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**Gürcan DEMİROĞLARI**

## ÖZET

### ADAY AKADEMİSYENLERİN YABANCI DİL SINAVINA KARŞI OLAN TUTUMLARI

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Yabancı Dil Sınavı, bir yüksek lisans veya doktora programına kabul edilmeyi hedefleyen ve Tıp alanında uzmanlaşmak için TUS'u (Tıpta Uzmanlaşma Sınavı) geçmeye çalışan pratisyen doktorlar tarafından alınan bir sınavdır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı aday akademisyenlerin Yabancı Dil Sınavı'na karşı olan tutumlarını incelemektir. Bu çalışmada 42 aday yer almıştır ve veriler iki açık uçlu anket yoluyla toplandı ve içerik analizi tekniği ile incelendi. İlk anket, adayların Yabancı Dil Sınavı hakkında adayların genel izlenimlerini öğrenmek için oluşturuldu ve ikinci ankette de adayların Yabancı Dil Sınavı'na karşı olan tutumlarını etkileyen faktörleri öğrenmek için oluşturuldu.

Araştırmanın sonuçları aday akademisyenlerin Yabancı Dil Sınavı'na karşı olumsuz bir tutum içerisinde olduğunu gösterdi. Bunun yanında, bulgular adaylar için sınavı daha olumlu ve uygulamaya değer bir duruma getirmek için sınavın içeriği, tarzı, güvenilirliği ve geçerliliği hakkında bazı iyileştirmelerin yapılması gerektiğini gösterdi.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yabancı Dil Sınavı, tutum, aday akademisyen, içerik ve tarz, güvenilirlik ve geçerlik

**ABSTRACT**  
**CANDIDATE ACADEMICIANS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS FOREIGN LANGUAGE**  
**EXAMINATION**

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Foreign Language Examination is taken by candidates who aim to be accepted to graduate and PhD programs and taken by general practitioners who try to pass TUS (The Examination of Majoring in Medicine) to have a major in Medical Science.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the candidate academicians' attitudes towards Foreign Language Examination. Forty-two candidates participated in this study and the data were gathered through two open ended questionnaires and analyzed by means of content analysis technique. The first questionnaire was designed to find out the candidates' general impressions about Foreign Language Exam and the second one was designed to learn the factors affecting the candidates' attitudes towards Foreign Language Examination.

Results of the study showed that candidate academicians have negative attitudes towards Foreign Language Examination. Besides, the findings of the study revealed that some improvements related to content, style and reliability and validity of the exam need to be done so as to make the exam more positive and practical for the candidates.

**Key words:** Foreign Language Examination, attitude, candidate academician, content and style, reliability and validity.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>FLE</b>	: Foreign Language Examination
<b>PTE</b>	: Pearson Test of English
<b>FCE</b>	: First Certificate in English
<b>UEE</b>	: University Entrance Examination
<b>ILE</b>	: Inter-Universities Foreign Language Examination
<b>M.A</b>	: Master of Arts
<b>PhD</b>	: Doctor of Philosophy
<b>TOEFL</b>	: Test of English as a Foreign Language
<b>TOEIC</b>	: Test of English for International Communication
<b>SSPC</b>	: Student Selection and Placement Centre
<b>IELTS</b>	: International English Language Testing System
<b>SEPPPO</b>	: Selection Examination for Professional Posts in Public Organizations

*Burcu Bayraktar Demirogları'na ithafen...*

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## CHAPTER I

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and some significant definitions have been included so as to convey a general idea about the framework of the thesis. This study approaches the candidate academicians' attitudes towards Foreign Language Examination.

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

Language testing is so significant and complex issue that a majority of researchers have been trying to determine for a long time to what extent testing is supposed to be reliable, valid, and effective. Language tests are also valuable sources as to measuring the effectiveness of learning and teaching. Language teachers, for example use tests to have an idea about the students' progress they make. In addition, they have an opportunity to figure out to what extent their methods are effective in classroom setting. Apart from the evaluation of the language learning in classroom setting, learners have to sit for various tests or examinations held in national or international field, such as FLE, IELTS and TOEFL. These tests are called as high stakes examinations because some important decisions are given about the individuals' future and careers. Therefore, high-stakes tests have highly been discussed for a long time by the authorities, since, these tests affect educational strategies and even policies which will determine a nation's developmental process in the long-run. As Petrie (1987, p.254) pointed out that "it would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that evaluation and testing have become the engine for implementing educational policy." There is a strong evidence that examinations, especially high-stakes tests, have important washback effects on learning and teaching (Cheng & Watanabe, 2004, p.98). According to Cheng (2005, p. 98) a high-stake test's results are accepted by students, teachers, administrators, parents or general public as a criteria which significant decisions are provided to the students. As Greaney and Kellaghan (1996, p. 98) argue, "an examination or test is said to have high stakes attached to it when sanctions or rewards are linked directly to performance." Besides this, Bachman and Palmer (2000, p. 147) define high-stake decisions as decisions that are likely to have a major impact on the lives of individuals. Especially in Turkey, high-stakes examinations such as FLE,

IELTS or TOEFL gained important roles while giving decisions about individuals' future in the long run. Accordingly, these examinations have highly been a disputable issue of authorities and those taking one of them since they were employed.

Foreign Language Examination is a national high-stakes academic English test in Turkey conducted for individuals holding M.A. or Ph.D. degree and aiming to apply for associate professorship examination that is offered by Council of Higher Education (SSPC, 2010). Individuals are also required to take this test in order to be assigned to any post in state institutions, and in addition state officers take this exam because they get extra payment to their salaries. FLE had been administered as ÜDS and KPDS by the time it was changed in 2013. The first FLE was conducted in April, 2013 and since then it has been offered biannually in spring and fall terms. In 2013, the number of test takers in spring term was 289.219 and in fall term 137.060. The test is conducted in 43 different city centres. FLE is negatively criticised by the authorities and test takers, since this exam does not assess all communicative language competences; that is, the exam is traditional including grammar, vocabulary and reading questions, all of which are presented in multiple choice format. Eighty multiple choice test items are answered in 150 minutes. The exam does not cover any section or item for listening, speaking and writing. As a result this causes validity and reliability problems. SSPC (2010) claims "bachelor level is admitted as a criterion", which actually does not refer to any kind of academic English levels known nationally or internationally. But in contrast to SSPC's claim, examination includes multiple choice test items in B2 and C1 levels which are too difficult to solve even for some native speakers of English Language.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Researchers have been interested in the effects of tests on different aspects of language teaching and learning for decades (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Buck, 1998; Hughes, 2003). It is a fact that tests and test results are important in people's lives. Especially in exam-oriented countries, like Turkey, this importance becomes even more evident because individuals might have to make their future decisions according to test results. FLE, which directly affects the academicians' lives, is such a test. As explained in the previous section, it is an academic English test which academicians have to take for promotion. Without a success in this exam, promotion is impossible. For that reason, there are many Ph.D. holders or Assistant Professors who have to wait for promotion

for years, which develops a negative attitude to this test. In other words, although this examination is extremely important for individuals aiming at following further higher education, people have negative attitude towards the test.

Since FLE is a new exam in Turkey, little or no research has been conducted to clarify to what extent this examination is effective on candidate academics' attitudes who are required to take the test. Therefore, It is significant to investigate the attitudes of candidate academicians towards FLE.

### **1.3. Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of candidate academicians' towards FLE. The research is conducted with candidate academicians who want to attend for further higher education . Also, these individuals attend Foreign Language Examination courses for five months in Mersin American Culture and Language Schools.

The issue of attitudes of candidate academicians towards FLE have not seriously been taken into account in detail so far. Therefore, in this research, it has been aimed to contribute to the literature by investigating candidate academics' attitudes towards the FLE. Furthermore, this study has a leading role for the researchers and teachers who study in the field of ELT.

### **1.4. Research Questions**

Considering the aims of the study, the following research questions were formed:

- 1) What are the candidate academicians' attitudes towards FLE?
- 2) What are the factors affecting the candidate academicians' attitudes towards FLE?

