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A Comparison between the Fifth Grade Intensive English Language Curriculum and the Fifth Grade English Language Curriculum: Students' Achievement in Speaking*

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Abstract: It is aimed, in this study, to compare the achievement level of the students taught with the fifth grade intensive English language curriculum (IELC) and the ones taught with the fifth grade English language curriculum (ELC) in terms of their speaking skills. With this aim, it is also intended to find out the failure behind the students' speaking skills. Sequential explanatory strategy, which is one of the mixed-methods research designs, was used for this study as the aim was to further explain the quantitative findings. There were two groups of participants in this study. The first group included 64 fifth grade students selected from two different schools through simple random sampling, while the second group consisted of the five teachers teaching the fifth grade IELC. Two instruments developed by the researcher were utilized to collect data. The first instrument was an achievement test developed to measure students' success in speaking skills, while the second instrument was a semi-structured interview schedule developed to collect data from the teachers implementing the fifth grade IELC. The quantitative data collected through the achievement test were analyzed with descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations and inferential statistics through independent samples t-test which was used to compare the two groups of students' achievement levels, while the qualitative data gathered through the semi-structured interviews were analyzed with content analysis. The findings indicated that only one objective was attained by the students, the results of independent samples t-test indicated that there was not a significant difference in the achievement levels of the students taught with the fifth grade IELC and the ones taught with the fifth grade ELC. The reasons behind this failure was found to be resulting from teacher-related, student-related, and Ministry of National Education (MoNE)-related factors referring to implementation problems rather than curriculum design.

Keywords: *Fifth grade intensive English language curriculum, speaking skills achievement, failure factors, curriculum evaluation.*

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Introduction

"There is no question that the key to economic, political and social progress in today's society depends on the ability of Turkish citizens to communicate effectively on an international level" (MoNE, 2017, p. 4). Especially, "the trend towards globalization and internationalization has increased the importance of being competent in communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds" (Fritz, Mollenberg & Chen, 2002, p. 1). These facts address the necessity of learning a common language that is accepted to be English throughout the world. Turkey has been trying to equip the students with sufficient proficiency in English for decades. Till 1997, foreign language education started from sixth grade onward; however, the starting grade changed in years. In 1997, foreign language education started to be provided from the fourth grade onward. Following this curriculum, another curriculum was developed in 2012 and it was started to be implemented from the second grade onward in 2013 and it is still in use. Despite the vigorous efforts and great deal of time spent on foreign language education (Gunday, 2007); however, low foreign language proficiency level remained a serious problem in Turkey (Isik, 2008), and a significant percentage of students left school without the skills to communicate successfully in an English-language medium (MoNE, 2013) although the main purpose has been to

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develop the students' communicative competence in the curricula developed since 1997 when the communicative approach was adopted in foreign language education in Turkey for the first time.

The evaluation studies conducted on the English language curricula developed and implemented since 1997 indicated several problems in foreign language education in Turkey which are indicated to influence the implementation and the success of those curricula. These problems include social economic status differences (Buyukduman, 2005; Erkan, 2009; Tekin-Ozel, 2011); crowded classrooms (Akuzel, 2006; Buyukduman, 2005; Dincer, 2013; Donmez, 2010; Erkan, 2009; Ersen-Yanik, 2007; Harman, 1999; Kaya, 2018; Kozikoglu, 2014; Ocak, Kizilkaya & Boyraz, 2013; Ormeci, 2009; Tekin-Ozel, 2011; Yaman, 2010); lack of materials (Akuzel, 2006; Dincer, 2013; Donmez, 2010; Er, 2006; Erkan, 2009; Ersen-Yanik, 2007; Gunes, 2009; Harman, 1999; Incecay, 2012; Kaya, Ok & Urun, 2015; Mersinligil, 2002; Ormeci, 2009; Tekin-Ozel, 2011; Yaman, 2010); use of board and student course book as the only material (Er, 2006; Kaya, Ok, & Urun, 2015; Mersinligil, 2002); students' negative attitude towards English (Batdi, 2015; Ocak, Kizilkaya & Boyraz, 2013); insufficient time to cover the content (Akuzel, 2006; Batdi, 2015; Buyukduman, 2005; Demirtas & Erdem, 2015; Dincer, 2013; Donmez, 2010; Er, 2006; Erdogan, 2005; Harman, 1999; Mersinligil, 2002; Ocak, Kizilkaya & Boyraz, 2013; Ormeci, 2009; Tekin-Ozel, 2011; Yaman, 2010); one type of assessment: written examination (Dincer, 2013; Er, 2006; Harman, 1999; Kaya, 2018; Mersinligil, 2002; Tekin-Ozel, 2011); no assessment of speaking and listening skills (Er, 2006; Gunes, 2009; Kaya, 2018; Tekin-Ozel, 2011); little or no focus on listening and speaking skills and communicative approach (Er, 2006; Kaya, 2018; Kozikoglu, 2014); teacher-centered instruction (Donmez, 2010; Kaya, 2018; Koydemir, 2001; Kozikoglu, 2014; Mersinligil, 2002; Ormeci, 2009; Tekin-Ozel, 2011); low student participation (Erkan, 2009; Kaya, 2018); content above students' level (Mersinligil, 2002; Ormeci, 2009); insufficient parent involvement, cooperation, education level (Akuzel, 2006; Sahenk-Erkan, 2015; Tekin-Ozel, 2011); lack of in-service training (Erkan, 2009; Tekin-Ozel, 2011; Yaman, 2010); central examinations for high school entrance (Donmez, 2010; Kaya, 2018; Kaya, Ok & Urun, 2015); incongruence between theory and practice (Kaya & Ok, 2016; Kirkgoz, 2007). These findings show that the problem related to the foreign language education is not the curricula developed; rather it is a matter of implementation. In this connection, they suggest actions to be taken to minimize these problems in order to enable the curriculum to be implemented as planned instead of various curriculum developments.

