

An Evaluation of the Secondary School Intensive Foreign Language Education

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate English teachers', students' and parents' opinions about the secondary schools' intensive foreign language education program in Turkey focusing on four skills, content, learning objectives, teaching/learning process and assessment/evaluation. To this end, instruments consisting of three questionnaires and one academic test were developed by the researcher. These instruments were applied to 305 English teachers, 189 students and 288 parents. Cronbach alpha results were found above 0,80 for all the questionnaires indicating the high reliability of the data collection tools. Descriptive statistics (frequency and mean), Oneway ANOVA and post hoc tests were used to describe and compare the opinions between the groups. The results of this study show that in terms of four skills, teachers, as opposed to students and parents, think that reading and writing skills develop more than listening and speaking skills. Teachers also think that they can partially achieve learning objectives for speaking skills. Regarding the content, teachers state that the content is partially prepared with a focus on communication while students and parents have quite positive opinions. The students and parents expressed partially positive opinions about the intensive foreign language education encouraging hands-on activities during the lesson while teachers think otherwise. Briefly, parents and students have more positive opinions than teachers. Overall, the results of this study show the discrepancy between teachers, students and parents' thoughts about intensive foreign language education, in which is worth investing.

Keywords: foreign language education, intensive language education, academic success, English

1. Introduction

With the recent technologic developments and globalization, it can be seen that the distances are getting shortened and international communication has been getting easier like never before. Thus, learning foreign languages has become a necessity for individuals who want to keep up with the developments of the globalizing world. English being the lingua franca for many years, is one of the most spoken languages in the world while being used for diplomatic, commercial or academic purposes (Kirkgöz, Çelik, & Arikan, 2016). In Turkey, English has been taught as a primary foreign language, and today students have approximately 1400 hours of foreign language education during their 12 years of compulsory education. In spite of the importance given to English education, it can be seen that the students are unable to show the foreign language achievement expected from them when it comes to Turkey's foreign language proficiency. According to the research results conducted by Education First (2020), Turkey's English proficiency is determined as 69th among 100 countries. In addition, according to the TOEFL results, which is one of the world-wide recognized tools in determining English proficiency, it has been concluded that the average of English results of Turkish students is 78 out of 120 points (British Council, 2015). Therefore, when the results of the international exams are taken into consideration, it can be seen that foreign language education in Turkey does not meet the expectation. Many researchers have aimed to find out the reasons that cause the low proficiency of Turkish students. Some of the reasons are stated as; the inability to apply the communicative methods into the classrooms (Kirkgöz, 2007; Paker, 2012; Yaman, 2018), the use of teacher centered and grammar transition method (Akalin & Zengin, 2007; Işık, 2008; Gökdemir, 2010; Altan, 2017), crowded classrooms (Büyükyavuz & İnal, 2008), poor physical conditions (Demirpolat, 2015), lack of technological utilities (Aydin, 2013) and textbook deficiencies (Demirpolat, 2015; Demirtaş & Erdem, 2015;

Yaman, 2018). Thus, the reasons stated above set the foundation of Turkey's low achievement in foreign language education.

To increase the success of foreign language education and prepare students for the requirements of the 21st century, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Turkey has been making changes and improvements in the curriculum. Out of all the curriculum changes, the ones in 2006 and 2013 have been the most influential. The curriculum changes of 2006 and 2013 encourage constructivist and student-centered approaches, thus forming the basis of today's curriculum. Also, in these curriculum changes, the CEFR (Common European Framework) was utilized, and the principles of CEFR were closely followed to make English education compatible with the European Union. Along with these curriculum changes, the Ministry of Education in Turkey has implemented intensive foreign language education in some secondary schools aiming to improve students' communicative competence by using communicative and eclectic approaches following the principles of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (TEGM, 2018).

The secondary school intensive foreign language program was implemented in the 2017-2018 education year in Turkey and no such program was implemented in secondary schools before. Thus, it is important to look into the research showing the strong and weak aspects of the program. The factors having an adverse effect on the program can be summarized as; inadequate physical conditions (Kambur, 2018; Aksoy et al., 2018; Şahin & Göksoy, 2019; Özkan et al., 2018), lack of materials (Berkant et al., 2019; Kayabaşı, 2019; Nacar, 2019), a large number of learning objectives (Dilekli, 2018), removal of the other courses as P.E. and art (Şahin & Göksoy, 2019, Aksoy et al., 2018). It should be noted that all of these factors in the studies above are only taken from teachers. Intensive foreign language education should also be evaluated by the other stakeholders such as students, parents and administrators. Also, studies outside Turkey can be investigated to have a broader scope while making curriculum development studies.

Turkey's intensive secondary school foreign language education is similar to the immersion programs or the preparatory schools of universities. However, it should be considered that immersion programs aim to develop students' academic and verbal abilities for the consecutive years of their study as the language is used as a medium of instruction. Turkey's intensive secondary school program does not require the target language to be a medium of instruction. The results of the immersion education studies show that with the immersion programs students show; positive attitude towards language (MacFarlane & Wesche, 1995), improvement in willingness to communicate and speaking skills (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2003; White & Turner, 2005) and development in the four skills (Collins & White, 2011; Spada & Lightbrown, 1989).

1.1 Purpose of the Research

This study aims to get the opinions of teachers, students and parents regarding intensive foreign language education in Turkey and determine the students' success in an intensive foreign language education program.

