

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**  
**ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY**  
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**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM BASED LANGUAGE  
ASSESSMENT IN TERTIARY LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
PROGRAMS IN TURKEY**

**THESIS BY**

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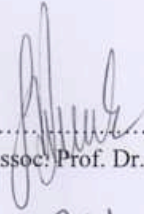
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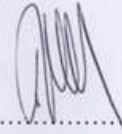
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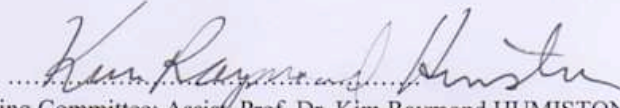
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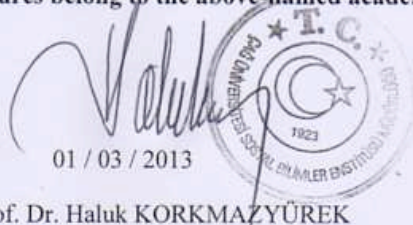


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## ÖZET

### TÜRKİYE'DE YÜKSEK ÖĞRENİM İNGİLİZCE HAZIRLIK PROGRAMLARINDA SINIF BAZLI ÖLÇME DEĞERLENDİRMEDE ÖĞRETMENLERİN ALGISI

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**Mart 2013, 74 Sayfa**

Bu çalışma “sınıf bazlı ölçme değerlendirme” sistemine yüksek öğrenim İngilizce hazırlık programlarındaki öğretim elemanlarının algılarını keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Türkiye’deki yüksek öğrenim İngilizce hazırlık programlarındaki hali hazırdaki algılar, uygulamalar ve prensipler de çalışmada yer almıştır.

Çalışmanın ilk bölümünde dil ölçme ve değerlendirme teorilerini baz alarak, daha sonra da yüksek öğrenimdeki sınıf bazlı dil ölçme değerlendirme sistemlerinin bu teorilere ne kadar yakın olduğu tartışılmıştır.

Çalışmanın ikinci bölümü anket sonuçlarının bulgularını sunar. Bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin sınıf bazlı ölçme değerlendirmelerindeki dört aşama tartışılmıştır: planlama, uygulama, gözlem ve kayıt. Anket bulguları istatistiksel ve nitel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Gönüllü katılımcılarla yapılan görüşmeler ek nitel data olarak çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir.

Çalışmanın sonuçları, öğretmenlerin aslında dil ölçme değerlendirmesinde sınıf bazlı ölçme değerlendirmeyi esas alan kendi algılarını uygulamakta olduklarını göstermiştir.

Bununla birlikte, öğretmenlerin ölçme uygulamalarından kaynaklanan çeşitli durumlar da mevcuttur. Anketin sonuçları, öğretmenlerin birçok prensiplerini uygulamaya koymadıklarını da göstermiştir. Görüşmeler esnasında öğretmenler bunların; merkezi sınav

sistemi, kısıtlı zaman ve müfredat yoğunlu, öğrencilerin ilköğretim ve liseden getirdikleri eğitim altyapısı gibi nedenlerden kaynaklandığını belirtmişlerdir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sınıf Bazlı Dil Ölçme ve Değerlendirmesi, Yüksek Öğretimde Öğretmenlerin Algıları

## **ABSTRACT**

# **TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM BASED LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT IN TERTIARY LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN TURKEY**

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**March 2013, 74 Pages**

This study aims to explore teachers' beliefs and their application with relating to classroom based language assessment. It examines the teachers' current operational principles of assessment and their practices in higher education in Turkey.

The first part of the study discusses concerning the theories of language assessment; then it considers how closely classroom based language assessment in higher education matches up to those theoretical principles.

The second part of the study presents the findings of a questionnaire. Four stages in teachers' classroom based language assessment were discussed; planning, implementation, monitoring, and recording and dissemination. The findings of the questionnaire were analyzed statically and qualitatively. Extra qualitative data was additionally collected and analyzed through interviews with volunteer participants.

The results of the study showed that usually the teachers hold and exercise their own firm beliefs concerning classroom based language assessment.

Beside this, there has been variety of issues that arose from their assessment beliefs and their application. The results of the questionnaire showed that they did not put a number

of their principles into application. Throughout the interview, they mentioned that in some cases they do not have chance to put their beliefs into application like central assessment system of the institution, intensive syllabus that they have to finish in a very restricted time and students' educational background that they brought from primary and secondary schools' education system.

**Keywords:** Classroom Based Language Assessment, Teachers' Perceptions in Tertiary  
Level

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a real pleasure to thank to people who helped me complete this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to express my special thanks and sincere gratitude to my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ, who always encouraged me to study, helped and guided me in completing my thesis for her invaluable suggestions, deep interest, endless assistance, constructive feedback and patience. I have learnt quite a lot thanks to her throughout this thesis process. I also would like to thank Assist. Prof. Dr. Erol KAHRAMAN and Assist. Prof. Dr. Kim Raymond HUMISTON for their help and constructive feedback during the class.

I am also thankful to my wife Fatma Yıldırım GÖNEN and my kids Berkay and Eren for their patience during my study.

Many thanks also to my colleagues Ahmet YASTIBAŞ, Ali DOĞAN, Özlem YILDIZ for their support and friendship throughout this M.A. program.

1<sup>st</sup> March 2013

Kemal GÖNEN

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CBLA</b>	Classroom Based Language Assessment
<b>ELP</b>	English Language Program
<b>GE</b>	General English
<b>AE</b>	Academic English
<b>TOEFL</b>	Test of English as a Foreign Language
<b>IELTS</b>	International English Language Testing System



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## CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION

McNamara (2000) points out that the nature of testing has changed quite radically over the years to become less impositional, more humanistic, conceived not such a lot to catch individuals out on what they do not know. McNamara also mentions about the newer forms of language assessment that they may no longer involve the ordeal of a single test performance under time constraints (ibid.). As he emphasizes learners could also make up a portfolio of written or recorded oral performances for assessment, they may be asked to carry out activities outside the classroom context and supply evidence of their performance. Pairs of learners could also be asked to take parts in role-plays or in-group discussions as a part of oral assessment. It would be hard to imagine a language class in which no assessment takes place. The teacher, either consciously or subconsciously, formally or informally, monitors students' performance and proceeds with the lesson according to the students' response. Assessment is now seen as a powerful tool for learning, not simply a means of ascertaining students' achievement (Lewkowicz & Zawadowska-Kittel, 2008). Testing is not the only way to gather data about people's language level and ability. it's only one kind of assessment, and various methods can generally be more applicable. it's helpful here to clarify the distinction between formative and summative assessments. If teachers use it to check on the progress of their students, then assessment is formative. He/She checks how much they have progressed, uses the data to change the students' future plans. This kind of assessment may even be the basis for feedback to the students. Students may even be encouraged to carry out self assessment by themselves to watch their own progress. Summative assessment is such an assessment method which can be used at the end of the term, semester, or year to see what has been achieved by the students (Hughes, 2003). Assessment for learning, that is formative naturally, has brought new challanges for the teachers. The language classroom can be

construed as a specific social context: an area that's specially established for teaching functions to bring about language learning. The role of teachers are so important in Higher Education Language Classes in Turkey. Since they do not have a national curriculum, what to teach and how to assess is mostly left to them or the desicion-makers in the school. Beside this, according to Turkish Higher Education Rules, any students, who could not achieve in English Language Program in two years, have to continue their education in a department in Turkish Language (Yuksekk Ogretim Kurumu, 2008). For this reason, all the teachers in language classrooms normally do regular assessment, not only to know students' progress and achievement, but also to help them to progress more. However, although its role is important, assessment created and enforced by teachers within the classroom has been forgotten. Moreover, very few number of researches has been conducted on classroom based English language assessment (Rea-Dickens 2004: 249).

After working for private primary schools in Turkey for almost 10 years, I've started working for an English Language Program in a university as the Testing Office Coordinator. With my experienced and enthusiastic team members, we have prepared authentic questions, organized and managed weekly quizzes and monthly midterm and final examinations for 1400 students in which almost 100 instructors were involved. In addition to these, we have prepared online placement and proficiency exams. In this process something was going wrong with the students. Almost none of them were interested in learning a foreign language. It seemed we were not teaching them a language but preparing them for the tests. The students were not recognizing the instructors' assessment as an element in their learning, they seemed to be more interested in external tests, which were summative. Then I started talking to my colleagues and they confessed that they were also preparing their students for the tests which were being prepared and distributed by the institution's own Testing Office. Then I figured out that not only the students' but also the teachers' perception of assessment was



wrong. Since this seems problematic to me, I decided to review gaining an in-depth understanding of teachers' assessment perceptions in higher education language programs.

### **1.1. The Aims of the Study**

This study aims:

- To explore the link between Higher Education English Language Program teachers' perceptions of the principles and practice of their classroom based language assessment.
- To explore if Higher Education English Language Program teachers perceptions of classroom based language assessment are valid and consistent.
- To explore if Higher Education English Language Program teachers perceptions of classroom based language assessment are ethical.

