

**A LANGUAGE FOCUSED NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR EFL SPEAKING IN
PREPARATORY PROGRAMS: A CASE IN TURKEY**



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**A LANGUAGE FOCUSED NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR EFL SPEAKING IN
PREPARATORY PROGRAMS: A CASE IN TURKEY**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
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BY

Seval DOĞAN

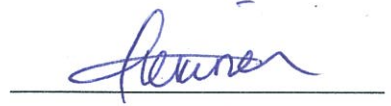
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Approval of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences


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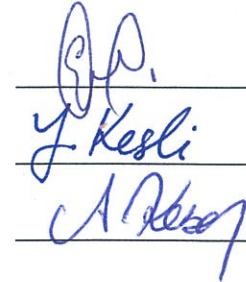
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Seval Dođan', written in a cursive style.

ABSTRACT

A LANGUAGE FOCUSED NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR EFL SPEAKING IN PREPARATORY PROGRAMS: A CASE IN TURKEY

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the speaking needs of the Turkish EFL learners of pre-intermediate level enrolled in a language preparatory program at a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Istanbul, Turkey. Specifically, the study attempts to identify the speaking needs of the participating students, find out whether the obtained needs are met in the existing program or not and lastly, investigate the perceptions of the participants about the importance of speaking and students' speaking performance. The participants in this study were 80 students, 17 instructors and 2 coordinators of the program. The data were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively from needs analysis questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that both the students and academic staff attached great importance to almost all speaking skills and subskills. However, there were remarkable differences and similarities between their perceptions regarding the speaking performance of the participating students. Based on the findings, recommendations to improve the existing speaking syllabus are provided.

Keywords: Needs Analysis, Speaking Skill, Speaking Performance, English Preparatory Program, EFL

ÖZ

YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETEN HAZIRLIK PROGRAMLARINDA DİL ODAKLI KONUŞMA İHTİYAÇ ANALİZİ: TÜRKİYE’ DE BİR DURUM

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, İstanbul, Türkiye’deki bir vakıf (kar amacı gütmeyen, özel) üniversitesinin dil hazırlık programında yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen orta alt seviyedeki Türk öğrencilerin konuşma ihtiyaçlarını araştırmaktır. Bu çalışma, öğrencilerin konuşma ihtiyaçlarını belirlemeyi, ihtiyaçların mevcut programda karşılanıp karşılanmadığını ortaya çıkarmayı ve konuşmanın önemine ve öğrencilerin konuşma performansına dair algıları belirtmeyi hedeflemektedir. Katılımcıları, orta alt seviyedeki 80 öğrenci, 17 öğretim üyesi ve 2 koordinatör oluşturmaktadır. Nicel ve nitel araştırma modeli içeren bu çalışmada veriler; ihtiyaç analizi anketleri, sınıf gözlemleri ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerle toplanmıştır. Bulgular, katılımcıların neredeyse tüm konuşma ve alt becerilerine büyük önem verdiğini ortaya koymaktadır; ancak öğrenciler ile akademik personelin algıları arasında öğrencilerin konuşma performansı bakımından belirgin farklılıklar ve benzerlikler belirlenmiştir. Sonuçlara göre, mevcut programının geliştirilmesine yönelik öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İhtiyaç Analizi, Konuşma Becerisi, Konuşma Performansı, İngilizce Hazırlık Programı, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Eğitimi



To My Beloved Family

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter presents the background information of this research study. The chapter starts with the theoretical background of the importance of language learning and teaching, and is followed by the importance of four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Then speaking skill is focused on. Statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study are included in the chapter. Finally, the key terms concerning this study are defined.

1.1 An Overview on English Education and Language Preparatory Programs in Turkey

The world is becoming globalized gradually and people of this era have started to feel the need to interact with other people all over the world through the universal language, English, besides their mother tongue. That's why English has become a requirement not only for communication purposes but also for educational goals. In English education, engaging learners in an interactive language learning process to be able to communicate through the universal language requires educational language programs at institutions in which various opportunities in terms of effective approaches and practices in English education are offered to learners.

In the majority of universities in Turkey, particularly in almost all private (non-profit) universities, English is the medium of instruction. Before students start university, they have to pass a nationwide University Entrance Exam. After they are placed at different universities according to their entrance exam scores, they are required to take a language proficiency exam. If needed, the students can attend a year long supplementary program to increase their proficiency in the target language (TL). At the beginning of each academic year, both undergraduate and graduate students are admitted to their departments on condition that they successfully pass an English language proficiency test. The test is designed to assess a student's ability to adequately use English for academic purposes. Students unable to pass the test receive English language training at onsite preparatory schools until they reach the

required level of proficiency. Mostly, the levels are based on the Common European Framework (CEFR), which aims to provide transparency in language acquisition, in the application of language, and in the language competency of students in Europe. According to this framework, the students are placed in six different levels according to their language proficiency; A1 (breakthrough or beginner), A2 (way stage or elementary), B1 (threshold or intermediate), B2 (vantage or upper intermediate), C1 (effective Operational Proficiency or advanced), and C2 (mastery or proficiency) levels.

Based on this framework, English language programs in Turkey are designed to meet the basic needs of students who start their undergraduate programs after the preparatory program in Turkey. Regarding the purposes of these programs which prepare students for their future departmental courses in various disciplines by assisting them in improving the language skills and strategies effectively, the recognition of their language needs should be prioritized in such programs. The ultimate goal in these preparatory programs is to help students to follow their departmental courses in English in the following year with an adequate proficiency level and improve their level of English to be able to study their majors and be competent in their fields of study. The syllabi are developed and implemented in such a way that all students can achieve the necessary scores on their final language tests by the end of the year. Therefore, the successful completion of the program greatly depends on a student's regular attendance, timely submission of homework and the use of provided resources.

As one of the major purposes of English language preparatory programs is to prepare students for their future departmental courses in various disciplines by assisting them in improving their language skills and strategies effectively, recognition of their language needs should be prioritized in such programs.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

In today's world, there are various technological developments which influence language learning and communication. Children acquire a language in the context of their own culture. Therefore, they first start to communicate through their mother tongue. However, mother tongue is not enough for communication due to the

advances in technology and the globalizing world. That's why a second language which is nowadays the universal language, English, has become a vital need.

As Crystal (2000) stated, it is predicted that there are 1.5 billion speakers of English around the world. Namely, one-fourth of the world's population interact with one another through English, which is viewed as a world-wide language and has increased its importance in all social areas of the world. Regarding the increasing needs to learn this global language, English has become paramount in education. Not all learners find an opportunity to be exposed to this language though. Thus, these learners are generally involved in one-year language preparatory programs that aim to have learners with an adequate proficiency level at the end of the program in order to be able to help the learners follow their undergraduate studies effectively. In these preparatory programs, learners are placed at different levels ranging from beginner to upper-intermediate. The levels of learners are determined by assessing them in terms of four skills of reading, listening, speaking, and writing, which ends up with significant results for both learners and the success of the program. As observed in the literature, the four skills of reading, listening, writing and speaking exist in language learning, as supported by Turk (2009), who indicated that ELT is based on four basic skills by the methodologists. These are divided into two groups as the productive and receptive skills. The productive skills are writing and speaking, and the receptive skills are reading and listening. Obviously, these four skills play a crucial role in the language learning and teaching process since learners are supposed to succeed in these four skills when they communicate in the target language.

According to Ozkanal and Hakan (2010), foreign language teaching might be described as the process where a language with its own structures, rules and concepts that are different to the mother tongue is aimed to be taught. In an attempt to teach the features of a language, the four skills are focused upon. Performance of the four skills in terms of learning and teaching of a language has been a major focus with the goal of communication; however, of listening, speaking, writing, and reading, speaking has always been viewed by the learners as the most difficult skill even though it is the basis of a language (Oradee, 2012) and there are numerous reasons for learners to fall behind the level desired by teachers and the curriculum. According to Oradee (2012), there are many reasons for learners to perceive speaking as the most difficult skill and they are mainly connected to learners being deprived of enough exposure to the target language and its culture. Learners also

have difficulty in speaking in terms of their own perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards speaking skills. As well as competence, these motives play a crucial role in their needs and success in speaking a foreign language. Turk (2009) stated that many learners believe that speaking a language is equal to knowing a language. This perception is supported by Nunan (1991) who contended that success is measured in terms of carrying out a conversation in the target language. It is also claimed by Lawtie (2004) that if students are not taught how to speak or do not obtain a chance to speak in the language classroom, they might lose their motivation and interest in learning. To raise interest and encourage learners in speaking to communicate well, activities appropriate to students' levels may be chosen to make learning more fun, create curiosity and provide a better dynamic atmosphere in the class.

According to Turk (2009), the majority of class time is spent on reading and writing practice and speaking and listening skills are almost ignored. If our aim of a language course is to guide our students to communicate in English, then we should teach and practise speaking skills in the classroom. Some methods and techniques used in teaching EFL pay attention to only some of these skills and ignore the rest instead of applying a holistic approach. Although there have been some modern methods like CLT and TBL which aim to build all four skills together, the result is not sufficient to develop speaking skills because of a lack of course materials and books, or the philosophy of these methods not being understood by language teachers, or for some reasons such as learner necessities. Also, in the traditional methods of teaching language, whereas writing and reading skills were heavily focused on, speaking skills were neglected considerably. An old method called The Grammar-Translation method might be a good example of this. As Richard & Rodgers (2001) claimed, other skills of language were given much more attention despite the fact that speaking skill is highly significant for language learners in terms of communication. Though many people take foreign language courses in all stages of their education lives today, a common problem shared by many people is the inability to speak the foreign language being learnt. This is supported by Vijaya and Swamy (2016) who say that despite the fact that speaking English is regarded as one of the most important skills, a lot of students face difficulty in speaking this language. This can hinder their performance in fulfilling the basic requirements of successful communication during interviews.

Furthermore, assessment of speaking skill is not viewed as an easy concept. The assessment of speaking is seen as one of the most challenging, highly demanding tasks in the English language teaching methodology. As a result, it is still hard for teachers not only to find the most favoured way for eliciting learners' speaking but also to assess their oral proficiency fairly (Lozovska-Gunes, 2010).

Regarding these viewpoints, both students' communication in a foreign language and teachers' evaluation might be viewed as challenging, but crucial in language learning. These comments may be nourished by Senthamarai and Chandran (2016) stating that the emergence of globalization has paved a new way in the field of English with a particular focus on communication skills, especially in developing countries. That's why speaking skills are viewed not only as skills but also as fundamental needs in language learning. Regarding the ultimate goal of communication in language learning, speaking skills set the main ground while learning the target language. Moreover, among these four skills, speaking skill is regarded as the most important skill because people contending to know a language have an intention to claim that they are able to speak the language (Ur, 2000). Besides this, many language learners prioritize speaking skill as they consider that they can be viewed as speakers of the language if they succeed in the speaking skill. Most language learners believe that they will find jobs in their future careers when they focus on mastering the speaking skill which is a priority for many second and foreign language learners (Saeed, K. M., Khaksari, M., Eng, L. S., & Ghani, A. M. A., 2016). Consequently, language learners usually assess their achievement in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their language course on the basis of how well they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency (Richards, 2005).

From these perspectives, it can be implied that there might be different purposes and reasons for learners to learn the target language. Regarding the purposes, learners have different kinds of needs based on these purposes and learning processes. Rahman (2012) indicated that English language needs analysis can determine the language needs of students in a specific field. Therefore, a needs analysis is utilized to reveal the needs of learners. Ekici (2003) indicated that in order to fulfill the aim of needs assessment, two steps need to be followed. Applied to a language learning context, they may be defined as the process of determining the

needs for which a learner requires a language and arranging the needs according to learners' priorities.

When the needs of learners are considered, Long (2005) contended that each language teaching course should be designed through needs analysis and every language course should be considered a course with specific purposes. Thanks to needs analysis, ultimate goals for language courses and programs can be achieved. With the help of needs analysis, the needs of students as to the four fundamental skills can be determined.

In the light of these observations, the present study aims to investigate the speaking needs of the Turkish EFL learners of pre-intermediate level enrolled in a language preparatory program at a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Istanbul, Turkey. Specifically, the study attempts to identify the speaking needs of the participating students, and find out whether the obtained needs are met in the existing program or not. According to the obtained findings, a speaking syllabus will be designed for the following academic year so as to help language learners and instructors benefit from the awareness of these needs, to find solutions, and to meet the learners' target needs of the existing preparatory program.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

It is a well-known fact that most learners ranging from beginner to advanced levels have difficulty with speaking English. As English has the status of foreign language in Turkey, learners have a tendency to speak their native language, which is generally Turkish, and most of them avoid developing oral fluency and practising in English. According to Saeed et al. (2016), the lack of interaction or use of the language will negatively affect language learners in their communications. Thus, language learners should be assisted to participate in the acute interaction that takes place in the classroom so that they can be fluent in spoken language (Mackey, 2007; Zucker, 2005)

Specifically, many learners today experience difficulty with speaking English for reasons such as not having enough competence, having biased beliefs and attitudes towards the new language, lack of confidence, not getting enough opportunities to develop oral fluency etc. Regarding these difficulties, as Nunan (1991) mentioned, when learners get engaged in interactive communications,

learning a second or foreign language might be facilitated. Obviously, revealing the needs of learners as to their own conditions is beneficial in their speaking process.

Regarding learners' needs, differences between beginner and advanced levels are apparent. It can be claimed that every language level has its own needs. Different types of learners have different language needs and what they are taught should be restricted to what they need. These needs are fairly specific; they can be identified and they should determine the content of any course (Richards, 2001, p.32-33). Learners' needs can be met as long as they are identified and specified. In order to meet the needs of learners, various facilitators might play a crucial role in this process such as carrying out needs analysis, setting clear objectives for each level and preparing interactive activities for speaking classes.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

In foreign language education, there have been various studies centering upon learners' needs and needs analysis. The present study aims to investigate the speaking needs of the Turkish EFL learners of pre-intermediate level enrolled in a language preparatory program at a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Istanbul, Turkey. Specifically, the study attempts to identify the speaking needs of the participating students, find out whether the obtained needs are met in the existing program or not and lastly, investigate the perceptions of the participants about the importance of speaking and students' speaking performance. To achieve this, the questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with the students, instructors teaching pre-intermediate level learners, level coordinator and academic coordinator of the program are included in the study. According to the obtained findings, a speaking syllabus will be designed for the following academic year so as to help language learners and instructors benefit from the awareness of these needs to find solutions and meet the learners' speaking needs.

1.5 Research Questions

Regarding the discussion above, the following research questions are addressed in this study:

1. How do the pre-intermediate, B1 level Turkish EFL learners perceive the importance of the speaking subskills and their performance in speaking in the preparatory classes?
 - 1.1 Are there any differences between the perceptions of B1 level Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators regarding the importance of the speaking subskills?
2. How do the instructors teaching B1 level learners, level and academic coordinators perceive the importance of the speaking subskills and students' performance in speaking in the preparatory classes?
 - 2.1 Are there any differences between the perceptions of B1 level Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators regarding the student performance of the speaking subskills?
3. What recommendations can be made for the improvement of the existing speaking syllabus in the preparatory program?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Speaking skills are crucial in terms of communication among four main skills. Thus, it is usually considered that knowing a language is the ability to speak it communicatively. While learning a foreign language, many students experience difficulty with speaking. Also, the most common problem in teaching English in Turkey is the inability of students to speak despite the fact that they are usually competent in English grammar (Turk, 2009). However, among four main skills including reading and listening (receptive), writing and speaking (productive), vital importance is attached to speaking especially by students as communicating well in English is seen as a sign of having a good proficiency level in this language. Due to the fact that many students have specific needs in terms of speaking, revealing the needs and meeting them appropriately is crucial to help learners be competent and develop oral fluency in speaking.

In most English preparatory programs, teachers might not find enough time to focus on all skills in classrooms because of pacing and time restrictions. Speaking is

generally the first skill to be ignored if a teacher falls behind the flow. The administrators and instructors should take this case into consideration as speaking can only be developed by a high amount of exposure to communication in the target language and lots of interactive practices. Therefore, neglecting speaking practice because of various motives such as pacing and time restrictions might cause problems in developing students' communication skills. Besides these, the students of each level from beginner to the advanced obviously have different personal attitudes, beliefs and needs, so assisting students with their own needs and creating a positive attitude towards speaking are also significant factors to help students become more successful in speaking.

Taking the importance of speaking into consideration, this study indicates the importance of speaking needs of pre-intermediate level students and emphasizes that students can be competent in speaking and display development in speaking English only if their needs are met. Participating learners consisted of pre-intermediate level students who had the need to improve their speaking skill most when compared to other levels, since this level is regarded as the level in which students first start developing oral production by moving from answering simple and direct questions to longer and meaningful conversations. That's why this level is more critical than other levels in terms of developing learners' speaking skills by meeting their needs. Learners from pre-intermediate level can start, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversations on topics that are familiar or of personal interest, by explaining personal opinions and giving reasons. In terms of participants, this study can highlight the importance of learners' speaking needs so that they can develop their speaking skills at this critical stage. Thus, it is important to reveal the speaking needs of the Turkish EFL learners and find out whether the obtained needs are met in the existing program or not. Even though there have been many studies based on learners' needs, learners of pre-intermediate level have not been examined in terms of their speaking needs, the documents, syllabi, activities etc. utilized in an English language preparatory program so as to suggest a beneficial syllabus for the following year.

According to the findings of this study, suggestions will be provided for the existing B1 speaking syllabus to be redesigned regarding the importance and performance of students' in the speaking classes, based on the perceptions of the stakeholders engaged. In addition, the results of the needs analysis will have a great

value for preparatory program pre-intermediate, B1 level students because success in speaking lessons can be achieved. Furthermore, more developed syllabi, documents, tasks and activities might be prepared for the speaking lessons based on the obtained data. The findings will also be a guide for the instructors, level coordinators and administrators of the preparatory programs to prepare level appropriate speaking tasks and materials to be included in the existing syllabus. As a result, this study is supposed to shed light on further studies aiming to investigate speaking needs of students at different proficiency levels in language preparatory programs.

1.7 Definitions

CEFR: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which is a guideline describing success of foreign language learners across Europe (Little, 2005).

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching is a broad approach to teaching that resulted from a focus on communication as the organizing principle for teaching rather than a focus on mastery of the grammatical system of the language (Richards, 2001).

EFL: Refers to English as a Foreign Language (Mayo & Lecumberri, 2003).

ELT: Refers to English Language Teaching (Harmer, 2007).

ESL: Refers to English as a Second Language (Zhang & Gao, 2014).

Needs: Needs are what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation and how learners might best master the language during the learning period (West, 1994).

Needs Analysis: Needs analysis (also called needs assessment) is defined as “the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation” (Brown, 1995, p. 36).

Learning Needs: Refers to to what the learner needs to do in order to learn. They show how the learner learns the language items. It refers to the skills that he or she uses (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Speaking Skills: “They are productive skills that require students/learners to produce words or language or to express ideas orally. They are used to communicate between one to another by speech or saying” (Socheath, 2010, p. 62).

Syllabus: The term “syllabus” is used to refer to what actually happens at the classroom level as teachers and learners apply a given curriculum to their own situation (Nunan, 1988).

Syllabus Design: Syllabus design is seen as being concerned essentially with the selection and grading of content of the syllabus (Nunan, 1988).

Target Needs: Target needs refer to what the learner needs to do in the target situation (work domain) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

TL: Target Language (Smith, 1981).

TBL: Task-based Learning (Ellis, 2003).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the role of English in foreign language education, integrated four language skills approach and the importance of speaking skills. Program design and evaluation in foreign language education and needs analysis in foreign language education are also discussed in the chapter. Finally, related studies on analysis in foreign language education are reviewed.

2.2 The Role of English in Foreign Language Education

Technological changes have effects on cultures, and cultural changes influence communication among people. That's why people of this era feel the need to learn another language while interacting with one another. As Braine (2005) indicated, foreign languages, especially English, are gaining more importance as the world's most common language.

