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A Sytematic Review of English Curriculum Evaluation Studies in Turkey (Between 2005-2021)

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Abstract

Updating and evaluating language teaching programs in Turkey is an important issue, which leads to this issue occupies an important place in the scientific field. This study aimed to determine the research trends in the postgraduate theses conducted to evaluate the English language curriculum developed and updated by the Ministry of National Education since the year of 2005. The study was based on the systematic review design and included 52 theses aiming to evaluate the English language curriculum between 2005 and 2021 years. The findings showed that most of the postgraduate studies aiming to evaluate the English language curriculum were carried out in the last five years, and targeted to evaluate 2012-2013 teaching programs especially designed for early age groups (such as 2nd, 4th and 5th grades). Although Eisner's Educational Connoisseurship model is the most preferred curriculum evaluation model in postgraduate theses, a great number of theses were based on the elements and the effectiveness of the curriculum in practice. The theses were determined to adopt mixed methods and descriptive survey design, while teachers were preferred as the data source and the studies were carried out with a sample size of 1-50 participants without using the sampling method. The data of the study in postgraduate theses were collected mostly through surveys and interviews, and were analyzed with descriptive statistics and comparison tests. With this study, the general tendency or framework of studies evaluating language curriculum, one of the most preferred areas for curriculum evaluation studies, was revealed.

Keywords: English language teaching, curriculum, curriculum evaluation, systematic review.

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Öz

Türkiye'de dil öğretim programlarının güncellenmesi ve değerlendirilmesi önemli bir konu olmakla beraber bu durum bilimsel alanda önemli bir yer işgal etmektedir. Bu çalışmada, 2005 yılından itibaren Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından hazırlanan ve güncellenen İngilizce öğretim programlarını değerlendirmek amacıyla yürütülen lisansüstü tezleri incelemek ve söz konusu tezlerdeki araştırma eğilimlerini sistematik olarak analiz etmek amaçlanmıştır. Bu kapsamda 2005-2021 yılları arasında İngilizce öğretim programlarını değerlendirmeyi konu edinen toplam 52 adet tez incelenmiştir. İncelemeler neticesinde İngilizce öğretim programlarını değerlendirmeyi konu edinen lisansüstü tezlerin büyük çoğunluğunun son beş yılda yürütüldüğü, yüksek lisans tezlerinin çoğunlukta olduğu, 2012-2013 yılında uygulamaya konulan ve özellikle erken çocuklukta dil öğretimine yönelik hazırlanan öğretim programlarını (2., 4. ve 5. sınıf) değerlendirmeye yönelik tezlerin ağırlıkta olduğu belirlenmiştir. Eisner'in Eğitsel Eleştiri modeli, lisansüstü tezlerde en çok tercih edilen program değerlendirme modeli olmasına rağmen, tezlerin büyük bir kısmında programın öğeleri ve uygulamadaki etkililiğine yönelik bir değerlendirme yaklaşımının söz konusu olduğu görülmektedir. Söz konusu tezlerin yöntemsel açıdan karma yöntem, betimsel tarama deseni ile yürütüldüğü, veri kaynağı olarak öğretmenlerin tercih edildiği ve örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmadan 1-50 kişiden oluşan örneklem büyüklüğü ile gerçekleştirildiği belirlenmiştir. Lisansüstü tezlerde veri toplama aracı olarak daha çok anket ve görüşme teknikleri tercih edilirken betimsel istatistik ve karşılaştırma testleri gibi istatistik tekniklerinin sıklıkla kullanıldığı gözlenmiştir. Bu çalışma ile program değerlendirmenin en sık yapıldığı alanlardan biri olan dil öğretim programlarını değerlendiren çalışmaların genel eğilimi veya görünümü ortaya çıkarılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İngiliz dili eğitimi, eğitim programı, program değerlendirme, sistematik derleme.

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Introduction

Language is one of the most functional communication tools in the social field, and language teaching is one of the most important fields of education in many education systems. In the 21st century, people are expected to use and speak at least a few foreign languages effectively (Partnership for 21st Century [P21], 2010; Yastibas & Erdal, 2020). That's why language teaching becomes an important industry and millions of children and adults spend a quiet deal of time and effort to learn a new language (Richards, 2001). With the effect of westernization in Turkey, an interest and demand increased for foreign language learning in schools and educational institutions (Isik, 2008) as a result, English became the most preferred foreign language in Turkish society unlike the languages such as French, Arabic and German (Akcakaya, 2009). Many programs for teaching English at different school levels have been developed and implemented following the intense interest and demand for learning English (McKay, 2010) in Turkey.

Initial attempts to develop foreign language programs in Turkey started with the cooperation relations with the Council of Europe in 1968, and in 1972 foreign language curriculum for secondary schools was prepared and implemented (Demirel, 2012a). Between the years 1980-1990, the arrangements on foreign language education were made for secondary and upper level schools. Foreign language curriculum were designed for Anatolian and vocational high schools (Demircan, 1988). In 1997, with the transition to the eight-years uninterrupted education model, English language education started to be given from the primary school levels (Akyuz, 2013). This regulation was a first step for introducing foreign language education to earlier ages and foreign language teaching started to be given two hours a week in 4th and 5th grades and four hours a week in 6th, 7th and 8th grades (Kirkgoz, 2010). According to the evaluation and research results of the 1997 curriculum, the program was based on the behavioristic approach and was ineffective in achieving the program goals (Ormeci, 2009; Topkaya & Kucuk, 2010). Based on this, the Ministry of National Education made a comprehensive reform in 2006 and rearranged the curriculum based on the constructivist approach (Kucuk, 2008). This new regulation increased the weekly course hours (three hours in a week) (Cetintas, 2010) and adopted student-centered and communication-oriented language approach (Cihan & Gurlen, 2013). The following amendment to the education system in Turkey abolished the eight-years compulsory primary education in the 2012-2013 academic years, and replaced 12-years interrupted 4 + 4 + 4 compulsory education (Akyuz, 2013; Yavuz & Topkaya, 2013). This new regulation shifted the school starting age to 5.5, and the language learning age to an earlier period such as 2nd grade (Akpinar, Donder, Yildirim & Karahan, 2012; Bayyurt, 2012). The last update regarding the curriculum in Turkey was in 2018. Although the 2018 curriculum does not contain radical changes, it was put into practice in 2018 after having taken the teachers', parents' and academics' views, which were presented as a draft in 2017 (Isik, 2019). The most prominent features of the 2018 English language curriculum were the key competences framed by the European Commission and the integration of universal and socially important values into the program. In addition, the use of process-oriented measurement and evaluation methods is also emphasized (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2017).