New curricula are still being developed in Turkey hoping to find a cure for the failure in foreign language education. The latest attempt to solve this problem is the designing of the fifth grade IELC for the fifth grade students. This curriculum started to be implemented in 620 pilot schools located in 81 cities of Turkey in 2017/2018 education year and it was started to be implemented in more schools in 2018/2019 education period. With this curriculum consisting of 40 thematic units that have "interrelated yet independent themes" (MoNE, 2017, p. 9), the fifth graders take 15 class hours of English a week, while the remaining 20 class hours are left for other branches; six class hours for Turkish course, four class hours for Mathematics, three class hours for Science course and Social Science course, two class hours for Religion course, and two for an elective course. In the other schools, on the other hand, the fifth grade ELC, developed in 2012 and upgraded in 2016, is still being implemented and the students are provided with three hours of English course. In addition, the students can choose to take additional two hours of elective English course which makes five hours in many schools.

The fifth grade IELC, like the fifth grade ELC developed in 2012, follows the principles and descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) (MoNE, 2017, p. 4), which "provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe" (CoE, 2001, p. 1). The most important characteristic of this framework is its focus on communicative aspects of English as it is "intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems in Europe" (CoE, 2001, p. 1). What is to add, the target language is seen as "a means of interacting with others" (MoNE, 2017, p. 4) rather than a subject to teach.

The investigation of literature showed that there is no research on IELC except for the one conducted by Gurbuzturk and Ceviz (2018) who aimed to find out teachers' views about this curriculum. The findings of this study indicated that the students could not speak as expected due to their low readiness level.

Purpose of the Study

It is aimed, with this study, to compare the achievement level of the students taught with the fifth grade IELC and the ones taught with the fifth grade ELC in terms of their speaking skills. With this aim, it is intended to find out problems encountered during the implementation process of the fifth grade IELC. The following research questions were formulated to find answers for this aim:

1. To what extent have the students taught with the fifth grade IELC and the ones taught with the fifth grade ELC have reached the objectives with respect to speaking skills?
2. Is there a significant difference between the achievement level of the students taught with the fifth grade IELC and the ones taught with the fifth grade ELC in terms of their speaking skills?

3. What are the likely reasons behind the students' failure in speaking skills despite the fifth grade IELC?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in many aspects. First and foremost, there is no study conducted to assess these students' speaking skills in the literature yet. This study is partly a sign of success of the curriculum. It can show whether this curriculum has worth to the students. By comparing the two curricula, it can also show the contributions and influence of the fifth grade IELC.

Secondly, the literature is in need of reliable and valid instruments to assess students' speaking skills. As found by Kaya (2018), the teachers do not know how to prepare tests to assess students' speaking skills. Therefore, the achievement test of which development process is explained in detail can prove to be an example for not only the teachers in Turkey but also the teachers from all over the world where the principles of CEFR are followed.

Last of all, this curriculum has been in piloting process for two years and it might take some more time. This study is significant in that it presents valuable findings about the lacks of the curriculum and the problems encountered during the implementation process, which can lead to necessary precautions before the country wide implementation of the fifth grade IELC.