1.2 Problem Sentence

What are the opinions of teachers, students and parents about the secondary school intensive foreign language education? By taking these opinions, the reasons for the success of secondary school intensive foreign language education were defined.

1.3 Subproblems

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the opinions of teachers, students and parents on the degree of development of the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) in intensive foreign language education?
- 2) What are the academic achievements of students in foreign language education?
- 3) What are the opinions of teachers, students and parents regarding intensive foreign language education in terms of the learning objectives, content, teaching/learning process and assessment/evaluation?
- 4) Is there a significant difference between the opinions of teachers, students and parents in terms of the learning objectives, content, teaching/learning process and assessment/evaluation?

1.4 Foreign Language Teaching in Turkey

When we look at the program changes made in Turkey, it can be seen that the changes made in 2005, 2013 and 2017 form the basis of today's foreign language education program (Kırkgöz, 2017). Before 2005, the curriculum was heavily criticized for promoting rote learning, having an intense schedule and being disconnected from real life, not appealing to children's ages and interests, not developing their critical and creative thinking skills (TTK,

2005 as cited in Çelik, 2011). The 2006 curriculum change was prepared to overcome these deficiencies. With the curriculum change made in 2006, the education programs have been based on constructivist, student-centered approach and multiple intelligence theory (Kirkgöz, 2017). Thus, it was emphasized that foreign language education should be carried out focusing on the practical language use and communicative aspect of the language. In accordance with the constructivist approach, it can be seen that the education program in 2006 has given great importance in using hand-on activities and group work by which students can develop four skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking). Thus, it is recommended to use the elective (eclectic) method since it is aimed not to stick to a single method (MEB, 2006). This program aims students to reach A2 level at the end of 8th grade (Arslan, 2012).

In 2013, the Turkish Education system was redesigned as 4+4+4, and some regulations were made about foreign language education. With that reform, English courses are lowered to grade two in primary school aiming to benefit from the early education. Considering the age characteristics of the curriculum of the 2nd and 3rd graders, it can be seen that the activities are prepared to focus on speaking and listening skills, while the reading and writing activities are kept at a simple level. In this context, foreign language teaching at the primary school level has been prepared with a game and activity-based approach to make learning fun and communicative for young learners. The necessity of creating an entertaining and motivating environment in foreign language teaching was stated, and to ensure active participation, original materials and methods based on the active participation of the students were added to the program. Also, the eclectic method was used to increase teacher flexibility and organize the program according to the needs of students (MEB, 2013). Lastly, the foreign language education program entailed using four skills and process-oriented evaluation techniques which are project and portfolio evaluations, checklists that provide self-evaluation for each unit, a written exam that measures four skills, and teacher observation and evaluation (MEB, 2013). Overall, the 2013 program is similar to the 2006 program in many respects. These similarities are that the curriculum is based on a communicative approach, the use of the spiral curriculum, the emphasis on the affective field in the programs, the suggestion of activities that require the active participation of students, and the use of process-oriented assessments.

1.5 Intensive Foreign Language Education

Intensive foreign language education for secondary schools was started to implement in “all or certain branches of the 5th Grades, taking into account the opportunities and conditions of the school, the demands of parents and students” in the pilot secondary schools in 2017/2018 school year (TEGM, 2019). Today, intensive foreign language education has been implemented in secondary schools that volunteer for intensive foreign language education. With this education it has been aimed to; increase the level of English proficiency and improve students’ communicative competence by providing authentic materials and environments for practical language use. The ultimate goal of intensive foreign language education is to prepare students for business and academic life realities and to raise generations that can provide international communication that comes with globalization. (TEGM, 2019).

The intensive foreign language education in secondary school consists of thirty-six units, which are interrelated but structured around independent themes. According to the instruction schedule of this program, units are prepared according to principle of curriculum developments which are being easy to complex, concrete to abstract, and related to students’ daily lives. When we take a look at the units, it can be seen that the first fifteen units consist of concrete topics that students often encounter in their daily lives, such as classroom items, family members, place and direction statements, games, daily routine, animals, health statements and plans. In the following units, more abstract subjects were included, such as past experiences, predicting the future, specifying conditions, transferring experiences, stating cause and effect. Accordingly, the methodical choices of the themes are suggested as communicative and eclectic methods in the instruction schedule. Since this program aims to develop the communicative skills of the learners, the realistic design of the classroom environment and the use of realistic materials are suggested. It is also recommended that teachers plan their lesson plans according to four basic language skills and use songs, games and practical activities that support active learning. In terms of assessment/evaluation, it is planned to use summative and formative assessments. For this purpose, it is recommended to carry out the evaluation process with written oral exams, midterm assessments, homework and projects (TEGM, 2019).

2. Method

This research is a descriptive study aiming to evaluate intensive foreign language education according to the opinions of teachers, students and parents. In this study, the survey (field survey) model, which is one of the descriptive research types, was used since it was aimed to obtain the opinions. Field survey studies aim to identify

existing problems and define problems (Karasar, 2008; Büyüköztürk et al., 2008; Can, 2017).