English is of vital importance for a variety of motives for people all over the world. The reasons, which vary from economics and politics to education, mostly depend on whether the country is classified as native speaking or non-native speaking. The reasons are categorized into three circles by the American linguist Braj Kachru (1988). In the inner circle, English is regarded as the primary language of the country because it is in the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States, Canada, Ireland, or New Zealand. In the second circle, which is also called the outer or extended circle, English plays an important part as a Second Language (ESL). It covers countries such as India, Singapore, Malawi, and fifty other territories. The expanding or extending circle includes countries like China, Japan, Greece, Poland and Turkey where English is viewed as the most significant foreign language. Even though the number of English users is hard to determine, it is apparent that the number of people who are familiar with the language today is increasing rapidly. Nowadays, as mentioned by McKay (2002), it can be claimed that the biggest

potential for the ongoing spread of English is observed in countries where English is considered and taught as a Foreign Language (EFL), that is, in the expanding circle.

Regarding the previous assumptions, English spreads so fast in the world as an international language since it provides wider communication among individuals and countries. This can be supported by McKay (2002) indicating that “as an international language, English is used both in a global sense for international communication between countries and in a local sense as a language of wider communication within multilingual societies” (p.12). Regarding these assumptions, it can be said that people interact with one another and share ideas globally in terms of international commerce, historical factors etc. through the agency of English in today’s world. Besides interaction in English in terms of these factors and communication, English is very common to convey information and is taught as a foreign language in many non-native speaking countries.

Many illustrations might be provided all around the world as to the use of English. To exemplify, as it is stated by Crystal (2003), 85 percent of biology and physics papers, 73 percent of medical papers and over 65 per cent of mathematics and chemistry papers were published in English in 1980. Regarding the importance of English use in the world, teaching English as a second (ESL) and foreign language (EFL) has taken an important role in education. As claimed by Flowerdew and Peacock (2001), English is considered the most widely used language to learn as a second or foreign language. EFL, which is described by Harmer (2007) as a setting where learners learn English in their own countries and utilize it with native speakers in a global context, has become essential in education. In addition, the international status of English has influenced English Language Teaching (ELT) due to its importance in politics, commerce, tourism and media etc.

Especially in non-native speaking countries, the use of English is a necessity in most jobs. With regard to this, English is integrated into education in these countries. In line with these assumptions, Mede and Uygun (2014) emphasized that English has become lingua franca which is an agent of communication among people speaking different languages. Thus, because of all motives mentioned above, undeniably, English constitutes one of the main ways of communication among people all over the world.

In addition to the remarkable status of English in second and foreign language education in the world, English is a highly valuable and prioritized language in

foreign language education in Turkey. Palfreyman (2005) as well as Atay and Kurt (2006) stated that as Turkey is a country located between Europe and Middle East geographically, culturally and strategically, seeking integration into the European Union and possessing a good command of English have become an invaluable asset for its citizens. Therefore, there has been an increasing demand in English language learning and teaching. As a government driven policy since 1950s, English has reached its peak after 1980 in Turkey (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998; Atay and Ece, 2009). In most government and private schools in Turkey, English is now the primary foreign language taught.

In 1997, legislation that made English teaching mandatory in Turkish institutions beginning from 4th grade on was introduced. Since then, the number of educational institutions providing teacher training courses in English has increased to meet the needs of state and private schools in Turkey. According to Aslan (2016),

training and development in the development of a country is known to have a significant place in reality. Therefore, countries have begun to draw special attention to education to ensure continuity and to keep up with the progress of scientific and technological developments in the world, which can only be achieved by raising the quality of education. This depends on practical, sustainable and qualified training programs within the education system of each country. Accordingly, the basic requirements of training program should be appropriate for the needs and interests of students, teachers and schools (p.34).

Regarding the aforementioned assumptions, English possesses a crucial role in training programs and foreign language education as well as commercial and political fields all around the world. Therefore, especially in non-native speaking countries like Turkey, English has been regarded as a must in foreign language education.

2.3 Integrated Four Skills Approach

English as an international language is not only a school subject but also a skill requiring substantial content knowledge. Therefore, as mentioned by Chen, Chang

and Chang (2016), in an attempt to reach the goal of successful communication through English, the understanding of the needs of the target situation is vital. Thanks to the four skills, learners can achieve their goals as long as their needs are met. These skills are described as receptive (reading and listening) and productive (speaking and writing) skills. Receptive skills are those that students use to get involved in a learning process when they are exposed to language without being expected to produce it. In contrast, learners put what they have learnt into practice with the help of productive skills.

Language learning is based on the four skills and, as claimed by Arens and Jansen (2015), language performance also includes the four skills which have been conceptualized as different language systems (Berninger, 2000) referring to different parts of the body (ear, mouth, eye, and hand), producing different outputs, showing differential developmental trajectories, and depending on different inputs. Every learner has different learning styles. Some of them are auditory learners who learn best by listening to others. They usually do well in a "traditional" classroom where a more teacher-centered approach is used. In these classrooms, teachers are more active while learners listen to them. Audio tapes, music, repetition, discussions, guest speakers etc. might be beneficial for auditory learners. Some others are kinesthetic learners who learn best by doing. They like to express themselves physically. Visual learners are the ones who process, store and draw back information from the memory. These kinds of learners' learning process can be facilitated by pictures, mind mapping, colour codes, mental imaginary etc. Each classroom includes these auditory, kinesthetic and visual learners. In addition, each learner has different needs according to their learning styles and personal differences. That's why meeting these learners' needs are essential to guide students to the ultimate goal of effective communication in the target language, English.

Regarding the different learning styles and various needs of learners in language learning process, integration of the four skills is required to achieve the goal mentioned in the target language. The philosophy of integrated-skills instruction is based on the concept that languages that are oral, written and in natural, day-to-day experience are not isolated from one another and kept separate (Su, 2007). This approach is consistent with communicative language teaching (CLT) and whole language approach because these emphasize meaningful and authentic language use and connect oral and written language development. As indicated by Freeman

(2000), Savignon (1991), and Oxford, Lavine and Crookall (1989), the principles of CLT center upon the significance of using a language to communicate in order to learn it. Hymes (1971) emphasizes, “being able to communicate requires more than linguistic competence; it requires communicative competence” (Freeman, 2000, p. 121). That’s why to assist learners to be able to communicate in the target language, they are involved in a communicative learning process in classrooms through the four skills. However, not all educational institutions teach receptive and productive skills together. In contrast, they are taught separately, but teaching the skills separately has significant shortcomings, which can be supported by Zhang and Gao (2014) who indicated that due to the notable shortcomings of teaching listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills separately, English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) researchers and practitioners regularly explore techniques to integrate the four skills into lesson plans. For instance, Zhang (2009) discusses four activities that integrate the teaching of reading and speaking, focusing on how reading enhances learners’ speaking ability.

In an attempt to enable learners to be effective communicators in the target language, integrating four skills is crucial in terms of involving learners in a more interactive process in which they learn, store and produce. Integrating two or more skills in one lesson can aid learners in being competent and effective communicators in the target language because of the fact that productive and receptive skills reinforce and complete one another. Furthermore, integration of the skills can assist learners to be familiar with the content of internationally accepted standardized exams. For instance, Arens and Jansen (2015) indicated that the two most popular language assessment tests in English—the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)—include these four skills (e.g., Sawaki, Stricker, & Oranje, 2008). Moreover, both the framework for foreign language testing in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) established in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015) and the German national educational standards for German and the foreign languages of English and French refer to these four skills (Köller, Knigge, & Tesch, 2010; Rupp et al., 2008).

Consequently, the four primary skills are integrated into lessons so that learners can communicate effectively in English as language is regarded as a tool for

communication and so that the language learning process can be facilitated and enhanced.

2.3.1 Receptive skills. Listening and reading skills are categorized under “receptive skills”. Learners are not active in terms of production at this stage. However, messages and meaning are decoded by learners. That’s why learners get involved in lessons where brainstorming and getting the gist activities are encouraged, previous information is activated etc.

One of the receptive skills is listening and the purpose of teaching listening is to guide learners to learn the sounds, to interpret intonation and the phonetic variables in a meaningful context, and to comprehend the message of the speaker. Rivers (1981) centered upon the significance of listening skill by mentioning that adults spend 40 – 50% of their time listening to the materials. The other receptive skill is reading, and that is considered as a successful interaction of conceptual abilities, background knowledge and processing strategies (Celce, M. M., & McIntosh, L., 1991). According to Hedge (2000), learners are expected to be able to establish schematic knowledge and structure to assist interpreting the texts through a critical view. Besides listening, reading is also crucial as learners prefer to read for their study purposes, career and pleasure. Furthermore, effective reading texts help learners to become familiar with good models for writing, initiating discussing and enriching the vocabulary knowledge of learners.

With regard to these views, receptive skills are crucial in terms of learners’ foreign language learning process. However, learners’ needs are required to be taken into consideration while teaching receptive skills. That’s why a specific skill or skills as to learners’ needs and purposes can be focused on.

2.3.2 Productive skills. Speaking and writing are categorized as “productive skills”. With the help of receptive skills, learners are involved in a process where they produce oral and written language in the target language. Receptive skills and productive skills reinforce one another - students can listen to improve speaking, focus on reading texts to be able to write well with the help of new vocabulary, chunks etc. As mentioned in Demirbaş’ (2011) study, firstly, learners need listening, speaking, reading and then writing in the natural process of language acquisition. To

be able to produce speaking and writing, learners need to be supported by receptive skills before they are expected to produce oral and written work.

Regarding the four primary skills, undoubtedly, the productive skill of speaking, is of vital importance among these skills in terms of the ultimate goal of communication. According to Revathy and Ravindran (2016), when compared to other skills, it is important to acquire speaking skills. They also mentioned that a child should not depend only on text books to learn a language, they can acquire speaking skills by constant practice or by using the language intensively instead.

2.4 Speaking Skill

Since the emergence of globalization, communication skills have been focused on more, especially in developing countries. Oral communication is an undeniably important factor in foreign language education even though many students experience difficulty while developing their oral communication. Also, as to learners' own perceptions in terms of their own needs for communication, oral communication is regarded as essential (Chen, Chang and Chang, 2016). According to MacIntyre (2007) and Trent (2009), one of the four key and pivotal skills of language that should be developed is speaking as a productive skill since the ability to communicate effectively benefits second language (L2) learners by giving them self-confidence and improving performance in the rest of the language skills. Besides these, learners can develop their knowledge of the target language by interacting with others thanks to speaking as being able to speak is regarded as knowing a language because speech is the most basic means of communication (Türk, 2009).

Furthermore, the importance of mastering speaking skills in the target language arises when the language learners are aware of the impact it can have on the success of their future careers (Saeed et al., 2016). That's why learners possessing various speaking needs and purposes, such as for their career, for pleasure, for an oral exam etc. need to have their needs recognized and be involved in an interactive process as to their needs and purposes. Otherwise, producing speaking without taking learners' own needs into consideration might not be regarded as beneficial for learners in terms of their progress in speaking. In addition, according to Soureshjani (2013),

in this age of communication, speaking seems to be playing a major role, and the purpose of teaching the language has shifted from the mastery of structure to the ability to use the language for communicative purposes (p.167).

Thus, focusing on the significance and development of speaking skill among other skills has been prioritized recently because of the communicative and technological era. Therefore, it is required to recognize the speaking needs of learners, and the necessary environmental factors, activities, syllabuses etc. need to be designed according to learners' speaking needs and learning processes.

The significance attached to the speaking skill can be supported by notable studies. For example, a needs analysis of English for art and design students in Malaysia, found that 47 students and 10 staff members perceived English speaking skills as the most useful component of their art and design courses and their careers, followed by English listening, reading, and writing skills was conducted by Kaur and Khan (2010). Another study, carried out by Tseng (2014), found that learning speaking skills was particularly necessary in Asia (Choi, 2005; Pawanchik, Kamil, Hilmi, & Baten, 2011; West, 1994; Wu, 2012). Also, in New Zealand, non-native English speakers from China, Thailand, South Korea, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia learn reading and speaking before writing and listening instruction (Choi, 2005; Pawanchik, Kamil, Hilmi, & Baten, 2011).

Cunningham (1999) defines speaking as an interactive process in which receiving, producing and processing information is involved to build the meaning. The more learners are involved in interactive processes with the help of receptive skills, the more they are able to develop their speaking skill. As supported by Thornbury (2005) and Cunningham (1999), speaking is an active process consisting of utterances that depend on the previous utterance, which makes the speaking spontaneous, open – ended and evolving. When learners are encouraged and get involved in an interactive classroom atmosphere, they might have more opportunities to negotiate meaning and develop their communication skills by mutual practice. In contrast to the focus attached to accurate speaking which centered upon drills, memorization etc. in the past, communicative and fluent speech is crucial in today's world. This is agreed with by Burkart (1998) who indicated that in traditional classroom environment, speaking practice mostly depends on drills that involve asking and answering questions. The questions and answers are provided in the book

or by the teacher and the students are supposed to imitate a model. Whether the students can repeat a structured and predictable pattern is aimed to be revealed. However, in real communicative activities, the purpose is to accomplish a task, such as expressing an opinion about a subject or obtaining information.

Regarding these assumptions, learners today are encouraged to get involved in such tasks as the activities are related to their own lives. According to Riggenbach and Lazaraton (1991), communicative and fluent speaking activities depend on the learners' interpreting real knowledge and communicating it in real life contexts. As speaking cannot be considered as a separate skill from daily life situations, fostering it via communicative activities such as role plays, dialogues, discussions etc. in the classroom might contribute to learners' speaking improvement.

Linked with needs of learners in speaking such as asking and answering questions, expressing oneself, describing etc., a broad approach called "Communicative Language Teaching" (CLT) (Richards, 2001) has come into play with a focus on communication in teaching as an organizing principle instead of a focus on mastery of the grammatical system of the languages. Briefly, CLT emphasizes teaching language with the aim of fostering learners' communicative competence via authentic contexts. Taking real life contexts into consideration, learners have different aims and needs in speaking varying from expressing ideas, opinions etc. as mentioned in Demirbaş' (2011) study. To acquire the communication skills based on the ultimate goals in speaking, learners need to be motivated both in and out of class. Also, the setting in class is required to be arranged in a manner similar to real life settings to make learning more meaningful, and learners should be involved in freer meaningful practices rather than controlled ones (Riggenbach & Lazaraton, 1991).

With respect to the aforementioned assumptions above, both learners and teachers need to follow certain paths to enhance speaking skill. Firstly, the needs of the target group of learners need to be identified so that they can be met. Another factor influencing the development of learners' speaking process is the classroom atmosphere in which learners are involved in communicative tasks. Thus, there is a need to provide an atmosphere in which learners feel free to speak and interact with other learners. In addition to this, meaningful and communicative activities can serve as beneficial motives for reducing anxiety and speaking problems and might contribute to learners' confidence through socializing rather than being involved in

an individual work as long as these activities are prepared appropriately and provided to learners in stages such as controlled, guided and free practices. Finally, as observed in Talley and Hui-ling's (2014) study, a curriculum for teaching speaking skill should strive to expose learners to authentic, practical settings for speaking English and trigger active learner involvement in the lesson. In the study, it is also argued that English speaking curriculum should take cognizance of international and local cultures which should coexist mutually.

Moreover, various factors affecting learners speaking performance should be taken into consideration in an attempt to develop speaking skill. To exemplify, Tuan and Mai (2015) determined the factors that have an impact on students' speaking performance including motivation, confidence, anxiety, time, planning, amount of support, standard performance, listening ability and feedback during speaking activities. It is also argued in the study that in order to provide a successful conversation for learners, learners must have good listening skills to understand what is said to them. According to the CLT approach, it is required for learners to actively participate by sharing ideas and speaking freely, thus every speaker has the role of listener and speaker.

In line with the previous views, while enhancing learners' speaking skill, there are many factors affecting this process and learners of different levels have different needs. As pre-intermediate (B1) level is considered the level where learners first start to be involved in unprepared conversations instead of only responding to questions, they are required to have some certain abilities in speaking. For example, unprepared dialogues on familiar topics can be performed, and learners at this level can handle the challenges and living conditions in native speakers' countries. What's more, descriptive feelings, experiences and events can be linked via phrases into the speech. The sub skills of speaking such as reasoning, explaining, narrating a story or a book, and describing someone or something can be managed at this level (Demirbaş, 2011). Therefore, identifying the most important needs of learners of this level can help teachers to develop learners' speaking skill in order to meet their needs and set a ground for future purposeful speaking courses in terms of designing syllabuses and curriculum as to learners' speaking needs.

2.4.1 The nature of speaking competency. As one of the essential skills, speaking as a productive skill is reinforced with other receptive skills and comes into play when learners' speaking needs are met. While teaching speaking to learners, the sub skills of speaking including describing, expressing ideas, criticising etc. might be focused on based on learners' specific needs. Thus, the main areas of speaking knowledge need to be recognized clearly.

According to Burkart (1998), speaking involves three areas of knowledge:

- Mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary): Using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation
- Functions (transaction and interaction): Knowing when clarity of message is essential (transaction/information exchange) and when precise understanding is not required (interaction/relationship building)
- Social and cultural rules and norms (turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants): Understanding how to take into account the people communicating with one another, the circumstances they are involved in, the issues they discuss, the reasons why they interact with one another.

Regarding the areas of speaking competence, learners who are involved in communicative tasks in classrooms can be guided by pinpointing their missing parts of the speech. Finally, what is needed for learners specifically can be determined by knowing the areas of speaking knowledge.

2.4.2 Factors and perceptions affecting learners' speaking skill. In terms of learning and teaching, performance of the four skills with the goal of communication has been a major focus. Among listening, speaking, writing, and reading, speaking has always been seen by the learners as the most difficult skill even though it is the basis of a language (Oradee, 2012) and there are numerous reasons for learners to fall behind the desired level by teachers and the curriculum.

According to Oradee (2012), there are many reasons for learners to perceive speaking as the most difficult skill and they are mainly about learners' being deprived of enough exposure to the target language and its culture. Fear of making mistakes can also be another reason for the learners to have problems in speaking. In the study done by Oradee (2012), it is found that working in groups helps learners

have more self confidence in speaking, which can assist them to reduce the fear of making mistakes and it increases the motivation and the joy in learning the language.

In addition to this study, another needs analysis done with 141 Chinese college students by Chang (2013) indicated that even though students have a strong desire to be able to communicate through English, they are embarrassed of their heavy accents, and intonation mistakes and also since their speaking is not tested, they pay less attention to the production of the language.

In another study done by Toomnan and Intaraprasert (2015) about the attitudes towards speaking in Thailand by 949 Thai university students studying English, it is found out that learners with positive attitudes and experiences are better at communication strategy use so that their learning and use of the language are correlated.

Attitudes towards speaking including the fear of making mistakes can also be associated with anxiety of the learners. As it is mentioned in Öztürk and Gürbüz's (2014) study, pronunciation is regarded as anxiety factor which can be found in speaking, as well as immediate answers given to immediate questions. The causes can be divided into three groups; environmental, individual, and educational. In the study, which was implemented in language preparatory classrooms in a state university in Turkey, it was found that anxiety factors are mainly categorized under the headings of the fear of making mistakes, the perfectionist attitude, and peer effect: reactions of other students.

Together with fear of making mistakes, the issue of accuracy and fluency is also another effect that has a role on learners' production in language. A study conducted with the students at the age of 19 in Tehran by Bagheridoust and Kotlar (2015) stated that no matter how hard students try to be accurate and have less errors during speaking, they lose their concentration and speed, which results in fluency issues.