### **1.5. Limitations**

The present study is administered with a target population which includes candidate academicians who attend the Foreign Language Examination courses in Mersin American Culture and Language Schools. Since, the study is administered with a limited population, a number of limitations need to be considered. The first limitation of this study is to make generalization when taking into consideration the findings of the study being done. The second limitation is that the study focuses on the attitudes of candidate academicians . Hence, the term 'attitude' a determinant key word in this study. Another

limitation is that findings are commented based on the data which are being collected from the candidate academicians attending the courses for five months.

### **1.6. Operational Definitions**

*Foreign Language Examination:* FLE is a national high-stakes academic English test conducted for the individuals who aim to apply for the graduate or doctorate programmes (Özmen, 2011).

*Attitudes of candidate academicians:* The way that the candidate academics view Foreign Language Examination. On the other hand, the terms such as perceptions, thoughts, attitudes and impressions are used interchangeably.

## CHAPTER II

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Testing and Assessment

Teaching a foreign language is an important and difficult process. It includes a lot of knowledge, such as the knowledge of the foreign language, the knowledge of learners and the learning process, the knowledge of teaching methods and techniques. It also involves a lot of skills, such as questioning skills and pedagogical skills and activities starting from planning, teaching, and testing (Widyantoro, 2010). Apart from the planning and teaching process, testing is a driving force which may help to evaluate the quality of the teaching and learning process. According to Petrie (1987, p. 254) “it would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that evaluation and testing have become the engine for implementing educational policy.”

It is very important to keep in mind that testing is not a separate process. There is a strong link between testing and teaching, which can not be separated from one another. For instance, Heator (1988, p. 18) points out that “both testing and teaching are so close that it one can not saperate testing and teaching from each other.

Testing has been accepted as a device or instrument which measures the linguistic knowledge or competence of the learners (Rahman & Gautam, 2012). Similarly, Chapelle and Brindley (2010, p. 247) state, language tests collect information and make judgements about a language learner’s knowledge. Therefore, language tests are valuable tools for teachers to observe the learners’ performance and progression throughout the learning process. Actually, language tests are not the only mirrors to see the learners’ performance but they also illustrate the efficiency of the teachers or teaching methods and techniques employed in classroom settings. According to Fulcher and Davidson (2007) language testing and assessment is an important stage in the process of language learning and teaching as it helps monitor students’ educational progress and evaluate the quality of school systems.

Every teacher may have an interest in knowing whether and to what degree his/her teaching has been successful and every student has an interest in knowing what and how much he/she has learnt. Hence, assessment is one of the most important stages of learning and teaching both for the teachers and learners.

In its most general definition, assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students' learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on student achievement and progress and set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning (NSWDET, 2008). Being a kind of link between teaching and learning, assessment is a systematic and cooperative process. What is more, it is the analysis of data about the needs, interests, learning styles and achievements of students (Ming, 2002, p. 6).

According to Woolfolk (2005, p. 504) assessment is the procedure used to obtain information about students' performance. Likewise, Nelson and Price (2007, p. 65) describe the term assessment as a process, determining what students already know about a topic before the instruction. According to Kiperman;

The English language teaching world tends to refer to 'testing and assessment rather than assessment and testing, because testing has a very long history and is a familiar part of most teachers' daily lives, whereas assessment is a much more recent arrival as a recognize respectable means of evaluating performance. (Kiperman, 2010, p. 3)

Assessment can be realized as a misunderstood term in current educational practice. Testing and assessment can be seen as synonymous terms, but they are not. Şenel and Tütüniş give the difference between these two terms as follows:

Tests are prepared for administrative procedures that occur at identifiable times in curriculum when learners master all their faculties to offer peak performance, knowing that their responses are being measured and evaluated. Assessment, on the other hand, is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain. Whenever a student responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance. (Şenel and Tütüniş, 2012, p.4)

In foreign language teaching, it needs to be considered the two types of assessments containing formative and summative ones. Formative assessment is designed to assist the learning process by providing feedback to the learner, which can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses (Ezir, 2013, p. 41). The major function of formative assessment is to give feedback on students' performance to improve learning (Falchikov, 2005). In addition, students' participation is an important issue in formative assessment. It is a procedure for regulating teaching to ensure the active participation of



students (Harlen, 2007, p. 9). By actively involving the students in this process, the teachers are able to meet students' needs and help them reach high standards (Policy Brief, 2005).

Summative assessment is used to check the level of the students' learning at a particular time. It focuses on the product or outcomes of learning (Ciel, 2000). Summative assessment is conducted to observe and record student achievement by taking into consideration the results which have been obtained (Irons, 2008, p. 10). Brown explains how summative assessment functions as follows:

The major function of summative assessment is to measure or summarize what students have learnt at the end of a course or unit of instruction but it does not focus on the future progress and it also helps teachers to observe as to whether their program goals and objectives have been met or not. (Brown, 2008, p. 7)

## **2.2. Principles of Testing**

### **2.2.1. Reliability**

Reliability is related to the consistency, reproducibility or generalisability of a test and it is one of the most important elements of test quality. As APA (1985, p. 7) highlights that reliability is a quality of test scores and a perfectly reliable score, or measure would be one which is free from errors of measurement. Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 9) defines the concept of reliability as "the consistency of measurement." A test is said to be reliable if it consistently yields similar or even the same results when conducted multiple times under the same conditions (Kulitmann, 2008).

There are various factors affecting the test reliability. Factors including the participants' personal characteristics such as age, gender, mood and the level of anxiety and factors regarding the testing environment may contribute to whether or not a test is effectively reliable (Bachman, 1990, p. 27).

### **2.2.2. Validity**

There are some requirements for constructing a good test. One of the most important requirement is that there must be a good coordination between a test item and the objectives of the whole test (Osterlind, 2000, p. 3). To put it simply, a test must be valid. Validity can be said to be the most important consideration in language testing

because it gives opportunity for teachers to make decisions about the skills or abilities that the test takers have.

Various definitions of validity have been presented by some experts. Bachman (1990) defines the validity as the most important quality of test use which concerns to what extent meaningful inferences can be extracted from test scores. Henning(1987, p. 170) in his research describes it as “appropriateness of a given test or any kind of its component as a measure of what is supposed to measure.”

Gronlund (1998, p. 226) provides the meaning of the term validity as “the extent to which inferences made from assessment results are appropriate, meaningful, and useful in terms of the purpose of the assessment.” Another researcher who gives the definition of validity is Hughes (2003, p. 26). He argues that a test is valid if it measures accurately what it is intended to measure.

For Fulcher and Davidson (2007, p. 3), validity is precisely what teachers have to do so that they can make a kind of reasoning of what a test score means. In their view, “validity is not a property of a test but an evidence which teachers have chance to make an inference about test scores.” Related to this, Paterno believes the following:

Validity can only be obtained when we state clearly the objectives of our teaching, break them down into skills and abilities involved, and define them in separable elements; and then to measure each in situations which comes as close as possible to the real circumstances in which they will be used. (1965, p. 378)

In order to examine the validity of a test, it requires a validation process by which a test user presents evidence to support the inferences or decisions made on the basis of test scores (Cronbach, 1971). Test validation is the process of accumulating evidence to support such inferences, that means, it involves the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores (AERA, 1985).

There are mainly four common types of validity. These are face validity, content validity, criterion validity and construct validity. To begin with, face validity in testing describes the look of the test as opposed to whether the test is proved to work or not (Nadasdy, 2005). Therefore, face validity is determined impressionistically by asking students whether the exam was appropriate to their expectations or not. Content validity is concerned with whether or not the content of the test is sufficiently representative and comprehensive for the test to be a valid measure of what is supposed to measure (Henning, 1987, p. 94). To address this issue, testers or people interested in test

validation may need to focus particularly on the organization of the different types of items that they have included on the test and the specifications for each of those item types (Brown, 2005, p. 221). The concept of criterion validity involves “demonstrating validity by showing that the scores on the test being validated correlate highly with some other, well-respected measure of the same construct” (Brown, 2005, p. 233). The next type of validity is the construct validity and this is the most difficult validity type to explain as it is regarded as a superordinate form of validity to which external and internal validity contribute (Alderson, 1995, p. 183).