2.1 Study Group of the Research

The universe of this research consists of students, teachers and parents in secondary schools that provide foreign language education throughout Turkey. For the study population; Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakir, Mardin, Şırnak, Siirt, Adiyaman and Batman provinces, which are affiliated to the Southeastern Development Agency, were selected (GAP Development Agency, 2020). Necessary permission was obtained from the Ministry of National Education to form the study group in accordance with the purpose of the research. Before the pandemic, it was aimed to collect data with the stratified sampling method. However, since it was challenging to find participants due to Covid 19 outbreak, the study population was determined as accessible secondary schools that provide foreign language education in Turkey. Participants were selected with the convenience sampling method, one of the non-random sampling methods. In the convenience sample type, “the researcher starts to create his sample starting from the most accessible respondents until he reaches a large group he needs.” (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008, p.90). Student and parent participants were reached with the help of school principals and classroom teachers. The study’s sample group consisted of 189 students, 305 teachers and 288 parents who volunteered to participate in the study. The teachers in this study solely consist of English teachers who give intensive foreign language education.

2.2 Instruments

By the aims of the research, three different quantitative data collection tools were developed by the researchers. These are the “**Intensive Foreign Language Education Evaluation Questionnaire**” for teachers, students, and parents separately. Intensive Foreign Language Education Evaluation Questionnaire consists of four different sections, which are: four skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening), content, teaching/learning process, assessment/evaluation and learning objectives (only for teachers). The items in the questionnaire were created in parallel form for English teachers, students and their parents. Also, to measure the students’ academic success, an achievement test was prepared by the researchers. The achievement test includes different questions for speaking, listening, writing and reading skills. In the development of the assessment tools and questionnaires, firstly, studies in the related literature (Canlier & Bumen, 2018; Dilekli, 2018; Erkan, 2009; Gür, Çelik & Yurdakul, 2016; Merter, Kartal & Çağlar, 2012; Şahin & Göksoy, 2019; British Council & TEPAV, 2014) and about intensive foreign language education program were analyzed. Accordingly table of specifications were created by the researchers (TEGM, 2017). The questionnaires consist of Likert-type items as “strongly agree”, “agree”, “undecided”, “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. To ensure the reliability and validity of data collection tools, reliability coefficient, correlation analysis and independent t-test were carried out. The correlation analysis excluded items with a Pearson correlation value below 0.20 and negative values. As a result of the independent groups t-test analysis, items with a p-value above 0.05 were excluded. After all the analysis, four items from the teachers’ and students’ questionnaires were removed as the reliability coefficient was below 0.70.

After the item removals, the reliability coefficients of the questionnaires were found as 0.97 (students); 0.93 (teachers) and 0.96 (parents), showing that the questionnaires are quite reliable. In order to ensure content validity, experts’ opinions were taken, a literature review and a table of specifications were prepared. Expert opinions were obtained from two experts to determine the content validity of the pre-application. The opinions were received from two academic experts, one of whom is an associate professor dr. in the department of English language teaching and the other one is an associate professor dr. from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. With the literature review, studies examining similar questions were examined and compiled. Then, with the table of specification items, these were cross-correlated, thus testing the content validity of the questionnaires and tests. Thus, all dimensions related to four language acquisition skills, achievements, content, educational status and measurement-evaluation were investigated in the questionnaires.

In the development of the **achievement test**, the learning objectives of the “Movies”, “Time to Celebrate,” and “Holidays” units in the intensive foreign language education program and the related exams on these units were taken into consideration. For the achievement test, the opinions of two teachers and two experts (the two academicians mentioned above and two specialist teachers working in the secondary school) were taken and necessary changes such as speech and expression disorders were made in line with these opinions. The data obtained from the pre-application were analyzed with the SPSS program, and the discrimination indexes, difficulties, standard deviation and reliability coefficients of the test were obtained. No item discrimination power (r_{jx}) value below 0.20 was found to correlate the item and the total test scores. The arithmetic reliability coefficient of the achievement test was found above 0.6 for each skill.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaires and achievement tests were used in the 2020/2021 academic year with the permissions obtained from the Ondokuz Mayıs University Ethics Committee, the institute board of directors and the Ministry of National Education. These data collection tools were applied to 790 participants, including 305 teachers, 205 students and 280 parents. In the end, data were obtained from 760 people after removing the blank and invalid data. Due to the pandemic process, the data were collected through Google forms, as the schools switched to online education.

Collected data was downloaded as an excel file and SPSS 22 package was used to analyze the data. In accordance with the aims of the research; arithmetic mean, percentage, frequency and standard deviation statistics were applied. The significance level (p) was taken as 0.05 for all results within the scope of this study. In order to examine whether there is a significant difference between the groups, descriptive analysis, one-way ANOVA test and post hoc tests were performed. While analyzing the data, the following value ranges were taken into account; 1.00-1.80= not positive at all, 1.81-2.60= very little positive, 2.61-3.40= partially positive, 3.41-4.20= quite positive and 4.21-5.00= totally positive (Kalayci, 2006).

3. Results

In this section, the data collected from teachers, students and parents related to intensive foreign language education was analyzed using descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, and post hoc tests. The findings and comments obtained as a result of these analyses are included. The results of this study are presented under four headings in line with the purposes of the research.