As it is mentioned in Qamar's (2016) study, being a good English speaker does not only mean having enough linguistic competence, but also enough sociolinguistic competence to communicate well and to prove that a speaker needs to use Speech Acts appropriately. For this reason, learners need to have an autonomous classroom environment where they can practice the language in a free way. Therefore, classroom environment is another factor affecting learners speaking skill. Students can foster their abilities only when they have enough motivation, interest and

autonomy. In addition, the classroom environment needs to provide a non-threatening atmosphere in order to let the learners get the full benefit.

The teacher being a native speaker or a non-native speaker is also another issue that might be perceived by the learners as a factor affecting students' improvement in speaking skill. However, in a study done among 125 EFL university students in Korea by Chun (2014), it was claimed that Korean teachers and native teachers have different strengths, and weaknesses and that students do not actually prefer one type of teacher over the other, though they also expressed a preference for having Korean teachers in lower levels and native teachers in higher levels as a better solution.

As a final motive influencing learners' improvement of speaking proficiency, critical thinking is an essential point. According to Sanavi and Tarighat (2014), teaching critical thinking does not only improve the life quality of the students, but also the language learning ability. Research done among Iranian adult intermediate EFL learners found that teaching critical thinking explicitly has a significant and positive effect on learners' skills. That's why, learners taught to think critically might show progress in their communication skills.

All these assumptions mentioned above influence learners' speaking skill and are required to be taken into consideration in terms of revealing learners' speaking needs to be met in the existing language program. In other words, revealing the speaking needs of learners is essential so that learners' communication skills in the target language can be improved and appropriate syllabuses as to learners' speaking competency levels can be designed.

2.4.3 Interaction hypothesis. When learners' perceptions and factors affecting their speaking skill are taken into consideration, it is suggested that learners need to be involved in an interactive environment to guide learners to overcome the difficulties in speaking and improve their speaking skill.

Long (1981), suggested the Interaction Hypothesis that forms the basic argument for conversational interaction in language teaching and learning, where language learners have access to comprehensible input, chances for outcome and correction through conversation among one another. That's to say, learners can get involved in meaningful conversations and achieve the various functional purposes of their speaking process such as clarifying, expressing, asking and answering questions etc. According to the tenets of the Interaction Hypothesis, negotiation of meaning is

the process of engaging in interaction for learners to focus on the form and process of the input they get. Therefore, the Interaction Hypothesis indicates that interaction among non-native speakers and native speakers or among non-native speakers can build an environment in which acute second/foreign language acquisition exists and where learners are involved in learning process via negotiation of meaning. What's more, as shown in the research, interactional modified input that helps language teaching and learning is more effective than input alone. (Ellis & Fotos, 1999; Gass & Varonis, 1994; Wang & Castro, 2010).

Considering the assumptions and research, the Interaction Hypothesis plays a pivotal role in learning as conversational interaction enhances language learners' speaking skills. Thus, when learners' speaking purposes and needs are recognized, they are required to be engaged in a communicative environment so that unmet needs of learners can be met.

2.5 Needs Analysis

Teaching speaking as a productive skill to the learners of foreign language has always been a controversial issue that needed to be dwelled on a lot by analysing the needs of the learners. Allwright (1983), Berwick (1994), Nunan (1988), and Taylor (1983) have indicated that in recent years, the surveying of students' learning motivation and needs has been considered as a crucial part of a successful foreign language program. Scholars assert that a well-designed language course, which targets increasing students' learning efficiency and triggering students' interest and motivation to learn the foreign language, should first take their attitudes and needs into account. That's why it is believed that learners' attitudes and needs have a crucial impact on their learning process.

It is required to analyse learners needs in order to contribute to their learning process with respect to their aims. The "analysis of needs" first appeared in West Bengal, a province of India when West (1994) introduced the concept of "needs" to cover what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation and how learners might best master the language during the learning period. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) asserted different definitions and classifications concerning "needs." They used three terms to explain "needs" such as 'necessities', 'wants' and 'lacks.' They define 'necessities' as the type of need determined by the

demands of the target situation, that is, what the learner should know in order to work effectively and efficiently in the target situation. They argue that to identify necessities alone is not enough to understand ‘needs.’ According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), since in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) necessities are major variables to be considered in particular learners, we also need to know what learners want and lack. There is a need to find out what learners actually view their needs as. These needs are defined as a learner’s ‘wants’. It is also required to evaluate what learners already know. The target proficiency needs to be matched against the existing proficiency of learners. The gap between the two can be referred to as learners’ lacks. According to Nation and Macalister (2009), the analysis of targets needs in Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) study can be viewed in the pie below:

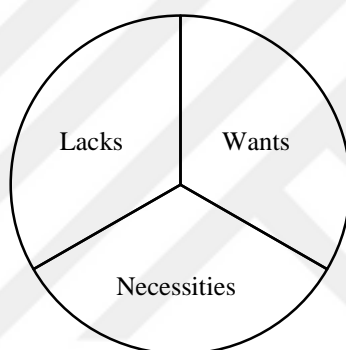


Figure 1. Three types of needs

As it can be seen above, learners’ needs are defined in three classifications:

1. Necessities: What is necessary in the learners’ use of language? For example, do the learners have to write answers to exam questions?
2. Lacks: What do the learners lack? For example, are there aspects of writing that were not practised in their previous learning (L1, L2)?
3. Wants: What do the learners wish to learn?

Another view stated by Richards, Platt and Platt (1992) is that needs analysis is the process of identifying the needs for which a learner or group of learners require(s) a language and adjusting the needs as to priorities. However, Nunan (1988) concentrated more on the information gathering process by indicating that “techniques or procedures for collecting information to be used in syllabus design are referred to as needs analysis.” It is worth mentioning at this stage that the terms “needs analysis” and “needs assessment” are used interchangeably (p.13).

When it comes to the aim of needs analysis, Richterich and Chancerel (1978) contended that the purpose of needs analysis is not only to determine elements lending themselves to training but to establish relative significance, to explore what is necessary, indispensable or solely desirable. Furthermore, West (1994) indicated that needs analysis is a pragmatic activity centered upon specific situations, even though it is based on general theories, such as the nature of language and curriculum. For instance, learners' speaking needs in terms of their proficiency level and purposes such as communicating in a foreign language class, improving daily life conversations etc. can be identified through needs analysis. The term "needs analysis" is also defined by Iwai et al. (1999) as referring to the activities that are involved in gathering information that will serve as the ground for developing a curriculum which will meet the needs of a particular group of students.

As seen in the studies above, all definitions mentioned are learner-oriented. Thus, learners' needs should be prioritized and analysed at the very beginning before involving learners in learning process in order to meet their needs appropriately.

Furthermore, Breen (1987) stresses that the learning process is more important than the result of learning and that any curricular activities and tasks should be come by through the negotiation of both the teacher and the students. That's why in students' pivotal learning process, a teacher-oriented instruction might be avoided in order to have a more learner-oriented instruction.

Needs analysis can be the first step for learner-oriented instruction. According to Tsao (2008), needs analysis allows the teacher to know why and how his students are learning the foreign language. When the courses learnt relate meaningfully to the learner's expectations, his/her motivation advances naturally. In addition, their needs could be met by setting clear learning objectives, acknowledging learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors, and adapting a more student-oriented approach in teaching.

In general, students' needs correspond to their expectations with a slight discrepancy on the priority of basic language proficiency and communicative competence. The possible explanation might be that expectations and actual needs do not always meet with each other. Thus, it is suggested that the four language skills should be integrated and learning objectives should be manifested.

As it was previously mentioned in Tsao's (2008) study above, learners' needs and teachers' expectations do not match all the time. Moreover, it becomes evident

that learners' needs require setting before their learning process begins in order to meet their needs in the end. When needs analysis is considered as a whole contribution to students' learning process, Long (2005) asserted that better-conducted needs analyses will enhance the quality of language teaching programs based upon them and, thereby, success rates for language learners.

In brief, learners' needs in all skills are supposed to be revealed before engaging learners into the learning process so that their skills can be fostered, a more learner-oriented environment can be provided and the needs can be fulfilled.

2.5.1 Four primary philosophies of needs analysis. There are four main philosophies including the democratic, analytic, diagnostic and discrepancy in needs analysis (Stufflebeam, 1985), all of which have an impact on the information to be gathered.

The democratic philosophy is one in which the group involved has specific needs. The group can consist of students, teachers, administrators etc. In this philosophy, the majority of information gathered will be included in the syllabus. In the analytic philosophy, based on what is obtained about learners and their learning process, a need is defined as whatever is learnt naturally. As exemplified in Orang'i's (2013) study, if the target group of learners know what a noun is, then the course designers can include the noun phrase and the noun clause thereafter in the prospective syllabus. In the diagnostic philosophy, according to Brown (1995), a need is anything that would prove harmful if it was missing. A needs analysis should be carried out to ensure that the learners are completely equipped with the essential skills that will be beneficial rather than harmful to them in the long run (Orang'i, 2013). Lastly, in the discrepancy philosophy, needs are regarded as differences or discrepancies between an ultimate performance expected from the students and what they are really doing. In education, as stated in Mckillip's (1987) study, the most widely used model is the discrepancy or gap model. The model has three main phases including goal setting, performance measurement and discrepancy identification.

The present study is based in the democratic and discrepancy philosophies by referring to perceptions of various sources such as the students, English instructors, level coordinators and administrators. By finding the discrepancy between the

students' speaking needs and their self-rating with respect to their competence, discrepancy philosophy has been called on.

2.5.2 Purposes and steps for conducting needs analysis. There have been different purposes and reasons for carrying out needs analysis. According to Richards (2001, p.52), the purposes for needs analysis are as follows: to find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role, such as sales manager, tour guide or university student; to help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students; to determine which students from a group are most in need of training in particular language skills; to identify a change of direction that people in a reference group feel is important; to identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do; and to collect information about a particular problem learners are experiencing.

Taking the purposes into consideration, data gathered from the needs analysis are useful while planning a program, designing a course etc. Actually, needs analysis can set the ground for teachers and planners in terms of their learners' specific needs so that a flexible curriculum can be prepared rather than a fixed one. Besides setting the purposes of needs analysis, conducting it is also significant. The steps followed while conducting a needs analysis have been suggested in different ways. According to McKillip (1987), the steps are indicated as follows: 1) Identify users and the uses of the needs analysis, 2) describe the target population and the service environment, 3) identify needs including describing problems and solutions, 4) assess the importance of the needs, and 5) communicate results.

Regarding these steps, setting clear objectives and following the path step by step are crucial in terms of achieving the ultimate goal of addressing learners' needs. Besides these, describing the problems clearly at the very beginning can contribute to their solutions, which can help teachers or assessors to carry out a needs analysis that has certain goals to be achieved. Finally, focusing on a particular skill while revealing learners' needs can assist the development of each skill.

2.5.3 Needs analysis studies. Plenty of needs analysis studies have been conducted so far around the world, including Turkey (Friederichs & Pierson, 1981; Enginarlar, 1982; Horowitz, 1986; Ferris & Tagg, 1996; Basturkmen, 1998; Boonyawattana, 1999; Edwards, 2000; Chan, 2001; Ekici, 2003; Kim, 2006).

To begin with, Friederichs and Pierson (1981) collected 507 distinct question patterns from science exam papers and classified them into 27 categories such as *Discuss, Explain, Describe, List, Show by what manner/means*. This was used to guide the making of writing exercises for EFL university students.

Another needs analysis study was carried out by Enginarlar (1982) at the Middle East Technical University in Turkey to determine the academic needs and lacks of freshmen students studying at social science based departments. Their needs in writing were found out and the effectiveness of the programme at the preparatory school was evaluated and an important degree of discrepancy between the students' needs when writing as well as the writing instructions provided in the preparatory school was identified. Recommendations for syllabus design of the writing component of the instruction at the preparatory school were made.

Horowitz (1986) gathered actual writing assignment handouts and essay examinations given to students in their classes. The 54 tasks gathered were classified into 7 taxonomies: 1) summary of reaction to reading [9 items], 2) annotated bibliography [1 item], 3) report on a special participatory experience [9 items], 4) connection of theory and data [10 items], 5) case study [5 samples], 6) synthesis of multiple sources [15 items], 7) research project [5 items]. The information was used to create procedures, strategies and tasks to help ESL students with academic writing.

In a survey of 900 professors at four different institutions in the US, Ferris and Tagg (1996) investigated the listening and speaking tasks that instructors in higher education require for their English as second and foreign language (ESL/EFL) undergraduates. The results of their instructor survey revealed that instructors' requirements vary across academic disciplines, types of institution, and class sizes. The results of the students' survey indicated that the classes they attended often required class participation and small group interaction, and that the most challenging tasks were oral presentation, whole class discussions, and note-taking. Because lecture styles are becoming less formal and more interactive (Ferris & Tagg, 1996, p. 51), English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers need to prepare students for comprehension of and participation in a variety of lecture and discussion formats.

Basturkmen (1998) conducted a needs analysis study in the College of Petroleum Engineering at Kuwait University to evaluate the communicative language needs of the students. Data were gathered from instructors and students through

structured questionnaires, classroom observations and examination of student materials and samples. Students considered listening as more difficult than speaking, reading and writing. However, the instructors considered the four skills to be of the same level of difficulty.

Boonyawattana (1999) focused on needs analysis of English in tourism. The results indicated that listening and speaking skills were more significant than reading and writing skills in tourism business careers. Speaking was needed most, followed by listening, reading and writing. People who worked in the tourism business also faced the most problems in using English in listening skills followed by speaking, writing and reading.

Another needs analysis study was carried out by Edwards (2000) to determine the language skills of German bankers in order to design an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course for bank personnel. Four skills were explored. Writing and specialist vocabulary in banking came into play as specific needs. An ESP course was designed and guidelines for teaching method were set.

Chan (2001) conducted research on the language needs of students at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Students' perceptions related to their needs and wants, their self ratings of their competence in academic and professional domain were revealed. Their opinions were compared with those of their English instructors. There was consistency with respect to the responses of teachers and students. The consistency was interpreted as the students' being able to state their opinions on various skills and being conscious in terms of their competence.

Ekici (2003) carried out a needs analysis to determine the English language needs of Tour Guidance students of the Faculty of Applied Sciences at Baskent University. Students, English instructors and curriculum coordinators were the participants in this study. The data collection instruments used were an attitude scale, students' needs assessment questionnaire and ESP identification form. The results revealed that speaking, listening and specialist vocabulary needed to be emphasized more to fulfil the ESP needs of Tour Guidance students.

Kim (2006) conducted another study of academic oral communication needs among East Asian international graduate students. In spite of a different population from Ferris and Tagg (1996), graduate students reported academic oral classroom activities such as participating in whole-class discussions, raising questions during

class, and engaging in small-group discussions as their primary communication concerns.

To wrap up, in all the studies mentioned above, the purpose was to identify the needs of target groups clearly in order to support the existing curriculum and courses or guide the researchers to come up with new ideas by creating a course or curriculum with respect to the target learners' needs. What's more, these studies highlight that the data can be gathered not only from students but also teachers, administrators etc. Also, a particular focus can be given to skills or a specific skill, which is related to the needs. Given the studies above, with the light of needs analysis, issues that stakeholders experience might be facilitated and their needs can be met.

2.6 Course Design and Evaluation in Foreign Language Education

In foreign language teaching, the course design that is organized according to learners' needs has significant impacts on the effectiveness of teaching. As stated in Yılmaz's (2003) study, it is apparent that when the English course or program is relevant to learners' specific needs, learning occurs better and faster, motivation of learners and effectiveness of teaching can increase. That's why, designing a course is crucial in terms of meeting learners' needs.

Designing a language course is a difficult undertaking because of the fact that various components and conceptualizations are part of the actual design process (Mukundan et al., 2011). In addition to the design process, teachers are important for the course design. According to Harmer (1991), teachers are aware of what students need to learn about the language they are learning. However, before starting to teach the students, teachers need to decide which parts of the knowledge they want the students to have and when. What skills should be focused on and how the language is organized is called a syllabus., Hutchinson and Waters (1987) contended that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach to language teaching that aims to meet the needs of a specific group of learners. ESP teachers are concerned with designing courses for different group of learners. They indicated the assumptions below based on the course design:

Designing an ESP course is fundamentally a matter of asking questions in order to provide a reasoned basis for the subsequent processes of syllabus design, materials writing, classroom teaching and evaluation. The course designer need to ask a very wide range of questions: general and specific, theoretical and practical. Some of these questions will be answered by research, others will rely more on the intuition and experience of the teacher; yet others will call on theoretical models. The following questions should be answered:

- Why does the student need to learn?
- Who is going to be involved in the process?
- What potential does the learning place provide?
- How much time is available?
- What topic areas will need to be covered in learning?
- What kind of methodology will be employed? (p. 21-22).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) stated that these questions require investigation under three main headings including language descriptions, theories of learning and needs analysis. In addition to the course design itself, evaluation of the course design is also necessary to view whether learners' needs are met or not in the end. Evaluation not only requires looking at the results of the course, but also the planning and running of the course. Thus, there are steps to be followed.

As discussed by Nation and Macalister (2009), all of the early steps in evaluation aim at deciding why the evaluation is being done and if it is possible to do it. The steps are as follows:

- a) Find who the evaluation is for and what kind of information they need, b) Find what the results of the evaluation will be used for – to improve the course, to decide whether to keep or get rid of the course, c) Decide if the evaluation is necessary or if the needed information is already available, d) Find how much time and money are available to do the evaluation, e) Decide what kinds of information will be gathered including amount of learning, quality of learning, quality of teaching, quality of curriculum design, quality of course administration, quality of support services – library, language lab, etc.; teacher satisfaction, learner satisfaction, sponsor satisfaction, later

success of graduates of the course, financial profitability of the course, f) Try to gain the support of the people involved in the evaluation, g) Decide how to gather the information and who will be involved in the gathering of information, h) Decide how to present the findings, i) Decide if a follow-up evaluation is planned to check the implementation of the findings (pp.123-124).

Following these steps is crucial in terms of effective evaluation process. When it comes to tools of evaluation, they are similar to the tools of needs analysis (Nation&Macalister, 2009). There are various data collection tools such as interviews, self-report scales, observation checklists etc. All these contribute to the evaluation of the course design when utilized.

2.7 Syllabus Design in Language Education

The term “syllabus” is defined as is the statement of what needs to be learnt and is viewed as a guide for teachers and learners that includes some certain goals to be attained. While syllabus is concerned with the selection and grading of the content, methodology is concerned with the selection of learning tasks and activities. A syllabus defines the major elements which will be used in planning a language course and presents the basis for its instructional focus and content.

As stated by Nunan (1988), there have been conflicting views about the distinction of syllabus design from curriculum development. One of the ideas expressed by Yalden (1984) indicated that “The syllabus replaces the concept of 'method', and the syllabuses now seen as an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer, can achieve a degree of 'fit' between the needs and aims of the learner (as social being and as individual) and the activities which will take place in the classroom” (p.14). That’s to say, syllabus refers to the subpart of the curriculum that focuses on the units to be taught and it deals with the selection of the content, while curriculum is a broad concept that concerns all of the motives contributing to the planning of an educational program. For instance, a curriculum might include the whole school year, whereas a language teaching syllabus may cover only a part of the curriculum. According to Kranke (1987), the goals including what learners will be able to do at the end of the instruction may be specified by the

overall curriculum designers, while the syllabus clarifies the content of the lessons. The content is regarded as what is taught in classrooms and accepted as a specific aspect of the syllabus design. When it comes to teaching syllabi, it has many elements such as learning objectives and specifications related to the evaluation of the content. There are also some factors that influence planners or syllabus designers while choosing a particular syllabus framework for a course. According to Richards (2001), the factors are described as follows:

- Knowledge and beliefs about the subject area: A syllabus reflecting ideas and beliefs about the nature of speaking, reading, writing or listening.
- Research and theory: Research on language use and learning as well as applied linguistic theory sometimes leads to proposals in favour of particular syllabus types.
- Common practice: The language teaching profession has built up substantial practical experience in developing language programs and this often serves as the basis for different syllabus types.
- Trends: Approaches to syllabus design come and go and reflect national or international trends” (p.152).