### **1.2. English Teaching and Assessments in Higher Education Institutions in Turkish Context**

The researcher first investigates how English teaching was introduced in Higher Education English Language Programs. Then, he reflects assessment practice within the field of English language teaching in higher education English Language Programs.

#### **1.2.1. Introduction to English Teaching in Higher Education in Turkey**

Turkey, where English has been taught as a foreign language for years, retains this status. Turkey has made progress in the teaching of English after losing the impact of the French language. French, nobility language of sometime, lost its importance and after World War II, with the American influence English have gained importance in Turkey and around the world.

After the law of 8-year compulsory elementary school, English has been started teaching in the 4<sup>th</sup> graders. After compulsory 4-year high school law, English Preparation

year has been eliminated and English teaching hours per week have increased. After 2012 this law has been changed. Compulsory education expanded to 12 years. First four years for primary education, then four years for Lower Secondary School education, after that 4 years for high school education. Children who are older than 66 months old have to begin their education in primary schools. All the students in Turkey have to continue their education until they graduate from high school (Ministry of National Education, 2012).

In Turkey in many universities, which have English Language Programs, students have to take placement or proficiency tests in the beginning of the year. Preparatory classes are obligatory for the students who do not meet the pre-conditions of English Language Programs. They have to study for a period of one year (in some universities, it is 3 terms) to reach a sufficient level of English in intensive programs. The students who cannot meet the requirements of the programs' final goals within two years cannot continue their higher education in English taught programs.

### **1.2.2. English at General Education Level in Turkey**

Turkey's general education consists of three levels with 12 forms/grades: primary level (from Form 1 – 4 for children aged 6 to 10); lower secondary level (from Form 5 – 8 for children aged 11 – 15); and upper secondary level (from Form 9 – 12 for children aged 15 – 18). In 2012, English started to be taught at earlier ages. Now starting from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the students will be studying English for 11 years.

The number of periods studied at each level and the total number of periods studied in the whole formal general education system in Turkey can be summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1 : The Number of Periods Studying English at Each Level in Turkey**

Level of Education (forms)	Number of Periods Taught	
	Each Week	Total
Primary (Forms 2 - 4)	2 periods/35 weeks	210
Lower secondary (Forms 5 – 8)	4 periods/35 weeks	560
Upper secondary (9)	6 periods/35 weeks	210
Upper secondary (10 -12)	2 periods/35 weeks	315
		TOTAL 1190 periods

### **1.3. English at Tertiary Level in Turkey**

At tertiary level, English is introduced nationally both as a discipline and as a subject. Some of the universities, in which English is used as the language of education in many fields, have English Language Programs called “English Preparatory School”. In those programs, the students study at least 25 hours of English per week for one year, but this may vary in every university. Some give 3 terms (almost 15 months) but many of them give 2 terms of English (10 months). We cannot say there is a standardized system in those institutions, but nowadays the principles of these “schools of foreign language” are arranging annual meetings to decide on the standards of language teaching and assessment systems (ydyo, 2012). The main goals of these programs are achieving the goals to be able to study and understand the classes when they start their departments. In terms of needs, however, Turkish tertiary students fall into three categories. Some view English as a tool for more attractive and lucrative employment opportunities after graduation; a small number of others need a good knowledge of English to study further at graduate and doctoral levels, either in Turkey or in an English-speaking country, while the majority of them learn English just to pass the examinations. Although the needs for learning English differ from student to student, the general tendency is that English is an indispensable language for international exchange and better-paid employment.

The contents of English teaching present one of the most challenging issues in Turkey's higher education. Unlike general education, where the contents of teaching are imposed by the Government, at tertiary level, the question of what to teach is left to each particular institution to decide. What the government does is to provide the general time frame for all institutions. This has created diversity on the one hand, but chaos on the other. Different institutions take a different view on what to teach. Up till now, however, there have been three different views on what kind of English should be taught at tertiary level in Turkey: the GE view, the GE-and-AE view, and the AE view. The GE view holds that GE and AE are essentially not so much different. In both kinds, the students will have to learn the phonological system of English. The only difference between GE and AE seems to lie in the terminology, but once the students can pronounce correctly the sounds, they have acquired enough knowledge of English lexicon-grammar, used them correctly and appropriately, and reached a certain level communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), they will have no difficulty learning the technical terms in their discipline.

#### **1.4. English Language Assessments**

To begin with, there's a big idea of the worth of assessment. The administration of the preparatory schools constantly encourage the teachers to assume that English teaching at Higher Education English Language Program would succeed if they use applicable teaching methods. They seem to avoid coping with the matter of assessment because they feel that the requirement of assessment could lead the teachers and the students to resist the introduction of English. What teachers ought to do is to obtain data on the progress of their students' learning as assessment activities.

Teachers primarily monitor their coverage of the curriculum, their teaching methodologies and the materials used, and at the end of each term, they check their students' performances on the grades as the principals and decision makers do. Taking into

consideration the actual fact that, all the teachers are assessed annually in accordance with scores of several students. This, in turn, to some extent, relates to the standards by that they are judged for promotion. Moreover, students sometimes are very sensitive to the relative position of the students with relevance their peers within the category and the other pupils within the school at an identical grade. Moreover, most recently, the teachers of English aware of growing strength of the demands of a society that is saying that they need to acquire assessment theory and principles. They have to make sure that they should not only consider in their assessment results and a better understanding of their students' learning (Shim, 2008).

Finally, though the role of assessment is very important and its result is multiple, the assessment of students' English learning is left to the experience of teachers of English. This can be often the context of English assessment within the schools. I'll try to emphasize this principle in this study.

In this chapter, I discuss variety of aspects of English teaching and assessments in higher education institutions in Turkey. I investigate how English teaching was introduced within the higher education; then focus on the scenario of English teaching experience of the teachers. Finally, I think about assessment practice within the sector of English language teaching in higher education.

### **1.5. English Language Assessments at Tertiary Level in Turkey**

In the beginning of English Language Program in universities, students are supposed to take "proficiency test" mostly prepared by the institution itself unless they have an internationally accredited English exam score such as TOEFL or IELTS. Throughout the program, the students are supposed to take summative tests to be able to finish the program and start their departments. There are three versions of these tests. One version of tests is the tests constructed by the instructors themselves. Second version of the tests are the tests prepared and organized by institution's Testing Office, and the third version of the tests are

the tests constructed by outside institutes or publishing companies. In some institutions, the instructors do checking and grading, and in some institutions in which they have a testing office, the Testing Office may do checking and grading. In those institutions, instructors mostly do not give any grades or just a participation grade which weakly effects the students' passing sores.

### **1.6. Research Questions**

The aim of this study is to look into how tertiary level English teachers perceive the classroom-based assessment of English as a foreign language. Research questions are especially concerned with discovering English teachers' perceptions and their practice of classroom-based assessment from planning to recording and dissemination.

Q1: How do Higher Education English Language Program teachers perceive the planning of their classroom-based assessment?

Q2: How do Higher Education English Language Program teachers perceive the implementation of their classroom-based assessment?

Q3: How do Higher Education English Language Program teachers perceive the monitoring of their classroom-based assessment?

Q4: How do Higher Education English Language Program teachers perceive the recording and dissemination of their classroom-based assessment?

### **1.7. Operational Definitions**

To clarify the study, I define some of the key terms I used which are in the area of English Language Teaching, and applied linguistics.

**Language Assessment:** As Human Resources Development Working Group (2012) emphasizes; language assessment is the way to measure students' learning of languages. It's a gauge of what a student knows and/or can do and, more indirectly, of how well instruction is continuing.

**Language Testing:** As Tsagari stated (2004) language testing is usually associated with formal assessment procedures such as tests and examinations carried out at specified times and serving a variety of purposes.

**Classroom Based Language Assessment:** is an integral part of language instruction where the teachers, as "agents" (Rea-Dickens, 2004) are the ones responsible for facilitating student learning and obtaining information about their progress and achievement, hence, also earning the name *teacher assessment*. From *planning* what to assess and how, through *implementing* assessment procedures and *monitoring* students' performances to *recording* students' attainment and progress, the teacher is constantly making decisions on how to keep track of students' progress and attainment (Rea-Dickens, 2001)

**School based Assessment:** is an assessment, which is embedded in the teaching and learning method. School Based Assessment has some characteristics such as involving the teacher from the beginning to the end: from planning the assessment program, to be carried out in ordinary classrooms, stimulating continuous evaluation. These characteristics distinguish it from other types of assessments.

**Testing and Assessment Unit (Testing Office):** A unit in language programs of some universities, which prepares and evaluates School Based Tests.

**Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning):** Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides explicit feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. Formative assessment is a method of continually evaluating students' academic needs and development within the classroom and precedes local benchmark assessments and state-mandated summative assessments.

Assessment which provides information to be used for the teachers to give feedback to the students, and to create a route for both the teachers and students to modify learning and teaching activities called formative assessment (Black & William, 1998).