1) Findings on the Opinions of Teachers, Students and Parents on the Four Skills in Intensive Foreign Language Education

The first part of the study aims to evaluate the Four Skills in Intensive Foreign Language Education from the perspectives of teachers, students and parents. In the questionnaires applied to these stakeholders, questions related to four language skills were asked directly, necessary explanations were given to the stakeholders in the survey explanation section before the google form application, and a survey was conducted afterwards. The results of the study are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of teachers, students and parents about the four skills

Item No.	Four Skills (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking)	Teacher		Student		Parent	
		\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss
Four skills	1. Intensive education aims to improve four skills	3.32	1.12	3.64	1.11	3.67	1.07
	2. With the intensive education, there is improvement in four skills	3.53	1.21	3.82	1.15	3.70	1.08
	3. With the intensive education, there is improvement in speaking skill	3.40	1.21	3.71	1.15	3.80	1.04
	4. With the intensive education, there is improvement in listening skill	3.55	1.11	3.67	1.20	3.76	1.03
	5. With the intensive education, there is improvement in reading skill	3.75	1.08	3.73	1.14	3.75	1.03
	6. With the intensive education, there is improvement in writing skill	3.71	0.98	3.63	1.18	3.59	1.05
Total \bar{X}		3.54		3.70		3.71	

According to the results in Table 1, it can be seen that the total mean scores of the scale for teachers, students and parents were found to be quite positive (3.41-4.20). Thus, it can be asserted that all the groups have positive opinions regarding the four skills in intensive education classes, and it can be seen that the averages of students and parents are close, and the average of teachers is lower than students' and parents' total mean score. Therefore, teachers have more negative opinions than students and parents. Teachers' results for reading and writing skills are higher than listening and speaking skills. Therefore, teachers think that reading and writing skills develop more than listening and speaking skills. According to the parents, the most developed skill is speaking, while the most developed skill according to teachers and students is reading. Students and parents think that the least developed skill is writing. For teachers, the least developed skill is speaking, and the most developed skill is reading. So, it can be seen that the teachers, students and parents have different opinions regarding the development of four skills.

2) Findings on the Academic Achievement of Students in Foreign Language Intensive Education

Table 2. Achievement test

	Listening (n=192)		Reading (n=288)		Speaking (n=172)		Writing (n= 132)	
	\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss
Question 1	0.59	0.49	0.78	0.41	3.48	1.51	2.71	1.33
Question 2	0.60	0.49	0.70	0.45	3.97	1.16	3.16	1.47
Question 3	0.58	0.50	0.61	0.48	4.08	1.41	3.34	1.48
Question 4			0.73	0.44	4.13	1.45		
Question 5			0.63	0.47	3.83	1.61		
Question 6					3.54	1.14		
Question 7					3.19	1.34		
	Total \bar{X} = 0.59		Total \bar{X} = 0.69		Total \bar{X} = 3.75		Total \bar{X} = 3.06	

A total of 790 data tools were obtained. In the end, data were obtained by removing the blank and invalid data. Due to the pandemic process, the data was collected through google forms, as the schools switched to online education. According to Table 2, the total arithmetic mean of the items in the listening section is \bar{X} = 0.59, so it is seen that the answers given by the students are weak. The arithmetic of the total scores of the items in the reading section is \bar{X} = 0.69, so it is 'weak'. The arithmetic of the total scores of the items in the writing section is \bar{X} = 3.06, and it is 'medium'. The arithmetic of the total scores of the items in the speaking section is \bar{X} = 3.75, and it is 'good'. To sum it up, listening and reading skills were found to be weak, speaking skill is found to be good and writing skill is found to be medium. It means that intensive education makes a difference in students' four skills achievement, but more studies should be done on reading and listening skills.

3) Findings Regarding the Learning Objectives, Content, Assessment/Evaluation and Teaching/Learning Process of Intensive Foreign Language Education

The third part of the study aims to evaluate the learning objectives, content, assessment/evaluation and teaching/learning process of intensive foreign language education from the perspective of teachers, students and parents. The results are shown in different headings below.

3.1 Content

The first section of this heading evaluates the teachers', students' and parents' opinions regarding the content of the intensive foreign language education. Table 3 shows the results of the teachers, students and parents.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of teachers, students and parents about the content

Item No.	Content	Teacher		Student		Parent	
		\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss
Content	Being communicative	3.15	1.04	3.53	1.15	3.76	0.95
	Being compatible with students' needs	3.11	0.98	3.74	1.17	3.52	1.05
	Being fun and engaging	3.32	0.99	3.78	1.16	3.76	1.02
	Being related to daily life	3.57	0.97	3.75	1.17	3.78	0.97
	Be suitable for student level	3.59	1.04	3.91	1.10	3.94	0.94
	Being suitable for socio- cultural characteristics	3.38	1.00	3.29	1.03	3.61	1.04
	Improving problem solving skills	3.32	1.06	3.43	1.20	3.75	0.94
	Being appropriate for students' age	3.48	0.99	3.79	1.21	3.99	0.83
	Completion within the specified time	3.55	1.13	3.70	1.12	3.73	0.91
	Having wide scope	3.34	1.20	3.44	1.09	3.51	1.06
	Units' being completed in two semesters	3.35	1.17	3.52	1.27	3.66	0.92
	Being understandable	3.56	0.92	3.68	1.13	3.85	0.83
	Being understandable regarding the terms of other courses	3.53	0.96	3.59	1.14	3.81	0.82
	Total \bar{X}	3.40		3.63		3.74	

According to Table 3, the total mean score for teachers is partially positive (2.61-3.40). The total mean score for students and parents is quite positive (3.41-4.20). When the total arithmetic averages of the items are examined, it can be seen that the arithmetic average of the parents is higher than that of students and teachers. Teachers have the

lowest arithmetic mean regarding the content of intensive foreign language education. While the teachers have the partially positive opinion that the content is communication-oriented, considers the needs of the students, has a wide scope, provides problem-solving skills and is funny/interesting, students and parents have quite positive opinions. Teachers, students and parents expressed quite a positive opinion that the content is related to daily life, appropriate for the age and level of the students, can be completed within the specified time, and is understandable. While the teachers and students expressed partially positive opinions on the content suitable for socio-cultural characteristics, the parents expressed quite a positive opinions. All groups have quite positive opinions that the content is related to the daily life of the students, appropriate for students' readiness and development levels.