These factors possess a crucial role in determining a specific syllabus for a lesson. Since the 1980s and 1990s, there has been a revision of traditional approaches to syllabus design due to the communicative language teaching movement and a search for the principles for the development of communicative syllabuses. As stated by Richards (2001), a communicative syllabus is accepted as an attempt to develop a framework for a general course such as a Threshold Level syllabus or the one that prioritizes communication within a restricted setting, such as English for Specific Purposes. As various syllabus approaches are available in enhancing communicative courses, many different syllabus frameworks might be communicative syllabuses such as task-based or competency-based syllabuses.

In addition to the significance of these various approaches to syllabus design, in designing a syllabus, choices and selections have to be made by a syllabus designer in order to have a plan that is convenient for the teaching environment (Breen 1987). Therefore, there is a need for a syllabus to be in harmony with the three main contexts within which it is located: a) the language curriculum, b) the teachers and learners, and c) the wider society that the syllabus is supposed to serve.

Also, according to Brumfit (1981), a syllabus must be goal oriented to enable learners to attain certain goals for the learning process. Regarding the features of a syllabus, design is also crucial in order to enhance the benefits of using a syllabus. As stated by Kauffman (1992), the necessary attention to learners' needs and characteristics should be paid and how to match with the instructor's approach with the learners in the class should be considered while designing a syllabus. Besides these, in designing a syllabus, there are other factors that directly affect syllabus design (Krahnke 1987). The most vital factors are that of the overall objectives of the program. Secondary factors include available resources, the need for accountability, and teacher input. According to Yalden (1987), in the first phase of syllabus design, the data collection is made and then syllabus components are chosen. After this phase, the collected data are utilized so that there will be interaction in the classroom.

Consequently, in designing a syllabus, the factors mentioned above are required to be taken into consideration in terms of achieving the learning goals. Also, as argued by Krahnke (1987), "to design a syllabus is to decide what gets taught and in what order. For this reason; the theory of language explicitly or implicitly underlying the method will play a major role in determining what syllabus is adopted" (p.11). Regarding the syllabus design, in foreign language education, there are six main approaches that often emphasize communication and these are explained in detail below.

2.7.1 Types of syllabi. The recent approaches to syllabus design in foreign language teaching have made a difference by increasing focus on language use and decreasing attention to language form. According to Krahnke (1987), the use/form continuum can be regarded as a scale on which to evaluate various actual syllabus decisions. He also mentioned that there are six different types of syllabi and these types of syllabi are not completely distinct from each other. Almost all language teaching syllabi are combinations of two or more types mentioned below. As explained by Krahnke (1987), the six types of syllabi are:

<u>structural - notional/functional - situational - skill-based - task-based - content-based</u>					
emphasis on form			emphasis on meaning		

Figure 2. Continuum of syllabi (p.12).

1. A *structural* (or formal/ grammatical) syllabus is described as the one in which the content of language teaching is a gathering of the structures, generally grammatical, of the language that is taught. Some examples of structures cover: verbs, nouns, adjectives, present tense, questions etc. However, the structural syllabi, might include other facets of language form including pronunciation. According to Richards (2001), as the basis for general courses, grammatical syllabuses have been used so far, especially for the beginning-level learners. In many language courses, grammar remains as a core component. As stated by Richards (2001), there are certain reasons for this as follows:

- Teachers and students are supposed to focus on grammar in a lesson and if grammar is not centered upon in a lesson, they might react negatively.
- Grammar can be linked to other strands of a syllabus, such as functions, situations and topics.
- Grammar is accepted as a core component of language proficiency: communicative competence covers the ability of grammar use. Thus, it is supposed to be placed in the curriculum.

Regarding the reasons, grammatical syllabi that are sequenced from simple to complex in a linear fashion and aims to enable learners to learn how to be accurate in production in the target language are continuously used in language teaching. According to Higgs (1982), one of the benefits of this syllabus type is that the teaching of structural items can prevent fossilization or a termination in the learning process. Also, structural knowledge plays a crucial role in Krashen's Monitor theory "by serving as the basis for the learner to Monitor, or check on the accuracy of production and self-correct according to known rules when time and the attention of the language user allow for it" (Krahnke, 1987, p. 23).

2. A *notional / functional* syllabus is one in which the content is a collection of the functions which are performed when language is utilized or of the notions that language is used to express. Agreeing-disagreeing, apologizing, requesting and so on can be viewed as some of functions included in this syllabus. The functions of comparison, time, age and so on can be regarded as some examples of the notions. Functions and notions might be confusing for many teachers. Generally, while notions are the concept meanings that are expressed through language such as objects, logical relationships and so on, functions can be described as the communicative purposes for which we use language. According

to Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), there are various benefits of notional/functional syllabuses such as setting realistic learning tasks, providing an opportunity for a real-world language and communicative functions that motivate learners intrinsically.

3. A *situational* syllabus is regarded as one in which the content of language teaching is a gathering of real or imaginary situations in which language comes into play. The situational syllabus has been used as an adjunct to instruction that is mainly focused on language form and structure. The situations in the syllabus range from short dialogues to lengthy themes and communication activities. The syllabus is organized for different situations such as *at the airport* or *at a hotel*. Communicative acts occur in such settings. As indicated by Richards (2001), the situational syllabus has the advantage of presenting the language in a meaningful context and the language used in situations involves many functions. Regarding the functions, the ultimate purpose of the situational syllabus is to teach the language occurring in situations. For instance, asking directions, seeing the dentist, complaining etc. can be accepted as situations for the syllabus.
4. A *skill-based* syllabus is one in which the content of the language teaching is a collection of particular abilities that might have a role in using language. According to Krahnke (1987), the term “skill” is considered as “a specific way of using language that combines structural and functional ability, but it exists independently of specific settings or situations” (p.52). Writing skills such as writing topic and supporting sentences; reading skills such as skimming and scanning; speaking skills such as giving public talks and asking for help and listening skills such as asking for information on the phone and getting orders in a restaurant are some certain examples of this syllabus type. The main purpose of the skill-based instruction is to learn and focus on a language skill. The skill-based syllabus centers upon performance related to particular tasks. Thus, for designing courses and preparing materials, it can provide a practical framework.
5. A *task-based* syllabus is one which is organized around meaningful tasks that students get involved in in the target language. A task can be described as an activity that is approached by using language such as giving directions, finding a solutions to a problem/puzzle, reading a map and so on. In language teaching, tasks are always necessary, but a task-based syllabus is the one that is specifically designed to facilitate the learning of the target language. It is

believed that comprehensible input can be conveyed to learners through meaningful tasks. This idea can be supported by Long and Crookes (1992) claiming that “tasks provide a vehicle for the presentation of appropriate target language samples to learners” (p.43) In this type of syllabus, grammar is not at the center of learning process since learners can acquire grammar by carrying out tasks. According to Richards (2001), two tasks including pedagogical and real-life tasks exist in language teaching. The former is based on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory in order to facilitate second language learning. Problem solving tasks, information-gap tasks and jigsaw tasks that involve learners in combining different parts of information to build up a whole can be some samples of this type. Real-life tasks are also important as they are useful in the real world. Even though the task-based syllabus seems useful, it had not been adopted as a unit of syllabus design until 2001 (Richards, 2001, p.163).

6. A *content-based* syllabus is not regarded as a language teaching syllabus. The purpose of content-based teaching is to teach some content with little or no explicit effort by using the language the students are learning. This can be supported by Krashen (1982) and Krashen & Terrell (1983) indicating that content-based instruction is viewed as an acquisition theory which accounts for learning without direct instruction. In this type, the subject matter is essential and the content teaching is not arranged around the language teaching. Whereas task-based language teaching is related to communicative processes of learning, content-based language teaching is concerned with information. While conveying information, form and function are not distinguished in content-based learning, but content-based learning makes the new language available in the context of its meanings and functions (Krahnke, 1987). A science class that is taught in the target language as to learners’ needs can be an example of content-based teaching.

When all types of syllabi are considered, they differ in the ways in which they link to linguistic form to meaning and use. However, all types of syllabi target getting learners engaged in learning a new language process and facilitating the learning process (Krahnke, 1987). Considering this, while choosing an appropriate syllabus or syllabi for learners, the purposes, strengths, weaknesses of the syllabi and learners’ needs and competency levels are required to be taken into consideration.

2.7.2 Previous studies on syllabus design in language education programs.

In foreign language education, there have been several studies on syllabus design in the world as well as in Turkey (Ishiyama & Hartlaub, 2002; Parkes, Fix & Harris, 2003; Örs, 2006; Karataş, 2007; Bensen & Silman, 2012). In addition to the studies on syllabus design, there are also several studies carried out in English Language programs in terms of the syllabi, curriculum and evaluation of these programs (Cengizhan, 2007; Yılmaz, 2009; Mede, 2012; Soruç 2012).

In a study carried out by Ishiyama and Hartlaub (2002), it was shown that supportive statements motivate students and enhance their performance. It has been proposed that the instructors who worded their syllabi in rewarding language instead of punishing were considered to use their power more equally and have students who developed more positive attitudes towards the instructor and the course.

Parkes, Fix and Harris (2003) investigated the assessment elements of college instructors and their assessment practices and their policies on their syllabi. After they analyzed 217 syllabi, the results revealed that instructors fail to interact with the students due to not including the assessment practices, thus their syllabi are not completely considered as a communicating tool.

Another study conducted by Örs (2006) focused on designing a formal syllabus for the School of Foreign Languages by centering upon the importance given by the students to learning English materials used during courses, their ideas about language skills and strategies, and their views on the testing and evaluation procedures applied in the program. The results showed that the program was not sufficient to meet the students' future needs in terms of learning and teaching. Therefore, there was a need to redesign the program.

The curriculum used in preparatory classes of three universities was compared by Cengizhan (2007). Some similarities and differences in general English courses were found in the research. Briefly, “the similarities between these universities: the materials used in each preparatory department are communicative and task based. The differences: there are extra reading activity courses and a native speaker of English as a lecturer in one of these universities” (p.305).

Karataş (2007) evaluated the syllabus of the English II instruction program applied in the Modern Languages Department of Yıldız Teknik University (YTU) School of Foreign Languages. 35 teachers implementing the English II program and 415 students were chosen randomly to participate in the study. Data were collected

via two questionnaires given to the teachers and students. The results indicated some significant differences between the teachers' and students' opinions in terms of context, input, process and product. Particularly, the suitability of the program's objectives for the students' development, the proficiency level and the comprehensibility of the textbook and the use of audio-visual materials used in the program were among the essential concepts which were considered while the program was redesigned.

In a study carried out by Yılmaz (2009), the English language needs of students in voluntary preparatory classes of Gaziosmanpaşa University were identified by emphasizing to what degree these preparatory classes have met those needs. The participants were 40 students, who were enrolled in the preparatory program, 81 former students, 7 instructors and the director of the program. Data were collected through three different questionnaires and a structured interview. The findings found that even though the students were satisfied with the program, there were some areas that needed improvement. Students needed a broader use of materials and methods in classroom instruction. It was also revealed that there was a specific need for speaking and listening skills as they were regarded as insufficient in the existing program.

Bensen and Silman (2012) examined the syllabus designs used in the three preparatory schools of the three universities in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and made suggestions on how to improve these syllabus designs. A qualitative research method was used in this study. An interview schedule was used to collect data. The study was conducted with 27 participants from the preparatory schools of the three universities in the TRNC. The data were broken into categories and then coded thematically. The results revealed that two universities were still using the traditional product-oriented approach (in other words, the grammar based syllabus design), while one university was using a process-oriented approach with a skill-based syllabus design.

Mede (2012) carried out a study on designing and evaluating a Language Preparatory Program for student teachers enrolled in the English Teaching Program at a private Turkish university. Regarding the data from the pre-needs analysis questionnaires and focus group interviews, determining the language needs of the learners was prioritized as a crucial step to be taken into consideration before a preparatory program is designed. As for the evaluation of the program through post-needs analysis questionnaires, focus group interviews and pre- and post- proficiency

exam scores, it was concluded that the program met the student teachers' perceived language and learning needs. It also increased teachers' language proficiency.

Finally, Soruç (2012) aimed to investigate the context and program of an English Preparatory School in Istanbul. The results gained from learners' needs assessment survey and interviews found that the program was satisfactory for their language skills. This study centered upon the importance of needs analysis that plays a crucial role in making curricular decisions or redesigning language preparatory programs.

In conclusion, all these studies mentioned above highlighted the significance of designing a syllabus and its guidance to support the available curriculum in the program. They can also assist syllabus designers in terms of preparing a syllabus that can aim to meet learners' perceived and future needs.

2.8 Conclusion

Overall, needs analysis has a great impact on learners' target needs. Especially, speaking skills that are regarded as crucial in language learning can be improved as long as learners' needs are analysed clearly and well-designed syllabuses are offered at universities. Setting goals for speaking needs analysis and syllabus design is beneficial for learners in language programs so that learners' speaking needs are clarified for instructors, level coordinators and the director of language programs to be able to follow certain paths in terms of meeting learners' speaking needs and upgrading speaking syllabuses for learners' target needs.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this chapter, the components of methodology such as philosophical paradigm, research design, setting, target population and participants are explained. Then, the procedure that covers sources of data, data collection procedures including type of sampling and data collection instruments, implementation and data analysis procedures are discussed in detail. Finally; reliability and validity, limitations and delimitations are presented.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the pre-intermediate, B1 level Turkish EFL learners perceive the importance of the speaking subskills and their performance in speaking in the preparatory classes?
 - 1.1 Are there any differences between the perceptions of B1 level Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators regarding the importance of the speaking subskills?
2. How do the instructors teaching B1 level learners, level and academic coordinators perceive the importance of the speaking subskills and students' performance in speaking in the preparatory classes?
 - 2.1 Are there any differences between the perceptions of B1 level Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators regarding the student performance of the speaking subskills?
3. What recommendations can be made for the improvement of the existing speaking syllabus in the preparatory program?

3.1 Philosophical Paradigm

A paradigm is defined as a perspective about research that is based on various shared assumptions, concepts, practices and values (Johnson&Christensen, 2012). In an attempt to form an effective research design, it is crucial for researchers to select a

paradigm that is coherent with their own assumptions and beliefs in terms of the research reality.

There are two fundamental types of research that are utilized; quantitative and qualitative research. According to Ary et al. (2013), quantitative research is explanatory research and copes with questions of relationship, current status which can be answered by gathering and statistically analyzing numeric data, cause and effect. Quantitative research can also be categorized as experimental and nonexperimental. However, qualitative research is considered exploratory research; comprehending social phenomena and providing rich verbal descriptions of settings, situations and participants. Ethnography, case studies, naturalistic observations, focused interviews and historical studies are included in the qualitative approach. Also, researchers can choose a mixed method design that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches in one study. Mixed methods design can be included in descriptive research as descriptive research involves quantitative research techniques or is based on a combination of both broad approaches (quantitative and qualitative). This can be supported by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) asserting that ‘mixed methods’ research has been formed as a third methodological movement over the last two decades and it integrates the existing traditions of quantitative and qualitative movements. In educational research, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are significant. While choosing a method, a researcher is supposed to prioritize a method that will provide the data to address the research questions of the study.

Based on the assumptions above, this study was based on mixed method research design in terms of data collection to be able to answer the research questions and meet the purposes of the study.

3.2 Research Design

Considering the purposes of this study, mixed method research design that includes both quantitative and qualitative research by using and integrating multiple methods to draw on the strengths of each and obtain convergent data was utilized in this study. While the nature of the data was more quantitative, qualitative additions were also made through the semi-structured interviews in the study.

According to Clark and Creswell (2007), mixed method research design has six prototypical versions; the convergent parallel design, explanatory-exploratory

sequential design, embedded design, transformative design and multiphase design. The convergent parallel design is when the researcher focuses on both methods equally, collects data separately, but approximately at the same time, analyses and then mixes the results during the interpretation and integrates the inferences. In explanatory design, the qualitative results assist researchers to explain the initial quantitative results. When compared to explanatory design, exploratory design emphasizes qualitative data. It starts with the collection and analysis of qualitative data in the first phase. In embedded design;

one form of data supports a second form of data within a single study. For example, if the purpose for the research project is to inform administration or change policy, quantitative and qualitative data may be required to convince those with the power to make changes that the results are credible. The rationale for an embedded design is that a single data set is not sufficient to answer different questions, and each type of question requires different types of data. The most common form of embedded mixed methods research is when quantitative data are embedded within a qualitative case study and the quantitative data are supportive of the major qualitative findings. Alternatively, qualitative data can be supportive of statistical results by addressing questions that are unanswerable using experimental or correlation research (Ary et al., 2013, p.564).

In transformative design, a transformative theoretical framework is shaped by the researcher. Within the context of this framework, all other decisions including priority, interaction, timing, and mixing are made. Multiphase design is usually used in program evaluation in which quantitative and qualitative approaches are utilized over time so that the development, adaptation, and evaluation of specific programs can be supported.

In an attempt to obtain miscellaneous, but complementary data, convergent parallel design was employed in this study. The quantitative data were gathered through needs analysis questionnaires and classroom observations whereas qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews. By comparing and providing both quantitative and qualitative data, the methods were triangulated. Then the results are interpreted to be able to understand to what extent the results converge

or/and diverge from one another. Thus, in order to have higher credibility, mixed method research design was implemented by triangulating the data in the study.

The research design in the present study is a case study. According to Yin (1994), a case study is viewed as an empirical inquiry, in which the emphasis is on a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context. The boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not overtly apparent. There are three types of case studies including explanatory, exploratory and descriptive. However, the designs might be single or multiple-case studies. In case studies, qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods can be used. This study is an exploratory single case study in which both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied.

In this study, the data were collected from three main sources of data; needs analysis questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. By doing so, it was aimed to seek convergence among the students', instructors', level and academic coordinators' perceptions and the instructors' teaching practices. In order to reduce validity concerns, a particular level (pre-intermediate) of the students, instructors, level and academic coordinators was chosen. First, the participant pre-intermediate level students were asked to complete needs analysis questionnaires to find out their perceptions about the importance of speaking subskills referring to target needs and the ratings of their own competence based on these subskills. Then, in order to see whether the target needs were met in speaking lessons and what type of syllabus could be suggested in terms of students' needs based on speaking skill, the students were observed while getting involved in speaking tasks during the lessons. The researcher observed the selected speaking lessons in classrooms. During each observation, the researcher completed the observation table. Then, semi-structured interviews with the instructors, level coordinator, academic coordinator and students were respectively applied to explore their own perceptions about the importance of speaking subskills referring to target needs to view whether there were differences of perceptions among the instructors, level coordinator, academic coordinator and students. Also, it was aimed to find out what kind of speaking syllabus could be suggested.

3.3 Target Population and Participants

This study was carried out at an English Language Preparatory Program offered at a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Istanbul, Turkey. The aim of the preparatory program is to prepare learners for their departmental studies by providing them intensive English courses in an academic year. In these preparatory programs, basic skills including listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary are taught in order to help learners to have academic language skills and to use English language effectively so that they can continue in their departments.

Students at these preparatory programs are there because their command of the English language, as established by an entrance test, is not high enough to handle their English-based departmental studies. Thus, before the university allows students to start their departments, a written English language test is offered to students at the beginning of each year. As long as the students pass the written test, they have a right to take the follow-up oral test. If the results of the tests are below 60 out of 100, students need to take a placement test and be enrolled in the preparatory program according to their proficiency level. Meanwhile, if the results of the tests are above 60 out of 100, students are allowed to start their departments as they are thought to be capable of following their academic language skills in their faculties.