Limitations of the Study

Like every research, this study has some limitations, too. First of all, the curriculum suggests focusing on four language skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing, however, only students' speaking skills were assessed. Therefore, the findings of this study are limited to the students' success in speaking skills.

Secondly, the study is limited to a school located Antalya, therefore the findings cannot be generalized to the whole country.

Last of all, the findings about the likely reasons behind the failure in speaking skills are limited to the teachers' views as no observation could be conducted.

Methodology

Research Design

Sequential explanatory strategy, which is one of the mixed-methods research design, was used for this study. In this strategy, quantitative data are collected first, then qualitative data are collected based on the findings reached through the analysis of the quantitative data which shows that the two forms of data are separate but connected (Creswell, 2009). In this connection, the qualitative data are used to help further explain the quantitative results (Creswell, 2009), which is the major reason behind the use of the sequential explanatory strategy as it is "better suited to explaining and interpreting relationships" (Creswell, 2009, p. 211). In this study, the quantitative data gathered through the achievement test were collected and analyzed first, and then the findings arrived at this stage were planned to lead the qualitative phase which included semi-structured interview intending to find out the likely reasons behind the students' failure in speaking skills.

Participants

There were two groups of participants in this study. The first group included fifth grade students to whom the achievement test was conducted, while the second group consisted of the teachers teaching the fifth grade IELC.

The sample of the first group consisted of 64 students selected through simple random sampling method from the two schools. With this method, 32 students were selected from the school which implemented the fifth grade IELC, 32 students were selected from the other one implementing the fifth grade ELC. The second group of participants were five willing English teachers implementing the fifth grade IELC.

Data Collection Instruments

In order to find answers for the research questions two instruments were utilized. The first instrument was an achievement test developed by the researcher to measure students' success in speaking skills, which was used to gather data for the first research question. The second instrument was a semi-structured interview schedule developed by the researcher to collect data from the teachers implementing the fifth grade IELC. The development process of each instrument is presented in the following paragraphs.

Table 1. The Units and the Corresponding Speaking Skills Objectives in the Curriculum

Units		Objectives
Fifth Grade IELC	Fifth Grade ELC	
1. Hello!	1. Hello!	1. Students will be able to introduce themselves when meeting other people.
2. My Classroom	4. Games and Hobbies	2. Students will be able to talk about their likes and dislikes in a simple way.
5. My Town	2. My Town	3. Students will be able to talk about the locations of things and people in simple conversations.
6. Games and Hobbies	8. Fitness	4. Students will be able to give simple directions.
7. My Daily Routine	3. My Daily Routine	5. Students will be able to accept or refuse suggestions in a simple way.
8. People and Animals	9. The Animal Shelter	6. Students will be able to talk about daily routines of friends and family members.
9. Health	5. Health	7. Students will be able to talk about what people/animals are doing at the moment.
14. Time to Celebrate	6. Movies	8. Students will be able to talk about the common illnesses in a simple way.
		9. Students will be able to tell the date and time of events.

The achievement test was developed by the researcher for two reasons. The first aim was to find out to what extent the objectives related to the speaking skills suggested in the fifth grade IELC were attained by the fifth grade students. The second aim, on the other hand, was to compare the achievement level of the students taught with the fifth grade IELC and the ones taught with fifth grade ELC. While developing this instrument, the units and their corresponding objectives of the two curricula were examined first. Next, the common objectives in the two curricula were selected. Nine objectives were selected as seen in Table 1, and at least 3 questions were written per objective. Totally, 28 questions were prepared at the beginning. Due to the students' previous learning experiences (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill & Krathwohl, 1956, as cited in Seddon, 1978), their level of development, and the nature of speaking skills, the questions were prepared at the application level, while it was not possible to prepare questions related to knowledge, comprehension, analysis, synthesis and evaluation levels.

In order to check this test's content validity, expert opinions were taken from an expert in assessment and evaluation, two professors working at Curriculum and Instruction Department and one professor working at English Language Teaching Department. Based on the suggestions from these experts, two questions, which were found not to be measuring the corresponding objectives, were deleted. In addition, six more questions were deleted as two questions were decided to be enough to measure some of the selected objectives based expert opinions. Then, four English teachers teaching the fifth grade students and five students from the same grade level were asked to read and state their opinions about the questions' and particularly the pictures', clarity, understandability and readability. No change or improvement was proposed by either of the parties. An assessment rubric having five-points scale developed by Kaya (2018) was used to measure students' achievement level for the achievement test.