There is a strong relationship between the terms validity and reliability. Nunan’s explanation of this relationship is as follows:

Reliability is a necessary element of validity, but not a sufficient one. If our measurements are highly unreliable, we cannot draw any conclusions from them.

On the other hand, even if our measurements are reliable, we also have to be confident that we have measured what actually interests us. (1992, p. 14)

In addition, a test cannot be valid unless it is reliable. If a test does not measure something consistently, it can not always be measuring precisely. However, it is also possible for a test to be reliable but not valid. For example, a test can give the same results all the time even though it is not measuring what it is claimed to. Hence, even though reliability is a must for validity, it alone is not adequate (Alderson, 1995). On the other hand, it is possible that when a test is not reliable, it may not be valid as well. For instance, Bachman (1990, p. 8) says, if test scores are strongly affected by errors of measurement, they will not be meaningful, and cannot, therefore, provide valid interpretation or use. A test score that is not reliable, therefore, cannot be valid. As a result, from the different approaches and definitions one thing that can be concluded that validity and reliability are important concepts in language testing.

### **2.2.3. Practicality**

Practicality refers to the economy of time, effort, and money in testing. In other words, a test should be easy to design, easy to administer, easy to mark, easy to interpret the results (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, p. 5). Moreover, Brown (2004) states that the test that is practical it needs to be within the means of financial limitations, appropriate time constraints, easy to administer, score, and interpret.

#### **2.2.4. Scorbability**

It means that that a test should be scored with ease so that examiner is able to interpret the results easily. However, subjective tests are not easy to score when compared to objective tests (Rahman & Gautam, 2012).

#### **2.2.5. Administrability**

It means that a test is conducted under the conditions that include facilities such as equipments, atmosphere of the exam (Rahman & Gautam, 2012). For instance, if a test requires electronic equipments and the service of highly trained technician, then it is not administrable since these facilities are not available in most of the school and even most colleges and universities.

### **2.3. Low and High- Stakes Tests**

It is possible to say that there are mainly two types of language tests. One is low-stakes tests including classroom based or teacher designed tests such as placement, progress or achievement tests administered by schools or teachers. The other one is high-stakes covering national or international exams such as FLE, IELTS, TOEFL, PTE administered by the governments or official examination institutions like ETS in order to give important decisions about candidates' future career. Wall (2000) states in her research, high-stakes tests are helpful for the decision makers such as admission officers, educational administrators or even for the companies since they determine candidates' language proficiency while hiring a job position or accepting a school.

#### **2.3.1. Low-Stakes Tests**

Low-stakes tests are those whose results have little or no meaningful impact on the students, teachers and administrators (Cole, 2007). "Low stakes decisions have relatively minor impact on the lives of relatively small numbers of individuals or small programs and can be reversed quite easily" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 5). McKay (2006) believes, if large-scale tests are not designed to provide data to administrators and parents, they could be regarded as low-stakes tests. Such tests could range from teacher-made achievement tests, end of year exams to placement tests which prepare students to enroll in a foreign language program (Roever, 2001). As a typical example of low-stakes tests, teacher-made achievement tests are widely used in almost every

classroom to observe students' achievements of educational goals at different levels. Such tests are prepared and conducted by teachers in classroom (McKay, 2006, p. 5). Teachers use this kind of tests to plan instruction, guide students' learning, and place students in special programs (Goertz & Duffy, 2003, p. 5).

There may be some positive aspects of low-stakes tests, for instance they help instructors to see whether or not students are understanding course and course materials and prepare students for high-stakes examinations (Goertz & Duffy, 2003). Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to say that they are important bridges for the high-stakes examinations. Moreover, they also create less stress for students and teachers because they tend to be quicker and easier to mark when compared to high-stakes tests (Cole & Bergin, 2005).

### **2.3.2. High Stakes Tests**

Tests are important because the decisions made about students' performance and knowledge and also teachers' performance are influenced by the results of them. According to Halliday (1966, p. 215), "tests are an attempt to construct an instrument for measuring attainment, or progress, or ability in language skills." It is possible to state that tests are driving forces for both students and teachers in that they either motivate students and teachers positively or affect them negatively. For instance, Wall (2000) claims that tests have same features both for teachers and students because with the announcement of the results teachers and students are influenced positively or negatively and even sometimes these results may lead to anxiety in classroom setting. On the other hand, unlike Wall's opinion, Corder (1973, p.435) is of the following view:

Language tests are measuring instruments and they are applied to learners, not to the teaching materials or teachers. For this reason they do not tell us directly about the contribution of the teacher or the materials to the learning process. They are just designed to measure the learners' knowledge of or competence in the language at particular moment.

Besides this, Ingram (1974, p. 435) supports Corder's thought by claiming that "tests, give opportunities to candidates to show their knowledge or skills in a concentrated fashion, so that the result can be graded, and inferences made from the standard of

performance that can be expected from the candidate, either at the time of the test or at some future time.”

High- stakes tests have highly been discussed for a long time by the authorities because those tests affect educational strategies and even policies which will determine a nation’s developmental process in the long- run. Therefore, studies are increasing on the effects of high-stakes testing. High-stakes test is a notion used to make decisions and inferences about people or institutions (Madaus, 1988), and to improve teaching and learning (Bishop, 2005). Cizek (2001, p. 759) defines high stakes testing or assessment as the exams which students need to pass in order to finish a school, to enter an education program, to attend a university, to be able to get a scholarship, or to obtain proficiency for an application. Similarly, Casbarro (2004, p. 759) articulates the term high-stakes as the exams or tests, whose results are very important for the examinees, and which have high concern and anxiety on them.

High-stakes decisions are likely to have a major impact on the lives of individuals or programs (Bachman & Palmer 2000, p. 147). Since high-stakes decisions are not easily reversed, the decision errors cannot be easily corrected, thus, examiners have to be careful about these life changing implications of testing outcome for the test takers (Roever, 2011).

Teachers’ methods and techniques are highly influenced by the high- stakes tests. It is possible to say that teachers ignore some parts of the curriculum which is not related to the exam. For instance, Kumandaş and Kutlu (2010) argue that the teachers tend to teach the content of the exams in other words, they tend to teach what the test must include. Also, high stakes tests may have positive effects on teachers and students. For instance, they improve coordination and cooperation among teachers (Marshall, 2003, p. 759), help teachers to adapt to student-centered approaches (Kumandaş & Kutlu, 2010), and increase the motivation of the students (DeMoss, 2002, p. 759). On the other hand, there are negative sides of high stakes tests as well. According to Looney (2009, p. 759) when the results, the students obtain from high stakes tests, are employed as either punishment or reward for schools, administrators and even for teachers, some undesirable outcomes may appear such as:

a) Students, administrators and teachers feel under stress.

b) Teachers are inclined to teach the test items and questions (content, knowledge dimension, i.e. ) teaching the test.

c) Teachers (particularly private educational institutions that prepare the students for such tests) ignore the necessity of students' basic skills determined in the educational curricula, and they begin to prefer an educational approach which highlights the significance of test technique.

There are a number of studies conducted on the impacts of high-stakes tests. Stake (1989, p. 7) studied the effect of introducing new statewide tests as devices for increasing achievement and found that although tests caused teachers to become more focused in their teaching and they had the additional effect of narrowing the subject matter taught.

Smith (1991) studied the impacts of high-stakes tests on teachers and found that teachers feel negatively because of test scores and they try to avoid low scores. She also showed that in the classroom, preparation for an high-stakes test significantly reduces the amount of time available for the instruction; preparation for the test may not be covered with teaching.

Xiaoju (1990) examined the impact of a language test in China. The MET (Matriculation English Test) test caused the use of exam based on test textbooks and teaching materials.

A study undertaken by the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice (2010) studied the effects of high-stakes tests (ACT, SAT and AP) on student academic performance. They gathered data from students including 28 states and found that high-stakes

Han, Dai, and Yang (2004) conducted a survey among the teachers in colleges and universities. They asked about their attitudes toward the national testing system of the CET at the tertiary level of educational system in China. They found that although the majority of the teachers stated negatively about the system of this exam, most of them did not want the test to be abolished. Teachers were also doubtful about the validity of the CET.