Teachers primarily monitor their coverage of the information, their teaching methodologies and the materials used, and at the end of each term, they check their students' performances on the grades as the principals and decision makers do. Taking into consideration the actual fact that, the administration of the language programs generally check the teachers' performances with the students' scores and achievement percentages. Moreover, students are generally very sensitive to the relative position of the students with regard to their peers inside the class and also the various pupils within the school at an identical grade. Moreover, the teachers of English are becoming more aware of strength of the strain of a society, that's oral communication that they need to accumulate assessment theory and principles. They need to take care that they must not exclusively admit in their assessment results and a better understanding of their students' learning, however that teachers could meet the increasing demands to show that they teach English well, and their students learn English well.

**Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning):** Summative assessments are typically used to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs and services at the end of an educational year or at a pre-determined time. The goal of summative assessments is to make a



judgment of student ability after an instructional section is complete. For instance, in Turkey, OSS is administered once a year for high school graduate students to be able to begin a university. It's a summative assessment to determine every student's ability. Summative evaluations are used to determine if students have mastered specific competencies and to identify instructional areas that require extra attention.

**Washback Effect:** The Influence of tests or examinations on the teaching and learning leading up to the assessment.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Language Testing and Assessment

Language Testing has not been seen as an expanding field during the first part of twentieth century. Then there has been more need for language testing profession to consider the meaning of language assessment to articulate the role of it in pedagogic materials and programs to meet the changing needs of teachers for a new century (Fulcher, 2012).

As Fulcher emphasized, there are three main reasons for a phenomenal increase in Language Assessment; the increase use of tests and assessments, rapid expansion of the use of language tests as part of national immigration policies, and being of assessment for learning as an essential component of classroom practice (ibid).

Assessment can be used both to see students' achievements for certification (summative assessment) and to support their learning (formative assessment). Assessment practice is closely related to the overall teaching context and the teacher's view of his/her role (Black & William, 1998). Formative assessment can be designed in different forms for different aims. The major function of formative assessment is to give feedback on students' performance to improve learning (Falchikov N, 2005). Feedback is the keyword for formative assessment. In order to improve themselves, students need to be aware of the feedback's importance. Formative assessment has a positive impact on student learning. As Black and William (1998) stated, formative assessment, which gives students supportive feedback improves their learning.

Summative assessment focuses on completed learning rather than process. It gives learners the opportunity to show how far they have moved to the achievement of planned

learning outcomes. Summative assessment can be carried out as particular stages of the learning program. Where achievement is recorded on an on-going basis, summative assessment may mean bringing all the evidence together, rather than carrying out an additional set of assessment activities.

## **2.2. Classroom-based Language Assessment**

External examinations are developed and administered by outside institutes or central government. They are very influence-able in that they are ‘high-stake’ exams and may have both serious negative effects on the classroom as a whole and on the students (Wall, 1996). According to Wall, the effects of external exams make the subjects and skills be isolated as they are not examined, cause the teachers to prefer using past exam papers as teaching materials a lot, and increase the need to practice test-taking techniques (ibid). Therefore, the focus of education may be on the most mechanical and boring forms. External tests might make the students more passive, and this may result in the rejection of the students whose grades are low. Moreover, Broadfoot (2005) states that structured activities and transmission teaching become more important in the classroom environment because of external examinations, which may stem in lowering the students’ self-esteem and lowering the power of teachers in classroom (Shepard, 1991). Though external examinations influence classroom and students in a negative way, they are still considered important by the policy makers because this kind of tests helps them control the educational system and curriculum and introduce new teaching methods and books (Cheung & Curtis, 2004).

Classroom-based assessment is constructed and administered by the students and teachers. It’s ‘low-stake’ and has less power (Davidson, et al 1997). CBLA cannot be considered as low-stake because the aim of it is to obtain information about the students’ progress and attainment while external tests aim to indicate how well a student has performed

on a test and consider high scores as good learning though high scores cannot mean good learning (Cheng & Curtis 2004). In accordance with this, EfEE (1998) told that formal tests and teacher assessment are equal in terms of their status since they give complementary information about students' attainment. As a result, formal tests and teacher assessment are considered high-stakes (Clapham 2000).

### **2.3. Teachers' Roles in Classroom-based Assessment**

In the classroom, external tests and teacher-made tests are used, but CBLA cannot be done according to the type of the test because teachers have an important role in deciding the type of the tests that are going to be used in the classroom. Accordingly, teacher factors may outweigh the influence of an examination. In other words, it is believed that teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards assessment shape and constrain their assessment practices in the classroom (Arkoudis & O'Loughlin, 2004; Davison, 2004; Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004). In accordance with teachers' roles as assessors, Davison defined five roles of teachers in CBLA as; technicians, interpreters of the law, assessors balance the prescribed criteria with the contextual factors, arbitrators between the criteria and the students' own ideas of their assessment, and decision makers that have absolute power and authority.

On the other hand, the different roles of teachers in CBLA may cause problem(s) because they have to play different roles in different assessment practices (Rea-Dickens, 2004). Teachers should be aware of who they are and what they are in the assessment process for (Rea-Dickins & Rixon, 1999). They discussed that to be a good assessor, teachers are required to know more about the theories of assessment, and have access to information about any testing and assessment they have to carry out.

## **2.4. Characteristics of Classroom-based Language Assessment**

While developing assessments for CBLA, it is necessary that assessment developers should know that familiarization with the characteristics of the assessment, which is to be utilized in the classroom because this procedure is directly connected to the issue of validity. When these characteristics are clearly explained, assessment developers can develop their assessment tools to consider the fundamentals that may influence their validity. The purpose of the assessment that is to be implemented and their wide-ranging influence has a direct impact on the issue of validity. According to Arkoudis and O'Loughlin (2004), two distinct purposes of classroom-based assessment are under the effect of the administrators and educational purposes. First of all, for administrators assessment should be simple, focus on product, have objective outcomes, be reliable and accountable while educational purposes stress out that assessment should be valid, complex, and individual, and focus on process, teaching and learning. Also, Rea-Dickins and Gardner (2000) listed the purposes of classroom-based assessment as being used as input for managing and planning teaching, enabling teachers to evaluate teaching, and providing evidence of curricular learning and development.

Moreover, Teasdale and Leung (2000) thought that CBLA is both formative and summative. It is formative in that it allows teachers to focus on and discuss the positive achievement of each student and to plan the suitable steps for each student. What makes CBLA summative is related to the recording of the general achievement of each student in a systematic way, which makes CBLA evaluative. As a result, educational service can be assessed. According to them, CBLA and external tests are not different though formative and summative assessments differentiate from each other in terms of quantity. It is because in CBLA and external tests, teachers are the ones who conduct two kinds of assessments in their classroom, which make teachers active in the assessment procedure.

The official demands, teaching needs; and in particular, concern with learning and the learner's needs influence teachers on deciding the character of classroom-based assessment (Rea-Dickins, 2001). The official demands impact assessment externally by setting up an obligation for the school and teachers to tell the local educational authority or the ministry of education concerning students' progress and achievement. Therefore, assessment is directly affected by the central government' demands since specific objectives that are mentioned in the national curriculum are determined for education. The national curriculum introduces and mentions the domain of knowledge, expected students' language using ability and factors which can have an effect on students' actual language mistreatment performance. The second aspect is formed by the requirements of teachers, in the schools. Students' learning is more emphasized in the third aspect because the third aspect takes learning into consideration itself, but not measuring learning (Rea-Dickins, 2001). To sum up, teachers got to perceive these 3 aspects and then had better set up their assessment tools.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The primary focus of this research is to explore the link between Higher Education English Language Program teachers' perceptions and their practice of classroom based language assessment in Turkey. However, their teaching and assessment understanding is under continuous review, as teachers perpetually interact with external factors like new theories on teaching and assessment and academic system; and while attempting to internalize these factors, they try to find new ways to teach and assess English in their specified contexts. However as Shim (2008) emphasizes, while implementing their ideas, the dominant and related theories and principles of language teaching and assessment affect what the teacher does in the classroom. And also established theories and social contexts usually affect what they do and more importantly why they do it.

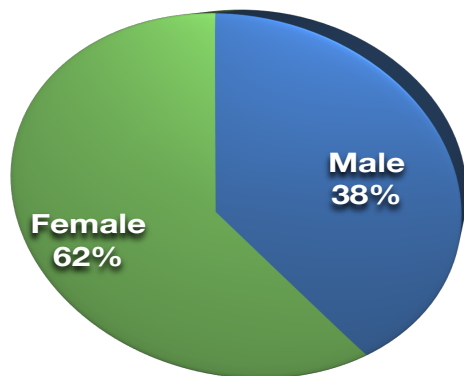
This chapter starts out with the research question; and then followed by the participants' descriptions; then details of the research tools follow it. After that, describing the procedure of data collection, and explanation of the ethical issues and the limitations of the study follow it.

