

**A CASE STUDY ON TEACHER AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS  
TOWARDS THE ONLINE ENGLISH EXAMS**

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**A STUDY ON TEACHER PERCEPTIONS AND STUDENT ATTITUDES  
TOWARDS THE ONLINE ENGLISH EXAMS**

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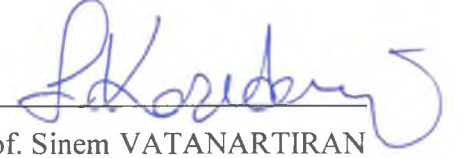
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Approval of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences



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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A CASE STUDY ON TEACHER AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE ONLINE ENGLISH EXAMS**

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors and the students on the use of online assessments as educational tools. 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and EFL teachers working at a private school during 2017-2018 academic year in Turkey comprise the scope of the study. A sample of 10 EFL instructors participated in the study in addition to the 89 students from the 5th grade classes. Data were obtained through a mixed-method survey in addition to the interviews with the participants. The surveys included Likert-scale type questions and open-ended questions. The overall findings of the study revealed that both the teachers and the students had positive perceptions on the use of mobile applications as educational tools because of their being time saving, environment friendly, providing validity, being motivating and giving a useful feedback report. Though the mostly stated drawback of the online exams was the low internet connection and computer related problems.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Computer Assisted Assessment, Online Assessment, Perceptions of EFL Instructors on Online Assessment, Perceptions of students on Online Assessment

## ÖZ

### ÖĞRETMEN VE ÖĞRENCİLERİN ONLINE İNGİLİZCE SINAVLARI İLE İLGİLİ TUTUMLARI ÜZERİNE DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

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Bu çalışmanın amacı hem İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten öğretmenlerin, hem de öğrencilerin İngilizce dersinde yapılan Online sınavların eğitim amaçlı kullanımı ile ilgili olan tutumunu araştırmaktır. 2017-2018 eğitim ve öğretim yılında Türkiye’de özel okullarda çalışan öğretmenler ve 5. Sınıf öğrencileri bu çalışmanın sahasını oluşturmuştur. Araştırmaya İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten toplamda 10 Türk ve yabancı öğretmen ve 89 tane 5. Sınıf öğrencisi katılmıştır. Veriler, öğretmenler ve öğrenciler için hazırlanan karma yöntemli anketler ve katılımcılar ile yapılan mülakatlar ile toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları, hem öğretmenlerin hem de öğrencilerin Online İngilizce sınavların zaman kazandırıcı ve çevre koruyucu olması geçerlik sağlaması, motive edici olması, geri bildirim raporları sağlaması nedeniyle eğitim aracı olarak kullanılması hakkında pozitif bakış açılarına sahip olduğunu açığa çıkarmıştır. Ancak, en çok bahsedilen sorun internet bağlantısı ve bilgisayarlarla ilgili problemler olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, Bilgisayar Destekli Değerlendirme, Online Değerlendirme, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin Online Değerlendirme ile ilgili Algısı, Öğrencilerin Online Değerlendirmelerle ilgili Algısı

To my family...

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CAA	Computer Assisted Assessment
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CAT	Computer Aided Tests
CB	Computer Based
CBA	Computer Based Assessment
CBT	Computer Based Test
CTMA	Computer-marked Tutor-Moderated Assessments
EFL	English Foreign Language
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
PB	Paper Based
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

This chapter provides an introduction to the topic of the thesis study, briefly reviews computer-assisted language learning (CALL) in addition to expressing the statement of the problem, the purpose and the significance of the study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

In recent years, technology has gained an undeniable role in daily lives. This effective role brought innovations and developments within itself and the developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) led to the emergence of different fields to use technology such as business, communication, human relationships, agriculture, banking, transportation, and education.

In his study, Seale (2006) states that technology and e-learning may help students to access higher education and effective learning experience since they provide the users with information anytime and anywhere they need.

The present study investigates the implementation of online assessment via using a computer which is called Computer Assisted Assessment (CAA). The study will both evaluate the student perceptions on CAA and find if there is a difference in success level of online English and traditional (paper) English exams. While Levy and Stockwell (2006) suggested that computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and assessment may help to improve overall proficiency, according to Bull and McKenna (2011), there are some motivations for applying CAA. Some of the motivations are:

- To broaden the range of knowledge assessed
- To extend the range of assessment methods,
- To increase objectivity,
- To encourage skills practice.

According to James et al (2002), Computer Based Assessment (CBA) is implemented with such reasons: it enables the instructors to diversify assessment tasks, it broadens the range of skills assessed and provide students with more detailed and timely feedback on their progress in addition to meeting student expectations for more flexible delivery and to generate efficiencies in assessment that can ease

academic staff workloads. With the increasing use of information and communication technologies to enhance learning, Computer Based Assessment is a natural outcome as James et al (2002) stated in their study.

Abdullah et al. (2006) state that some of the English teachers are willing to use familiar methods of teaching that they know from their previous experiences. Since the use of technology increases day by day, sometimes these traditional teaching techniques conflict with the new technological strategies which are being used by many educational programs

Chapelle (2005) expressed that through the changes the technology brought, the positions of the language teachers are changing too. However, Taffe and Gwinn (2007) added that using technology enables the teachers with a more efficient way of teaching and enhances the skills and making up the strong reading curriculum of the future. For the enhancement of the students' language proficiency, the researcher and educators have been refining the ways to incorporate well-organized and effective computer technology into foreign language teaching.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The computers are the irreplaceable part of today's' world. When they were first put into market, they were difficult to have due to their cost and size. Besides, the service was limited. Though, in time computers began to have a undeniable role in our everyday life. They are used with various reasons, business education, socializing and so on.

In time computers are used with educational purposes. The schools started to have computer labs and they provided the students with computer lessons. Thanks to the technological innovations, engaging computers' usage in education become common in education day by day. (Warschauer, 1998).

Computers provide students with more opportunities than traditional teaching methods and increased motivation and student-centered learning process. Since they are providing easier way to find out the information or for the transmission of the information, its being not only for class activities but also for the assessment.



To produce expected exam results and to providing the examinees time without technological or stress problems, the assessments should be in a secure environment.

Taking the role of the computer into consideration, this study aims to investigate the perceptions of EFL teachers and students on the use of Online English assessments which will serve as a guide for EFL instructors and, administration.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

There has been an incredible increase in the use of technology recently. There is a great wealth of research on the effects and methodology of technology use, mainly, computer, tablet, smart board, online applications and mobile devices in language education. However, there seems to be a gap in literature considering both the teacher perception and student attitudes towards online English exams.

To fill in this gap, the present study aims to give a detailed insight both teacher and student perceptions towards online English assessments. The results of this study may contribute to the literature by revealing teacher and student perceptions on online assessments used by their institution and defining the impact of online assessments on these individuals.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the Turkish student perceptions on online English exams?
2. What are the Turkish EFL teacher perceptions on online English exams?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The use of technological devices in the field of education has led to an increase in computer based learning and computer-based assessment. These exams are used for lots of fields such as language proficiency assessments, educational assessments, job applications and certifications by professional groups. Although there are studies about the student perceptions and teacher attitudes, there is not enough study

focusing on both teacher and student perceptions. The present study searches for the insight of these research questions to be able to make related suggestions in this field. The study aims to find out how students and teachers perceive the online exams being used and what kinds of efficiencies and drawbacks of these online exams are. By illuminating the perceptions and experienced problems, this study might provide valuable suggestions to better the online exam proctoring for teachers and students. The information which is aimed to get via this study is valuable for the institution since the results may lead to making new decisions about the online assessment system at the school in question. Stakeholders at other institutions might find the results critical and applicable as well.

It is also crucial for teachers and students to have the chance to express their ideas about the current online exam system. Besides, the present study will help to gain a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the system. The present study may also lead to further studies in finding ways to involve teachers and students in the assessment process and to introduce alternative forms of assessments.

## **1.6 Operational Definitions**

**EFL:** Abbreviation for English as a Foreign Language: the teaching of English to students whose first language is not English (Online Cambridge Dictionary, 2017).

**EFL Instructors:** In this study, “EFL instructors” refers to English teachers who work at fifth grade classes of a private school in Turkey.

**Assessment:** the act of judging or deciding the amount, value, quality, or importance of something, or the judgment or decision that is made (Online Cambridge Dictionary, 2017).

**CAA:** Computer Assisted assessment (CAA) is a common term for the use of computers in the assessment of student learning.

**CBA:** Computer Based Assessment is commonly directly made via a computer, whereas Computer Assisted Assessment is used to manage or support the assessment process

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

When the personal computers started to gain fame, the computer technology had a lively effect on society. While the society swiftly started to use the computers in daily lives, educational institutions wanted to provide the students with global education and they put much effort to incorporate greater use of internet, information and communication technologies (ICT) into their curriculum. ICT brought the terms as e-learning, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Computer Based Assessment (CBA) or Computer Based Test (CBT) with itself (Russel & Haney, 2000).

Since the computers were used for learning, the developments in computer technology led to the emergence of Computer Aided Tests (CAT). These tests were introduced with different names such as online assessment, tests on a computer, electronic tests and computer based tests (Russo, 2002).

#### **2.2 Assessment**

Assessment plays an irrefutable role in the learning process. For individuals who are assessed to know what they know and don't know focuses on their learning. After having the assessment in class, learners need opportunities to perform and have feedback on their performance. At various points during college, and at its end, learners need chances to reflect on what they have learnt, what they still need to know, and how they might assess themselves (Chickering & Ehrmann, 1990).

**2.2.1 Summative assessment.** Summative assessment is the one which is made at the completion or end of a program to provide the individuals with the information on whole of activity. Summative assessment is an 'endpoint' judgment of the extent to which learners have achieved objectives of the subject and is of little value to student learning although grades/outcomes are of great importance to learners.

Summative assessment can lead students to focus on a narrow range of skills and content - the things that they think the lecturer is looking for (Morgan, 1995).

**2.2.2 Formative assessment.** Formative assessment is the ongoing assessment, with a view to making changes which is done during the learning process. Many assessment activities that learners undertake are both formative and summative: for example, a student may undertake a piece of work and receive extensive feedback from the tutor to guide him or her in their future learning (i.e. formative assessment) but for the same piece of work the student may also have a grade or a mark that contributes to the overall mark for the unit (i.e. summative assessment). Biggs (1999) argues that formative assessment, as a vital function of teaching, should always be present, but the results should not be 'counted' unless the student agrees. The dilemma for tutors then is concerned with student enthusiasm and motivation to take part in formative assessment activities. Formative assessments offer continual feedback and aims to enable learners to correct their mistakes, or misunderstandings. Besides it helps to motivate engaging them with the materials and content. Moreover, it encourages students to take more responsibility for their own learning.

### **2.3 Computer Assisted Assessment**

The Computer Assisted Assessment (CAA) may include any use of computers with the aim of assessing the skills, knowledge and abilities of the individuals. Most computer assisted assessment is separated into two groups:

- a) recording and guidance systems
- b) computer delivered systems (Mazzeo, Druesne, Raffeld, Checketts, & Muhlstein, 1991).

**2.3.1 Recording and guidance software.** Recording software is planned for the use by personnel staff or trainers. It is usually intended to help the user to keep track of individual performance or training and its results are set in motion. Competence of individual is matched to the competence needs of the organization and job applicants may be taken through the software especially where testing is involved (Şanlı, 2003).

## **2.4 Computer Delivered Assessment**

Computer delivered assessment means a test or assessment which is taken at the computer. The learner or the individual being tested responds to tasks or questions given by the software and the software marks the response and provides feedback where it is required.

