Evaluation of English Curriculum in 9th Grade of Secondary Schools through Teachers' Views

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research was to evaluate secondary school 9th grade English Curriculum according to teachers' views in terms of objectives, content, teaching-learning process and evaluation and to develop recommendations covering these aspects. The sample population of this research consists of 119 teachers and for quantitative population and 12 teachers were selected for qualitative data. Results were analyzed and evaluated in SPSS statics program, accordingly, some recommendations were made. Approach of the curriculum needs to be improved through the help of consultants. Assessment sources on four skills should be prepared. The content of the programme should be revised along with the other dimensions. Teachers should be encouraged to implement the suggested methods and techniques in the classrooms. Also, the course book should be revised and the use of materials suggested for teaching English should be encouraged. As for the assessment dimension, teachers can be participated in the inservice training programmes.

Key Words. *Curriculum Evaluation, English Course, Secondary School 9th Grade, Teachers' Views*

Introduction

Foreign language that symbolizes the source of modern knowledge is the basis of modernization and civilization. Nowadays, not only one language is essential to learn but more than one foreign language. It's commonly known that foreign language is growing in importance due to the interrelationship among the countries, cultures and economies (Zengin, 1997).

Today's man needs to learn at least a foreign language in order to communicate with other people in foreign countries and understand and evaluate the documents in other countries for information (Ceyhan, 2007). In determining what foreign languages to be taught depends on some organisations like UN and NATO. English was determined as official language by these organisations (Er, 2006). Though there are many languages on Earth, English is the most common language in the world. This results from linguistic heritage of the U.K. and the U.S.'s becoming a superpower in the world, economically and politically according to Crystal (1997). So, English is the glory among other languages (White, 1988). English as a language has become ''lingua franca'' in the world not only thanks to politics and economy but also dominance over the media.

Foundation of Turkish Republic started an understanding that science and modern values are the bases of civilisation. Learning a foreign language is essential in order to do research, follow the improvement in science and join scientific activities in other countries (Şahbaz ve Çınar, 2008).

In Turkey, learning a foreign language depends on the relationship between Turkey and that country. After Second World War, English as a foreign language started to gain power in Turkey (Demircan,1988). Thus, French began losing its power in Turkey (Demirel, 2010). That's why Turkey has been a member of organisations such as UN and NATO (Büyükduman, 2001; Mirici, 2001).

English is the dominant foreign language in Turkey nowadays. Because young people are asked to know at least a foreign language while looking for a job. This foreign language is mostly English (Mirici, 2001). Good education depends on learning

at least a foreign language. Thus, the need of qualified staff is continueing (Türkoğlu, 1988). Learning a foreign language is a must whatever the students ages are.

In the future, how many languages we know will be stated in European Language Portfolio (Demirel, 2010). Due to the changes in foreign languages to be learnt, curricula should keep up with the necessities and expectations of time. Because developments in science and technology needs qualified human power (Tan, 2007). Implementation of Foreign Language Curricula in Secondary Schools is new. Evaluation of new curricula is very important thinking that after implementing curricula, it is decided how effective they are. Moreover, it is stated that evaluation of curricula must be ongoing in order to get efficiency (Demirel, 2006). Thus, in imlementing curricula, there may be troubles in the elements of curriculum such as objectives, content, teaching- learning process and evaluation. So, they should be determined and corrected according to the results of researches (Demirel, 2006). One of the pioneers of curriculum evaluation, Tyler stated that whatever the level is, curricula should be planned and evaluated continously.

Desired success cannot be reached although English is taught for nine years (Er, 2006). According to a study (2008) the main problem is caused by the inconsistency between objectives and implementations. Another problem is foreign language is not meaningful for the students. The most important thing is to make English course meaningful for the students. In order to make it happen, curricula should be evaluated. There are two ways to gather information for evaluation of curricula: 1) Interviews with teachers should be done; 2) Students should be tested at the end of the term. Teachers are the implementers of curricula, so their views are curicial (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1988).

Since 2010-2011 academic year, there has been a decrease in the hours of English course in 9th grades. English classes in a week are 3 hours in 9th grades. There was a four hour drop in English classes (Magazine of Bulletins, 2010).