#### 3.1. Participants

102 teachers returned the questionnaire. The information gathered from the teachers showed that these teachers were using the tests as only a part of the assessment system and they divided the passing-failing score to percentages. The teachers are also giving the rest of the scores from portfolios, participation, and assignments, so they can be recognized as assessment developers for classroom based assessment. As a result, all of the responses of 102 teachers are presented here.

Of these 102 participants, 60% of the teachers have experience of teaching English more than 10 years, 18% 6-10 years, 19% 2-5 years, and only 4% of them have 1 year or less teaching experience. This information shows that, most of the teachers are experienced which makes them acceptable to participate in this study.

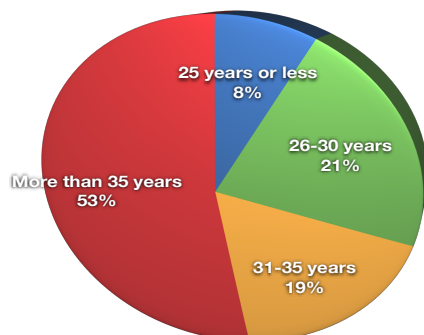
### 3.1.1. Gender



**Figure 1: Ratio of male to female teachers**

As shown in Figure 1, the number of female participants is more than the male ones. The data shows that female teachers are more interested in teaching English than their male colleagues.

### 3.1.2. Age



**Figure 2: Ages of the participants**



Figure 2 shows that 53 percent of the participants are over 35 years old. On the other hand, only 8 percent is 25 years or less.

### **3.2. Instruments**

The research tools were adopted from the doctoral thesis of Shim (2008) titled “An investigation into teachers’ perceptions of classroom-based assessment of English as a foreign language in Korean primary education”. Questionnaire surveys and short interviews were used in this study to obtain the teachers’ ideas.

### **3.3. Data Collection and Analysis of the Questionnaires**

The questionnaire was prepared using Google Docs Form, and distributed through Internet. To receive responds from different institutions’ staff, the questionnaire was sent to many various institutions’ mail addresses and Internet forums. All the questions were sent in English and responds were in English as well. The data was collected by Google Docs spreadsheet. The investigation took over four months.

Analysis of the data of the questionnaire was carried out using SPSS (v. 21 for Mac) in order to find the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation of all the items. A Paired sampled Correlations was used to see if the gap between teachers’ beliefs and their practice is statistically significant. As Brown and Rogers (2002: 205) emphasizes, to compare mean scores, this is the mostly used technic in second language research.

In this research, quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies were used. To get the 102 participating teachers’ common perceptions of classroom-based language assessment, a questionnaire was used prepared by Shim (2008). Also the results of the

questionnaire were used to develop the interview questions. The detailed clarification of the questionnaire is as follows.

There are four parts in the questionnaire. In the first part the teachers are asked for their personal information. In the second and the fourth part, open-ended questions are used where they could type their ideas and opinions regarding their understanding of English language assessment in their classrooms. Part three utilizes closed items on language assessment.

### **3.4. Data Collection and Analysis of the Interviews**

Since the participants had already taken part in the first part of the study (questionnaire), all the interviewees were ready for the second part (interview). The researcher visited five teachers and interviewed them face-to-face to clarify the gaps between the teachers' beliefs and their practices in the questionnaire. All the interviews were recorded by Photo Booth 5.0.1 for Mac and saved in computer. Then they were used to explain the responses to the questionnaire.

The interview carried out to clarify the gap between teachers' responds to teachers' beliefs part in the questionnaire and their practice part questions. Interview questions were prepared regarding to the teachers' responds to the questionnaire.

The interview has been made with five volunteer teachers who participated in the first investigation.

### **3.5. Procedure**

This study starts with a questionnaire carried out to examine teachers' beliefs of classroom-based language assessment, and then findings were analyzed. The data collection for the first investigation was carried out from October 2012 to January 2013.

First, the questionnaire survey was published by using Google Docs, then the link

was sent to many institutions' directors, and to many instructors' personal e-mail addresses. In two months the data was collected and analyzed using SPSS for Mac, meanwhile some interview questions were prepared to clarify some of the responds to the survey questions. All interviews were recorded by Photo Booth software for Mac.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4. FINDINGS

The results of the questionnaire are divided into 5 sub-groups in this chapter. In section one, the teachers' perceptions of classroom based language assessment in tertiary level is introduced, and in sections two, three, four, and five, the connection between tertiary level English teachers' perceptions and their practice of their classroom based language assessment are indicated, from planning to recording and dissemination.

In this study the results are taken into account from two perspectives: the teachers' level of perception, and its relevance to certain issues regarding classroom based language assessment.

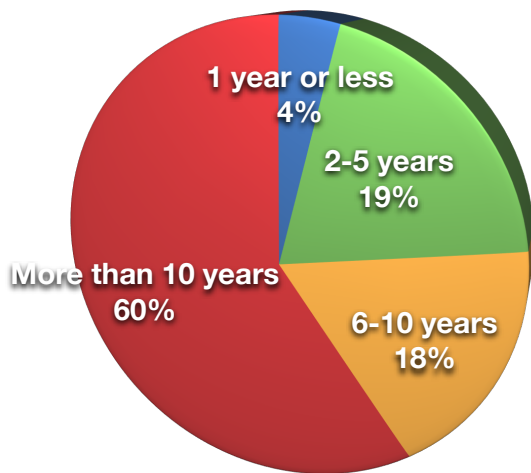
This study also recognizes the fact which Rea-Dickins (2008) emphasizes that;

There are several challenges facing the effective and fair implementation of assessment, one of which has to do with the nature of teacher expertise and what teachers need to know to support effective and fair classroom language assessment.

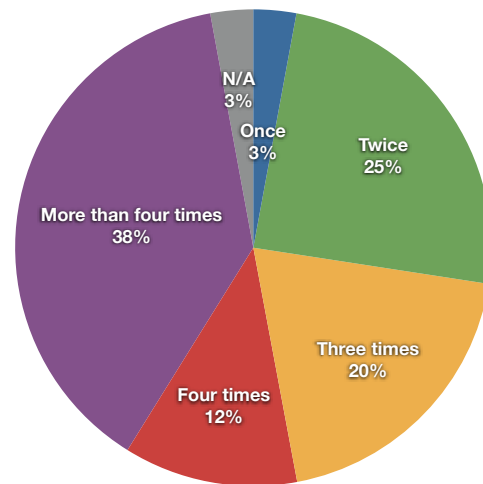
Besides, this study focuses on the gaps between teachers' beliefs and their practice of CBLA.

#### **4.1. Teachers' English Teaching Careers**

As Smith (2007) emphasized, experienced teachers can anticipate, plan, and improvise are better decision makers and may establish important decisions and are more proficient at observation and providing much feedback. Moreover, information on teachers' English teaching careers might reflect the current state of English teaching in higher education in Turkey.



**Figure 3: Teachers' English teaching careers**



**Figure 4: Frequency of assessment carried out by the teachers**

In Figure 3, sixty percent of teachers have more than ten years experience of teaching English. However, 23 % of the teachers have less than five-year experience of English teaching.

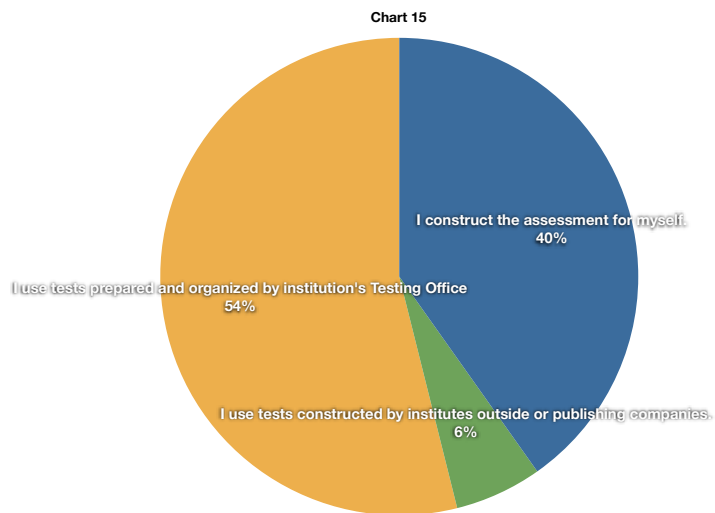
#### **4.2. Numbers of Assessment**

When asked, “How many times do you carry out testing?” the results showed that the frequency of assessment was various (Figure 4). This means that assessment of English is left to the teachers’ preference.

Thirty-eight percent of the teachers indicates that they carry out the assessment more than four times. This shows that assessment is a big part of their teaching life. They use assessment as a teaching tool. Meanwhile 25 % of the teachers say that they carry out the assessment only twice in a term, so it may be understood that either those teachers do not accept assessment as a teaching tool or they do not want to use it because the questions of the tests are prepared by a third party such as testing office or outside.