3.2 Assessment and Evaluation

The second section of this heading evaluates the teachers', students' and parents' opinions regarding the assessment and evaluation of the intensive foreign language education. In the questionnaires applied to the stakeholders, questions related to four language skills were asked directly, necessary explanations were given to the stakeholders in the survey explanation section before the google form application, and a survey was conducted afterwards. Table 4 shows the results of the teachers, students and parents.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of teachers, students and parents about assessment and evaluation

Item No.	Assessment and Evaluation	Teacher		Student		Parent	
		\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss
Assessment and Evaluation	1. Self-assessment	3.22	1.02	3.78	1.14	3.77	0.92
	2. Covering four skills	3.35	1.10	3.69	1.12	3.74	1.00
	3. Being in accordance with the lesson	3.58	0.96	3.66	1.15	3.75	0.88
	4. Using both summative and formative assessment types	3.40	1.01	3.56	1.15	3.71	0.87
	5. Having a positive washback effect on the student	3.54	1.07	3.69	1.18	3.82	0.91
	6. Being appropriate to the developmental characteristics of the students	3.51	0.97	3.67	1.12	3.69	0.95
Total \bar{X}		3.43		3.66		3.75	

According to Table 4, the total mean scores of teachers, students and parents are quite positive (3.41-4.20). When the item averages are examined, it can be seen that the arithmetic average of the parents is higher than that of the students and teachers, and the arithmetic average of the teachers is the lowest. Teachers have partially positive opinions, in terms of assessment/evaluation, while students and parents have very positive opinions.

3.3 Teaching/Learning Process

The third section of this heading evaluates the teachers', students' and parents' opinions regarding the teaching/learning process of intensive foreign language education. In the questionnaires applied to the stakeholders, questions related to four language skills were asked directly, necessary explanations were given to the stakeholders in the survey explanation section before the google form application, and a survey was conducted afterwards. Table 5 shows the results of the teachers, students and parents.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of teachers, students and parents about teaching/learning process

Item No.	Teaching/Learning Process	Teacher		Student		Parent	
		\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss	\bar{X}	ss
Teaching/Learning Process	Establishing communication in English during the lesson	3.39	1.08	3.53	1.19	3.71	0.98
	Speaking English in the lesson has a positive effect on student success.	3.64	1.02	3.80	1.18	4.18	0.84
	Having an authentic classroom atmosphere	2.98	1.15	3.32	1.19	3.29	1.13
	Exposure to visual and auditory materials during the lesson	3.65	0.99	3.43	1.21	3.38	1.01
	Use of mother tongue when needed	3.73	1.06	3.83	1.26	4.09	0.82
	Focusing on speaking skills	3.27	1.05	3.51	1.23	3.79	1.08
	Creating a fun and motivating environment	3.39	1.01	3.67	1.17	3.74	1.03
	Doing activities that students can achieve	3.72	0.97	3.61	1.14	3.79	0.98
	Feeling comfortable and confident during the lesson	3.10	1.08	3.58	1.18	3.69	1.08
	Encouraging students to speak English during class	3.71	0.97	3.54	1.22	3.85	0.96
	Using hands-on activities during the lesson	3.58	1.08	3.31	1.28	3.38	1.09
	Using group activities	3.65	1.02	3.76	1.17	3.46	1.02
	Being student-centered	3.45	1.00	3.65	1.15	3.58	0.92
Total \bar{X}		3.48		3.58		3.69	

According to Table 5, the total mean score of the scale for teachers, students and parents was quite positive (3.41-4.20). When the total mean scores are examined, it can be seen that the arithmetic average of the parents is higher than that of the students and teachers, and the teachers have the lowest arithmetic average. Teachers have partially positive opinions in establishing communication in English during the lesson, focusing on improving speaking skills, creating a fun and motivating environment, and making the students feel comfortable and self-confident during the lesson. The study results show that the opinions of students and parents on these items are quite positive. All of the participants expressed very positive opinions about encouraging students to speak English, using their mother tongue when needed, using achievable activities, using group activities, and the program being student-centered. All groups have a partially positive opinion in terms of providing a realistic language environment. The only item that teachers have quite a positive opinion on while the students and the parents have partially positive opinions on is the use of hands-on activities in the classroom. So, the teachers think that the intensive foreign language education makes quite use of hands-on activities while the students and parents partially agree on that. Also, parents think that the visual and auditory materials are partially used in the classroom while teachers and students think otherwise.