Once a student gets into the preparatory program, they are then further sectionalized into classes by their language level. At the preparatory program of this university, there are 5 levels: beginner (A1), elementary (A2), pre-intermediate (B1), intermediate (B1+), upper-intermediate (B2). These levels (A1, A2, B1, B1+, B2) are designed in compliance with Common European Framework (CEFR/CEF) (see Appendix A). However, advanced (C1) level is not provided in the preparatory program. Each level lasts 8 weeks, which comprises one teaching module with 20-25 hours depending on the level. Except L1 (A1, beginner) and L2 (A2, elementary), each level has five courses; Main Course, Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. While Main Course focuses more on grammar and vocabulary, comprehending academic texts and writing academic essays are focused on more in Reading-Writing lessons. In Speaking lessons, learners are provided communicative practice to improve sub-skills such as giving directions, turn taking, expressing themselves, criticizing, apologizing, keeping the conversation going etc. In listening lessons, students are supposed to comprehend level appropriate talks so that they can answer

the related questions. Students have to take the Achievement Test (AT) at the end of each module. Students need to get minimum 60 out of 100 to be able to pass the level by providing the average of AT and the required grade from the other tasks and quizzes. In order to start departmental studies, the students are required to complete L5 (upper-intermediate).

In an attempt to enhance and reinforce language learning, the preparatory program of the university also provides some facilities, such as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Centers to give students the opportunity to improve their English by doing online activities, Writing and Learning Center where students can make a reservation for a tutorial so that they can improve their writing skills and a Resource Library where students can borrow books, journals etc. In addition, the program offers various workshops given by language instructors including grammar, speaking, writing etc. to provide more hands-on activities and practice. Also, there are tutorials to give a chance to the students so that they can work with their instructors one-to-one. Besides these, there are different types of clubs including a Poetry Club and a Cinema Club for the students to participate in more communicative activities in the target language.

All in all, the purpose of the preparatory program at the institution is to prepare students for their departmental studies in the upcoming year by assisting them in reaching a sufficient proficiency level and helping the students express themselves by reading, writing, speaking and listening. The program aims to help students gain insights and develop a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language as well.

There were 478 pre-intermediate (B1) level students (the students who started as elementary and passed their level at the end of the term), 19 instructors teaching B1, 1 level and 1 academic coordinator as the population of the study. There were morning and afternoon classes that mostly consisted of undergraduate degree students. Pre-intermediate level students were morning students who were taught 25 hours per week. Specifically, the participants in this study consisted of 80 B1 level students, 17 instructors teaching B1, the pre-intermediate level coordinator and the academic coordinator of the preparatory program.

3.3.1 The students. The first sample group consisted of 80 pre-intermediate level students studying at English Preparatory Program of the foundation (non-profit, private) university. The total number of the students studying at this preparatory

program was 2161 in term 3 in 2016-2017 academic year and the population of the study was 478 students whose English proficiency level was pre-intermediate.

In this study, convenience sampling was used to approach the target participant groups easily. The participants among the whole pre-intermediate (B1) group were chosen randomly. The participants were 80 Turkish students and 45 of the participants were males while 35 of the participants were females. Their ages ranged from 18 to 25 years old. The participants were placed at B1 classes in this term (term 3) as they passed elementary level (A2) classes last term (term 2) based on their exam scores.

3.3.2 The instructors. The second group consisted of 17 instructors who were teaching English to pre-intermediate, B1 level students. The population of this group was 19 instructors teaching B1. 10 instructors had a BA degree in English Language Teaching and 4 instructors had a BA degree in English Language Literature. 2 of them had a BA degree in American Culture and Literature while 1 instructor had a BA degree in Comparative Language and Literature. 2 of the instructors had an MA degree and 1 of them had MS in adult learning. 9 instructors had CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and 3 instructors had a Pedagogical Formation Certificate. Almost all instructors had more than 7 years of English teaching experience. All instructors were Turkish. While 13 instructors were females, 4 of them were males. Their ages ranged from 26 to 55. Finally, all instructors had teaching experience at a private university and had taught main course components including speaking lessons at different proficiency levels.

3.3.3 The level coordinator. The third participant of this study was B1 level coordinator who was the coordinator of this particular level for 8 years and had 30 years of English teaching experience. The level coordinator was a Turkish female who had a BA degree in English Language and Literature. Her age was 50. She was required to prepare weekly syllabuses, set weekly meetings, and provide guidance about the problems the instructors face with their students.

3.3.4 The academic coordinator. The fourth participant was the academic coordinator of English Language Preparatory Program. The coordinator was a Turkish female who held an MA degree in English Language Teaching and had 16

years of English teaching experience. Her age was 43. She was the academic coordinator of the preparatory program for 8 years. She was required to deal with the issues about administrative and academic staff of the program. She was also responsible for the program meetings.

All the participants' names, surnames and personal information were kept confidential while collecting the data as the data instruments did not require their personal information in terms of participants' confidentiality.

3.4 Procedures

In this section of the study, the information about data collection procedures including type of sampling, data collection instruments, data analysis procedures, and finally reliability and validity are provided in detail.

The study was conducted in three major stages and the whole data was collected and analyzed in March (term 3), 2017 at a foundation (non-profit, private) university English preparatory program in İstanbul, Turkey. The researcher got permission from both the Ethics Board Committee and the Head of the English Preparatory Program of that university to carry out the study.

The first stage was divided into two sections including student-questionnaire and academic staff-questionnaire. It consisted of the administration of the needs analysis questionnaires to B1 level students, the instructors teaching B1, level and academic coordinators at the preparatory program of the university in an attempt to answer the first and the second research questions. 17 instructors were asked to answer the questionnaire and 80 students were asked to respond the questionnaire. The researcher asked for help from 4 instructors who were teaching B1 to administer the questionnaire by sharing the link of the questionnaire so that 80 students in their main classes could complete the questionnaire online.

The second stage was the classroom observations through an observation table completed by the researcher to be able to support the questionnaires and obtain answers for the research questions 2 and 3. The researcher observed 4 classes during term 3 in order to get a better understanding of the surroundings. The observation table was filled with the percentages of the use of speaking subskills to gather more information on the speaking needs and program implemented in B1 level classes. Observations also helped understand what the students and instructors were

considering about the speaking program and brought insights to the researcher about what kind of speaking syllabus could be suggested to meet the target needs of the participating students in the existing program.

The third stage consisted of semi-structured interviews with four different participants including the instructors teaching B1, level coordinator, academic coordinator of the preparatory program and students. In addition, each group of the participants was involved in the interviews separately. Every question was answered by each participant. Each interview was audio recorded and then transcribed in order not to lose any significant data. Each interview took almost 15 minutes. The following table presents an overview of the research questions and corresponding procedures.

Table 1

Overview of the Research Questions and Corresponding Procedures

Research Questions	Data Collection Instruments	Data Analysis
1. How do the pre-intermediate, B1 level Turkish EFL learners perceive the importance of the speaking subskills and their performance in speaking in the preparatory classes?	Needs Analysis Questionnaire (adopted from Ekici, 2003) & Classroom Observation Table (adapted from Ekici, 2003) & Semi-structured Interview	Descriptive Statistics & Paired-sample t-test (SPSS) & Frequency Count (Percentages) & Pattern Coding
1.1. Are there any differences between the perceptions of B1 level Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators regarding the importance of the speaking subskills?		
2. How do the instructors teaching B1 level learners, level and academic coordinators perceive the importance of the speaking subskills and students' performance in speaking in the preparatory classes?	Needs Analysis Questionnaire (adopted from Ekici, 2003) & Semi-structured Interview	Descriptive Statistics & Paired-sample t-test (SPSS) & Pattern Coding
2.1. Are there any differences between the perceptions of B1 level Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators regarding the student performance of the speaking subskills?		
3. What recommendations can be made for the improvement of the existing speaking syllabus in the preparatory program?	Semi-structured Interview	Pattern Coding

3.4.1 Data collection procedures. Type of sampling and data collection instruments are presented in this part.

3.4.1.1 Type of sampling. Field (2005) defines sampling as a smaller, but representative collection of units from a population that is used to determine realities about that population. The sampled participants are supposed to be similar to the target population. In literature, there are two types of sampling: probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

In probability sampling, the idea is random selection. Each person has an equal opportunity of being chosen. Four types of probability sampling exist in literature: simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling. In contrast to probability sampling, in non-probability sampling the subjects are selected as a part of the sample in non-random ways. There are four sub-categories of non-probability sampling including availability/convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling. ‘Convenience sampling’ is defined as one of the non-probability sampling techniques which includes participants that are eager to participate and easily approachable (Teddlie, 2003). In fact, the subjects are chosen due to their convenient accessibility. Most of the time, it is unlikely for researchers to gather data from the entire population. Carrying out research with accessible subjects is regarded as practical. In this study, for the quantitative data, convenience sampling was used because the subjects of the study (B1 level students, the instructors teaching B1, level and academic coordinators of the program) were chosen from the private university where the researcher works.

In other respects, ‘purposive’ sampling is mostly utilized instead of ‘random’ sampling in terms of qualitative data collection and is viewed as one of the non-probability samples. In purposive sampling, the cases are particular instead of random. This type of sampling is chosen in order to meet the purposes of the research questions of the study. Certain subjects are intentionally included in the study by the researcher in purposive sampling. The researcher can decide the subjects regarding their own eagerness, impact on the research and so on. In this study, purposive sampling was utilized in terms of qualitative data collection (semi-structured interviews). The subjects of qualitative data were involved in the research

for the researcher to be able to gain insights into the perspectives of the students, instructors, level and academic coordinators of the whole program.

3.4.1.2 Data collection instruments. In this study both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered through needs analysis questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Each data collection instrument is described in detail in the section below.

3.4.1.2.1 Questionnaires. The questionnaire in this study was adopted from Ekici's (2003) questionnaire, used in her research study, "A Needs Assessment Study on English Language Needs of the Tour Guidance Students of Faculty of Applied Sciences at Başkent University." The aim of the questionnaire was to find out the perceptions of B1 level students, the instructors teaching B1, level and academic coordinators as to the importance of speaking subskills as well as the students' own perceptions based on their speaking performance. Therefore, it was administered to 80 B1 students, 17 instructors teaching B1, the level and academic coordinators. This study used Ekici's (2003) initial section on speaking skills to establish the particular perceptions and speaking needs of the subjects. In the questionnaire, there are two columns consisting of two main questions including 14 points with 5 point Likert type scale ranking from 'unimportant' to 'very important' and from 'extremely poor' to 'excellent' (see Appendix B). The two columns were administered to the students, instructors, level and academic coordinators. The students' questionnaires were written in Turkish so that the students could feel more comfortable while completing them, whereas the instructors', level and academic coordinators' questionnaires were written in English as all the academic staff had English teaching experience.

After the analysis of the questionnaire answers, the instructors who had mostly similar responses to the students were observed in speaking lessons and were involved in semi-structured interviews.

3.4.1.2.2 Classroom Observations. Observations are systematic data collection instruments which researchers utilize to observe people in their natural settings. One of the qualitative data collection instruments in this study was classroom observations, in which the students and the instructors were observed during the speaking lessons to be able to meet the research questions and supplement the

questionnaires. 4 instructors and 80 students were observed. The researcher used the observation table to be able to see the students' prioritized perceptions and needs of speaking skill and subskills as well as their speaking performance. Also, observations helped the researcher to gain insights about what kind of syllabus could be suggested for the speaking program. The observation table was adapted from Ekici (2003) and included 14 functions of speaking skill (see Appendix C).

Thanks to classroom observations, the researcher could capture the dynamics of the interaction in the class, gain a better understanding of the situations in the speaking lessons, and view whether speaking needs of the students were met during speaking practices so that a new speaking syllabus could be suggested.

3.4.1.2.3 Semi-structured Interviews. In order to support the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews with the instructors teaching B1, level and academic coordinators were separately employed. Besides, semi-structured interviews with 16 students out of 80 students were carried out. In general, semi-structured interviews provide a chance for the participants to express themselves freely. Therefore, more in-depth data can be gathered via these interviews. The interviews can also be helpful by supporting the quantitative data to enhance interpretations of the results. In this study, therefore, semi-structured interviews consisting of 9 open-ended questions were carried out with the instructors, level and academic coordinators (see Appendix D). Also, semi-structured interviews including 3 open-ended questions were carried out with 16 students (Appendix E). All the interviews were conducted individually and each interview took approximately 15 minutes. No other person was allowed to enter the office where the interviews took place in order to make the participants feel more comfortable.

3.4.2 Data analysis procedures. This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools even though quantitative data were emphasized. The data collected through the student and academic staff questionnaires were analyzed statistically through SPSS software. Frequencies for each item reflecting the students' learning needs, performances and perceptions based on the importance of the speaking skill and subskills were calculated in order to have the opportunity to compare their perceptions with the instructors', level and academic coordinators' perceptions. The comparison was made through paired sample t-test since within subject comparison was chosen to analyze the data.

As for the other quantitative data, the classroom observations were conducted and the observation table was completed by the researcher. The percentages of the use of speaking subskills were calculated and stated for each skill in the table. According to the observation table, each lesson was perceived as 25 % by the researcher. Thus, 100 % symbolizes the percentage that represents the most frequent subskill(s) used in the 4 English speaking lessons. While 50 % refers to the subskills that were focused in only two lessons, a subskill that was used by the students in only one lesson was marked as 25 % in the observation table. Also, 0 % indicates no use of the subskills in any lesson observed. Specifically, the observations were conducted in order to comprehend the students' perceptions towards the speaking skills and their needs based on speaking skill and subskills. The data were gathered in fifty-minute-speaking lessons in 4 different B1 classes that were assigned by the administration. The data obtained from the speaking lessons were compared to the weekly speaking syllabuses prepared for those lessons. Furthermore, the detailed data as to the students' perceptions about their speaking performance and what type of speaking syllabus and how a new speaking syllabus could be suggested were obtained during observations through the observation table that included the percentages of the use of speaking subskills.

For the interviews, semi-structured interviews were utilized. First, semi-structured interviews with 17 instructors were individually held to be able to explore the perceptions of the instructors of the importance of speaking skills and subskills besides the speaking performance of the students. In addition, the interviews aimed at identifying the perceptions of the participants of whether the students' perceived speaking needs were met in the preparatory program and what kind of speaking syllabus could be suggested. Then, semi-structured interviews with the same questions were conducted with the level and academic coordinators for the same purposes mentioned above. Finally, a semi-structured interview with 3 open-ended questions mentioned above including the same purposes was carried out with 16 students. In the end, the researcher had four semi-structured interviews with four different types of participants. It was ensured that all participants were willing to attend the interviews. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed so as not to miss any significant data. Pattern coding was used for the interviews. Patterns that included similar or different speaking subskills such as *asking* and *answering questions*, *expressing oneself* and *reacting to speech* were noted down.

3.4.3 Reliability and Validity. Reliability and validity are crucial for both quantitative and qualitative research. As stated by Guba (1981) there are four main criteria that influence research in terms of reliability and validity.

The first criterion is credibility (internal validity), which refers to ensuring that what is needed is measured. In order to provide internal validity in this study, triangulating the data played an important role. Also, enough time was spent by the researcher's observation of the participants as the researcher works in that foundation university. Moreover, to be able to ensure that honesty is kept while collecting the data, the participants were provided a chance to reject participating in the study. Therefore, only eager participants were involved in the study.

The second criterion is transferability (external validity), which is about extending the results of the study to other situations. To be able to build external validity, it was ensured by the researcher that the sufficient information about the institution and the participants was provided, which can also be useful for further research and enable the reader to make a transfer.

The third criterion is dependability which refers to having the same results in each try in the same context with the help of having the same methods and participants. In an attempt to make the study dependable, detailed information about the stages and the process of the study was given. The data collection instruments, procedures and analysis of the study were explained clearly to enable future researchers to conduct repetitive or similar studies.

The final criterion is confirmability, which is being able to get the results of the study in which the researcher's prejudices or characteristics are avoided. In this sense, the researcher bias was reduced by data triangulation through the questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. This helped the researcher to interpret the results more reasonably. Also, the researcher adopted the questionnaires from another study that had reliable results so that this study could also be valid and reliable. Regarding these, all the data collected in this study complemented each other.

3.5 Limitations

There are some limitations to be considered in this study. First of all, the small number of the participants is one of the limitations of the study. Due to the fact that

only a limited number of the instructors teaching B1 level learners and students were involved in the study, except the level and academic coordinators of the program, the internal validity might have been affected.

In addition, the data were obtained from the participants that were studying or teaching in B1 level at the same preparatory program of the same institution. Therefore, the results could not be generalized to all populations but only to this population, which also influences external validity. If some other participants from various preparatory programs of other institutions had been involved in the study, broader perspectives of the ideas of the entire population would have been provided.

Also, other language skills such as reading, listening and writing were not taken into consideration. This can also be a limitation as the students' abilities in these skills might have an impact on students' performance in speaking.

The final limitation is that only the speaking lessons and program in B1 level were focused on. To be able to conduct comparative studies in the future, other speaking lessons that are designed for other levels such as B2 and C1 can be centered upon to provide cohesiveness in terms of speaking skill.

3.6 Delimitations

There have also been a few delimitations of the study. This study was narrowed down in terms of the purpose of the study and the research questions. To be able to have more significant information based on speaking lessons, B1 level instructors and students, the level coordinator as well as the academic coordinator of the program participated in the study to provide indepth information about the instruction of speaking and speaking needs in this particular proficiency level. The researcher did not involve all the instructors and students of all levels in the study as the main focus was on B1 speaking needs of the learners. That's is because B1 level is the only level in which learners first start to be involved in separate speaking lessons that require longer and meaningful conversations. Besides this, demographic data were not collected in the study since the study aimed to find out the learners' perceptions and needs towards speaking skills and subskills.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Overview

This chapter represents the results of all the data gathered from B1 level students, the instructors teaching B1 level learners, level and academic coordinators of the preparatory program regarding their perceptions about the importance of speaking subskills and the students' performance in speaking. The data were collected successively through the questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The findings were grouped around these sections; the perceptions of the students about the importance and performance related to speaking subskills, the perceptions of the instructors, level and academic coordinators about the importance of speaking subskills, the students' performance in these subskills and the differences between the perceptions of the instructors, level coordinator, academic coordinator and students. Finally, based on the gathered data suggestions for the improvement of the existing speaking syllabus are reported.

4.2 The Perceptions of the Students about the Importance of Speaking Subskills and their Performance in Speaking

In an attempt to answer the first and second research questions about the perceptions of the students in terms of the importance and the rate of the students' performance related to speaking subskills, the data were collected from questionnaires and classroom observations. The data were also supported by semi-structured interviews. The mean scores of the questionnaires were calculated through SPSS software and paired sample t-test was applied to find out the differences between the importance attached to the students' speaking subskills and their performance rate.

The perceptions of the students based on the importance given to the speaking subskills and the self ratings of their own performance in speaking are presented in the table below.

Table 2

The Perceptions of the Students about the Importance of Speaking Subskills and Their Performance in Speaking

Speaking Subskills	The Perceptions of the Students Based on the Importance of Speaking Subskills		The Perceptions of the Students Based on Their Self Rating of Speaking Subskills		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Asking questions	4.31	.80	3.67	1.09	t(74)=5.05 , p< .05
Answering questions	4.46	.86	3.77	1.07	t(72)=4.60 , p< .05
Expressing oneself	4.44	.85	3.83	1.08	t(75)=4.26 , p< .05
Summarising	3.65	1.13	3.24	1.04	t(70)=2.61 , p< .05
Describing	3.60	1.21	3.22	1.21	t(75)=2.85 , p< .05
Comparing-contrasting	3.72	1.06	3.36	1.07	t(73)=2.78 , p< .05
Solving problems	4.09	1.08	3.45	1.08	t(72)=4.48 , p< .05
Reasoning	4.17	1.12	3.69	1.23	t(72)=3.97 , p< .05
Making presentations	3.45	1.30	3.00	1.35	t(74)=2.87 , p< .05
Criticising	3.67	1.21	3.27	1.14	t(73)=2.84 , p< .05
Reacting to speech and lecture	4.39	.90	3.96	1.10	t(73)=3.61 , p< .05
Producing correct pronunciation	4.18	.98	3.93	1.01	t(72)=2.55 , p< .05
Wording quickly	3.46	1.30	3.26	1.27	t(75)=1.27 , p> .05
Using appropriate intonation and stress patterns	3.91	1.10	3.76	1.17	t(72)=1.23 , p> .05

As can be seen in Table 2 above, almost all of the participating students perceived all speaking subskills as quite important as all the subskills were valued more than 3 (average) out of 5. Firstly, *answering questions* (4.46) was perceived as the most important subskill in speaking classes. In other words, almost all the students among 80 students found *answering questions* (4.46) the most important subskill of speaking in this level. *Expressing oneself* (4.44) and *reacting to speech and lecture* (4.39) were respectively regarded as significant subskills of speaking. Likewise, the majority of the students viewed *asking questions* (4.31), *producing correct pronunciation* (4.18) and *reasoning* (4.17) as crucial speaking subskills. Finally, in contrast to these significant speaking subskills, the participating students found *making presentations* (3.45) as the least significant speaking subskill, followed by *wording quickly* (3.46) that refers to deciding the ideas, words etc. in mind and delivering them quickly.