### 4.3. Sources of assessment

As explained previously, 102 teachers responded the questionnaire. The results of the responses of 102 teachers are presented in Figure 5.



**Figure 5: Source of assessment in classroom based language assessment**

Most of the teachers (60%) use the tests prepared by another person or institution. This shows that teachers use outside sources for the tests and assessment.

### 4.4. Planning

Higher Education English Language Program teachers' perceptions while planning their classroom-based assessment will be discussed in this stage.

#### 4.4.1. Teachers' Principles of Assessment

The varieties of principles that teachers guide when they plan their assessment of students' progress and their achievement in their classrooms were analyzed in this section.

**Table 2: Teachers' Beliefs in the Planning Stage**

Items	Mean	SD
17. Teachers should make sure that assessment is not affected by students' personal characteristics such as gender, appearance, and economic and social background.	4.8	0.546
1. Teachers should first identify the purpose of the assessment when they design the assessment.	4.73	0.81
7. Assessment (tasks) should be meaningful to the students.	4.72	0.763
12. Assessment should focus on students' progress and achievement rather than on comparisons between the students in the classroom.	4.67	0.762
16. Teachers should make sure that all students are given the same learning opportunities in their classrooms.	4.62	0.845
6. Assessment (tasks) should be related to what students do in real class time.	4.57	0.766
3. Teachers should consider what their students' needs are when they design the assessment.	4.54	0.864
10. Assessment (tasks) should be designed in such a way as to obtain information about students' potential to use the language effectively.	4.43	0.779
2. Teachers should consider the attainment targets which the curriculum requests when they design the assessment.	4.42	0.849
5. Teachers should use assessment specifications when they carry out the assessment.	4.42	0.801
15. Teachers should respect the privacy of the students and guarantee confidentiality.	4.41	0.937
4. Teachers should balance the attainment targets with their students' needs when they design the assessment.	4.34	0.906
8. Assessment (tasks) should be designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students know at that particular time.	4.28	0.958
9. Assessment (tasks) should be designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students can do at that particular time.	4.28	0.948
13. Teachers should give the students advance notice, so that the students will be able to prepare for the assessment.	4.08	1.2
11. The appropriateness of assessment (tasks) should be checked by calling for peer comment or with reference to published guidelines.	3.94	0.983
14. Teachers should receive advance 'informed consent' from the students or their parents with regard to carrying out the assessment.	2.78	1.166

Considering descending order of the means of the items (Table 2), the teachers who responded usually believed the items given in this stage are parts of their own assessment principles.

Among them, items 17, 1, 7, 12, 16, 6, and 3 seem to be the principles that most of

the teachers adhere powerfully, and they are the most possible to be carried as classroom-based language assessment. Additionally, the teachers also recognize other items as solid principles of classroom-based language assessment; however, they do not seem to embrace items 11 and 14 as their operational principles.

#### 4.4.2. Teachers' Practice Reflecting Their Assessment Principles

Table 3 shows the teachers' planning stage: how they plan the assessment of students' progress, and how they build up the assessment tasks.

**Table 3:** *Teachers' practice in the planning stage*

Items	Mean	S.D
17. I make sure that assessment is not affected by students' personal characteristics such as gender, appearance, and economic and social background.	4.66	0.708
16. I make sure that all students are given the same learning opportunities in their classroom.]	4.6	0.672
12. Assessment focuses on students' progress and achievement rather than on comparisons between the students in the classroom.	4.58	0.691
10. Assessment (tasks) is designed in such a way as to obtain information about students' potential to use the language effectively.	4.53	0.739
13. I give the students advance notice, so that the students are able to prepare for the assessment.	4.53	0.807
6. Assessment (tasks) is related to what the students do in real class time.	4.52	0.781
1. I first identify the purpose of the assessment when I design the assessment.	4.51	0.781
8. Assessment (tasks) are designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students know at that particular time.	4.5	0.711
15. I respect the privacy of the students and guarantee confidentiality.	4.48	0.874
7. Assessments (tasks) are meaningful to the students	4.41	0.802
2. I consider the standards or attainment targets which the curriculum requests when I design the assessment.	4.4	0.718
9. Assessment (tasks) is designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students can do at that particular time.	4.33	0.867
5. I use assessment specifications when I carry out the assessment.	4.27	0.747
3. I consider what the students' needs are when I design the assessment.	4.25	0.781
4. I balance the attainment targets with the students' needs when I design the assessment.	4.2	0.866
11. The appropriateness of assessment (tasks) is checked by calling for peer comment or with reference to published guidelines (if these are available).	3.82	0.94
14 I receive advance 'informed consent' from the students or their parents with regard to carrying out the assessment.	2.63	1.503



In Table 3, the teachers were asked fifteen questions concerning to their students' assessment. However, Items 11 and 14 appear not to be usually a part of teacher's practice within the planning stage of their classroom-based assessment. They were not often enforced as a principle of the participants' assessment procedure.

Table 3 additionally shows that the details of the assessment schedule, and necessary data with regard to the assessment has been given, before carrying it out, this seems to be normal procedure within the higher education English language programs in Turkey. Also, in general, the teachers set up their assessment as scheduled and made assessment tasks following their principles. The assessment tasks reflect the aims of the program properly, and are in line with what's given within the curriculum. Additionally, quite a lot of teachers recognize the degree of the students' participation in assessment tasks as an assessment tool.

Meanwhile, most of the teachers agree that every student is given the same learning opportunities in their classrooms, and students' personal characteristics like gender, appearance, and economic and social background does not affect the assessment.

#### **4.4.3. Constructive validity**

Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 10 (see Tables 2 & 3) show the constructive validity. The most basic element of the development of assessment is that its developers must recognize purposes of the assessment. The result regarding the teachers' identification of the purpose of the assessment (Item 1) indicates that most of the teachers agree with this principle. The results of the teachers' consideration of the standards, which the curriculum requests (Item 2) show that the teachers generally agree on the curriculum to assist them to develop their assessment aims and skills.

In addition, 98 teachers agree that assessment focuses on students' progress and achievement rather than on comparisons between the students in the classroom (Item 12). Furthermore, the results of items 3 & 4 (students' needs and balancing it with the targets) show that the teachers believe that students' needs should be taken into consideration as well as the targets of the curriculum. Many teachers believe that assessment should reflect what the students know, and they can do in English at that particular time (Item 8&9).

#### **4.4.4. Content validity**

As Shim (2008) indicated items 6 and 11 (see Tables 2 & 3) relate to the validity of contents: assessment might not be enforced without sufficient attention being paid to what ought to be assessed. In this regard, the teachers conjointly stress that there should be a powerful similarity between what the students learned and the nature of the assessment (Item 6). Thirty-five teachers indicate that their aim is to check to what degree the students understand what they were instructed in the classroom; and they believe that they assess what the students learned and experienced in English learning classes.

#### **4.4.5. Ethical aspects**

Items 7, 12, 14 and 15 (see Tables 2 and 3) are related to the ethical issues. Being significant of assessment tasks to the students, (Item 7) and focusing on students' progress and achievement instead of comparing the students with one another, (Item 12) shows the degree of the teachers creating empathy with the students whereas they're designing the assessment. Most of the teachers agree that assessment should target every student's individual progress or achievement, instead of their ranks in class.

#### **4.4.6. Fairness**

Items 16 and 17 (see Tables 2 & 3) are related to the teachers' concerns of the fairness issue of the assessment they develop. Items 16 & 17 show that the teachers provide students an equivalent learning opportunities, and if they are affected by students' personal characteristics like, gender, appearance, and economic and social background by assessment as a part of their classroom-based language assessment.

#### **4.4.7. The Correlations of the Teachers' Working Principles and Their Practice**

As seen on the Tables 2 and 3, no significant differences have been found between Teachers' beliefs in the planning stage and their practice in the planning stage. This means that they are mostly practicing whatever they believe in their assessment process.

#### **4.5. Implementation**

In this stage, how tertiary level English Language Programs' teachers perceive the implementation of their classroom-based language assessment will be discussed.

#### 4.5.1. Teachers' principles of assessment

**Table 4:** *Teachers' Beliefs in the Implementation Stage*

Items	Mean	S.D
24. Assessment (tasks) processes should be completed within a manageable time considering the given context.	4.59	0.805
20. Students should understand the desired outcome of the assessment (tasks).	4.47	0.955
18. Teachers should inform the students of the reasons why they are being assessed.	4.42	0.934
19. Teachers should explicitly instruct the students how to do the assessment (tasks).	4.25	1.029
22. Teachers should provide students with an opportunity to monitor their own work while they are performing the assessment (tasks).	4.11	0.942
23. Teachers should give students immediate feedback after they complete each assessment (task).	4.06	0.952
21. Students should be supported when they have a problem hindering their completing the assessment (tasks).	3.97	1.243

In this section, teachers' assessment principles are explored. Items 24 & 20 show that (see Table 4) teachers mostly agree that assessment process ought to be completed within a manageable time covering the given context, and students ought to perceive the assessment' outcomes. These results show that teachers mostly know what and how to do throughout the implementation stage of the CBLA.