3.4 Learning Objectives

The fourth section of this heading evaluates the teachers' opinions regarding the learning objectives of the intensive foreign language education. Table 6 shows the results of the teachers, students and parents.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics for teachers about the learning objectives

Learning Objectives	Teacher	
	\bar{X}	ss
The learning objectives meet the students' needs.	3.46	1.02
The learning objectives provide students with the ability to understand and use daily expressions.	3.61	0.93
The content of the courses coincides with the learning objectives.	3.55	0.92
I think that the learning objectives are suitable for the cognitive level of the students.	3.47	2.97
I can achieve the learning objectives related to speaking skill.	3.31	1.03
I can achieve the learning objectives related to listening skill.	3.52	1.01
I can achieve the learning objectives related to reading skill.	3.63	1.05
I can achieve the learning objectives related to writing skill.	3.55	0.99

According to Table 6, the results show that the teachers' opinions on the learning objectives are quite positive except for the speaking skill. Teachers think they can partially attain the learning objectives for speaking skill. Teachers think that the learning objectives are suitable for the cognitive level of the students, coincide with content, provide students with the ability to understand and use daily expressions, and meet the students' needs.

4) Findings Regarding the Degree of Difference Between the Views of Teachers, Students, and Parents Regarding

the Four skills, Content, Assessment and Teaching/Learning Process

The last part of the study aims to compare means of the teachers, students and parents, and determine whether there are significant differences between teachers, students and parents. For this purpose, one-way ANOVA test and post hoc tests were used to show the differences between groups. The results of the one-way ANOVA test are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. One Way Anova results for teachers, students and parents regarding the four skills, content, teaching/learning process and assessment/evaluation

Four Skills	sum of squares	sd	mean square	f	p
Between Groups	360.358	2nd	180.179	6.097	.002
Within Groups	22371.124	757	29.552		
Total	22731.482	759			
Content	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	p
Between Groups	6183.786	2nd	3091.893	45.007	.000
Within Groups	52004.765	757	68.699		
Total	58188.551	759			
Teaching/Learning Process	sum of squares	sd	mean square	F	p
Between Groups	722.818	2nd	361.409	4.776	.009
Within Groups	57277.971	757	75.664		
Assessment	58000.789	759			
Assessment/Evaluation	sum of squares	sd	mean square	f	p
Between Groups	906.607	2nd	453.303	19.326	.000*
Within Groups	17755.718	757	23.455		
Total	18662.324	759			

* $p \leq 0.05$.

According to Table 7, there are significant differences between groups. So, the findings suggest that the opinions of the teachers, students and parents are significantly different. To show which ones are different, further test needs to be done. The post hoc test below shows the groups with significantly different opinions.

The post hoc test aims to determine whether there are significant differences between groups. The post hoc test for teachers, students and parents are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Post hoc test results

Dimensions	Groups	Student	Teacher	Parent
Four skills	Student	-	.290	.239
	Teacher	.290	-	.001*
	Parent	.239	.001*	-
Content	Student	-	.000*	.000*
	Teacher	.000*	-	.000*
	Parent	.000*	.000*	-
Teaching/Learning Process	Student	-	.466	.257
	Teacher	.466	-	.006*
	Parent	.257	.006*	-
Assessment/Evaluation	Student	-	.740	.000*
	Teacher	.740	-	.000*
	Parent	.000*	.000*	-

* $p \leq 0.05$.

The post-hoc test indicates a significant difference between parents and teachers regarding the four skills ($p=0.001$). In terms of content, there is a significant difference between all the groups of participants ($p=0.000$). In terms of the teaching/learning process, there is a significant difference between parents and teachers ($p=0.006$). In

terms of assessment, there is a significant difference between parents and students ($p = 0.000$). Also, there is a significant difference between parents and teachers regarding assessment ($p = 0.000$).

4. Discussion

The first part of the research aims to evaluate the improvement of four skills in intensive foreign language education programs from the perspective of teachers, students and parents.

The first result of this study is about the four skills. Regarding the four skills, the answers given by teachers, students and parents were quite positive. Thus, it can be seen that intensive foreign language education is prepared in a way to develop four skills. This finding is supported by the study of Şahin and Göksoy (2019). They reported that the teachers had thought that the intensive foreign language education increases students' achievement in four skills as students can expose the target language more. Likewise, Spada and Lightbrown (1989) concluded in their study that students' listening and reading skills improved thanks to the foreign language education program. Colins and White (2005) compared the primary and final scores of the students in the immersion program and concluded that there was an increase in the success scores of the students at the end of the study. They also concluded that the verbal proficiency of students increased with immersion education. As a result, it is seen that intensive foreign language education has a positive effect on students' speaking skills. Thus, the finding of this study was similar to other studies. Overall, there is a consensus in the previous literature that the intensive education contributes to the achievement of four skills.

Considering the skills one by one, according to the results of this study, teachers' answers for reading and writing skills are higher than listening and speaking skills. Therefore, the results show that reading and writing skills develop more than listening and speaking skills for teachers. The most developed skill for parents is speaking, while the most developed skill for teachers and students is reading. For students and parents, the least developed skill is writing. In terms of the learning objectives and the improvement of the four skills, teachers think that the least developed skill is the speaking. The most developed skill for students is reading while for parents, the most developed skill is speaking. Students have stated that the least developed skill in foreign language education is writing.