Finally, the achievement test was pilot tested with 32 fifth grade students to measure its interrater reliability. As proposed by Bliese (2000), Kozlowski and Hattrup (1992), and LeBreton, Burgess, Kaiser, Atchley and James (2003), interrater reliability refers to "the consistency in ratings provided by multiple judges of multiple targets" (as cited in LeBreton & Senter, 2008, p. 815). Out of different interrater reliability measures, intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was utilized for this test, because it can be used with more than 2 raters (LeBreton & Senter, 2008) and when sample size is small (Rui & Feldman, 2012). Shrout and Fleiss (1979) introduced three classes of ICC for reliability, depending on whether the same observers rate each subject in a study (as cited in Rui & Feldman, 2012). For this study, two-way mixed model was used, because each person was rated by the same raters (Hallgreen, 2012; McGraw & Wong, 1996; Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). 30 heterogeneous samples and at least 3 raters are considered to be enough for a reliability study and under these conditions, "the values less than 0.5, between 0.5 and 0.75, between 0.75 and 0.9, and greater than 0.90 are indicative of poor, moderate, good, and excellent reliability, respectively" (Koo & Li, 2016, p.155). Three raters rated 33 students and two-way mixed model of ICC were used in the pilot study and ICC values were found to be .93 which indicates excellent reliability (Koo & Li, 2016). To wrap up, the final version of the achievement test consisted of 20 questions after these procedures (Appendix A).

The second data collection instrument was a semi-structured interview developed with the intention of finding answers for the second research question. It was developed by the researcher based on the results of the achievement test in order to find out the likely reasons behind the students' failure in speaking skills despite the 15 class hours of English instruction through the fifth grade IELC. In the development process of this instrument, expert opinions were taken in order to satisfy the content validity of the instrument and necessary changes were applied based on their

suggestions. Then, the instrument was conducted with two English teachers in order to check the understandability and clarity of the questions, which yielded no change or improvement. At the end of these procedures, the final schedule included two main questions with seven probing questions.

Data Collection Process

As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, data were collected from two groups of participants including teachers and students. As the interview schedule was prepared after the conduct of the achievement test, the data were gathered from the students first. In this connection, the achievement test was administered to each selected student in an administrator's room separately and it took one week to finish the administration of the test.

After administering the achievement tests, they were analyzed by the researcher and individual interviews were conducted with the teachers teaching the fifth grade IELC. All interviews were conducted in an administrator's room, they were audio-taped, and transcribed verbatim. The interviews lasted for an average of 45 minutes and it took two weeks to finish the interviews depending on the availability of the teachers.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected through the achievement test were analyzed with descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations and inferential statistics through independent samples t-test which was used to compare the two groups of students' achievement levels in the test.

On the other hand, the qualitative data gathered through the semi-structured interviews were analyzed with content analysis. At the beginning of the content analysis process, the tape-recorded data were transcribed first, next the raw data were read for a few times to "obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning" (Creswell, 2009, p. 185). Afterwards, the coding process, which includes "taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term" (Creswell, 2009, p. 186) followed. While coding the data, paragraphs, sentences, a couple of words, and even single words were given codes where and when applicable. In this connection, paragraphs, sentences and words were utilized as the unit of analysis. Lastly, the themes were generated from the codes, and the findings were reported based on these themes and codes.

To satisfy reliability of the data analysis, one of the interviews was selected randomly and it was sent to two independent coders for the purpose of intercoder reliability. Afterwards, intercoder reliability was calculated through the formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 64): $\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{number of agreements}}{\text{total number of agreements} + \text{disagreements}}$. Using this formula, the agreement between the coders was found to be 82%.

Findings

In this part, the findings of this study are presented in parallel to the research questions. In this connection, the findings with respect to each research question are addressed one by one in the following paragraphs.

The first research question was asked to investigate the students' attainment of the common objectives regarding speaking skills in the two curricula. Table 2 presents the findings about this research question.

As seen in Table 2, only the first objective, "students will be able to introduce themselves when meeting other people", has been attained by the students taught with the fifth grade ELC as measured through the question 1 ($M=4.91$, $SD=.53$), the question 2 ($M=3.16$, $SD=2.23$), and the question 20 ($M=3.28$, $SD=1.43$). Likewise, this objective has been reached by the students taught with the fifth grade IELC as measured with the question 1 ($M=4.72$, $SD=.58$), the question 2 ($M=3.72$, $SD=1.65$), and the question 20 ($M=3.34$, $SD=1.38$). This table also shows that there is not much difference between the two groups of students taught by different curricula.