Most of the computer delivered assessments are based on objective questions, such as multiple choice questions in which the user has to select the correct answer from a number of given options. Nevertheless, computer delivered assessments consist of tests of typing skills and of software use and imitations of industrial processes or fault finding. Computer delivered assessment product includes three main types of computer delivered assessment product (Mazzeo, et. al., 1991). The first one is the test of aptitude or personality which is usually used for recruitment and selection. The second one is the test of specific knowledge or skills. These type of tests include IT skills, knowledge of business, science, and a simulation of process control for plastics processing. The third one is the question setting shell systems, into which the users put their own questions; the software stores the questions and delivers them to the individuals according to rules devised by the user.

All of these three types include the features to record and track individuals taking the assessment and may provide the individuals with statistical analysis of results.

## **2.5 Computer Based Assessment**

A Computer-Based Assessment (CBA), also known as Computer-Based Testing (CBT), e-assessment, computerized testing and computer-administered testing, is defined as a method of administering tests. During these tests the responses recorded electronically and assessed, or both. As the name suggests, Computer-Based Assessment makes use of a computer or an electronic device with the equivalent features such as tablet, cell phone or PDA.

CBA systems enable instructors, trainers and educators to author, deliver, schedule and report on surveys, quizzes, tests and exams. CBA may be part of a virtual learning environment and great motivator accessed via the World Wide Web. Computer Based Assessment term may include any type of computer using for assessing the knowledge.

Yang (2010) states that the reason for the increase in computer usage for education is that the students are disposed to do things on the computer since they are so used to playing with computers send e-mails so that they learn how to use computers. There are also other reasons which make the computer-based tests preferable:

- Computer Based Tests allow the students to have the tests anytime they want.
- In most instances, the results of the tests are given immediately at the end of the test.
- There may be a variety of question types on the computer-based tests.
- The user may spend less time on online tests.

Although CAA, CBA refer to same way, Hogg (1997) states the need to distinguish the terms and states that,

“CAA usually covers the use of computers in marking and administering optical mark reading cards, while CBA on the other hand refers to the use of computers for the entire assessment process including the delivery of the assessment, administration, management of the assessment and the provision of the feedback.”

**2.5.1 Perceived advantages of CBA.** There are lots of advantages of Computer Based Assessment. The assessment can be done anytime, if there is no time limitation the entrant may spend as much as time as he/she wants on a question, the entrants may have immediate feedback. Besides, the motivation level is one of the essential advantages of Computer Based Assessment. Moreover, CBA aids efficiency and enables the instructors to keep track of the data.

Computer-based tests have the potential to include more interactive and engaging question types, such as online experiments, simulations, and graphing, enabling the users to measure the skills which may not easily be assessed by traditional paper and pencil tests. Moreover, the advocators of computer-based tests argue that students may be accustomed to learning in a better way (Bridgeman, 2009; Buško, 2009; Csapó et al., 2010; Kikis-Papadakis & Kollias, 2009; Kozma, 2009; Kyllonen, 2009; Lee, 2009; Martin, 2009; Scheuermann & Björnsson, 2009; Thompson & Weiss, 2009; Tucker, 2009).

Computer-based assessments provide the educators with the data on students' testing strategies, the amount of time spent on each question, and thought processes, intermediate progress in addition to their final answers (Bridgeman, 2009; Buško, 2009; Csapó et al., 2010; Kozma, 2009; Martin, 2009; Thompson & Weiss, 2009; Tucker, 2009).

**2.5.2 Perceived challenges of CBA.** Computer-based assessments have some methodological challenges; such as inappropriate usage, poor quality material such as irrelevant questions or ambiguous questions, inadequate instructions which may cause candidates with unfair results, security issues such as impersonation and cheating and data protection issues such as personal data being stored (Bugbee, 1996). Computer related problems are more difficult to resolve than the ones experienced in traditional exams such as a broken pencil or lost eraser. There is a potential that the entire testing session, with all students' responses, could be lost. In terms of saving the responses of student and administering the test, supporting applications are crucial (Education Commission of the States, 2010; Bridgeman, 2009; Brandt & Rabinowitz, 2001).

Computer-based assessments can lead to fairness issues if some students are better at computer literacy skills than others. Research suggests that students who have better computer skills perform better on computer-based tests than students with lower levels of computer skills (Csapó et al., 2010; Gamire & Pearson, 2006, Education Commission of the States, 2010; Thompson & Weiss, 2009; Paek, 2005; Poggio et al., 2005).

When the number of students who take online assessment is more, issues of network and server congestion, fluctuations in speed, and possible disruptions in service must be taken into consideration (Kozma, 2009; Kyllonen, 2009; Thompson & Weiss, 2009).

Besides, many schools lack the technical support needed to keep computerized systems functioning properly and equipment running smoothly (Education Commission of the States, 2010; Bennett, 2003, Buško, 2009).

## **2.6 Studies Related to Student Perceptions about CBA**

Wong and Fong (2014) investigated the student attitudes towards traditional and online methods of delivery designing a survey questionnaire to gauge student perceptions of learning motivation, effectiveness and impact on assessment outcomes for face to face or online learning options. The study rated the students' study preferences toward the traditional face to face lectures and new online teaching options. The paper also aimed to find out if there are significant differences between male and female respondents in terms of their preferences. Wong and Fong (2014) used Wilcoxon Rank Sum test and also Pearson's Correlation Test and found out that the participants of the study preferred face to face learning mode compared to online learning. The results from Wilcoxon Rank Sum tests show that there were no significant differences between face-to-face or online learning options and preference for online learning technology between male and female students studying first-year accounting. Both these groups on average found the face-to-face learning mode effective.

Aisbitt and Sangster (2005) studied the implementation and efficacy of a new online assessment system which was the quiz activity of the software of Dow University. The quiz was used to administer the assessment which includes 100 item multiple choice questions. The online assessment system was both summative and formative. Six hundred objective test questions were prepared for the summative OLA, organized into 100-question tests scheduled approximately six weeks apart. These tests were called 'Computer-marked Tutor-Moderated Assessments' (CTMAs). They accounted for one-third of the overall marks on the course and students were only eligible to pass the course if they achieved an average of 40% across the six CTMAs and three Tutor. A further 600 objective test questions were used for six 'practice CTMAs', the first of which was made available two weeks before the first two-week CTMA window. It covered the same topics as the impending summative CTMA. Students received feedback after every 10 questions, and they could attempt the practice CTMA as often as they wished. The same was done before each of the other five summative CTMAs. After applying the online assessment system, the researchers found a positive correlation between student performance in the online assessments and in their final exam.



Al-Qdah and Ababneh (2017) studied the effects of online exams on students' achievements and students' perceptions of online and paper exams after taking online and paper based exams. Male students in the faculty of Computers and Information Technology and female students in the faculty of Education and Arts took the exams that included various types of questions. The results of the online exams were compared with similar designed paper based exams. The students' performances in exams were measured in each question type. Surprisingly, the statistical results were found to be similar between both paper based and online exams; however, results of the essay questions indicated that the students preferred to answer on paper rather than type on the computer screen.

Maguire, K.A., Smith, D.A. and Brailer, S.A. (2010) explored the difference in test scores for 192 students who took proctored course assessments electronically via a computer interface compared to students who took proctored assessments through a paper and pencil in the classroom. Each participant attended four different applications in one semester. 43 students took all of the paper-pencil based exams, 92 students attended computer based exams. The results showed that students who completed all assessments electronically scored higher than those students completing all assessments via pencil and paper format. Moreover, the findings of the study suggested that Computer Based Teaching provided the students with more motivating results.

Özden, Ertürk and Şanlı (2014) conducted a study on students' perceptions of online assessment. They aimed to investigate students' perceptions towards the use of computer assisted assessment with a paper based survey and follow up interviews. The participants were the third year students in the Department of Computer Education at Kocaeli University. Forty-six students voluntarily accepted to participate in the study. The mixed-method study revealed that the most outstanding features of the online assessments were randomized question order, immediate feedback and the efficacy of online assessment system. The descriptive study used paper-based surveys and interviews for data collection. To obtain information about the students' perceptions of online assessment, a Web site was developed and implemented. The course instructor was responsible for the instructional design, content creation, and all activities for the course, but one researcher designed and developed the online assessment Web site. The online assessment Web site was mainly designed as two modules with user and administrator interfaces. The user

module contained multiple-choice questions. The study found out that, 58% of users agreed that the system provided immediate feedback, 79% agreed that online assessment was better than the paper-and-pencil format, and 92% agreed that online assessment was faster than the paper-and-pencil form. On average, 80% of the users agreed that online assessment was contemporary and more systematic.

## **2.7 Studies related to Teacher Perceptions about CBA**

Arkin (2003) conducted a study about how teachers perceive the use of computer technology in language teaching, more specifically, teachers' perceptions and approaches to using an online resource in vocabulary instruction in an EFL context. The researcher expressed that the aim of the study was to define the factors that affect teachers' use or nonuse of an online program which included vocabulary level tests, a vocabulary frequency profiler, word and text concordance, and cloze text and hypertext builder. The questionnaires were distributed to the 97 participant teachers who worked in an English medium university. The questionnaire results indicated statistically significant differences between teachers who have undergone computer technology training and those who have not in terms of their attitudes toward computers and the use of computer technology resources in language teaching. With the follow-up interviews the results also revealed that introducing the computer technology resources in a simple way does not guarantee teachers' use of these in practice. Providing the teachers with the necessary training is seen as a crucial factor in both changing perceptions and encouraging teachers in incorporating technology into their classes.

Saeed (2015) conducted a study about the effect of using computer technology on English Language teachers' performance. Saeed aimed to investigate the effect of using computer technology on the teaching performance of Sudanese English language teachers. The participants of the study were 70 secondary school English language teachers in Khartoum State. The data of the quantitative study was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The study revealed that most of English language teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of computer technology in EFL classroom. Also, it showed that the majority of English language teachers are not trained enough to use computer technology in an EFL classroom.

Jamil, Tariq and Shami (2012) studied teachers' perceptions of computer based and paper based examinations. 314 teachers from Pakistani universities (from 20 Public Sector and 16 Private Sector) from Punjab Province were included in the study. The aim of the study was to find out the teacher's' attitude regarding computer or paper based examinations. A survey was designed for which all items of the instrument were couched and included after the literature review. The instrument was comprised of three parts. Part – 1 was related to teachers' demographic information i.e., department name, gender, designation (i.e., job title) and professional qualifications. Two variables regarding the information for computer training certificate or diploma and experience of conducting CB examination were also included in the same part. 5 – Point attitude scale included 21 items was the questionnaire was used as Part – 2 to explore teachers' attitude towards CB examinations on the basis of their personal experiences. And Part –3 included 19 statements, which were designed to depict teachers' perceptions by comparing PB versus CB examinations, same on the bases of their personal experiences. This part helped the researchers to understand teachers' belief on PB or CB examinations. Via these instruments, the researchers found out that teachers' attitudes were positive towards Computer Based examination systems but in some situations they preferred Paper Based as well.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter gives detailed information about the methodology including the research design, participants, materials, and data collection procedures and data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

As the present study mainly focuses on teacher and student perceptions, a qualitative case-study research design is preferred by the researcher. As Anselm, Strauss and Corbin (1990) express in their study, qualitative methods may be used for better understanding of any phenomenon or can also be used to have new perspectives about the things already known or qualitative approach may also provide the researcher with more in-depth information.

“Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation.” (Creswell, 2003, p. 68)

Besides, Merriam (2002) states some key characteristics about qualitative research designs. While the first characteristic is that researchers try for comprehending the meaning people have gained through their experiences, the second characteristic is claimed to be the researcher’s being the primary instrument of data collection and analysis as an ideal means of collecting and analyzing data, in addition to having an inductive investigative strategy due to the lack of theory or failing theory to explain a phenomenon.