In summary, these results show that teachers think they partially achieve learning outcomes of speaking skill and they partially agree that intensive education increases students' speaking skills. Similarly, according to the data obtained by Erdem and Yücel Toy (2017), teachers reported that the skills that students lack the most were listening and speaking skills. Therefore, it can be seen that the findings of this study and their research have similar findings for teachers. With that in mind, students and parents seem to have different opinions from teachers. This result is significant at the $p = 0.05$ level according to post hoc results (Table 8).

The second part of the research aims to evaluate the students' achievement levels of English. *With the achievement test*, the arithmetic averages of the students were weak in listening and reading skills, good in speaking skills and moderate in writing skills. There is a difference between the results in the achievement test and the perceived success level of teachers, students and parents. The results show that the students are more successful in productive skills (speaking, writing) than receptive skills (listening and reading). It should be noted that questions for listening and reading skills were evaluated with multiple-choice questions whereas writing and speaking skills were evaluated with classical questions (question-answer). These results show that the students answered the classical type questions more accurately than the multiple-choice questions. Therefore, process and multiple evaluation should become widespread in determining the acquisition levels of receptive (listening and reading) skills. One reason for this finding might be the lack of multiple-choice exercises for listening & reading skills during intensive foreign language program. Also, the Covid 19 outbreak might have affected students' results as some of the students might not participate in online lessons, absenteeism, lack of interest and attention or have health problems because of the outbreak. In accordance with the present results, previous studies have demonstrated that time allocated to the target language results in more proficiency (Liu & Yin, 2021). Therefore, intensive foreign language education can contribute to the students' achievement in four skills. With that being said, intensive education can be beneficial in terms of students' verbal abilities. This finding is similar to the finding in the study of White and Turner (2005), who claimed that there was an increase in the verbal abilities of students who were subject to an immersion program. Similarly, Lightbrown and Spada (1994) have found that intensive language education helps students with basic communication abilities. Last but not least, Yilmaz (2019) conducted an academic achievement test in his study, which aimed to measure the academic achievement of students studying foreign languages, and found a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students. These results of this research show that intensive language education can develop communication skills, but intensive foreign language education in Turkey can also be revised concerning four skills. As cited by

Kizildağ (2021), English teachers in Turkey stated the need for more balanced four skills content and activities in the textbooks. Also, Dincer and Koç (2020) reported that teachers think they need more assessment guidelines. Therefore, more assessment guidance in four skills will more likely result in a higher chance of achievement.

The third part of the research aims to evaluate the content, learning objectives, assessment/evaluation and teaching/learning process of the secondary school intensive foreign language education program in Turkey. In terms of *content*, findings have revealed that the students and parents have more positive opinions regarding the content than teachers. According to teachers, content needs to be improved regarding being communicative, in accordance with students' needs, fun and engaging, suitable for socio-cultural characteristics, improving problem solving skills, scope and units' completion in two semesters. Kayabaşı (2019) stated in his study that the program was not suitable for the level of the students and, accordingly, the program was not sufficient in terms of time. Therefore, it can be seen that the findings obtained in this study are similar to another study concerning teachers. On the other hand, Balim (2020) has stated that the content of an intensive foreign language program is suitable for students' level, interesting and intense. Canlier and Bumen (2018) have reported that the course topics are generally suitable for the age characteristics and levels of the students. Similarly, Kambur (2018) has reported that teachers think the materials are suitable for the level of students. In this respect, the results of this study are opposite to the studies mentioned above.

In terms of being in accordance with students' needs; it can be seen that teachers have partially positive opinions while parents and students have quite positive opinions. This finding is similar to the studies of Dincer and Koç (2020) and Şahin and Göksoy (2019). Both of those studies have suggested that the content of this program should be revised according to students' needs.

Students and parents have more positive opinions than teachers regarding the fun and interesting content. MacFarlane and Wesche (1995) have concluded in their study that foreign language education program creates positive attitudes in students. Similarly, Spada and Lightbrown (1989) have reported that the attitudes of students in immersion programs are higher than of other students. MacIntyre et al. (2003) have reported that students studying in immersion programs have higher motivation and attitudes than other students. Therefore, it can be seen that the findings related to the attitude in this study are similar for students and parents and contrary for teachers.

In terms of scope, it can be seen that teachers have partially positive opinions, while students and parents have quite positive opinions. This finding indicates that all groups think that the content is intense, but it can be completed in two semesters. However, all groups expressed quite a positive opinion that the books used in foreign language education are understandable and can be finished at the specified time.

Overall, the findings of this study show that the students, parents and teachers have different opinions about the content, as shown in table 8. Students and parents have quite a positive opinion about the content than teachers. Other research done in Turkey seems to indicate similar results to the teachers. For students and parents, research done in other countries have similar results. However, it should be noted that very few research have been done regarding the students' and parents' opinions in Turkey, so this study might be useful for further research. Also, further research might be required to understand the reasons for difference in the participants' opinions.

In terms of *learning objectives*, only the teachers' opinions were taken. It can be seen that teachers have very positive opinions about the learning objectives except for one item. So, teachers expressed that the learning objectives are suitable for the students' cognitive level, in accordance with the needs of the students, provide the ability to understand and use daily expressions, and that the content of the courses overlaps with the learning objectives. This finding of the study is in line with the finding of Kambur (2018) that the learning objectives of the intensive foreign language education are understandable and suitable for students' readiness. In this study, the only item reported as partially positive concerning learning objectives is about speaking skills. In this respect, it is found that teachers can achieve the learning objectives of reading, writing and listening, and the learning objectives for speaking skills are partially achieved. Berkant et al. (2019) found that teachers could achieve the learning objectives except for writing skills. According to this study, teachers responded quite positively to the degree of realization of the achievements for writing skills. So, this finding does not match with the study above. The difference in this finding might be because of the decrease in the number of units to 36 in the following 2018/2019 academic year. This may be the reason why teachers expressed more positive opinions about the learning objectives.

