that a test can bring about all necessary changes in teaching and learning is oversimplified. Washback effects for Manjarres (2005) can be used to describe how an exam affects the classroom, as well as the school, the educational system, and society at large. Furthermore, this effect is not always immediate; rather, it is mediated by a number of variables, including the teachers' perceptions of the test, its status relative to the subject matter it covers, the larger context in which the test is administered, and the context's intended use of language learning.

Messick (1996) describes washback as just one type of testing outcome that must be taken into account when assessing validity, and it leads to attitudinal differences in students and teachers. Another definition for washback effect is put forward by Shawcross (2002) as "a well-known academic phenomenon that affects practically all institutional learning processes". In other respects, Cheng and Curtis (2004) explain backwash as a

term frequently used in applied linguistics, referring to the impact of testing on instruction and learning.

2.1.2. Washback Effect in Language Education

Tests influence not only the students and teachers but teaching and learning processes as well. These effects could be both positive and negative as a result of the processes. In a study conducted by Cheng (2004), an exam reform is scrutinized in terms of the washback effect. According to the results of that study, albeit not showing any effect on teaching experience, teachers' perception towards the change is positive, namely having a positive washback effect on the test. Akin to this fact, creating curricula and having an emphasis on communicative skills leave a positive washback effect, too.

The washback effects of the exams stem from several factors like students, teachers, parents and even administrators. A teacher in a related study expresses opinion by claiming that the administrators put them under stress by attempting to turn up at any time to check on them (Shohamy, E., Donitsa-Schmidt, S., & Ferman, 1996), which proves that the sources of the pressure are similar in different countries.

In an effort to determine whether this test had an impact on the participants, language education, and teaching and learning outcomes, Ferman (2004) investigates the washback effects of the National EFL Oral Matriculation test. The findings reveal that the majority of the teachers acknowledge that they and their students have intense anxiety and worry as a result of the test outcomes. Teachers clarify that as soon as the results of the oral examination are made public, students and teachers are eager to compare their performance with that of other classes. This leads to a competence between the teachers, creating a stressful atmosphere, which is undesired.

The test, according to the majority of teachers, generates an environment of high anxiety and fear of test results among teachers and students (Shohamy, E., Donitsa-Schmidt, S., & Ferman, 1996). For instance, nearly all teachers in a study of Amengual-Pizarro add that, when taking their teaching methods and approaches into consideration, they are usuriously affected by the exams. They also imply that student talk time in speaking activities is relatively low as a result of the reason that makes teachers to bear in mind that the students are not responsible for oral production in the test. Moreover, the remaining time for the tests gets the students and teachers into panic. When the exams approach, mock exams and other assessment-based exams are featured both with the demand of the parents and students, and with the will of the teachers.

Classroom materials are important tools for both students and teachers. While preparing for the exam, materials that focus on exam topics are widely used around the

world. Lumley and Stoneman (2000) point out that some teachers' heavy reliance on exam-oriented materials may be motivated by a desire to meet the expectations of their students. This situation can lead to a mismatch between the implementation of curriculum and preparation of the exam practices.

Shohamy et al (1996) share the effects of two language tests their study. According to study findings, the test has the following effects on teaching and learning practices:

- Teachers stopped introducing new material and started going through previous material.
- Worksheets that mirror the exams from prior years are used in place of class materials.
- All of the activities resemble tests.
- The usual class time is supplemented by review sessions.
- The class has a tense atmosphere.
- Both teachers and students have a strong desire to learn the content.

All in all, the teachers' attitude towards the test and classroom activities tips the balance, and according to Burrows (2004), when developing implementation strategies for new tests, it could be helpful for test designers who want to work for washback to consider the instructor factor. High-stakes exams have positive and negative washback effects on teachers' emotions and behaviors, but it's unclear how and to what degree these effects lead to successful teaching according to Onaiba and Mustafa (2014).

2.1.3. Washback Effects of the Exams in Turkey

The effects of the tests have a great role in students' lives. These effects could be either positive or negative according to the reflections of them. The changes in the placement exams may affect the teachers who practice the classes and adapt their classes accordingly. Hatipoğlu (2016) suggests that there is a common perception among professionals, researchers, students, and parents that the university entrance exam has a negative effect on foreign language teaching and learning in Turkey and students in Turkey "learn to the test". During the interview with them, students in Çakır's study (2017) signaled that thanks to the exam, they are learning English. They claimed that if English was not included in the content of the exam, they would not prepare for it that much. On the other hand, however, negative washback effects are seen as a consequence of stress caused by the existence of test pressure and worry for the results of the exam.

In another study carried out by Demir (2019), the pressure felt by the teachers about their students who are supposed to be successful in the LGS exam (high school entrance exam in Turkey) is considered to have a negative washback effect. Moreover, the

negative washback effects of a placement test are reported by the teachers in a study by Kizildag (2009). These negative washback effects happen as the upshot of demotivation and ambiguity of the placement system which systematically undergoes changes. Yet another reason behind this demotivation is that the curriculum requires communicative activities to apply but the placement exam doesn't assess the communicative skills, which in turn causes dissonance between the curriculum and implementation.

Karabulut (2007) investigates the washback effects of university entrance exam which has foreign language test in it. The findings suggest that the test has an impact on what teachers teach, how they teach it, and what and how students learn it. To perform well on a test and be admitted to university is the main objective of language learning. However, comments from college students and teachers suggest that because the test does not entail speaking, writing, and listening, students don't get certain crucial linguistic concepts while studying. The student's idea is to include neglected skills in the exam. Similarly, the professors also opine that test is not comprehensive and effective enough to reflect the proficiency of the students with the language.

The education system is strongly examination-oriented in Turkey, as Hatipoğlu (2016) points out. This leads to some problems related to coping with the struggles the exam preparation process presents. One factor that is thought to have an impact on a student's test success is teaching behaviors related to how the student handles the entrance and examination process as Altun and Çakan (2008) emphasize. This makes the students make a bid for attending prestigious schools or universities without being aware of what they are learning. Moreover, a teacher in a study of Işıklı and Tarakcioglu (2016) perceives the university entrance exam in Turkey as the most critical problem in terms of language teaching efforts. This is also another negative washback effect stated by an in-service teacher.

Findings in Kılıçkaya's (2016) study indicate that high stakes tests component have significant results for all stakeholders. When it comes to teaching and studying foreign languages in Turkey, it may be said that an excessive emphasis on examinations can have a number of negative effects, including the exclusion of some abilities and accomplishments. Teaching and learning the material covered by the exam as well as methods that could result in higher scores but lower language use abilities dominate classroom activities rather than introducing useful language and fostering productive skills like speaking that will encourage students to communicate. Besides, the choice of textbooks, the method of instruction, the evaluation of students in the classroom, and anxiety are some additional factors that tests negatively impact, as Kılıçkaya (2016) shares.

The results of a study implemented by Hatipoğlu (2016) prove that teachers are of the opinion that placement exams direct the way they teach in addition to the schedule and structure of teaching English. The teachers also maintain that the placement exam has an important influence on their teaching style as well as approaches, methods, and techniques they utilize. High school teachers' main focus is not to teach English, but to help their students learn the test format and prepare them to answer more questions in the exam as Hatipoğlu (2016) reveals.

Külekçi (2016) discusses in his study that test takers generally concentrate on test tactics rather than developing their overall language abilities. Moreover, they also invest a lot of time in practice exams to sharpen their recognition skills and try to become more comfortable with the multiple-choice format. Apart from the negative effects of the tests, it is also discussed that thanks to the exam, test takers allocate time for studying English, which is a positive aspect of the exam.

It is possible to witness a negative washback effect caused by superiors in schools. Çakır's study (2017) is a good example of this. One of the teachers enucleated that after the mock exams, the outcomes are analyzed by the relevant assistant managers and a meeting is held with 8th- grade teachers. It is explained that which class showed which success or failure in which course and the reasons for this are discussed. They express their expectations about what can be done to achieve better results. This reveals the stress the administrators impose on the teachers. Another teacher discloses that the outcome of the test determines school success. In every region, rivalry exists between schools. In its province or district, each school wants to be the first. Naturally, this situation places pressure from administrators on students. Administrators want children in spare lessons to be evaluated and reviewed for incorrect responses. Another teacher reports that some teachers say that in every lesson they are under pressure from students and parents to solve questions. In addition to these, some of the teachers suggest that the more the school administrators and families have problem solving skills, the more successful the students are in the test.

It is generally accepted that making the atmosphere of the classroom more comfortable and enjoyable has a beneficial influence on the learning experience of EFL learners for Atilir and Bergil (2020). However, as a result of spending time dramatically on the preparation process for the exams, the placement tests create a negative washback effect. Moreover, as the exams involve multiple-choice questions, the students give emphasis on memorization rather than acquisition. The 2018 examination innovation aimed to decrease pressure on students as Kitchen et al (2019) elucidates. In the 6th and

7th grades, however, where exam anxiety is not felt much, the teachers can implement communicative activities effectively as Çakır (2017) shares.

2.2. Factors affecting School Choice

Tests have been used for a wide variety of purposes, and each of these purposes has had an impact on instruction, learning, and individuals as for Cinkara and Tosun (2017). The problems brought by placement examination systems are marked all around the world. It is probable that by using alternate assessments, interpreting the exams distinctively, or providing exam results with extra knowledge based on the previous education of learners, colleges will be able to make more exact placements (Belfield, C., & Crosta, P. M. 2012: 1). For instance, data on a high school transcript of a student may supplement or substitute for the placement test scores of that student. This will lead to a quicker and more efficient improvement through college education as Belfield and Crosta (2012) offer as a solution.

In Turkey, the role and effect of international as well as indigenous organizations like the government, the council of higher education, the ministry of national education and universities at the macro-level and teachers at the micro-level played an important role in facilitating the implementation phase of the reforms (Kirkgöz, Y. 2017: 254). School, teachers, students, school administrators, families, school facilities and all other responsible people play a crucial role in succeeding in teaching students a foreign language duly as Engin and Seven (2007) explicitly explains. Nonetheless, there isn't any congruity in the implementation process of each organization. This results in frustrated students, teachers, parents and administrators who seek the inducement for the problematic situation. Some blame teachers and others blame the textbooks or curriculum designers for the throwback, therewith.

From the first grade to the end of the eighth grade in our primary schools, it is of great importance to effectively direct the profession the students would choose, as for Şahin (2007). Buyruk (2020) concludes that the first and most critical stage of planning is selecting a school as this affects the child's educational path on a broad sense. The findings of a study related to gender and school choice by Jackson and Bisset (2005) reveals that a school's reputation and test results are important factors in parents' decisions about which school to send their children to. Instructor factor takes a leading part when deciding on a school for students in that Hsu and Yuan-fang (2013) states that a school can only provide a quality education if its teachers are dedicated. Some students hide behind the other students in order not to take active part in classes. As classes that

are crowded prevent teacher and student interaction, the size of a class, according to Altun and Çakan (2008), is another crucial factor which highly affects student success.

Çarıkcioğlu (2019) affirms in her study that it is recognized that the majority of students in the process of learning English get the help of their families. It can be inferred in this sense that the value of language learning is appreciated by families. Berberoğlu and Tansel (2014) divulge that Turkey is one of the countries where it is popular to receive private tutoring when studying for the national selection examination, withal. On the grounds that parents and students are especially worried about access to a prestigious university program, private tutoring may be considered an out-of-school academic enterprise to improve the learning of students. In fact, the assumption is that if students spend more time on the lessons that they are responsible for, they will ultimately learn more and better and excel in the national exams, provided that the exams cover fundamental aspects of the school curriculum (Berberoğlu, G., & Tansel, A., 2014: 687).

Many teachers claim to keep teaching listening and speaking, but confess that they do not assess oral skills in their classrooms as Wall and Alderson (1993) claim. To place a student into an appropriate school, teachers do their best but they also neglect the skills they are supposed to give to their students. School administrators, on the other hand, desire being the best school in their region so as to show off their successful graduates and the university or college these students attend. Skipping skills that are of vital importance are not the teachers' choice at all.

A teacher shares his/her opinion about this issue in a study run by Kizildag (2009) by alleging that I think school administrators should be taught the prominence of learning English in a global world. They still believe that English is too exotic to learn for Turkey as a foreign language. It is possible to consider individual factors such as gender, interests, and abilities to play a role in school choice. School administrator, the school's sense of discipline, guidance services, the school's physical structure and facilities, the school's admission practices, the school's educational program, teaching staff and academic success are the main factors that influence families' high school decisions as emphasized by Pehlivan Aydın and Zobar (2006).

2.3. High Stakes Exams in Turkey

Placement examinations are implemented in varying ways throughout the world. In determining the future academic achievement of students, standardized tests have become a central component for many institutions (Şen, B., Uçar, E., & Delen, D., 2012: 2). Kitchen et al., (2016) explicates that the national exams in secondary schools in Turkey have a significant selection system for a small range of high school programs and

prestigious bachelor's programs. Moreover, students and instructors view the senior year not as a year for building English abilities but as a year for cramming for the exam since it is thought of as a level to a better future according to Yıldırım (2010).

Toksoz and Kilickaya (2018) summarize the high stakes exam effects in Turkey. They discuss that tests, which deal with multiple-choice questions, concentrate on recognition abilities and overlook the productive skills (writing & speaking) and the receptive skill of listening. Additionally, these tests seem to be obstacles for test takers' future personal and professional lives and they are very stressful for participants. Like this, it appears that the exams in Turkey's public and private schools solely evaluate students' reading, grammar, and vocabulary, disregarding their other receptive and productive skills, such as listening and speaking. These examinations force teachers to teach to the test, restricting the curriculum in schools. Students don't seem to be gaining the abilities necessary for language learning; instead, they seem to be mastering the format of these assessments (Toksoz, I., & Kilickaya, F., 2018).

Until the 1960s, universities accepted only some of high school graduates without an examination as OSYM (Student Selection and Placement Center). Faculties that faced with a demand exceeding their quotas generally chose by one of the following ways: accepting as many candidates as needed, accepting science or literature graduates of high schools, taking into account the quality of the education provided at the faculty; listing the applicants according to their high school graduation degree and recruiting students according to this order. With the increase of high school graduates and the right to apply for higher education to high school graduates, the methods of student selection have become inadequate to meet the needs; faculties have started to organize entrance exams suitable for their purposes. Students had to rush from city to city within the country to take the exams; the inability to attend one of the exams that may occur on the same day and time, but not the other, has caused important complaints among the candidates and their parents.

After completing the last year at high school, students enter the university placement exam initiated by YOK (The Council of Higher Education). The student selection and placement center in Turkey is concerned with the design, administration, and supervision of the marking of the grade twelve university placement exam and the placement of students in tertiary programs (Kitchen, H., Bethell, G., Fordham, E., Henderson, K., & Li, R. R., 2019: 58). The effectiveness of such placement tests has been debated. Especially language placement tests require improvement because of the fact that approaches and techniques frequently change, as Sayın and Aslan (2016) argue. Because of the negative washback effect of placement exams and other related concerns, placement tests are

harshly criticized by the teachers. In spite of the criticisms, however, Ali (2010) doesn't think there could be an alternative for OSS (student selection examination). Nevertheless, he resumes that concentrating on high-level cognitive skills and ensuring the acquisition of the skills via interactive activities instead of committing memorization would be advantageous for the students.