The present case study aims to find out the perceptions of EFL instructors and students on the use of Online English assessments as educational tools at private schools in Turkey. Since case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context as Zainal (2007) states in his study, the researcher was able to comprehend the behavioral conditions of the participants. And since case study generally intends to provide data within a definite group and setting, the case study was found appropriate for the present study. It gave the researcher chance to focus on the responses of each participant in detail (Mackey & Gass, 2005). With this purpose, mainly qualitative case study research design was adopted in the study.

Moreover, with the aim of gaining insights about the perceptions of students and teachers on Online English assessments, mainly qualitative data analysis techniques were used to identify the strengths, weaknesses of the Online English exams in addition to the teacher and student perceptions on them. Qualitative data of research was analyzed through using content analysis which was divided into categories; and quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistical techniques by using Microsoft Excel. Since, the study revolved around showing deep perceptions on Online English assessments, the researcher used descriptive data analysis method.

As Yin (2003) stated in his study, this type of case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred.

The study indicated both teachers' and students' perceptions on the use of online English exams. With this aim, two surveys were prepared to answer the following research questions:

Following two questions guided the study:

1. What are the students' perceptions towards online English exams?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions towards online English exams?

With the two guiding questions the study aims to evaluate the student and teacher perceptions on online English exams. As data gathering techniques for both students and teachers, paper based surveys and interviews were used.

The researcher was inspired from studies conducted by Jamil, Tariq and Shami (2012) which focused on teacher perceptions about computer based examinations vs. paper based examinations, and Özden, Ertürk and Şanlı (2004) who aimed to find out students' perceptions of online assessments. Since these studies included the crucial points of the present study, both comparing online and paper based exams in addition to searching for students' perspectives and teacher attitudes, these studies were the

inspirations for the current study. The study included two groups' perceptions of online assessment using a descriptive survey research design. This design was chosen because as it is stated by Sandelowski (2000), in qualitative descriptive studies language is a vehicle of communication and the aim is to describe describe what is found through the surveys and the interviews.

The study focused on 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Bahçeşehir Schools Umraniye Campus. Each grade has 5 different classes including 24 students. The study let the researcher to evaluate the perceptions of students and teachers on the efficiency of online English exams.

### **3.2 Target Population and Setting**

89 students from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes of Bahçeşehir Schools Umraniye Campus were the participants of the present study. The students' age ranges from 9 to 10. The students' English level also ranged from elementary to pre-intermediate. These students took the school entrance exam and started their education at Bahçeşehir Schools. The study was held in one school, within one site and descriptive statistics were used.

While the questionnaires were given to 120 in total and 89 students were volunteer to participate, 10 teachers participated in the study voluntarily. For the interviews, 4 students from two different classes were volunteered, only 2 teachers wanted to be interviewed.

Convenience sampling which is the type of nonprobability sampling technique was used for this study. Convenience sampling is quite common in second language research as Cohen (2005) states.

### **3.3 Procedures**

**3.3.1 Data collection procedures.** The data collected for the purposes of this study was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The data which was gathered through the Likert-scale survey was analyzed by using Microsoft Excel where percentages were calculated. The data collected by interviews were analyzed through content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis is defined as a research method which has various steps with the aim of making good inferences from the text (Weber, 1990).

The data gathered via the open-ended and Likert scale questions were read and evaluated to make a clear sense of the data. Then the keywords were identified and relevant pieces were labelled for the purpose of coding and finally they were categorized to create the themes.

The audio records of interviews were transcribed. Key terms and sentences were marked; hence the data could be grouped into thematic units. Thematic analysis was used.

Then, organized groups of data were interpreted and explained. Through organizing the data, the perception of the instructors and the students about the use of online assessments were displayed profoundly.

Two surveys which included both Likert-scale and open ended questions, and interviews were used as the sources of data in this study.

The researcher contacted the head of the English department and the principal of this private school to get permission to hand out the survey both to students and teachers. The data were collected anonymously from 89 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and 12 teachers. The data were collected between February and March in 2017. While a total of 101 participants answered the open-ended and the Likert-scale surveys, 5 teachers and students were included in the interviews.

The procedure of the present study includes two steps. At the first step the students took the online English exams. The researcher observed the students who took online English exams and the teachers who gave the online English exams. The researcher also gives online English exams to two 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes. The students take 3 online English exams in total. They took the first online exam in October 2016 which was their first English online exam, and they took two online exams at the second semester as the first and last exam of the second term. The online exams were prepared by Canada Precise Solutions and the exams included the parts related to integrated skills as shown below,

• Listening	• 4 questions	• 00:08:00	T
• Reading	• 11 questions	• 00:11:00	he
• Structure	• 14 questions	• 00: 10:00	exam
• Vocabulary	• 11 questions	• 00:11:00	s
• Writing	• 2 questions	• 00:10:00	took

50 min. in total and they were held in the computer laboratory of the school. To start the exam, the students first logged in to Bahçeşehir Precise Solutions address and then with the pin number that they were given they started the exam. After, the students logged into the system, the teachers admitted the entrance with students' qr code and they started the exam. The exam included three levels of questions: elementary, basic and pre-intermediate.

Listening part included questions based on recognizing familiar words and very basic phrases in elementary level.

Reading part included 11 questions and comprised of understanding very short, simple texts, a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases, and rereading as required in elementary level. The assessment criteria for this part is defined as reading for detail. The test type was multiple choice.

For the structure part, the exam included 14 questions. The part was evaluated out of 25%. This part included questions related to the conditional type-1, future tense, simple present, orders of adverb and adverbs of frequency in basic level.

In pre-intermediate level conditionals type-2, zero conditional- get, present continuous tense, present perfect tense, simple past vs. present perfect tense, past continuous tense, past continuous vs. simple past tense and determiners.

For vocabulary part, the exam included 11 questions which is evaluated out of 15 %. The time defined for this part was 11 minutes in total. Phrases, nouns, adjectives were included in this part in pre-intermediate level.

For the writing part, there were 2 questions which were evaluated out of 20. This part included sentence and paragraph completion.

After the students get the exam, they get the result reports coming from Pearson Solutions Inc. The result reports include the scores in addition to the feedback as shown with the pictures in Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3.



Examinee  
ECE VURAL

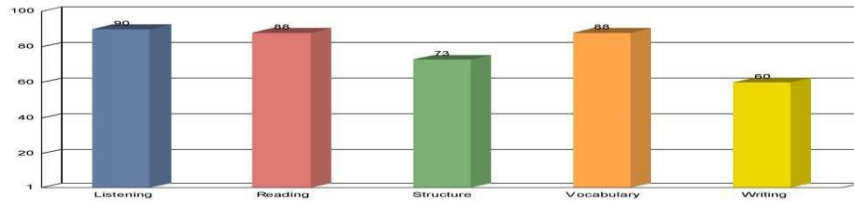
Examination  
Oct. 2016 - Grade 05

Session Date and Time  
October, 2016

**Summary of Results**

Test Modules	Score	Total	Percentage	Weight (%)
Listening	9.00	10.0	90.00%	20
Reading	8.00	9.0	88.89%	20
Structure	19.00	26.0	73.08%	25
Vocabulary	15.00	17.0	88.24%	15
Writing	18.70	31.0	60.32%	20
<b>Overall Score</b>			<b>79.35%</b>	<b>100</b>

**Bar Chart**

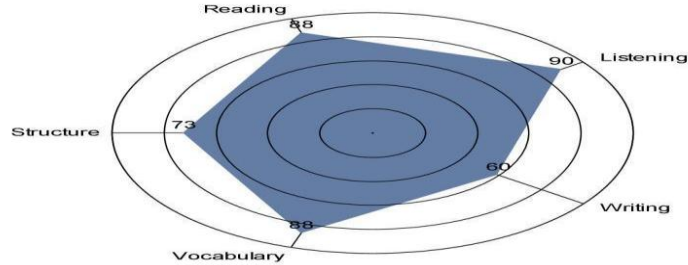


Examination Report - ECE VURAL  
Report Generated on: Sunday, October 23, 2016  
Campus: Omraniye  
Class: 5A  
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Figure 1 Performance report

**Performance Radar Chart**

This Radar Chart provides a different visual representation of test taker's performance, through the size and shape of the area covered in blue. A bigger and more symmetrical blue area demonstrates a stronger and more balanced performance in different sections of the test. The areas of weakness are closer to the center, and the points of strength approach the perimeter.



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Figure 2 Performance report

Writing Detailed Report

Score: 10.70 / 20.0 53.50%

Topic:

Write about your dream vacation in at least 70-80 words. You need to write about: Where this place is; What you would like to do there; Who you would like to go with. Check the layout, spelling, structure, word choice, and punctuation of your writing.

[my |dream holiday is [go |to [paris |and [england][. |] [walk |in [paris |]streets[. |] [going |to |] [the |tower] and |] [stay |in [disney |land |] |] [to |] [paris |with my family |] |] [walk |in [england| |]streets |] |] [to |] [the |tower| |] |] [in |] [england |] |] [street |] |] |] [go |to the [elisabets |castle |] |] [go |] |] with my friends and my friends[. |]family[. |]my family[. |]my grandmother[. |]my grandfather[. |]my friends |]grandma |]my friends[. |]grandpa |]my aunts and uncles |] [this |]is my dream.

Notes (Micro Comments):

- Non-English form
- Missing / incorrect preposition
- Missing word
- Missing / incorrect article
- Punctuation error
- Incorrect verb form
- Missing genitive marker ('s/s)
- Singular / plural error
- Incorrect verb tense
- Spelling error
- Capitalization error

\* Further analysis of the writing report will be performed by the teacher.

Figure 3 Performance report

After the students take the exam, Precise Solutions sends the result reports to school and when the teachers take the reports, they provide student with feedback to encourage them to correct their mistakes and to improve their skills.

The second phase is gathering qualitative data via administering the surveys conducting the interviews. The surveys (Appendix A and B) were given to the students before they would take their second online exams. The surveys for students included open ended and Likert scale questions in Turkish while the surveys for teachers included English open ended and Likert scale questions.

**3.3.1.1 Surveys.** The surveys used in this study was adopted from the literature review studies to assess the perceptions of EFL teachers and the students on the use of online English assessments as educational tools. The survey for students consisted of 11 questions under 4 different sections.

The survey for teachers consisted of 11 questions under 9 sections. The first section included questions on EFL teachers' perceptions toward the use of online assessment for language learning/teaching while the aim of the second section was to gain information about student perceptions on the online assessments in English lessons.

Two surveys which included 7 open ended and 4 Likert-scale questions were used for students and 10 open-ended and 1 Likert-scale question with 5 sub-questions were used for teachers. The questions of the survey were adopted from the studies related to literature that included the benefits and drawbacks of the online assessment supplementation.

The surveys (see Appendix A and B) included sections consisting of the attitudes of students and perceptions of teachers towards online exams in English classes. The surveys for teachers included the categories as advantages and disadvantages of giving online exams, difference between paper and online exams in terms of methodology, online exams' being time consuming or not, practicality, efficiency of online English exams, the problems faced during online exams and future use.

The surveys given to the students (see Appendix B) included 6 categories as; the ideas about Online English exams, the efficiency of the result reports which included feedback, stress level on online or paper-based exams, problems faced during Online English exams, efficiency of the Online exams, and perceptions towards future use of online Exams.

**3.3.1.2 In-depth individual interviews.** To have a detailed depiction of participants' perceptions related to their online exam experiences, interviews with 2 teachers and 4 students were held. The interviews were done 1 week after the exams are given and they were done in the school environment. With students the interviews were done during their Club lesson which took 15 minutes per one student, and with teachers the interviews were done during their office hour. The researcher asked questions, which she prepared with the help of her advisor, to the teachers about their contentedness, aims and reasons to use the online assessments. Interviews which lasted approximately 15 minutes (see Appendix 2) were face-to-face and audio-taped. Each interview was transcribed for data analysis. These interviews were semi-structured and audio taped. The specific questions explored were included in an interview guide and are summarized in the following paragraph. The individual interview questions were arranged from general to specific to follow a progression of participants' experiences in online exams:

Teacher Interview questions: (a) What do you think about the online English exams? (b) What do you think about their efficiency in terms of assessment? (c) How

would you characterize your experiences in holding online exams? (d) Tell me about your impressions related to the online exams.