It is known that there are many studies on evaluating primary school English curricula in terms of the views of teachers, students, parents and inspectors. However, there are few researches done on evaluating 9th grade English curriculum after the new curriculum started to implement in 2010-2011 academic year and four years of education was passed. In this research secondary school 9th grade English Curriculum was evaluated in terms of objectives, content, teaching- learning process and evaluation.

Method

Sample and Study Group

This research was evaluated according to teachers' views working in secondary school 9th grade. 53 secondary schools were selected for quantitative sample. The number of teachers are 191 in Aydın. As a sample, 137 teachers were chosen randomly and 119 teachers handed in questionnaires. 12 teachers were selected by sampling objectively for qualitative data. In this research, teachers working in secondary school 9th grade were chosen as a study group.

Data Collection Tools

9th Grade Secondary School English Teachers' Views Survey: A survey was conducted in this study to gather data from the 9th grade secondary school teachers of English. In research, data have been obtained from the semi-constructed English teacher's interview form. As a result, a draft questionnaire was prepared. 2 Instructors working in Adnan Menderes University Faculty of Education Educational Sciences Department and 1 Instructor working in Celal Bayar University Faculty of Education Educational Sciences Department were consulted for expert view. According to critics of experts, the survey was reorganised and 54 teachers were applied this survey.

The survey included fourty six questions, and there were five options in each term. For the options in the terms, five grading types were structured as answer options as follows: '' 5 as totally agree, 4 as mostly agree, 3 as partially agree, 2 as slightly agree and 1 as totally disagree''.

Terms from the first to the tenth, aim to find the degree of agreement by teachers to objectives of the curriculum. The terms from the eleventh to the twenty fourth are directed to learn the degree of agreement by teachers in terms of content of the curriculum. Terms from the twenty fifth to thirty sixth were asked to learn about the teaching- learning process of the curriculum and terms from the thirty seventh to the fourty sixth were for assessment of the curriculum.

9th Grade Secondary School English Teachers' Views Interview: Interview was used for qualitative data. Developing interview questions, 2 English teachers were made semi-structured interviews. Based on these interviews, final interview questions were asked in 2010-2011 academic year.

The main purpose of this research was to evaluate secondary school 9th grade English Curriculum according to teachers' views in terms of objectives, content, teaching- learning process and evaluation. According to this general purpose, the subgoals below were determined:

1) How do English teachers evaluate 9th grade English curriculum in terms of;

- objectives,

- content,

- teaching- learning process,

- evaluation?

2) Do teachers' views on English curriculum differ according to school types?

Data Analysis

Results were analyzed and evaluated in SPSS Windows 17.0 statics program. For quantitative data's analysis frequency and percentage were calculated and chi-square test was done in order to calculate whether data's undergone a significant change according to the types of schools. The level of significance was taken as .05 for the statistical analyses that were conducted in the research. As for the qualitative data, interviews were recorded by paper and pencil. The interviews were transferred to the computer, and content analysis was done. As a result, the reflections of the student relating to the process provided the researchers with main themes. Means in each of the themes set forth and this sense units through units inferences are made on the base of the theoretical explanation.

Findings

Findings Related to Objectives

The Chi-square Test was conducted in order to test whether there was a significant relationship between school types, and its results are given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Percentage and Chi-Square Results Regarding School Types*

		Totally agree %	Mostly agree %	Partially agree %	Slightly agree %	Totally disagree %	$\overline{X}$	X^2
1. The objectives of the curriculum are suitable for student development	Anatolia	1,8	19,3	43,9	28,1	7,0		
	General	3,3	13,1	44,3	13,1	3,3	2,72	.48
	All high schools	2,5	16,0	44,5	25,2	11,8		
2. English course hours are enough to gain the objectives of the curriculum.	Anatolia	0	5,3	3,5	10,5	80,7		
	General	4,9	1,6	6,6	16,4	70,5	1,44	*
	All high schools	2,5	3,4	5,0	13, 4	75,6		
3. The objectives of the curriculum are able to meet the needs of students in terms of using a foreign language.	Anatolia	0	12,3	33,3	26,3	28,1	2,34	*
	General	3,3	4,9	39,3	32,8	19,7		
	All high schools	1,7	8,4	36,9	29,4	23,5		
4. Cognitive objectives are enough	Anatolia	0	7	47,4	28,1	17,5		
	General	4,9	11,5	41,0	34,4	8,2	2,57	.19
	All high schools	2,5	9,2	44,5	31,1	12,6		
5. Affective objectives are enough.	Anatolia	0	3,5	36,8	43,9	15,8		
	General	3,3	8,2	41,0	31,1	16,4	2,39	*
	All high schools	1,7	5,9	39,5	37,0	16,0		
6. Psychomotor objectives are enough.	Anatolia	0	8,8	28,1	28,1	35,1		
	General	1,6	8,2	32,8	32,8	24,6	2,20	*
	All high schools	0,8	8,4	30,3	31,1	29,4		
7. Listening skills can be gained.	Anatolia	0	25,9	36,2	32,8	5,2		
	General	0	9,8	34,4	47,5	8,2	2,63	*
	All high schools	0	17,6	35,3	40,3	6,7		
8. Speaking skills can be gained.	Anatolia	0	5,2	43,1	34,5	17,2		
	General	0	0	11,5	55,7	32,8	2.07	*
	All high schools	0	2,5	26,9	45,4	25,2		
9. Reading skills can be gained.	Anatolia	1,7	17,2	60,3	15,5	5,2		
	General	0	3,3	27,9	59,0	9,8	2,58	*
	All high schools	0,8	10,1	43,7	37,8	7,6		
10. Writing skills can be gained.	Anatolia	0	8,6	32,8	48,3	10,3		
	General	0	0	8,2	62,3	29,5	2,08	*
	All high schools	0	4,2	20,2	55,5	20,2		

The objectives of the curriculum are stated partially suitable for student development, partially meaningful, partially gained and partially complementary. There is no significant difference between Anatolian and General School teachers' views related to "the objectives of the curriculum are suitable for student development''. The objectives of the curriculum can be stated that linguistic structure and writing principles were given importance. Many teachers don't agree on the term ''English course hours are enough to gain the objectives of the curriculum.'' 80, 7% of Anatolia High School teachers totally disagree on this term while 70, 5% of General High School teachers totally disagree.

Most teachers are seen that they partially agree on the term ''The objectives of the curriculum are able to meet the needs of students in terms of using a foreign language.'' Findings on whether mental objectives are enough do not show significant difference (p=0.19>0.05).

When findings on affective objectives are analysed, Anatolia High School teachers and General High School teachers partially agree on this term. Looking at findings on psychomotor objectives, it is seen that Anatolia High School teachers disagree while General High School teachers partially agree on this term. Anatolia High School teachers and General High School teachers' answers are respectively partially agree and totally disagree on the terms ''Writing skills can be gained.'' , ''Speaking skills can be gained.'' and ''Reading skills can be gained.''

Findings Related to Content

Teachers partially agree on the terms ''Content was chosen from everyday life.'', ''Content was listed from simple to complex.'', ''Content was listed from concrete to abstract.'', ''Content was organised as prerequisite has to be taken into consideration.'' (Table 2).

Table 2. *Percentage and Chi-Square Results Regarding School Types*

		Totally agree	Mostly agree	Partially agree	Slightly agree	Totally disagree		
		%	%	%	%	%	$\overline{X}$	X^2
1. Content was chosen from everyday life.	Anatolia	1,8	25,0	51,8	14,3	7,1		
	General	3,3	18,0	47,5	29,5	1,6	2,95	*
	All high schools	2,5	21,0	50,4	21,8	4,2		
2. Content was listed from simple to complex.	Anatolia	5,4	32,1	32,1	23,2	7,1		
	General	4,9	16,4	34,4	36,1	8,2	2,88	*
	All high schools	5, 0	23,5	34,5	29,4	7,6		
3. Content was listed from concrete to abstract.	Anatolia	5,4	28,6	30,4	23,2	12,5		
	General	3,3	14,8	49,2	23,0	9,8	2,69	.05**
	All high schools	4,2	21,0	41,2	22,7	10,9		
4. Content was organised as prerequisite has to be taken into consideration.	Anatolia	1,8	33,9	26,8	23,2	14,3		
	General	1,6	11,5	44,3	24,6	18,0	2,69	.05**
	All high schools	1,7	21,8	37	23,5	16,0		