When it comes to the students' self rating of their own performance in speaking, *reacting to speech and lecture* (3.96) was revealed as the strongest skill evaluated by the students. Almost all the students thought that they could react well to conversations in lessons and real-life tasks implemented in the lessons. Then, *producing correct pronunciation* (3.93) and *expressing oneself* (3.83) successively followed *reacting to speech and lecture*. The students thought that they were the best in *reacting to speech and lecture* and they found themselves better in *expressing themselves* and *producing correct pronunciation* when compared to the other subskills. While the students regarded themselves as the most effective performers in the subskills mentioned above, it was clear that most of them perceived themselves as lower performers in *making presentations* (3.00), *describing* (3.22), *summarising* (3.24) and *wording quickly* (3.26) regarding their performance in speaking.

Furthermore, these findings were supported by classroom observations where the students were involved in class speaking activities. Using an observation table, the researcher reported the most frequently used speaking subskills by the students while being engaged in pair/group work tasks and activities. As viewed in the table with the percentages presented below, the researcher obtained mostly similar answers to the questionnaires. The following table provides the most and the least speaking subskills used in B1 level speaking classes.

Table 3

The Most Frequent Speaking Subskills in B1 Level Classes

Speaking Subskills	The Percentages of Speaking Subskills Use
1. asking questions	100 %
2. answering questions	100 %
3. expressing yourself	100 %
4. summarising	25 %
5. describing	25 %
6. comparing-contrasting	25 %
7. solving problems	25 %
8. reasoning	50 %
9. making presentations	0 %
10. criticising	0 %
11. reacting to speech and lecture	75 %
12. producing correct pronunciation	75 %
13. wording quickly	0 %
14. using appropriate intonation and stress	0 %

As it is clear from the Table 3 reported above, the researcher reported the percentages of the most frequent speaking subskills focused during the speaking activities in 4 different lessons as to her observations. According to the results presented in the table above, the observations revealed similarities to the questionnaires in that *asking questions* (100 %), *answering questions* (100 %) and *expressing oneself* (100 %) are the most frequent subskills that were focused on by the students while they were getting involved in pair/group speaking activities. These were followed by *reacting to speech and lecture* (75%) and *producing correct pronunciation* (75 %).

In contrast to the most frequent subskills used in speaking lessons, *summarising* (25 %), *describing* (25 %), *comparing-contrasting* (25 %) and *solving*

problems (25 %) were marked as the subskills that were used only in 1 speaking lesson. Likewise, there were some subskills that were not focused at all in these 4 speaking lessons based on the observations. As seen in the Table 2, *making presentations* (0 %), *criticising* (0 %), *wording quickly* (0 %) and *using appropriate intonation and stress* (0%) were not observed in any speaking classes. According to the observation table, it was figured out that the students who tried to focus on some certain speaking subskills (the ones marked as 100% or 75 % in the table) regarded these subskills as important for them while they were performing in the observed speaking lessons.

Finally, the findings of the semi-structured interviews revealed parallel findings. Specifically, the instructors, level and academic coordinators highlighted the importance of students' performance in asking/answering questions, agreeing/disagreeing, starting, maintaining and concluding conversations and lastly, talked about problems and offered solutions. The following excerpts show their perceptions on this issue:

[...] I believe asking and answering questions are among the most important sub-skills to engage students in our classrooms. Students should be able to answer the related questions and express their ideas (Academic coordinator, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] I think B1 level students should be involved in speaking tasks such as asking and answering questions; agreeing/disagreeing as well as starting, maintaining and concluding conversations. These tasks will help them to improve their speaking ability (Level Coordinator, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] In my opinion, the students should learn how to ask and answer questions, express themselves as well as agree and disagree with the topics covered in the class. This will aid with their performance in speaking classes. They mostly ask questions and answer the questions, but rarely use summarizing or criticizing (Instructor, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

Along with the interviews carried out with the instructors, level and academic coordinators, the students' interviews showed similar findings. Initially, the students mostly centered upon expressing their ideas/themselves, and asking and answering questions as important subskills of speaking. These were followed by reacting to conversations, reasoning and producing correct pronunciation. Finally, they talked about the subskills they found themselves good at and mentioned about some hardships in speaking. The responses can be viewed in the following comments:

[...] I believe expressing myself is the most important factor in speaking because if we can express ourselves well, we can find solutions to our problems and communicate well with other people. However, making presentations, speaking too fast and focusing on intonation are not significant for me in this level (Student, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] In my opinion, asking and answering questions are very crucial as well as expressing my opinions and discussing in longer conversations. I think I am good at answering questions and comparing in conversations; but speaking quickly, criticizing, focusing on pronunciation and intonation are difficult for me (Student, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] Expressing myself elaborately is the most important factor in speaking as we are expected to respond the conversations in details. Reacting to dialogues and giving detailed answers are significant. However, I can't express myself well and criticize if I try to speak fast (Student, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

To conclude, it is obvious that almost all the students in B1 level gave importance to pointing out their ideas in detail in conversations by asking and answering questions, discussing such as agreeing/disagreeing, reasoning and producing correct pronunciation. Also, they found themselves successful in reacting to conversations as well as expressing their ideas with correct pronunciation while they thought that they were not good performers in describing something, summarizing an event, making presentations and stating their ideas in a row. This showed that although the students valued many subskills mentioned above, they did

not view themselves as good performers in all subskills. That's why their needs in the subskills which they did not find themselves successful in should be taken into consideration to improve their speaking ability.

4.2.1 The differences between the perceptions of the students about the importance of speaking subskills and their performance in speaking. As viewed in Table 1 illustrated in the previous section of this study, there were differences between the mean scores regarding the perceptions of students on the importance given to speaking subskills and their performance in speaking classes. There were differences between the subskills that were seen as important and the students' performance on these subskills. These differences revealed a gap which can be referred as the students' needs in these subskills.

First of all, the differences between the two variables were identified through paired-samples t-test. Based on the analyzed data, there were significant differences ($p < .05$) among the 12 main subskills (see Table 2 above) focused on B1 level, except for the 2 subskills of *wording quickly* and *using appropriate intonation and stress patterns* which did not reveal any significant difference ($p > .05$) between the importance and performance of the speaking subskills. Specifically, there were significant differences between the perceptions of the students regarding the importance of the subskills and the perceptions of the students about how they view themselves about their own speaking performance such as *answering questions* (the importance: 4.46, the performance: 3.77), *asking questions* (the importance: 4.31, the performance: 3.67), *expressing oneself* (the importance: 4.44, the performance: 3.83), *solving problems* (the importance: 4.09, the performance: 3.45).

All of these assumptions revealed that although the students attached much importance to the speaking subskills, they do not rate themselves as good performers in speaking. These findings showed that there is a gap between their perceptions about the importance given to the speaking subskills and their existing speaking performance. Therefore, this gap should be mediated by meeting their perceived needs and the existing speaking syllabus should be redesigned based on the gathered data.

4.3 The Perceptions of the Instructors, Level and Academic Coordinators about the Importance of Speaking Subskills and Students' Performance in Speaking

To find out the perceptions of the instructors, level and academic coordinators in terms of the importance attached to the speaking skill as well as the students' performance in speaking, the data were gathered through questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The following table presents the obtained findings together with the differences related to the importance of the speaking subskills as well as the rate on the students' performance in speaking.

Table 4
The Perceptions of the Instructors, Level and Academic Coordinators about the Importance of Speaking Subskills and Students' Performance in Speaking

Speaking Subskills	The Perceptions of the Instructors and the Academic Staff Based On the Importance of Speaking Subskills for the Students		The Perceptions of the Instructors and the Academic Staff Based on Their Rating for the Students' Speaking Performance		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Asking questions	4.47	.70	3.47	.84	t(18)=4.62, p< .05
Answering questions	4.68	.58	3.42	.77	t(18)=7.50, p< .05
Expressing oneself	4.89	.31	3.00	1.11	t(18)=7.88, p< .05
Summarising	3.63	.89	2.37	.89	t(18)=4.80, p< .05
Describing	4.37	.50	3.32	.75	t(18)=5.88, p< .05
Comparing-contrasting	4.11	.57	3.21	1.13	t(18)=3.54, p< .05
Solving problems	4.37	.60	2.74	1.10	t(18)=7.03, p< .05
Reasoning	4.53	.84	2.79	1.32	t(18)=5.70, p< .05

Table 4 (cont'd)

	M	SD	M	SD	t-test
Making presentations	3.58	1.22	2.21	.92	t(18)=4.08, p< .05
Criticising	3.63	.83	2.37	.95	t(18)=4.44, p< .05
Reacting to speech and lecture	4.00	.94	2.68	1.10	t(18)=4.43, p< .05
Producing correct pronunciation	4.32	.82	3.00	.88	t(18)=5.43, p< .05
Wording quickly	3.68	1.06	2.32	.95	t(18)=4.59, p< .05
Using appropriate intonation and stress patterns	3.26	1.10	2.11	.87	t(18)=5.62, p< .05

As shown in the Table 4 above, it is obvious that almost all of the B1 instructors, level and academic coordinators perceived speaking subskills as very important because all them were rated more than 3 (average) out of 5. More specifically, *expressing oneself* (4.89) was perceived as the most important subskill in speaking and followed by *answering questions* (4.68), *reasoning* (4.53) and *asking questions* (4.47). Besides, *solving problems* and *describing* (4.37), *producing correct pronunciation* (4.32), *comparing and contrasting* (4.11) and *reacting to speech and lecture* (4.00) were perceived as important subskills in speaking classes by the three participating groups.

Contrary to these findings, *using appropriate intonation and stress patterns* (3.26) was perceived as as the least significant speaking subskill which was followed by *making presentations* (3.58). A possible reason behind this finding might be the fact that the development these two subskills are emphasized more in higher level classes. That's why, the participants prioritized certain subskills because the students get involved in longer conversations that require giving reactions, answering and expressing themselves in B1 classes.

Furthermore, when the participants' ratings for their students' performance in speaking are considered, *asking questions* (3.47) was perceived as the most successful subskill. *Answering questions* (3.42), *describing* (3.32) and *comparing and contrasting* (3.21) followed *asking questions* (3.47). As seen in the table above,

almost all the students' performance was not found equal to the expectations regarding the importance of these specified subskills. Specifically, the students' performances were rated lower than the rate of importance attached to the speaking subskills. The participants believed that the students were the best at *asking questions* (3.47) and they found the students also better at *answering questions* (3.42), *describing* (3.32) and *comparing and contrasting* (3.21) when compared to the rest of the subskills in the questionnaires.

On the other hand, it is obvious that *using appropriate intonation and stress patterns* (2.11) was figured out as the poorest subskill regarding the students' speaking performance. *Making presentations* (2.21) and *wording quickly* (2.32) were revealed as the subskills that the students could not perform as well.

Moreover, to complement the questionnaire findings, data gathered from the semi-structured interviews revealed that the B1 instructors, level and academic coordinators perceived asking and answering questions, providing reasons, showing interest during conversation and reacting to others' opinions to be crucial subskills for the students' performance in speaking classes as shown in the excerpts below:

[...] In B1 classes, the students are expected to seek or give personal views and opinions providing reasons and using a simple language. Thus, I believe asking and answering questions are important sub-skills for this particular level (Academic coordinator, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] I expect my students to ask and answer questions as well as show interest during conversation. The students are asked to express their opinions and react to the others' ideas as well (Level coordinator, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] Well, expressing their opinions, and answering detailed questions are crucial for the students's speaking performance (Instructor, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

On the other hand, the three groups of participants stated that the students had difficulty with certain subskills such as solving problems, reasoning, criticizing in pair/group works, presenting their ideas and reacting to speech, uttering their talks

quickly and focusing on intonation in conversations which are addressed in the following comments:

[...] My students usually have difficulty with reacting to their partners meaningfully and critical thinking, which often prevents them from solving the problems in group works. Also, they usually cannot express their opinions quickly due to focusing on grammar too much (Instructor, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] While expressing their ideas in details, the students have difficulty and also they cannot state their opinions quickly in conversations just because of accuracy issues. They usually ignore stress patterns as they don't pay attention to phonemics (Instructor, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] Well, the students usually have difficulty with criticisizing, reasoning and reacting appropriately as they tend to memorize their roles in dialogues or focus on grammar too much. However, these should not be expected to be improved in a short time (Instructor, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

All in all, the obtained findings indicated that the importance attached to the subskills, the expectations for the students' speaking performance and the students' existing speaking performance form a gap to be mediated. The gap can be referred to the students' speaking needs to be fulfilled.

4.3.1 The differences between the perceptions of the instructors, level and academic coordinators about the importance of speaking subskills and students' performance in speaking. Based on the results displayed in Table 4 above, there were significant differences between the perceptions of the instructors, level and academic coordinators in terms of the perceived importance of the speaking subskills as well as the students' speaking performance. These can be inferred as the students' needs regarding their speaking ability in B1 classes.

To begin with, the speaking performance of the students was not found equal to the importance given to these subskills by the participants. Regarding the paired sample t-test findings reported in the Table 4, significant differences ($p < .05$) were

found among all the subskills. For instance, the students' performance in tasks such as *expressing oneself* (the importance: 4.89, the performance: 3.00), *reasoning* (the importance: 4.53, the performance: 2.79) and *solving problems* (the importance: 4.37, the performance: 2.74) was not found equal to the importance attached to these subskills.

To put it simply, the participants attached more importance to all the subskills when compared to the rate of the students' speaking performance. This resulted from the fact that most of the speaking subskills based on the students' speaking performance were rated below 3 (the average) out of 5 as can be seen in Table 4. The gap between the expectations, importance attached to these subskills and the students' speaking performance can be perceived as the students' speaking needs that should be fulfilled in the speaking syllabus the next academic year.

4.4 The Differences between the Perceptions of the Instructors, Level Coordinator, Academic Coordinator and Students about the Importance of Speaking Subskills

In this section, the perceptions of the instructors, level coordinator, academic coordinator and students regarding the importance of speaking subskills were compared. The mean scores and standard deviations of all participating groups are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5

The Differences between the Perceptions of the Instructors, Level Coordinator, Academic Coordinator and Students about the Importance of Speaking Subskills

The Importance of Speaking Subskills	The Perceptions of the Students		The Perceptions of the Instructors, Level and Academic Coordinators	
	M	SD	M	SD
Asking questions	4.31	.80	4.47	.70
Answering questions	4.46	.86	4.68	.58

Table 5 (cont'd)

	M	SD	M	SD
Expressing oneself	4.44	.85	4.89	.31
Summarising	3.65	1.13	3.63	.89
Describing	3.60	1.21	4.37	.50
Comparing-contrasting	3.72	1.06	4.11	.57
Solving problems	4.09	1.08	4.37	.60
Reasoning	4.17	1.12	4.53	.84
Making presentations	3.45	1.30	3.58	1.22
Criticising	3.67	1.21	3.63	.83
Reacting to speech and lecture	4.39	.90	4.00	.94
Producing correct pronunciation	4.18	.98	4.32	.82
Wording quickly	3.46	1.30	3.68	1.06
Using appropriate intonation and stress patterns	3.91	1.10	3.26	1.10

As shown in Table 5, great importance was attached to almost all the subskills by the academic staff when compared to the perceptions of students. Firstly, the subskills that had the most important difference were as follows: *Describing*, *expressing oneself* and *comparing-contrasting*. The average (mean) score of *describing* was rated 3.60 by the students while it was rated as 4.37 by the academic staff. The difference of the mean scores was 0.77. The mean score of *expressing oneself* was 4.44 rated by the students whereas it was rated as 4.89 by the academic staff. The difference of the mean scores was 0.45. Lastly, the mean score of *comparing-contrasting* was 3.72 rated by the students while it was rated as 4.11 by the academic staff. The difference of the mean scores was 0.39.

Apart from these findings, while almost all the subskills were valued more by the academic staff compared to the students, there were four subskills which were attached more importance by the students themselves. These subskills were successively indicated as follows from the most different mean scores to the least ones: *Using appropriate intonation and stress patterns* (the importance by the students: 3.91 and the importance rated by the academic staff: 3.26) , *reacting to*

speech and lecture (the importance rated by the students: 4.39 and the importance rated by the academic staff: 4.00), *criticising* (the importance rated by the students: 3.67 and the importance rated by the academic staff: 3.63) and *summarising* (the importance by the students: 3.65 and the importance by the academic staff: 3.63).

In addition, these findings were supported by the semi-structured interviews. Four groups of participants namely, students, instructors, level and academic coordinators attached importance to the speaking subskills such as, expressing oneself clearly, describing something or someone, asking and answering questions, comparing/contrasting and maintaining conversations as illustrated in these comments:

[...] I believe expressing themselves clearly, describing something or someone, asking some questions and comparing and contrasting are important speaking subskills for B1 level students (Instructor, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] The students should be able to ask and answer questions as well as compare and contrast various topics. They should also try to keep a simple conversation unless the teacher motivates them. These subskills are important in speaking classes (Level coordinator, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] B1 students need to be able to ask the questions and express themselves clearly. They need to maintain detailed conversations as well (Academic coordinator, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March).

[...] Stating my ideas clearly with correct pronunciation is quite important for me. Asking and answering questions, comparing my ideas with the others and describing something in dialogues can help me communicate well (Student, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

To sum up, all of the participants considered similar speaking subskills to be important in B1 level English classes. They emphasized the importance of the students' involvement in these subskills which would aid with the development of their speaking ability.

4.5 The Differences between the Perceptions of the Instructors, Level Coordinator, Academic Coordinator and Students about the Students' Performance in Speaking

In this section, the perceptions of the instructors, level coordinator, academic coordinator and students about the students' performance in speaking were compared. The mean scores of the participants along with the standard deviation are illustrated in Table 6 below:

Table 6
The Differences between the Perceptions of Instructors, Level Coordinator, Academic Coordinator and Students about the Students' Performance in Speaking

The Rate of the Performance in Speaking	The Perceptions of The Students		The Perceptions of the Instructors, Level and Academic Coordinators	
	M	SD	M	SD
Asking questions	3.67	1.09	3.47	.84
Answering questions	3.77	1.07	3.42	.77
Expressing oneself	3.83	1.08	3.00	1.11
Summarising	3.24	1.04	2.37	.89
Describing	3.22	1.21	3.32	.75
Comparing-contrasting	3.36	1.07	3.21	1.13
Solving problems	3.45	1.08	2.74	1.10
Reasoning	3.69	1.23	2.79	1.32
Making presentations	3.00	1.35	2.21	.92
Criticising	3.27	1.14	2.37	.95
Reacting to speech and lecture	3.96	1.10	2.68	1.10

Table 6 (cont'd)

	M	SD	M	SD
Producing correct pronunciation	3.93	1.01	3.00	.88
Wording quickly	3.26	1.27	2.32	.95
Using appropriate intonation and stress patterns	3.76	1.17	2.11	.87

As is shown in Table 6, the students' speaking performance in all the subskills except *describing* (the students' perceptions: 3.22 and the academic staff's perceptions: 3.32) was rated less by the academic staff when compared to the students' perceptions about their own performance. That's to say, the academic staff found the students' speaking performance lower than the students themselves. Regarding the table above, the biggest difference in mean scores between both groups of the participants belong to *using appropriate intonation and stress patterns* rated by the students as 3.76 whereas rated by the academic staff as 2.11. The mean score difference was 1.65. This could be attributed to the amount of the importance attached to this subskill. This subskill was followed by *reacting to speech and lecture* which ranked from 3.96 (by the students) to 2.68 (by the academic staff) by having 1.28 mean score difference and *wording quickly* which ranked from 3.26 (by the students) to 2.32 (by the academic staff) by having 0.94 mean score difference.

Furthermore, the quantitative data was supported by semi-structured interviews conducted with the instructors, level coordinator, academic coordinator and students. All these participating groups stated that the B1 level students had difficulties reacting to their partners meaningfully, answering quickly in dialogues, giving reactions to speech, making presentations, and using appropriate intonation and stress patterns while performing speaking tasks. The following comments support these findings:

[...] The students have most difficulty in reacting to their partners meaningfully, answering quickly in dialogues and summarizing (Academic coordinator, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] My students mostly have difficulty with reacting to speech and making presentations (Instructor, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] B1 level students generally have difficulty with wording quickly and using appropriate intonation and stress patterns. I think this is because they do not pay attention to phonemic issues as expected. (Level coordinator, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] While expressing my ideas, I cannot focus on my intonation and speak fast because of focusing on grammar. I also have difficulty while summarizing a text or criticizing my partner in dialogues as my vocabulary knowledge is not enough (Student, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

To clarify the findings, it can be indicated that the academic staff considered that the speaking performance of B1 students was lower and they had difficulty while performing such tasks. This could be attributed to the academic staff's expectations from the students and the high importance given to these subskills by the academic staff in this particular level.

4.6 Suggestions provided by the Instructors, Level and Academic Coordinators for the Improvement of the Existing Speaking Syllabus

From the perspectives of the instructors, level and academic coordinators about the suggestions for the improvement of the existing speaking syllabus, data were gathered from semi-structured interviews. The qualitative findings revealed that the existing syllabus should include more meaningful tasks, the number of activities out of the class should be increased, pair/group work should be promoted and lastly, more authentic materials should be developed. The following excerpts show their recommendations regarding the existing speaking syllabus:

[...] I believe students should be engaged in more meaningful speaking tasks and the number of out-side class activities could be increased to improve the existing syllabus and help students to develop their speaking skills. (Academic coordinator, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] Students have limited opportunities to practice the language. To improve the existing syllabus, students should be involved in more pair/group work activities to practice the target language. (Level coordinator, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

[...] In my opinion, there should be more authentic materials in the syllabus to cater for the needs and interests of the students (Instructor, Semi-structured interview data, 9th March, 2017).

Based on these assumptions about the existing syllabus of B1 level, the assessment of speaking, classroom speaking tasks and the suggestions for the improvement of the syllabus, it is shown that the academic staff made the comments above to be able to meet their learners' speaking needs and mediate the gap between the importance, expectations they attach to the speaking subskills and the students' own speaking performance so that the students can improve their speaking skills and be competent in this level. Even though there were also some constructive comments about the tasks, books and the syllabus, the findings showed that they do not provide enough practice for the students in this particular level and there is still a need for the improvement of the speaking syllabus to meet these unmet needs for the following academic year.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

The main purpose of this study was to identify the speaking needs of B1 level students and find out whether those needs are met in the existing program or not. Furthermore, this study also aimed to figure out the perceptions of B1 level students, instructors, level and academic coordinators about the importance of speaking subskills along with the students' speaking performance. In line with these purposes, data were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively. A mixed method research design was adopted for data analysis. This chapter initially discusses the results of the study including each research question in depth and then presents practical implications offering recommendations for further research and practice.

5.1.1 Discussion of findings of RQ 1: How do the pre-intermediate, B1 level Turkish EFL learners perceive the importance of the speaking subskills and their performance in speaking in the preparatory classes? The first research question in this study attempted to find out the perceptions of B1 level students, about the importance of speaking subskills utilized in the classrooms and their performance in speaking through questionnaires and an observation table which were supported by semi-structured interviews. Based on the ratings and perceptions of the students, the analysis indicated that all the speaking subskills were rated above 3 (average) out of 5 (mean scores), which showed that they attached great importance to the subskills in speaking lessons in their classroom practices. Specifically, the subskills that were attached the greatest importance by the students were successively as follows: *answering questions*, *expressing oneself* and *reacting to speech and lecture*. These revealed similarities in terms of the findings of the observations. The reason behind these findings might be the requirements of the students' existing level, B1 since the students are supposed to

give reactions in conversations with correct pronunciation, answer detailed questions and express themselves elaborately so that they can go beyond the elementary level and transfer from basic users to independent learners according to CEFR. Besides, the students get involved in longer and meaningful dialogues that require agreeing/disagreeing, reasoning, summarizing, comparing/contrasting and solving problems in B1. Also, another reason behind this finding might be the distribution of the speaking activities and time spent on these subskills in speaking classes. The distribution of the activities and time spent on all the speaking subskills might not have been the same. Thus, the participants might have prioritized these speaking subskills mentioned above.

In contrast to the most important subskills rated by the participants, there were some subskills that were attached the least importance when compared to the other subskills. The subskills that were found as the least important by the students are respectively as follows: *making presentations* and *wording quickly* and by the instructors, level and academic coordinator are successively as follows: *using appropriate intonation and stress patterns* and *making presentations*. This may be due to the focus on these subskills in higher levels as students of intermediate and upper-intermediate level can be expected to explain their ideas quickly by focusing on intonation and make presentations related to more academic topics. As B1 is the level in which the students first get involved in longer and detailed conversations, more focus on the delivery of ideas elaborately and appropriately are prioritized rather than centering upon intonation and making presentations.

In line with these assumptions, the findings of the study carried out by Ekici (2003) revealed that expressing oneself, asking and answering questions, solving problems are the common prioritized speaking subskills that were attached much importance by the students, instructors and curriculum coordinators. Despite the similarities of Ekici's study, solving problems is not the greatest subskill rated by the participants of this study when compared to the other subskills that were given the greatest importance. Focus on solving problems in Ekici's study might be due to the fact that the students were majoring in Applied Sciences Faculty in Tour Guidance Department and they were initially supposed to solve the problems based on the specific purposes of their departments to be able to communicate with people in their field better and quickly.

In this study, there were also other subskills that all groups of participants found as crucial in speaking such as asking questions, producing correct pronunciation and solving problems whereas summarising and criticising are the ones that were quite close to the least important subskills rated by all the participants. These findings may be because of the expectations from the students of B1 level because it is supposed that the students of this level can express ideas to communicate well in pairs/groups, respond appropriately, differentiate between accents in conversations, give suggestions, offer solutions, show interest during the conversation with correct pronunciation, maintain a dialogue and agree/disagree on topics by solving problems. Summarising and criticising may be linked to the improvement of these stated learning needs. Due to the link, there might be a need to meet these needs first and then improve summarising and criticising. That's why summarising and criticising might not have been prioritized subskills according to the participants.

By looking at these findings, it can be concluded that almost all the students agreed on the significance of many common subskills of speaking which are directly related to communication skills. Apart from these, some subskills mentioned above were undervalued by the students when compared to the other subskills and also were rated in a different way regarding the importance by the students. However, the focus on all the speaking subskills rated by the whole participants in terms of their significance cannot be denied.

When the students' performance is considered, it was found out that the students regarded themselves as the best performers in *reacting to speech and lecture* which was followed by *producing correct pronunciation* and *expressing themselves* while they perceived themselves as lower performers successively in *making presentations*, *describing*, *summarising* and *wording quickly* regarding their performance in speaking. The reason behind this finding might be because of the students' own awareness of their proficiency level that mostly focuses on expressing ideas appropriately with correct pronunciation and responding to others. According to the findings, the students believed that these subskills should be given importance to be able to communicate effectively and they thought that they are good at these subskills in speaking classes. It can be inferred that there is a parallelism between the speaking subskills that the students attached importance to and their perceptions about their own speaking performance on these subskills. What's more, the subskills

in which the students found themselves as lower performers were almost the ones that the students attached of little importance, which revealed another parallelism between the importance attached to the subskills and the performance of the students on speaking.

The connection between the importance of the speaking subskills and the students' speaking performance can be seen from the paired sample t-test scores. As it was clear from the results, there were significant differences between the perceptions of the students of the importance of speaking subskills and their performance in speaking in 12 subskills except for *wording quickly* and *using appropriate intonation and stress patterns*. That's to say, the students attached much importance to the speaking subskills, but they did not view themselves as good performers in speaking. As the target proficiency needs to be matched with the existing proficiency of the learners (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987), the students might have felt the need to be better performers in speaking to be able to fulfill the expectations and requirements of B1 level.

5.1.1.1 Discussion of findings of RQ 1.1: Are there any differences between the perceptions of B1 level Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators regarding the importance of the speaking subskills? This subordinate research question supporting the first research question aimed to figure out whether there are any differences between the perceptions of B1 level Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators regarding the importance of the speaking subskills through the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Considering the responses from the participants, it is obvious that both the students and academic staff including the instructors, level and academic coordinators attached importance to the speaking subskills as all the subskills were rated above 3 out of 5 (mean scores). However, according to the mean scores of the questionnaires the academic staff attached great importance to almost all the speaking subskills when compared to the students. Thus, there were some differences found between the students and the academic staff's perceptions. Whereas the academic staff attached great importance to various subskills when compared to the students, there were some subskills that students gave more importance than the academic staff.

Firstly, the subskills that were attached more importance by the academic staff are as follows: *describing*, *expressing oneself* and *comparing-contrasting*. While

there are some other subskills such as *asking* and *answering questions*, *reasoning*, *solving problems*, *producing correct pronunciation* etc. that were given more importance by the academic staff, *describing*, *expressing oneself* and *comparing-contrasting* were revealed as the first three subskills that showed the most difference between the students and academic staff's perceptions. The motive behind this finding might be the academic staff's greater focus on interaction in pair and group work that require the students to express themselves clearly, compare some events, texts, topics etc. in group activities as well as describe some people in their families, some places etc. When the subskills that were given more importance by the students are considered, these are successively as follows: *using appropriate intonation and stress patterns*, *reacting to speech and lecture*, *criticizing* and *summarizing*. The underlying cause behind this finding can be due to the students' regarding themselves as inadequate to perform these subskills. Therefore, the students might have thought that these subskills should be emphasized so that they can be more competent while using these subskills. To exemplify, the students usually get involved in pair/group works in B1 and they generally feel the need to react others with correct intonation and they might need to criticise something or someone and summarize an event to their partners during conversations in pair/group works. This finding can be supported by Demirbaş (2011) stating that some important subskills of speaking including explaining, narrating a story or a speech etc. can be handled at this level.

Regarding the assumptions above, a study carried out by Orang'i (2013) also disclosed similarities in terms of the differences of the perceptions between the students and the instructors. In the study, the students attached more importance to *reacting to speech and lecture* than the instructors while the students undervalued *describing* and *comparing/contrasting* in contrast to the instructors, the same as in the current study. However, Orang'i's study (2013) differs from the current study in that the instructors found *summarising* as more crucial than the students. This might be because of different types of participants who were diploma students of tour guide in the study whereas the students of the current study were B1 level students studying at a preparatory program. The instructors might have felt the need to focus on *summarising* for their students to guide them to summarise the topics, events etc. well to clarify their ideas while they are dealing with business English. Thus, the instructors might have put more focus on *summarising*.

To sum up, all of the participants agreed on similar speaking subskills as significant in B1 level English classes, except for some differences pointed out above. All the participants put emphasis on the importance of the speaking subskills. From these perceptions, it can be concluded that both the students and academic staff care about utilizing the speaking subskills to be able to develop their speaking skill. These findings are in accordance with Chan's (2001) study revealing that there was consistency with respect to the responses of teachers and students in terms of both groups' perceptions related to the students' needs and wants, their self ratings of their competence in academic and professional domain. The consistency indicated that the students were able to express their opinions on various skills and conscious in terms of their competence. However, teachers and students' perceptions do not match all time. In Karataş's (2007) study that was an evaluation of the syllabus of the English II instruction program applied in the Modern Languages Department, the results revealed some significant differences between the teachers' and students' opinions in terms of context, input, process and product. Briefly, the findings show that the perceptions of the students and academic staff can be both similar and different regarding different variables such as needs, attitudes and proficiency level which should be closely addressed while designing a language program.

5.1.2 Discussion of findings of RQ 2: How do the instructors teaching B1 level learners, level and academic coordinators perceive the importance of the speaking subskills and students' performance in speaking in the preparatory classes? The second question aimed to find out the perceptions of the instructors teaching B1 level learners, level and academic coordinators about the importance of the speaking subskills and students' performance in speaking in the preparatory classes. With regard to this question, the data were gathered through questionnaires and supported with semi-structured interviews.

Based on the ratings and perceptions of the academic staff, the analysis indicated that all the speaking subskills were rated above 3 (average) out of 5 (mean scores), which showed that they attached great importance to the subskills in speaking lessons. Specifically, the subskills that were attached the greatest importance by by the instructors, level and academic coordinators were respectively as follows: *expressing oneself*, *answering questions* and *reasoning*. It might be due to the fact that longer and meaningful dialogues that include agreeing/disagreeing, reasoning, comparing/contrasting etc. are emphasized in this level. Also, the

distribution of the activities might not have been the same in the speaking classes. Some subskills such as expressing oneself in detail, reacting with correct pronunciation, reasoning etc. could have been focused more in the lessons. That's why the academic staff might have thought that these subskills were prior to the others in this level.

The subskills that were found as the least important by the instructors, level and academic coordinator are successively as follows: *using appropriate intonation and stress patterns* and *making presentations*. A possible reason might be some certain expectations from the students of B1 level. As the students of B1 level are not supposed to use appropriate intonation, make presentations and focus on more academic skills, the academic staff might not have given importance to these subskills in this level. These subskills can be emphasized in higher levels. Regarding these findings, it can be stated that the academic staff including the instructors, level and academic coordinators agreed on the significance of many common subskills of speaking which are directly related to interaction among the students.

When academic staff members including the instructors', level and academic coordinators' perceptions about the students' performance in speaking are taken into consideration, the speaking performance of the students was not found equal to the importance given to these subskills by the participants. The importance rates outperformed the performance rates. Namely, according to the paired sample t-test scores, significant differences were found among all the subskills between the importance attached to the subskills and the students' speaking performance, which might represent the students' speaking needs that should be fully met in the upcoming syllabus of the program. Based on the students' speaking performance, *asking questions* was perceived as the subskill that the students were regarded as good performers in. *Answering questions*, *describing* and *comparing and contrasting* followed *asking questions*. A possible reason of this finding might be related to the amount of exposure of the students to interviewing skills such as asking and answering questions in pair/group work activities in speaking classes and also the academic staff might have observed that the students could perform better in these interviewing skills as well as describing something/someone and compare their ideas etc. thanks to sufficient practice in speaking lessons.

Also, the academic staff might have thought that the students were good at some certain speaking subskills just because some speaking subskills are related with

other skills. To exemplify, if the students are good at summarising, reasoning and criticizing in reading skills, they can also perform these subskills better in speaking. However, the academic staff contended that the students were poor performers in *using appropriate intonation and stress patterns* which was followed by *making presentations* and *wording quickly*. Not surprisingly, these findings are most probably owing to the focus on these subskills in higher levels when compared to B1 as it would not be possible for the students to utilize the appropriate intonation and stress patterns, express their ideas quickly and make presentations based on various topics without achieving interviewing skills, maintaining a conversation, reacting to speeches, expressing ideas clearly etc. The subskills that were seen as the ones in which the students could not perform well may depend on the other stated subskills' improvement. That's why, the academic staff might not have found the students' performance good enough in these subskills and they did not attach much importance to these subskills either. In addition, the number of activities that included the speaking subskills in the classes was not equal. This might have affected the participants' perceptions based on the students' performance in speaking. As observed by the researcher, subskills such as asking and answering questions, reacting meaningfully, expressing oneself elaborately, comparing-contrasting etc. were emphasized and practiced more in the activities that were included in the syllabus.

Furthermore, the results of the semi-structured interviews revealed that the students' perceptions based on their speaking performance might be related to their instructors' expectations, practices as well as support. The researcher witnessed that the students were trying to center upon some certain subskills and perform them appropriately thanks to their instructors' guidance, clear objectives and comments as well as their own perceptions during the classroom observations.

In accordance with these assumptions, it was figured out that supportive statements by teachers encourage students and enhance their performance in Ishiyama and Hartlaub's (2002) study. Another reason behind the students and academic staff's perceptions based on the students' speaking performance can be linked to the students' speaking needs that were met because the academic staff might have thought that the students could feel themselves as good at some speaking subskills just because their speaking needs were met in the existing syllabus. Mede's (2012) study showed similarities of this assumption in that the student teachers'

perceived language and learning needs were met thanks to the efficiency of the program. It also increased teachers' language proficiency. It can be concluded that the efficiency of the program and syllabus including clear goals might have an impact on the students and instructors as well as coordinators' perceptions about the speaking performance of the students.

5.1.2.1 Discussion of findings of RQ 2.1: Are there any differences between the perceptions of B1 level Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators regarding the student performance of the speaking subskills? This subordinate research question backing up the second research question attempted to find out whether there are any differences between the perceptions of B1 level Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators regarding the students' speaking performance through the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Regarding the academic staff's perceptions, the students' speaking performance in all the subskills except *describing* was rated lower by the academic staff in contrast to the students' own perceptions. The most likely reason of this finding might be related to the academic staff's expectations from B1 level students and the students' own feelings as to their speaking performance because "learning, particularly the learning of a language, is an emotional experience, and the feelings that the learning process evokes will have a crucial bearing on the success or failure of the learning" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.47).

Specifically, the most different mean scores between the students and the academic staff belong to *using appropriate intonation and stress patterns* which was followed by *reacting to speech and lecture* and *wording quickly*. The academic staff rated the students' speaking performance as lower than the students. This might be because the academic staff might have considered that intonation and stress patterns and wording quickly can be developed in time. Also, they may have thought that reacting to speech and lecture with correct pronunciation and intonation requires adequate vocabulary and grammar knowledge as well as communication skills that can be directly utilized during conversations. Therefore, they might not have found the students competent enough to react appropriately to the speech, which indicates that the academic staff might feel the need for their students to be competent enough first in terms of accuracy and fluency so that they can fulfill the requirements of B1 level in the end in speaking lessons.

Another cause behind the findings can be due to the higher importance attached to the speaking subskills by the academic staff than the students. That's to say, the academic staff expected more from the students and when their expectations were not met fully by the students, they graded their performance lower than the students themselves. Tsao's (2008) study is in line with the current study in that learners' needs and teachers' expectations do not match all the time. Apart from the expectations of the instructors, as stated by Harmer (1991), it can be indicated that teachers are the ones who are aware of their students' needs about the language they are learning.

5.1.3 Discussion of findings of RQ 3: What recommendations can be made for the improvement of the existing speaking syllabus in the preparatory program? The last research question of the study attempted to provide recommendations about the improvement of the existing speaking syllabus in the B1 level preparatory program based on the reflections of Turkish EFL learners, instructors, level and academic coordinators. The findings gathered from the semi-structured interviews revealed that all the participants highly recommended that the components such as purposeful speaking tasks, more out-side class activities, focus on pair/group work activities instead of individual speaking activities, more authentic tasks related to the learners' own lives, various types of designed materials should be increased. When these suggestions are taken into consideration, a study carried out by Soruç (2012) differs from the present study in that the program of an English preparatory school was satisfactory for their language skills based on the data gathered through students' needs assessment survey and interviews. Regarding Soruç's study (2012), the difference of the present study is not the discontent of the participants about the existing speaking syllabus or program, but its need for mediation for B1 students to guide them to be competent in speaking based on the expectations in this particular level. In fact, even though the program was satisfactory in Soruç's study, the importance of needs analysis in making curricular decisions or redesigning language preparatory programs was not ignored. In contrast, needs analysis was highlighted in that study. In this sense, the study also revealed some similarities despite the difference.