The sub-question of the first research question was asked to find out whether there is a significant difference between the achievement level of the students taught with the fifth grade IELC and the ones taught with the fifth grade ELC in terms of their speaking skills. An achievement test was administered to the students taught with the two curricula and independent samples t-test was used to compare the results. The results indicated that there was not a significant difference in the achievement levels of the students taught with the fifth grade IELC ($M=35.66$, $SD=14.02$) and the ones taught with the fifth grade ELC ($M=34.19$, $SD=16.23$); $t(62) = .36$, $p > .05$.

Table 2. *Students' Attainment of Speaking Skills Objectives in the two Curricula*

Objectives	Corresponding Questions	Achievement of the Students Taught with Fifth Grade ELC		Achievement of the Students Taught with Fifth Grade IELC	
		M	SD	M	SD
1. Students will be able to introduce themselves when meeting other people.	Question 1	4.91	.53	4.72	.58
	Question 2	3.16	2.23	3.72	1.65
	Question 20	3.28	1.43	3.34	1.38
2. Students will be able to talk about their likes and dislikes in a simple way.	Question 5	1.53	1.73	1.66	1.01
	Question 6	2.34	1.50	2.03	.74
3. Students will be able to talk about the locations of things and people in simple conversations.	Question 13	1.41	1.56	1.72	1.40
	Question 14	1.25	1.44	1.34	1.34
4. Students will be able to give simple directions.	Question 15	1.06	1.44	.91	1.42
	Question 16	.97	1.33	.84	1.22
5. Students will be able to accept or refuse suggestions in a simple way.	Question 7	1.31	1.58	1.88	1.80
	Question 8	1.72	1.73	2.19	1.59
6. Students will be able to talk about daily routines of friends and family members.	Question 9	.69	1.10	1.44	1.22
	Question 10	.47	.88	1.53	1.02
7. Students will be able to talk about what people/animals are doing at the moment.	Question 11	2.28	.99	2.03	.97
	Question 12	2.38	1.48	1.97	1.15
8. Students will be able to talk about the common illnesses in a simple way.	Question 17	1.31	1.09	1.22	1.01
	Question 18	1.32	1.03	1.20	.99
	Question 19	.94	1.61	1.34	1.36
9. Students will be able to tell the date and time of events.	Question 3	2.41	1.73	2.31	1.66
	Question 4	.72	1.37	.41	.80

The second research question was asked to find out the likely reasons behind the students' failure in speaking skills despite the fifth grade IELC. A semi-structured interview was used and the data were analyzed through content analysis.

To start with some preliminary information about the participants, the first teacher (T1) was female, she was a graduate of English Language and Literature Department and had 6 years of experience. The second teacher (T2) was male, he was a graduate of English Language Teaching Department and had 11 years of experience. The third teacher (T3) was female, she was a graduate of English Language and Literature Department and had 8 years of experience. The fourth teacher (T4) was female, she was a graduate of English Language Teaching Department and had 4 years of experience. The fifth teacher (T5) was male, he was a graduate of English Language and Literature Department and had 5 years of experience. What is to add, all of them have worked in public schools up to now, they did not have any training about this curriculum and had no knowledge about CEFR so they had to learn about it on their own and implement it considering their past experiences or they used internet to get information about the curriculum. Regarding the school where the fifth grade IELC was implemented, the classrooms consisted of 23 students on average, there was a laboratory for English courses which included reading books, computers, visual and audio visual materials.

The content analysis resulted in one theme that was called as "failure factors" and three sub-themes which were called as "teacher-related factors, student-related factors and MoNE-related factors". When the results of the achievement test were shared with the teachers, they were disappointed (T1, T2, T5) and expressed that they expected a much higher average (T1, T2, T5), while two teachers admitted that they expected these results (T3, T4). One teacher expressed her despair about speaking skills in the following statements:

Despite everything, about 15 to 20 students tell me that they can watch cartoons in English, they understand what watch or hear. The students can read, understand what they read, they listen, they understand what they listen, but we could not solve the speaking problem. When it comes to speaking, they cannot. It is just when it comes to speaking, there is problem... I do not know how we will overcome this problem... (T1).

When they were asked about the likely reasons behind these low scores, they pointed to teacher-related factors which mainly include teachers' teaching style, student-related factors which relate to students' behaviors and their prerequisite knowledge, and MoNE-related factors which mainly resulted from the course book.