Mohammadi (2009) examined the effect of MA entrance exam of the universities on the methodology of university professors during their undergraduate courses. According to him, majority of the subjects were affected by the exam and the subjects were aware that their methodology and attitudes were gradually set to the demands of the exam. He also found that experienced teachers tended to be much more examination-oriented than their younger teachers.

Wall (2005) conducted a study by examining the effects of a national high-stakes test “English as a Foreign Language” on the education system of Sri Lanka. She argued that both the factors of the exam and the characteristics of the educational setting have an influence on the intended outcomes of the examination on the teachers and the learners.

#### **2.4. Washback Effect**

We always live with examinations. Accordingly, our education system has been equipped with various high-stakes exams which involve national or international ones such as YDS, IELTS, TOEFL, PTE, FCE. High-stakes exams have highly been discussed for a long time by the authorities, because, these tests affect educational strategies and even policies which will determine a nation’s developmental process in the long-run. It is commonly known that high-stakes examinations have important consequences on teaching and learning and this phenomenon is known as test washback (Alderson & Wall, 1993, p. 431). Definitely, “testing is never a neutral process and always has consequences” (Stobart, 2003, p. 140). Negative or positive, strong or weak, the influence of tests on learning has been defined as ‘washback’ or ‘backwash’ (Biggs, 1995).

Various opinions have been argued on washback effect so far. In her investigation, Cheng (1997, p. 8) depicts washback as “an intended direction and function of curriculum change, by means of a change of public examinations, on aspects of teaching and learning” but on the other hand, Spolsky (1994, p. 8) reports that “backwash is better applied only to accidental side-effects of examinations, and not to those effects intended when the first purpose of the examination is control of the curriculum”. Alderson and Wall (1993) argue that, washback is “likely to be a complex phenomenon which cannot be related directly to a test’s validity.” Hence, the washback effect should be understood as the effects of the test itself on the aspects of teaching and learning. The term washback refers to the positive or negative influence that tests have on teaching and learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993).

For some researchers (Messick, 1996; Spratt, 2005; Hughes, 2003) washback is closely related to teaching since it provides a clear way for teachers to be aware of as to whether their teaching process and test preparations are effective or not. For instance, Messick (1996) and Hughes (2003) assert in their investigations, whether positive or



negative there is a direct relationship between the teaching process and the design and use of the examinations.

Messick (1996, p. 4) believes that there is an existence of link between teaching and use of test. He mentions in his article that in order to claim the washback, teaching has must be accurately linked to the use of the test. Frederiksen (1984) and Hughes (2003) have also similar ideas like Messick's. They clearly state that provided that a test is not designed accurately, the outcomes are possibly negative on the other hand a well-prepared test can create positive effects on teaching and learning process.”

It has been tried to figure out for a long time to what extent tests are supposed to be valid and effective and therefore, some experts (Shephard, 1996; Messick 1996) believe that there is a relationship between washback effect and validity of a language examination. Shepard (1997, p.216) considers the washback as part of test validity. For Messick (1996, p. 4), washback is a kind of construct validity, and it is an inherent quality of any kind of assessment, especially when the test results are used for important decisions.

In order to understand the influence of examinations on learning and teaching, it could also be beneficial to remember the distinction between the test impact and test washback. Generally, the term washback is primarily known as the impact of a test on teaching and learning but Wall (1997, p. 216) makes a distinction between test washback and test impact. She claims in her study(1997, p. 216) test impact refers to the effect of examinations on educational policies, educational practices, and society, but test washback is the effect of the examinations on teaching and learning process.

Many researchers (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Pearson, 1988; Cheng & Watanabe, 2004; Wall, 1997; Hughes, 2003) believe that washback seems to be associated mainly with high-stakes tests, which are mainly employed for making important decisions on wider fields of a society such as education and economy. Bachman & Palmer (1996, p. 14) claim that “washback refers to the extent which a test influences within society, ranging from government policymaking, school administration, publishing, and general opportunities to parents' expectations of their children.” Pearson (1988, p. 431) has also a similar opinion. For him, washback could be a potential instrument for educational reform which affects the developmental process of a society in the long-run.

There is a strong evidence that examinations, especially high-stakes tests, have important washback effects on learning and teaching (Cheng & Watanabe, 2004 p.98).

According to Cheng (2005, p. 98) “a high-stake testing refers to test whose results are seen rightly or wrongly by students, teachers, administrators, parents or general public as the basis upon which important decisions are made that immediately and directly affect students.” Greaney and Kellaghan (1996, p. 98) articulate that “an examination or test is said to have high stakes attached to it when sanctions or rewards are linked directly to performance.”

Washback studies in language testing include high-stakes tests of some countries such as, Sri Lanka (Wall & Alderson, 1993), Hong Kong (Andrews, 1995; Cheng, 1997; Andrews, 2002) and Israel (Shohamy, 1996) where English is used as a foreign or second language. A great number of researchers have investigated the effects of washback on learning and teaching second foreign language so far. While some of these studies focused on the impact of world-wide-known high-stakes test like TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS (Alderson and Reynolds, 2010), the others (Cheng, 1997; Wall, 2005; Watanabe, 1996) investigated nationwide exams.

Alderson (1996) investigated the washback effect of Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) preparation courses. He found that the TOEFL test has an impact on what and how teachers teach. However, the degree of this effect changes from teacher to teacher. In another study, Rahimi and Nazhand (2010) focused on the washback effect of one of the most taken English exams in the world, IELTS. They conducted a study on the washback effect of IELTS preparation courses to learn students' perceptions of speaking instructions. In general, the IELTS exam has a negative washback effect on the development of speaking skill during the course periods as IELTS restricts the speaking skill due to the format of the exam.

Another example of a washback study about national high-stakes exams was conducted by Li (1990). He investigated the effects of the Matriculation English Test in China and found positive effects for the test. Later, Shohamy (1993), studied the effects of three language tests: The Arabic Test, the English Oral Test, and the Reading Comprehension Test. The study revealed that all the three tests have some impact on teaching and learning practices. Wall (2005) conducted a study by examining the effects of a national high-stakes test “English as a Foreign Language” on the education system of Sri Lanka. She reported that both the factors of the exam and the characteristics of the educational setting have an influence on the outcomes of the examination on the teachers and the learners.

There are only a few national studies conducted in Turkey. Hughes (2003) for instance, investigated the effects of an English proficiency test at Bogazici University in Istanbul. He found out that the test achieved its main goal of motivating students to work harder on their English proficiency. Later, Sevimli (2007) studied washback effects of foreign language component of the university entrance examination on the teaching and learning context of language groups in secondary education. She found that productive skills (speaking and writing) and receptive skill (listening) are totally neglected and not tested. She thought that this might have been the washback effect on the teaching and learning of the students and curriculum.

Karabulut (2007) studied on university entrance test. She examined how foreign language component of the university entrance examination influences teachers and students in senior three classrooms (the last grade of high school) in Turkey. In her study she also focused on the attitudes of different stakeholders and senior three English teaching in general towards the test. The most important result of her study is that the students and teachers focus mostly on the (grammar, reading, vocabulary) which is tested in the exam and ignore the ones that are not tested (listening, speaking, writing).

Özmen (2011) conducted a research on washback effects of inter-university foreign language examination (ÜDS) on candidate academics. Washback effect of ÜDS was in a qualitative study. It was clearly seen that ÜDS has had a negative washback effect on the test-takers. The results also showed that the exam does not only have a micro level effect, which could be defined as the effect on individuals or test-takers, but also a macro effect on a group of individuals studying or working at institutions. The reason why ÜDS shows negative washback effects on candidate academics is attributed to the content and style of the test. Yıldırım (2010) conducted a study on the washback effects of English section of the University Entrance Exam on future English language teachers. He found that even though students spent most of their times in English classes, they barely or never focused on writing, reading and speaking skills. It is a multiple choice test including grammar, vocabulary and reading skills in L2.

#### **2.4.1. Positive and Negative Washback**

Washback and the impact of tests more generally has become a major area of study within educational research, and language testing in particular (Alderson, 1993). The term ‘washback’ might be positive or negative. According to Hughes (2003, p. 145)

washback is the effect of testing on teaching and learning and also he describes the term washback as positive and negative. Wall and Alderson (1993, p. 28) believe that tests can influence the classroom activities both positively and negatively.