To begin with, based on the academic coordinator's reflections, the number of out-side class activities including all learners' interests and needs should be

increased. It can be inferred that the out-side class speaking activities and tasks should not be prepared only for one type of learners. They need to address the students with various learning styles; visual, auditory, kinesthetic, experiential and analytic learners. Namely, as highlighted by Ellis (1998), the material writers should be aware of this variety and cater for differences in their materials. Thus, the out-side class activities are supposed to be integrated other skills such as listening and reading into speaking tasks so that the students speaking skill can be improved with the help of other crucial skills.

Apart from these, it was obvious that the participants felt the need to have pair/group work activities that include authentic materials embedded in the syllabus. It might be because of the academic staff prioritized student-student interaction rather than teacher-student interaction. Thanks to the student-student interaction that focuses on students' interactive activities in pairs/groups, the academic staff might have thought that the students can have more self-confidence, improve their communication skills while expressing their ideas, reasoning, solving problems etc. and reduce the anxiety of making mistakes due to the teacher existence. In this sense, it is possible to infer that the students might regard speaking lessons as a natural learning process instead of perceiving them as just lessons. That is a crucial point in that the students can be sure that their needs are met and they can achieve the ultimate goal, communication, thanks to their own efforts, the instructors' guidance and the effective syllabus design that centers upon the students' needs and interests for a particular level (Soureshjani, 2013).

Another point made clear by the the instructors was not enough practice in speaking classes. Although there were also constructive comments about the syllabus, books and materials of B1, the instuctors emphasised the lack of practice for their students. The reason behind this finding may be due to the instructors' feeling about inadequacy of speaking time for their students. Most probably, they might have perceived that their students might be rushed sometimes in speaking activities, which might not reflect the natural learning process of speaking. Thus, they might have focused on the out-side class activities as follow-up tasks for speaking and centered upon authentic materials so that the students can feel closer to the topics discussed. It can be inferred that the students' speaking needs are required to be understood completely in order to arrange everything including the syllabus, instructors' guidance, books and materials accordingly. In line with these

assumptions; Chen, Chang and Chang (2016), indicated that reaching the goal of successful communication through English can be possible as long as the needs of the students are comprehended and met. Also, the studies carried out by Enginarlar (1982) and Örs (2006) revealed some similarities with the current study in terms of the suggestions for the redesign of the existing syllabus that aims to reduce any discrepancy between the students' needs and the existing components of the speaking program and the students' target speaking needs.

In brief, the findings of the last research question demonstrate that mediating the syllabus or redesigning the syllabus of B1 should be taken into consideration not only to meet some speaking needs but also to cater for all the speaking needs of this particular level students so that the students can be ready to take a step for the upcoming level in speaking.

5.2 Practical Implications

This study has remarkable implications to be taken for granted about the speaking needs of B1 level Turkish EFL learners in preparatory classes. As previously discussed, most of the previous studies in the literature either put an emphasis on the importance and implementation of needs analysis or focused on designing a syllabus for the essential four skills including reading, writing, listening and speaking. To mediate this gap, the present study was prepared to move beyond the existing attention by providing elaborate findings that exclusively focus on speaking skill that is a pivotal skill regarded as knowing a language (Turk, 2009) and attempting to present the perceptions of not only the students but also the instructors, level and academic coordinators based on the students' speaking needs as well as the notable differences of their perceptions. To reveal the differences of the perceptions, if any, based on the students' speaking needs among the students, instructors, level and academic coordinators, all of these participants were involved in the study to provide more realistic data. The data cardinaly rely on the participants' perceptions and reflections as well as the practices observed in the classrooms to be able to see if all types of data match with one another.

Moreover, this study has noticeable implications and provides insights for the instructors teaching B1, the level coordinator preparing weekly speaking syllabuses and the academic coordinator. Firstly, the instructors teaching B1 might want to

revise their teaching approaches towards speaking and work on the allocated time for the speaking lessons by looking at their colleagues' and the students' perceptions. Likewise, these implications might help the level coordinator to mediate or redesign weekly speaking syllabuses that include more learner-oriented authentic tasks and set the allocated time as to learners' needs accordingly. Besides these, the academic coordinator can make some changes or additions in the speaking program so that the students' in the specific level mentioned needs are fully met. Also, the coordinators might take the revision of the speaking assessment into consideration in that the speaking assessment requires what the students are guided to focus on in class or outside the class.

Based on the findings of the study, it seems that the students are not as competent as in speaking as they are supposed to be, regarding most significant differences between the students' perceptions based on the importance of speaking and their own speaking performance even though the existing speaking syllabus included skill-based tasks to be practiced in speaking lessons. It can be concluded that the tasks were not practiced that effectively.

In the light of the obtained findings, the number of interactive speaking tasks that motivate the students and include pair/group work interaction should be increased. Even though some speaking subskills are given much importance and might be performed well above the average by the students, thanks to the existing syllabus, the missing ones that are not focused on and performed well should be considered so that the gap is filled in. Meeting these needs in speaking is highly crucial as all the subskills are dependent on one another in the students' learning process. Pair/group work activities can be supported by other pairs or groups in terms of peer feedback and more exposure to the target language in this level as the students of this level are accepted as independent learners that can communicate with different types of learners rather than just answer some standard prepared questions that include simple and short conversations in a limited time. In contrast, the students of this level should be allocated enough time to comprehend all the components of speaking so that they can act in communicative activities in pairs/groups because the amount of direct communication practice can be improved through the choice to set activities up as individual, pair or group work. Utilising a variety of approaches gives students a change of environment and provides for different learning styles in class (Peterson,1986).

In addition, in speaking syllabuses of this level, there should be more clear objectives that provide the instructors to focus on a specific target language such as agreeing and disagreeing, offering, solving issues, reasoning etc. to practise in many ways. Presenting lots of new structures and target focuses might confuse students' minds, which might prevent them learning the target language appropriately. Therefore, specific goals and target language should be reflected or written on the board before getting the students involved in speaking activities. During the learning process of speaking, the students can get help from the board that covers some prompts by seeing the target focus many times, which can help the instructors to assist their students to be exposed to the language. Preparing a rubric for the students' needs of the specific level might help the instructors to check the unmet needs of the students and fill the rubric at the end of term. That kind of rubric can be completed by the students as well and the instructors' and students' perceptions based on the students' speaking needs can be compared by the coordinator so that a necessary step to meet the needs that are not covered can be taken immediately.

Besides the existing syllabus that include mostly skill-based activities, content and situation based approaches might be used while deciding which content and methodology to include in speaking lessons. With the help of situational syllabus that relates the language and context, some activities to develop learners' communication skills can also be possible. What's more, in-class and out-class activities should be increased to be able to let the students be exposed to the target language as much as possible as well as the authentic materials that capture the students' interests, which can aid the instructors in meeting the speaking needs of their learners.

Regarding the aforementioned aspects, the findings of the study are crucial in terms of meeting B1 level students' speaking needs and bringing insights to the effectiveness of speaking syllabuses. Therefore, the study can be regarded as a model for upcoming studies that might aim to reveal the needs of learners' speaking needs in different levels and perceptions based on speaking.

5.3 Conclusions

The results of the study indicated that an in-depth analysis of speaking needs of B1 level students has made useful contributions to see the effectiveness of the existing syllabus as well the perceptions of the students, instructors, level and

academic coordinators based on the speaking needs of the prospective learners. The data collected through the questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews demonstrated that the instructors teaching B1 are mostly content with the existing speaking syllabus; however, some modifications with regard to the increase of authentic, realistic and interactive materials and tasks for fostering speaking skills; allocated time for speaking lessons; preparation for out-class activities; providing various activities that cater for all the needs of B1 level students rather than mainly focus on some of them in pair/group works and parallelism between the implemented speaking lessons, the assessment of speaking and creating awareness of the students in terms of their real needs need to be closely addressed.

To conclude, the purpose of the study was to explore the speaking needs of B1 level students; whether their needs are fully met and to investigate the perceptions of the students, instructors, level and academic coordinators based on the students' speaking needs as well as the differences, if any, among the participants' perceptions at a private (non-profit, foundation) university language preparatory program in Turkish EFL context. For this reason, the study specifically focused on the subskills of speaking in detail, classroom practices and the differences of the perceptions between the students themselves and the academic staff including the instructors teaching B1, level and academic coordinators of the program. With the obtained findings, the study indicates some aspects of the speaking syllabus and classes that are satisfactory according to the findings or should be improved and sets a basis for designing effective speaking syllabuses that cater for learners' speaking needs for the benefits of both students and instructors.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

This study provides some recommendations for further research. To begin with, a further study could be implemented to examine the other essential language skills such as listening, reading and writing in order to see the differences or similarities of needs for each skill.

Secondly, another follow-up study could be conducted for speaking needs of different level learners such as elementary and upper intermediate so that it could be seen whether the speaking needs of different levels are fully met or not, as well as the perceptions of different participants. Then, to reveal any differences and similarities,

needs analysis of different levels can be compared to contribute the design or modifications of speaking syllabuses.

Also, another study that takes learners' public speaking class anxiety into consideration can be conducted as speaking anxiety might influence learners' performance in speaking.

Lastly, the present study is suggested to be utilised to support other subsequent needs analysis studies as needs analysis precedes syllabus design, materials development, implementation and assessment of the courses in a program.



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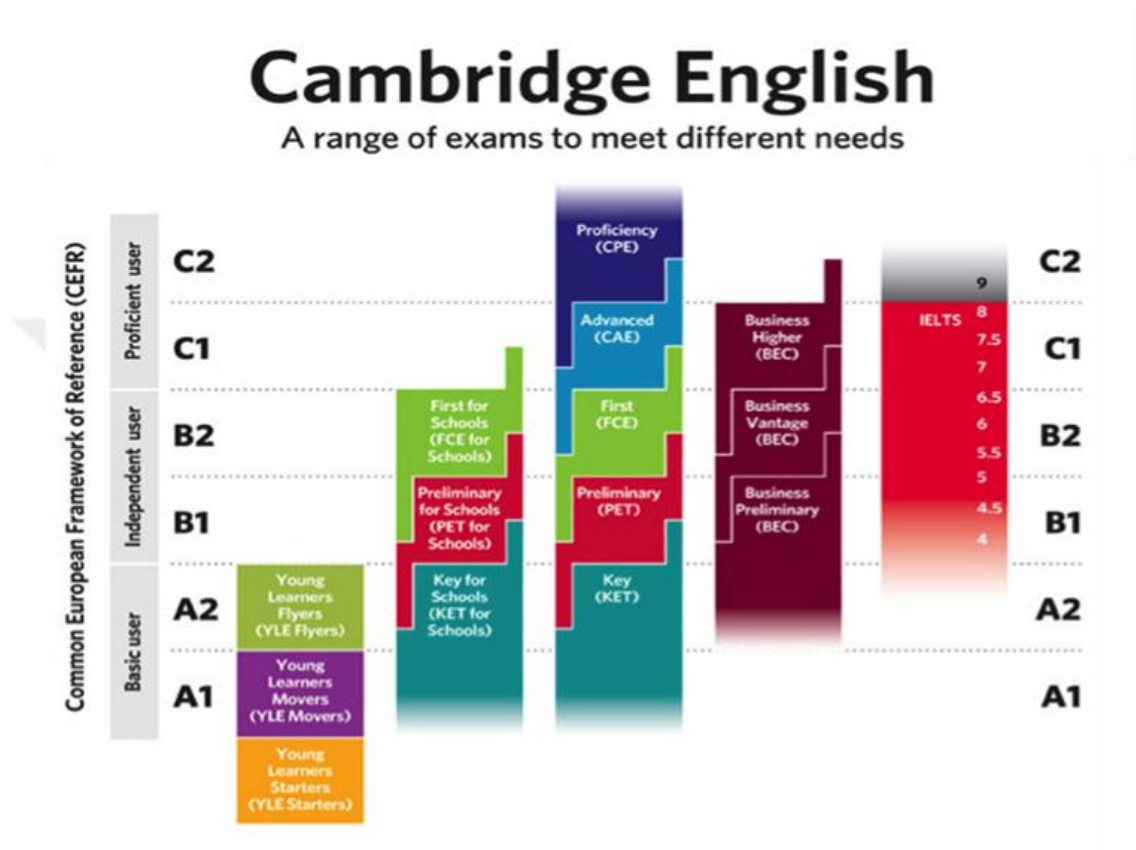
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APPENDICES

A. COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE



B. NEEDS ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRES

B.1 Student Questionnaire

Dear Students,

I am studying on my Master's degree in English Language Teaching Program at Graduate School of Educational Sciences at a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Istanbul, Turkey. The purpose of the questionnaire is to reveal your needs on speaking skills and see if the prepared conversation lessons and weekly programs meet these needs. Thanks to this questionnaire, it is possible to find out what kind of speaking skill program can be suggested regarding your speaking needs. You are kindly asked to fill out the questionnaire.

Your responses will provide me valuable data for this study and will not be used for other purposes. Your personal information will be kept confidential and only the information you provide will be important for the proper evaluation of this research.

Thank you for your participation and contribution to the work.

Seval Doğan
sevaldogan.sd@gmail.com

Please complete the questionnaire according to the scale given in column 1 and 2

LEARNING NEEDS

Column 1

Column 2

How would you rate the **importance of learning** each of the following modes of learning?

How would you **rate yourself** in terms of each of the following modes of learning?

Use the following scale for column 1:

Use the following scale for column 2:

1. Unimportant
2. Of little importance
3. Moderately important
4. Important
5. Very important

1. Extremely poor
2. Below average
3. Average
4. Above average
5. Excellent

SPEAKING

	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. asking questions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. answering questions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. expressing yourself	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. summarising	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. describing	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6. comparing-contrasting	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7. solving problems	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8. reasoning	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9. making presentations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10. criticising	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11. reacting to speech and lecture	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12. producing correct pronunciation	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
13. wording quickly	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14. using appropriate intonation and stress	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

B.2 Teacher Questionnaire

Dear colleagues,

I am studying on my Master's degree in English Language Teaching Program at Graduate School of Educational Sciences at a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Istanbul, Turkey. The main purpose of my thesis is to identify the speaking needs of the B1 level students, find out whether the obtained needs are met in the existing program or not to be able to suggest a new speaking syllabus. This questionnaire has been prepared to serve as a data collection instrument for my study and aims to gather information about the perceptions of the EFL instructors teaching B1 level classes about the importance of speaking skills and sub skills referring to their students' needs and the students' speaking performance. In this questionnaire, you are kindly asked to reflect your own thoughts about the importance of the sub speaking skills and your students' speaking performance.

Your sincere comments and experience will help me to obtain valuable data. I ensure you that the information will be confidential and used for research purposes only.

For any further questions, you can email me from the address below.

Thank you for your contribution and cooperation.

Seval Doğan
sevaldogan.sd@gmail.com

Please tick the column that best represents your answer.

LEARNING NEEDS

Column 1

Column 2

How would you rate **the importance** of the following for your students' target needs?

How would you **rate your students' performance** in terms of each of the following modes of learning?

Use the following scale for column 1:

Use the following scale for column 2:

1. Unimportant
2. Of little importance
3. Moderately important
4. Important
5. Very important

1. Extremely poor
2. Below average
3. Average
4. Above average
5. Excellent

SPEAKING

	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. asking questions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. answering questions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. expressing yourself	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. summarising	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. describing	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6. comparing-contrasting	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7. solving problems	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8. reasoning	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9. making presentations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10. criticising	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11. reacting to speech and lecture	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12. producing correct pronunciation	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
13. wording quickly	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14. using appropriate intonation and stress	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

C. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TABLE

Speaking Subskills	The Frequency Percentages of Speaking Subskills Use
1. asking questions	
2. answering questions	
3. expressing yourself	
4. summarising	
5. describing	
6. comparing-contrasting	
7. solving problems	
8. reasoning	
9. making presentations	
10. criticising	
11. reacting to speech and lecture	
12. producing correct pronunciation	
13. wording quickly	
14. using appropriate intonation and stress	

D. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

D.1 Interview Questions for the Instructors, Level and Academic Coordinators

1. What are your overall perceptions about the speaking syllabus in B1 level classes?
2. What are the speaking sub skills (i.e. asking questions, summarizing etc.) that your students mostly use in your classes? Why do you think that they are important? Briefly explain.
3. What are the speaking sub skills that your students most frequently use?
4. What are the speaking sub skills that your students have most difficulty with? Briefly explain.
5. What speaking sub skills does the existing syllabus include?
6. What speaking tasks are the students engaged in your courses? Do you think that they meet the students' needs? Why/Why not?
7. How do you assess your students' performance in your speaking classes? What aspects of language do you emphasize in the assessment?
8. What are the side effects (strengths and weaknesses) of the speaking syllabus? Briefly explain.
9. What suggestions do you have for the improvement of the existing speaking syllabus? Briefly explain.

D.2 Interview Questions for the Students

1. What are the most and least important subskills for you in speaking lessons when you think of your English level? (Eg. asking questions, expressing oneself, etc.) Why? Briefly explain.
2. What are the subskills you see yourself at the best level in speaking lessons when you think of your English level? (Eg. answering, comparing, etc.) Why? Briefly explain.
3. What are the subskills that you have most difficulty with in speaking lessons when you think of your English level? (Eg. criticizing, summarizing etc.) Why? Briefly explain.

E. CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Information

Surname, Name : Dođan, Seval
Nationality : Turkish (T.C.)
Date and Place of Birth : 25 October, 1990, Sivas
Marital Status : Single
Phone : +90 507 148 11 71
E-mail : sevaldogan.sd@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	Bahcesehir University	2017
BA	Uludag University	2013
High School	Antalya Atatürk High School	2008

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2014-	Istanbul Bilgi University	English Language Instructor
2013-2014	Nisantasi University	English Language Instructor

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Elementary French

CERTIFICATES

- Microsoft and Bahcesehir University, Microsoft Recognized Educator Certificate, June 2016
- GlobELT 2016 International Conference, To Be More Accurate: A Study to Investigate the Importance of Explicit Teaching in Monolingual Language Classroom Settings- Speaker, 17 April 2016
- IATEFL LTSIG 4th Digital Conference with ELT Ireland & MEI / Dublin, Ireland, Using Web 2.0 Tools to Celebrate Diversity in Student Culture and Learning Styles- Speaker, 1 November 2015

- Istanbul Bilgi University, In-service Training Sessions Certificate, June 2015
- British Side Language School Istanbul, CELTA, May 2015
- Sisli Terakki Schools, Terakki ELT Conference, February 2015
- Yıldız Technical University, Education Technology Summit, 31 May 2014
- Yıldız Technical University, 1st International ELT Conference, 17 May 2014
- Sabancı University, Professional Development Seminar&Workshop, 26 April 2014
- Nisantasi University, Meeting of Cultures International Project, March 2014
- Nilüfer Education Foundations, ELT Seminar, March 2013
- Université de Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens/ France, Stage Intensif de Langue, Culture et Civilisation Français, September 2011
- Kingsbridge Community College, Devon/England, Socrates Comenius Project, June 2007
- Antalya Atatürk High School, Socrates Comenius Project, June 2006

PUBLICATIONS

- Aral, B., Doğan, S., & Oliver, B. W. (2016). To Be More Accurate: A Study to Investigate the Importance of Explicit Teaching in Monolingual Language Classroom Settings. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232, 583-590.

HOBBIES

Poetry, Drawing, Theatre, Music, Travelling, Photography, Personal Learning Network, Blended Learning, Teaching Techniques.