Since the 1960s, some universities first started to organize entrance exams for themselves; later, some universities chose to act together. The increase in the number of candidates required the preparation of multi-question and objective tests in exams, the use of informatics methods and tools in processes such as application, scoring, selection and placement, and reporting the results. In 1974, the Interuniversity Board decided to hold the university entrance exams from a single center and established the Interuniversity Student Selection and Placement Center (ÜSYM) on 19 November 1974. Student selection and placement procedures for universities were carried out by this center until 1981. In 1981, the Center was transformed into a subsidiary of the Council of Higher Education with the name of the Student Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM) with the 10th and 45th articles of the Higher Education Law numbered 2547. In the ongoing process, the institution transformed into a public institution with administrative and financial autonomy, with a special budget, and was named "Measurement, Selection and Placement Center" as Arslan (2004) maintains. There are different applications in the world regarding transition from secondary education to higher education. In our country, the university entrance system was developed with changes in the historical process and the university entrance system was finalized in 2017 (ÖSYM, n.d.).

2.3.1. High School Entrance Examinations in Turkey

Placement tests include English language exam topics which are covered through the primary education years. In the course of preparing such tests, which are considered to be important in many respects for students, parents, and school administrators, it is appropriate to examine the content, applicability, and degree to which the applicable curriculum benefits from the test, Çakır (2017) suggests. Administrators and educators frequently concentrate their efforts on test content and spend an increasing amount of time helping learners get ready for these exams as a result of the pressure to ensure that they perform well on exams, as Şenel and Tütüniş (2011) contends.

Işıklı and Tarakcioglu (2017) mention that Turkish students are required to transfer from primary to secondary education from level A2 to level B1 in accordance with commonly accepted CEFR levels. Besides, Gündüz (2010) simply justifies that a placement test should take attainment, ability, the level of motivation, and effort of the

student into account. Moreover, keeping up with the changes in the examination system requires second wind. Andrews (2004) ratifies that altering the test will alter the type of exam practice, but not the reality of exam practice.

At the end of Grade 8, Turkey traditionally has some kind of examination to decide on student placement in the various types of high schools in the country as Kitchen et al (2019) views. TEOG (transition from primary to secondary school) is one of the examinations that students have taken to attend a high school between the years of 2013-2018. It has created substantial competition for classrooms, with students and teachers expending a great deal of time to exam preparation rather than improving the skills highlighted in the curriculum (Kitchen, H., Bethell, G., Fordham, E., Henderson, K., & Li, R. R., 2019: 58).

In contradistinction to the TEOG exam, 8th-grade students choose five schools to attend around their neighborhood with the new placement system. Central and automatic placement system run by the General Directorate of Measurement, Evaluation, and Examination Services positions students following their proximity to the schools as Kitchen et al. (2019) points out. Since the possibility of quota being limited in the selected schools is viable and students could justifiably want to be assigned to the best schools, the oversubscription criteria get involved to determine the placement of a student into a school. The criteria comprise of factors which are proximity to the school geographically; having sisters or brothers at the same school or having attended the school already; students' former academic success; attendance; and date of birth with priority given to the younger students.

In Turkey, the transition exams to the Anatolian High School with its current name have continued to be held with various differences since 1955. Pass exams, which were held at the end of the 5th grade until 1998, started to be held at the end of the 8th grade after 1999, and the high schools that previously accepted students with a separate entrance exam started to accept students with a common central exam in 1999. In SBS and TEOG from 2009 to 2017, 70% of the high school placement score consisted of the score obtained in the central exam, and 30% consisted of school success score.

2018 High School Entrance Exams, on the other hand, are similar to the OKS, which was last made in 2008, with the number of schools where students will be admitted with the exam, score calculation and the way the exams are applied. Between the years of 1955 and 1999, the name of the exam was Anatolian High School exam and it used to be carried out at the end of the 5th grade. In 2000, its name changed as LGS. In 2004, the name of the exam was OKS. In 2008, it was SBS for 6th and 7th graders and there were

final OKS. In 2009, its name was still SBS but it was held at the end of the 8th grade. In 2014, it changed into TEOG. The last name of it became LGS again in 2018.

2.4. English curriculum in Turkey

Curriculum is different from syllabus, much as those two terms are perceived as interchangeable. Richard (2001) makes the senses clear as: "A syllabus is a specification of the content of a course of instruction and lists what will be taught and tested. Thus, the syllabus for a speaking course might specify the kinds of oral skills that will be taught and practiced during the course, the functions, topics, or other aspects of conversation that will be taught, and the order in which they will appear in the course. Syllabus design is the process of developing a syllabus.

Curriculum development is a more comprehensive process than syllabus design. It includes the processes that are used to determine the needs of a group of learners, to develop aims or objectives for a program to address those needs to determine an appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods, and materials, and to carry out an evaluation of the language program that results from these processes." Syllabus should involve all the necessary skills and abilities in order for the language to be ingested.

The present curricula in Turkey took its final shape after a switch from 8+4 educational model to 4+4+4 one. English language education starts at grade 2 with the adoption of new educational model. A new curriculum is composed for 2nd and 3rd grades. So, former version of the curriculum is redesigned. The new curriculum is not mint-stated when compared with the old one. Still, it has been updated taking the teachers', parents' and academicians' view into consideration.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) is followed for forming the new English curriculum. Pupils need to learn English in an authentic communicative atmosphere per week, in accordance with their grade level, and according to the necessities of the new curriculum, English should be emphasized as a communication tool, not as a topic of study, as Turkish Ministry of Education Curriculum (2018) documents.

English is taught as a compulsory lesson in Turkey. The teachers have the urgency to follow the curriculum. In 1997, a new curriculum, which gives importance to the communicative classes, was presented (Kırkgöz, 2008). 1997 curriculum was renewed in 2006. It has been in use since that time (Çal, 2010). A teacher in Çarıkçıoğlu's study (2019) opined that there is a continuous updating of the educational program in Turkey. The new program is more realistic and, compared to the former one, shows the functional

side of the language. Işık (2008) puts down the curriculum that is in use and sustains that curriculum should be organized taking cognizance of the society. For that reason alone, it is significant to take the views of the teachers who are experts in their field.

2.4.1. Communicative Components of English Curriculum in Turkey

It is crucial that students carry the spirit of positive feelings towards the aimed language as Arpacı and Bergil (2020) note. Communicative classes prejudice students in favor of the target language. For several factors, the aims of a communicative class, which are rather ideal and should be specified, are simply not considered feasible. One of the most significant reasons for this is that students have to prepare for the placement exam. Some teachers consider themselves lucky for not teaching to the 8th grader students.

Pre-service and in-service training presents new trends in English language teaching to the teachers and teacher candidates. The teachers have the necessary knowledge and motivation for CLL (Communicative Language Learning). However, there are still problems in carrying out the activities. Teachers' taking the decisions about the behaviors desired to gain students in the learning-teaching process and how to gain these behaviors will lead to differences in practice among teachers as Karabacak (2020) indicates.

Kirkgöz (2009) concurs that the majority of teachers are unable to establish the suggested communicative learning environment which is needed to promote learners' language acquisition. On the other hand, LGS exam doesn't encapsulate speaking, listening, and writing skills which in turn gives cause for not covering these skills in classes. What is more, the students, parents, and administrators support this opinion. Apart from this view, the teachers are busy with preparing their students for the voluminous exam at a rattling pace. Demir (2019) shows the evidence of this idea by marking that the teachers hardly ever have enough time to do listening, writing, or speaking activities though they would prefer to utilize such activities more in their English classes.

In a very recent study of Çakır (2017) the experiences of the teachers on the problems of teacher practices are shared. One of the teachers alludes that in the classes, they do activities so that the students could learn the phrases in each unit. Unfortunately, in doing so, the pronunciation of these words cannot be properly stressed. It is also shown that the students are unable to pronounce the terms properly and that they do not care much about it. Since listening and speaking skills are not assessed in the tests, they do not care much about the actual pronunciation of the word. Moreover, teachers typically

state that they have to use the Grammar Translation Method when lecturing because of the preparation for the exam. For students, this approach is simple since it requires grammar, translation, and vocabulary. There is no issue with too much variety. During the lecture, activities like games are not included. This case is experienced by most of the teachers. For this reason, İnceçay (2012) recommends that during fulfilment, the schools, school administrators, teachers, and students should be encouraged inasmuch as enforcing a policy is not the same as establishing it. Cheng's (1997) findings reveal that teachers may have a favorable view about change, but they still perceive it challenging to put their ideas into practice.

Recently, the ability to communicate in a second language has gained significance with the rising popularity of teaching language in a communicative way as Altiner (2018) notes. With the adoption of CLT in Turkey, more interactive and competent classroom practices are targeted. A communicative English language course aims to enable students to acquire listening-comprehension, reading comprehension, speaking, writing skills, to communicate with the language they learn, and to develop a positive attitude towards foreign language teaching. Hence, teaching English to communicate necessitates stressing more on speaking and listening skills. To acquire the target language properly, according to Sayın and Aslan (2016), the courses and the assessment exams should mainly comprise of four skills.

Teaching English has been included in the education program as of the second grade of primary school since the 2013-2014 academic years, and has been taught two hours a week. Paker (2018) upholds that it is a positive development that children encounter a second language at an early age and form a positive attitude towards it. In this way, it is aimed that children face foreign languages at an early age, and begin to develop awareness and positive attitude towards language and culture. At this level, the aim is to increase their self-confidence and motivation towards learning a foreign language with activities appropriate to children's interests, social, physical, and mental development, and also to develop a positive attitude towards learning English. For this purpose, education programs and teaching materials were prepared under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, and language learning processes of students were supported through activities such as hearing and understanding, listening and recognition, matching, and physical response, listening and verbal response.

Speaking and listening skills are prioritized in the 2nd and 3rd grades, whereas reading and writing skills are introduced when pupils proceed to higher grades. Drama, arts and crafts are promoted in the grades 2, 3, and 4 with 2 hours of class per week. In 5th and 6th grades, students are expected to improve their reading skills with the

introduction of short texts and limited writing activities. Reading is limited and writing is very limited for the 5th grade. For the 6th grade, on the other hand, reading and writing is limited. Drama and role-play activities are essential for these grades. In the grades 7th and 8th, the students should be able to read simple texts write simple stories. What is more, the students are anticipated to level up from A1 to A2 in 7th grade. Primary skills that should be emphasized are speaking and listening in 7th and 8th grades. Reading and writing skills are also crucial to foster communication in the target language. Autonomous learning and problem-solving skills are aimed at each stage. Leaving a positive washback effect is one of the curriculum's most crucial components.

English should be constantly introduced to students through audio and visual elements according to Turkish Ministry of Education Curriculum (2018). Arts and crafts, TPR, and drama are just a few of the activities that encourage enjoyment of language acquisition. Learning is more concerned with improving communication than it is with finishing curricular tasks by a certain deadline. Instead of only learning about the language, students improve their conversational abilities in English by doing things with the language.

The 5th Grade Curriculum's main goals are to improve students' enthusiasm in studying the target language and to give them the skills necessary to use the language in everyday situations. Themes for the fifth grade include the students' city of residence, health issues, regular jobs, hobbies, social activities, emotions, and sports activities. Through these themes, it is hoped that students will learn related, fundamental terms and how to pronounce them. The topics of greeting, asking permission, expressing personal opinions, wants, and needs, expressing a quantity, regularly expressing the work one does as a human, telling the time, describing what is being done at the time, and giving instructions are also covered. Utilization of targeted visual, audio, and audio-visual resources to realize these functions with a communication-focused strategy. It is intended to employ materials like fairy tales, stories, maps, image dictionaries, postcards, songs, poetry, lists, and menus in the setting of cartoons, posters, and photos. Simple, common expressions are easily understood by the student. They can identify themselves or another person and pose straightforward inquiries (such as where he lives, his connections, his assets, etc.), and respond to inquiries of the same nature. If the other individual speaks clearly and slowly, the students can communicate easily.

The curriculum choices for the sixth grade are centered on the fundamental qualities of the children, like imagination and creativity. The program's themes are chosen based on the participants' social, cognitive, and affective growth. Achievements are measured in accordance with an action-oriented teaching approach that enables students to

communicate their ideas and feelings in simple and practical ways using ordinary language. It is planned to communicate using language functions on subjects such as daily life and weather conditions. In addition to this, pupils are accountable for the environment and the society in which they live through the themes of democracy and the environment. The objective is to introduce pupils to the language through carefully chosen themes, exercises, and projects. Children can encounter stories, tables, brief poems, nursery rhymes, posters, dialogues, songs, cartoons, cartoons, postcards, text messages, notes, and texts regularly in daily life. Activities involving reading and writing are restricted to the sentence level in this environment. The main aim is to learn while having fun, and it will make it easier for them to reflect on what they learn outside of the classroom. Students are able to comprehend and employ very basic everyday language. They can make an introduction, ask basic questions (such as where the other person lives, his relationships, assets, etc.), and answer the similar questions. If the other person speaks clearly and slowly, the student can communicate easily.

One of the levels listed in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, starting at A2 (Basic) Level User is the seventh-grade curriculum. Listening and speaking, followed by reading and writing, are the abilities that should be fostered in students of that age range. At this grade level, learners demonstrate predicted growth in areas such as writing, oral interaction, oral expression, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension. Themes/topics that make up the program's content and communicative activities were chosen after taking the students' interests and developmental traits into account. The subjects were organized using the "from close to far/known to unknown" premise. In addition, consideration was given to this age group's developmental characteristics. The curriculum for the seventh grade includes topics like physical characteristics, sports, biographies, wild animals, television programs, holidays, dreams, public structures, the environment, and planets. The communication functions include characterizing individuals and characters, offering straightforward comparisons, discussing past events, discussing everyday activities and routines, and providing straightforward suggestions. Students use straightforward language and conversational elements such as personal and family details, shopping, the immediate environment, and work. They can communicate by engaging in simple, everyday activities that only call for the exchange of simple information. They should be able to explain the subjects that relate to their fundamental needs and give straightforward descriptions of their surroundings.

The A2 level, one of the levels identified in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, corresponds to the eighth-grade curriculum. For students in

that age group, listening and speaking abilities should be fostered first, followed by reading and writing. The curriculum's overarching learning objectives are the same as those for the seventh grade. Students will achieve expected acquisitions such as listening comprehension, verbal interaction, oral expression, reading comprehension, and writing abilities after completing the eighth-grade English curriculum. Beginning in the second semester of the sixth grade, teaching includes all four skills. The 8th graders in the program have advanced beyond the level of simple sentences in terms of writing, and different sorts of text tasks for different objectives have also come to the forefront. It has been planned to use specific tasks and activities as the foundation for students' language production in order to generate a program that can enhance their current language proficiency. The developmental characteristics of children in this age group, who are in the first stage of transitioning to maturity, are primarily taken into consideration when determining the program's content. The 8th grade curriculum includes the following themes and topics: friendship, youth, cooking, phone calls, the internet, adventure, travel, sightseeing, housework, science, and natural disasters. The functions of communication include offering excuses, expressing preferences, accepting and rejecting, and apologizing. Students communicate with one another using straightforward language and can comprehend commonly used terms such as family information and shopping. The students should be able to communicate through simple sentences about everyday activities that call for the straightforward sharing of educational knowledge.

2.4.2. LGS Exam and English Curriculum Relationship

It is generally agreed that teachers adjust their teaching strategies and lesson content to meet the requirements of the test when they are aware that their learners will be taking a certain exam, according to Taylor (2005). In Turkey, the first introduction to a placement test is in grade 8 when students are in their last year in the primary education. They are supposed to be placed in a high school according to the results of their exams. The curriculum for the grades 6 to 8 is more convoluted than the lower grades and the role of English classes for these grades is to extend the basic communicative skills the students have learned through the incorporation of the four language skills, as Kirkgöz (2007) indicates. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) conducts the national placement exam in Turkey. Akçay (2014) depicts this situation as entering a higher grade of the educational level at the end of the stage students stand in order to decide the degree of success.

Paker (2012) discusses the problems and reasons that drive these problems in his study. In all conscience, he disserts that if you do not measure the four skills even though

you teach them, after a while students start to neglect the skill that you did not measure. At the end of a certain period, students learn only the skills that have been measured and do not need to learn the parts that are not measured at all. In fact, this is also experienced in the language learning process in Turkey. In other words, since only reading skills are measured in language proficiency exams at the national level, those who are successful in these exams can mostly answer the multiple-choice questions that are asked in writing, but cannot hear when they are told in English, they cannot express themselves and organize their feelings and thoughts. They cannot write their opinions or even letters. In short, they cannot communicate even at the beginner level of English. This situation is a product of such exams. Whereas, if such exams are used for communication purposes based on four skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, English learners will also prepare themselves for these skills and learn to communicate in four skills. To exemplify, a teacher in the study of Çakır (2017) claims that the TEOG exam does not enhance speaking and writing abilities in particular. In the textbooks, however, there are so many good activities aimed at developing these learners' skills that they do not have time to apply them. Besides, teachers modeling such national exams will also place emphasis on measuring the four skills in their exams and guide their students to learn English for communicative purposes. This signals a gap between the ideal official policy endorsed by MoNE and substantial classroom activities as Kirkgöz (2009) acknowledges. As a result, all stakeholders who learn and teach English should first consider English as a communication tool and organize all learning and teaching processes for this purpose. Otherwise, this situation will continue as a vicious circle in the current system (Paker, T. 2012: 93).

Akalın and Zengin (2007) confirm that people in Turkey, in addition to the advantages they will bring in professional, academic, and commercial terms, with their sincerity, which is prone to intercultural communication, look favorably on foreign languages, especially English. Although Turkey often undergoes some changes in an educational context, there is still a perception of unsatisfactoriness in terms of communicating in English. In the best-case scenario, students graduate as an individual who can understand the English language and communicate in it to some extent. Unfortunately, these students are few in number. The reasons behind this picture are deliberated by some researchers and teachers. Even though the public puts the blame on the teachers, Çarıkcioğlu (2019) calls attention to the other considerations. She expresses that to understand the reasons for the problem that are faced in the foreign language learning process, some other areas are needed to be examined other than the teacher, learner, and the education system.

The support of the school management and organization has an important place in overcoming the hindrances faced in the foreign language learning process. In this sense, Çarıkcioğlu (2019) clarifies that it should be admitted that in order education system to meet the expectations, the role of renovative school administrators, well as the teacher and the student, is also crucial. Hence, if the school administrates stand by the teachers, the process would be more painless. Brown (1990) proves this idea by explicitly saying that tests will allow language teachers and administrators to make responsible decisions about students, curriculum, and future policy if used effectively.

LGS exam was designed with the intension of raising individuals who have strong understanding skills, and question forms are formed in accordance with our education system as Mehrli and Alpkaya (2021) document. LGS examination encompasses the 8th grade curriculum topics. LGS examination focuses on 10 questions parallel with the units covered throughout the academic year. The questions are aggregated from the 8th grade units. The topics in the first term of the 8th grade are as follows:

Unit 1: Friendship

Unit 2: Teen Life

Unit 3: Cooking

Unit 4: Communication

Unit 5: The Internet

The second term topics are as follows:

Unit 6: Adventures

Unit 7: Tourism

Unit 8: Chores

Unit 9: Science

Unit 10: Natural Forces

The units of the 8th grade concur with the topics of the curriculum. The questions are in test format. In addition to this, the exam doesn't evaluate speaking and listening skills while the English curriculum objectives place special emphasis on speaking and listening skills. The curriculum advises setting listening and speaking skills above reading and writing skills to achieve communication in the 8th grades and minor grades. Listening comprehension, verbal interaction, oral expression, reading comprehension, and writing abilities are among the expected learning outcomes of the curriculum. The high school entrance exam, on the other hand, doesn't engage with the evaluation of the acquisition of the related skills and communication that is targeted, attendantly.

2.5. Studies Related to English Curriculum and Exam Preparation Process in Turkey

Test content, skill requirements, and format frequently have an impact on results as Kılıçkaya (2016) explains. Many examinations use multiple choice and gap fill questions to measure grammar, reading, and vocabulary skills, which prioritizes usability. These exams disregard speaking and listening skills and do not place much emphasis on communication skills. Additionally, the majority of exams aim to evaluate vocabulary and grammar at the word or sentence level while omitting the discourse level as for Kılıçkaya (2016).

Güler (2022) compares Finland, China, Holland and Turkey in terms of primary school foreign language curriculum. In his study, it is shown that China and Turkey have similar aim in their general objectives which is to make students achieve communicational skills. It is also found that in Turkey's curriculum, grammar is not stressed which is similar to Finland's and Holland's curricula. Indeed, there are common qualities in these countries' curriculum like being student-centered, emphasizing oral communication in the foreground, using authentic materials and creating incentive atmosphere.

In a study conducted by Palabıyık and Çakmak (2021), the teachers agree on the point that listening and speaking aims are possible to achieve. Furthermore, educational attainments are found to be consistent with the general objectives of the curriculum. The teachers are of the opinion that the curriculum encourages the use of various approaches and techniques. Utilizing from English songs and games are inspired in the classes as teachers' state. The use of target language is also prevalent in the classes of the teachers in Palabıyık and Çakmak's (2021) study.

Kerimoğlu (2021) evaluates the 8th grade English curriculum and it is found out that curriculum is in accordance with the development of the basic language skills of the students. Dissimilarly, the teachers partly agree that curriculum is prepared to improve all four skills of the students equally and the students can communicate using simple sentences at the end. The participants also partly agree that the program fulfills the needs of language learning and the students can improve their speaking and listening skills. The obtained level of the students conforms with the aimed level at the end of the term partially, according to the views of the teachers.

Participant teachers in a study carried out by Özden (2019) find the update in the 2nd grade English curriculum necessary and educational attainments are efficacious. Moreover, the methods, techniques and materials are used effectively by the teachers. Educational attainments are found to be simplified. Besides, weekly class hours are found insufficient by the teachers.

Turkey's educational policy is discussed in a study by Çarıkçıoğlu (2019), and the teachers take the view that foreign language educational policy is not sufficient and should be altered and updated. Likewise, four skills are not attached importance in the curriculum and the importance given to the grammar teaching is decreased, according to the perceptions of the teachers.

In a study by Yıldırım (2010), the teachers have identified a number of detrimental effects of testing, including curriculum constriction, teaching to the test, decreased teacher morale, increased student and teacher stress, etc. Despite the fact that students devote a lot of time and effort to studying reading, grammar, and vocabulary, exams have some negative consequences on their grasp of these three language skills. The texts used in the exam for reading, according to teachers, are quite brief (often one or two paragraphs) and limited in terms of type, thus they don't accurately represent the length and diversity of passages in real life.

In Karabacak's (2020) study, the teachers state that vocabulary and grammar teaching is important. It is also shared that there is not allocated time for fostering speaking, listening, writing and reading skills. 3 of the teachers clearly state that the time allocated for each student is also limited. Negative washback effects of the exam are also debated in the relevant study. The participant teachers publish that the students are stressful because of their parents' pressure. The student participants in a study carried out by Karanfil (2020) also express that they are highly anxious because of LGS examination.

In Çakır's study (2017), one of the English language teachers states that teachers are made responsible for the failure of the students. If this pressure is not because of the administrators or parents, it is because of the teacher himself. The same teacher points out that most of the teachers are of the opinion that if their students are successful, they are successful teachers, too; which is inadmissible.

Sayın and Aslan (2016) reveal that in the light of their study on the LYS-5 exam that measures foreign languages for university entrance, four skills are ignored and are not only omitted from the LYS-5 exam but also the students' and teachers' studies and classroom practices. As a consequence, students only concentrate their studies on grammar activities and vocabulary memorization. This is a strong indication that the LYS-5 placement exam is not an inclusive one and does not assess language acquisition competency. Likewise, one of the significant problems encountered in the foreign language teaching process, as stated above, is that students studying in the 8th grade in the secondary education exams prioritize learning test techniques rather than learning a foreign language. Keeping these in mind, final year students both in primary schools,

namely 8th graders, and in high schools don't have English language education in a planned way determined at the very beginning of the year.

The results of a study executed by Tılfarlıoğlu and Öztürk (2016) display that 13.3 percent of teachers announce that they never do speaking activities in the classroom and 18.8 percent of them express that they hardly ever do speaking activities in the ELT classroom. This suggests that one-third of learners attempt to learn a foreign language without communicating or speaking the target language.

Kılıçkaya (2016) reveals that the teachers could not teach many subjects they have to teach as they want due to the students' obligation to prepare for the exam; especially the listening, writing, and speaking skills could not be provided to eighth-grade students. While most of the classrooms are in the same case with this example, the students feel that they would never achieve producing some piece of a communicative sample but perceive the language in a way, at least. Akalın and Zengin (2007) summarize this idea by notifying that just as a teacher's beliefs, goals, attitudes, and decisions about teaching affect her teaching, a student's beliefs, goals, attitudes, and decisions about teaching and learning affect her learning.

Further to those examples, Isik (2008) claims that there is no coordination between the Ministry of National Education and the Council of Higher Education and what is worse, the changes and improvements cannot be adapted to the foreign language education system.

III. CHAPTER

3. METHODOLOGY

This study examines questions related to the high school entrance exam and EFL classroom practices in Turkey. The incentive behind the current study is to unveil the effects of the LGS exam on the implementation of the English curriculum. Qualitative and quantitative strategy both in tandem are employed to shed light on the EFL teachers' instructional practices with regard to their perception of high school entrance exam and curriculum implementation connection. In this chapter, the design of the study is presented. Secondly, the participants and setting are introduced. After that, in-depth information is given about the data collection tools that are questionnaire and interview. Finally, the data analysis process is scrutinized step by step.

3.1. Research Design

The justification for combining quantitative and qualitative data in one study stems from the fact that neither quantitative nor qualitative methodologies are sufficient to capture the patterns and specifics of a situation on their own (Ivankova, N. V., Creswell. J. V., & Stick. S. L. 2006). In an attempt to determine the washback effects of the LGS exam by getting the views of the EFL teachers', this study seeks to gather data for which mixed approach is adopted. Mixed methods combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches (Tashakkori, A., Teddlie, C., & Teddlie, C. B., 1998.), and it is crystal clear that the current study is a mixed one by its nature.

An online questionnaire is utilized to collect quantitative data. To gather qualitative data, on the other hand, interviews are utilized. For the quantitative data, cross-sectional design is adopted. Olsen and George (2005) represent the type of this research study as follows:

"The entire population is selected and data are collected to help answer the research questions of interest. Its name comes from the gathering of the information that presents what is going on at only one point in time."

Interviews are commonly applied to find out the experiences of people and their inner senses, manners, and feelings (Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. M. 2009). In this connection, the teachers filled the online questionnaire on their willingness at first. Then, ten volunteer teachers that noted their e-mail addresses at the end of the questionnaire to

be the part of the one-to-one interviews voluntarily, are reached. Qualitative approach of the study is based on the grounded theory of sociologists Glaser and Strauss (2017).

On-line questionnaire was taken from an MA thesis named "Communicative Language Teaching in Turkey: Teachers' Views and Classroom Practices" (Hunutlu, 2011) and the interview questions were adopted from another MA thesis named "The washback effects of high school entrance examination (LGS) on the teaching and learning processes of English language education in a public middle school in Turkey" (Demir, 2019). Necessary permissions were received by means of e-mail in the 30th of November 2020 for the interview questions. For using the questionnaire questions, the permission was obtained in the 30th of January 2021 (see Appendix). To conduct this study, ethical permission was obtained from Amasya University Institute of Social Sciences in 02.02.2021. Besides, permission was taken from MoNE in 17.01.2022 in order to gather the views of the teachers.

3.2. Participants and Setting

Purposive sampling method is applied which is a form of non-probability sampling. In purposive selection, the primary objective is to concentrate on particular characteristics of a population (Rai & Thapa 2015), wherefore purposive sampling method matches the needs of the current study.

The sample consists of 201 EFL teachers who work in secondary schools in Turkey. The teachers are working in provinces of Amasya, Ankara, Antalya, Balıkesir, Giresun, İstanbul, Konya, Manisa, Samsun and Sivas. EFL teachers are reached for the questionnaire and the volunteers to take part in the interviews are asked to leave their e-mail addresses at the end of the questionnaire. Among them, 10 volunteers are kindly requested to have an interview. Pre-determined questions are followed in a conversational manner which paves the way for semi structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are applied to the volunteers and detailed notes are taken during the interviews.

Purposive sampling method is applied to select the participants, as it is the most efficient method of non-probability sampling when it is appropriate to research a specific cultural field with knowledgeable individuals engaged in the process (Tongco, M. D. C. 2007). The participants who don't give approval are not targeted for this study. Besides, the volunteers are assured that their names would remain anonymous. They are also ensured that they can leave the meeting at any time they desire.

One-sample T-test is applied and it is found out that items differ meaningfully from each other ($p < .05$).

Table 1. Gender Distribution of Questionnaire Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Female	139	69.2
Male	62	30.8
Total	201	100.0

Table 1 proves that 139 (69.2 %) of the questionnaire participants who return the questionnaire are female, while 62 (30.8 %) are male.

Table 2. Age Distribution of Questionnaire Participants

	Frequency	Percent
20- 25	87	43.3
26- 30	69	34.3
31- 35	29	14.4
36- 40	10	5.0
41- 45	5	2.5
46- Above	1	.5
Total	201	100.0

As Table 2 shows, 87 (43.3 %) of the participants, which could be thought as the majority, are between the ages of 20 – 25. Of 201 teachers, 69 (34.3 %) are from 26 to 30. 29 (14.4 %) of the participants are between the age range of 31 – 35. 10 (5.0 %) of the participant teachers are between 36 – 40. Few teachers' ages range between 41 – 45. 1 (.5 %) of the teachers are at the age of 46 or above.

Table 3. Questionnaire Participants' Year of Experience

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 4 years	112	55.7
4- 9 years	54	26.9
10- 14 years	25	12.4
15 or more years	10	5.0
Total	201	100.0

It is clear in the table 3 that 112 (55.7 %) teachers who volunteer to fill out the questionnaire part have less than 4 years of experience in teaching English. Among them, 54 (26.9 %) have the experience of 4 – 9 years. 25 (12.4 %) of the participants have from 10 to 14 years of experience. Lastly, 10 (5.0 %) of the teachers have at least 15 (or more) years of experience in the field.

Table 4. Questionnaire Participants' Department of Graduation

	Frequency	Percent
ELT	161	80.1
ELL	26	12.9
Translation- Interpreting	6	3.0
Linguistics- Philology	4	2.0
Other	4	2.0
Total	201	100.0

161 (80.1 %) of the teachers are graduates of the English Language Teaching Programme. Having the second predominance, 26 (12.9 %) teacher participants are English Language and Literature graduates. 4 (2.0 %) are Linguistics / Philology graduates and the other 4 (2.0 %) are graduates of other department/s that are not given as an option among the questions.

Table 5. Gender Distribution of Interview Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Female	7	70
Male	3	30
Total	10	100

Table 5 above shows that out of 10 participants, 7 (70 %) are female and 3 (30 %) are male. As participation is voluntary, it can be concluded that female teachers outnumbered the male teachers in terms of voluntary interview.

Table 6. Interview Participants' Year/s of Experience

	Frequency	Percent
0-5 years	6	60
6-10 years	3	30
11 years-Above	1	10
Total	10	100

Table 6 highlights that 6 (60 %) of the participants have experience of 0-5 years in the field. 3 (30 %) of the participants have 6-10 years of experience as an English Language teacher. Only 1 (10 %) of the participants is working more than 11 years, which reports that novice teachers are more willing to participate in the interviews.

Table 7. Interview Participants' Graduation Department

	Frequency	Percent
ELT	8	80
ELL	1	10
Linguistics	1	10
Total	10	100

Findings in Table 7 demonstrate that 8 (80 %) of the interviewees are ELT department graduates. Among 10 teachers, 1 (10 %) is ELL and the other 1 (10 %) is Linguistics department graduates.

Table 8. Interview Participants' Year of Experience on High-School Preparation Process

	Frequency	Percent
0-1 Years	5	50
1-2 Years	4	40
2 Years-Above	1	10
Total	10	100

As confirmed in Table 8, 5 (50 %) of the volunteers are preparing their students for LGS for 0-1 years. 4 (40 %) of them have an experience of 1-2 years on high-school preparation. 1 (10 %) of the volunteers has more than 2 years of experience.

3.3. Data Collection

At the core of this study are on-line environments which are the best options to collect the data in Covid-19 days. Quantitative data is gathered in a span of 2 months. The window of time for gathering qualitative data is 1 month, on the other hand. Both qualitative and quantitative data is collected on-line lest the teachers might feel uneasy about the Coronavirus outbreak, which will go against the ethical perception of this thesis.

Qualitative data is recruited via Zoom, a cloud-based video communication application. While doing the interview, sharing the view is precluded with the will of both the interviewer and the interviewee. In the light of these, notes are taken whilst the teacher participants are responding to the questions.

3.4. Data Collection Tools

For quantitative data, on-line questionnaire is utilized. Semi-structured interview is applied in order to gather the qualitative data. Detailed information about the data collection tools is presented under the related titles.

Validity and reliability are ensured by 2 colleagues and an expert who run through the codes and categories. Instructors who run through the codes and categories work at a state university in Turkey.

3.4.1. Questionnaire

201 EFL teachers working at secondary schools throughout Turkey filled questionnaires for the present study. The questionnaire is adopted from a thesis named "Communicative Language Teaching in Turkey: Teachers' Views and Classroom Practices". It has 15 items and at the very beginning, 4 items seek answers for the participants' profile. The first item reveals the gender, while the second one tries to discover the age range of the teacher participants. The third item polls the department of graduation, and the fourth item questions the year of experience. The choices for the first item are female and male. For the second item, the participants can choose their age ranges as 20 – 25, 26 – 30, 31 – 35, 36 – 40, 41 – 45 and 46 – Above. So as to mark their department of graduation, participants have 5 choices that are English Language Teaching, English Language and Literature, Translation and Interpreting,

Linguistics/Philology and Other. The teachers rate their year of experience as follows: Less than 4 years, 4 – 9 years, 10 – 14 years, 15 or more years.

The questionnaire goes ahead with 11 items that deal with the teachers' practices in EFL classes. The first item questions the use of target language in the classroom. The second item is about the introduction of the textbook's content and following of the curriculum. The third item deals with the students' use of target language in the classes. The fourth item is concerned with the students' writing practices. The fifth item, on the other hand, examines if the teachers inquire about the students' reading comprehension. The sixth question searches for if the teachers use target language, body language, pictures, videos, or realia while teaching vocabulary. The seventh question investigates teachers' use of English while teaching grammar. The eighth question asks whether the teachers use task-based activities or not. The ninth question is concerned with the use of songs and games in the classes and the tenth one deals with the use of movies and dramas. The last item is concerned with the pair and group work utilization in the classes. Items of the questionnaire are scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always).

At the end of the questionnaire, a box is allocated for teachers to leave their e-mail addresses so as to be reached for the interview section of the study. That part is not obligatory to fill in and it is especially exuded that it is on a voluntary basis.

3.4.2. Interview

Interviews are so prevalent for qualitative researchers that many qualitative methods base heavily or solely upon them (Knox, S., & Burkard, A. W. 2009). The interviews are conducted according to the course of the study. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews are utilized during the data collection process. The interview questions are from a thesis named "The washback effects of high school entrance examination (LGS) on the teaching and learning processes of English language education in a public middle school in Turkey", and the necessary permission is obtained (see Appendix). Due to the practical constraints, the thesis does not engage with face-to-face interviews. The participants are aimed to be recruited from web tools, especially via social media. The reader should bear in mind that the study is based on the teachers' views owing to the fact that the students are not aware of the meaning and value of communicative classroom practices and implementation of curriculum at that age. To this end, a wide coverage of teacher views is targeted to be included in the study.

A convenient date is assigned to fulfil the interview considering the schedule of the teachers. Interviews are held in the English language. The informants' personal

information and responses are warranted to remain anonymous. The table below connotes the period of time put in for each participant.

Table 9. Length of the Interviews

Participants	Durations
Participant D	23 minutes
Participant F	19 minutes
Participant I	16 minutes
Participant M	28 minutes
Participant O	24 minutes
Participant S	25 minutes
Participant T	18 minutes
Participant Y	26 minutes
Participant Z	21 minutes
Participant U	18 minutes

The entire duration of the interviews is 218 minutes. The interviews are read several times after redaction. The participants are ensured to leave the meeting at any time they desire.

The interview items enclose 7 open-ended questions. The first question aims to cogitate the teachers' year of experience and undergraduate department (also graduate and doctorate if available). The second question is about the teachers' experience of preparing their students for the LGS exam and if their answer is yes, how long they have been preparing their students. The third question deals with the quality of the preparation of the students for the exam. The fourth question seeks answers for how the preparation process affects the way teachers teach. The fifth question asks whether the grades diverge in teaching style. The sixth question is concerned with the effect LGS has on the English level of the students. The last item questions the positive and negative aspects of the preparation process for the LGS exam. As the interview is a semi-structured one, the questions and answers vary according to the course of the interview.

3.5. Data analysis

Online questionnaires and interviews are used during the current study. Likert type scale is applied as a research instrument in order to pick up the teachers' reactions on their classroom habits. To analyze the data collected from the teachers, the responses of the teachers for each statement and their frequencies and percentages are reckoned and

presented in tables. Since SPSS is the most widely used predictive data analysis software application in educational science (Muijs, D., 2010) the statistics are analyzed through SPSS 11, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Descriptive statistical analysis is put to use for the analysis of frequencies.

Interviews are applied to the participants who agree to be the participant of the study and interview notes are analyzed. The interview transcriptions are analyzed individually and separately. Deductive approach is employed to analyze the gathered data. Content analyses of the interviews are meticulously done by the researcher using NVivo, which can analyze all the data and assist to organize, analyze, visualize and report the data (Dhakal, 2022). Themes are effectuated on the basis of grounded theory. The use of constant comparative analysis is addressed in this study, which originated from the grounded theory. By comparing, it is possible to constitute a theory by categorizing, coding, delineating categories and connecting them (Boeije, 2002).

IV. CHAPTER

4. FINDINGS

This chapter primarily presents the statistical findings of the questionnaire and one-to-one semi-structured interviews in line with the research questions. As aforementioned, SPSS data analysis software application is taken advantage of inasmuch as it is useful for analyzing the quantitative data. Descriptive analysis is benefited from to analyze the data with the help of SPSS application. Alongside of this, semi-structured interviews are analyzed using content analysis.

In the pages that follow, analyzes of the levels, frequency and percentage values of the items on the questionnaire exist. Additionally, categories, codes and quotes of the interviews are also shared in accordance with the research questions.

4.1. Research Question 1: To What Extent are the Aims of the Curriculum Followed in EFL Classes?

The related items of the questionnaire are debated in this part. The first item of the questionnaire pertains to the use of English in classes.

Table 10. Teachers' Use of English

	Frequency	Percent
Never	4	2.0
Infrequently	22	10.9
Sometimes	50	24.9
Frequently	95	47.3
Always	30	14.9
Total	201	100.0

It can be seen from the data in Table 10 that almost half of the participants (47.3 %), 95 participants namely, use English frequently in their classes. 50 (24.9 %) participants sometimes use the target language. 30 (14.9 %) of them always take advantage of English language in their classes. 22 (10.9 %) of the teacher participants infrequently utilize the language. 4 (2.0 %) of the participants selected never for this item, which indicate they never use English in their classes.

The second item of the questionnaire is linked with following the curriculum.

Table 11. Teachers' Following of the Curriculum

	Frequency	Percent
Never	3	1.5
Infrequently	2	1.0
Sometimes	16	8.0
Frequently	58	28.9
Always	122	60.7
Total	201	100.0

Table 11 provides an overview of the degree to which informants follow the curriculum. The better part of the teachers, which are 122 (60.7 %), always follow the curriculum. 58 (28.9 %) of the participants follow the curriculum frequently. 16 (8.0 %) of the teacher participants sometimes follow the curriculum. 3 (1.5) of the participants never follow the curriculum and 2 (1.0 %) follow the curriculum infrequently.

4.2. Research Question 2: Are the Classes with the 8th Grades Communicative?

The second research question is "Are the classes with the 8th grades communicative?". The third item of the questionnaire is "I have my students speak English in classes".

Table 12. Students' Frequency of Speaking English

	Frequency	Percent
Never	1	.5
Infrequently	23	11.4
Sometimes	65	32.3
Frequently	44	21.9
Always	68	33.8
Total	201	100.0

Table 12 presents above that 68 (33.8 %) of the informants always have their students speak English. In a similar vein, 65 (32.3 %) of the participants have their learners speak English. Among 201 participators, 44 (21.9 %) frequently have their students speak English in their classes. 23 (11.4) of them infrequently have their learners speak English in class. 1 (.5 %) of the teacher participants never have his or her students speak English.

The fourth item aims to assess the writing practice of the students from the teachers' point of view.

Table 13. Students' Frequency of Writing

	Frequency	Percent
Never	6	3.0
Infrequently	56	27.9
Sometimes	91	45.3
Frequently	37	18.4
Always	11	5.5
Total	201	100.0

As shown in Table 13, 91 (45.3 %) of the teachers sometimes have their students write an essay or a story. 56 (27.9 %) of them infrequently have their learners write a story or an essay. Among them, 37 (18.4 %) frequently have their students writing practice. 11 (5.5 %) teachers always make their students write a story or an essay. 6 (3.0 %) of the participators never make use of writing practices.

The fifth item is "I have my students talk about the story they read".

Table 14. Students' Frequency of Speaking on a Story

	Frequency	Percent
Never	6	3.0
Infrequently	73	36.3
Sometimes	71	35.3
Frequently	36	17.9
Always	15	7.5
Total	201	100.0

It can be seen from the data in table 14 that 73 (36.3 %) of the participators infrequently have their students talk about the story that is read by the students. Comparably, 71 (35.3 %) of the teachers sometimes have their learners talk about the story. Among 201 participants, 36 (17.9 %) teachers' students frequently talk about the story they read. 15 (7.5 %) teacher participants always have their learners talk about the story they read and 6 (3.0 %) of the teachers never have their students talk about the story read by the students.

The ninth item is "I use English songs or games".

Table 15. Teachers' Use of English Songs or Games

	Frequency	Percent
Never	2	1.0
Infrequently	16	8.0
Sometimes	37	18.4
Frequently	88	43.8
Always	58	28.9
Total	201	100.0

In Table 15, it is explicit that 88 (43.8 %) of the teachers frequently use English songs or games in their classes. What is more, 58 (28.9 %) always use English songs or games. The third maximum number is 37 (18.4 %), with the choice of "sometimes". 16 (8.0 %) participants infrequently have English songs or games in the classroom. 2 (1.0 %) of the teachers never use English games or songs in their classroom.

The tenth item is linked with the use of English movies or dramas.

Table 16. Teachers' Use of English Movies or Dramas

	Frequency	Percent
Never	2	1.0
Infrequently	21	10.4
Sometimes	31	15.4
Frequently	78	38.8
Always	69	34.3
Total	201	100.0

As table 16 demonstrates, 78 (38.8 %) teachers frequently use English movies or dramas in the classroom. Moreover, 69 (34.3 %) of the informants always use English dramas or movies. On the flipside, 31 (15.4 %) teacher respondents sometimes make use of English movies or dramas in the class. Among 201 participators, 21 (10.4 %) infrequently give place to English movies or dramas and 2 (1.0 %) never use these items.

The last item is "I use pair work or group work in English".

Table 17. Use of Pair or Group Work

	Frequency	Percent
Never	3	1.5
Infrequently	19	9.5
Sometimes	34	16.9
Frequently	54	26.9
Always	91	45.3
Total	201	100.0

Inspection of the Table 17 expresses that 91 (45.3 %) teacher participators always use pair work or group work in English. 54 (26.9 %), on the other side, frequently use pair work or group work. 34 (16.9 %) attendants sometimes use group or pair work in the classroom. 19 (9.5 %) respondents mark “infrequently” for implying their use of group or pair work in the class. 3 (1.5 %) teacher participants never use group or pair work according to the answers.

4.3. Research Question 3: Is there a Relationship between LGS and Classroom Practices?

Along with the third research question, both quantitative and qualitative findings are revealed in this part. The sixth item of the questionnaire examines whether the participants teach vocabulary by using the target language, body language, pictures, videos or realia.

Table 18. Teachers' Frequency of Teaching Vocabulary Using Communicative Items

	Frequency	Percent
Never	3	1.5
Infrequently	62	30.8
Sometimes	72	35.8
Frequently	48	23.9
Always	16	8.0
Total	201	100.0

It is apparent from Table 18 that 72 (35.8 %) of the attendants select “sometimes” as for the related item. 62 (30.8 %) of the participators infrequently use target language, body language, pictures, videos or realia to teach vocabulary. 48 (23.9 %) teachers frequently use target language, body language, pictures, videos or realia in order to teach

vocabulary. 3 (1.5 %) of the informants opt for “never” to remark their use of target language, body language, pictures, videos or realia for vocabulary teaching.

The seventh item associates with explaining English grammar in English.

Table 19. Teachers' Explanation of English Grammar in English

	Frequency	Percent
Never	14	7.0
Infrequently	64	31.8
Sometimes	61	30.3
Frequently	41	20.4
Always	21	10.4
Total	201	100.0

Data from this table display that 64 (31.8 %) of the teachers explain English grammar in English infrequently. Correlatively, 61 (30.3 %) of the respondents sometimes explain English grammar in English. Out of 201 participants, 41 (20.4 %) of them frequently explain English grammar in English. 21 (10.4 %) of the attendants choose “always” to indicate their explaining English grammar in English. 14 (7.0 %) of the teachers never explain English grammar in English.

The eighth item is relevant to using communicative activities in the classroom.

Table 20. Teachers' Use of Communicative Activities

	Frequency	Percent
Never	3	1.5
Infrequently	21	10.4
Sometimes	41	20.4
Frequently	101	50.2
Always	35	17.4
Total	201	100.0

Table 20 is quite revealing in that more than one half of (50.2 %) the teachers frequently use communicative activities in their classes. 41 (20.4 %) of the participant teachers sometimes use communicative activities in the class. 35 (17.4 %), on the other hand, choose “always” choice to remark that they give place to communicative activities in their classes. 21 (10.4 %) of 201 participants infrequently apply communicative activities in the classroom. Being the minority, 3 (1.5 %) attendants never make use of communicative activities in their classroom.

During the interviews, the teachers are asked “How is your process of preparing the students for the exam?” as the first question. The findings demonstrate that 6 of the teachers’ foci are on the LGS exam as they state that they implement their classes in an exam-oriented way. Among 10 teachers, 4 conduct their classes in a communication-based way, giving less emphasis on the exam. Still, both exam-oriented and communication-based groups follow curriculum since LGS encompasses curriculum aims.

Table 21. Findings About Teaching Process

Categories	Codes	Participants
Test-Oriented		(6)
	Introducing Vocabulary	M, O, S, T, D
	Introducing Grammar	O, S
	Applying Pilot Tests	F, M, O, S, T
Communication-Based		(4)
	Introducing Unit	Y, Z, U
	Following The Course book	İ, Y, Z, U
	Applying Extra Activities	Y, U
	Applying Pilot Tests	Y, Z, U

Some of the quoted sentences are below in the table.

Table 22. Quotes in Accordance with the Codes for the 1st Question

Codes	Quotes
Introducing Vocabulary	I teach them vocabulary, just vocabulary of course. Because the exam format and questions evaluate students’ vocabulary knowledge, not grammar knowledge. I teach them grammar superficially when needed. We focus on statistics and graphics, also. Because there are lots of questions about the statistics.
Introducing Grammar	Grammar is important for the students for their general understanding of the passages and the questions.
Applying Pilot Tests	We focus on mostly reading skill, generally, study on multiple choice questions and tests. We try to prepare the students for an exam with mock exams. It is an exam centered process.
Introducing Unit	First, I start to teach the key vocabulary by using videos and PowerPoint presentations. Then, I use the reading texts and dialogues from their course book for comprehension, and if there are grammar points that I have to teach, I review the grammar from the text and dialogues, and then, I let them make similar sentences by using the vocabulary and the grammar points. We sometimes listen to the listening part. And then, we write the listening parts in their notebooks because some of the vocabulary which are asked in the exam was from the listening scripts. And finally, I give a series of tests from other different sources.

Table 22 continued

Following the Course book		Firstly, I introduce the unit and the related vocabulary item to my students. And I show a short video or some photos to get attention of them for the unit. And then we start with the book. I follow the curriculum, mostly. Because the exam covers the course book units. And I follow the units. I follow the activity. And then we go on with the test about the units. We analyze the previous years' exam questions. And then I do some examinations. And we finish the unit. I am following our course book because all the vocabulary are in it so I am following our course book and I have my students solve English questions.
Applying Activities	Extra	I follow the curriculum. At the beginning of every unit, I give them the new words and we play games with them, with new words. Then I teach them the subject. At the end of the unit, we start the tests.

The majority of teachers remark that they introduce the unit, primarily. Subsequently, they apply pilot tests to see their students' level. They also state that they abide by the English curriculum in their classes.

Throughout the interviews, the participant teachers are posed question 2 which is "Does the preparation process affect the way you teach?".

Table 23. Findings About Teachers' Changing Their Teaching Style for LGS

Categories	Codes	Participants
Yes		(8)
	School Management's Pressure	U, S, O, M
	Parents' Pressure	U, M
	Students' Pressure	S, M
	Limited English Class Hours	U, T, D, Z, M, F, S
No		(2)
	Communicative Activities	I
	Curriculum Activities	Y

A considerable number of teachers change their teaching style when they are teaching to 8th grade students. Those 8 teachers debate the reasons of their change in style and it is found out that there are four main reasons behind the changes. 4 teachers mention that the school management waits the teachers to focus on the exam which is important for their school's fame. Besides, as 2 of the teachers share, parents also feel free to have right to interrogate teachers about the pilot test results. What is more, the 2 of the teachers report that they also have student pressure as the students don't want to learn what is not involved in LGS exam. Of 7 teachers that change their teaching style, 6 discuss the weekly class hours which is, according to them, is limited.

On the other hand, 2 of the English teachers don't have any change because of the LGS exam as they state. One of them also remarks that following the curriculum is

enough for preparing them for the exam. The other teacher that doesn't change the style utters that, communicative activities in 8th grade should be prioritized in the classes like the other grades. Nevertheless, those 2 teachers are of the opinion that class hours are limited to follow and implement the curriculum wholly. They state that they bring extra activities to the classroom. That's why there is a lack of weekly class hours especially with 8th grades. Extracted sentences are below:

Table 24. Findings About the Process

Codes	Quotes
School Management's Pressure	I am not teaching the sixth graders and eighth graders in a same way because in the sixth graders for example, I don't have an aim as an exam. I can speak with them; I can do some activities ...but when it comes to eighth graders, it is hard to apply the communicative activities. I don't have time to do that ... the management is focusing on the exam for eighth graders... they don't encourage us to present other skills. Our headmasters want us to make a good average of English... they want to be the first school in the area.
Parents' Pressure	As a result of the parents' and administration's request, it becomes a must for me to prepare the students for the exam...if the students have more English classes in their weekly program, I would choose to improve my students in terms of communicative skills.
Students' Pressure	In my university, we learnt making classes in an integrated way including all four skills and sub-skills. But when we focus on exam, our learners and administration wait from us to teach the things that are related to the exam... when we think about eighth grades, they don't want to do these kinds of activities and when I try to do, they think like it will not be helpful for them, it is loss of time.
Limited Class Hours	I can't give all four skills because there is not time for this. The listening scripts. And finally, I give a series of tests from other different sources.
Communicative Activities	I don't do everything exam based even for eighth graders. I don't make them solve questions all the time. We watch movies and listen to the songs in English and play games.
Curriculum Activities	The students have to get ready for the exam and the course book includes the exam related topics. I follow the curriculum and try to rely on the course book.

The teachers are questioned whether the course with 8th graders differ from the courses with minor grades. All of the participants responded positive to this query. As a result of the responses, the differences are made clear.

Table 25. The Difference Between 8th Grades and Other Grades

Categories	Codes	Participants
Minor Grades	More Communicative Activities	U, Z, O, F, M, İ
	Extra Activities	U, D, S, O, İ
	Games	T, S, Y, Z, O,
	No Tests	T, İ
	All Four Skills	D, S, Y, F
8 th Grades	Non-Communicative Activities	T, S, Z, O, F, M, İ
	Stressful Teaching/Learning Process	U, T, D, S, Y, O, M
	No Games	T, S, Z, O, F, M,
	Test-Based Classes	T, Z, İ

As delineated in Table 25, more than half of the teachers apply more communicative activities with minor grades when compared to 8th graders. In addition, 5 of the teachers bring extra activities for their learners in minor grades, which is not mentioned for the 8th grade students. In the same vein, 5 of the teachers give place to games in their classes with minor grades. 2 teachers state that they don't allow for tests in the classes with minor grades. 4 teachers predicated that they can involve all four skills in the classes with minor grades.

In other respects, 7 teachers point out that their classes with 8th grades are not communicative. Again, 7 of the teachers conceive the teaching and learning process with 8th graders stressful. 7 teachers connote that they don't make the students play games in the class with 8th graders. They clearly express that the 8th grade students seem bored when their teacher starts a game. 2 of them also ventilated that their students find games excrescence since they are going to have an important exam for high school entrance. 3 of the teachers reflect that their classes with 8th graders are test-based. Sample excerpts are submitted below:

Table 26. Quotes on the Difference Between the Grades

Codes	Quotes
More Communicative Activities	For other grades like 5th or 6th or 7th grades, I try to include all of the activities in the book... I try to bring some enjoyable activities for my students and even we listen to music and use some videos at these grades
Extra Activities	I always bring extra activities to the class.
Games	I am playing more games with seventh and sixth grades ...we are making vocabulary contest but there isn't enough time to make these activities in eighth grade.
No Tests	I don't apply any specific test because of the exam. I go on with the activities in the course book.
All Four Skills	I try to use role plays, dramas. This is fun for students ...We try to give the students four skills in English. But in that process, we try to prepare the students for an exam.
Non-Communicative Activities	With other grades, I can use some communicative activities but with eighth graders I can't focus on them because of the exam because we have a limited time.
Stressful Teaching Learning Process	When they fail, they won't gain this chance again. So, it is stressful for the students. They're only responsible for ten questions so, this makes me and students stressful. Even if they are successful in the exam, they are feeling very stressful.
No Games	I am playing more games with seventh and sixth grades ...we are making vocabulary contest but there isn't enough time to make these activities in eighth grade
Test-Based Classes	With the minor grades we can play more games. We can do different exercises like fill in the blanks, matching, listening and speaking activity but with eighth grades we mostly focus on the test questions, reading, writing activities, how we can find the clues or shortcut in the questions.

4.4. Research Question 4: Does LGS have any Washback Effect on the implementation of English Curriculum?

In order to unveil the positive and negative washback effects of LGS on the implementation of English curriculum, the interview questions are presented in this part.

The next question in the interview is an attempt to see if LGS improves the English level of the learners.

Table 27. Contribution of LGS Process to the Students' English Level

Categories	Codes	Participants
Partly Yes	Vocabulary	(4)
	Grammar	U, S, M
	Reading	U, S, M
		S, Z, M
No	Neglected Skills and Sub-Skills	(6)
		T, D, Y, O, F, İ

Referring to Table 27, among 10 teachers, 4 consider the exam to contribute to the students' English level at best. 3 of the teachers envision that LGS redounds the vocabulary of the students. They also reckon that LGS bolsters the students' grammar knowledge. Similarly, 3 of the teachers uphold that the reading comprehension skill of the students develops to some extent.

6 volunteer teachers are of the opinion that the LGS examination has no positive impact in terms of improving the students' English level. They hold forth that most of the skills and sub-skills that are highly crucial while learning English are neglected because of the exam preparation process. One of the participants illustrates that vocabulary knowledge of the learners seems to develop but they don't use the vocabulary they learnt in the classroom. The other participant interlards that English is a lesson for the students, not a skill. Moreover, one of the participants propounds that one of the students answers all the questions correctly in pilot tests but has no aim and ability to use the target language. Some selected quotes regarding the issue are below:

Table 28. Quotes on the Contribution of the Exam

Codes	Quotes
Vocabulary	It increases students' vocabulary level. They mostly memorize the vocabulary.
Grammar	It is really helpful when you think vocabulary and grammar. It improves their English level in terms of vocabulary and grammar and it's an important part of language.
Reading	It improves their reading and vocabulary skills. Maybe only in reading, because we neglect the other skills

Table 28 continued

Neglected Skills and Sub-Skills	LGS and the books are contrast. In LGS, there isn't any listening part or there isn't any speaking part but books focus on speaking and listening ... English needs speaking, writing, and listening but LGS just focuses on reading, analyzing and solving. For listening speaking and writing, it doesn't improve. I try to add some other activities. And I am aware that these are sub skills, but the exam questions mostly focus on these (vocabulary and reading) functions. They know the words they know how to write maybe they know when they hear a word what this word is. They can't use it in their daily life. They only focus on choosing ten questions on LGS. This is the purpose of English in LGS. Not using English in daily life or not becoming a skill for the students. Their listening and speaking skills are decreasing at the same time. We mostly neglect speaking, listening and especially writing parts.
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The participants are asked around about the positive and negative sides of LGS. Each participant states that LGS has some negative effects. However, 8 participants find positive effect, some responding after thinking for about 5 minutes.

Table 29. Negative and Positive Aspects of LGS

Categories	Codes	Participants
Positive Aspects	Autonomous Learning	D, U
	Time Management	U, M
	Multiple Choice Practice	D, S
	Vocabulary Memorization	T, S, F
	Reading Comprehension	T, S, Z
	Motivation Factor	T, O, M, I
	Appreciation of the Importance of English	O
Negative Aspects	English as a Lesson	D, S, Z, F
	No Authentic use	D, S, M
	Shadowed Communication Skills	U, T, O, I
	Emphasis on Exam	Y
	No Fun Activities	M

As for positive aspects, 2 of the participants state that their students develop autonomous learning while preparing for the exam. 2 of the teachers report that their students learn to manage their time thanks to the exam. Another 2 teachers note that the students get used to multiple choice questions at a young age, which is a positive aspect leastways. 3 participants identify vocabulary memorization as another positive aspect. Reading comprehension of the students' progress, according to 3 of the teachers. Half of the teachers that can name positive effects talk about the motivation factor of the exam. They advocate that LGS motivates their students to study English. One of the teachers mentions that under favor of LGS, the students appreciate the importance of English.

For the negative sides, one half of the interviewees points out that their students perceive English as a lesson, not as a skill. 3 of the participants assert that there is not an authentic use of English the students learn. They don't use that English in their daily life. Again, half of the volunteer participants argue that communication skills of the 8th grade students are shadowed because of the exam preparation process. One of the participants observed that the interest is on the exam for 8th grade students, not on the language itself. Another participant draws the attention to the lack of fun activities because of the exam essence and time problem throughout the class.

During the interview, the voluntary participants discussed the negative aspects of the exam for the most part. Whereby, they try to find positive aspects when they are posed the last question. They postulate that they already talked about the negative aspects. Hence, the table shows that positive aspects of LGS outweigh. Agreeably, the participants' responses are crucial in that point. They principally explain that negative aspects of the exam are preponderant. The reflections of the teachers about the positive and negative aspects of LGS are elucidated in the excerpts below:

Table 30. Quotes on the Aspects of LGS

Codes	Quotes
Autonomous Learning	As a positive aspect, I think students can have autonomous learning. They find their techniques. This makes students autonomous learners. This is positive effect aspect. I can say that they become more independent.
Time Management	They spend most of their efforts for solving questions. This also affects the time management during the lesson. You know we have a very limited time for listening and speaking activities. And I can say that a grammar and vocabulary teaching are inevitable as all questions require the knowledge of these skills.
Multiple Choice Practice	We have lots of multiple-choice questions in the exam. So, LGS is multiple choice exam. Students can solve multiple choice questions. This is good for students, the beginning of the life.
Vocabulary Memorization	The only positive effect of it eight graders mostly succeed in memorizing English vocabulary. LGS just broadens students' vocabulary knowledge and the reading skills.
Reading Comprehension	Only positive effect of this preparation is that maybe they learn how making complete sentences or understand what they written. LGS just broadens students' vocabulary knowledge and the reading skills.
Motivation Factor	I can say that they are trying to learn English because of the exam. I mean if we didn't have exam, most of them would say that this isn't in the exam so, I don't have to learn English. But thanks to exam, they learn somehow. I mean, or else, they would say that this is like a music or physical education lesson.

Table 30 continued

Appreciation of the Importance of English		Because there are English questions in the exam, students think that English is as important as the other lessons.
English as a Lesson	a	The students don't consider it as a second language but they study it only for the exam. A language's main purpose is speaking communication or expressing yourself. While preparing them to the exam, they can't reach this purpose. English is just a lesson for them and for us in this point, not a language, according to them. English is a skill but we don't teach English as a skill
No Authentic Use		Students can't use English in their daily life.
Shadowed Communication Skills		A language is something integrated. We should teach it in a whole way, not separately. But now, I must separate the skills so it affects me in a negative way. I also cannot have experience about speaking activities when I work with eighth grades. The exam only focuses on some skills. It neglects other skills. So, students can't speak in English because of the exam. They can't make some sentences related to the asked topic.
Emphasis on Exam	on	A language's main purpose is speaking communication or expressing yourself. While preparing them to the exam, they can't reach this purpose. As we are focusing on the exam, learners perceive English as a lesson, not language.
No Fun Activities	Fun	If we didn't have an exam, maybe I would give them some other fun activities and would make them feel more relaxed and encourage them about English.

The quotes above clarify that the majority of the participants have similar ideas for almost all the questions of the questionnaire. On the side, the questionnaire answers are made clear by the answers given to the semi-structured interviews.

V. CHAPTER

5. DISCUSSION

This chapter attempts to share the discussion of the key results as a whole. It begins by the discussions of the research questions. Secondly, the relationship between the qualitative and quantitative data are seen. The findings are debated paying regard to the research questions.

5.1. Discussions of the Research Questions

Research questions are re-answered in this part outspokenly. There are 4 questions and there are quotes related to the questions under the sub-titles.

5.1.1. Research Question 1: To what Extent are the Aims of the Curriculum Followed in EFL Classes?

In the spotlight of the research questions, this study tries to unveil the effect of LGS on implementing English curriculum. Items of the questionnaire measure the extent to which the aims of the curriculum followed in EFL classes. Dönmez (2010) finds in her study that the teachers couldn't carry out the new curriculum in the class because of the limited time problem. Unlike that, the teachers in this study share that they follow the curriculum since the exam involves curriculum topics. The teachers, according to their answers to the questionnaire and the interviews, follow the curriculum in the class. The participant teachers also affirmed this in the questionnaires. To give an example, one participant (participant U) enounced that *"I follow the curriculum as the curriculum encompasses LGS topics."*. Another participant, participant Y, enunciated that

I have to follow the curriculum because the exam is related to the curriculum and the vocabulary, especially the vocabulary is asked from the curriculum and the daily expressions...". Respondent O apprized that "LGS questions are related to the curriculum needs and in our fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh grade and eighth grade I am following the curriculum."

Respondent D said that

...each year, they are same topics but it becomes harder. For example, I teach present tense each year. But in each year, it becomes harder for students you know. So, actually, I think that I prepare students for LGS in each year"

Moreover, none of the teachers asserted the contrary about following the curriculum. Overall, these statements lay bare that the teachers in secondary schools extensively follow the curriculum without heed of the grades of the students.

5.1.2. Research Question 2: Are the Classes with the 8th Grades Communicative?

Noble and Smith (1994) state that the teachers are affected by high stakes exams and they prepare the students for the exams by giving them worksheets with exercises, regardless of the communicative skills the students acquire. A clear majority of the teachers address in the questionnaire that they conduct their classes in a communicative way. Having regard to the fact that the interview participants are the secondary school teachers, namely not the 8th grade teachers only, interviews call out in the interest of the 2nd research question. When the answers for the interviews are scrutinized, it becomes clear that the 8th grade classes are not communicative at all. To set examples, Respondent D alleged that

I can't totally speak in English in my 8th grade classes...", Respondent F called of that "the exam is written and with the other grades I mean the middle school fifth sixth and seventh grades, we can focus on four skills, I mean, listening speaking writing and reading. We can work in groups in the other grades. But eight graders usually study individually for the exam.

Respondent Y passed that

I usually use English in the classroom and the if the age is lower, they like speaking English and they have a different confidence in speaking English but if they are in the eighth grade it is very difficult to make them speak English. So, in the lower grades I usually use English in the classroom and use lots of activities to teach them English... It is very different because they don't like. In lower classes they like speaking English and they like doing a lot of activities in the classroom. But in the eighth grades because of the exam and the limited time for the exam, they don't like doing other activities and they resist doing other activities.". Respondent I summarized the 1st and 2nd research questions' answer in one sentence: "I also gave lessons for fifth and sixth graders beside eighth graders. With fifth and sixth graders it was less test based. We did other activities like games or more listening based activities with them. I avoided for them to doing some tests in the classroom. But for eight graders it was different. Indeed, I follow the curriculum with all grades.". Respondent M threw out that: "...when it comes to eighth graders, it is hard to apply the for example communicative activities. I don't have time to do that. For listening activities, I do some short introduction. We listen and do the activity. And we can't add more activities for this skill. I am focusing on the vocabulary and the reading part mostly, for the eighth graders. Because the exam is focusing on the same things. Because of that the school grades are not same... We nearly have no activities with writing to tell the truth. Because we don't have time to teach writing and students have problems about writing and formal writing the sentences in English. They can't produce something in English. Because we need an extra time for writing. And I have just four hours

for eighth graders and what can I do in four hours with speaking and writing. We four hours if I had more time most probably, I would give more importance to speaking and then writing, I think. Because it is really harsh to write a sentence in English even if for the adults. It is hard skill a hard skill, I think.” Respondent O related the grades like other respondents:” ...we choose grammar-based language or vocabulary-based language teaching in eighth grade but in seventh and sixth grade for example, for me, I am focusing on grammar based, communicative based, audio lingual based...it is complexed and also, I am playing more games with seventh and sixth grades.” Respondent U said that “I think their communicative skills are shadowed by exam preparations.

Together, these excerpts propound that 8th grade EFL classes are not communicative contrary to expectations. Çelik (2017) has similar reasons in her thesis as she finds that the teachers don’t give enough importance to the communicative skills equally. As distinct from the other grades, 8th grade teachers change their way of teaching because of the exam factor.

5.1.3. Research Question 3: Is there a Relationship between LGS and Classroom Practices?

In a similar study conducted by Akıncı (2010), high school entrance exam has some effects on classroom practices. She clearly demonstrated that grammar and vocabulary exercises take the lead as a result of the influence that high school entrance exam creates. To evince if there is a relationship between LGS and classroom practices, the teachers are questioned in the interviews. Respondent U articulated that “...and for 8th grades our lessons are exam oriented”. Respondent Z couched in frankly that:

“...with the other grades, we can play more games. We can do different exercises like fill in the blanks, matching, listening and speaking activity but with eight grades we mostly focus on the test questions, reading, writing activities, how we can find the clues or shortcut in the questions. Moreover, we don’t play vocabulary games with the students who prepare for the exam. They and their parents don’t want these activities because they think studying for the exam is more important. As a result, I don’t make time for these activities. I just mention the vocabulary and skip to tests.”. Respondent Y apprised that “And I give lots of tests to prepare for the exam”.

As the excerpts above suggest, LGS affects the way teachers teach. To put a finer point on it, there is a strong relationship between LGS and classroom practices.

5.1.4. Research Question 4: Does LGS have any Washback Effect on the implementation of English Curriculum?

Exams most likely have washback effects. When the teachers and the students do what they would not necessarily otherwise do as a result of the exam factor, it is called washback effect as Alderson and Wall (1993) suggest.

These washback effects might be positive or negative according to the exam's impact. In order to disclose whether LGS has any washback effect on putting the curriculum in action or not, the teachers are posed questions in the semi-structured interviews.

According to their replies, the teachers experience and witness some washback effects. For the sake of example, Respondent Y adduced that

because of their anxiety about the exam, they don't want to speak English and they don't want to really learn it. They usually ask: teacher this vocabulary or this part can be asked in the exam and I say I don't know we are going to learn it...", "Not only the parents, also the school headmaster usually presses us prepare them for the exam. And I mostly have to do practice in the lesson...", "I feel very stressed because after the exam I want to see the students how they did in the exam and I think that I am a teacher of English but I don't teach to them. It gives me a lot of stress.", "they mostly memorize the vocabulary and do tests for the exam so after the exam they forget everything at once... I don't think there is a positive effect of the exam.

Respondent Z unclosed that *"Because their, I think, reading skills are improving. There is a notable progress here because we focus on these skills. For example, their listening and speaking skills are decreasing at the same time."*, "A language's main purpose is speaking, communication, or expressing yourself. While preparing them to the exam, they can't reach this purpose. English is just a lesson for them and for us in this point, not a language, according to them. Only positive effect of this preparation is that maybe they learn how making complete sentences or understand what they've written."

Respondent U proclaimed that

...as a result of the parents' and administration's request, it becomes a must for me to prepare the students for the exam. But of course, if I had the chance, and maybe if I had more class hours, if the students have more English classes in their weekly program, I would choose to improve my students in terms of communicative skills, but now it looks like that the priority is on the exam.", "I feel free with other classes I mean other grades in primary and secondary schools, but I feel the responsibility of my students' future and their success on the exam.", "...you know high school placement is much more important. Because it also affects the university placement. Actually, the situation is not so bad. I can say that my students generally memorize the common vocabulary. I say that for 8th grades, they memorize the vocabulary and they have the knowledge of English, but they need more practice to speak fluently. I suppose and I hope that they develop their language skills next year maybe after the exam easily.", "they become more independent in terms of grammar and vocabulary and they spend most of their efforts for the grammar questions. This also affects the time management during the lesson.

Respondent T went on that

They have an exam and they want to know if they would fail in the exam or not, what they are going to do, what occupations will they have, will they have money or not and also their time is limited for the exam.", "it broadens

students' vocabulary level.", "...responsibility is more important than being stressful, I think. We have to teach many things. I am always questioning myself: Should I teach this or not? And if I don't teach this will the students encounter this in the exam? So, if the students couldn't solve this? Always I am questioning myself because they see many questions and they have to know all of them because in the questions they mix many topics.

Respondent S spilled that

...it is really helpful when you think vocabulary and grammar. But for the listening, speaking and writing, it doesn't improve. I try to add some other activities.", "They don't want me to use English to teach vocabulary or grammar. These students are only thinking about LGS.", "...they learn quite much more vocabulary..." I feel like I am a bit unsuccessful because in our university life we learnt that we should teach all four skills, a language is something integrated. We should teach it in a whole way, not separately. But now, I must separate the skills so it affects me in a negative way. I also cannot have experience about speaking activities when I work with eighth grades. So, it affects me negatively.", "some of them are really good at English so they don't need to get stressed. But most of them are really anxious.

Respondent O uttered that

"In our schools, our headmasters and managers want us to make a good average of English... They want to be the first school in the area for example they don't they aren't interested in speaking or reading or listening or writing. They are only interested in how the students solve the questions... If I focus speaking and reading maybe my students can't solve the questions. So, our manager maybe can warn me: teacher please make students solve questions and multiple choices. Don't focus on speaking or writing or reading, just only solving the test.", "For example, if a student's English results are bad, their father, his father or her father mother maybe can come to school and tell me: "Teacher, why are my child's English results are bad?" So, we are sometimes are stressful for the fathers of the students', mothers of students or headmaster. Sometimes we are affecting our students. Maybe we have them more stressful.", "in terms of the positive effect, students are caring English.", "sometimes I am feeling that I am not teaching English them. Just I am teaching them to solve English multiple choices."

Respondent M evidenced that

"I want my students be successful in the exam and the how can I say, the school management also wanting these from us. I mean they want us to solve problems with the students, to do some examination. So, if I have time, I would do the same thing. If I wouldn't do this, they would tell me that: Hocam this this is not related to the exam. They would force me, most probably, to solve some problems.", "the management, actually is focusing on the exam for eighth graders, I mean. They tell us that why in this exam their level is so low? Why they have these points? For example, they do four from ten questions, why is it like that Hocam? They always force us to solve problems, focus on the test. What can I do with these forces? I should focus on these ones too. I mean they don't encourage us to make other skills.", "For example, it improves their reading and vocabulary skills. Sometimes grammar, but we mostly neglect speaking listening and especially writing parts. So, somehow it improves but not all the skills."

Respondent F gave vent to the question as

...the only positive effect of it eight graders mostly succeed in memorizing English vocabulary". Respondent D expressed that "successful students are not stressful. But successful students are rare for us...there aren't too many questions. There are only ten questions in the exam so for example, in the even one question is so important for the students. I gave them ten topics all year. I teach ten topics and students have ten questions to do it. They only responsible for ten questions. I think this is not too many you know. So, this makes me stressful, and students... students can't use English in their daily life. They have to solve ten questions in LGS. This is not purpose of the English, I think.", " ...as a positive aspect I think students can have autonomous learning... know we have lots of multiple-choice questions in the exam. So, LGS is a multiple-choice exam. Students can solve multiple choice questions. This is good for students. the beginning of the life"

As seen above from the excerpts, the teachers frankly talked about the positive and negative washback effects of high school entrance exam's effects on their classes. Negative washback effects originate from several factors like the pressure or expectations of parents, school administrators, students and teachers. Negative washback effects overpoise the positive ones as a matter of course.

5.2. The Relationship between the Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The questionnaire items and semi-structured interview questions are mutually complementary. Interview questions nourish the questionnaire items and make the responses clearer in accordance with the information gathered. The overarching replies below make a connection between the quantitative and qualitative data.

Table 31. Relationship Between the Questionnaire and Interview Answers

Questionnaire Items	Interview Excerpts
Use of English	I can't totally speak in English in my 8 th grade classes. They are not responsible for listening and speaking skills so I don't emphasize speaking English and I don't generally speak English.
Curriculum	Indeed, I follow the curriculum with all grades. I have to follow the curriculum because the exam is related to the curriculum and the vocabulary, especially the vocabulary is asked from the curriculum and the daily expressions.
Students' Speaking Frequency	I usually use English in the classroom and the if the age is lower, they like speaking English and they have a different confidence in speaking English but if they are in the eighth grade it is very difficult to make them speak English. Because of their anxiety about the exam, they don't want to speak English and they don't want to really learn it. With other graders I am trying to speak in English. And they give me some short answers not exactly long sentences, unfortunately. But for eighth graders, they don't want to speak in English. They don't want to answer in English even if they know the words. We can do different exercises like fill in the blanks, matching, listening and speaking activity but with eight grades we mostly focus on the test questions, reading, writing activities, how we can find the clues or shortcut in the questions.

Table 31 continued

Students' Writing Frequency	I usually want them to find the words or the grammar point from the reading texts and dialogues and then want them to make some dialogues or write dialogues. If the class time would be much more and if they were named like listening class, reading class, writing class, or speaking class; it would be more appropriate. I mean with other grades I can use some communicative activities but with eighth graders I can't focus on them because of the exam. Because we have a limited time. You know, the exam is near. So, we can't focus on all the skills at the same time because of the time problem. I give writing activities as a homework. We neglect the other skills because we can't have enough time for the other skills like writing because we are only focusing on the reading skill. We don't have enough lessons to do all skills. So, I think our lessons should be increased. Maybe only for listening two lessons, for speaking two lessons, for writing two lessons and for reading two lessons; so, we can use all four skills easily. The biggest problem is now we don't have enough lessons to do all things in English. English is different from the other lessons. We try to give lots of things to the students but we don't have enough time to do these
Talking About a Story	I am focusing on the vocabulary and the reading part mostly, for the eighth graders. Because the exam is focusing on the same things. Because it is easy for them and I can't force them to speak in English because after a time they say that it is not related to the exam. I have nothing to say about these words.
Teaching Vocabulary	I usually try to use realia, games, pictures and technology to teach the vocabulary, but in the 8th grade classes I don't use all of these. Actually, I don't spend time to teach the vocabulary items. I give them as homework and they memorize the vocabulary. After that, we do practice in the class. This is more helpful for them, I think. With the other grades we can play more games. We can do different exercises like fill in the blanks, matching, listening and speaking activity but with eighth grades we mostly focus on the test questions, reading, writing activities, how we can find the clues or shortcut in the questions. Moreover, we don't play vocabulary games with the students who prepare for the exam. They and their parents don't want these activities because they think studying for the exam is more important. As a result, I don't make time for these activities. I just mention the vocabulary and skip to tests.
Teaching Grammar	They try to learn every detail of some grammar rules, for instance. They don't want me to use English to teach vocabulary or grammar. These students are only thinking about LGS. We have to prepare our students for these questions in LGS exam. So, I am following our course book because all the vocabulary and all the grammar are in it. You know the exam doesn't focus on the grammar wholly. They just give the grammar in the reading part and the question. So, I teach the grammar part but I say that you just have to know the small tips about them, just know how to translate it in Turkish.
Communicative Activities	We sometimes listen to the listening part. And then, we write the listening parts in their notebooks because some of the vocabulary which are asked in the exam was from the listening scripts. I always do the listening activities and they enjoy the listening activities. Sometimes I find some other listening texts, songs from other different websites and I use them in the classroom. They like it and they enjoy doing listening activities, especially song activities. I give them handouts with some blanks of the song and they enjoy while doing it.
English Songs or Games	I always bring something different to the class. I usually use PowerPoint presentations and some games from other sources. You know, now, there are a lot of English sources in the internet and there are a lot of games, on-line games and also, we sometimes play games with cards and we sometimes run in the classroom and use the blackboard or stage, whiteboard sorry. We have whiteboard in the classroom. We sometimes use the whiteboard to play games like hangman and guess the word activities. I try to include all of the activities in the book. You know there are some listening and speaking activities and I try to use them in the class, moreover I bring some enjoyable activities for my students and even we listen to music and use some videos to learn the language.
English Movies or Dramas	I watch short movies with my students and we practice the vocabulary after watching the movies. With the other grades, we watch a film in a week and the most successful student chooses the next week's film. I choose the films and they select one of the films from my list. It is motivating and helps them to improve their understanding in listening.
Pair or Group Work	Students like playing games and they work in groups in order to be the first group at the end of the week.

In response to question 1 in the questionnaire, the results reveal that almost half of the participants frequently, and the rest majority opting as sometimes and always, use English in their classes. These results are consistent with data obtained in a study by Kapcı (2014). In his study, most of the teachers support the use of target language. As the sample consists of secondary school teachers, the use of English in classes may vary in that the teachers change their way of teaching according to the grade of the students.

It is also explicit from both the questionnaire responses and the interview quotes that the teachers substantially follow the curriculum. They state that the high school entrance exam is concerned with the curriculum and if they follow the course book, circuitously curriculum, they would give the learners what they would need for the exam. The data coming from Çal (2010) confirm the association between the textbook and the curriculum from the perception of teachers. In both studies, when asked about curriculum, the teachers share that they follow the curriculum by abiding by the course material. Akin to this, Kütük and Bergil (2021) concludes that the majority of teachers and students view textbooks as the only source of knowledge. Hence, it can be concluded that the teachers perceive the course book given by MoNE as a guide for following the curriculum. Still, it is obvious that the teachers are following the curriculum on a large scale.

The teachers principally have their students speak English in their classes according to the answers. It is also promoted by the interview participants. What stands out in most of the interviews is that the 8th grade students don't attract as intensive attention as the other grade students, according to the teachers. It shows up that the students in the 8th graders have low motivation and interest in speaking English in classes in contrast with the students at lower grades. In a resembling study's findings, a participant reveals that learners in Turkey go for traditional ways of learning where they are expected to memorize the things they have learnt (Hoyland, 2021). It is pointed out that the reason for this behavior stems from the exam-based studying habits, which expounds the lack of motivation for speaking English. To put the whole matter in a nutshell, the teachers actually do their best in order to make their students speak English in classes notwithstanding the fact that LGS doesn't comprise of speaking skill.

The teachers are mostly irresolute about having their students write an essay or a story. Indeed, the participant teachers have a head start on applying writing activities infrequently in their classes. This doesn't necessarily mean that the teachers definitely don't accommodate writing activities in their classes, yet the frequency for this skill is low. When it comes to the writing skill, the teachers put the least emphasis on this skill. A congruent study by Zengin (2020) highlights that class hours are insufficient for developing writing skills. The current study also deduces that the teachers are not content

with the weekly class hours when they are asked about writing part of their classes. In a nutshell, the teachers don't make their students write an essay, a story or about any topic because of the limited time allocated for English classes.

The teachers infrequently have their students talk about the story they read. The underlying cause for this problem should inevitably result from not reading stories in the class. This is because the teachers broadly have their students speak English in classes according to the 7th question. When the students don't read a story, they don't have the opportunity to talk about it. The curriculum necessitates reading and speaking in a communicative classroom atmosphere. It can be concluded that the teachers get round to these skills separately and limitedly because of the exam factor. The comments are crucial because of the fact that the teachers eliminate the skills in line with the significance for the LGS exam. To put it another way, if it wouldn't appear in the exam, the teachers prefer not to take heed of the related skill. In sum, the teachers don't opt for making their students talk about the story they read.

Respondents are asked to indicate whether they use the target language, body language, pictures, videos or realia while teaching vocabulary. The teachers sometimes use the target language, body language, pictures, videos or realia while teaching vocabulary to their secondary school students. Remarks of the interviewees make clear that the teachers change their vocabulary teaching style for grade 8 students. However, they apply the aforesaid techniques for the other grade students. It can therefore be assumed that the teachers alter their vocabulary teaching style in the 8th grade classes and they reckon as they sometimes use the target language, body language, pictures, videos or realia while teaching vocabulary.

In reply to the 11th item of the questionnaire which is "I explain English grammar in English", the majority of the respondent teachers say they infrequently do this. Foregoing quotations enucleate that the teachers teach grammar in their classes and they don't emphasize it. To make the meaning and understanding clear, the teachers would prefer using Turkish language while teaching grammar since the students expect to make translation to understand better. With this in mind, only a small number of teachers explain grammar in English. Those teachers also dissent that they have communicative classes. In line with the claim of Palalı (2006), it could be concluded that grammar could be absorbed influentially with communicative activities.

For the 12th item of the questionnaire, the respondents share that they frequently use communicative activities in their classes. Given that the participants are secondary school teachers who have classes 5,6,7 and 8, the majority of them think they often have communicative activities in their classes. Only 8th grade teachers or those who has

classes for 8th graders remark that they don't have such communicative activities with 8th grade students or they have limited amounts of those activities. Findings of this study match with a study of Kirkgöz (2007) up to a point. In her study, the teachers are found to be reluctant to apply communicative activities that curriculum advise.

The respondent teachers frequently use English songs or games, according to their answers. Given the teachers use communicative activities frequently, it is inescapable that they utilize these kinds of materials since the ages of the learners require such activities. It is worth mentioning that great number of students in a similar study drew a conclusion that edutainment activities are used by the teachers on a vast scale (İnan, S., 2006).

The teachers frequently allocate time for English movies or dramas. Fortunately, they indicate that they link the topics of the unit to the movies they bring to the class. On top of that, it is important for students at that age to realize that the English language is authentic. With this object in mind, it is also noteworthy that the teachers integrate technology into their classes by presenting movies in the class. A similar conclusion is drawn by Ekinçi (2017) that teachers might use movies and dramas as an authentic input for EFL learners since those learners are not in luck of being exposed to the foreign language beyond the classroom.

The teachers always have their students work in pairs or groups. It is a stubborn fact that working in groups or pairs promotes social intelligence. To put it differently, learning a language necessitates social intelligence, obliquely. Over more, teachers in a study by Paker (2009) take the view that group work is moliminous in achieving academic, intellectual and social targets. Taken as a whole, it is undeniable that group and pair work is promoted by the teachers in this study.

The present curriculum necessitates the use of English as a communication means as Turkish Ministry of Education Curriculum (2018) shares. However, the teachers think that English is perceived as a lesson because of the format of the exam. LGS doesn't include speaking, listening and writing skills. Hence, both the teachers and the students don't give the necessary importance for these skills. It is clearly mentioned in the curriculum that speaking and listening skills should be attached priority. Instructional practices of the EFL lower secondary school teachers don't correspond with the curriculum.

VI. CHAPTER

6. CONCLUSION

The conclusion and summary of the study is given in this part. Then, pedagogical implications are presented. After that, suggestions for the upcoming studies are given.

This study is designed to deduce the effect of the high school entrance exam, namely LGS, on the implementation of curriculum. For that reason, teachers working in secondary schools in Turkey are contacted and their views are utilized with the object of redounding the literature.

By the end of the survey period, data has been collected from EFL teachers working at primary schools and those working with 8th-grade students together. As a beginning, the teacher questionnaire is filled out by EFL teachers. In the sequel, interviews are applied with the teachers all of whom left their e-mail addresses at the end of the questionnaire and shored that they are voluntary to take part in interviews. All the questionnaire and interview questions are in English language considering the participants are all English language teachers.

The questionnaire answers are composed of 15 items 4 of which inquire of demographic information of the attendants. The first demographic information question is gender and the second demographic information question is age. The third item is the department of graduation. The fourth item asks the participants their year/s of experience. The 5th item is related to the use of English in classes. The 6th one is about following the curriculum. The 7th item deals with students' speaking English in classes. The 8th item is concerned with writing. The 9th one is pertinent to talking about the story. The 10th item is appertaining to vocabulary teaching. The 11th item asks about teachers' preference of language while teaching English grammar. The 12th item inquiries about the use of communicative activities in the classroom. The 13th item surveys teachers' use of English songs or games. The 14th item queries the use of English movies or dramas. The last item enquires the use of pair or group work. At the end of the questionnaire, there is a part that teachers can write their e-mail addresses if they desire. That part is not obligatory to fill.

During the questionnaire period, the volunteers are reached by their e-mail addresses and interviews are started. In the interviews, 10 respondents are asked about their year/years of experience, graduation program, the meantime of preparation, their

reflection on the preparation process, whether the preparation process affects their teaching style or not, how the courses differ from the other grades in terms of implementing curriculum in terms of methods and techniques, if the preparation process improves the students' English level and, positive and negative aspects of LGS preparation process.

At the very end of the data accumulation process, the questionnaire results are analyzed using SPSS for descriptive analysis and the content analyses of the semi-structured interviews are done using NVivo, a computer assisted software tool, based on the transcribed documents of the interviews. Taken all together, the results are associated with the research questions, and conclusions are made at the end of the research period.

The study demonstrates that the instructional practices of the teachers depend on the grade they teach as a result of the exam preparation process. The teachers also remark they have communicative classes with both 8th grade students and minor grade students. After all, the teachers state that they have very limited time to allow for all four skills in their classes with 8th graders. The root cause of insufficient time is that the teachers make the time for pilot tests or other activities that prepare students for LGS. In order to allocate this time, they choose not to apply some skills like listening, speaking and writing. Nonetheless, time isn't the only problem to accuse of. The teachers also complain about the pressure of their school administration, parents and students. They state that anticipation of school administration, parents or students makes them focus on the exam results and teach the students accordingly. On the whole, LGS has significant negative effects on classroom practices though it has questions parallel with the curriculum. It also hinders communicative classes, which is essential for learning a foreign language.

6.1. Pedagogical Implications

The motivation behind the present study is to drag up if the high school entrance exam has any effects on classroom practices and on following the curriculum. It can therefore be assumed that the teachers are the ones to interact with in order to answer the research questions. Yıldırım (2010), though discussing upon a different exam, has parallel findings with this study in that he asserts that the students preparing for the exam focus on developing only grammar, vocabulary and reading skills as they are assessed in the exam.

The findings are discussed and some of the issues emerging from these findings relate specifically to the motivation of the current study. The combination of findings suggest that the secondary school teachers follow the curriculum and carry out

communicative classes in a vast scale. However, if they have 8th grade classes, they try to carry out their classes in a communicative way, adding extra written exercises like mock exams, and facing time problems in the end. Because of that, the teachers' effort for communicative EFL classes become tainted by the negative washback effects of the exam.

Addedly, the teachers imply that the students' expectations from the foreign language change as the students themselves want to get prepared for LGS when they start 8th grade. It is also purported that both the teachers and the students are under stress due to the high school entrance exam. Along the same line, the teachers in Demir's study (2010) declare that they feel responsibility for preparing their learners for the high school entrance exam. The findings of the both studies support that there is a stress factor of the teachers which ensures the negative washback effect of the exams.

Finally, it is inevitable to make a mention of that the negative washback effects of LGS tip the scales over the positive washback effects when the teachers' comments are taken into consideration.

6.2. Recommendations

The current study deals with the opinions of the teachers as a whole. For further studies, it might be possible to make an interview with the administrators and parents. Taking the results into consideration, the effects of the high-stakes exams could be compared with each other.

Despite the promising results of the current study, there are still unanswered questions about the following exams that students will encounter in their lives. This is an important issue for future research because university entrance exams might have effects on the students and teachers.

Further to that, the English curriculum puts emphasis on speaking, listening, writing and reading skills. LGS format could include 4 skills equally. To conclude, this study raises the possibility that further additional research could be required.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Transcription of the Respondent Y

The Interviewer: Hocam, how long have you been working as an English Language Teacher?

The Interviewee: Umm, I've been working for twenty-six years as a teacher but I have been working for the government school for twenty- four years.

The Interviewer: Which undergraduate department did you graduate from?

The Interviewee: I graduated from Hacettepe University Linguistics department.

The Interviewer: Do you have graduate or doctorate...

The Interviewee: No, no, I don't have.

The Interviewer: Have you prepared your students for an exam like LGS before?

The Interviewee: Yes, many times (laughs). After..

The Interviewer: Really?

The Interviewee: Yes, after OKS, do you know OKS?

The Interviewer: Yes, I know it. I remember it.

The Interviewee: Yes, I think it was in 2008. It was the last one. After OKS, English was included to the exam and I've been preparing my students for these exams for years, ok? I think it was thirteen years, yes.

The Interviewer: So, you are accustomed to OKS, LGS, TEOG maybe.

The Interviewee: Yes, yes, I am accustomed to it. But I can say that in OKS, there was no English in that exam. But after that OKS, in SBS, English questions were related to grammar and in T-E-O-G, the questions were different. They didn't only ask for grammar, but also dialogues and comprehending questions. It was a multiple choice but they gave paragraphs and texts, small texts, and dialogues and they check if the students understand it or not. Now, we you know that LGS, L-G-S, it is far more different from the TEOG and SBS. It evaluates the vocabulary but also the communicative type, in communicative type. It is very different from the SBS and TEOG.

The Interviewer: You say LGS, right?

The Interviewee: Yes, LGS is very different.

The Interviewer: So, how is your process of preparing the students for the exam?

The Interviewee: First, I start to teach the key vocabulary by using videos and PowerPoint presentations. Then, I use the reading texts and dialogues from their coursebook for comprehension, and if there are grammar points that I have to teach, I review the grammar from the text and dialogues, and then, I let them make similar sentences by using the vocabulary and the grammar points. I usually follow the coursebook because the exam was depend on the coursebook, ok?

The Interviewer: So, you follow the curriculum also, right?

The Interviewee: Yes, yes. I have to follow the curriculum because the exam was related to the curriculum and the vocabulary, especially the vocabulary is asked from the

curriculum and the daily expressions, ok? And, reading, and listening scripts. We sometimes listen to the listening part. And then, we write the listening parts in their notebooks because some of the vocabulary which are asked in the exam was from the listening scripts. And finally, I give a series of tests from other different sources and EBA. EBA, from the government's online education system.

The Interviewer: So, though not included in the exam, you still follow listening tracks, right?

The Interviewee: Sorry, I can't understand you?

The Interviewer: The exam doesn't assess listening skills, but you follow curriculum and do your listening activities.

The Interviewee: Yes, I always do the listening activities and they enjoy the listening activities. Sometimes I find some other listening texts, songs from other different websites and I use them in the classroom.

The Interviewer: How is your feedback from students about these listening activities?

The Interviewee: They like it and they enjoy doing listening activities, especially song activities. I give them handouts with some blanks of the song and they enjoy while doing it.

The Interviewer: Eight-graders are the same, right? They enjoy these activities.

The Interviewee: Yes, the eight-grades enjoy listening to songs and fill in the blanks activities.

The Interviewer: Ok, do you add extra activities except for the curriculum? Do you add-bring something different to the class?

The Interviewee: Yes, I always bring something different to the class. I usually use PowerPoint presentations and some games from other sources. You know, now, there are a lot of English sources in the internet and there are a lot of games, on-line games and also, we sometimes play games with cards and we sometimes run in the classroom and use the blackboard or stage, whiteboard sorry. We have whiteboard in the classroom. We sometimes use the whiteboard to play games like hangman and guess the word activities. Like these.

The Interviewer: Ok, how is your process of preparing the students for the exam? I mean, I want to learn that are they stressed? Are the students stressed because of the exam?

The Interviewee: Yes, because of their anxiety about the exam, they don't want to speak English and they don't want to really learn it. They usually ask teacher this vocabulary or this part can be asked in the exam and I say I don't know we are going to learn it but if it is in the exam, you will learn it. You can do it better; you can do your best in the exam. And they memorize the vocabulary but I know that it's not good but we can't do anything about it because the parents also want me to want ask to teachers to prepare them only for the exam not for learning English.

The Interviewer: Really?

The Interviewee: Yes, really.

The Interviewer: What about the administration? Do they have any pressure on you?

The Interviewee: Yes. Not only the parents also the school headmaster usually presses us to study for the no prepare them for the exam. And I mostly have to do practice in the lesson but students have little interest in learning English because of the In the exam. We don't want to speak in English. They say that we love you but we don't love English.

The Interviewer: Unfortunately, most of the students are the same.

The Interviewee: Yes, unfortunately. And I say if you love me so you have to make me happy so please study hard for the English and get good grades for the exam.

The Interviewer: Yes, good motivation for them. Does the preparation process affect the way you teach? Because of the exam do you change your teaching style?

The Interviewee: Yes, I mostly change my teaching style because if I don't teach the eighth grades maybe the seventh grades or sixth grades, I usually use English in the classroom and the if the age is lower, they like speaking English and they have a different confidence in speaking English but if they are in the eighth grade it is very difficult to make them speak English. So, in the lower grades I usually use English in the classroom and use lots of activities to teach them English.

The Interviewer: Does the course with eight grades differ from the courses with other grades in terms of methods and techniques?

The Interviewee: Yes, I said before. A moment ago. It is very different because they don't like. In lower classes they like speaking English and they like doing a lot of activities in the classroom. But in the eighth grades because of the exam and the limited time for the exam, they don't like doing other activities and they resist doing other activities.

The Interviewer: You said there is limited time. Do you think class hours are long enough?

The Interviewee: Class hours. We can say that class hours were adequate. They were enough before the online lessons but now we can't say it now because it is thirty minutes and it doesn't it isn't enough for activities. We start the activity when we are in the middle of the activity the lesson finishes. And it is difficult to start the activity again.

The Interviewer: Do you emphasize the correct pronunciation of the words in the class?

The Interviewee: When they start to talk I don't, how I can say that, I don't correct the mistakes while they are talking but after they finish talking, I write the words on the white board and let them say it altogether.

The Interviewer: Is it the same with eight grades? There is no difference, I guess.

The Interviewee: No, I don't do it in eight grades. Sometimes I do it. Because, as I said before the exam is the most important thing, not the production or other things.

The Interviewer: Do you feel stressed because of the exam?

The Interviewee: Yes, I feel very stressed because after the exam I want to see the students how they did in the exam and I think that I am a teacher of English but I don't teach to them. It gives me a lot of stress.

The Interviewer: Do you think LGS improves your students' English level?

The Interviewee: They mostly memorize the vocabulary. I don't think so but they mostly memorize the vocabulary and do tests for the exam so after the exam they forget everything at once.

The Interviewer: It is until the exam. After the exam they forget all the things. Ok.

The Interviewee: Yes, think about your student time. When you were in secondary school or high school, you memorize some of the lessons for the exam and after the exam you forget everything. It's like this. They memorize all the vocabulary but after the exam if you ask one of them, they can't remember it.

The Interviewer: How do you assess the students at school?

The Interviewee: You mean that homework?

The Interviewer: Yes, maybe by homework or quiz, portfolio if you use.

The Interviewee: I give them some worksheets for vocabulary practice. And then I for example this year we did everything online. And I always play quiz and kahoot with them to practice the vocabulary. And I give lots of tests to prepare for the exam. Like this.

The Interviewer: How do you evaluate the students. How do you give their marks at the end of the term?

The Interviewee: This year was different you know but before that we give exams and also, we give some points for their participation in the lesson. But this year you know that we didn't give any marks.

The Interviewer: Would you implement communicative activities more intensely if the class hours were extended?

The Interviewee: Yes, of course. If the class hours were extended, are extended I will be more communicative in the lesson and more activities, I can do more enjoyable things with them. But because of the hours and lesson times I can't do my best, I know.

The Interviewer: So, do you think LGS assesses students' language skills thoroughly?

The Interviewee: No, I don't think so. I am sorry but I don't think so.

The Interviewer: I have a wrap up question. What are the negative and positive aspects of preparing your students for the English section of LGS?

The Interviewee: As I mentioned before, the students don't consider it as a second language but they study it only for the exam and they don't give importance to learn English. They only give importance for the exam and as I said before, they memorize the vocabulary and other dialogues and after the exam they forget everything.

The Interviewer: So, there is no positive effect for you

The Interviewee: I don't think there is a positive effect of the exam.

The Interviewer: I want to ask one more question. Do you emphasize grammar in your classes?

The Interviewee: In the past, yes. But now I don't emphasize grammar. I usually want them to find the words or the grammar point from the reading texts and dialogues and then want them to make some dialogues or write dialogues like these and read texts like

these. I want them to produce some dialogues and reading texts by using the grammar points.

The Interviewer: Why did you change it? Is it because of the exam or because of you decided so?

The Interviewee: It's not because of the exam but it is because of the teaching English as a second language. All over the world it is the same, I think. The methods and other things always change you know in the world. And I usually follow the new methods and follow teaching types in English. I usually want to use them in my classroom.

The Interviewer: Ok hocam, do you want to add anything or ask me anything about these?

The Interviewee: No, that's all, I think. We all talked about these. Thanks for everything.



Appendix 2. Questionnaire

Dear participant,

Please choose the most appropriate choice according to your classroom practices. Please answer, from *Never* (1) to *Very Frequently* (5) for each statement.

Gender:

Age:

Department of Graduation:

Years of Teaching Experience:

	Never	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1. I use classroom English.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I introduce the content of the textbook and follow the curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I have my students speak English in classes.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have my students write an essay or a story.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have my students talk about the story they read.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I teach vocabulary by using the target language, body language, pictures, videos or realia.	1	2	3	4	5

7. I explain English grammar in English.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I use task-based activities (e.g., information gap, role-play).	1	2	3	4	5
9. I use English songs or games.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I use English movies or dramas.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I use pair or/and group work in English.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 3. Interview Questions

1. How long have you been working as an English Language Teacher? Which undergraduate department (also graduate and doctorate if available) did you graduate from?
2. Have you prepared your students for an exam like LGS before? If your answer is yes, how long have you been preparing students for these kinds of exams?
3. How is your process of preparing the students for the exam?
4. Does the preparation process affect the way you teach?
5. Does the course with 8th grades differ from the courses with other grades in terms of methods and techniques?
6. Do you think LGS improves your students' English level?
7. What are the negative and positive aspects of preparing your students for the English section of LGS?



Appendix 4. Ethical Permissions for Questionnaire



Appendix 5. Ethical Permissions for Interview Questions



Appendix 6. Etik Kurul İzni

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 02.02.2021-3636



T.C.
AMASYA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Bilim Etik Kurulu
Sosyal Bilimler Etik Kurulu

Sayı : E-30640013-108.01-3636
Konu : Etik Kurul İzin Belgesi

02.02.2021

REKTÖRLÜK MAKAMINA
Sayın Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Hayriye AVARA
Öğretim Üyesi

İlgi : 24.12.2020 tarih 781 sayılı yazınız

'The Effect of High School Entrance Exam on Implementation of English Curriculum (Lise Giriş Sınavının İngilizce Müfredatının Uygulanmasına Etkisi)' adlı araştırmanız Sosyal Bilimler Etik Kurulu tarafından bilimsel araştırma etiği yönünden incelendi ve değerlendirildi. Konu ile ilgili kurul görüşü ektedir.

Bilgilerinizi rica ederim.

Doç.Dr. Songül KEÇECİ KURT
Etik Kurul Başkanı

Ek:

- 1- Hayriye Avara 2 değerlendirme_1 (1 sayfa)
- 2- Hayriye Avara Başvuru 2 (1 sayfa)
- 3- 2 sosyal-bilimler-etik-kurulu-basvuru-formu (5 sayfa)
- 4- Anket İngilizce ve Türkçe (3 sayfa)
- 5- anket kullanım izni maili (1 sayfa)

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Belge Doğrulama Kodu :BE5N4DPNA Pin Kodu :06512

Belge Takip Adresi :
https://ebys.amasya.edu.tr/enVision/Validate_Doc.aspx?V=BE5N4DPNA

Adres: Akbilek Mah. Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu Cad. No:7 Merkez/Amasya
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e-Posta:genelsekreterlik@amasya.edu.tr Web:<http://www.amasya.edu.tr/idari/etik-kurul/bilim-etik-kurulu.aspx>
Kep Adresi:amasyauniversitesi@hs01.kep.tr

Bilgi için: Songül KEÇECİ KURT
Unvanı: Etik Kurul Başkanı

Tel No: 1



Bu belge,güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Appendix 7. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı İzni

Amasya Üni Gelen Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 18.01.2022-53061



T.C.
MİLLÎ EĞİTİM BAKANLIĞI
Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı

Sayı : E-49614598-605.01-41447218
Konu : Araştırma Uygulama İzin Talebi

17.01.2022

DAĞITIM YERLERİNE

- İlgi: a) Amasya Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü'nün 03/01/2022 tarihli ve E-47526769-302.08.01-50219 sayılı yazısı.
b) Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın 21/01/2020 tarihli ve 2020/2 Nolu Araştırma Uygulama İzinleri Genelgesi.

İlgi (a) yazı ile Amasya Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bilim Dalı Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Seray İrem KÜTÜK'ün "The Effect of High School Entrance Exam on Implementing English Curriculum (Lise Giriş Sınavının İngilizce Müfredatının Uygulanmasına Etkisi)" konulu çalışmasına veri sağlamak amacıyla anket çalışması yapma izin talebine ilişkin ilgi yazı ve ekleri Bakanlığımız tarafından incelenmiştir.

Bakanlığımıza bağlı resmi/özel okul ve kurumlarda öğrenci, öğretmen ve okul yöneticilerinin katılımıyla yapılması planlanan uygulamanın covid-19 tedbirlerine uyulması ve denetimi il/ilçe millî eğitim müdürlükleri ve okul/kurum idaresinde olmak üzere, kurum faaliyetlerini aksatmadan, gönüllülük esasına göre; onaylı bir örneği Bakanlığımızda muhafaza edilen ve uygulama sırasında da mühürlü ve örnekten çoğaltılan, veri toplama araçlarının <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdZ3T3KawQUkgDulqQnZnCGmgF4cWXSyesrPHLLNmyd8Fkpkg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0> adresinden online olarak uygulanmasına ilgi (b) Genelge doğrultusunda izin verilmiştir.

Gereğini bilgilerinize rica ederim.

Mehmet Fatih LEBLEBİCİ
Bakan a.
Başkan

Ek: Onaylı Veri Toplama Araçları (6 Sayfa)

Dağıtım:

Gereği:

Amasya, Ankara, Antalya, Balıkesir, Giresun,
İstanbul, Konya, Manisa, Samsun, Sivas Valiliğine
(İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü)

Bilgi:

Amasya Üniversitesi Rektörlüğüne

Bu belge güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Adres : Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı 4/A

Belge Doğrulama Adresi : <https://www.turkiye.gov.tr/meb-ebys>

Bilgi için: Fatma TABALU

Unvan : Şb.Md.

Telefon No : 0 (312) 413 27 51

E-Posta: sgb_arastirmaizininleri@meb.gov.tr

İnternet Adresi: www.sgb.gov.tr

Faks: 3124186401

Kep Adresi : meb@hs01.kep.tr

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Place of Birth:

Date of Birth:

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Graduate Education: Amasya University/ Institute of Social Sciences/ English Language Teaching (2020-....)

Foreign Languages: English

SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

Certifications/Trainings

4th Çukurova International ELT Teachers Conferences: 'Innovative Practices in EFL/ESL Learning/ Teaching, Adana, April 07, 2018

13th METU International ELT Convention 'Teaching Beyond Boundaries', Ankara, May 03, 2018

2nd Gazi University ELT Undergraduate Student Conference, Ankara, March 23, 2018

MM Publications: How to Cultivate Reading Fluency for Lower Performing Students and Students Experiencing Learning Difficulties, March, 2021

TESX İSTANBUL: Öğretmenin İyi Olma Hali, Motivasyonu, March, 2021

Anxiety and Stress: Let's Kick It to the Kerb and Foster Self-Confidence, March, 2021

ÇOMÜ: Çocuklara İngilizce Öğretiminde Oyunlar, March, 2021

MM Conversations: What's on Your Mind, March, 2021

MM Conversations: What's on Your Mind, April, 2021

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