Effective and serious steps have been taken in achieving the desired level of English language teaching, and certain curriculum development attempts have been carried out in Turkey. Curriculum development in education is a difficult and open-to-change process (Halimi & Kochova, 2013) that includes needs analysis, determination of gains, organization of content, realization of learning experiences and evaluation of the whole process (Nunan, 1988; Richards, 2001). Ellis (2015) stated that the only shortcoming of a developed curriculum is that it needs implementation. Because the inferences of the people who develop the curriculum and who implement it may differ from each other (Ben-Peretz, 2001). For this reason, a developed and implemented curriculum should definitely need to be tested (White, 2006; Erturk, 2013). Curriculum evaluation in education is carried out to carry educational activities to a better level (Hastings, 1966) and it is an indispensable element of the curriculum development process (Peacock, 2009). Curriculum evaluation serves as a feedback mechanism for the curriculum development process and provides scientific evidence for updated and improved programs (Orbeyi & Guven, 2008).

The need to test educational programs has made curriculum evaluation an important field of study since the early 20th century (Hewings & Dudley-Evans, 1996). It is only possible to determine the effectiveness of an educational program during the implementation process. Curriculum development experts and educators need feedback on the extent students achieve the goals set by the programs, what malfunctions are observed during implementation process, and how effectively the stakeholders can implement it (Al-Jardani, 2012; Demirel, 2012b). In order to provide this feedback, it is necessary to provide data obtained by scientific methods about the views, opinions, and practices of all stakeholders (Varis, 1988). The related literature showed that scientific studies exist to evaluate the updated English language curriculum, and the English language curriculum is one of the most frequently preferred fields for curriculum evaluation studies (Kurt & Erdogan, 2015). Although it is important to systematically and continuously evaluate the curriculum and determine its strengths and weaknesses for effective English teaching (Aksoy, 2020), analysis of study trends in this field is also necessary (Bikmaz, Aksoy, Tatar & Altinyuzuk, 2013).

Review of Literature

The related literature showed that the contents of scientific studies in curriculum and instruction were explored in depth, and several studies have been carried out to summarize the research trends and orientations in this field. Ozan and Kose (2014) examined the research trends and tendencies of 380 articles published in Curriculum and Instruction between 2007-2011. Kurt and Erdogan (2015) examined 38 studies, including 21 articles, 9 master's theses and 8 doctoral dissertations, in the curriculum evaluation studies between 2004-2013. Koc (2016) investigated 142 graduate thesis focused on the evaluation of the primary school curriculum between 2007-2009 in Turkey. Finally, Asiroglu (2020) examined 73 doctoral dissertations in curriculum and instruction based on mixed methods between 2009-2019.

The highlighting issue in curriculum and instruction studies is that the scientific studies are mostly carried out for curriculum evaluation (Kurt & Erdogan, 2015; Asiroglu, 2020). In many studies, most of the studies are on quantitative research method and descriptive survey design, while questionnaires, scales and interview forms are frequently used as data collection tools, and teachers and students are preferred as data sources (Ozan & Kose, 2014; Kurt & Erdogan, 2015; Koc, 2016; Asiroglu, 2020). It is also appearent that sampling, sample sizes and the data analysis techniques' preferences in these studies are quite different.

It is seen that the studies examining the research trends in curriculum and instruction field are carried out at certain intervals and thus, these studies guide people working in this field with complementary data on what kind of research is needed and what kind of studies are carried out. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) stated that analyzing such studies systematically at certain time intervals provides benefits to researchers studying and planning to research by summarizing the general view in the field. However, the related literature showed that, as an area where program evaluation studies are mostly carried out, curriculum evaluation studies on English language do not include a study presenting a comprehensive data yet. In this sense, as the studies carried out to evaluate English education programs are quite functional to provide a basis for educational decisions and presenting reliable data in solving existing problems, knowing the general view of the studies will also contribute to both researchers and field experts working in this field as it summarizes topics of interest and research methods in curriculum development in Turkey. All stakeholders, especially researchers studying or planning to study in this field, could easily see the what different evaluation processes are carried out on similar curricula and what aspects of evaluation overlooked in process or what parts of curriculum need more focus. Thus, knowing the tendencies of researches in a specific field will contribute to filling of gaps in the studied field. With this in mind, this study aims to analyze studies on evaluating English language teaching programs. In this context, the following research questions are sought:

1. What trends are observed in curriculum evaluations preferences in postgraduate theses/dissertations?
2. What trends are observed in methodology of postgraduate theses/dissertations?
3. What trends are observed in sampling part of postgraduate theses/dissertations?

4. What trends are observed in data collections and analysis parts of theses/dissertations?

Method

Research Design

This study adopted a systematic review method, as postgraduate theses/dissertations based on English language curriculum evaluation were scanned. A systematic review is a type of research that limits the biases and allows an application of scientific strategies, critical appraisals, synthesis of all studies on a particular topic (Cook, Sackett & Spitzer, 1995). Systematic reviews require both intensive labor and expertise in the subject and scientific methods (Wright, Brand, Dunn & Spindler, 2007). This method provides a chance of clarifying strengths and weaknesses of the literature on a specific topic and summarizing a great deal of studies, avoiding unnecessary studies (Lang & Secic, 1997). In systematic review, five steps were propesed to be followed by the researchers (Khan, Kunz, Kleijnen & Antes, 2003; Higgins & Green, 2011):

1. *Framing questions for a review:* Well-defined research questions were identified.
2. *Identifying relevant studies:* Relevant studies were searched in line with the determined criteria.
3. *Assessing the quality of studies:* The studies were selected and included based on pre-determined criteria.
4. *Data extraction:* The studies were examined and categories were created to analyze data.
5. *Interpreting the findings:* The data obtained from postgraduate theses/dissertations were summarized and interpreted.