In the dimension of *assessment and evaluation*, while the teachers have a partially positive opinion on the coverage of the four skills in the assessment tools, the students and parents have quite positive opinion. Dilekli (2018) and Balim (2020) concluded that four skills are not measured in intensive foreign language education, and writing and multiple-choice questions are used. This study has concluded that four skills are partially measured, as

reported in the other two studies. Dincer and Koç (2020) have reported that teachers think they need more guidance about the assessment. All participants expressed quite a positive opinion that the assessment tools are appropriate to the developmental characteristics of the students, in accordance with the lesson, and have a positive washback effect. Teachers have partially positive opinions on the formative and summative assessments, and self-assessments are being used in the intensive foreign language education program, while students and parents have quite positive opinions. Tavoozy (2021) has stated that teachers make use of both traditional and alternative assessment tools. As a result, intensive foreign language education assessment can be improved by more guidelines, sample exams, and materials. Teachers can be informed about the assessment process through seminars.

In terms of the *teaching/learning process*, all groups think the intensive foreign language education is student-centered. In addition, all groups think that group activities are used during the intensive foreign language education. Students and parents have a partially positive opinion on the use of hands-on activities during the lesson and teachers have quite a positive opinion. Erdem and Yücel Toy (2017) have stated that teachers thought that educational games, realistic activities or materials, and drama attract students' attention and help learning be more permanent, so the teachers use these methods in their lessons. Similarly, Kambur (2018) has stated that teachers think the activities in the program are suitable for the developmental characteristics of children and teaching principles. Therefore, the findings obtained from this study show that there are deficiencies in the use of hands-on activities in the program and in creating a realistic environment in the classroom for teachers. On the other hand, all groups responded partially positively that the classes have an authentic atmosphere as if the students and teachers are speaking English in real life. This finding is similar to the study of Dilekli (2018) who reported in her study that teachers think program gave more importance to teaching grammar rules while neglecting other skills. This finding is remarkable because this is the only item in the survey that has been reported as partially positive for teachers, students and parents. Also, the intensive foreign language program aims to create an authentic classroom atmosphere to develop students' communicative abilities in the target language. So, there seems to be a need for increasing an authentic classroom atmosphere according to this study.

Teachers have partially positive opinions, while students and parents have quite positive opinions about the program creating a fun and motivating atmosphere for students and making students feel comfortable and confident while speaking English. All groups have very positive opinions that students are doing activities that are achievable and encouraged students to speak English throughout the lesson. So, it is possible to say that the opinions of the students and parents are more positive than the teachers. MacIntyre et al. (2003) reported that students' willingness to speak has increased with the foreign language education program in their study on 59 university students who were taught in an immersion program. Baker and McIntyre (2000) similarly have reported that immersion program increases students' willingness to speak. Therefore, it is possible to say that the findings of this study and other studies are similar for students and parents.

5. Conclusion

In this study, teachers', students' and parents' opinions about intensive foreign language education in secondary schools were taken in terms of four skills, content, learning objectives, teaching/learning process and assessment. With this study, it is intended to figure out the problematic areas in intensive foreign language education. For this reason, three different questionnaires and an achievement test are used. To conclude, participants of the study generally have quite positive opinions on the intensive foreign language education. Parents have more positive opinions than students and teachers. Teachers have more negative opinions than students and parents. This study shows that some changes in terms of the content, teaching/learning process and assessment need to be made to make the intensive foreign language education more efficient. Some suggestions are given below. According to those suggestions, the areas that need attention are the use of hands-on activities and the creation of an authentic environment. These changes can directly affect the development of four skills as the achievement test shows that the intensive foreign language education should provide more skill-based education rather than focusing on form approach. Focusing on four skills instead of the grammatical aspect of the language helps students learn the target language more holistically. Thus, intensive foreign language education can help students prepare for the preparatory classes, and communicative and academic use of English. Intensive foreign language education has up to 18 hours of English lessons per week, giving learners a great opportunity to develop communicative competence, with this, ease the language acquisition.

6. Suggestions

- 1) To make the intensive foreign language education more efficient, more activities for the four skills can be used.

- 2) The number of listening and speaking activities can be increased.
- 3) The number of student-centered activities and realistic materials can be increased.
- 4) More realistic environment in foreign language teaching classrooms can be created. For this, the physical conditions of the classrooms can be improved, and the use of online tools can be increased.
- 5) Books may cover more content to improve students' speaking skills.
- 6) The number of hands-on activities can be increased.

7. Limitations

- 1) This study is limited to the 2020-2021 academic year of the pandemic.
- 2) This study is limited to 6th, 7th and 8th-grade secondary school students and their parents.
- 3) This study is limited to English teachers who teach intensive foreign language..
- 4) Teachers, students and parents; gender, location, graduated school, socio-economic level and seniority variables were excluded from the independent variable group because the convenient sampling method was used.

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