Student Interview Questions: a) What do you think about taking online English exams? b) Do you think they are easier or more difficult? Why do you think so? c) Would you like to have online assessments in future too?

**3.3.2 Data analysis.** Sample is defined by Dörnyei and Csizér (2011) as “the group of people whom the researcher actually examines and the population is the larger group of people whom the survey is about” (p. 80).

Doherty (1994) states that different methods to gain information in order to create a sampling can be grouped into two categories: probability and non-probability sampling. The current study made use of a type of nonprobability sampling. With nonprobability sampling “members of the target population are selected only if they meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, or easy accessibility” (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2011, p. 81). The nonprobability method facilitated the data collection process of the current study.

The researcher had the surveys and the interviews with the colleagues and her students as they were easier to be in contact. The teachers were chosen purposively as they were known to apply online assessments for their lessons as well as the students who were given online assessments. Both the teachers and students were quite willing to help after filling out the surveys.

**3.3.3 Trustworthiness.** One of the essential aspects in both qualitative and quantitative research is trustworthiness. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are four main criteria that influence research:

**Credibility:** the quality of the findings in terms of being believable.

**Transferability:** the quality of findings to have applicability in other contexts.

**Dependability:** being capable of having reliable and consistent findings

**Confirmability:** Qualitative research tends to assume that each researcher brings a unique perception to the study. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others.

In order to establish trustworthiness, the criteria previously stated were analyzed one by one. To be able to encourage credibility in this study, the researcher

used prolonged engagement and member check strategies. Prolonged engagement refers to a term “which allows the researcher to check perceptions and allows the informants to become accustomed to the researcher” (Krefting, 1991, p. 217).

The researcher has been teaching English at this school so teacher participants are her colleagues. Thus, the researcher spent enough time to observe both the online assessments and instructors as well as the students to get an understanding of the target context as she was also one of the participants of the study.

After writing up the interview data analysis, the researcher checked her understating with the participants, and they confirmed the truthfulness of the data. To establish the transferability of the criterion, the researcher gave a detailed description of the institution and comprehensive background information about the participants in addition to data triangulation.

In terms of dependability, the process was described elaborately. The research design, how it was implemented and how the data was gathered were given in detail. Furthermore, thesis advisor guided the researcher to check the accuracy of the findings, interpretations and conclusions. Finally, confirmability was established by triangulation method in this study. Data were gathered via a mixed-type survey and interviews. The findings of the current study were evaluated objectively and written by eliminating subjectivity and bias as much as possible.

### **3.4 Limitations**

There are some limitations to take into consideration in the present study. First of all, the present study depends on the honesty of the both students’ and teachers’ self-reported data. Due to the fact that, the findings of the research were based on qualitative data, it is not easy to reflect the views of all the participants thoroughly without the effect of the understanding of the data by the researcher. While the participants were filling out the survey, the answers could be affected from their current mood or they might not prefer to signify their own opinions in order not be considered as unwilling instructors to the researcher. Besides, the students may give answers without giving any details with the willingness to finish answering the questions of the survey as soon as possible.

There lies another limitation. The instructors and the students to be interviewed may not have reflected their inner feelings or ideas about the online assessments.

Especially students may have felt stressed out to give negative answers even though the researcher told them that this wouldn't affect their grades or so on.

Besides, since the study is done by a researcher, the study lacks the interrater reliability and qualitative rating by different researchers.

Thirdly, the number of the participants in the study which consisted of 11 teachers creates another limitation. Also, since the number of the teachers who teach 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes is limited and the schedule of the teachers are quite full, the researcher could do interviews only with two teachers. Further research need to be conducted with a larger group of teachers. If the study could be conducted with more participants in more institutions, the results would be more representative.

### **3.5 Delimitations**

There are a few delimitations of the study. To begin with, this study was narrowed down to Bahçeşehir Umraniye Campus instructors and it's 5<sup>th</sup> grade students only since the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes are having the most intensive English program with 17 hours of English lesson in a week including Integrated Skills, Reading and Writing lessons. Since this study aimed to find out both teacher and student perceptions about the online English assessments both the students and teachers were included in the study.

Secondly, in order to gain insight into the perceptions of teachers who work with young learners, this study was conducted only with fifth grade students. Primary, other secondary or high school students were not included.

Besides, the researcher could observe classrooms while having online exams and could give further detailed insight

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

#### **4.1 Overview**

This chapter gives a detailed information about the results of both qualitative and quantitative analyses carried out for the purpose of answering the research questions. The data were gathered through a survey which consisted of both Likert-scale questions and open ended questions as well as the interviews with teacher and students. The quantitative questions were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel while the open-ended questions and the interviews were analyzed based on the content analysis. This chapter examines and discusses the findings of the research questions which were specified at the second chapter. The findings of the research are given based upon the following research questions:

1. What are the Turkish students' perceptions on online English exams?
2. What are the EFL teacher perceptions on online English exams?

#### **4.2 Student Perceptions**

With the aim of answering the first research question (What are the students' attitudes towards online English exams?) in the first section of the survey, the students were asked 11 questions about their perceptions towards online English assessments.

The first open-ended question was 'What do you think about the online exams which are being done at our school? Explain it with the reasons.' In terms of students' perceptions of the use of Online English assessments, content analysis revealed the following major categories which are divided into two as positive and negative:

Table 1

*Students' Perceptions towards the Online English exams*

Positive Categories	Frequency	Negative Categories	Frequency
Fun and motivating	17	Technological problems	12
Encourages progress	11	High stress level and difficulty	10
Good to have Online exams	10	Demotivating and boring	9
Easier to write	3	Worse than paper based	4
Useful feedback	2	Too long	3
TOTAL	43	TOTAL	38

For the first question, “What do you think about the Online English exams?” the results showed that the majority of the themes were showing positive while minority of the items were indicating negative perceptions towards the use of online English exams (see Table 1).

To illustrate, the following direct quotations given to the first question, “What do you think about the English exams? Why do you think so?” are as follows:

“I think the online assessments are fun. Because I love technological devices or using keypad for exams” (Participant 7).

“I think the online exams are good because we are having fun” (Participant 10).

“I love online English exams, because I don’t get stressed out when I have online exam” (Participant 16).

“I love online English exams, I think they are good because I am forcing myself to do well and I think these exams are improving our English level” (Participant 35).

“I think Online English exams are increasing our level of success” (Participant 69).

“I don’t like online exams; I am getting stressed.” (Participant 12).



All these answers clearly reveal that the students have positive perceptions online English exams.

**4.2.1 The usefulness of the Online English exams.** With the aim of answering the first research question, the students were asked second question which was ‘Do you think that the feedback reports are useful? Why?’ The students are provided with the feedback reports after the exam but since these reports are being sent from Precise Solutions Inc. sometimes this may take time. At the time of data collection, the students were not provided with immediate feedback but when they would get the reports, they could see their mistakes and grades.

Table 2

*Usefulness of Feedback Reports*

Categories	Frequency
Useful	73
Not useful	7
No comment	9

As it is seen on Table 2, 73 participants think that the feedback reports are useful. Most of the participants indicated that the feedback reports are useful, both to know their mistakes and their grades. In addition, there are a few participants who stated their feelings about knowing the number of their correct answers. While most of the participants are concerned about learning their mistakes, a few participants are feeling happy about learning their correct answers for the Online English exams. For instance, Participant 6 answers the above question in the following way:

“Yes, feedback reports are useful because I learn my mistake and study on these mistakes (Participant 6).

“Yes, because when I see the feedback report I can understand if my English improved or not” (Participant 11).

“Yes, because I can decide which subject to study via seeing my mistakes and results (Participant 30).

“Yes, because I can see which of my answers are incorrect and it is good to know the mistakes not to do the same mistakes again” (Participant 45).

“Yes, because it is good to know which of my answers are correct so that I can see at which skill I am better” (Participant 52).

“No, it makes me feel sorry that I have a low grade”. (Participant 27)

All of the above excerpts taken from participants clearly represent their satisfaction with having the feedback reports. Students explain that they usually feel happy about having the reports; some of them are happy about learning their mistakes and seeing the skills that they lack of and some of them expressed that they are happy to see their grades and correct answers.

With the 8<sup>th</sup> question they shared their reasons for the online exams’ being useful as displayed in Table 6.

Table 4  
*Usefulness of the online exams*

Categories	Frequency
Motivating	23
Improving and educative	24
Useful feedback	8
Better to use computer and keyboard	6
Better than paper-based exams (less stress, easier)	5
No comment	12

The majority of the students provided their reasons for thinking that Online English exams are useful. While 26,58% of students expressed that these exams are motivating and 27% stated that these exams are improving their level of English. 8% of the students mentioned the advantage of getting the feedback reports. Some of the students (6,74%) mentioned using computer and keyboard and that they love typing on keyboard or working on computer since it is related to technology. In total, 66 students mentioned the advantageous sides of Online English exams, while 12 students did not make any comments. Additionally, 24,71% of students shared negative perceptions including the difficulty and higher stress level of Online English exams. Some of the participants gave the following answers for the 8<sup>th</sup> question:

“Because I love using computer and keyboard” (Participant 6).

“Because English becomes more understandable and improvable thanks to the Online English exams (Participant 11).

“Because we both revise what we have learnt, and can learn the things we don’t after the exam” (Participant 17).

“Because I think Online exams are more explanatory” (Participant 39).

“I don’t feel anxious so I can think about the questions calmly” (Participant 52).

Above excerpts taken from participants show that while 74,15% of students had positive attitudes towards the usefulness of the Online English exams and expressing the reasons under the given subtitles showed that majority of the students agree with Online English exams’ being useful for them, there is a minority of students expressing the disadvantageous parts of Online exams.

**4.2.2 Perceptions related to stress, usefulness and future use.** The survey included 4 Likert-scale type questions (see Table 3) related to stress and usefulness perceptions. After the students answered these questions, they were asked to explain the reasons with the coming questions.

Table 3

*Perceptions related to stress, usefulness and future use*

3. Online English Exams make me feel stressed.	<u>SD</u> 19%	<u>D</u> 24%	<u>A</u> 26%	<u>SA</u> 28%
4. Paper-based English exams make me feel stressed.	<u>SD</u> 15%	<u>D</u> 33,4 %	<u>A</u> 30,3%	<u>SA</u> 18%
7. I think that Online English exams are useful.	<u>SD</u> 12%	<u>D</u> 16,8 %	<u>A</u> 32,5 %	<u>SA</u> 39%
9. Would you like to have Online exams for all your lessons?		<u>YES</u> 42 %		<u>NO</u> 58%

Note: SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> questions of the survey were evaluated under the “Stress” subtitle. The third question was asked to the participants to evaluate the stress level that they felt during the Online English exams. Even though majority of the students enjoyed having online English exams, 54% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the Online English exams make them feel stressed while 48,34% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Another question which was asked with the aim of evaluating stress level was the 4<sup>th</sup> question which was “Paper-based exams are making me stressed”. This question was asked to evaluate the student’s perceptions towards the paper- based exams and their stress level during these exams. As it can be seen on Table 3, 54 % of students agreed or strongly agreed that written exams make them feel stressed.

As shown in Table 3 the participants were also given items exploring their ideas about the usefulness of the online English exams. The majority of students, (71%), agreed or strongly agreed that the online English exams are useful.