Study Population

The population of this study comprises the postgraduate theses focused on the evaluation of the English language curriculum between 2005-2021. Criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in the sample selection. Criterion sampling is a method based on the process of including or excluding situations and samples that meet a set of criteria predetermined by the researchers (Suri, 2011; Creswell, 2017). The postgraduate theses/dissertations were selected based on the criteria that the studies are based on evaluating the English language curriculum, which was put into practice after the program renewal and updates by the MoNE between 2005 and 2021.

Data Collection

The data of the research was collected by taking the criteria determined by the researcher into account and using the keywords of the English language teaching program, English language program evaluation, curriculum evaluation in English teaching. As a result of the first searches, 55 postgraduate theses in this field were collected. Following the in-depth examinations, three theses were excluded from the research as they failed to meet the criteria mentioned above, then 52 theses were included in the research. The postgraduate theses/dissertations on evaluating the English language curriculum include mostly master's theses (f = 39) and with a less of Phd dissertations (f= 13).

Coding Process

The data coding form was created in accordance with the research questions to encode the data. A form was used for the coding of data and the form was designed with the help of "*The Thesis Examination Form*" developed by Yazar & Dokumaci-Sutcu (2018). Then the form was sent to three experts in the field for their opinion and the proposed changes were made and used. The researcher created a code book during the code generation process. After reading the theses repeatedly and making the required arrangements in the codebook, the analysis in the codebook, which representing the 20% of analysis, were presented to another expert in the field to ensure consistency. Then each thesis was carefully read and encoded by considering the codes generated. Since this study was

conducted based on codebook process and the data was coded by a single researcher, internal consistency between coders were not required (Kuckartz, 2014).

Descriptive analysis method was used in the analysis of the data. Descriptive analysis is a data analysis technique used to present and interpret the findings to the reader in an organized way (Yildirim & Simsek, 2011). In the process, fist of all thematic framework of the research were designed, experts' opinion were taken for the overall design of the research (pupose, categories, research questions, research models, data collection tools and study samples). Within the scope of research questions, the data were coded and categorized into a form in this study. Descriptive statistical techniques, figures and visuals were used for analysis and presentation of the data.

Ethical Issues

As this study is based on systematic analysis of documents, committee approval is not required. This article has been conducted by following the publication ethics and principles of the scientific discipline. During the process, the principles of publication principles were respected and responsibilities for universal ethical values were fulfilled.

Findings

In this section, the findings obtained from the postgraduate theses conducted to evaluate the English language curriculum between 2005 and 2021, are presented in the direction of research questions.

The Curriculum Evaluations Preferences in Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations

The findings related to the general tendency of postgraduate theses on ELT were presented in terms of program updates, targeted grade level, and curriculum evaluations model.

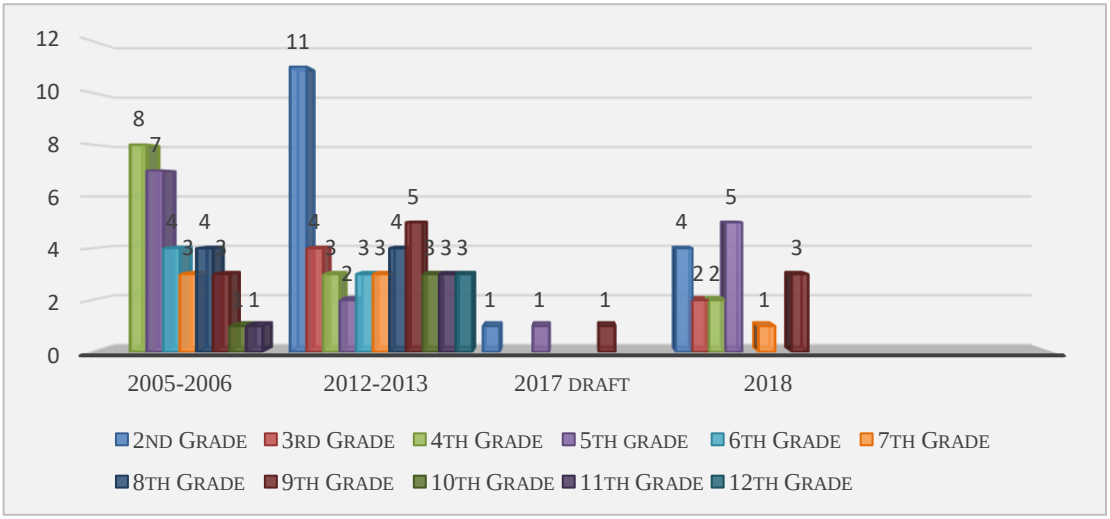


Figure 1. The Distribution of Postgraduate Theses on Evaluating English Language Curriculum by Program Updates and Targeted Grades

Figure 1 shows that the majority of postgraduate theses/dissertations aim to evaluate the program update in 2012-2013 (f=21). The second most evaluated program update is that put into practice in 2005-2006 (f=17). Along with this, the postgraduate theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate English language curriculum mostly targeted 4th-grade curriculum (f=8) following the 2005-2006 program update, while most of the theses/dissertations targeted 2nd grade (f =11) curriculum following the 2012-2013 update. As for the 2017 draft program, only the 2nd, 5th and 9th grades, which were piloted only in these grades were evaluated. Finally, for the 2018 updated program, the

5th-grade curriculum (f = 5) was mostly targeted by the postgraduate theses. As for the curriculum evaluation model, the general distribution of models by years was presented in Figure 2.