Messick (1996, p. 217) suggests some ideas on creating positive washback in terms of teaching and learning. He argues that a positive washback effect can occur when the tasks and activities which are used in teaching process are contained in language examinations. He also (1996, p. 28) continuously claiming that to create a positive washback, there must be little differences between activities involved in learning the language and the activities involved in preparing for the test. On the other hand, Pearson (1988, p. 9) makes a contribution to Messick's ideas by stating that "good tests will be more or less directly usable as teaching-learning activities. Similarly, good teaching-learning tasks will be more or less directly usable for testing purposes, even though practical or financial constraints limit the possibilities."

To create a positive washback, it is necessary to take into consideration some factors which contribute to positive washback. Özmen (2011) studying the washback effect of ÜDS examination on candidate academicians' language learning attitudes found that the attempts of designing tests to create a positive washback effect on both teachers and learners are challenged by so many factors such operating in social, economic, cultural, and institutional strata of a specific educational system.

In addition to the positive washback, there are also negative effects of tests called 'negative washback'. When the tests do not match with the learning or teaching principles, it may lead to negative effects. In his research, Pearson (1998) clarifies that "washback effect of a test will be negative, if the test does not match with course outcomes and learning principles." In another research, he (1988, p. 101) stated "a test's washback effect will be negative if it fails to reflect the learning principles and course objectives to which the test supposedly relates, and it will be positive if the effects are beneficial and encourage the whole range of desired changes." Also, Alderson and Wall (1993, p. 29) reports a similar idea like Pearson on negative washback. They say that "negative washback effect can be observed in circumstances in which learners do not want to learn and teachers do not want to teach."

One of the researchers suggesting an idea on the negative washback effect is also Vernon (1956). He believes "teachers tend to ignore subjects and activities that are not directly related to passing the exam, and tests change the curriculum in a negative way."

Wiseman (1961, p. 9) also adds “paid coaching classes, which are intended for preparing student for exams, are not a good use of the time because students are practicing exam techniques rather than language learning activities” and Davies (1968, p. 9) supports Wiseman’s and Vernon’s ideas by saying that “testing devices had become teaching devices that teaching and learning are effectively being directed to past examination papers, making the educational experience narrow and uninteresting.”

#### **2.4.2. The Impacts of Washback**

Washback has impact on various aspects of the classroom such as curriculum, materials, teaching methods, feelings and attitudes. This part will review for each of these areas in turn

##### **2.4.2.1. Curriculum and Materials**

Alderson and Wall (1993, p. 9) argues in their Sri Lanka study that “the examination has had an important effect on the content of language lessons.” Cheng (1997) notes that “the content of teaching was changed after the introduction of the revised exam, reading aloud, replaced the role play and discussion activities by reflecting the new exam content.” However, Shohamy’s (1996) study shows a different aspect. She reports that the Arabic exam had little effect on the content of teaching.

Other factors relating to the curriculum are class time and class size. Lam (1994, p. 9) states that more curriculum time is given to exam classes, however, Shohamy’s study shows that “this is true only when the exams are viewed as high stakes.”

Alderson and Hamp Lyons (1996, p. 9) note in their study that “while extra time is given to TOEFL classes in some institutions this is not the case in others.” Read and Hayes’ study (2003) also note that time allocation may depend on the school. They emphasize the time allocated for teachers by schools affects their methodology.

Alderson and Hamp Lyons (2003, p. 19) also draw attention to class size arguing that there are many more students in the exam classes than in the regular classes. As a result, studies as to how washback affects the curriculum show that curriculum operates in different ways in different situations (Spratt, 2005, p. 10).

The term ‘materials’ is used for the exam-based books and past papers. According to Spratt (2005, p. 6) there are different types of materials changing from content to content which try to develop exam techniques or relevant language skills. Many

researchers (Andrew, 2002; Cheng, 1997; Read & Hayes, 2003; Lam, 1994) conveyed various ideas in their studies as to how the introduction of the EFL exams affects the use of published materials in classroom settings. Andrews (2002, p. 7) has an opinion on the role of the published materials in the Hong Kong classroom and articulates that teachers spend approximately two-thirds of class time working on exam-related published materials. The reason for this may be that the exam textbooks in Hong Kong not only provide information and activities but also suggest methods for teaching and time allocations for the teachers (Cheng, 1997, p. 8).

Read and Hayes (2003, p. 7) note that the exam preparation books are usually employed in New Zealand IELTS study. Therefore, teachers are influenced by the major exams as to what material they should employ while teaching.

Lam (1994) accepts the new use of materials produced by the introduction of the revised exam and also regards teachers as 'textbook slaves' and 'exam slaves' because they depend heavily on the textbook in exam classes and sometimes even more on past papers. He was continuously stating that teachers do this as they believe as the best way to prepare students for exams.

#### **2.4.2.2. Teaching and Learning**

High-stakes exams heavily affect teachers' teaching methods and techniques. Instead of conducting general language teaching activities, they mostly focus on the test-based tasks or activities in classroom setting. Shohamy (1996, p. 100) argues that "teaching toward the high-stakes EFL exam led teachers to teach through the exam tasks or through carrying out other activities directly aiming at developing exam skills or strategies."

Alderson and Wall (1993, p. 105) suggest a similar idea with Shohamy's. They believe that "National Examination on teachers' teaching method is negative, because teachers do whatever methodology they think most obligatory to help them prepare their students for the exam."

Jones and Hargrove (1999, p. 105) point out, a high-stakes test forces teachers and students particularly to use exam based methods because the schools and teachers intend to maintain or exceed previous test achievement.

Some of the studies indicate that the methods used to teach towards high-stakes exams vary from teacher to teacher. For instance, the studies conducted by

both Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996, p. 14), and by Watanabe (1996, p. 14) show large differences in terms of method, teachers teach towards the same exam skill. Some use much more 'teaching the test,' 'textbook slave' approaches, while others use more creative and independent approaches.

According to Smith (1990 p. 254) there is a pressure on teachers to improve students' test scores and this causes them to neglect teaching materials that the external test does not include. As a result, teachers are highly affected by high-stakes exams while implementing their teaching methods in classroom setting.

Studies on the washback effect in learning process show various findings and those mostly focus on the learners' motivation and learning activities. Stoneman (2006, p. 111) investigated the students in Hong Kong preparing for the university graduation exams. Her study revealed that over half of the students were more motivated to prepare for a high-status international exam, but not for a local exam with less status.

Students' perceptions of test difficulty or easiness may also determine their levels of motivation and the amount of effort they devote to preparing for the test. Low-achieving students tend to be more worried about the test or test requirements than high-achieving students, and these low-achieving students do not prepare for the test until the last minute (Watanabe, 2001; Chu, 2009). Similarly, Humphreys and Hamp-Lyons (2004, p. 112) believe that successful students appear to be more willing to study for and take an EFL test because they believe it could evaluate their English proficiency. By contrast, unsuccessful students tended to have negative attitudes toward taking the test and experience significant stress and panic.

Stoneman (2006) investigated the learning activities that the students employ to prepare for the university graduation exam in Hong Kong University. She found that learning methods used by students were similar to one another and more than half of them said that they preferred traditional methods such as going through previous exams or relying on testbooks. Similarly, in Taiwan University, Jou (2010) investigated how students prepared for the TOEIC exam to fulfill their school graduation requirements. Three-fourths of them reported that they adopted traditional test-preparation methods such as practicing test-related questions and taking test-preparation courses in or outside of the school.

### 2.4.2.3. Attitudes

Attitude is defined as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 41). Similarly Black and Warthan (2009, p. 41) believe that attitudes “consist of evaluations of objects or activities. They are typically defined in terms of favorable or unfavorable perceptions associated with aspects of objects or activities”. Gardner (1985) defines the term attitude as one of the four components of motivation including a goal, effortful behaviour, a desire to attain the goal and attitudes. There are two significant kinds of attitudes in language learning: attitudes towards the people who speak the target language, and attitudes towards the practical use of the language being learned (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 41).