**4.2.3 The timer.** During the exam, the students could see the remaining time on the screen. For each part, the time defined is shown on the left part of screen. To disclose the situation if the students are happy with seeing the time left or not, the students were asked ‘Does seeing the time remaining notice on the screen affect you positive or negative? Why?’

Table 5

*The Timer*

Categories	Frequency
Affects positively	25
Affects negatively	49
No comment	2
Both positive and negative	13

As it is seen on Table 5, the majority of students feel stressed or have negative perceptions about seeing the remaining time on the screen. While majority of students shared negative ideas about it, 25 students claimed that it affects them in a positive way. There were only 2 participants who didn’t make any comments. 13 of

students expressed that if the remaining time was enough for them, then it affected them positively, otherwise it affected them negatively.

For instance, some of the participants answered the above question in the following way:

“It affects me negatively since I feel stressed when I see that I do not have a lot of time to finish the questions. Then I try to answer the questions quickly, so I make mistakes” (Participant 16).

“It affects me negatively because when I see the time, I feel like I won’t be able to finish the exam on time” (Participant 22).

“It affects negatively because I feel stressed out when I see the remaining time” (Participant 26).

“It has a positive effect on me, but if the remaining time is less than I need, than I feel stressed” (Participant 56).

“It has a negative effect, because if I don’t have enough time I feel stressed, though otherwise I don’t know how much time I have left” (Participant 67).

Majority of the student participants were not happy with having the remaining time notice on the screen. Most of the students (55%) explain that they feel stressed about having less time than they need, and doing mistakes because of getting stressed to finish the exam as soon as possible. Still there is a minority of students who think that they can arrange the time better if they know how much time they have (28 %). There is also another group of students who think that if the time is less than they need then it has a negative impact on them and if they have enough time then it has a positive impact.

**4.2.4 The drawbacks of the online exams.** The 6<sup>th</sup> question was asked under the drawbacks subtitle. The students were asked: “Have you ever experienced a difficulty while having Online English exams? (Internet problems, or any kind of problems). The aim was to have the students' ideas about the difficulties and drawbacks of the Online English exams.

Table 6

*The drawbacks of the Online exams*

Categories	Frequency
Internet problems	40
Computer-related problems	11
No problem	38

As it can be seen on Table 6, the majority of students have experienced difficulties during Online English exams. While majority of the students have experienced difficulties due to Internet connection problems, 13,4% have experienced difficulties due to the computer problems. In total 58,48% students have experienced problems during the exam which made them feel more stressed and nervous. 41,5% of students expressed that they haven't experienced any kind of difficulties but of some of them stated that their friends did. Some excerpts are shared below:

“I had experienced internet problem once, though not always” (Participant 52).

“There was a problem about the internet connection” (Participant 58).

“Almost in every exam, there was an internet problem” (Participant 79).

“Once, I couldn't take the exam because, the system did not let me and I had to take the exam days later” (Participant 81).

“Yes, there was an internet connection problem” (Participant 89).

**4.2.5 The Future use of online exams.** The other point emphasized with the closed-ended question was about future use of Online English exams. With this question the aim was to find out the ideas of students about the future use of Online English exams. 58% of students did not want to have online English exams while 42% wanted to have online exams in future.

With the aim of supporting the findings of the 9<sup>th</sup> question which was “Would you like to have Online exams in all your lessons?”, the students were asked the 10<sup>th</sup>

question which was “Why do you think so about the above question? The answers are given with the table below:

Table 7

*Future use of Online exams*

Categories	Frequency
Easier and faster to write on keypad	21
Internet problems	19
Online exams make me feel stressful	17
Online exams are fun	15
No comment	12
Online exams are difficult and boring	10
Paper based exams make me stressful	5

Table 7 shows us that the reasons that the students gave for saying “No” for the 9<sup>th</sup> question included the problems with internet connection, the level of anxiety both due to the internet problems and time management, and their perceptions about the difficulty of online exams. The most common disadvantageous parts of the Online English exams were being difficult and boring, while the most stated advantageous part was their being easier and faster to type. Most of the students enjoy using computers for educational aims. Besides majority of them think that it is a lot easier to type with the keyboard. Some of the participants stated their answers in the following way:

“It is easier, you don’t have to write, you can just touch a keyboard key” says Participant 87.

Some of the students think that it is easier for them to type on keyboards instead of scripting.

Whereas, Participant 3 thinks that it is hard to type on keyboard. “More technology!” says Participant 58, while Participant 54 feels stressed about Online English exam and says that: “I am getting nervous while having Online exams. They are scary for me, they are more difficult and taking longer time (2 lesson periods)”.

52 % of students have some doubts about Online English assessments even though they think they are fun or technological. Majority of students love the idea of using technology although they are having the difficulties with the internet mostly, and the stress level that they experience while having online English exams.

**4.2.6 Additional comments.** The last question of the survey for the students was “Do you want to express anything else about online English exams?” Only 16 students gave an answer to this question and 2 of them commented on the time given for the exam, asking for more time (Participants, 15 &76).

6 students stated their positive ideas while 1 of them said that there should be paper-based exams instead of Online exams, the other participant said that His/her eyes are hurt when he/she looks at the screen for that long. 6 of the students expressed their positive perceptions in the following way:

“I would love to have more online English exams” (Participant 66).

“I love Online English exams and I think that they are useful for me” (Participant 16).

“Yes not only exams, but every activity should be online” (Participant 4).

“No more written exams, please” (Participant 10).

“I learn more things while having online exams” (Participant 19).

“I believe having Online exams will be better for me” (Participant 52).

### **4.3 Teacher Preferences**

With the aim of answering the second research question ‘What are teacher perceptions towards the use of online English assessments?’ the 10 teachers responded to 11 questions in the survey. The first question asked was “Do you prefer giving online exams? Please discuss.” The content analysis revealed these major categories displayed in Table 8.



Table 8

*Teacher perceptions of online English assessments*

Categories	Frequency
More practical and efficient	2
Technological	1
High reliability and validity	3
Prevent cheating or copying	2
Low internet connection	2

Most of the teachers have positive perceptions on holding Online English assessments. As it is shown in Table 8, the majority of the English teachers believe that online English exams are good to have in terms of reliability and validity due to the objectivity of assessment. While some of the teachers (20%) mentioned the exams' being practical and efficient, a teacher stated that they are timesaving (10%). Some of the teachers expressed that these exams are hindering cheating or copying since the students are getting more focused when they have technological devices to be busy with. There is a minority of teachers who gave negative perceptions comments about these exams taking the low Internet connection into consideration. Here are some answers that the teachers gave in a positive way about the Online English exams:

“Yes, I prefer giving online exams. The objectiveness of the exams and their reliability and validity are satisfactory (Participant 3).

“I prefer giving online English exams to paper based. They are technological. They are paper saving, ecological etc. Paper free environment decreases cost. Data can be stored on a single server. It takes up less time and effort. Eliminates human error in grading” (Participant 7).

Two of the teachers said that they would not prefer online exams since “There is always a possibility of low Internet connection, technical issue or simply no Internet” (Participant 9) and “I don't prefer giving online exams due to the technological problems” (Participant 4).

In conclusion, the majority of teachers (80%) have positive attitudes towards the Online English exams and 20 % of teachers expressed that they would not prefer giving online exams due to the technological problems.

**4.3.1 Advantages and disadvantages of online assessments.** The second question of the survey was “What are the advantages and disadvantages of online assessments?” In terms of teacher perceptions on the advantages and disadvantages of online assessments, content analysis revealed these major categories:

Table 9

*Advantages and disadvantages of online English assessments*

Advantages	Frequency	Disadvantages	Frequency
Time saving	4	Unfamiliarity with online exams	2
Less stressful	1	Time limit	1
Environment friendly	2	Not to know the real performance	1
Objective and practical	2	Unable to go back and check	1
Faster	1	Technical problems	4
Minimize cheating	1		
Easier to grade	2		
TOTAL	13	TOTAL	9

As it seen in Table 9, while the advantages of online assessment were expressed more, disadvantages of them were stated less by the teachers who were giving online assessments. The advantages of online assessments are said to be being time saving, less stressful, environment friendly, objective and practical, faster and easier to grade. These exams are found to minimize cheating by the teachers. Still, the teacher also mentioned some disadvantages of online assessments. Technical problems took the first place in this list, and the possibility of non-existing familiarity of students with the online exams was another disadvantage the teachers mentioned. Other than these disadvantages, time limit, being unable to check their answers, and computers’ being unable to know the students’ real performances are

found to be disadvantages. Some of the answers for advantages and disadvantages were stated in the following way:

“As an advantage I can say that online exams may save time but on the other hand technological problems may occur during the exam” (Participant 5).

“Advantages: No paper, faster. Disadvantages: Technical problems, sometimes students are unable to go back and check their answers” (Participant 7).

“One of the advantages of online assessments is it is time saving since the results are evaluated by computers. Another advantage is that they are environment friendly because we are not wasting paper. They evaluate students objectively so we eliminate the factor of attitudes of teachers to the students” (Participant 10).

The fourth question of the survey was “Do you think online exams are being time consuming or time saving? Why?” In terms of teacher perceptions on this question, the results revealed that majority of teachers agree that the online exams are time saving:

Table 10

*Online exams’ being time saving or time consuming*

Categories	N (person)	Frequency	Categories	N (person)	Frequency
Time saving	9	9	Time consuming	1	1

As the table shows majority of the teachers stated that online exams are time saving only 1 of the teachers stated that it is time consuming. Participant 4 stated that:

“At this school, they are time consuming as we have to bring the students to the computer labs and back. Also internet problems occur.” However, most of the teachers expressed that these exams are time saving:

“I think they are time saving because the results are evaluated by computer systems very quickly and the results arrive immediately” (Participant 6).

“I think that they are time saving, since there is no need to spend time preparing and grading the exams” (Participant 1).

**4.3.2 The practicality of online assessments.** The 5<sup>th</sup> question of the survey was “What do you think about the practicality of online assessment?” The teachers mentioned their positive or negative perceptions about the practicality and the content analysis revealed these major categories:

Table 11

*The practicality of online assessments*

Categories	N (Person)	Frequency
Practical	7	7
Depends on age group	1	1
Depends on equipment	2	2

All of the teachers who took the survey agreed that the online assessments are practical. One of the participants expressed that the practicality depends on the age group, and two of the participants mentioned that the practicality depends on the equipment. While all the others stated that online exams are practical. Some of the sayings of teachers were shown below:

“As long as the students are familiar with the computers, it is practical” (Participant 1).

“They are practical because the only thing you do is to go to assessment page and have the exam” (Participant 2).

“If the school is equipped properly and the instructions are clear enough, it is practical” (Participant 9).

As it can be deduced from the excerpts given above, all of the teachers who took the survey think that online exams are practical especially during the application

and evaluation stage since they do not require a lot of preliminary preparations and grading is done through the computer systems.

**4.3.3 Comparison of paper-based and online exams.** The third question of the survey was “Do you observe any difference between paper-based exams and online exams being used at this school? Please consider both methodology and student performance and perceptions.” With this question it was aimed to gain a perceptions about teachers’ perceptions towards both type of exams.

Table 12

*Comparison of paper-based and online exams*

Online Exams	Frequency	Paper-based exams	Frequency
High Stress	2	Less Stress	1
Difficulty in understanding the instructions	1	Run smoothly	1
More enjoyable	2	Students take them more seriously	1
More confidence	1	Better performance	1

As the Table 12 indicates, while some of the teachers express that paper-based exams create less stress, some the teachers state that students feel more confident while having online exams. While 30 % of teacher’s state that students think that these exams are more enjoyable and they feel more confident, 30 % of teachers believe that online exams cause more stress due to the difficulty in understanding the instructions. For paper-based exams 20% of teachers state that these exams cause less stress than online exams since these exams can run smoothly without having any difficulty. Besides, 20% teachers claim that since students take the paper-based exams more seriously, they show better performance. Some of the excerpts about this question are given below:

“Students feel much more confident and relaxed in online exams”  
 (Participant 3) while participant 4 stated that:

“Methodology: Paper-based exams, are more prepared for run smoothly while online exams are chaotic. Student performance: Students tend to do better on paper-based exams because they take them more seriously.”