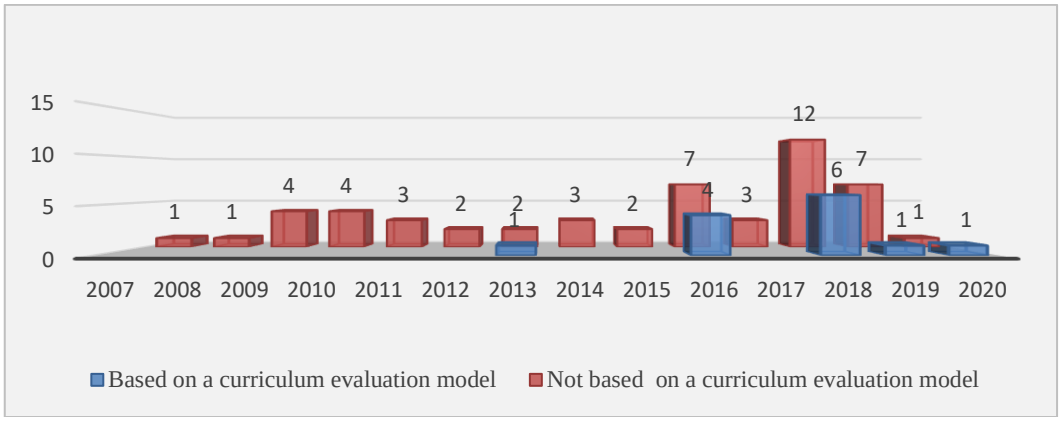
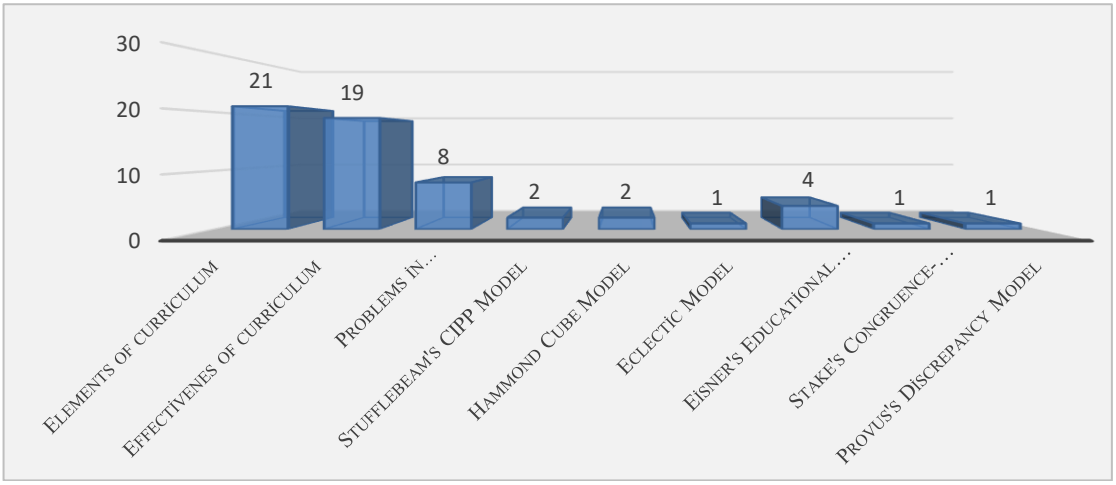


Figure 2. Distribution of Curriculum Evaluation Models on the Evaluation of English Language Curriculum by Years

As shown in Figure 2. most of the postgraduate theses/dissertations (f =39) aiming to evaluate English language curriculum are not based on a particular curriculum evaluation model, and curriculum evaluation models started to be included in theses/dissertations published after the year of 2012. Figure 3 shows the distribution of curriculum evaluation models used in postgraduate theses/dissertations.



• *The reason why the number of evaluation models given in the figure is more than the total number of theses/dissertations is that more than one model were preferred in some theses.*

Figure 3. The Distribution of Curriculum Evaluation Models Used in Postgraduate Theses.

Figure 3 shows that most of the postgraduate theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate the English language curriculum were conducted based on the elements of the program (f=21), the effectiveness of the program in practice (f=19), and the problems in the program implementation (f=8). However, Eisner's Educational Connoisseurship model (f=4) is the most preferred curriculum evaluation model in postgraduate theses/dissertations based on a curriculum evaluation model.

The Methodological Trends in Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations

In this part, the general tendency of postgraduate theses/dissertations on ELT were searched in terms of adopted research method and designs.

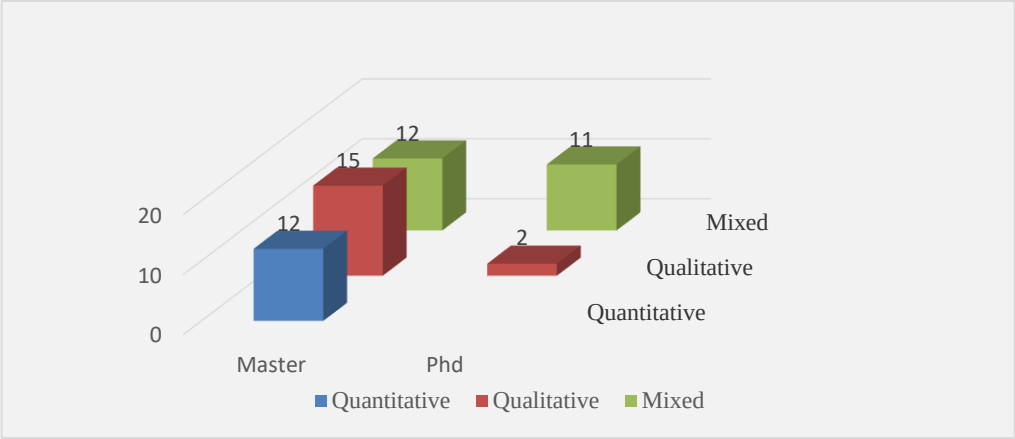
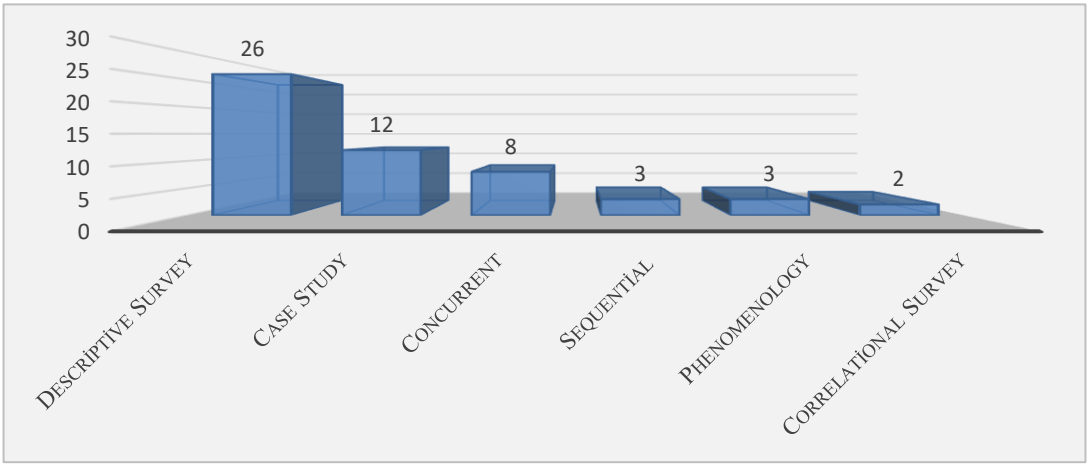