To start with teacher-related factors, the findings showed that the teachers started teaching from the very beginning ignoring students' education in the previous grades (T1, T2, T4, T5), they focused on grammar too much (T1, T2, T4, T5). One teacher drew attention to the examinations and grading of the course stating that

There is examination culture in the schools, so we have to teach them the grammatical rules so that they can get high scores in those trial examinations, otherwise we are blamed for the students' failure. The important point here is that we go too far and focus on the grammar too much. I wish English was taken out of these trial examinations and central examinations for high school entrance. I think English course should not be graded, it must be seen as a means for communication (T4).

The findings also indicated that the teachers spent too much time on memorization of the new vocabulary having students write the new words for a few times (T2, T3, T5), they could not do speaking activities most of the time (T1, T2, T3, T5), they did not use the target language while teaching (T3, T4, T5), they used only written exams for assessment (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5) as they did not know how to assess their speaking skills (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5). In addition, the teachers stated that they used the course book sent by MoNE for three class hours, while the rest of class hours were spent with a supplementary book chosen by the teachers (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5).

Regarding the reasons resulting from student characteristics, the teachers pointed to students' age (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5), low readiness level (T1, T2, T4, T5), unhappiness in the class (T2, T3), low level in language skills (T2, T3, T4, T5), lack of prerequisite knowledge (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5), lack of effort (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5), lack of expectation (T4, T5), unwillingness (T2, T4, T5), incompetence in speaking (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5), lack of vocabulary knowledge (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5), low motivation level (T1, T3, T4), lack of grammar knowledge (T3, T4, T5), low participation in speaking activities (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5), hatred for speaking activities (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5), lack of parent involvement (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5). They also stated that the students forgot what they learnt easily as they never had the chance to practice what they had learnt outside the class (T1, T2, T3, T4). One teacher put forward the following suggestions and wishes to overcome practice problem:

I wish I could teach each theme in a natural environment. To illustrate, I tried to create a restaurant environment, a supermarket in the classroom so that they could learn how to do shopping. However, it cannot be effective enough. I wish I could take them to a real supermarket where the people could speak English, a shopping center where they would be obliged to speak in English, practice what they learnt... The students need to see them in their real environment (T4).

With respect to the MoNE-related factors, the teachers mainly complained about the course book (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5), they did not like it at all (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5) and MoNE sent the course books very late which left them alone at the beginning (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5). The teachers also think that it is a mistake of MoNE to include questions regarding English in the central examinations for high school, they do not want the course to be graded.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed particularly to find out the influence of the fifth grade IELC on students' attainment of the objectives with respect to the speaking skills. To do this, an achievement test was utilized and it was conducted to both the fifth grade students taught with IELC and ELC to compare their achievement level. The findings showed that only one objective was attained by both groups of the students taught with two different curricula. What is to add, there was not a significant difference between the achievement level of both groups of the students although the students taught with IELC took 15 class hours of English in contrast to the students who were exposed to English for three or five class hours through ELC. In this connection, it can be put forward the idea that the fifth grade IELC did not solve the students' speaking problem in Turkey, which is consistent with the studies conducted by Gurbuzturk and Ceviz (2018), and Kaya (2018).

The second aim that was investigated through the second research question was to find out the likely reasons behind this failure. To do this, a semi-structured interview developed by the researcher was conducted with five teachers implementing the fifth grade IELC. The findings indicated that the failure resulted from three parties that are the teachers, the students and MoNE.

To start with the teacher-related factors, it was found that the teachers spent too much time on memorization of the new vocabulary having students write the new words for a few times, they skipped speaking activities most of the time as found by Kaya and Ok (2016) and Kaya (2018) consistent with the studies conducted by Kaya and Ok (2016) and Kaya (2018). They did not use the target language while teaching, they utilized only written exams for assessment as found with the studies of Dincer (2013), Er (2006), Harman (1999), Kaya (2018), Mersinligil (2002), and Tekin-Ozel (2011), too. Actually, this is an expected result as the teachers focus on grammar and vocabulary too much and the students' knowledge about them can be best measured with written exams. Likewise, speaking and listening skills were never assessed as found by Er (2006), Gunes (2009), Kaya (2018) and Tekin-Ozel (2011) as well as the teachers did not focus on listening and speaking skills and communicative approach much as found by Er (2006), Kaya (2018), and