The 10<sup>th</sup> question was asked to find out the teacher perceptions towards the online and paper-based exam in terms of validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity and positive washback.

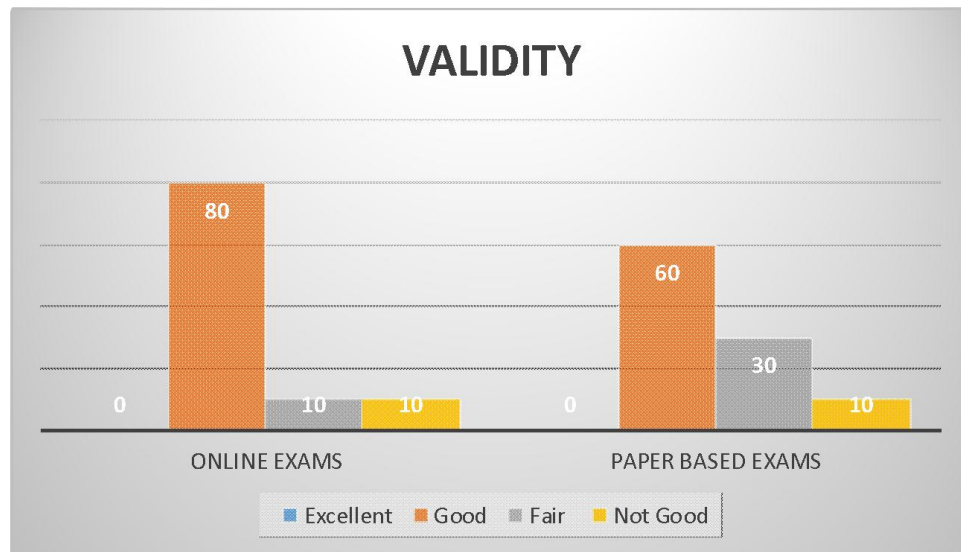


Figure 4 Validity

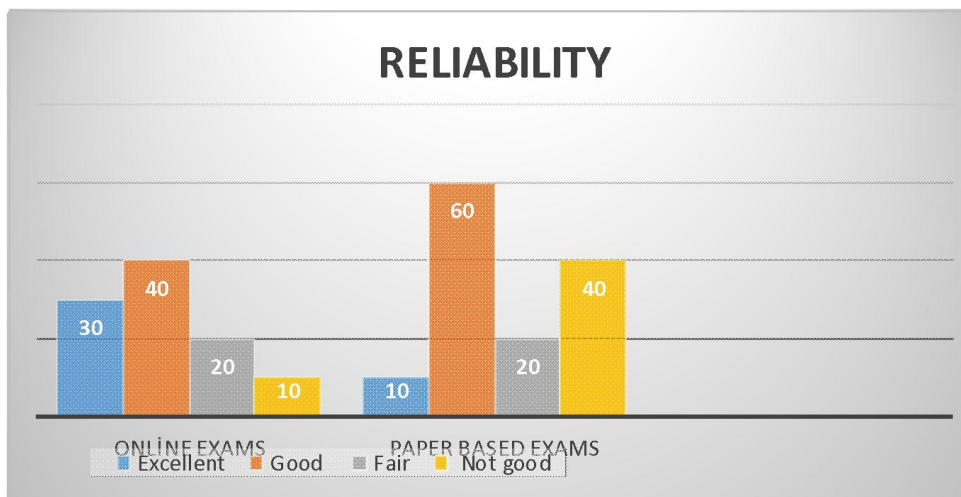


Figure 5 Reliability

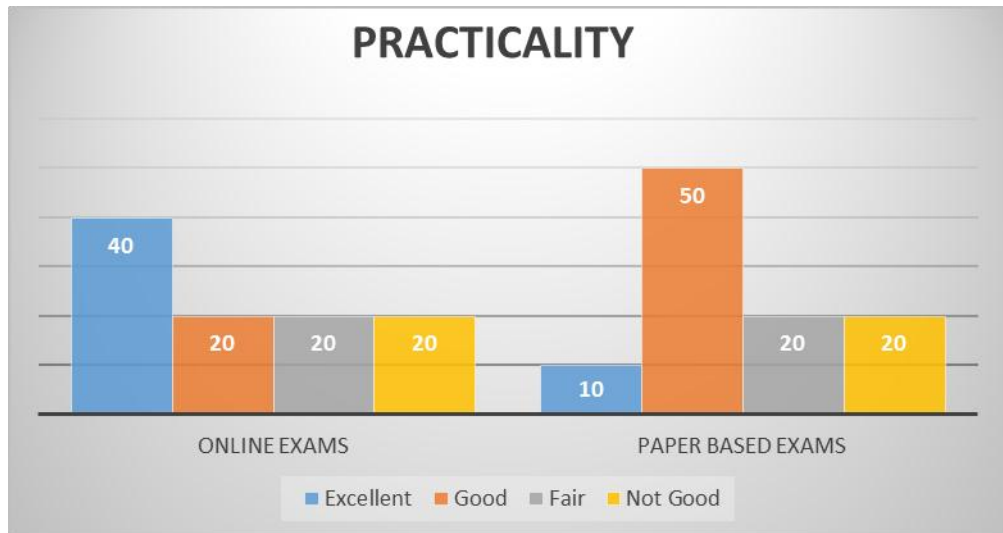


Figure 6 Practicality

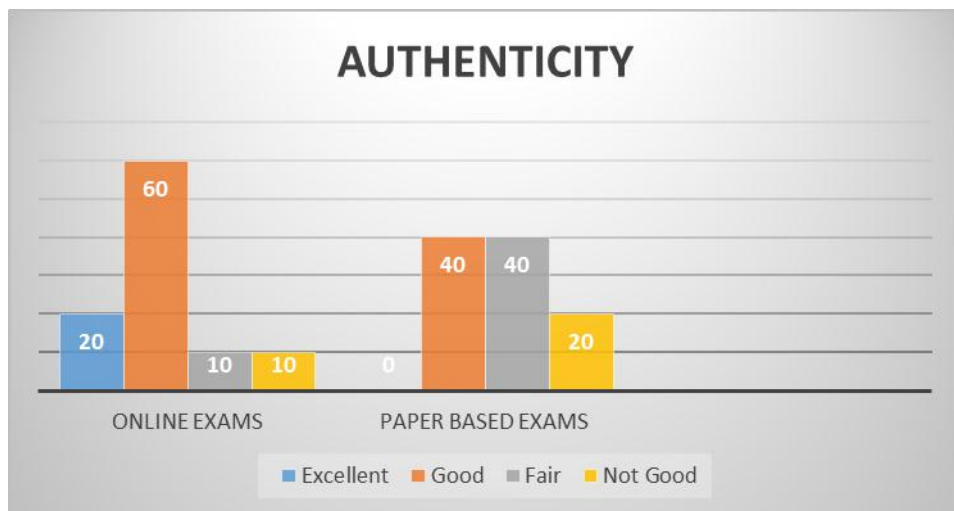


Figure 7 Authenticity

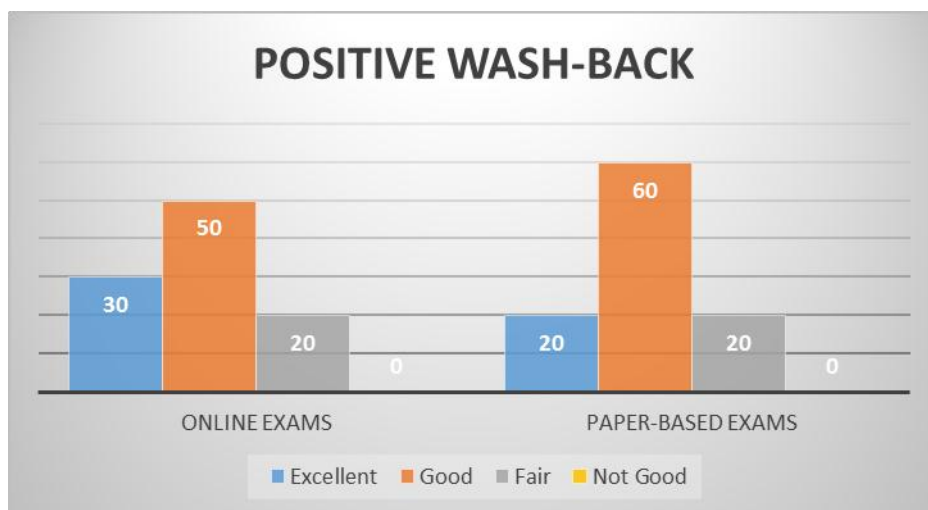


Figure 8 Positive wash-back

As Figures indicate, in terms of validity, online exams are found to be good by 80% of teachers, paper-exams are found to be good by 60% of teachers. While for online exams only 20% of teachers said that these exams are fair or not good in terms of validity, 60% of teachers thought that these exams are good or excellent. For reliability, the positive perceptions of teachers were equal for both type. The results showed that 70% of teachers said good or excellent for both online and paper-based exams in terms of reliability. Practicality is also found to be good or excellent by the 60% of teachers for both type of assessments. However, authenticity of the online exams is found to be two times better than paper-based exams. While 80% of teachers stated that they think that online assessments are good or excellent in terms of authenticity, only 40% of teachers agreed that the paper-based assessments is good. In terms of positive wash back, the majority of teachers (80%) agreed that both online and paper based exams are excellent or good.

**4.3.4 The efficiency of online English assessment.** With the aim of getting teachers' opinion about the efficiency of online English assessments, the teachers were asked "What do you think about the efficiency of online English assessment based on curriculum needs?". The answers given revealed out these categories:

Table 13

*Efficiency of online assessments*

Categories	N ( person)	Frequency
No cheating	1	1
Set up and run easily	1	1
Clear instructions	2	2
Prepared well and professionally	1	1
More efficient for teenagers and adults	1	1
No comment	2	2
Inefficient	1	1

As the table 13. demonstrates majority of the teachers think that online assessments are efficient due to their reducing the risk of cheating. The teachers also stated that if the online assessments are set and run correctly, prepared well and



professionally they are efficient. Two of the teachers stated that students can easily understand the instructions, so these exams are efficient. One of the teachers stated that for teenagers and adults these exams are more efficient. While one of the teachers did not make a comment about the 6<sup>th</sup> question, only one teacher stated that these exams are inefficient saying that:

“English curriculum has migrated to focus much more on English as a social skill, for that integrating with a computer is naturally inefficient” (Participant 8). Most of the teachers stated that these exams are efficient. Some sample direct quotations are as follows:

“Online exams are efficient because when they are having the exam the students can easily follow the instructions” (Participant 2).

“Online exams are efficient due to being time saving, motivating for students and causing less stress. The students do not feel the stress that they feel while taking the written exams” (Participant 10).

“Online exams are efficient since they are prepared professionally, and they eliminate the risk of cheating” (Participant 3).

As it can be seen from the given statements above, the majority of teachers have positive perceptions about the efficiency of the online assessments while the minority of teachers think that online assessments are inefficient in terms of changing perceptions about English learning.