Figure 4. Distribution of Research Methods in Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations

In postgraduate theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate the English language curriculum, the mixed method is the most preferred (f=23) and the quantitative method is the least preferred (f=12) research methods. While there is a tendency to work with quantitative or qualitative methods alone in master's theses, the tendency to work with qualitative methods or with mixed-method exists in doctoral dissertations. As for the research design preferences of postgraduate theses on ELT were presented in Figure 5.



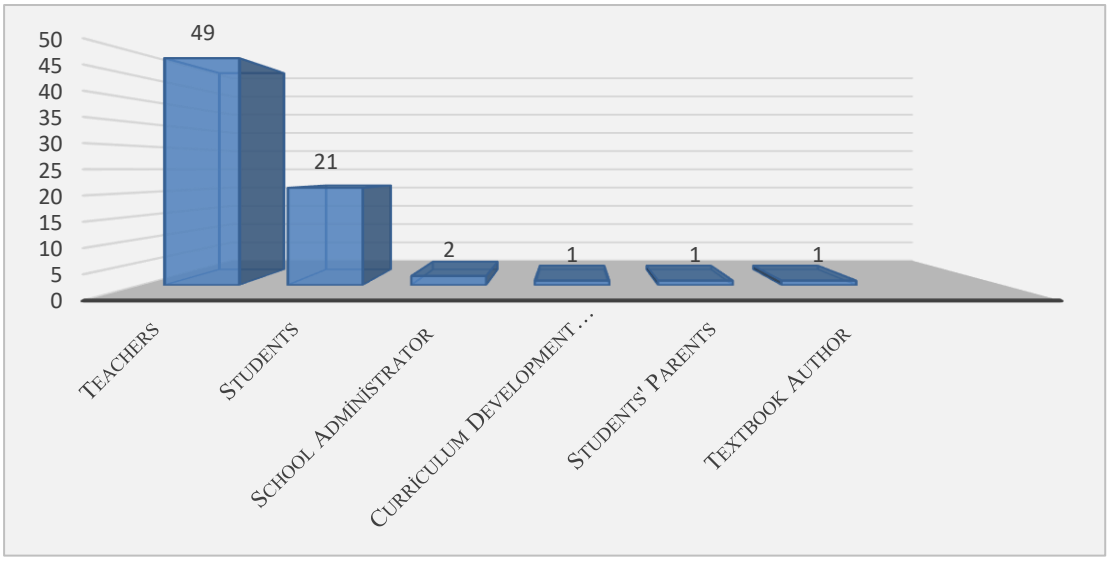
• *The reason why the number of research designs given in the figure is more than the total number of heses/dissertations is that more than one research design was preferred in two theses.*

Figure 5. The Distribution of Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations in terms of Research Designs

As given in Figure 5. in postgraduate theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate English language curriculum, the most preferred research design is descriptive survey design (f =26), and the second one is a case study (f=12). The least preferred research design is the correlational survey design (f =2).

The Sampling Trends in Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations

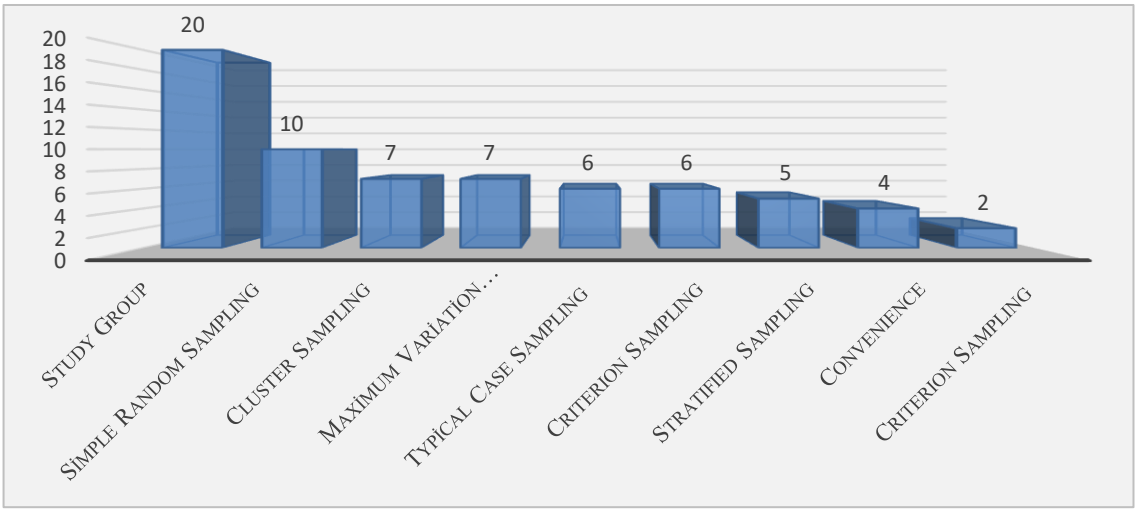
The findings on the general tendency of postgraduate theses/dissertations on ELT were presented in terms of data sources, sampling and sample size.