Learners’ attitudes toward a foreign language play significant roles in learners’ success in a foreign language learning setting. Furthermore, there are some substantial relationships between learners’ attitudes and their learning outcomes (Mahdavi & Zafarghandi, 1991, p. 42). Serin and Ceylan (2010, p. 6) support this idea by stating that attitude is a factor in the success of students in learning second language.

There are some studies conducted on the attitudes and language learning. Karahan (2007) examined the relation between language learning attitudes towards English Language. She found in her study that students have mildly positive attitudes towards English Language. Moreover, she added that especially female students have more positive attitudes than male students. Like Karahan, Serin and Ceylan (2010, p. 7) examined students’ attitudes towards English course. They investigated students’ attitudes by considering their socio-economic level, high school type, and high school success. They found that high school success affects students’ attitudes positively or negatively and in addition, low high school grades have lower attitudes towards English Language. However, students’ gender, socio-economic level and high school type do not have significant effect on students’ attitudes.

Studying the learners’ and teachers’ attitudes towards the high-stakes exams is also an important fact, since they may have a remarkable influence on learners’ test performance and teachers’ teaching performance. Cheng (1998, p. 296) mentions;

Learners show mixed feelings towards the exam itself, recognizing on the one hand that the exam made them work to achieve good scores but at the same time thinking that exams were not an accurate reflection of all aspects of their study.



She also mentions that teachers are worried about how the shy or less outspoken students will overcome in the exam and besides some teachers may feel themselves as guilty if they do not have their students familiar with the test formats. Therefore, high-stakes exam is reported to generate an atmosphere of high anxiety and fear of test results among teachers and students.

Pearson (1988, p. 146) notes that “public examinations influence the attitude, behavior, and motivation of teachers and learners. Similarly, Davies (Davies, 1985, p. 28) suggests that public examinations influence the attitudes, behaviors, and motivation of teachers, learners, and parents, because examinations often come at the end of a course.”

Teachers suppose that the success or failure of their students have influence on them and they speak of pressure to employ the materials for the exam (Shohamy, 1996, p. 14). Similar feelings are also articulated by Alderson and Lyons in the TOEFL study (1996, p. 14). They say that most of the teachers had a negative attitude towards the exam and to teaching TOEFL, and they claimed the time pressure they felt when teaching towards the exam. Some teachers, however, were much more positive. They enjoyed the teaching and thought that they could help students cope with something important. Read and Hayes (2003) also report generally positive feelings about IELTS amongst teachers and strong motivation amongst learners.

A number of research studies have examined the attitudes of students to various types of high-stakes tests (Madsen, 1982; Scott, 1986). Many studies have indicated that many factors influence learners' attitudes towards the high-stakes tests, including test format, length, time constraints, testing environment, familiarity with test types, perceptions of test validity, and anxiety (Scott & Madsen, 1983; Scott, 1986). Jones, Madsen, and Brown (1980) examined the attitudes of students towards the high-stakes tests. The results in a factor analysis of their data showed that emotive reactions were identified concerning how pleasant the experience of taking the tests was, how easy the test were, how frustrating they seemed, how well the student felt they performed, and how well the students liked the tests.

## CHAPTER III

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, context of the study, the research design, the selection of participants, the instruments, the data collection procedures and data analysis are presented.

#### 3.1. Context of the Study

Mersin American Cultural Association and Language Schools is a private language school located in the centre of Mersin. It was founded in 2006 and I have been working there for four years as an instructor of examination groups. It includes Young Learners' Language Education programs, General English Programs for Adult and High School Students, IELTS, TOEFL, FLE and English Proficiency Examination programs. FLE is an national English test conducted for the candidates who like to apply for M.A or PhD degree and for associate professorship examinations and it is administered in Fall and Spring terms in a year. Every year, in this institution, groups are amplified in Fall and Summer semesters. Most of the students who apply for the courses are candidate academicians holding M.A or Phd programs. Students take 170 hours FLE courses about four months and they have to be at least in B1 (intermediate) level. Teaching and testing materials are written by the institution itself.

#### 3.2. Research Design

For the research design of the study, qualitative approach was used. Qualitative approach is described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field, or participant observer research. It emphasizes the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found. Interaction between variables is important. Detailed data is gathered through open-ended questions that provide direct quotations. The interviewer is a part of the investigation (Jacob, 1988). This differs from quantitative research which attempts to gather data by objective methods to provide information about relations, comparisons, and predictions and attempts to remove the investigator from the investigation (Smith, 1983).

This study focuses on the candidate academicians' attitudes towards the FLE examination and therefore qualitative approach could be better for this research

because it provides an opportunity for the researcher to understand the participants' feelings, beliefs and perceptions about FLE examination.

In this study, two open-ended questionnaires were conducted. Results obtained by them were evaluated by using content analysis technique. This technique might be practical because with the help of it, the researcher could collect specific information about the participants' thoughts and evaluate them easily.

### **3.3. Participants**

The participants of the study are 43 candidate academicians aiming at passing the FLE. Among these 43 participants 25 of them are candidate academicians in different areas from different universities who would like to have M.A and Phd degrees, 15 of them are expert doctors who would like to apply for the faculty of medicines as an assistant or associate professor when they pass this examination, 3 of them are general practitioners who want to apply for the TUS examination. Participants are required to take FLE in order to apply for the academic positions at universities or in institutions.

### **3.4. Instruments**

The purpose of the FLE examination is to assess the candidates' level of English proficiency. It gives information on how students are competent and how well they perform in different language components such as reading, grammar and vocabulary. For this reason, the data were collected through two open-ended questionnaires which I prepared. The first open-ended questionnaire included three questions and it was aimed to find out the participants' general perceptions about FLE (Appendix 2). Taking into consideration the results which were acquired from the first open-ended questionnaire, second open-ended one was prepared including nine questions and it was aimed to learn about the factors affecting the participants' attitudes about FLE examination (Appendix 4).

### **3.5. Data Collection Procedure**

To conduct the study of candidates academicians' perceptions towards FLE, the necessary permission was taken from the Mersin American Culture Language Schools Management. First, an open-ended questionnaire was prepared including two sections and three questions totally. In first section it was aimed to find out whether participants

had taken the exam or not before. In the second one, there were two different questions and it was aimed to learn why the participants take FLE and what they think about it. Later on, the first open-ended questionnaire was handed out to the participants during the lesson and findings found from them were analyzed. After analyzing the results of the first open-ended questionnaire, a second open-ended questionnaire was administered on participants. The aim was to find out the factors affecting the participants' perceptions and changes occurred during the preparation process. They were asked to respond to nine different questions about the validity, reliability, social effects, necessity and effects in academic career. As a result, various conclusions were found about what the factors are affecting the participants' perceptions about FLE.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

In this study, two open-ended questionnaires were conducted. Following the implementing the first open-ended questionnaire, results were analyzed by using content analysis technique. The results obtained from the first implementation shed light on the preparation of the second open-ended questionnaire. In order to analyze the results, content analysis was used again. Key words which would help the researcher to comment on the findings and discussion part were also coded. After analyzing all the data, there were inferences and implications which were supposed to be helpful both for teachers and researchers.

## CHAPTER IV

### 4. FINDINGS

#### 4.1. Introduction

This section will present and discuss the results of open-ended questionnaires. The results of the open-ended questionnaires will be mentioned in different sections by taking into consideration the categories. The key words will be clearly shown in order to have the readers understand the results easily. As a result, the main aim is to give response to the research questions in this chapter.

#### 4.2. General Impressions of the Participants on Foreign Language Examination

After having decided the content of the study, the first thing that had to be done was to determine the data collection tools and prepare questions to gather data about participants' general impressions on Foreign Language Examination. An open-ended questionnaire was employed to find out the participants' general thoughts on FLE. Fourty three participants took part in the study.