**4.3.5 Difficulties of online assessments.** The 7<sup>th</sup> question of the survey was “What kind of problems do you experience while giving online assessment?” The answers given to this question revealed the categories in Table 14 below:

Table 14

*Difficulties of online assessments*

Categories	Frequency
Technology related or internet connection problems	4
Students not being quite	1
Students not knowing how to use the interface	1
Equipment problems, headphones not connected properly	1
Computers may get out of charge	2
The cost of systems	1

As the Table 14 shows, most of the teachers mentioned the difficulties they experienced due to the internet connection. Since the online assessments are conducted through the internet, the loss of internet causes an important problem both for students and teachers. Both the teachers and students get stressed about this unexpected situation and since these exams have time limits, this causes more stress. The teachers also mentioned students not knowing how to use the interface. During the exams, students may be confused how to go to the next section and for each section they may ask questions:

“There may be some technical problems related to device. For instance, headphones may break down or computer screens may be freeze” (Participant 6).

“For teachers, technology isn’t always reliable. Information can be lost if a system breaks down” (Participant 8).

“Technical issues; batteries dying or no internet connection can be a barrier in students’ performances” (Participant 9).

“The costs to set up an electronic assessment system in a learning institution may cost a lot” (Participant 10).

As the excerpts given shows, the majority of the difficulties emerge from technology or internet related problems. Although most of the teachers stated that these exams are practical and efficient, all of them stated internet related problems as the majority of the students did.

**4.3.6 Future use of online assessments.** With the aim of gaining a better understanding about the teacher perceptions towards the online assessments, the teachers were asked “Would you like to use the online assessment for all of the exams? Why/ why not?” The content analysis revealed two different perceptions one of which is positive and the other is negative.

Table 15

*Perceptions towards the future use of online assessments*

Positive Categories	Frequency
Planned and trained	1
Yes, I would like to use	1
Not sure	2
Negative Categories	Frequency
Student-examinee interaction	2
Not all students can use Internet very well.	1
They are inefficient for speaking parts.	2
Technological problems	1

As the Table 15 shows, only 2 of the teachers would like to use the online assessments for all of the exams. One of participants stated that if these exams are planned well and if teachers are trained about them, she/he would use them. Another teacher expressed that she/he would like to use it. Two of teachers stated that they were not sure about it. There were more negative attitudes towards the future use of online assessments as shown in Table above.

Majority of teachers showed negative reactions towards using the online assessments for all exams. While two of the teachers stated that the student and examinee interaction is important and online exams do not give the opportunity for this interaction, two of the teachers stated that these exams are inefficient for

speaking parts since they do not have these parts. Even though the assessment systems would include speaking parts, these would be lacking of interaction between teacher-student or student-teacher unless these exams would be with foreign students or examinees. Besides, some of the teachers were concerned about technological problems and students not being familiar with online assessments or using internet. This lack of familiarity causes stress problems and it affects the performance in a negative way.

**4.3.7 Skills to be assessed with online English assessments.** With the aim of having a deep understanding of the teacher surveys, the teachers were asked “For which language skills would you prefer online assessments?”. The answers given to this question revealed out given categories:

Table 16

*Skills to be assessed with online English assessments*

Categories	Frequency
Listening	7
Reading	4
Use of English	1
Vocabulary	1
Writing	2
Speaking	2
Checking improvement	1

The most stated skill to be assessed via online English assessments is listening skill. The second skill found to be assessed effectively thorough using online assessments is reading. Writing and speaking skills were also preferred by a few of the teachers. In addition, while one of the teachers stated that these exams are also useful for checking the improvement level of students another teacher stated that these exams are useful for evaluating all of the skills such as use of English and vocabulary. Some of the answers by the teachers are given below:

“Reading and listening are the skills that I would prefer to assess through online assessments. I believe writing should be a paper-based exam and speaking should be done with the examiner/ instructor face to face since students feel more comfortable.” (Participant 6)

“Listening the most but all the skills should be used for the exams.” (Participant 4)

“I would prefer listening skill. Since the audios are mostly authentic, the students may be exposed to the native speakers’ accent, pronunciation and so on. And this may increase their exposure to the target language.” (Participant 10)

As the excerpts given show, most of the teachers think that listening skill should be assessed through online assessments. Reading is also one of the mostly stated skill to be evaluated giving online assessments.

#### **4.4 The Interviews with Students**

In order to enable data triangulation and advocate and enrich the findings of the survey data, interviews were also conducted with main focused questions. The interviews done with the students included these questions. Extra questions were asked based on the answers received.

1. What do you think about taking online English exams?
2. Do you think they are easier or more difficult? Why do you think so?
3. Would you like to have online assessments in future too?

Four students were chosen randomly for the interviews. While the first two participants stated that they loved taking Online English exams, the 3<sup>rd</sup> participant said that he / she is not happy with taking these online exams, and the 4th participant said both type of the exams are the same. Some of the excerpts are given below:

For the first question of the interview the participant said that:

“I think it is fun because we use technology in our lives and we want to use it more in school. For example, we use iPads in school and to use these in the exams, it is fun and nice. We always use technology, we use it in school, it is nice for us.”

When I asked if the online assessments are easier or more difficult the 1<sup>st</sup> participant stated that:

“I think the online exams are easier. Because, we know how to use computers. And also, while writing on paper based exams, our hands hurt so much, but on computer my fingers don’t hurt. It is easier to write with the keypad.”

For the last question of the interview which was about the future of online English exams, 1<sup>st</sup> participant expressed that:

“I would love to have online exams in future too. Because it is so fun and I love computers. I also play games with them or do my homework with computer.”

And she also added that:

“I don’t feel stressed while using computer (Participant 1).”

First participant stated that technology plays an important role on his/her view of online exams. With this view, the participant believes that the online exams are easier, because the students know how to use computers. Since the participant loves computers, he/she wants to have online exams in future too.

The interview with Participant 2 revealed some negative perceptions towards online English exams:

“I don’t like online English exams. In the written exams, we are writing the answers on the papers and there are not any problems. But in online exams there some problems.

When I asked the participant 2 what kind of problems are these, he stated that

“Sometimes there is low internet connection, or there isn’t connection, so I can’t do one or two parts.

I asked if he experienced any difficulties other than internet connection and he said that:

“Once screen froze even though there is internet connection and I could not do last two parts, so I had the exam in another lesson missed that lesson.”

Participant 2, added that he would not like to have online English assessments in future due to these difficulties. Participant 2, represented the 13.48 % of the students, expressing the internet related problems.

According to the 3<sup>rd</sup> participant the online exams are easier. Though he stated that:

“I think the online exams easier, but there can be some negative points of them. During my first online exam, I couldn’t do the reading part because there was nothing seen on the screen.”

I asked the 3<sup>rd</sup> participant if he felt stressed at that moment and he said that:

“I did not get so stressed. I informed my teacher about the situation. And I took the exam for twice.”

I asked the 3<sup>rd</sup> participant what does he think about the positives sides of online English assessment and he claimed that:

“I think online assessments are easier and better because kids love technology.

When I asked do you think they are better because they are technological participant 3 said that:

“I like doing something which is technological. This motivates me. I feel that it is fun when it is on computer”

I asked the 3<sup>rd</sup> participant if he has faced any time management difficulties and he said he never had that kind of problems.

As the last question, I asked him if he would like to have online English assessments in future too he said:

“It is the same, he doesn’t have a choice if the exam is online or paper-based. They are the same.”

The 3<sup>rd</sup> participant stated that these exams are motivating for him since they are related to technology even though he has experienced technological problems during the exam and he had to take the exam again.

4<sup>th</sup> participant stated that online exams are much more easier than paper based exams when I asked her idea about online English exams:

“I think they are much more easier than paper-based exams. It takes less time.”

When I asked why does she think they are easier she said that:

“ While we are writing on paper it takes a lot of time, but on computer we just press buttons and this is easier. And also the questions are the same. I like taking online English exams.”

The 4<sup>th</sup> participant also stated that:

“I haven’t experienced any difficulties during these exams and I would love to have online exams not only in English lessons but also the other lessons. When I asked her idea about future of these exams.

Participant 3 stated that both paper-based exams and computer based exams would be the same, and even though the 3<sup>rd</sup> participant experienced some difficulties during the exam, he/she doesn’t have any negative attitudes towards online exams. Thinking that, the exams are still exams even though they are online or written, he /she doesn’t have a choice.

#### **4.5 The Interviews with Teachers**

In order to enable data triangulation and advocate and enrich the findings of the survey data interviews were also conducted. The interviews done with the teachers included these questions:

1. What do you think about the online English Exams?
2. What do you think about their efficiency in terms of assessment?
3. How would you characterize your experiences in holding online exams?
4. Tell me about your impressions related to the online exams?



Two English teachers were chosen for the interviews as 5<sup>th</sup> grade IS teachers who were volunteer for the interviews. The first teacher is a 30-year-old female and Turkish nationality. This is her 5<sup>th</sup> year in teaching and 1<sup>st</sup> year at this institution. She is teaching fifth and sixth graders. She is leading two online and one written IS (integrated skills) exams per semester. During the interview, she shared positive perceptions towards the online exams:

Since technology is improving day by day, these kind of exams are acceptable...I would prefer giving online English exams. It is time-saving. During the exams that I was proctoring, my students didn't have any problems with internet. Besides, these exams are eco-friendly. You can save the trees.

She added her observations regarding her students' stress about online exams:

Before the exam, the students are asking if the exam is going to be online or not. I feel like they have some concerns about them. When I ask deeper questions about that, my students tell that they don't feel really comfortable while having online exams.

She believes that because students "are so used to having paper-based exams, they are feeling stressed about online exams."

Although she was concerned that the online exams would not be able to assess learners' language performance, she found that their online exam scores are in parallel to in-class performance: "I think it is a bit risky process. While I was checking the results, I realized that even though they might feel stressed, their scores were so equal to their class performances."

Similar to what students stated, she also believes that we are living in a technology era so it is so acceptable to use technology for exams.

The second teacher interviewed is a female from Turkey and she is 35 years old. This is her 8<sup>th</sup> year in teaching and 3<sup>rd</sup> year in this institution. She has been teaching 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes. As the first participant, she holds one written and two online exams per term.

The second interviewee stated that the most important feature of these exams is that the students are assessing themselves in terms of structure and vocabulary skills.

First of all, it was my first time to do these exams on that campus. Before that I did not have any experience about these exams. I think one of the best parts of these assessments is that students can assess themselves including structure and vocabulary skills too, which is great for students. For me, it is very good. I think the online assessments are so efficient.

The interviewee also stated the importance of the feedback reports:

For example, for structure they learn something, and then they can assess themselves. they can see their own mistakes when they have the result reports.

The interviewee expressed that these exams are easier for the students, since the questions are multiple-choice questions. The interviewee also talked about the difficulties or the problems that she and her students faced during the exam. Similar to what most of the students stated, she also said that technical problems especially during listening part were experienced: “Especially in listening part there were some technical problems. The most important problems are technical ones”.

When the interviewee was asked about the future use of online assessments, she said that she would like to give them with a few changes such as better internet connection, and more listening questions.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

#### **5.1 Overview**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of English teachers and the students towards the use of online English exams in Turkey. The data were collected both qualitatively and quantitatively through a mixed-type survey and interviews. The survey given to the students were answered by 89 students, while the surveys for teachers were answered by ten teachers. The data which were gathered through the surveys was analyzed by using Microsoft Excel where percentages were calculated while the qualitative questions and the interviews were analyzed through content analysis. In this chapter, the results of the research will be discussed in terms of literature reviews. In addition, implications and recommendations will be provided.

#### **5.2 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions**

The data obtained from the surveys and interviews revealed that students in Bahçeşehir Schools Umraniye campus mostly adopt positive perceptions on the integration and implementation of online English assessments as educational tools. In addition to this, the findings also suggest that the students are aware of possible challenges.

**5.2.1 Discussion of positive perceptions of students towards the use of online English assessments.** The data obtained from the surveys and interviews revealed that students held positive perceptions about online exams including the feedback reports and the usefulness of the online exams.

As the answers given to the first question indicate, majority of the students held positive perceptions towards the online English assessments because of their being fun and motivating (Costa, Mullan, Kothe & Butow, 2010), easier to type, providing useful feedback and encouraging progress. Most of the students expressed that these exams are fun because they feel free when they can use computers and they can see

colors on the screen in addition to being able to hear the authentic voices through the listening tasks. Besides, since most of the students know how to use computers and they are so used to use keypads and mouse, it seems easier for them to type with keypads and they think they don't get tired when they type through keypads.

For the second question, the majority of students expressed that they found the feedback results useful. Al-Qdah (2017) also studied the students' perceptions about the feedback and he expressed that "...some features of online exams such as automatic results and feedback are preferred by students" (p.108). Besides, Özden, Ertürk and Şanlı (2004) also found out that majority of the students agreed that the features of obtaining feedback motivated them and contributed positively to their achievement on the exam. These features are the main advantages of computer-based compared exams.

Two of the questions were about the usefulness of the online exams. 79% students agreed or strongly agreed that online exams were useful. One of the mostly stated reasons of their being useful was their being motivating. In addition to that, students expressed that the online exams are improving their level of knowledge and providing them with useful feedback, easier and better to use and better than paper-based exams. Since the students love spending their time playing with computers at home, they love spending their time on computers at school. When the assessment or the task is said to be done through computers, the students find it motivating since it is related to technology. For many students, the reason of motivation comes through technology as Atkinson (2000) claims in his study that technology and teacher motivation has positive effects on student motivation since students respond positively to technology and are motivated by being able to use in every walk of life. Besides several studies reported that technology increased students' interest and motivation in language learning. (Liou & Peng, 2009; Kessler, 2009; McCarty, 2009; Pinkman, 2005; Román-Mendoza, 2009)

Another reason for being motivated by the technology is that most of the students are familiar with the use of technology. Prensky (2001) also expressed that being digital native makes the students respond well to technology-based activities regarding their familiarity with technology.

**5.2.2 Discussion of major challenges and limitations of the use of online English exams for the students.** In terms of drawbacks of online assessments, mostly stated problems were internet loss and computer-related problems. Most of the students stated experiencing problems such as internet loss and the anxiety that these kinds of technological problems caused. As it is stated by the Education Commission of the States (2010; Bridgeman, 2009; Rabinowitz & Brandt, 2001), computer related problems are more difficult to resolve than broken pencils. There is the potential that an entire testing session, along with all students' responses, could be lost.

Seeing remaining time on the computer screen is being seen as a demotivating tool for the majority of students, while only 28% students thought that seeing remaining time is good in terms of time management. Students feel nervous thinking that the time may not be enough to finish the whole exam even though the remaining time is shown for both the section and the total remaining time.

While 54% of students stated that they are stressed while having online exams, 48% of them expressed that they are stressed while having paper-based exams. As the statistics show, there is not a drastic difference between these two types of exam related anxiety level.

### **5.3 Discussion of positive perceptions of teachers towards the use of online English assessments**

The data obtained from the surveys and interviews revealed that English instructors working at private schools in Turkey hold predominantly positive perceptions on the integration and implementation of online assessment as assessment tools.

It can be seen that the mostly stated advantage of online assessment for teachers is that online exams save time since they facilitate the assessment of more students in less time and also enable the students to improve their understanding learning their mistakes thanks to the feedback provided as Jamil, Tariq and Shami (2012) found in their study. The teachers in the present study also indicated online exams' being environment friendly, objective, practical, taking less time to grade and implement. Because of these kinds of features, the majority of the teachers in this study prefer giving online exams.

Almost all of the teachers agreed that the online exams are time saving since there is no need to spend time on preparing and grading the exams. They are practical especially during the application and evaluation stage since they do not require a lot of preparations and grading is done through the computer systems. Moreover, most of the teachers think that these exams are efficient and they reduce the risk of cheating. In their study, Koppel and Hollister (n.d.) also found out that faculty was more positive towards CBA in terms of spending less time on writing exam and reducing grading time with a simple method of record keeping of grades.

Most of the teachers would prefer to use online assessment for listening skill. While having online exams, the students are listening to various sources from different voices. So that online assessments are providing the students with authentic materials and preparing them to the real world.

Besides, as Harmer (2007) underlines to provide maximum learning opportunities for the students in classes, it is necessary to integrate four skills. During online English exams the students are supposed to answer the listening questions on the computer screen which allows the listening skill to be integrated with reading and writing comprehension. Also, Nunan (1989) expressed that all the skills should be considered conjointly since they complete each other. To sum up, as the communicative language requires all of the skills to be improved and it is considered to be a whole, teaching of the language and assessing the language should be integral as well.

With the last question of the survey, the teachers were asked to evaluate the given features about both online and paper-based exams. While reliability, practicality and positive washback are found to be the same for both type of the exams, the online exams are perceived to be better in terms of validity and more authentic. Validity is one of the most important criteria for the quality of an assessment.

“Validity in general refers to the appropriateness of a given test or it’s component parts as a measure of what it is purported to measure” (Henning, 1987, p. 91).

On a test with high validity the items will be closely linked to the test's intended focus which will bring better understanding of the questions with itself. Since the online exams are linked to the students’ knowledge, and they evaluate the skills being taught in harmony, they are seen more appropriate by English teachers.

It is an undeniable truth that through these online English exams students are getting more familiar with the online exams that they may have in future such as TOEFL, IELTS and so on. Thus, they are being prepared to perform their potentials when they graduate. Since the students are performing a real-life like task, with the writing, reading, vocabulary and listening parts in these online exams, in addition to fulfilling authentic tasks, these exams are found to be more valid and authentic.

Validity in general refers to the properness of a test or any of its constituent parts as a measure of what it is supposed to measure ( Brown, 2004) In short, it refers to the accuracy of an assessment. The Online English assessments show that they have the all three types of validity (Bachman, 1990) (content, criterion and construct) since their content match with the instructional objectives, the scores of the exams are in agreement with the real performances of the students and they correspond to the variables. The students are assessed based on what they know, they also assess themselves through the feedback reports, and they know what to study more. Besides, in terms of language competency, online exams, assess all of the four skills, which are necessary need for effective communication.

**5.3.1 Discussion of major challenges and limitations of the use of online English exams for the teachers.** Regarding the limitations, both the students and teachers stated the internet and computer based problems as the most common problem. Thinking about this difficulty, both the students and the teachers preferred not to use online exams in all exams in future due to the technological problems mostly, even though both the teachers and the students liked most of the features of online exams.

As a conclusion, online English assessments were found beneficial by both students and teachers because of their being time saving, environment friendly, providing validity, being motivating and fun and giving a useful feedback report. The feedback reports are sent from Pearson one week after the exams finished. The reports are being sent to teachers first and then the teachers may send them as e-mail attachments to the parents, or may be given to the parents during the parents meetings to check it with the students. When the students get the feedback reports, they may see their mistakes. Most of the students expressed that they are happy to see their mistakes since they learn which subject they need to study more. However, the problems with the internet connection and the stress about this possibility should

be compensated with careful planning and taking precautions in advance such as charging the laptops and ensuring high speed quality internet connection. Since the exams are being taken in the computer laboratory or library, sometimes the plugs may not be enough for all of the computers. Not to cause such kind of problem, all the laptops should be checked if they are charged, or if there is enough plug to charge them if needed.

#### **5.4 Pedagogical Implications**

Findings of the study provide some implications for the use of online assessments as educational tools. Awareness on the positive perceptions as well as limitations of the implementation of online assessments may help teachers design their lessons accordingly.

Taking the limitations of the study into consideration, it is possible to suggest the following implications for the teachers who want to use online English assessments:

1. The timer may be seen when the students click on it.
2. The teacher should have technological proficiency. They should be taught the preface of the Online Assessment system and they should be informed about the possible problems and how to resolve them.
3. Before the application procedure starts, the teacher should clearly explain the steps of the exam so that the students may know how to go on the exam and do not lose any time thinking about how to do that.
4. In order to avoid stress, the teacher may use online quizzes before the online exams (for example vocabulary quiz).
5. The teacher should get feedback from the students at certain intervals about the online exams to see if there are any other problems than technological problems to be fixed.
6. The teacher should avoid using online exams which require high technology skills as all the students may not be familiar with these features. It should be kept in mind that the aim of the exam is to assess learners' language skills not the technology skills.



## **5.5 Conclusion**

The main aim of this study was to have a better understanding of English instructors' and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students' perceptions on the online English assessments. Therefore, the study specifically focused on both teacher and student perceptions towards the use of online English assessments. The findings obtained, demonstrated that both teachers and students have positive perceptions on the integration of online English assessments though, the teachers and students mostly stated the technological and computer related problems as the disadvantages of the online English exams.

It can be inferred that both teachers and students are pleased to use online English assessments for various reasons.

## **5.6 Recommendations for further research**

This study has several recommendations for further research. First of all, the present study took place in a private school. Besides 89 participants participated in the survey. A replication of this study with larger number of participants may give more concrete and generalizable results.

Secondly, the researcher could observe classrooms while having online exams and could give further detailed insight.

As there is scarcity of research both on the perceptions of EFL instructors and students on the use of online English assessments as educational assessment in Turkey, similar research or a replication with a greater number may contribute to this field substantially.

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## APPENDICES

### **A Case Study on Teacher and Student Perceptions towards the Online English Exams**

I am conducting a survey to investigate teacher perceptions and student perceptions towards online English exams. It would be appreciated if you would participate in this process by completing papers attached, and giving them back to me. Please **be as honest as possible** in completing the survey. When completed I intend to publish related results for my thesis for master degree. If you would like to talk about the aspects of the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

You do not need to write your name, and no individuals will be identified or traced from this, i.e. confidentiality and anonymity are assured.

I very much hope that you would like participate in this study.

Thank you.

Servet Çörekçioğlu

Master-degree Student

Yrd. Doç. Dr. *Aylin Tekiner Tolu*

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## SURVEY for STUDENTS

1. What do you think about the online English assessments in our school? Discuss with reasons.

2. Do you think that the feedback reports are useful for you? Why so?

3. Online English exams make me feel stressed

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	A Agree	S Strongly agree

4. Paper-based exams make me feel stressed

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	A Agree	S Strongly agree

5. How does it affect you to see the remaining time during the exam? Why so?

6. Have you experienced any kind of difficulty during online English exams (internet problem etc.)?



7. I think online English exams are useful

1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	A Agree	S Strongly agree

8. Why do you think so for the 7<sup>th</sup> question?

9. Would you like to have online assessments in all your lessons?

YES	NO

10. Why do you think so for the 9<sup>th</sup> question?

11. Do you want to write an additional comment about online exams?

## **SURVEY for TEACHERS**

- 1) Do you prefer giving online exams? Please discuss.
  
- 2) What are the advantages and disadvantages of online assessments?
  
- 3) Do you observe any difference between paper-based exams and online exams being used at this school? Please consider both methodology and student performance and perceptions.
  
- 4) Do you think online exams are being time consuming or time saving? Why?
  
- 5) What do you think about the practicality of online assessment?
  
- 6) What do you think about the efficiency of online English assessment?
  
- 7) What kind of problems do you experience while giving online assessment?
  
- 8) Would you like to use the online assessment for all of the exams? Why/why not?

9) For which language skills would you prefer using online assessment?

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Not good
Validity	Online				
	Paper-based				
Reliability	Online				
	Paper-based				
Practicality	Online				
	Paper-based				
Authenticity	Online				
	Paper-based				
*Positive wash back	Online				
	Paper-based				

10) Please rate online assessment and paper-based assessment in terms of these following criteria.

11) Is there anything you want to add?

\*Washback is the test impact on the teaching and learning processes. When washback is positive, it enhances intrinsic motivation, interlanguage, self-confidence and strategic investment.

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