Kozikoglu (2014) in their studies, too. The findings also suggested that the teachers used the course book sent by MoNE for three class hours, while the rest of class hours were spent with a supplementary book chosen by the teachers. This finding marks a question mark as to whether this supplementary book is congruent with the curriculum or not. As suggested in the studies of Kaya and Ok (2016), Kaya (2018) and Kirkgoz (2007), all of these acts indicate an incongruence between theory and practice. In other words, this curriculum was found not to be implemented as planned. That is because, the teachers are not aware of the main characteristics of the fifth grade IELC, which highlights the importance of communicative aspects of English rather than too much focus on grammar. Actually, it is an expected result because these teachers did not have any in-service training about the fifth grade IELC, which is a finding consistent with the studies of Erkan (2009), Kaya (2018), Tekin-Ozel (2011), and Yaman (2010). If these teachers are not provided with opportunities to learn about the fundamentals of a curriculum or how to implement a new curriculum, they will have to implement it as they are used to implement others. It seems a must to remind the teachers that speaking English is of utmost importance with this curriculum, which might urge them to find ways to help the students learn how to communicate in English.

The students' age, their low readiness level, unhappiness in the class, low level in language skills, lack of prerequisite knowledge, lack of effort, lack of expectation, unwillingness, incompetence in speaking, lack of vocabulary knowledge, low motivation level, lack of grammar knowledge, low participation in speaking activities, hatred for speaking activities, lack of parent involvement, and lack of practice were found to be other reasons behind the failure. These findings are consistent with the studies of Batdi (2015), Ocak, Kizilkaya and Boyraz (2013) who found out that the students have negative attitude towards English, while the students were found to have positive attitudes by Kaya (2018). Consistent with the studies of Erkan (2009), and Kaya (2018), low student participation remained a problem in this study as well. Likewise, insufficient parent involvement, as proposed in the studies of Akuzel (2006), Kaya (2018), Sahenk-Erkan (2015), Tekin-Ozel (2011), was found to be a problem causing failure.

Lastly, central examinations for high school entrance were reported to be another reason behind too much focus on grammar ignoring communicative aspects of the language, which is consistent with the studies of Donmez (2010), Kaya (2018), and Kaya, Ok and Urun (2015).

Apart from the problems detailed above, the findings of this study indicated that some problems do not exist with this curriculum anymore. To illustrate, inconsistent with the studies of Akuzel (2006), Buyukduman (2005), Dincer (2013), Donmez (2010), Erkan (2009), Ersen-Yanik (2007), Harman (1999), Kaya (2018), Kozikoglu (2014), Ocak, Kizilkaya and Boyraz, (2013), Ormeci (2009), Tekin-Ozel (2011) and Yaman (2010) who repeatedly blamed crowded classrooms for failure, this study showed that it is not the case anymore with classrooms composed of about 23 students. Likewise, lack of materials which has been found to be one of the biggest factors behind failure in the studies conducted by Akuzel (2006), Dincer (2013), Donmez (2010), Er (2006), Erkan (2009), Ersen-Yanik (2007), Gunes (2009), Harman (1999), Incecay (2012), Kaya, Ok and Urun (2015), Mersinligil (2002), Ormeci (2009), Tekin-Ozel (2011), and Yaman (2010) has been found not to be a problem anymore. Lastly, with 15 class hours of English instruction, this study showed that time is enough to cover the content in contrast to the studies of Batdi (2015), Buyukduman (2005), Demirtas and Erdem (2015), Dincer (2013), Donmez (2010), Er (2006), Erdogan (2005), Harman (1999), Mersinligil (2002), Ocak, Kizilkaya and Boyraz (2013), Ormeci (2009), Tekin-Ozel (2011), and Yaman (2010) who suggested that there is insufficient time to cover all the content.

To wrap up all these findings, it can be put forward that the fifth grade IELC could not be a cure for students' failure in speaking skills. The students still cannot speak English despite 15 hours of English instruction. Let alone, the students taught with the fifth grade IELC are not any better than the ones who were taught with the fifth grade ELC through five class hours of English instruction. The school where the fifth grade IELC was implemented had everything for a successful implementation of the curriculum. To illustrate, the problems arising from the big class sizes and lack of materials seemed to be solved with this curriculum; however, the results did not change at all. The reasons as found by this study seem to be resulting from mainly the teachers implementing the curriculum and the students affected by the curriculum. In this connection, the problem is not the curriculum theory, rather it is a matter of implementation.