Results acquired from the open-ended questionnaire show that forty-one the participants have articulated the same issue about Foreign Language Examination. They believe that FLE is so difficult and detailed in terms of grammar and vocabulary and they do not want to study detailed grammar rules because it will not be practical for them to use those rules apart from the exam. Following excerpt was chosen as representative:

*I think Foreign Language Examination is so difficult and filled with lots of unnecessary details and I do not want to learn detailed grammar rules and words because I am not going to use them apart from the exam.*

Pt1/1<sup>st</sup>Questionnaire/(10.04.2014)

The other point found is that Foreign Language Examination is an obstacle for thirty-five participants. They have negative approaches towards FLE because they believe that studying FLE is just a time consuming activity for themselves. Participants also state that they can not make progress in their academic studies due to the Foreign Language Examination. For instance, when they finish M.A or Phd program, they have to take the FLE in order to get a degree at university and therefore they study for years to pass this examination. Participant 3 and 5 stated their opinions about this:

*Foreign Language Examination is an obstacle for my academic career. It is rather difficult to study both for my own area and FLE. But, if you do not get enough point from this exam, it is not possible to get a higher degree at university.*

Pt3/1<sup>st</sup> Questionnaire(10.04.2014)

*It is definitely unnecessary examination because I can not find time to read article. Instead of this, I have to study grammar and memorize unnecessary words. I think, studying for this exam is both time consuming and obstacle for my academic life.*

Pt5/1<sup>st</sup> Questionnaire(10.04.2014)

For most of the participants, Foreign Language Examination is far from the measuring the individuals' English proficiency because they believe that questions asked in Foreign language exam should include four major skills, including reading, listening, speaking and writing. However, FLE conducted in Turkey offers multiple choice questions on syntax, lexis and reading ability and therefore individuals are deprived of improving their communicative abilities. Following excerpts were chosen as representatives:

*In my opinion, FLE does not measure students' English language abilities. I used to speak English better, but now I completely forgot how to do it because FLE forces me to study grammar and grammar.*

Pt7/1<sup>st</sup> Questionnaire (10.04.2014)

*All I must do is to memorize some vocabulary list and exam strategies. I can not speak and write but the system accepts as an individual who has a good English level. This is our reality in education and I believe it is really annoying.*

Pt11/1<sup>st</sup> Questionnaire/10.01.2014)

Findings have also shown that participants used cognitive strategies which led them memorize the words. Also, they believe that they do not have to have advanced English level. By being familiar with exam strategies and techniques, it is really easy to solve questions. Similarly, Cheng (2004, p.223) has focused on the influence of a specific test on learning strategies and study skills of students. She found that testees are just using test techniques and memorize the rules and words in order to get enough point in the specific exam. Participant 9 stated his ideas about this:

*FLE is not a good exam. I know many individuals who got high scores in FLE but cannot write a complete sentence. But by memorizing the rules and predominating the exam strategies, they may easily pass it.*

Pt9/1<sup>st</sup> Questionnaire (10.04.2014)

In conclusion, candidates have negative attitudes towards Foreign Language Examination in general. They believe that FLE is a serious obstacle which prevents them from making progress in their academic careers since they can not pass the exam for years. Besides, they are so unwilling to learn detailed grammar rules and vocabulary as those will not be used following the examination. On the other hand, FLE is believed to be an unfair implementation for the candidates because they claim, anyone who is preintermediate level can give response to the questions easily only when he/she knows the exam strategies and question techniques well. Finally, FLE is lack of testing their foreign language proficiencies. For them, a foreign language exam should measure four language skills, however, FLE is does only measure, reading, grammar and vocabulary. All in all, FLE created a negative impression them.

### **4.3. Factors Affecting Participants' Attitudes towards Foreign Language Examination**

The second open-ended questionnaire was prepared and conducted by taking into consideration the results obtained from the first one. The aim was to get the picture of factors affecting the participants' attitudes related to Foreign Language Examination. By asking participants nine questions, various conclusions were reached about the factors affecting their attitudes towards FLE. Data gathered from the participants were analyzed and categorized under these terms: reliability, validity, difficulty and length, necessity, social effects of FLE, effects of FLE in academic life, skills to be tested in FLE, studying strategies in FLE.

#### **4.3.1. Reliability**

Almost all participants stated that FLE is not a reliable exam. For them, there are many reasons for which they do not find the Foreign Language Examination as reliable. The first one is the security of the exam. According to participants, there is a serious copy problem in SSPC's examinations such as EEU, SEPPPO and FLE. Questions are leaked or sold to candidates by some authorities who work inside the institution and

therefore candidates can not trust in SSPC's applications. Also, political conflicts which have been experienced inside the institution affect participants' confidence. Intervention of politics on the SSPC's applications such as changing test system or question types and styles seriously decrease the confidence of candidates. The other problem related to reliability is the publishing of the questions after the administration of the exam. This was not the case until 2013. However, since last year, questions have not been published and therefore candidates can not have opportunity to see what they did and how they did in the exam. As a result, candidates begin to doubt on how they are evaluated and naturally suspects increase as to whether SSPC has conducted a reliable test or not. Following excerpts were chosen as representative:

*Foreign Language Examination, like other examinations conducted by ÖSYM is not reliable since questions are not published and not open to discussion.*

Pt4/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

*Not being disclosed of the questions affect the reliability. This situation prevents us from having an idea on to what degree we are successful or not.*

Pt3/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

*Foreign Language Examination is not reliable owing to the conflicts inside the institution (SSPC) conducting the test.*

Pt13/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

*I do not definitely trust in the fairness of Foreign Language Examination because leaking of the questions and copy issues are available in the test.*

Pt14/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

*As a consequence of the exams that ÖSYM conducted in the past, my confidence has decreased towards the Foreign Language Exams as well.*

Pt11/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

#### **4.3.2. Validity**

Participants were asked to answer on whether the Foreign Language Examination is valid or not. It would not be an exaggeration to say that all the participants attending study stated, Foreign Language Examination is lack of validity. There are some reasons why they claim the invalidity of the exam. The first and the most important one is that FLE does not measure all language skills apart from reading, grammar and vocabulary. According to them, a good foreign language examination should test four major language skills in order to determine the individuals' language competencies. Apart from this,



participants claim that questions can easily be solved with an effective test technique and memorization even if individuals have a little English language capacity. After a while, studying FLE actually turns language learning to a kind of a memory game. The other concerns related to the validity of FLE are difficulty and timing. Participants believe that FLE questions, especially the paragraph ones are so difficult and also learning very detailed grammar rules and vocabulary are both difficult and time consuming for them. Therefore, because of the content and style of the test, candidates form a negative attitude towards FLE. Following excerpts were chosen as representatives:

*Foreign Language Examination is not an examination measuring four skills. It is only based on the reading, grammar and vocabulary. In order to measure the actual English language capacity of individuals, TOEFL and IELTS exams are logical ones. Therefore, it is not a valid exam.*

Pt9/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

*I do not think FLE is a valid exam. It does not measure listening, speaking and writing abilities. There are only reading comprehension questions.*

Pt10/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

*In my opinion, it is not possible to measure the individuals' English language capacity with multiple questions. Also this exam is only based on the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. As a result, it is not a valid exam.*

Pt13/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

#### **4.3.3. Necessity**

When participants were asked on FLE is a necessary exam or not, various opinions were obtained. Most of them stated that FLE is a necessary exam because it is a prerequisite at universities for being accepted as an academic staff or for being accepted to academic programs such as Graduate and PhD programs. They also believe the necessity of Foreign Language Examination because studying for it provides them to learn advanced grammar and vocabulary and thus they will be able to review the literature effectively and read the articles without having difficulty. Some excerpts are stated below:

*Individuals who would like to apply for academic programs or work as an academic staff at universities must take Foreign Language Examination. Therefore it is a necessary application.*

Pt8/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

*I think, FLE is necessary. When you study for the Foreign Language Examination, you learn grammar and vocabulary deeply. Hence, it provides a good opportunity for the candidates to review the literature and read the articles effectively.*

Pt14 /2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

On the other hand, some of the participants think, Foreign Language Examination is an unnecessary application. For them, Foreign Language Examination is an obstacle for their academic careers since they can not pass the exam for years. Also, participants thinking the unnecessary of the exam strongly believe that they are not going to use those advanced grammar rules and vocabulary in their majors and therefore, content of the exam, which is so difficult to understand, make participants feel the Foreign Language Examination as unnecessary. Some thoughts of participants are stated below:

