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THE EVALUATION of TWO CONSECUTIVE ENGLISH CURRICULA for SOCIAL SCIENCES HIGH SCHOOLS*

SOSYAL BİLİMLER LİSELERİNE YÖNELİK İKİ ARDIŞIK İNGİLİZCE PROGRAMININ DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

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ÖZ: 2005 yılındaki eğitim reformundan sonra Sosyal Bilimler Lisesi, yoğun yabancı dil eğitimi verebilen az sayıdaki okul türünden biri haline gelmiştir; ancak yine de bu tür okullarda hala İngilizce iletişimi iyi olmayan öğrenciler bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma iki ardışık hazırlık sınıfı İngilizce programının iletişimsel becerilerin gelişimi açısından karşılaştırılmasını amaçlamaktadır. Türkiye’de bir Sosyal Bilimler Lisesinde 2017-2018 eğitim-öğretim yılının ikinci döneminde gerçekleştirilen karma yöntemli bu çalışma için öğrencilerin İngilizce sınav puanları ve paydaşlarla yapılan görüşmelerden yararlanılmıştır. Bulgular, 2016-2017 ve 2017-2018 akademik yıllarında iki hazırlık sınıfı arasında öğrencilerin İngilizce başarı puanlarında ikincisi lehine anlamlı bir fark olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, her iki programın paydaşlarından elde edilen nitel veriler, paydaşların program değişikliğine ilişkin olumlu görüşlere sahip olduklarını göstermiştir.

Anahtar sözcükler: *program değerlendirme, İngilizce hazırlık sınıfı programı, sosyal bilimler lisesi, iki ardışık program*

ABSTRACT: After 2005’s education reform, the Social Sciences High School has become one of the few school types that can provide intensive foreign language education; yet, there are still students at this type of school who cannot communicate in English well. This study aims to compare two consecutive preparatory class English curricula in that type of school regarding the development of communicative skills. For this mixed method study conducted in the second term of the 2017-2018 academic year at a Social Sciences High School in Türkiye, English exam scores of students and interviews with stakeholders were utilized. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference in the English achievement scores of the students between the two preparatory classes in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years in favour of the latter. Furthermore, the qualitative data obtained from the stakeholders of the two curricula showed that they had positive opinions regarding the curriculum change.

Keywords: *program evaluation, preparatory class English curriculum, social sciences high school, two consecutive curricula*

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Türkiye’de 2005 yılında gerçekleşen eğitim reformu sonucunda, okul türlerine bakılmaksızın, hazırlık sınıfları kaldırılmış ve bütün lise türlerinde eğitim süresi dört yıla çıkartılmıştır. O zamandan beri sadece birkaç okul türü yabancı dil eğitimini yoğun bir şekilde vermeye devam edebilmiştir. Bunlardan biri öğrencilerine istenilen düzeyde İngilizce öğretebilmek için hazırlık sınıfları bulunan Sosyal Bilimler Liseleridir. Bu okullarda eğitim süresi beş yıl olup, ilk yıl haftada yirmi saatlik İngilizce derslerine yer verilmektedir; ancak, bu türdeki okullarda hala İngilizce iyi iletişim kuramayan öğrenciler bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı’nın 2011 yılında yayınladığı Ortaöğretim Kurumları İngilizce Dersi Öğretim Programı ile 2016 yılında yayınladığı ve halen kullanımda olan Hazırlık Sınıfı Bulunan Ortaöğretim Kurumları İngilizce Dersi (Hazırlık, 9, 10, 11 ve 12. Sınıflar) Öğretim Programlarını iletişimsel becerilerin gelişimi açısından okul müdürü, İngilizce öğretmenleri ve hazırlık öğrencilerinin bakış açılarına dayanarak karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem

Karma yöntem deseni kullanılan çalışma, 2017-2018 eğitim-öğretim yılında Manisa Sosyal Bilimler Lisesi’nde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın örneklemini program paydaşları olan okul müdürü, 5 İngilizce öğretmeni ve 12 yeni hazırlık sınıfı öğrencisi (2017-2018 eğitim-öğretim yılında hazırlık okuyan) ile 12 eski hazırlık sınıfı öğrencisi (2016-2017 eğitim-öğretim yılında hazırlık okumuş ve veri toplandığında dokuzuncu sınıf olan) oluşturmaktadır. 2016-2017 eğitim-öğretim yılı hazırlık sınıflarında 20 saatlik İngilizce dersinin 15 saati ana İngilizce dersine, 5 saati ise beceriler için ayrılmıştır. 2017-2018 eğitim-öğretim yılında ise 20 saatlik İngilizce dersinin 10 saati beceriler dersine, 5 saati dinleme-konuşma ve 5 saati okuma-yazma dersleri için ayrılmıştır (Tablo 1). Çalışmayı gerçekleştirmek için Manisa Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü’nden gerekli izinler alınmış olup, çalışma yürütülürken araştırma ve yayın etiğine uyulmuştur. Program paydaşlarının 2011 ve 2016 yıllarında yayınlanan hazırlık sınıfı İngilizce programlarına yönelik görüşlerini daha derinlemesine öğrenebilmek için kullanılan nitel veri öğrencilerle gerçekleştirilen odak grup görüşmeleri ve İngilizce öğretmenleri ve okul müdürü ile gerçekleştirilen birebir görüşmelerden elde edilmiştir. Nicel veri ise yeni hazırlık sınıfı öğrencileri ile eski hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin hazırlık sınıfı İngilizce not ortalamalarından elde edilmiştir. Natüralist bir yaklaşım izlenerek farklı bakış açıları aracılığıyla programlar değerlendirilirken, Parlett ve Hamilton’ın Aydınlatıcı Değerlendirme Modeli kullanılarak programlar konusunda derinlemesine bilgi edinilmiştir. Bulguların doğrulanması için veri üçlemesi ve üye kontrolü yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen nitel veri detaylı bir şekilde okunduktan sonra MAXQDA 2020 ile analiz edilmiştir, nicel veri analizinde ise SPSS 2.0 kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular

2016-2017 ve 2017-2018 eğitim-öğretim yıllarında hazırlık okuyan öğrencilerin hazırlık sınıfı İngilizce başarı puanlarının karşılaştırılmasından, ikincisi lehine anlamlı bir fark olduğu sonucu elde edilmiştir (Tablo 5). Okul müdürü, 5 İngilizce öğretmeni ve 24 öğrenci ile gerçekleştirilen görüşmeler sonucunda elde edilen verilerin analizi yapılmış, sonuçlar temalar, kodlar ve alt kodlar şeklinde açıkça Tablo 4’te gösterilmiştir. Nitel veri analizi sonucunda iki ana temaya ulaşılmıştır, bunlardan biri programların özellikleri, diğeri ise programa yönelik düşüncelerdir. Yapılan görüşmede, okul müdürünün İngilizce Hazırlık Programının içeriğine hâkim olmadığı anlaşılmış, genel olarak İngilizce öğretimi, materyal seçimi, öğrenci başarılarını etkileyen etmenler gibi konular öne çıkmıştır. İngilizce Hazırlık Programının değişmesinin ardında yatan sebeplerle ilgili olarak öğretmenler politik sebepleri ve çağa uyum sağlamanın olduğunu belirtmiştir. Araştırma sonuçları öğretmenlerin çoğunluğunun program değişikliğinden memnun olduğunu, beceri gelişimi konusunda ise beceri derslerine ayrılan sürenin ve konuşma derslerine verilen önemin arttığını ortaya koymaktadır. Öte yandan, yeni hazırlık sınıfı öğrencileri ile yapılan görüşmeler, öğrencilerin de program değişikliğine yönelik olumlu bir tutum sergilediğini, özellikle beceriler, ders işleyişi, okul olanakları ve derse ayrılan zaman konularında memnun olduklarını göstermiştir. Benzer şekilde eski hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin de 2016-2017 eğitim-öğretim yılı hazırlık programından memnun olduğu, özellikle beceri ve program içeriği konularının ön plana çıktığı görülmüştür. Gerek okul müdürü, gerekse her iki öğrenci grubu seviye sınıflarının oluşturulması konusuna vurgu yapmıştır.

Sonuç, Tartışma ve Öneriler

İki ardışık hazırlık sınıfı İngilizce programını iletişimsel becerilerin gelişimi açısından karşılaştıran çalışmada Çetinavcı ve Topkaya (2012) çalışmasında da olduğu gibi okul müdürü, öğretmenler ve öğrencilerin görüşlerine yer verilmiştir. Programların içerikleri ve öğretmenlerin görüşleri incelendiğinde, bazı program içeriklerinin Acar'ın (2020) bulgularında da olduğu gibi yeni programa aynen kopyalandığı, farklı olarak etik ve ahlaki değerlerin ve yeni öğretim yaklaşımı olarak Seçmeci Yaklaşımın benimsendiği görülmüştür. Bu çalışma, Tekin (2015), Akpur et al. (2016) ve Sağlam ve Akdemir'in (2018) çalışmalarında da yer aldığı gibi, öğrenci ve öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğunun yeni programdan memnun olduğunu; öğretmenlerin materyal kullanımında daha esnek ve özgür olduğunu; öğrencilerin özellikle iletişimsel beceriler açısından gelişmelerine daha çok olanak bulduğunu, bu bulgunun Mede ve Uygun'un (2014) bulgularıyla paralellik gösterdiğini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin İngilizce not ortalamaları karşılaştırıldığında, yeni program ile eğitim gören öğrencilerin İngilizce ders notlarında önemli bir fark olduğu görülmüştür. Ancak, bu çalışma sadece bir okulda gerçekleştirilmiştir, diğer okullardaki işleyişler, öğrenci, öğretmen ve idarecilerin programa ilişkin görüşleri farklılık göstereceğinden konu hakkında daha kapsamlı çalışmaların yapılması önerilebilir.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the importance of foreign language education cannot be argued with, especially for those who want to keep up with the novelties in science, education, and technology. Communication plays a vital role at that point; that is, it not only helps to share information and knowledge but also helps to develop relationships with people from different countries which makes it possible for exchanging opinions and experiences all around the world. Thus, English has become an inevitable part of all levels of national education with diverse implementations in Türkiye (Doğançay-Aktuna & Kiziltepe, 2005). As a result, the number of public and private schools providing intensive English education has risen in Türkiye. Those schools accept students based on the results of a country-wide entrance exam and provide intensive English language teaching (Kirkgoz, 2007).

As one of the first state schools of this kind, the Anatolian High School (will be abbreviated as AHS) was first established in 1955 to cater to the language needs of students whose parents could not afford private school fees or who preferred to send their children to a state school (Doğançay-Aktuna & Kiziltepe, 2005). The students received intensive English education in preparatory classes in addition to three years in which the medium of instruction was predominantly English as well (Kirkgoz, 2007).

Another state school of this kind is the Foreign Language Oriented High School (will be abbreviated as FLOHS) which was established in 1993 and was known as Super Lycee among the public. The students were provided an intensive English language education to keep up with the novelties in language teaching. Akin to AHSs, the students at FLOHSs had a preparatory class with twenty-four periods of English classes; however, the medium of instruction in the following three years was Turkish, unlike AHSs where students received instruction in English throughout their high school education.

Due to the complaints regarding the fact that AHS students were disadvantaged compared to the others who were attending schools with Turkish medium of instruction (Doğançay-Aktuna & Kiziltepe, 2005) the preparatory English curriculum was abolished in both AHSs and FLOHSs in 2005 following the rise in high school period of study from three to four years to provide equality in all high school types (Kirkgoz, 2007).

On the other hand, Social Sciences High Schools (will be abbreviated as SSHS) were established in 2003 to educate students who have an interest in literature and social sciences. Currently, there are 89 SSHSs around Türkiye to help students with high social intelligence to learn languages and to follow scientific, cultural, and technological developments. They are among the very few state schools which currently provide intensive foreign language education with a five-year high school period of study. In their first year, students attend preparatory classes which contain twenty periods of English classes; however, in the following four years, their medium of instruction is Turkish similar to FLOHSs of the past.

In short, the implementations in language teaching differed in AHS, FLOHS, and SSHS due to the requirements of each school type. When the curricula were investigated, a curricular change was identified, which led the researcher to compare two consecutive preparatory English curricula in this study. The comparison of the two curricula is as follows;

Specifics of the 2011 English Preparatory Curriculum

The Secondary Education English Curriculum was launched in 2011 and it was first employed in the 2011-2012 academic year (MEB, 2011 a). There was no explanation for the reasons behind the curriculum change in the curriculum (MEB, 2011 b). According to the Secondary Education English Curriculum (MEB, 2011 b) the specifics of the English preparatory curriculum are as follows;

Objectives: The curriculum aims to improve the quality of foreign language teaching, help students utilize English as a means of communication to cater to their needs and utilize technology, and help them improve themselves continuously by teaching them how to learn and by developing their problem-solving abilities. It also intends to help students perceive the significance of foreign language learning in terms of their individual, social and cultural aspects (p.4).

Implementation: The curriculum requires the placement of students in different classes according to their English levels determined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) via a placement test. During the preparatory and 9th grades, students continue their language education accordingly as long as the school's physical capacity and staff are available (p.12). The curriculum assumes that all the students begin high school at the A1 level and they will be able to graduate at the C1-C2 level (p.34). The curriculum provides theme and content numbers for each language level and suggests some sample themes and appropriate content for those themes (p.15). The curriculum underlines the importance of four skills and gives no priority to any skill; on the contrary, it emphasizes handling all skills at the same time in interaction with each other in natural contexts (p.7).

Materials: The students are anticipated to arrange and utilize the materials as one of the learning outcomes of the curriculum (p.5). Teachers prepare the materials for the students and provide necessary support during the implementation period (p.25).

Approach: The curriculum embraces the Communicative Approach and it is designed in compliance with the students' cognitive development level. It intends to develop students' communicative and intercultural skills relevant to cognitive, affective, and psychomotor scopes. According to the curriculum, the fundamental aim of language learning is to achieve written and spoken communication, thus the use of language as a means of communication is more significant than its grammar. However, grammar cannot be taught separately from language skills, therefore it should be taught subconsciously within skills activities. Thus, the curriculum also embraces a learner-centred approach which allows students to discover their skills (p.21). Particularly, it helps the students to develop four skills in a balanced way to have positive attitudes towards foreign language learning and to express themselves in the target language (p.5).

Assessment and evaluation: According to the curriculum, assessment and evaluation should be conducted in line with the overall objectives and outcomes of the curriculum; moreover, the assessment and evaluation should continue during the implementation process of the curriculum by considering the developments in students' use of the target language in daily life (p.27). The assessment and evaluation section does not focus on language structures just like the objectives and outcomes sections of the curriculum, rather it focuses on students' learning process, their improvements in developing language and social skills, and the usage rate of the target language in daily life (p.28). Assessment and evaluation instruments mentioned in the curriculum are projects, posters, checklists, portfolio observation forms (p.30), peer evaluation, self-evaluation and group evaluation (p. 31), and so forth.

Specifics of the 2016 English Preparatory Curriculum

The Preparatory Class, 9th- 12th Grades English Curriculum was launched in 2016 and it was first employed in the 2017-2018 academic year (MEB, 2016 a). As it was mentioned in the curriculum, the reason behind the curriculum change was the revisions and updates conducted in the 2nd- 8th grades English Curriculum. Thus, the preparatory class, 9th- 12th grades English curriculum was a continuation of the 2nd - 8th grades curriculum (MEB, 2016 b). According to the secondary education English curriculum (MEB, 2016 b) the specifics of the English preparatory curriculum for SSHSs are as follows;

Objectives: It is aimed primarily to promote communicative skills and provide Turkish students and teachers with suggestions for English language learning and teaching environments where the teachers are expected to be flexible in adapting the content according to the needs of the students (p.5). The overall goal of the curriculum is to enable students to communicate effectively with people around the world and become creative and self-sufficient people who are fond of novelties (p.3). The curriculum intends to help students utilize English as a means of communication to cater to their needs and utilize technology. It also

intends to help students perceive the significance of foreign language learning for their individual, social and cultural development (p.4).

Implementation: The curriculum assumes that all the students begin high school at the A1 level and they will be able to graduate at the C1-C2 level (p.14). The curriculum provides theme and content numbers for each language level and suggests some sample themes and appropriate content for those themes. The curriculum is designed in 20 units which are organised around “interrelated themes” and familiar topics that include students’ daily lives, interests, and ages. “National, moral and cultural values” are highlighted and incorporated in units as well (p.7). The focus of the curriculum has moved away from grammar-only teaching towards skills development, therefore language functions and pronunciation are promoted in line with the CEFR in the curriculum (p.4). There are multilevel classes, and the preparatory class curriculum is considered to be the continuum of the 2nd - 8th grades English curriculum the first half of it comprises the revision of the previous school years’ contents and the second half consists of new language functions (p.4). The integration of four skills, especially listening and speaking and language functions are the foci of the curriculum. The activities based on communication, experience, and tasks are fostered in the curriculum (p.8).

Materials: Students are encouraged to participate in material and activity design and reflect on their own learning experiences (p.3). While designing materials, themes of units and students’ needs are taken into consideration and all vocabulary is “taught in a context concerning meaning, form, pronunciation, collocation, and example sentences” (p.8). Furthermore, authentic, attractive materials that give equal significance to each culture and gender are promoted in the curriculum. Additionally, the curriculum requires the incorporation of technological tools, online materials, and software in teaching English to keep up with the new era (p.9).

Approach: The curriculum essentially adopts the Eclectic Approach; that is, no teaching method is utilized exclusively nor is any of them neglected (p.7). The curriculum encapsulates components of “functional syllabus and skill-based syllabus” (p.8). The Preparatory Class, 9th-12th Grades English Curriculum embraces a blended-learning environment in which online materials and face-to-face teaching materials are utilized together (p.7). The use of technology among teachers is promoted in the curriculum to; foster communicative competence, give access to authentic materials via the internet, curtail cultural barriers and encourage conducting research and cooperating with colleagues worldwide (p.5).

Assessment and evaluation: Rather than traditional assessment techniques, performance-based assessment techniques are used within the curriculum. Since communicative competence is the focus of the Preparatory, 9th- 12th Grades English Curriculum, authentic assessment instruments are employed in the curriculum in line with the nature of the language learning process (p.6). The assessment and evaluation instruments mentioned in the curriculum are discussion time activities, video blogs, tech packs, written exams, and E-portfolios for assessment (p.10) and peer evaluation, self-evaluation checklists, and so forth for evaluation. Apart from the students themselves, their classmates and teachers, their parents, and electronic sources can provide feedback to students (p.11). Administrators are anticipated to support the implementation of the curriculum, and “to acknowledge the unique needs of English as a subject of study” (p.3).

As it is mentioned above there are both similarities and differences between the two academic years, curricula, and their implementations. In each curriculum, different assessment tools are used but self-evaluation and peer evaluation are mutual, also teachers are flexible to adjust classes and materials according to students’ needs and the preparatory curriculum aims to revise previous knowledge of the students in English. In the 2011 curriculum, students need to take a placement test to be placed in appropriate classes according to CEFR. In both curricula, the students are assumed to start high school at the A1 level and finish it at the C1 level. In the 2016 curriculum, it is specially mentioned that at the end of the preparatory class, the students are anticipated to be at B1 level, also cultural, moral, and national values are added into the new curriculum. In the 2011 curriculum, the communicative approach is embraced whereas in the 2016 curriculum eclectic approach is embraced. They both encourage students to discover their skills and use English in daily life and they emphasize communicative competence and the integration of four skills. However, some students attending preparatory classes with twenty periods of English lessons still cannot express themselves in English well. This study aims to explore the views of various stakeholders of the two consecutive English preparatory class curricula regarding the curriculum change; particularly, it scrutinizes what kind of contributions the new curriculum brought in teaching and learning English in terms of communicative competence and academic achievement of the students.

Literature Review

Brown (1989, p. 223) defines evaluation as “the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of the curriculum and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants’ attitudes within a context of particular institutions involved” (cited in Weir & Roberts, 1994). Some of the studies conducted on program evaluation comprised literature reviews (see Erarslan, 2022; Süer, 2022; Yücel et al., 2022), some were evaluations of the curriculum released by the Ministry of National Education (see Acar, 2020; Agcam, 2022; Civriz & Burakgazi Gelmez, 2022; Dalkiliç & Büyükhırska, 2021), and a great deal of them were on evaluating preparatory class curriculums at universities (see Akpur et al., 2016; Atar, Cullen, et al., 2020; Çetinavcı & Topkaya, 2012; Karci Aktas & Gundogdu, 2020; Mede & Uygun, 2014; Sağlam & Akdemir, 2018; Tekin, 2015).

Süer (2022) conducted a systematic review of the literature regarding the thesis which “evaluated the English curriculum between 2005 and 2021 years” (p.528). Similarly, Erarslan (2022) conducted “an integrative literature review” concerning “the primary school English language teaching program evaluation studies” on three big curriculum changes (p.7).

On the other hand, Yücel et al. (2022) analysed the primary and secondary school English curricula published over the last 15 years. According to the findings of the study, the Communicative Approach was embraced in the secondary school curriculum, however, there were some problems in their implementation as suggested in the curriculum. They also found that the secondary school curriculum gave importance to “sequence and continuity” while “scope, balance, user-friendliness, and flexibility” were sometimes neglected. The 2011 Secondary School English Curriculum was criticized for having poor “content and objective design” and being “too long, complicated” and inadequate time to implement the curriculum properly. Particularly, they asserted that the 2011 Secondary School English Class Curriculum was not balanced, user-friendly, and flexible enough (p. 703).

In recent years, the program evaluation studies focusing on preparatory class English curricula at universities and their implementation have increased (Sağlam & Akdemir, 2018). Atar, Cullen Kır, et al. (2020) assessed the English preparatory curriculum at İstanbul Medeniyet University. The results indicated that the students who took part in the study were not generally decisive about the efficacy of the preparatory curriculum and there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the students depending on gender, English level, and volunteering or obligation.

Tekin (2015) evaluated the English curriculum for English Language Teaching and English Language and Literature preparatory classes at a state university. The data were collected from the students via a questionnaire and two open-ended questions whereas semi-structured interviews were conducted with two instructors. The researcher found out that most of the participants of the study had positive opinions regarding the curriculum; however, they suggested a renovation in the physical conditions.

Sağlam and Akdemir (2018) investigated the English preparatory curriculum at Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University School of Foreign Languages via a questionnaire developed by Cengizhan (2006). It was found that the students generally had positive opinions regarding the curriculum, besides, the students suggested that the learning objectives needed to be reorganized to meet their needs in a better way and they added that they needed to be encouraged to gain self-confidence in communicating in English. Furthermore, no significant difference was found in factors related to gender.

Karci Aktas and Gundogdu (2020) studied the English preparatory class curriculum at Adnan Menderes University School of Foreign Languages. The case study included 310 preparatory class students, 26 English instructors, 26 instructors working at other departments, and 24 students attending other departments. Data collection tools were “a scale, questionnaire, interviews, class observations, and document analysis” (p.169). The findings of the study revealed that the curriculum lacked philosophy and goals. The students failed to reach the expected level although they had positive attitudes toward learning English.

Çetinavcı and Topkaya (2012) conducted an evaluation study on a preparatory class English curriculum of a state university. They compared “two different regimes of grammar teaching, one that follows its language content and another that follows the language content of the main course” and the findings revealed that the curriculum following the main course’s content was preferred more.

Akpur et al. (2016) evaluated the English preparatory class at Yıldız Technical University curriculum utilizing the CIPP model. In the study, the data were gathered via a questionnaire conducted to 54 teachers and 753 students. It was found that the students and the teachers had positive opinions towards the curriculum in general; however, they had worries concerning “balancing of skills, lacking audio-visual materials, not acquiring the habit of studying in groups and the knowledge of English for different areas” (p.466). Moreover, the views of the teachers and the students differentiated in terms of the context of the curriculum.

Mede and Uygun (2014) inquired about a preparatory class English curriculum for “The English Language and Literature and Translation departments” in terms of students’ needs. The researchers employed a needs analysis questionnaire and conducted semi-structured interviews. They found that the students were satisfied with the curriculum for providing equal opportunities for skills development; however, they had a discrepancy in their perceptions regarding writing skills.

Agcam (2022) explored the primary EFL curriculum which was revised in 2017 and used in the next academic year. Specifically, they investigated the “learning outcomes and suggested assignments” according to the “communicative objectives” of the curriculum. The results showed that the learning outcomes of the curriculum were compatible with the communicative approach of the curriculum and it fostered speaking and listening skills; however, the “suggested assignments” were not in parallel with the general logic of the curriculum (p.431).

On the other hand, Dalkiliç and Büyükahıska (2021) evaluated the objectives of the Secondary-School English curriculum according to Bloom’s taxonomy. They found that the goals of the curriculum were inadequate in “developing higher-order thinking skills of secondary-school students” (p. 389).

Acar (2020) investigated the 2014 and 2018 ELT curriculum for high schools, the findings of the document analysis revealed that there were many parts in the new curriculum copied from the previous one which was missing citations. Moreover, “ethics and values education” was included in the new curriculum as a novelty, there was no significant “difference between two curricula in terms of treatment of needs analysis, assessment and evaluation and the use of mother tongue” (p.510).

Civriz and Burakgazi Gelmez (2022) investigated the commitment of the English teacher to the new curriculum, the expectations of the 65^{9th} graders towards the English class, how much of their expectations were met, and the achievements of the students in various skills in English classes. The findings of the study revealed that the students expected more focus on listening and speaking skills, an increased number of drama activities and didactic plays, and interview exercises, and English to be the medium of instruction. Furthermore, the expectations of the students were met in the classroom of the English teacher who conducted his/her classes according to the planned time, suggested activity, and materials as defined in the new curriculum.

According to the literature review, the number of studies conducted to evaluate high school English preparatory class curricula was very limited; particularly, the ones comparing two consecutive English preparatory class curricula. This study specifically intends to address that gap in the literature by investigating two consecutive preparatory class English high school curricula regarding their impact on the skills development and academic achievement of the students from the lenses of different stakeholders. This study seeks answers to the questions below:

- 1-What are the perceived reasons for the curriculum change from the lenses of different stakeholders?
- 2-Are the students and teachers satisfied with the current curriculum?
- 3-How do different stakeholders evaluate the two consecutive curricula in terms of providing communicative competence?
- 4-Is there a significant difference between the two consecutive preparatory class English curricula regarding the students’ achievement in English language learning?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed method design in which interviews provided a profound understanding of the perceptions of the different stakeholders concerning the Preparatory Class English Curricula which were launched by the Ministry of National Education (will be abbreviated as MNE) in 2011 and 2016 whereas the English grades of the students provided useful information regarding the achievement of the students in English classes. The one-on-one interviews with the principal and five English teachers attending preparatory classes and the focus group interviews with 24 students provided qualitative data for the study. Furthermore, the study had a naturalistic approach since the evaluator sought the perceptions of different stakeholders such as the principal, English teachers, and students regarding the two consecutive English curricula (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). The understanding of the curriculum came from the interaction with the three stakeholders of the curricula which enabled the evaluator to view the curricula from their perspectives and triangulate the data as well. In this context, the study had “the *illumination model*” of Parlett and Hamilton (cited in Lynch, 1996, p. 82). The Illuminative Evaluation Model provides an in-depth investigation of the curriculum with various data collection instruments (Özüdoğru & Adigüzel, 2016). The Illuminative Evaluation Model was utilized in this study to explore the two consecutive curricula in-depth

by utilizing various perspectives. Creswell (2012) mentioned two major strategies to validate qualitative data which are “triangulation and member checking” (p. 259). To ensure validity in the study, the data were collected from various participants via various sources for triangulation. The thematic analysis took place after member checking, that is; the transcriptions were shared with the teachers and the principal and confirmation e-mails were received.

Setting and Participants

This study took place in Manisa SSHS in the 2017-2018 academic year. At that time, it had 382 students and 29 teachers; three preparatory classes with 89 students, three 9th grade classes with 86 students, three 10th grade classes with 83 students, three 11th grade classes with 85 students, and two 12th grade classes with 51 students. There were five English teachers, four of whom were teaching English to the preparatory classes when the interviews took place. 89 preparatory class students in the 2017-2018 academic year and 86 preparatory class students in the 2016-2017 academic year who were 9th-grade students at that time participated in the study (see Table 1). In the 2016-2017 academic year, the preparatory students had twenty periods of English classes consisting of fifteen periods of main course and five periods of skills lessons whereas in the 2017-2018 academic year, the preparatory class students had twenty periods of English classes consisting of ten periods of the main course, five periods of listening-speaking and five periods of reading-writing lessons. At that time, three different English teachers were teaching these classes, thus the students had three different teachers in one term. Creswell (2012) maintained that the ideal number for focus group interviews was four or six; thus, the researcher conducted focus group interviews with 6 groups of four students selected from three preparatory classes and three 9th grade classes. Four students from each preparatory class were included in the interview, two with high grades and two with low grades to strengthen the validity. Moreover, this study takes all stakeholders’ perceptions towards the two curricula and utilizes the English exam results of the students as the outcomes of the curricula to determine the effectiveness of the curricula (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006) regarding their skills development.

Table 1.

Characteristics of two academic years

2016-2017 Academic Year	2017-2018 Academic Year
2011 The Secondary School English Curriculum	2016 The Preparatory Class, 9 th - 12 th Grades English Curriculum
20 Periods of English Classes a Week	20 Periods of English Classes a Week
15 Periods of Main Course	10 Periods of Main Course
5 Periods of Skills	5 Periods of Listening-Speaking
	5 Periods of Reading-Writing
2 Different Teachers	3 Different Teachers
3 Preparatory Classes with 89 Students	3 9 th Grade Classes with 86 Students

Data Collection and Analysis

The necessary permission to conduct the study was granted by the Manisa Provincial Directorate for National Education and the study was conducted in accordance with the research and publishing ethics. The interview questions were prepared and two different experts concluded that they were appropriate to be used in this study. The researcher asked English teachers at Manisa SSHS to choose four students, two with high English grades and two with low English grades, from three different preparatory classes in the 2017-2018 academic year and from three different 9th grade classes which were preparatory classes in 2016-2017 academic year. Table 2 summarises the data collection instruments above. As the stakeholders of the preparatory English curriculum for the SSHS, the principal as well as five English teachers of the school, and twenty-four preparatory class students were interviewed to triangulate the data. The focus group interview was time-saving unlike one-on-one interviews (Creswell, 2012); thus, focus group interviews were employed with students while the one-on-one interviews were employed with English teachers and the principal. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed later

on. Additionally, the achievement scores of the students were collected from the principal to be analysed later.

Table 2.

Data collection instruments

Research questions	Qualitative data collection instruments	Quantitative data collection instruments
Research question 1	Semi-structured interviews One-on-one interview	-
Research question 2	Semi-structured interviews Focus group interviews	-
Research question 3	Semi-structured interviews One-on-one interview Focus group interviews	-
Research question 4	-	The achievement scores of the students

As the quantitative data, the English grades of the students on the scale of MNE which is demonstrated in Table 3 were used and they were analysed in SPSS 2.0. Students had one grade for twenty periods of English classes; that is, it included results from the main course, listening-speaking, and reading-writing classes. The exam results of the students regarding their English grades were gathered and a normality test was executed to see whether the gathered data were distributed normally or not. Then, a T-test was applied to observe the difference between the achievement levels of the students in two consecutive curricula.

Table 3.

The scale of the Ministry of National Education for secondary education

Point	Degree	Grade
85.00 - 100	Excellent	5
70.00 - 84.99	Good	4
60.00 - 69.99	Average	3
50.00 - 59.99	Fair	2
0 - 49.99	Poor	1

Furthermore, the interviews were conducted and recorded. Then, they were transcribed and translated into English by two experts and formed into a final version of the data. The translations were e-mailed to teachers for member-checking. Transcriptions were read by the researcher several times to have a deep understanding and students were coded as S1, S2, S3, etc., and teachers were coded as T1, T2, T3, etc. The data were analysed in MAXQDA 2020 by forming codes and sub-codes for relevant phrases and sentences. Then, codes and sub-codes were used to form themes. The main codes, themes, and frequencies are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

Themes	Codes	Frequencies
Characteristics		
	The New Curriculum	91
	The Old Curriculum	53
	The Weaknesses of the Curriculum	104
	The Implementation of the Curriculum	29

Level Classes	8
Practice Opportunity	4
Placement Test	3
Repetition	2
Interruption of Classes	1
Stress and Intonation	1
Student Profile	20
Skills	13
Contents of the Curriculum	7
Materials	7
Other Weaknesses	5
Number of Teachers	1
Assessment and Evaluation	1
The Strengths of the Curriculum	118
The Contents of the Curriculum	58
Skills	10
Communicative Skills	6
Speaking	13
Grammar	5
Vocabulary	4
Pronunciation and Stress	2
Implementation of the Curriculum	24
Materials	10
Student Profile	9
Other Strengths	9
Number of Teachers	2
Assessment and Evaluation	2
Repetition	2
Allocated Time for English Classes	2
Opinions	
The Suggestions for the Curriculum	58
Other Suggestions	30
Level Classes	10
Fun	5
Supplementary Courses	5
Speaking Class	2
Native Speakers	4

EU Projects	2
Number of Teachers	1
Achievement Scores	11
Assessment and Evaluation	7
Reasons for the Curriculum Change	3
School Choice	1
Confessions	24
The Students	16
The Teachers	7
The Principal	1
Other	7

FINDINGS

The findings regarding the exam results of the students are presented first, then the interpretations of the interviews carried out with three stakeholders follow them.

The Exam Results of the Students

The exam results of the 2016-2017 academic year were normally distributed, with skewness of 0.35 (SE= 0.26) and kurtosis of 0.50 (SE= 0.51), similarly, the exam results of the 2017-2018 academic year were normally distributed, with skewness of 0.39 (SE= 0.26) and kurtosis of 0.53 (SE= 0.51). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), the data were normally distributed since it was neither below -1.50 nor above +1.50.

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare the overall grades of preparatory class students in six classes; that is, three 9th-grade classes and three preparatory classes, to see the effects of English curricula on students' achievement.

Table 5.

Independent t-test analysis regarding the grades of the students belonging to two consecutive curricula

	Curricula	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Grade	2011	86	3.51	.84	173	-2.00	.04*
	2016	89	3.78	.90			

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Table 5 presents that there is a significant difference between the 2011 Secondary Education English Curriculum ($M= 3.51$, $SD= .84$) and 2016 Preparatory Class English Curriculum ($M= 3.78$, $SD= .90$) at Manisa Social Sciences High School $t(173)= -2.00$, $p<.05$. The findings revealed that the students who were taught through the new curriculum did better in their English exams.

Interview with the Stakeholders

Interview with the Principal

The interview with the principal was conducted in an “*informal conversational interview*” format; that is, it took place in a spontaneous way (Lynch, 1996, p. 126).

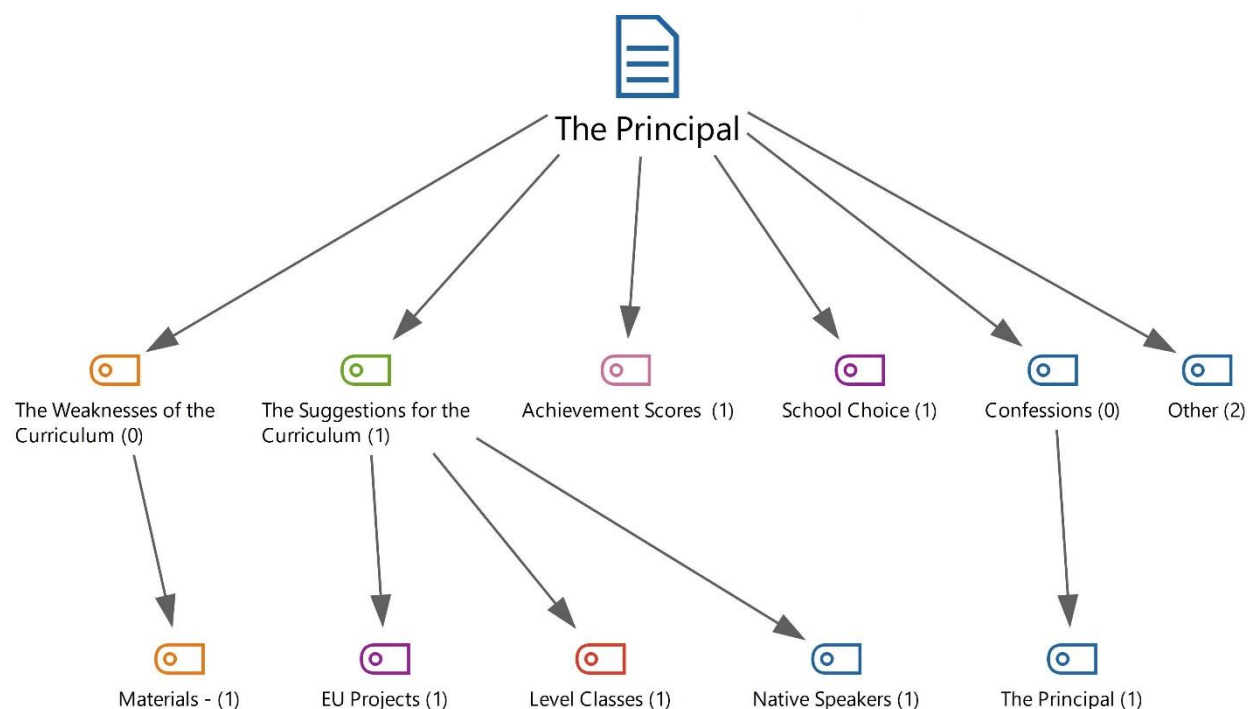


Figure 1. The Code Map for the Interview with the Principal

Figure 1 presents the distribution of codes used to decipher the interview with the principal. It was identified that the principal did not know much about the contents of the two curricula; thus, he shared his opinions regarding English language learning and teaching in general.

Interview with English Teachers

As the implementers of the two curricula, one-on-one interviews were conducted with five English teachers. Their perceptions regarding the two curricula are summarized below;

1- What do you think about the curriculum change?

Three out of five English teachers had positive opinions, one had a negative opinion about the curriculum change, and the other stressed that there was a discrepancy between the curriculum and the materials. According to the teachers, the curriculum was suitable for preparatory students of that year whose English levels were quite low. The methodology focused on skills and outcomes rather than grammar. The expectations of the curriculum were not so high, so it was more simplified. The world is changing, and so are the students and their needs. Today's world requires speaking skills more than reading and writing skills. The MNE considered this issue while designing the new curriculum. Three quotes that exemplify the opinions of teachers regarding the curriculum change are as follows;

T5: "At the beginning, I was against the curriculum change but now I have positive opinions about this change. I liked the new curriculum towards the end of the academic year."

T2: "The new curriculum requires the students to be more active during the classes to help them speak in English more."

T3: "The people rarely read and write, they have lost those habits, it is a listening and speaking era. People try to write and read as less as possible and speak as much as possible. The new generation is the same. I think this situation was taken into account while preparing the new curriculum. It was a necessity. I liked its theory."

Figure 2 presents the distribution codes used to decipher the interviews conducted with the teachers.

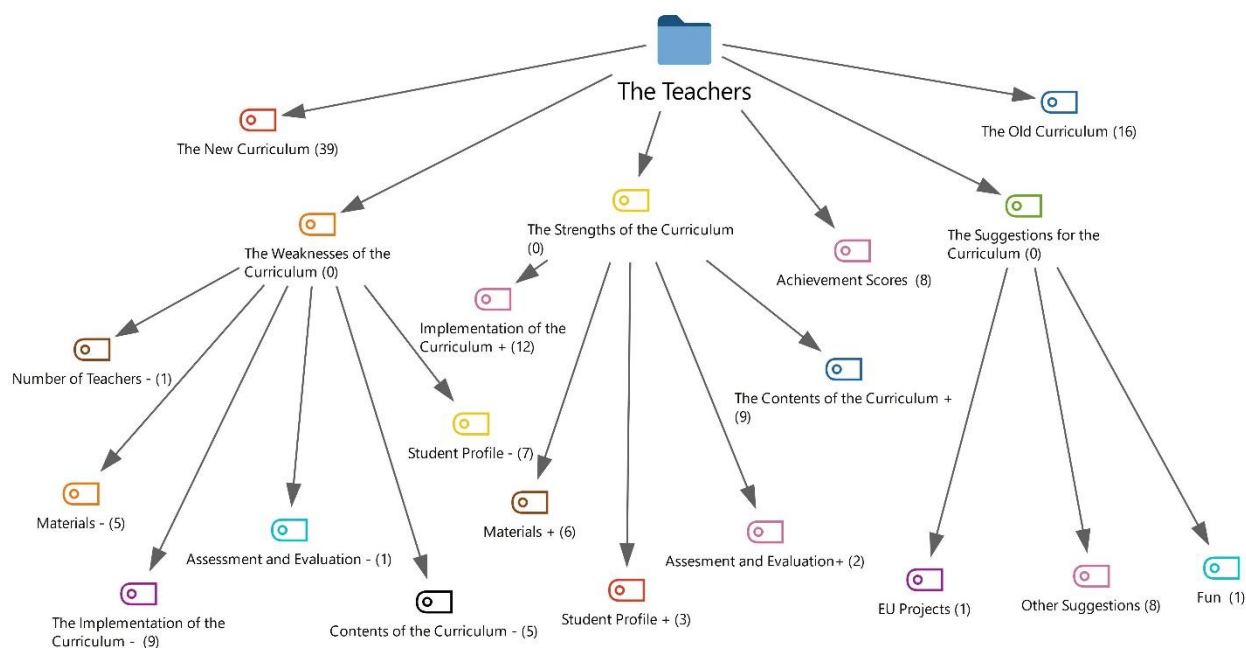


Figure 2. The Code Map for the Interview with the Teachers

2- What do you think about the reasons behind the curriculum change?

Three English teachers (n=5) had different opinions about the reason for the curriculum change one teacher did not know the reason and the other withheld his/her opinion. According to them, education includes politics, so the curriculum changed due to political reasons and changing world and new technology. This is a listening-speaking era; thus it was necessary to keep pace with the new era. The relevant quotes are as follows;

T1: "No matter how much the curriculum is changed, there is a problem in designing materials appropriate to these curricula."

T4: "I think it was changed due to political reasons."

3- What has changed in the curricula regarding skills development?

Two English teachers (n=5) answered the third question, one teacher stated that there was no difference in skills development regarding the two curricula, only the time spared for each skill expanded in the new curriculum and the other stated that it was flexible and easier to use. Two quotes that exemplify the responses are as follows;

T1: 'In the new curriculum, there are options for activities, if you have time you can implement all of them, if you don't, you can skip some.'

T5: 'It is simpler, more relaxed, and it demands less'.

4- Are you satisfied with the new preparatory class English curriculum? Why? Why not?

Four out of five English teachers were satisfied with the new preparatory class English curriculum, yet one had some concerns. According to the teachers, the new curriculum included activity-based language teaching which was preferred and it appealed to their student profile which deteriorated gradually in recent years. The samples are as follows;

T2: "I am satisfied with the curriculum in general. I think activity-based language teaching is better than grammar-based language teaching. I have witnessed that students improved their English a lot during these preparatory classes. This indicates that there is no problem with the curriculum."

T3: "I am satisfied but I always have concerns. The periods of teaching English have decreased gradually. Education encompasses politics."

5- *What do you think about the previous preparatory class English curriculum?*

Two out of five English teachers expressed their opinions concerning the old curriculum; one teacher had a mostly negative opinion and the other had a completely positive opinion about the old curriculum. Thereafter, the old curriculum was overloaded, and everything was determined, there was no option for teachers to make any changes and it promoted the students' communicative skills. The sample quotes are as follows;

T1: "It was too intensive and not clear about what to teach. The outcomes are more clear-cut now. In the old curriculum, everything including daily plans for classes was given. The teachers were not flexible."

T4: "2011 curriculum supported the speaking skills of the students. It was a modern curriculum away from grammar teaching."

6- *What do you think about the new preparatory class English curriculum?*

Two out of five English teachers expressed their opinions concerning the new curriculum; each has a positive opinion about the new curriculum. Accordingly, functions of language were emphasized in the new curriculum which expected students to use four skills in each theme. The use of interactive boards, video blogs, or e-blogs was also promoted as well. The contents of the new curriculum comprised fewer themes which gave the students more chances to practice different skills. Teachers had options concerning implementation since the new curriculum focused on the outcomes. The sample quotes are as follows;

T1: "I like the new curriculum since it is functional, appealing to everyday use, and simple enough to implement since there is less content but subtler and more functional activities depending on more revisions."

T3: "MNE says that as long as you provide these outcomes, you are free to use any materials; even you can adapt or create your material. In this context, I liked it."

7- *What are the strengths and weaknesses of the two curricula?*

The interview revealed that the positive opinions of four teachers (n=5) regarding the new curriculum were centred on three main themes; the students' progress was observed at their paces and they could evaluate themselves besides their peers. The new curriculum appealed to four skills. Teachers had time for each skill separately. The curriculum was not too intensive, and teachers had options in terms of implementation. Two quotes that exemplify the responses of teachers are as follows;

T5: "The students can speak in English better in the new curriculum since they are more relaxed. The teacher facilitates and supports their learning."

T3: "In the new curriculum, decreasing the number of themes is useful for students. It activates more skills at once. The teachers are allowed to be flexible in implementation."

Thematic analysis of the interview with the teachers revealed that three out of five English teachers had negative opinions regarding the previous curriculum. The previous curriculum was more didactic and intensive which did not allow teachers to practice enough to keep up with the curriculum. The test and quiz results of the students were taken into consideration in their assessment and evaluation. The students do not attach importance to English classes since English would not be included in the university entrance exam for most of them. The curriculum was not related to this problem.

8- *How would you evaluate the achievement of the students in English classes?*

Three teachers (n=5) stated that the new curriculum contributed to the achievement of the students in English whereas two described that there was no relationship between the achievement of the students and the new curriculum. Thereafter, the division of skills that differed from school to school affects the students' achievement in communicative skills. The students have different backgrounds, as a result, their English levels vary, and so do their achievements accordingly. Teachers were provided with various

evaluation methods in each new curriculum which enhanced students' achievement since the curriculum appeals to the students' needs. Two quotes exemplifying the opinions of teachers are as follows;

T3: "We have more alternative evaluation methods such as; portfolio, group work, self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and rubrics. I think these kinds of alternatives complete our most deficient parts. The students gain evaluation culture which affects their achievement since they know what is expected from them before the activities and the exams."

T5: "If the previous curriculum was in use, the achievement of the students would be lower. Since we have separated the skills lessons, I know what to do, in the previous implementation it was a mess."

9- Are there any parts that still need to be changed according to you? What are they?

Two out of five English teachers reported that the new curriculum was formed according to the views taken by the teachers. Therefore, they were quite satisfied with the new curriculum; still, they had some suggestions such as; the update of the vocabulary included in the lessons according to current issues around the world and the inclusion of more grammar topics into the new curriculum.

T1: "Language is something alive, thus it changes and develops. For instance, the vocabulary can be updated and some contemporary words such as war, migration, and such can be added to reading texts."

T2: "The curriculum ends with present perfect tense while I would like to teach further. More topics can be added."

Interview with the Students

As a result of the focus group interviews carried out with preparatory class students and 9th-grade students, it was apparent that they shared the same opinions on some topics with each other, whereas on some topics their opinions differ (see Figure 3).

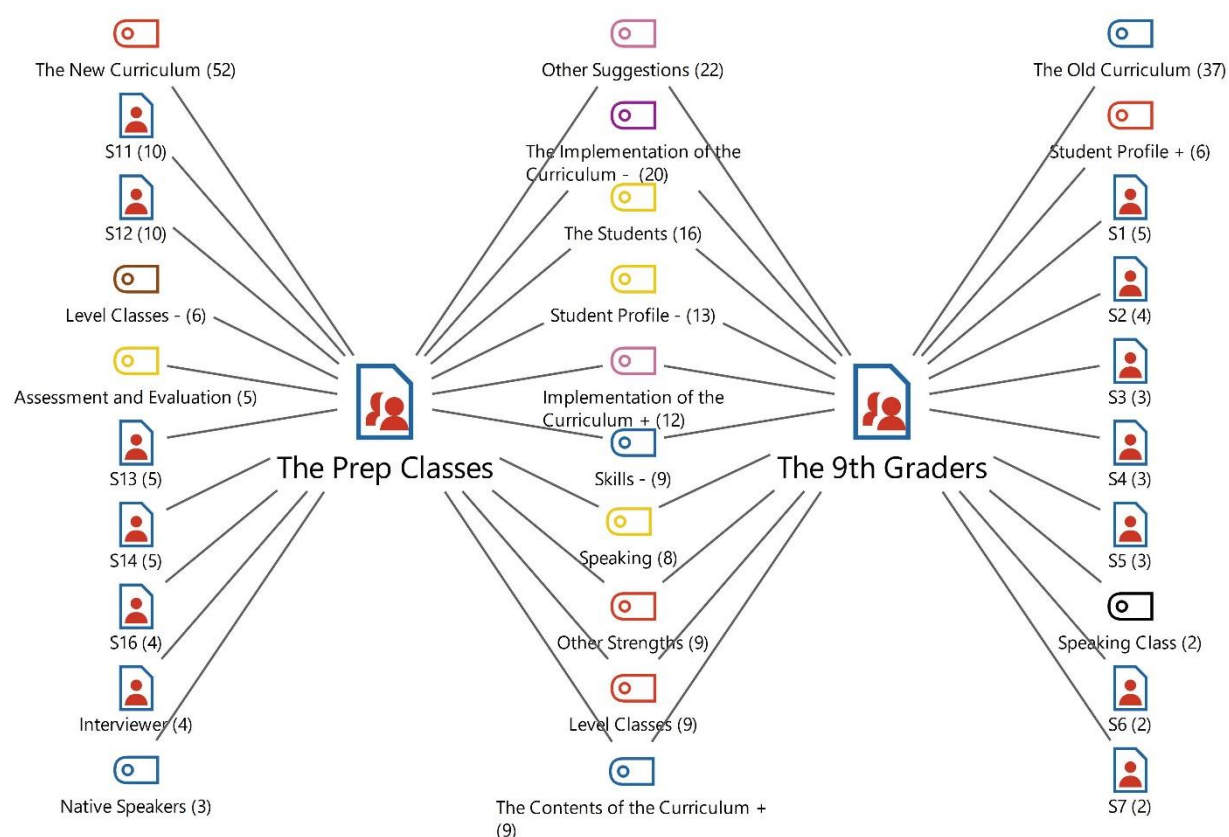


Figure 3. The code relationship for the interview with the students

The results of the analysis revealed that the positive opinions of the preparatory class students (n=12) regarding the new curriculum were centred on four main themes; skills, implementation, facilities, and allocated time for English classes. Some quotes exemplifying their views are as follows:

S11: "I think I have improved my vocabulary very much. It would be impossible to achieve this much progress without preparatory classes. It helped me very much because continuous exposure to a foreign language somehow transforms it into a necessity in your mind."

S13: "Preparatory class doesn't only teach us vocabulary and grammar, but also it improves our speaking. I am glad that I attended preparatory class."

On the other hand, the results of the analysis revealed that the positive opinions of the 9th-grade students (n=12) regarding the old curriculum were centred on two main themes; skills and content of the curriculum. Two sample quotes are as follows:

S8: "I have been interested in English since my childhood. Before preparatory class, I wouldn't understand an English song without checking the lyrics, but I can do it now, and I can watch movies without subtitles."

S 10: "Before coming here, I was very weak at English, at the beginning I couldn't understand anything, but as they started from the very beginning it helped me a bit, and now I can at least understand a little. I cannot speak but I can understand."

Moreover, it was found that the negative opinions of the preparatory class students (n=12) regarding the new curriculum were centred on two main themes; lack of level classes and repetition. Some quotes exemplifying their views are as follows:

S10: "We can have placement tests when we first arrive to avoid mixed-level classes."

S5: "I don't like repeating the same subjects from the main course like grammar in different lessons like reading, writing, listening, and speaking".

On the other hand, the interview carried out with 9th-grade students revealed that the negative opinions of students (n=12) regarding the old curriculum were centred on three main themes; skills and lack of level classes. Some quotes exemplifying their views are as follows:

S4: "There could be a placement exam at the beginning to sort students out according to their levels like A1, A2. Level-arranged classes would make us improve more."

S2: "Before coming here I was very weak in English, at the beginning I couldn't understand anything."

In terms of satisfaction with the new curriculum, the preparatory class students had discrepancies; some were glad, and some students asserted that it was a waste of time. Below you can find sample quotes:

S3: "If it weren't for prep class I wouldn't be able to speak and understand English now. I speak English at home with my family for practice. I'm lucky but others might not be."

S4: "I didn't improve at all; it wasn't helpful for me."

Similarly, the 9th graders contradicted each other concerning the old curriculum, related quotes are presented below:

S1: "Yes I am, I came here knowing what I will learn here and to improve my English for 5 years, I wouldn't come here if I didn't like English otherwise I would waste one year for nothing."

S7: "My English was bad but still I improved a little."

The suggestions of both groups of students concerning the two curricula were parallel to each other; that is; both groups of students suggested having more practice opportunities and skills development. Some quotes that belonged to the preparatory class are as follows:

S4: "School's social activities could include native speakers to improve us. I have two African friends in my neighbourhood and speaking in English with them helps me a lot even if they speak too fast."

S7: "Once a month there can be a foreign visitor for speaking classes."

Some quotes that belonged to the 9th-grade class are as follows:

S3: "There could have been a voluntary common speaking class for all prep classes where people who wanted to talk could improve, it would be great."

S5: "We had a speaking circus with my friends which made me get involved in more and like English more. If classes were more fun, we could learn more."

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study, different stakeholders; the principal, teachers, and students took place in the evaluation of two consecutive preparatory class English curricula which coincides with the study of Çetinavcı and Topkaya (2012) in which "the administrator, instructors, and students" formed the sample of the study. When the two English curricula for SSHS were investigated, it was found that different assessment tools and the same evaluation types were promoted in each curriculum. Moral and national values were added and the Eclectic Approach was embraced in the new curriculum as a novelty; however, some parts were copied from the previous curriculum which overlaps the findings of Acar (2020) which criticised the 2018 ELT curriculum for high schools for copying some parts from 2014 curriculum without quotations.

The findings of the study confirmed that the new preparatory class English curriculum impacted the students positively in; developing communicative skills in English, demanding outcome focus instead of content focus, providing enough time allocation to each skill, setting the teachers free to develop their materials, and allowing the students to demonstrate better performance in growing communicative competence in general which is parallel to the study of Mede and Uygun (2014).

The interviews conducted with teachers revealed that there were different reasons behind the curriculum change such as; improving the curriculum in terms of skills development, decreasing the themes included in the curriculum, keeping up with the new technologies, and political reasons. Furthermore, the teachers noted that the two consecutive curricula were similar in terms of skills development, but the time spared for each skill was expanded in the new curriculum and it encouraged the students to speak in English more. Despite an increase in the allocation of time for productive skills which pleased most of the students and teachers, the lack of practice opportunities which is parallel to Karci Aktas and Gundogdu's (2020) study was maintained to be one of the reasons behind the difficulties in speaking in English by some students. Moreover, some students demanded more speaking courses, specifically with native speakers if possible.

Also, the teachers criticised the old curriculum for being too long, complicated, and too intensive to implement which overlaps with Yücel et al.'s (2022) findings. Unlike the previous curriculum, the new curriculum was not too intensive which enabled teachers to observe students more and evaluate them at their pace.

It was discovered that the teachers were satisfied with the new curriculum in general and also the majority of the students in each group were satisfied with the curriculum which was in use during their preparatory education which coincides with the studies of Tekin (2015), Akpur et al. (2016) and Sağlam and Akdemir (2018). Only one teacher reported that there was no significant change in the new curriculum regarding implementation and the curriculum did not affect students' achievement in learning English. Moreover, two teachers and some of the students emphasized that the new curriculum was behind their expectations in some aspects.

However, some students evaluated the preparatory class as a year lost in their education lives since they learnt very little English or none. Similarly, the representatives of each preparatory class student highlighted that the preparatory classes need to be classified according to the current levels of the students. This idea took part in the previous curriculum; however, it was not able to be accomplished in implementation due to a lack of teachers and physical conditions at school. MNE needs to consider the needs of the stakeholders and take precautions for its successful implementation.

Based on the data gathered, the English scores of the students varied in each group; however, in the new curriculum, students' achievement was higher than that of the previous preparatory class students.

According to the teachers, there is a relationship between the interest and willingness of the students and their achievements in English. Also, the opportunity of practicing what they have learnt which was provided within the new curriculum is of significance. Three teachers noted that curriculum change contributed to the achievement of the students whereas two teachers indicated their achievement was not related to the curriculum.

The significance of this study relies on the fact that there has been no other program evaluation study regarding the preparatory class English curricula for SSHS. Thus, it shed light upon new insights regarding a specific setting. Moreover, it provided useful feedback for the two consecutive curricula one of which is still in use. In that context, it intends to contribute to the development of the next preparatory class English curriculum for SSHS by conveying the views of its stakeholders.

To sum up, two themes, characteristics of the curricula, and relevant opinions were obtained from the analysis of the qualitative data. Particularly, the findings indicated that the perceptions of teachers, the majority of the students, and the principal were positive towards the new curriculum which indicated that it was a step in the right direction to facilitate students' development in communicative skills in English language learning. In addition, the scores of the students using the new curriculum were significantly different from the students using the previous curriculum which indicated that the new curriculum had a positive effect on students' achievement in learning English.

This paper investigated the perceptions of the different stakeholders of two consecutive English curricula at one specific school; however, it is not adequate to provide the necessary information to conclude about the curricula for the same school types since the implementations and the perceptions of the stakeholders at each school vary. Therefore, similar studies should be conducted in other SSHSs in order to consolidate the sample size and provide a wider understanding of the research topic.

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