Implications for Practice

This study arrived at important findings with respect to foreign language education in general, and fifth grade IELC in particular. Based on these findings the following suggestions can be put forward.

Before any change with regard to a particular curriculum design, the teachers to implement it should be informed and they should be provided with in-service training so that they can start implementing it as planned. Otherwise, a new curriculum will not cause any change in teachers' teaching style.

Instead of skipping speaking activities due to students' reluctance or low participation, the teachers, who need to be the first source of change and betterment, should insist on these activities, they should even focus on them more and find ways to motivate their students to participate in these activities.

As suggested in the curriculum, too, English should be seen as a vehicle for communication rather than a subject to teach, and it should be used in the classroom as much as possible starting from the second grade onward. If the

students cannot learn English in general or speak English in particular in the previous grades, this is likely to affect their success in future grades as this study indicated.

Considering the immigrant students in Turkey who learn to speak Turkish in about one year without any grammar knowledge, the students should be exposed to English as much as possible throughout the whole lesson. Likewise, grammar teaching must be of the least important issue, while teaching English. In this connection, English course should not be assessed by written exams which mainly measure their success in grammar or reading skills; on the contrary, all language skills should be assessed through appropriate exams.

Last but not the least, MoNE, the school administrators or the parents should provide the students with opportunities to practice English outside the classroom for a permanent learning. The students should feel the satisfaction of meeting and talking with a foreigner so that they can have positive attitudes towards speaking English. To give an example, some English streets, or corners, where English is obligatory, can be created by the school administrators if it is not possible to go abroad where English is spoken.

Implications for Further Research

Like all research studies, this study has some implications for further research which are presented in the following paragraphs.

- First, the findings of this can be generalized to the conditions in Antalya, therefore this study can be replicated in other cities and the findings can be compared.
- Secondly, the findings of this study are limited to the students' success in speaking skills. Further research can focus on other language skills including reading, writing and listening skills.
- Last of all, the findings about the likely reasons behind the students' failure in speaking skills are limited to the the teachers' views and perceptions. Further research can include observation schedules in order to cross-validate the findings with more details. In addition, the views of parents, students and administrators can be gathered.

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Appendix A

ACHIEVEMENT TEST ON FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

1.

A: Hello, my name is Suat. What is your name?

B:

2.

A: How are you?

B:

3.

A: What time is it now?

B:

4.

A: What is the date today?

B:

5.

A: What is your favourite lesson?

B:

6.

A: What are your favourite sports?

B:

7.

A: I am bored. How about playing basketball?

B:

8.

A: Shall we go fishing?

B:

9.

A: What time does your father arrive at home?

B:

10.

A: What time does your mother wake up?

B:

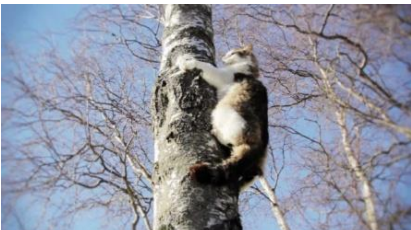
11.



A: What are the students doing at the moment?

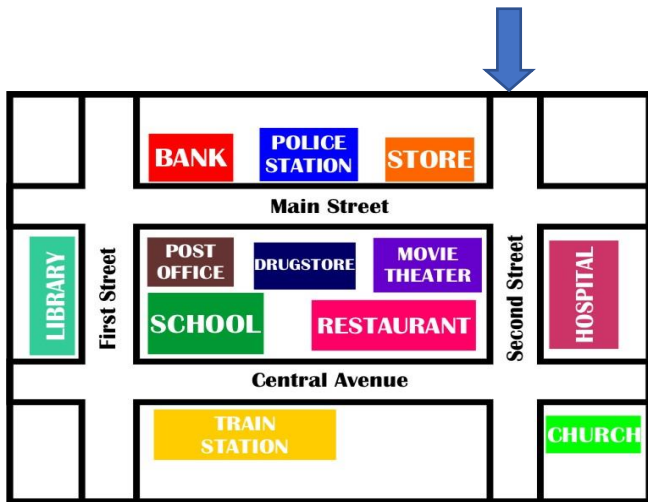
B:

12.



A: What is the cat doing now?

B:



13.
A: Where is the drug store?
B:

14.
A: Where is the school?
B:

15.
A: How can I go to the post office?
B:

16.
A: How can I go to the police station?
B:

17. What is the matter with Arda?
B:



18.
A: What is the matter with John?
B:



19.
A: What should John do?
B:

20.
A: Nice to meet you.
B: