

The Null Curriculum in the Classroom: The Current State and Underlying Reasons in English Language Teaching

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This study aimed to analyze the null curriculum in English language teaching (ELT) by exploring the perspectives and experiences of practitioners. Employing a basic qualitative research design, the study sought to reveal how and why certain elements of the English curriculum are neglected in practice. The participants consisted of twenty secondary school English language teachers. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using content analysis. The findings were contextualized under three primary themes: attainment (achievements), content, and assessment. The analysis indicated that speaking skills were the most frequently neglected component, followed by writing and listening. These omissions were attributed to factors such as insufficient instructional hours, students' lack of readiness, overcrowded classrooms, and the pressure of high-stakes centralized exams. Furthermore, the results highlighted adaptation challenges regarding the new performance-based assessment system introduced in the 2023-2024 academic year, which aims to evaluate all four language skills. A significant contradiction was identified between the High School Entrance Exam (LGS), which remains focused on multiple-choice reading questions, and the new applied assessment model. Consequently, the study suggests simplifying the curriculum and implementing regulatory measures to align instructional practices with evaluation methods

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INTRODUCTION

English proficiency encompasses the four fundamental skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Despite the inherent challenges of language acquisition, mastering these skills is vital for both communicative competence and the development of broader cognitive abilities (Deveci et al., 2016). However, the 2023 Education First English Proficiency Index ranks Türkiye 34th out of 35 European countries, underscoring a critical need for systemic improvement. For decades, individuals in Türkiye have struggled with language barriers; despite nearly ten years of formal English schooling, there remains a pervasive 'receptive-only' proficiency. Many learners find they can comprehend written texts but remain unable to communicate effectively in spontaneous speech. In response, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has implemented new strategies that prioritize a skills-based curriculum. Nevertheless, various systemic and practical factors often lead teachers to overlook or omit certain curricular components (Karahana & Şad, 2022)—a phenomenon that can be best understood through the framework of the 'null curriculum.'

Eisner (1985) defines the null curriculum as the subject matter that is either not taught or intentionally excluded from the official curriculum. Similarly, Mitchell (2016) describes it as the 'untaught' curriculum in schools, referring to content omitted due to ideological, political, or practical constraints. For instance, when subjects like art and aesthetics are undervalued in national assessment systems, they are often sidelined. This neglect can significantly hinder holistic student development, as the omission of essential domains like music and drama may result in diminished emotional and social intelligence (Gardner, 1983).

The formation of a null curriculum is often influenced by curriculum developers, governments, and political agendas. For example, in certain contexts in the US and the UK, the exclusion of religious education represents a form of null curriculum (Gholami et al., 2016). Furthermore, as Levin (2012) notes, curricular neglect often stems from shifting national priorities, leading to a gap between strategic objectives and classroom reality. While curricula are typically designed to meet the needs of their time, they often fail to adapt to changing conditions, resulting in the marginalization of key learning goals.

To address these persistent failures in foreign language instruction, MoNE has initiated numerous studies (Suna & Durmuşçelebi, 2013). Yet, the success of these initiatives remains limited. Improving outcomes is a multifaceted challenge that requires the collective responsibility of all stakeholders and the simultaneous implementation of various structural solutions (Coşkun Demirpolat, 2015). A fundamental shift is needed in the attitudes of parents, teachers, and administrators toward communicative language teaching (Işık, 2008). To ensure success, educational leadership must prevent the practice of 'skipping' language classes in favor of test preparation during high-stakes exam years (Başaran et al., 2020).

Research by Suna and Durmuşçelebi (2013) highlights several systemic deficiencies, including a disconnect between policy and practice, an over-reliance on grammar-heavy methods, severe time constraints, and overcrowded classrooms. Although the current English curriculum is designed to be communication-oriented,

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its practical implementation is frequently neglected, leaving students without sufficient exposure to the target language (Salma, 2020). Consequently, this study aims to investigate the underlying causes of foreign language teaching failures through the lens of the null curriculum. By exposing the impact of omitted curricular elements, this research seeks to analyze why certain objectives are neglected in Turkish schools.

To this end, the study addresses the following research questions:

- 1.What are teachers' perspectives regarding the attainments (achievements) that fall within the null curriculum dimension of the English curriculum?
- 2.What are teachers' views concerning the content that remains part of the null curriculum?
- 3.How do teachers perceive the influence of assessment and testing conditions on the emergence of a null curriculum?"

METHOD

In this section, the design of the study, the participants, the data collection tools and the techniques used in the analysis of the data are given.

Research Design

This research was designed as a basic interpretive qualitative study to explore the experiences and perspectives of English language teachers regarding the null curriculum. As a framework, basic interpretive and descriptive qualitative research encapsulates the core tenets of the qualitative tradition. Specifically, it focuses on understanding how individuals construct meaning and interpret their experiences within a particular context. In this model, the researcher serves as the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation, facilitating an inductive approach where findings emerge organically from the data. The overarching goal of such a study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon, a process, or the shared viewpoints of the participants involved (Merriam, 2002). Data are typically gathered through qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, or document analysis. These data are then analyzed inductively to identify recurring patterns, categories, or themes. Ultimately, the findings are presented in a rich, descriptive narrative, supported by direct evidence from the participants and contextualized within the existing literature that informed the study (Merriam, 2002).

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 20 English language teachers (14 female and 6 male) instructing at secondary schools in the Kahramanmaraş province of Türkiye during the 2023-2024 academic year. The group represented a diverse range of professional experience: 6 teachers had 4–9 years of experience, 8 had 10–14 years, and 6 had between 15–20 years in the field. Regarding their educational background, the vast majority (n=19) held a bachelor's degree, while one participant had completed a master's degree. In terms of academic specialization, 17 participants were graduates of English Language Teaching (ELT) programs, while the remaining three graduated from American Culture and Literature, English Language and Literature, and Linguistics departments, respectively.

Data Collection Process

Prior to the interviews, the researcher provided all participants with the necessary documentation, including official permissions from relevant authorities and approval from the ethics committee. The interviews were conducted at the participants' respective schools, in quiet environments conducive to focused dialogue. Each session lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. With the participants' explicit consent, a mobile phone was used to record the conversations. These audio recordings were subsequently transcribed using the dictation feature of Microsoft Word. During the transcription process, the researcher meticulously corrected any spelling or typographical errors to ensure the data were accurate and ready for analysis. To maintain confidentiality, participants were assigned pseudonyms, ranging from T1 to T20.

Data Collection Tool

To elicit the perspectives of secondary school teachers regarding the null curriculum, a semi-structured interview form was developed and utilized. The instrument comprised seven questions in total. The first four items were designed to gather demographic data, including gender, school level, educational attainment, and undergraduate specialization. The remaining three questions were open-ended items specifically formulated to address the core objectives of the study. For the content validity of the instrument, the initial draft was reviewed by two experts in the field, and revisions were made based on their constructive feedback. Following these expert consultations, the refined form was piloted with two teachers to assess clarity and flow. In response to the pilot findings, specific probing questions were integrated into the final version to encourage deeper reflection from the participants and ensure a comprehensive data set.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using inductive content analysis. Prior to the analysis, participants were assigned codes (e.g., T1, T2) to ensure anonymity while organizing their statements. The analysis involved a meticulous examination of the raw data to identify recurring concepts, which were subsequently grouped into meaningful categories and overarching themes. To ensure the internal reliability of the findings, the coding process was conducted independently by two researchers. Following this independent phase, the resulting codes were compared to determine the inter-coder reliability. The analysis revealed an 86% consistency rate between the coders, a level of agreement considered highly acceptable according to the criteria established by Miles and Huberman (1994).

FINDINGS

Three main themes emerged as a result of the data analysis as (1) “Achievement”, (2) ‘Content’, and (3) “Testing”.

Table 1. Codes

Theme	Category	Code	Sub-code	Frequency	
Achievement	English Language Skills	Speaking	Insufficient lesson hours	4	
			Crowded classrooms	4	
			Overloaded Curriculum	3	
			Central Exam	4	
		Writing	Homework	3	
			Central Exam	2	
			Listening	Insufficient lesson hours	5
				Central Exam	2
Content	Grammar	Grammar Knowledge	8		
		Vocabulary	13		
	Unit	Proper to Readiness	7		
		Up to date	4		
Testing	Assessment	Difficulty in Implementing the New System	4		
		New system is applicable	13		
		Adaptation Issues	8		
	High School Entrance Exam	Multiple-Choice	12		
		Contradiction Between Assessment Applications	6		

The themes and frequency distributions derived from the interviews are summarized in Table 1. As illustrated in the table, the qualitative analysis yielded a total of 3 overarching themes, 6 categories, 12 codes, and 8 sub-codes, with a total of 97 frequencies recorded across the data set.

Detailed findings regarding the first sub-problem—exploring teachers' perspectives on 'achievements' (learning outcomes) within the framework of the null curriculum—are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Codes for the “Achievements” Theme

Theme	Category	Code	Sub-Code	Frequency
Achievement	English Language Skills	Speaking	Insufficient Lesson Hours	4
			Crowded Classrooms	4
			Overloaded Curriculum	3
			Central Exam	4
		Writing	Homework	3
			Central Exam	2
		Listening	Insufficient Lesson Hours	5
			Central Exam	2

Table 2 illustrates the theme of the thematic and frequency distributions for the 'Achievements' (Learning Outcomes) theme. The qualitative mapping of this theme includes 3 codes and 8 sub-codes, with a total of 27 frequencies recorded. The data reveal three distinct categories of English language skills that are frequently neglected: 'Speaking' (f=15, 4 sub-codes), 'Listening' (f=7, 2 sub-codes), and 'Writing' (f=5, 2 sub-codes).

Based on the frequency values, it is evident that speaking skills represent the most significantly neglected component of the curriculum, as noted by 15 different participants. When analyzing the underlying reasons for this omission, 'insufficient instructional hours' emerged as a prominent sub-code, cited by 4 participants. They argued that the limited time allocated for English lessons forces a prioritization of other components over oral communication.

For instance, participant T7 explicitly linked the neglect of speaking skills to the lack of adequate lesson hours, stating: *“We don’t have that much time in the sixth grade, 3 lesson hours are very insufficient. In speaking, I can make them do some of the speaking parts in our book, but not all of them...”* (T7)

Another sub-code that emerged as the reason for neglecting speaking skills was 4 participants under the sub-code “crowded classrooms”. The interview excerpts of the participant T15, who stated that the classes were crowded as the reason for the neglect of speaking skills, are given below, respectively:

“Skill teaching is at a very limited level. We try to touch on all of them a little bit at a time. Speaking is the least part; if I were to evaluate and rate it, we focus on reading texts the most. Listening, then the writing part and the speaking part, that is, the production parts, are the parts that we touch the least. In fact, because it requires a lot of time for them, for example, and because the classes are very crowded, there are at least 30 people...” (T15)

It is observed that another sub-code that emerged as the reason for neglecting speaking skills is “overloaded curriculum”. The statements of a participant regarding this code are as follows:

“We have a very intense curriculum. Then we cannot focus on skills due to the anxiety and rush to catch up with the curriculum. The only thing we can do in other classes is to give what is required in the curriculum and prepare them for the exam; it is not possible to focus on speaking skills. We don’t because think of it like this: before this, our classes were 43 or 44 people. How many minutes can you talk to each child, and which child can you get to talk to whom?” (T16)

One participant expressed his/her thoughts about the “central exam”, another sub-code that emerged as the reason for the neglect of speaking skills, as follows:

"My students are preparing for the high school entrance exam, and we need to learn more vocabulary. That is why I focus a lot on grammar and vocabulary teaching and reading comprehension. So, we almost never focus on speaking..." (T12)

Another neglected skill is given under the code "writing". There were 5 participants who stated that writing skills were neglected. There were 2 sub-codes for the neglect of writing skills. There are 3 participants under the sub-code "homework" and 2 participants under the sub-code "central exam". The interview excerpt of participant S7, who stated that the skill could not be practiced in the classroom environment and homework was given as one of the reasons that led to the neglect of writing skill, is given below:

"I give homework, but writing is not very common in the 5th and 6th grades. Now we want them to make sentences in the exam. When we don't make them write in the classroom but ask them to do it in the exam, they can't do it. I think there is a contradiction. Because they told us that in the seminar, you will not make the children write, you will make them do more listening, reading, and speaking, but now their expectations of us are different in the exam. Definitely the children had a lot of difficulty, and their grades dropped suddenly..." (T7)

The "central exam" sub-code, under which the participants who stated the high school transition exam as one of the reasons for neglecting writing skills, has 2 frequencies. The interview excerpt of participant T12, who stated that the central exam caused neglect, is given below:

"...now, to speak frankly, I ignore listening and writing a lot, I mean, I almost never spend time there because my students are preparing for the high school entrance exam right now..." (T12)

Another neglected skill is given under the code "listening". There were 7 participants who stated that listening skills were neglected. There are 5 participants under the sub-code "insufficient class hours", which emerged as the reason for the neglect of listening skills. The interview excerpt of T20, who stated that listening skill was neglected due to insufficient class hours, is given below:

"...Everyone receives English education for 8-10 years, but when I go out, no one can speak English. Why is that? They are not seriously exposed to the language. I mean, there is not much emphasis on listening... 'and' ...Our class hours are not enough. If the curriculum is like this, it is not possible. I can't spare much time for listening right now..." (T20)

The "central exam" sub-code, under which the participants who stated the high school transition exam as one of the reasons for neglecting listening skills, has 2 frequencies. The interview excerpt of T17, one of the participants who stated that the central exam caused neglect, is given below:

"Now, since I teach eighth graders, the children are exam oriented. Obviously, I cannot give them much more weight in speaking and listening, and my fellow English teachers are the same way..." (T17)

The findings obtained from the sub-problem of teachers' views on the content of the null curriculum are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Codes for the "Content" Theme

Theme	Category	Code	Frequency
Content	Grammar	Grammar Knowledge	8
		Vocabulary	13
	Unit	Proper to Readiness	7
		Up to date	4

The thematic distribution and frequencies for the 'Content' dimension of the null curriculum are summarized in Table 3. Two primary categories emerged within this theme: 'Grammar' and 'Unit'. An analysis of the codes reveals a significant emphasis on linguistic components, with 'vocabulary' recorded at 13 frequencies and 'grammar knowledge' at 8 frequencies. Within the 'Unit' category, two distinct codes were identified regarding the suitability of the curricular material. The code 'Readiness' (referring to the alignment of content with students' current levels) was cited 7 times, while the 'Up-to-date' nature of the units was

mentioned by 4 participants. Interestingly, although the curriculum aims for communicative competence, 8 participants explicitly argued that grammar instruction must be prioritized or more comprehensively covered. These perspectives were grouped under the 'Grammar' code. For instance, participant T17 highlighted the perceived necessity of grammar-focused instruction as follows:

"A child who doesn't know grammar can't understand English." Yes, speaking is important and necessary, but an environment is needed to speak. Since children don't understand, I think it's....." (T17).

There are 13 participants who expressed the opinion that vocabulary knowledge should be provided, and these participants have been grouped under the code "vocabulary knowledge." As an example of this situation, an interview excerpt from participant T7 is provided below:

"Now, I primarily focus on vocabulary in my own lessons." So, when a child doesn't know vocabulary, they can't listen, understand what they listen to, speak, write, read, or understand what they read, but unfortunately, our curriculum doesn't have a dedicated section for vocabulary teaching. We have small sections in our textbooks, but there is nothing in the plan about how to do this. I already give the words in advance and show their pictures..." (T7)

There are 7 participants who expressed a positive opinion that the units are suitable for readiness, and these participants have been grouped under the code "proper for readiness." The participants who stated that the units are suitable for readiness are quoted below from T3's interview:

"...So, most of the topics are actually taken from daily life.' For example, there is a sports unit, there are units called daily life. So, when you adapt this to real life, it sticks in the students' minds..." (T3)

There are 4 participants who have expressed a positive opinion about the units being up-to-date, and these participants have been grouped under the "up to date" code. Participants who stated that the units are up-to-date, T15's interview excerpt is provided below:

"I don't think the titles and subheadings of the many unit selections are a problem." Right now, for example, yes, the parties are of the kind that one might encounter in daily life. Yes, even if we don't say the world, they have generally chosen themes that they might encounter in daily life, of course, they don't have much knowledge about the world..." (T15)

The findings obtained from the sub-problem regarding teachers' views on the testing situations within the null curriculum are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of Codes for the "Testing" Theme

Theme	Category	Codes	Frequency
Testing	Assessment	Difficulty in Implementing the New System	4
		New system is applicable	13
		Adaptation Issues	8
	High School Entrance Exam	Multiple-Choice	12
		Contradiction Between Assessment Applications	6

The distribution of the categories and codes identified for the theme of "testing" is presented in Table 6. There are two categories under the theme testing as 'assessment' and 'high school entrance exam'. Under the assessment category, 3 codes have been identified. When examining the distribution of the codes; "Difficulty in implementing the new system" has a frequency of 4, "New system is applicable" has a frequency of 13, and "Adaptation issue" has a frequency of 8.

Under the high school entrance exam category, 2 codes have been identified. When examining the distribution of the codes, "Multiple choice" has 12 frequencies and " Contradiction Between Assessment Applications " has 6 frequencies.

There are 4 participants who expressed negative opinions about the new measurement system, and these participants are grouped under the code "Difficulty in implementing the new system." The interview excerpt from participant T20, who stated that the new system's applicability is difficult, is provided below:

"...The children encountered something like this for the first time." So, practicability is very difficult at the moment..." (T20)

There are 13 participants who expressed positive views about the new measurement system, and these participants have been grouped under the code "New system is applicable." The interview excerpt from participant T5, who stated that the new system is applicable, is provided below:

"...I also approve of the new application. Of course, it's a nice application. It's prospective..." (T5)

There are 8 participants who have expressed their views on experiencing adaptation issues in the implementation of the new measurement system, and these participants have been grouped under the code "adaptation issue." Participants who reported having adaptation issues with the new system, the interview excerpt from T11 is provided below:

"...All skills are measured separately, but unfortunately, I face some difficulties in practice because I am told to measure them all without preparing the infrastructure..." (T11)

There are 12 participants who stated that exam-oriented education was provided for the high school entrance exam, and these participants have been grouped under the code "multiple choice." The interview excerpt from participant T7, who stated that they provided exam-focused education due to the high school entrance exam, is provided below:

"...We were constantly working on practice tests aimed at the LGS, we bought test books, even though we didn't apply them in class, I would give them as homework, at least that's what I can say, we were quite encouraging the kids towards the test ..." (T7)

There are 6 participants who state that the high school entrance exam and the measurement system are contradictory, and these participants are grouped under the code "Inter-system contradiction." The interview excerpt from participant T6, who stated that there is an application difference between the high school transition exam and the new assessment system, is provided below:

"...I think they are very unrelated, for example, something like this happened in one of the exams. The Ministry of Education prepared the first exam for the eighth graders and made it a multiple-choice test, but we prepared the second exam as an open-ended one. LGS will be a test again, so how will we proceed? That's a bit of a confusion..." (T6)

RESULT and DISCUSSION

Teachers' views highlight that English language skills are frequently marginalized, with speaking being the most neglected due to insufficient instructional hours, overcrowded classrooms, intensive curricula, and the pressure of high school entrance exams. Students lacking opportunities to practice English outside of school primarily rely on classroom participation for language acquisition (Kozikoğlu & Kanat, 2018). However, speaking skills are often overlooked in schools due to limited time and excessive teacher workload. This exam-focused instruction, predominantly assessed via multiple-choice questions, fails to evaluate oral proficiency, thereby hindering students' communicative success. Yılmaz (2005) further suggests that the undervaluation of speaking and listening skills in English language teaching reflects a broader deficiency in teacher competencies. Similarly, Sönmez Ektem and Yıldız (2017) concluded that these skills were almost entirely excluded from the instructional process. Research indicates that the time-consuming nature of preparation and evaluation in large classes further exacerbates this neglect (Arı, 2014; Tokur Üner & Aşılıoğlu, 2022). Nevertheless, following the 2023 MoNE directive regarding assessment changes, this study observes a relative decrease in the marginalization of listening and speaking skills (Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2023).

Writing is another frequently neglected skill, primarily due to its inherent complexity, the extensive time required for feedback, and a general lack of practice. Students struggle with writing precisely because they lack systematic opportunities to engage with it (Sönmez Ektem & Yıldız, 2017). While teachers are expected to provide more guidance to foster writing proficiency (Genç İlter, 2014), the prioritization of exam results over curriculum objectives remains a significant barrier (Hocaoğlu, 2015). Furthermore, the absence of English writing tasks in high school entrance exams and the relatively low credit weight of the course have contributed to this trend (Aküzel, 2006).

Listening stands as the second most neglected skill. Its deficiency negatively impacts the development of speaking, reading, and writing (Emiroğlu & Pınar, 2013). Although listening is a core component of comprehension, it is often bypassed by the exam system. Çelik Kul (2022) emphasizes that listening is the foundational skill in foreign language acquisition, facilitating progress in other areas. However, Paker (2012) notes that national exams exclusively measure reading, leaving productive skills in the background. This neglect is further fueled by traditional teaching methods, a lack of appropriate materials, and the difficulty of assessing listening activities. Consequently, low student motivation and passive participation become inevitable obstacles. Eltawila (2009) argues that traditional systems favor easily measurable outcomes, making listening harder to quantify—a secondary priority.

Regarding the null curriculum's content, teacher views categorize issues under "Grammar" and "Unit" themes. Despite a systemic shift toward communicative competence, some teachers still adhere to the grammar-translation method, neglecting the four core skills. To enhance grammar instruction, flexible and communication-based methods should be employed, focusing on the practical application of language structures in daily life (Dolunay, 2010; Larsen-Freeman, 2009). The persistence of grammar-centric teaching highlights a need for a more comprehensive pedagogical approach (Kılıç, 2006). Moreover, the societal value placed on a skill often dictates its priority in schools. In the Turkish context, societal and administrative expectations are synonymous with exam success; thus, a teacher's accountability is often measured by test scores. The absence of writing, speaking, and listening components in these high-stakes exams directly correlates with their neglect in the classroom.

Within the "Vocabulary" code, it is evident that word knowledge is prioritized by the majority, as it is perceived as essential for both entrance exams and general communication. Effective vocabulary instruction should transcend rote memorization, focusing instead on contextual usage and active practice. While the emphasis on the four skills has somewhat reduced rote learning, there is a growing need for vocabulary that prepares students for academic life rather than just basic conversational fluency.

Regarding "Readiness", unit contents are found to be only partially aligned with students' prior knowledge. Teachers often struggle to adapt titles and content to meet their students' current levels, a gap that reflects a deficiency in pedagogical competencies. Literature supports the finding that textbooks are often unsuitable for the intended readiness levels (Karsantik & Yağcı, 2021; Küçüktepe & Eminoğlu Küçüktepe, 2014). Additionally, the "up-to-date" code reveals that much of the content is perceived as obsolete. Outdated materials and limited cultural representation can lead to significant motivation issues (Çelik & Erbay, 2013; Alşan & Eminoğlu Küçüktepe, 2023). Recent studies suggest that even when contemporary skills are included, they are often not covered with sufficient depth (Güney et al., 2024).

Teachers' perspectives on the null curriculum also encompass assessment practices. The 2023 MoNE assessment system was introduced to address these gaps, yet it faces significant implementation challenges, such as overcrowded classrooms and limited time (Saltan & Özyeter, 2024). While some participants view the new system's applicability with skepticism, many favor its principles, suggesting that an increase in instructional hours could facilitate its success. This mirrors findings in Turkish language studies where similar implementation difficulties were observed (Ercan & Doğan Kahtalı, 2024).

The transition to the new system has been hindered by infrastructure inadequacies and a sudden increase in teacher workload, leading to "adaptation problems" (Dinçer & Bal Gezeğin, 2024). Teachers often find themselves caught between curriculum objectives and the practical pressures of central exams (Kütük & Avara, 2023). Analysis of the "multiple-choice" code shows that 7th and 8th-grade teachers prioritize test-taking strategies over core language skills due to LGS (high school entrance exam) pressure. As Kılıçkaya (2016) argues, the format of centralized exams directly dictates classroom practice, systematically sidelining non-tested skills like listening and writing.

Ultimately, there is a clear "Contradiction Between Assessment Applications." While teachers may theoretically favor a four-skill-based approach, the reality of multiple-choice entrance exams creates a disconnect. This exam-focused orientation—driven by parents, administrators, and the system itself—reduces language education to a mechanical process of test preparation (Çakır, 2017; Khan et al., 2025). Consequently, writing, listening, and speaking remain the most neglected components of the middle school English curriculum, forming a significant portion of the null curriculum. This issue is not unique to foreign language teaching; it is a systemic problem also prevalent in mother-tongue education (Duman & Karagöz, 2016; Dilekçi, 2022).

Declarations

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were disclosed by the author(s) with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Ethics Approval

The formal ethics approval was granted by the Aksaray University Human Research Ethics Committee in 23 October 2023. We conducted the study in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration in 1975.

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Research and Publication Ethics Statement

The study was approved by Aksaray University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number/ID: 2023/06-26. Hereby, we as the authors consciously assure that for the manuscript the following is fulfilled:

- The data used in this study are taken from first authors' master thesis.
- The paper reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner.
- The results are appropriately placed in the context of prior and existing research.
- All sources used are properly disclosed.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

All the authors contributed equally to the article.

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