5. Content mostly reflect the culture of foreign language.	Anatolia	1,8	7,1	32,1	39,3	19,6	
	General	6,6	13,1	31,1	32,8	16,4	2,47	.54
	All high schools	4,2	10,1	31,1	37,0	17,6	
6. Content meets the needs of Turkish students.	Anatolia	0	12,5	39,3	26,8	21,4	
	General	0	11,5	29,5	22,7	14,8	2,40	.25
	All high schools	0	11,8	33,6	44,3	17,6	
7. Content provides a funny and relax content.	Anatolia	1,8	10,7	28,6	30,4	28,6	
	General	1,6	4,9	23,0	42,6	27,9	2.17	*
	All high schools	1,7	7,6	25,2	37,8	27,2	
8. Content is essential in all terms.	Anatolia	1,8	10,7	32,1	33,9	21,4	
	General	3,3	3,3	32,8	39,3	21,3	2.32	*
	All high schools	2,6	6,7	31,9	37,8	21,0	
9. Objectives can be gained through this content.	Anatolia	1,8	10,7	26,8	26,8	33,9	
	General	1,6	1,6	37,7	37,7	21,3	2,22	*
	All high schools	1,7	5,9	31,9	33,6	26,9	
10. There are enough exercises.	Anatolia	0	7,4	32,1	37,5	23,2	
	General	1,6	3,9	36,1	32,8	24,6	2,29	*
	All high schools	0,8	5,9	33,6	36,2	23,5	
11. Content attracts the attention of the students.	Anatolia	0	12,5	17,9	32,1	37,5	
	General	1,6	1,6	23,0	52,5	21,3	2,24	*
	All high schools	0,8	5,0	40,3	42,9	10,9	

Teachers agree slightly on the terms ''Content mostly reflect the culture of foreign language.'', ''Content meets the needs of Turkish students.'', ''Content provides a funny and relax content.'', ''Content is essential in all terms.'', ''Objectives can be gained through this content.'', ''Content attracts the attention of the students.'', '' There are enough exercises.'

Findings Related to Teaching-Learning Process

As seen in the Table 3 , teachers partially agree on the term "Methods and techniques suggested in English curriculum are able to realise objectives". Teachers mostly agree slightly on the terms ''In the curriculum, there are enough sample activities for teachers.'', ''Teaching- learning process is stated in detail.'', ''Teaching-learning process is consistent with content.'', ''Methods and techniques suggested in English curriculum are suitable for the level of students.'', ''Methods and techniques suggested in English curriculum make the students love English.'', ''Methods and techniques suggested in English curriculum are good guide for teachers.'', ''Methods and techniques suggested in English curriculum are suitable for content.'', ''Teaching-learning process helps students join the classes actively.'', ''Teaching-learning process enables different activities to apply at the same time in class.'' Anatolia High School teachers and General High School teachers' answers are respectively partially agree and agree slightly on the terms ''Visual and audial aids suggested in the curriculum can be found easily in school.'', ''Teaching-learning process enables students to work collaboratively in class.'' Teachers state that they apply demonstration, question-answer, pair and group work, individual study as methods and techniques in classes. They use pictures, board, computer, projector as aids in classes.

Table 3. *Percentage and Chi-Square Results Regarding School Types*

		Totally agree %	Mostly agree %	Partially agree %	Slightly agree %	Totally disagree %	$\overline{X}$	$\mathbf{X^2}$
1. In the curriculum, there are enough sample activities for teachers.	Anatolia	0	1,8	35,7	48,2	14,3		
	General	1,6	9,8	42,6	34,4	11,5	2,41	*
	All high schools	0,8	5,9	39,3	41	12,6		
2. Teaching- learning process is stated in detail.	Anatolia	0	8,2	33,9	53,6	8,9		
	General	0	3,6	37,7	39,3	14,8	2,35	*
	All high schools	0	5,9	35,3	46,2	11,8		
3. Teaching-learning process is consistent with content.	Anatolia	0	7,1	48,2	37,5	7,1		
	General	3,3	6,6	41,0	41,0	8,2	2,55	*
	All high schools	1,7	6,7	44,4	38,7	7,6		
4. Methods and techniques are able to realise objectives.	Anatolia	1,8	8,9	39,3	32,1	17,9		
	General	3,3	4,9	44,3	32,8	14,8	2,47	*
	All high schools	2,5	6,7	41,9	31,9	16,0		
5. Methods and techniques are suitable for the level of students.	Anatolia	1,8	21,	32,1	28,6	16,1		
	General	1,6	6,6	19,7	39,3	32,8	2,33	.02**
	All high schools	1,7	13,4	25,2	35,3	24,4		
6. Methods and techniques are good guide for teachers.	Anatolia	1,8	5,4	30,4	41,1	21,4		
	General	3,3	8,2	34,4	41,0	13,1	2,36	*
	All high schools	2,5	6,7	31,9	41	16,8		
7. Methods and techniques are suitable for content.	Anatolia	1,8	7,1	33,9	35,7	21,4		
	General	3,3	9,8	37,7	37,7	11,5	2,44	*
	All high schools	2,5	8,4	35,3	36,8	16,0		
8. Visual and audial aids can be found easily in school.	Anatolia	5,4	25,0	32,1	25,0	12,5		
	General	1,6	8,2	18,0	37,7	34,4	2,43	003**
	All high schools	3,4	16,2	24,8	31,6	23,5		
9. Subjects can be completed on time.	Anatolia	0	0	7,1	12,5	80,4		
	General	0	0	8,2	23,0	68,9	1,33	*
	All high schools	0	0	7,6	17,6	74,8		
10. Teaching-learning process helps students join the classes actively	Anatolia	0	7,1	25,0	35,7	32,1		
	General	0	0	8,2	49,2	42,6	1,84	*
	All high schools	0	2,5	16,0	45,4	36,1		
11. Teaching-learning process enables different activities to apply at the same time in class.	Anatolia	0	7,1	25,0	35,7	32,1		
	General	0	0	8,2	49,2	42,6	1,85	*
	All high schools	0	3,4	16,2	42,7	37,6		

Findings Related to Assessment

Table 4 shows that most teachers partially agree on the terms ''Assessment is stated in the curriculum in detail.'', ''Assessment is consistent with objectives.'', ''Assessment is consistent with content.'', ''Assessment results give information about what problems the curriculum has.'', ''Assessment is mostly based on grammar.''

Table 4. *Percentage and Chi-Square Results Regarding School Types*

		Totally agree %	Mostly agree %	Partially agree %	Slightly agree %	Totally disagree %	$\overline{X}$	X^2
1. Assessment is stated in the curriculum in detail.	Anatolia	0	7,1	58,9	23,2	10,7	2,61	.22
	General	0	13,1	42,6	36,1	8,2		
	All high schools	0	10,1	51,3	29,4	9,2		
2. There are enough sample assessment techniques.	Anatolia	1,8	7,1	33,9	46,4	10,7	2,41	*
	General	0	8,2	42,6	31,1	18,0		
	All high schools	0,8	7,6	37,8	39,5	14,3		
3. Assessment is consistent with objectives.	Anatolia	5,4	14,3	42,9	28,6	8,9	2,69	*
	General	4,9	3,3	45,9	39,3	6,6		
	All high schools	5	8,4	45,4	33,6	7,6		
4. Assessment is consistent with content.	Anatolia	5,4	19,6	39,3	26,8	8,9	2,74	*
	General	1,6	8,2	47,5	37,7	4,9		
	All high schools	3,4	13,4	44,6	31,9	6,7		
5. In the curriculum, there are enough sample assessment aids for teachers.	Anatolia	0	17,9	42,9	19,6	19,6	2,56	005**
	General	0	8,2	42,6	44,3	4,9		
	All high schools	0	12,6	42,7	31,9	11,8		
6. Assessment enables students to make self-assessment.	Anatolia	7,1	5,4	37,5	23,2	26,8	2,32	*
	General	1,6	4,9	29,5	42,6	21,3		
	All high schools	4,2	5,0	32,8	32,8	23,5		
7. Assessment shows whether students gain all the objectives.	Anatolia	3,6	10,7	37,5	41,1	7,1	2,47	*
	General	1,6	4,9	36,1	41,0	16,4		
	All high schools	2,5	7,6	36,1	42,0	11,8		
8. Assessment results give information about what problems the curriculum has.	Anatolia	3,6	17,9	32,1	33,9	12,5	2,55	.08
	General	1,6	3,3	47,5	34,4	13,1		
	All high schools	2,5	10,1	41,2	33,6	12,6		
9. Assessment is not only based on in-class activities but also on out of class activities.	Anatolia	1,8	10,7	35,7	35,7	16,1	2,43	*
	General	1,6	6,6	34,4	45,9	11,5		
	All high schools	1,7	8,4	34,5	42,0	13,4		
10. Assessment is mostly based on grammar.	Anatolia	14,3	30,4	35,7	17,9	1,8	3,31	.83
	General	16,4	21,3	37,7	21,3	3,3		
	All high schools	15,1	25,2	37,8	19,3	2,5		

Anatolia High School teachers and General High School teachers' answers are respectively partially agree and agree slightly on the terms ''In the curriculum, there are enough sample assessment techniques for teachers.'', ''In the curriculum, there are

enough sample assessment aids for teachers.'', ''Assessment enables students to make self- assessment.''

Most teachers agree a little on the terms ''Assessment shows whether students gain all the objectives.'', ''Assessment is not only based on in-class activities but also on out of class activities.''

Teachers state that they use short answer, fill in the blanks, multiple choice, oral and observation as assessment techniques.

Results

* Teachers have problems applying communicative approach during classes.

* Curriculum is based on developing four skills but teachers' views are negative about gaining objectives.

* Limited time is stated as another problem so that teachers can not apply all activities in the curriculum.

* Teachers state that they go on grammar- based teaching in classes.

* About content, subjects are too much. They don't attract the attention of students.

* Looking at methods and techniques used, teachers do not use each suggested method and technique.

* Materials are not sufficient and main sources used in classes are book and board. Book is not suitable for the level of students and should be changed. Moreover, teachers state that they do not use course book handed out by National Ministry of Education.

* Teachers explain that assessment is mostly based on grammar, not four skills. Assessment covers the written tests.

* Another problem of teaching-learning process is not being able to apply assessment techniques such as peer and self assessment. These assessment techniques are not suitable to mark students as teachers tell. Teachers think that performance assessment is a waste of time and paper. Thus, they assign project work and term homework instead.

* Another problem is that crowded classes prevent suggested methods and techniques to implement by the teachers.

* Teachers desire preparation class to be again.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Implementation

1. 9th Grade Secondary School English Curriculum should be revised and made up.

2. New materials of listening and speaking should be developed. For listening skill, CDs and videos should be used and native speakers should talk on them.

3. Projector and smart board using should be more common as well as course book and board.

4. Class hours should be increased or subjects and objectives of the curriculum should be decreased.

5. Assessment sources should be provided for teachers.

6. In order to make up for assessment knowledge, teachers should be organised in-service training programmes.

7. A guide to knowing about communicative approach and how to implement it in classes should be prepared.

8. Content selection should be suitable for the level of students.

9. Teachers should be urged to apply the methods and techniques suggested in the curriculum.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. The research is on evaluating 9th Grade Secondary School English Curriculum. Future researches can be done on evaluating 10th, 11th or 12th Secondary School English Curriculum.

2. This research was evaluated according to teachers' views working in secondary school 9th grade in 2010-2011 academic year. In the future research, students', parents' and inspectors' views can be taken into consideration.

3. The sample of the research is the English teachers in the centre and towns of Aydın. Future researches can cover the views of English teachers in other cities of Turkey.

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