#### 4.5.2. Teachers' practice reflecting their assessment principles

Table 5 shows how the teachers carry out their planned assessment process; and how they organize assessment activities.

**Table 5:** *Teachers' Practice in the Implementation Stage*

Items	Mean	S.D.
19. I explicitly instruct the students how to do the assessment (tasks).	4.48	0.816
24. Assessment (tasks) processes are completed within a manageable time considering the given context.	4.48	0.603
18. I inform the students of the reasons why they are being assessed.	4.47	0.831
20. Students understand the desired outcome of the assessment (tasks).	4.34	0.77
21. Students are supported when they have a problem hindering their completing the assessment (tasks).	4.09	1.104
22. I provide students with an opportunity to monitor their own work while they are performing the assessment (tasks).	4.05	1.061
23. I give students immediate feedback after they complete each assessment (task).	4.02	0.916

All of the items are found to be applicable to what the teachers really did as regards their students' assessment. However, once it is compared with the other items, Item 23 (giving immediate feedback) appear to be least strong of assessment practice; though the teachers generally offer some kind of feedback, they often do not see that it was necessary to provide adequate and prompt feedback once implementing their assessment.

#### **4.5.3. Assessment protocol:**

Items 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, and 24 (see Tables 4 & 5) focus on the assessors' implementation of the mandatory steps within the assessment procedure. The teachers perceived that they need to help the students to grasp why they are being assessed (Item 18). Some teachers argued that they, as teachers, explained the students in detail and clearly why they enforced the assessment; so, they believed that the students participated in the assessment positively.

The results of items 7 and 12 (see Table 2.1) show that the teachers were concerned about creating assessment relevant to learning; this may be considered as assessment to be another chance to learn English.

In addition, Item 19 shows that the teachers strongly agree that they should provide students how to do the assessment. This points out that assessment should be merged into the regular classroom practices.

The teachers also believe that the assessment processes should be completed within a manageable time considering the given time (Item 24).

#### **4.5.4. Concerns About Ethical Aspects**

The results of Item 23 (giving immediate feedback after they complete the tasks) show that (see Tables 4 & 5) even though its mean is quite high, yet it's still comparatively low when compared with other statements' means. Throughout the interviews, the teachers mentioned three main reasons why they could not give immediate feedback: curriculum, the aim of assessment, and quality of feedback. Only writing skill teachers were providing feedback when they finished their weekly assignments. They knew its necessity as one of their classroom-based assessment principles; however, they may not be extremely confident about the ethics of what they're doing when putting it into practice.

### **4.6. Monitoring**

In this stage, how Turkish higher education English teachers perceive the monitoring of their classroom-based assessment will be discussed.

#### **4.6.1. Teachers' Principles of Assessment**

This section explores the teachers' beliefs about assessment during monitoring the implementation of their assessment.

**Table 6:** *Teachers' Beliefs in the Monitoring Stage*

Items	Mean	S.D.
31. Teachers should make assessment as a part of teaching and learning.	4.67	0.586
33. The overall feedback should enable students to know how to improve their work and take their learning forward.	4.59	0.709
29. Teachers should use the results of assessment for revising their teaching.	4.58	0.737
34. The whole process of assessment should be consistent in terms of procedure and administration.	4.53	0.671
28. Teachers should mark the students' performance consistently.	4.45	0.863
30. Teachers should not use the results of assessment negatively.	4.41	0.871
26. Marking criteria should be connected with the aims of the assessment and the learner's characteristics in a given context.	4.35	0.886
25. Teachers should construct a marking system as a part of the whole assessment process.	4.22	1.03
27. Teachers should let students have detailed information about the marking criteria.	4.15	1.094
36. Teachers should monitor the misuse of the overall consequences of the assessment as a tool of power.	3.76	1.016
32. Teachers should share the findings of assessment with other teachers.	3.55	1.183

When putting the responds descending order according to their means (see Table 6), the highest means are the items reflecting the preferred principles of classroom-based assessment. In addition, items 32, and 36 have the lowest means (Table 6) which shows what teachers mostly disagree. Thus, the overall results indicate that the teachers totally perceive what they understand and how to do it when they perform their work in the monitoring stage of classroom-based assessment.

#### **4.6.2. Teachers' Practice Reflecting Their Assessment Principles**

In this section, how the teachers carry out the assessment to classroom during monitoring the implementation of their assessment will be discussed.

**Table 7: Teachers' Practice in the Monitoring Stage**

Items	Mean	S.D.
31. I make assessment as a part of teaching and learning.	4.6	0.65
29. I use the results of assessment for revising my teaching.	4.54	0.771
30. I use the results of assessment positively not negatively.	4.48	0.763
28. I mark the students' performance consistently.	4.44	0.632
26. Marking criteria are connected with the aims of the assessment and the learner's characteristics in a given context.	4.4	0.872
34. The whole process of assessment is consistent in terms of procedure and administration.	4.39	0.819
33. The overall feedback enables students to know how to improve their work and take their learning forward.	4.32	0.874
25. I construct a marking system as a part of the whole assessment process.	4.28	0.996
27. I let students have detailed information about the marking criteria.	4.16	1.021
32. I share the findings of assessment with other teachers.	3.78	1.109
36. I monitor the misuse of the overall consequences of the assessment as a tool of power.	3.64	1.066

Table 7 shows that the teachers act how they believe about assessment. In this section all of the items are found to be applicable to what the teachers actually do as regards their students' assessment; however, sharing findings of the students' assessment with their colleagues, and monitoring the misuse of the overall consequences of the assessment as a tool of power (Item 32 and 36) seemed to be unpopular principles.

#### **4.7. Recording and Dissemination**

In this stage, how higher education English language program English teachers perceive the recording and dissemination of their classroom-based assessment will be discussed.



#### 4.7.1. Teachers' Principles of Assessment

This section is to investigate teachers' principles of assessment related to recording and sharing their students' progress and the achievements.

**Table 8:** *Teachers' Beliefs in the Recording and Dissemination Stage*

Items	Mean	S.D.
38. Teachers should be aware of their responsibilities for the output of their professional work.	4.51	0.887
37. Teachers should consider students' rights as assessment takers; they must never be harmed by the assessment.	4.44	0.863
41. Teachers should be involved in the development of the report system at all levels.	4.16	0.972
40. Schools should develop their own report system of students' progress and achievement.	4.05	1.009
39. Local or nationwide report systems about the students' progress and achievement should be provided.	3.72	0.969
42. A formal review of a student's progress and achievement should be reported to the local education authority and the central government.	3.29	1.033

Teachers generally agree with the items in this stage (Table 8). Item 38, which indicates the responsibilities of the teachers for the output of their professional work, had the highest mean. Meanwhile, considering being humanistic while assessing the learners (item 37) is another item, which the teachers support strongly. The other items also reflect the teachers' beliefs of the Classroom Based Language Assessment. Item 42, which asks the teacher to report the students' progress to local authority, and local or nationwide report systems of students' progress (Item 39) are not supported that much by the teachers.

#### 4.7.2. Teachers' Practice Reflecting Their Assessment Principles

Table 9 shows how the teachers record and share the students' performances with the people concerned. The means of the items (Table 9) show that in most cases the teachers do not reflect their beliefs into practice.

**Table 9 : Teachers' Practices in the Recording and Dissemination Stage**

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Items	Mean	S.D.
38. I am aware of my responsibilities for the output of my professional work.	4.63	0.644
37. I consider students' rights as assessment takers; they must never be harmed by the assessment.	4.48	0.8
40. My schools develop their own report system of students' progress and achievement.	3.89	1.257
41. I am involved in the development of the report system at all levels.	3.19	1.386
39. Local or nationwide report systems about the students' progress and achievement are provided.	2.77	1.468
42. A formal review of a student's progress and achievement is reported to the local education authority and the central government.	2.53	1.273

---

Items 37 & 38 seem to be applicable to the teachers acting according to their beliefs. Besides, the other items (40, 41, 39, 42) are not supported by the teachers as strong as regarding to their beliefs.

Table 9 shows that teachers do not generally put in to practice four of the assessment principles. In this study, the maximum number of gaps between the teachers' principles (beliefs) and their practice has come out in *the Recording and Dissemination Stage*.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will focus on the findings in Chapter 4, and discuss them in details. Then the whole study will be summarized. It will also recommend some practical considerations which may work for assessment researchers, administrators and teachers-cum-assessors as well. From *planning* what to assess and how, through *implementing* assessment procedures and *monitoring* students' performances to *recording* students' attainment and progress, the teacher is constantly making decisions on how to keep track of students' progress and attainment (Rea-Dickens, 2001). The limitation of the study and implications for the future studies will also be mentioned.

#### 5.1. Teachers' Principles and Practices in the Planning Stage

*Research Question 1: How Higher Education English Language Program teachers perceive the planning of their classroom-based assessment?*

According to the questionnaire results of this study show that teachers have a clear knowledge about how to plan their classroom based language assessment. The results also show that teachers have a clear idea that while assessing, the students are not affected by their personal characteristics (Item 17). The teachers are also clear about identifying the purpose of the assessment when they design it (Item 1), which is one of the main characteristics of the classroom based language assessment. This also shows that teachers have a clear idea of the need to plan their classroom based language assessment. Giving the same learning opportunities, considering students' needs, their potential to use the language effectively, aiming the targets, which the curriculum requests are the main goals of classroom based language assessment. They are also indicated by Assessment Reform Group (2002) as:

A teacher's planning should provide opportunities for both learner and teacher to obtain and use information about progress towards learning goals. It also has to be flexible to respond to initial and emerging ideas and skills. Planning should include strategies to ensure that learners understand the goals they are pursuing and the criteria that will be applied in assessing their work. How learners will receive feedback, how they will take part in assessing their learning and how they will be

helped to make further progress should also be planned.

Rea-Dickins (2008) indicated that there has been a need for teachers to develop an awareness of the progress of their learners informally at the classroom level as well as to track formally learner achievement for accountability purposes. This is in line with the item (Item 12) regarding focusing on students' progress rather than comparing them with their mates.

As indicated in 5.2.2 giving the details of the assessment schedule, and necessary data with regard to the assessment before carrying out seemed to be normal procedure within the tertiary level English Language Programs in Turkey. It can be gathered from the questionnaire that the teachers set up their assessment as scheduled and made assessment task meet their principles. It also shows that the assessment tasks reflect the aims of the program.

Finally there might be some slight differences between the teachers' understanding of the language testing. As Shim (2008) explains this, relating to different issues of the development of teacher education programs.

## **5.2. Teachers' Principles and Practices in the Implementation Stage**

*Research Question 2: How do Higher Education English Language Program teachers perceive the implementation of their classroom-based assessment?*

As Cheng, Rogers, & Hu (2004) emphasize the implementation and use of CBLA vary in procedure, and Seong (2001) found that teachers' strategic cognitions and interactive cognitions influenced both their approach to planning assessment procedures and the actual implementation of assessment practices. However Rea-Dickins (2006) explains that whilst a teacher may select a particular assessment activity for its formative potential, it is only at the point of implementation and use that the characteristics of an assessment become apparent.

All in all, in the implementation stage, the teachers' perceptions seem generally to be in line with the principles of CBLA. The teachers have a clear idea about what should be done in the implementation stage of CBLA. They are also aware that there is a link between the students' learning and assessment. The results regarding to the students' understanding of the desired outcomes of the assessment show that the teachers have information about the

characteristics of the outcome-based assessment (Bresciani, 2006). Finally all of the items' responses show that they are applicable to what the teachers really do as regards to their students' assessment. Although generally the teachers offer some kind of immediate feedback in classroom, they do not feel it is really necessary to provide feedback once implementing their assessment (Item 23).

### **5.3. Teachers' Principles and Practices in the Monitoring Stage**

*Research Question 3: How do Higher Education English Language Program teachers perceive the monitoring of their classroom-based assessment?*

In the monitoring stage, teachers generally agree with the use of assessment results, considering assessment as a part of teaching tool (item 31), giving importance to feedback (item 33), using the results of assessment for revising (Item 29), marking students' performances regularly (Item 28), not using the assessment results in a negative way (Item 30), using the rubrics as a part of assessment process and sharing the rubrics with the students (Item 25). However, there are some issues that teachers do not totally agree such as monitoring the misuse of the overall consequences of the assessment as a tool of power (Item 36), and sharing the findings of assessment with other teachers (Item 32). Teachers' responds to the questionnaire (Table 4.1 & 4.2) show that they generally agree with the items reflecting the preferred principles of classroom based language assessment. In this stage, the responds to the questionnaire show that teachers' practices meet with their principles. Finally, as indicated above the teachers do not want to use the assessment as a punishment tool. They are so sensitive on this. In addition to this, sharing findings of their assessment with third parties such as other colleagues does not sound them to be applicable, but to some extent teaching English might be more effective if the data is shared with teacher development unit or with peers or some other colleagues within a systematic cooperative context which creates interaction between the teachers.

### **5.4. Teachers' Principles and Practices in the Recording and Dissemination Stage**

*Research Question 4: How Higher Education English Language Program teachers perceive the recording and dissemination of their classroom-based assessment?*

In classrooms, the learners' language is usually expected to be developed and

measured by the teachers. According to Brindley (1989), in shifting between two roles of facilitator of language development and assessor of language achievement tensions arise. While recording students' achievements and progress, the teachers are continuously making decisions on how to keep tracks of the students' progress and attainment (Rea-Dickens, 2001). As Shim (2008) indicates, it is an obligatory situation to be recognized that the level of the responsibility the teachers as assessment developers carry is so controversial. The responses to teachers' awareness of their responsibility for the output of their professional work (Item 38) show that teachers are aware of these responsibilities. Teachers are also aware of considering students' rights as assessment takers (Item 37). The responses also show that not many of the higher education institutions develop report systems of the students' progress and achievements (Item 40), and teachers are not generally satisfied with the current report system. This is also same as the item regarding to providing report systems about students' progress and achievement (Item 39).

Ways in which classroom-based language assessment is used and the involved processes are heavily influenced by the practices of the teachers (Seong, 2011). The teachers do not like sharing academic results with the third parties as mentioned above. This is not only because it may damage the teachers' performance in the classroom, but also their performance might be compared with the other colleagues. Finally the teachers are aware of their responsibility as language assessors and teachers.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

Classroom Based Language Assessment is being generally used in higher education language programs in Turkey, but teachers and institutions are not aware of this. They do not have a name for it in their minds. Some use e-portfolios, some use portfolios, some have powerful teachers evaluation grades in classes which affect the students' passing/failing score.

## **5.7. Limitations of the study**

The most difficult part of the study was to find volunteers to respond these amounts of questions. Most of them complained about answering these numbers of questions at one time. It took a lot of time to finish up all the questions. Another limitation of the study was to answer open-ended questions. Especially for the teachers, who studied in a multiple-

choice test based education system, it was really difficult to type a lot of sentences, so it was a good idea to make an interview with at least five of them to gather some information which I could not get from the questionnaire's open-ended part.

### **5.8. Implications of the Study**

In this study, the principles, procedures, teachers' beliefs and practices of classroom based language assessment are discussed. Here are the implications of the study which may help for further investigations regarding to CBLA in tertiary level in Turkey.

In this study, it is found out that the teachers are aware of what good assessment should be like, and they have their own assessment criteria, and they know how to put them into practice. It is obvious that they are not only receivers but also active practioners (Shim, 2008).

It is obvious that this is only a limited research to give a big picture of current situation in English Language Programs in Universities in Turkey. It is hoped that this study will give an idea about the teachers' perceptions about CBLA in Turkey. However there are still a number of teachers who do not feel confident when implementing an assessment in language classes.

Although it has some limitations, this study gave me a chance to have better understanding of the teachers' beliefs, principles and practices of CBLA in Turkey. This might be a step for further studies in this field in Turkey.

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## **7. APPENDIX**

### **7.1. Appendix 1: Questionnaire**

**Dear colleagues,**

My name is Kemal Gönen. I am MA student at the Çağ University in Tarsus, Turkey. The reason that I am contacting you is that I am now doing my thesis research on Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom-Based Assessment of English as a Foreign Language in tertiary level in Turkey. Your participation will assist me to conduct the research.

The aim of the research is to explore practices of classroom-based assessment constructed and administered by the teachers of English and to understand why they do what they do with regard to their assessment. It also aims to suggest a developmental model or practical guidance for the classroom teachers and the others who are involved in classroom-based assessment in English education.

To put this into practice, I would need to analyze four kinds of data from the study:

1. The classroom-based assessment questionnaire
2. The assessment specifications
3. Assessment tasks used in the classroom
4. The content of the interview

This data will be processed statistically and selected anecdotes might be used for illustration and explanation. I would like your informed consent to use your data in the following way. Before making this request, I would like to provide you with the following assurances.

1. You can be assured that there can be no risk to you in participating in this research. The strictest anonymity will be retained; your name and any other personal details will be removed and, wherever possible, the data will be decontextualized, thus no inference can be made as to your own identity.

2. You can be assured that the data and research sources will be held securely in strictest confidence.
3. Participation in the research is completely voluntary. If you are interested in the results of this study, I am willing to share them with you.

I would be very grateful if you could find the time to consider the statements of informed consent, which follow, and to complete this questionnaire to assist me in my research. Please feel free to write down your experience and opinions. Many thanks for your valuable time and cooperation

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## **My Perceptions of Classroom-Based Assessment of English as a Foreign Language**

In this questionnaire you will find a list of things that teachers might do when they carry out classroom-based assessment of English to obtain information about the students' progress or achievement in their schools. The aims of this questionnaire are to explore your perceptions of classroom-based assessment of English as a foreign language.

This questionnaire consists of four parts.

Part 1. Personal information

Part 2. It asks you to describe your general perceptions of classroom-based assessment.

Part 3. It asks you to show what kinds of personal working principles you have with regard to English language assessment in the classroom.

**If you are happy to join the further investigations of this study, please let me know your email address below:**

**Your E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 1: Personal Information

1. What is your gender?

Male ( )

Female ( )

2. What is the type of the school where you teach?

Private University ( )

State University ( )

3. What is your age?

25 years or less ( )

26-30 years ( )

31-35 years ( )

More than 35 years ( )

4. How long have you been teaching English?

1 year or less ( )

2-5 years ( )

6-10 years ( )

More than 10 years ( )

5. Do you teach English as a skill teacher or a main course teacher?

A skill teacher ( )

A main course teacher ( )

6. How many times do you carry out assessments during a semester to assess students' progress or achievement?

Once ( )

Twice ( )

Three times ( )

Four times ( )

More than four times ( )

7. Do you use tests provided by outside sources or construct them for yourselves when you assess your students' progress or achievement?

I use tests prepared and organized by institution's Testing Office ( )

I construct the assessment for myself. ( )

Others: ( )



## **PART 2: Your General perceptions of Classroom-Based Assessment**

*Please write down your practice and opinions in as much detail as possible. Please use more space than is given below if you need it.*

1. Why do you carry out assessment in the classroom?
2. What, in your opinion, are the characteristics of classroom-based assessment?

### **PART 3-1: Your Working Principles of Classroom-Based Assessment**

For each of the items please circle the score that best represents **your own working theory** of classroom-based assessment.

*When you carry out assessments to assess students' progress or achievement, to what extent you believe it is part of your personal working theory of classroom-based assessment to:*

- 1. Strongly disbelieve**
- 2. Disbelieve**
- 3. Neutral**
- 4. Believe**
- 5. Strongly believe**

#### **STAGE 1: Planning**

1. Teachers should first identify the purpose of the assessment when they design the assessment.
2. Teachers should consider the attainment targets which the curriculum requests when they design the assessment.
3. Teachers should consider what their students' needs are when they design the assessment.
4. Teachers should balance the attainment targets with their students' needs when they design the assessment.
5. Teachers should use assessment specifications when they carry out the assessment.
6. Assessment (tasks) should be related to what students do in real class time.
7. Assessment (tasks) should be meaningful to the students.

8. Assessment (tasks) should be designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students know at that particular time.
9. Assessment (tasks) should be designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students can do at that particular time.
10. Assessment (tasks) should be designed in such a way as to obtain information about students' potential to use the language effectively.
11. The appropriateness of assessment (tasks) should be checked by calling for peer comment or with reference to published guidelines (if these are available).
12. Assessment should focus on students' progress and achievement rather than on comparisons between the students in the classroom.
13. Teachers should give the students advance notice, so that the students will be able to prepare for the assessment.
14. Teachers should receive advance 'informed consent' from the students or their parents with regard to carrying out the assessment.
15. Teachers should respect the privacy of the students and guarantee confidentiality.
16. Teachers should make sure that all students are given the same learning opportunities in their classrooms.
17. Teachers should make sure that assessment is not affected by students' personal characteristics such as gender, appearance, and economic and social background.

## **STAGE 2: Implementation**

18. Teachers should inform the students of the reasons why they are being assessed.
19. Teachers should explicitly instruct the students how to do the assessment (tasks).
20. Students should understand the desired outcome of the assessment (tasks).
21. Students should be supported when they have a problem hindering their completing the assessment (tasks).

22. Teachers should provide students with an opportunity to monitor their own work while they are performing the assessment (tasks).
23. Teachers should give students immediate feedback after they complete each assessment (task).
24. Assessment (tasks) processes should be completed within a manageable time considering the given context.

### **STAGE 3: Monitoring**

25. Teachers should construct a marking system as a part of the whole assessment process.
26. Marking criteria should be connected with the aims of the assessment and the learner's characteristics in a given context.
27. Teachers should let students have detailed information about the marking criteria.
28. Teachers should mark the students' performance consistently.
29. Teachers should use the results of assessment for revising their teaching.
30. Teachers should not use the results of assessment negatively.
31. Teachers should make assessment a part of teaching and learning.
32. Teachers should share the findings of assessment with other teachers.
33. The overall feedback should enable students to know how to improve their work and take their learning forward.
34. The whole process of assessment should be consistent in terms of procedure and administration.
35. The process of assessment should be supported by the involvement of the parents.
36. Teachers should monitor the misuse of the overall consequences of the assessment as a tool of power.

#### **STAGE 4: Recording and Dissemination**

37. Teachers should consider students' rights as assessment takers; they must never be harmed by the assessment.
38. Teachers should be aware of their responsibilities for the output of their professional work.
39. Local or nationwide report systems about the students' progress and achievement should be provided.
40. Schools should develop their own report system of students' progress and achievement.
41. Teachers should be involved in the development of the report system at all levels.
42. A formal review of a student's progress and achievement should be reported to the local education authority and the central government.

**PART 3-2: Your Practice Reflecting the Working Principles of Classroom-Based**

**Assessment** For each of the items please circle the score that best represents the degree of correspondence between your personal working theory and your actual practice. That is,

*to what extent do you put your personal theory into the practice?*

1. **Never**
2. **Hardly ever**
3. **Sometimes**
4. **Quite often**
5. **Very often**

**STAGE 1: Planning**

1. I first identify the purpose of the assessment when I design the assessment.
2. I consider the standards or attainment targets which the curriculum requests when I design the assessment.
3. I consider what the students' needs are when I design the assessment.
4. I balance the attainment targets with the students' needs when I design the assessment.
5. I use assessment specifications when I carry out the assessment.
6. Assessment (tasks) is related to what the students do in real class time.
7. Assessments (tasks) are meaningful to the students.
8. Assessment (tasks) are designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students know at that particular time.
9. Assessment (tasks) are designed in such a way as to obtain information about what students can do at that particular time.
10. Assessment (tasks) is designed in such a way as to obtain information about students'

potential to use the language effectively.

11. The appropriateness of assessment (tasks) is checked by calling for peer comment or with reference to published guidelines (if these are available).
12. Assessment focuses on students' progress and achievement rather than on comparisons between the students in the classroom.
13. I give the students advance notice, so that the students are able to prepare for the assessment.
14. I receive advance 'informed consent' from the students or their parents with regard to carrying out the assessment.
15. I respect the privacy of the students and guarantee confidentiality.
16. I make sure that all students are given the same learning opportunities in their classroom.
17. I make sure that assessment is not affected by students' personal characteristics such as gender, appearance, and economic and social background.

## **STAGE 2: Implementation**

18. I inform the students of the reasons why they are being assessed.
19. I explicitly instruct the students how to do the assessment (tasks).
20. Students understand the desired outcome of the assessment (tasks).
21. Students are supported when they have a problem hindering their completing the assessment (tasks).
22. I provide students with an opportunity to monitor their own work while they are performing the assessment (tasks).
23. I give students immediate feedback after they complete each assessment (task).
24. Assessment (tasks) processes are completed within a manageable time considering the given context.

### **STAGE 3: Monitoring**

25. I construct a marking system as a part of the whole assessment process.
26. Marking criteria are connected with the aims of the assessment and the learner's characteristics in a given context.
27. I let students have detailed information about the marking criteria.
28. I mark the students' performance consistently.
29. I use the results of assessment for revising my teaching.
30. I use the results of assessment positively not negatively.
31. I make assessment a part of teaching and learning.
32. I share the findings of assessment with other teachers.
33. The overall feedback enables students to know how to improve their work and take their learning forward.
34. The whole process of assessment is consistent in terms of procedure and administration.
35. The process of assessment is supported by the involvement of the parents.
36. I monitor the misuse of the overall consequences of the assessment as a tool of power

### **STAGE 4: Recording and Dissemination**

37. I consider students' rights as assessment takers; they must never be harmed by the assessment.
38. I am aware of my responsibilities for the output of my professional work.
39. Local or nationwide report systems about the students' progress and achievement are provided.
40. My schools develop their own report system of students' progress and achievement.



41. I am involved in the development of the report system at all levels.

42. A formal review of a student's progress and achievement is reported to the local education authority and the central government.

### **My Perceptions of Classroom-Based Assessment of English as a Foreign Language**

Part 4. It asks you to explain to what extent you are convinced that your assessment meets the fundamental considerations of classroom-based assessment.

**PART 4: The Convictions, which You Hold about the Fundamental Considerations of Classroom-Based Assessment**

1. To what extent are you convinced that your assessment is valid? *Please explain WHY, or list the reasons, which support your opinion.*
2. To what extent are you convinced that your assessment is reliable? *Please explain WHY, or list the reasons, which support your opinions.*
3. To what extent are you convinced that your assessment is fair and ethical? *Please explain WHY, or list the reasons, which support your opinions.*

Thank you very much for your help.