• *The reason why the total frequency given in the figüre is more than the total number of theses is that some theses/dissertations included more than one data source.*

Figure 6. The Distribution of Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations in terms of Data Source

Figure 6. shows that the data from teachers (f=49) and then from students (f=21) in postgraduate theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate English language curriculum. Apart from this, school administrator (f=2), an expert in curriculum development (f=1), textbook author (f=1) were also used as data sources. The findings related to sampling methods used in postgraduate theses on ELT programs were presented in Figure 7.



• *The reason why the total frequency given in the figure is more than the total number of theses is that some theses/dissertations adopted more than one sampling method.*

Figure 7. The Distribution of Sampling Method Used in Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations

As given in Figure 7. most of the postgraduate theses/dissertations theses aiming to evaluate the English curriculum did not adopt any kind of sampling method instead the use of study group (f =20). Simple random sampling method (f =10) was mostly used in postgraduate studies where sampling method was preffered. The cluster sampling (f = 7), maximum variation sampling (f = 7), typical case sampling (f = 6) and criterion sampling (f = 6) methods were also frequently used in these studies. The distribution of sample size used in postgraduate theses/dissertations on evaluating ELT programs were presented in Figure 8.

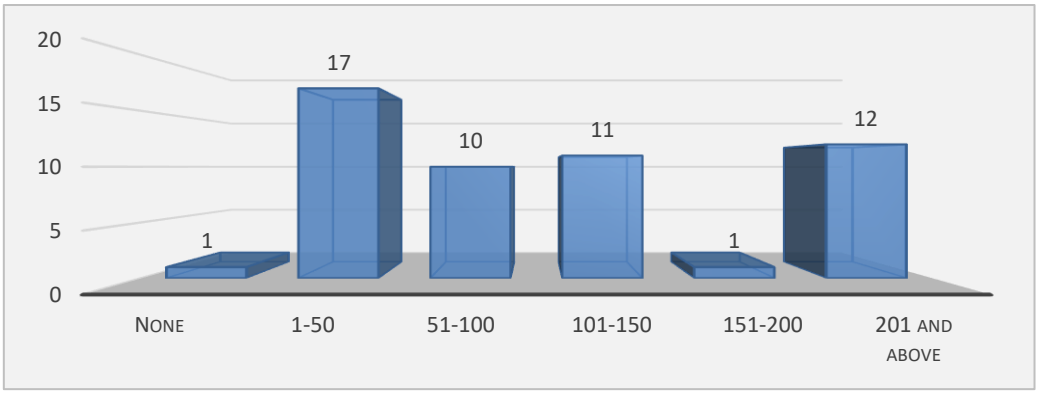
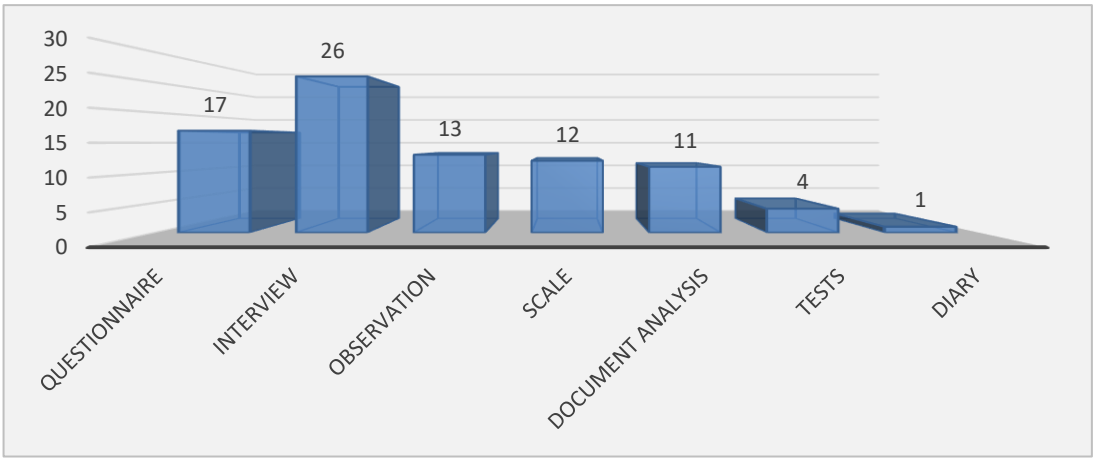


Figure 8. The Distribution of Sample Size in Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations

As seen in Figure 8, most of the postgraduate theses/dissertations on the evaluation of the English language curriculum included a sample size of 1-50 participants (f=17). However, the sample size of 201 and above (f=12) is the second most preferred sample size, while the sample size of 151-200 (f =1) was the least preferred one.

The Data Collections and Analysis Trends in Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations

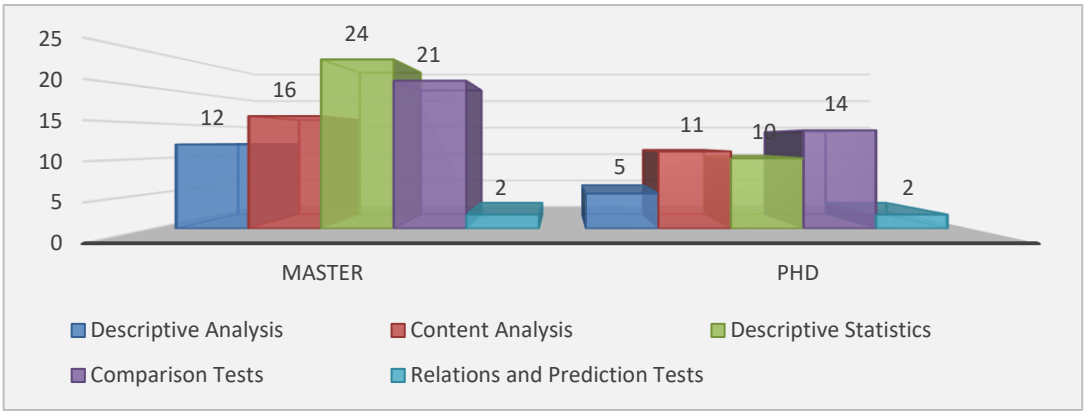
The findings related trends in data collection tools and analysis techniques used in postgraduate theses/dissertations on evaluating the ELT curriculum were presented in Figure 9-10.



• *The reason why the total frequency given in the figure is more than the total number of theses is that some theses/dissertations included more than one data collection tools.*

Figure 9. The Distribution of Data Collection Tools in Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations.

Figure 9 shows that the majority of postgraduate theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate the English language curriculum mostly included the interview (f =26) and questionnaire (f =17) as data collection tools. However, observation (f=13), scale (f =12) and document analysis (f=11) were also frequently preferred tools. The document analysis includes curriculum implemented by MoNE (f=7), Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (f=1), teachers' annual plans (f = 2), and group teachers' meeting records (f=1). The tests used in the curriculum evaluation studies include achievement (f=3) and language skill tests (f=1) as data collection tools. The distribution of data analysis techniques used in postgraduate theses/dissertations on evaluating the ELT curriculum was presented in Figure 10.



• The reason why the total frequency given in the figure is more than the total number of theses is that some theses/dissertations included more than one data analysis techniques.

Figure 10. The Distribution of Data Collection Techniques in Postgraduate Theses/Dissertations

As seen in Figure 10, the postgraduate theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate the English language curriculum include many qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. While descriptive statistics (f=24) and comparison tests (f=21) were mostly preferred in master's theses, the comparison tests (f=14) and content analysis (f=11) were frequently used in phd dissertations.

Conclusion, Discussion and Implications

This study aimed to analyze postgraduate theses on the English language teaching curriculum, which is one area of curriculum evaluation studies frequently conducted in Turkey. Within the study, 52 theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate the English language curriculum between 2005 and 2021 were examined and most of which comprised master's thesis.

Significant increase exists in the number of postgraduate theses/dissertations on evaluating English language curriculum in the last five years, with the highest number of theses/dissertations published in 2018, and the least number of studies in the years 2007, 2008 and 2020 with only one study per year. This is due to the fact that curriculum and instruction departments are preferred more than other departments as a postgraduate education option, thus institutes in more universities started to actively offer postgraduate education programs for the department of curriculum and instruction. In line with this, in the last decade, two program updates in the English language curriculum in 2011-2012 and 2017-2018 may have motivated researchers to conduct curriculum evaluation studies in this area. In addition, that only one study was carried out in 2020 compared to the last 5 years may be because of the negative effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic conditions worldwide, and the disruption of the education process in universities and schools caused the postgraduate studies planned to be completed this year to a future date. Because of the coronavirus epidemic, Higher Education Council (HEC) allowed students studying in bachelor's and postgraduate programs to freeze registration for the spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic years (HEC, 2020). Majority of postgraduate theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate ELT curriculum focused on evaluating the curriculum update implemented in 2012-2013. This curriculum update in 2012-2013 caused hesitation in the society, as the new curriculum brought the age of starting school to a very early period of 60 months and the age of language learning as 72 months (Solak & Semerci, 2015). Thus, researchers may have needed to do research on this to remove hesitation. Along with this, postgraduate theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate English language curricula focused on 4th and 5th grade curricula after the program update in the 2005-2006, and 2nd grade curriculum following the program updates in 2012-2013. Considering the grade level of targeted program for evaluation, curriculum for early age groups attracted more attention when compared to the upper grades. Since the process of language learning and teaching at an early age required a fresh approach, postgraduate theses/dissertations may have focused more on evaluating curriculums prepared for young language learners. As we know it, the cognitive, social and emotional structures of young learners differ from adults (Philp, Oliver & Mackey, 2008). The language teaching process for young age group requires activity-based teaching such as songs and games, maintaining language teaching with innovative

materials in well-equipped learning environments, and implementing this process in cooperation with other teachers in schools (Pinter, 2017) thus evaluation of the curriculum for these groups may have attracted more attention.

Majority of postgraduate theses/dissertations aiming to evaluate English language curriculum are not based on a specific curriculum evaluation model, evaluation based on any specific models started to be included in the thesis published after 2012, and theses/dissertations in which curriculum evaluation models were used the most were published in 2018. Most of the postgraduate studies aiming to evaluate the English language curriculum were carried out to determine the elements of the curriculum, the effectiveness of the curriculum in practice, and the problems in the curriculum implementation. The graduate theses/dissertations conducted to evaluate the English language curriculum may have been written to determine the general characteristics, elements and problems in implementation of the curriculum, so that they could convey the feedback from teachers to the program developers. However, in the following studies, it is thought that more formal curriculum evaluation studies were carried out by including more factors (such as students, parents, school administration, experts) because of the widespread use of curriculum and instruction departments in universities which lead the training of more qualified experts in the field. In addition, Eisner's Educational Connoisseurship model is the most preferred curriculum evaluation model in graduate theses because it allows the evaluation to be made under the criteria and experiences determined by the experts of the field rather than the providing superficial data, thus revealing the details better (Kara & Akdag, 2020).

As for the methodological trends of the postgraduate theses/dissertations, the most preferred method was mixed method and the least one was the quantitative method. While there is a tendency to work with quantitative or qualitative methods alone in master's theses, the tendency to work with qualitative methods with mixed method is more in phd dissertations. That master's theses provide a shorter thesis writing process may have led the researchers to study on a single research method. Doctoral dissertations may have led researchers to adopt mixed method studies as they offer a longer thesis writing process and require high level scientific skills from researchers. In addition, researchers may have felt the need to adopt mixed method studies in order to eliminate the disadvantages of working only with qualitative or quantitative method in line with the scientific research skills they gained at the phd process. As for the study design, the descriptive survey design is the most preferred method in postgraduate dissertations aiming to evaluate the English language curriculum. This finding is basically similar to the results of the studies in the related literature and most of the postgraduate theses/dissertations were carried out in descriptive survey design (Bikmaz et al., 2013; Ozan & Kose, 2014; Kurt & Erdogan, 2015). Descriptive survey design may be preferred when the researchers want their study results to be more generalizable, especially in regions where curriculums are designed centrally and implemented throughout the country. As with the effect of a formative approach in curriculum evaluation, researchers may strive to make the results of their evaluation in a certain region generalizable to other places and regions where the program is implemented (Kara & Akdag, 2020). For this reason, they may tend to study with the research designs in which they can generalize their findings and results.

As for the sampling process for data collection, the postgraduate theses/dissertations on evaluating English language curriculum predominantly sampled teachers and then students as a data source. As a practitioner of the curriculum the teachers, and as targeted audiences of the curriculum the students are the most preferred data sources in curriculum evaluation studies in Turkey (Erisen, Sezer & Kaya, 2019; Tan-Sisman, Odun-Baskiran & Aktan-Tas, 2019; Asiroglu, 2020). In these studies, based on the idea that teachers bear the responsibility of the learning and teaching process to a great extent (Seiffert, 1986), they expect teachers to decide on the effectiveness of their teaching processes and program (Bharvad, 2010). Although this enables teachers to present rich data by reflecting their own instructional behavior as the planner and implementer of the process (Hunkins, 1980), it reveals the limitation of program evaluation experts not to get as much data as they want since the teachers are emotionally very close to the process (Woods, 1988). To add, most of the postgraduate theses/dissertations that aim to evaluate the English language curriculum did not include any specified sampling method, instead included the study group. The most common method for

sampling was simple random sampling in studies where sample selection was used. Since the grade level of a certain level is taken into consideration in postgraduate theses/dissertations, the researchers included the English teachers who handle the determined grade level in the study group. Since the number of English teachers who are currently teaching the determined class level is limited, the researcher may have felt obliged to work with the study group rather than sampling. In addition, in postgraduate studies with larger sample groups, the researcher may prefer the simple random sampling method in order to generalize the research results and to prevent biased analysis. As for the sample size preference, most of the postgraduate theses/dissertations that aim to evaluate the ELT programs mostly studied with 1-50 sample size and then with 201 and above. There thought to be two reasons behind this result. The first reason is that some postgraduate theses/dissertations in question were designed with a qualitative method which requires a small sample size. The second one is the number of English teachers who teach the certain grade level for curriculum evaluation is quite limited. However, that the sample size of 201 and above is the second most preferred sample size is thought to be due to the quantitative data collected, especially from student groups in studies conducted with mixed and quantitative methods.

As regards to data collection tools, many data collection tools were used in postgraduate theses/dissertations. First the questionnaire, then the interview was determined to be the most preferred data collection tools. This is related to the fact that the data is commonly collected with an interview in qualitative methods while it was collected with the questionnaire in quantitative methods, as in the current sample size finding. In addition, this result is consistent with the findings of studies conducted with a similar approach in the literature (Ozan & Kose, 2014; Kurt & Erdogan, 2015; Yazar & Dokumaci-Sutcu, 2018). The data collected with these tools were mostly analyzed with descriptive statistics and comparison tests in master's theses, while comparison tests and content analysis were frequently used in phd dissertations. What led to the frequent use of these two data analysis techniques in these postgraduate theses is that especially the descriptive statistical techniques were used in the analysis of quantitative data where the questionnaires were used as a data collection tool, and the use of content analysis technique was preferred in the analysis of qualitative data where interview technique was preferred as a data collection tool. In addition, the use of comparison tests stemmed from the tendency of testing independent variables and determining the significant difference between groups in theses where scale was used as a data collection tool.

This study was carried out to reveal the tendencies and general view in scientific studies aimed at evaluating English language curriculum. Based on the data obtained, the majority of English curriculum evaluation studies have been conducted in the last five years, which boomed in 2018, and the 2012-2013 curriculum was the most evaluated program update in the literature. Although Eisner's Educational Connoisseurship model is the most preferred curriculum evaluation model in postgraduate theses, a great number of theses based on the elements and the effectiveness of the curriculum in practice. These theses frequently targeted the ELT programs for early age groups (such as 2nd, 4th and 5th grades). Method of the studies was mostly designed in mixed method and descriptive survey design. Teachers were preferred as the data source and the studies were carried out with a sample size of 1-50 participants determined as the study group without using the sampling method. In addition, while survey and interview were determined to be the most used data tools in these studies, the data obtained were frequently analyzed with comparison tests to reach research findings.

Since most of the scientific articles in the field are derived from postgraduate theses, the study was limited to only postgraduate theses/dissertations. In addition, the serious initiatives and curriculum studies in the field of English language teaching have begun to be carried out since the 2005-2006 academic year; the publishing year range of graduate theses/dissertations is limited to the years between 2005-2021. This study is still important because it presents a general framework of evaluation studies on the English language curriculum. Because it provides a general framework for both researchers and curriculum development experts working in the field, as well as guiding them.

Based on the results, the following issues regarding the studies on ELT curriculum evaluation are recommended:

- The studies should be more based on different curriculum evaluation models developed in the field for professional evaluation studies.

- The studies may include larger sample groups and including different data sources such as parents, curriculum experts, school administrators, and different grade levels for English language curriculum evaluation studies in the future.

Lisans Bilgileri

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Ethical Declaration

As this study is based on systematic analysis of documents, committee approval is not required. This article was conducted by following the publication ethics and principles of the scientific discipline. During the process, the principles of publication principles were respected and responsibilities for universal ethical values were fulfilled. Along with these, the journal writing rules, publication principles of the journals were followed too. The responsibility belongs to the author in case of any violations.

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