*FLE is not a necessary examination because it is an obstacle in my academic career. Even if I write various articles in scientific journals, I can not become an associated professor because I still can not pass the examination*

Pt18/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

*FLE is not only an unnecessary examination but also it is very nonsense. I am not going to use most of the grammar rules and vocabulary.*

Pt 11/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

#### **4.3.4. Effects of FLE in Academic Career**

Participants were asked to respond to on how Foreign Language Examination has influence on their academic careers. They believed that Foreign Language Examination is an obstacle in their academic life because it prevents them applying for graduate or PhD programs. Some of the participants claimed, even if they are successful in their own majors, they can not make progress in their academic careers due to the FLE. In addition, since it is necessary to allocate quite a long time for studying FLE, participants found it a time consuming practice and because of this they complained about not being

able to read or write an article. According to them, doing a research or writing a paper in their areas added more things to their academic or professional development than studying FLE. Following excerpts were chosen as representatives:

*I think, studying for Foreign Language Examination is completely a waste of time. I can not find time to read an article.*

Pt1/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

*This exam is an obstacle for my academic career. I will not be able apply for any university and academic program untill I get a good score which is demanded.*

Pt3/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

*In order to be accepted to my PhD education, I have been waiting for three years to pass this exam.*

Pt5/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

*This exam affects me negatively. I can not make progress in my academic life, even I have produced lots of articles. Therefore, I hate FLE, I hate English. I will have to stop doing everything.*

Pt11/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

#### **4.3.5. Effects of FLE on Candidates' Social Life**

Participants were asked to respond to on how FLE affects their social life. They gave such significant answers for this question that it actually sheds lights on all the candidate academicians' life in our country. Participants believed that studying for Foreign Language Examination is an obstacle for their social life as well as for their academic careers because they have to allocate much time to study it. They stated, they have to ignore their friends or even their families owing to that exam. Unfortunately, the most serious thing was that conflicts between parents start to occur since candidates focus on studying for hours can not make time for their children and wives. Also, candidates begin to isolate from their friends because they always think about the exam and they do not want to spend their times with their friends. Instead of this, they always solve questions or memorize vocabulary and in time isolation from social life causes depression and even serious disorders. Furthermore, participants mentioned their misery as to they are harshly criticized by some people when they can not pass the examination. For them, this is the worst thing they experience when they are criticised rigidly because of not being able to be successful in the exam. Also, they added that the people who

criticise them actually do not know the difficulty of the academic life, hence that makes them upset. Following excerpts were chosen as representatives:

Some participants stated that they cannot allocate time for their families. Therefore, they sometimes have conflicts with their wives or children and as a result they feel themselves in depressed. Some excerpts were taken as representatives:

*I do not have any social life because of this exam. I am depressed. I don't know what I will say to my wife and friends, if I can not pass the exam.*

Pt2/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (26.01.2014)

*I do not have any social life. After a while, because that exam becomes as the centre of your life I can not see my wife and children enough even if we are in the same house. We just can see each other during the meal for twenty minutes. I feel that my wife and children so reactive to me nowadays. But I can not pass this language examination and become associate professor. I am in depression and do not know what to do.*

Pt4/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (26.01.2014)

*I can't devote time to my family. Even in break times, I feel myself guilty and start studying immediately. Also sometimes, I feel that I insufficient for that exam.*

Pt26/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (26.01.2014)

Two participants stated they feel themselves guilty when they do not study for the exam. They called off everything in their lives to pass this exam. As a result, they are isolated from their social lives. Excerpts were chosen as representatives below:

*I feel that staying at home and memorizing vocabulary is better than meeting with friends. If I do not study, I feel a twinge of guilt about the exam*

P13/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (26.01.2014)

*I cancel everything what I would like to do in my life. When I do not study, I feel myself guilty. I am depression.*

Pt 21/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

Some participants were complaining about the people who criticize them unjustly. They state that some people who are not familiar with the academic life and this examination criticize them harshly. As a result, they are discouraged by negative remarks of people and do not want to study more. Following excerpt was chosen as representative:

*When you can not get enough point from FLE, people do not evaluate and comment on your professional competence. They evaluate your success whether you have passed the examination or not. This a very bad situation.*

Pt 15/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

One participant stated that studying Foreign Language Examination is a waste of time and money. He reproached by saying that his students passed him in terms of academic degree but still he tries to pass the exam. Following excerpt was chosen:

*My students became Professor or Associated Professor. But still, I cope with Foreign Language Examination. I spent my most of my life and money for that exam.*

Pt18/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

#### **4.3.6. Test Strategies for Foreign Language Examination**

Participants were asked as to how it should be studied for Foreign Language Examination and they suggested various ideas on it. Particularly, most of the participants stated that vocabulary and reading are the determining parts for being succesfull in FLE and thus they suggest studying vocabulary and reading regulary. In addition, the other participants claimed that being competent in multiple choice question technique could contribute to candidates success and therefore they recommended solving so many multiple choice questions and doing practice exams a lot. Few of the participants stated the importance of studying grammar and memorizing some grammar rules for solving multiple choice questions. However, all the participants were in view of the fact that focusing on the exam questions which were asked in previous years are really important for the candidates' success because they believe, the questions which were asked in the past could be clues for themselves about the content and format of the exam. Some excerpts were given below as representatives:

*In order to be succesful in this examination, vocabulary and reading should be studied regulary.*

Pt7/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

*The questions which were asked in previous years should be studied in detail. Also, being familiar with the multiple choice question technique brings success.*

Pt 11/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

*Practice exams should be done a lot.*

Pt 15/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (24.01.2014)

*Candidates should have a good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Also paragraph studies are to be included in this studying process.*

Pt7/ 2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

#### **4.3.7. The Difficulty of Studying for Foreign Language Examination**

When participants were asked whether studying for Foreign Language Examination is difficult process or not they presented various opinions. According to them, studying FLE is quite difficult and tiring process. They state it is definitely a waste of time. Instead of this, they always want to be busy with their academic studies. Also, participants do not want to spend their times in language courses after a busy day at work since it is very hard for them to focus on classes during the evening. They find FLE tiring and difficult because it requires studying regularly and revising the topics they learnt continuously. However, their own works prevent them from studying FLE. For some participants, memorizing vocabulary and reading the texts are tiring and difficult because of their English levels. Therefore, they have to spend much more time than the other ones. Finally, test anxiety that FLE gives rise to makes participants feel that the exam is really difficult and tiring process. Following excerpts were chosen as representatives:

*It is really difficult and tiring process. Because it takes a lot of time and effort to memorize the very difficult words and grammar rules.*

Pt5/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (26.01.2014)

*FLE is extremely difficult because you have to study regularly everyday. Otherwise, it is possible to forget everything such as vocabulary and grammar rules. But, on the other hand I have my own works and therefore I am in dilemma and do not know what to do.*

Pt13/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

*The time I have to spend for both FLE and work and the time which passes in language courses in the evening. It is really difficult and tiring.*

Pt1/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (26.01.2014)

*This education system did not give us anything in terms of language education. But now, this system wants us to pass this complex and ambiguous exam. It is*

*really difficult and tiring because I can not find enough time to study it because of my busy academic schedule.*

Pt16/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

#### **4.3.8. Language Skills Measured in Foreign Language Examination**

In Foreign Language Examination conducted in Turkey, reading as a major skill, grammar and vocabulary as subskills are tested so, participants were asked to give responses on what skills should be measured in FLE. All of them are agree on the testing of four major language skills. Those who support the idea of testing four major skills also believe that memorazing should not be in FLE process. On the other hand, even though a great number of them agree on the being measured of four language skills, very few of them stated that Foreign Language Examination is a tool for reviewing literature, reading an article and therefore they do not need to write, speak or listen to something in the exam. All the participants took part in this study were in view of the fact that there should be questions related to their own majors and that will contribute to their achievements more. Following excerpts were taken as representatives:

*There should not be memorization of vocabulary and grammar. Four skills must definitely be included in this exam.*

Pt6/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (26.01.2014)

*Not only is multiple choice is measured but also four major skills must be included in the exam.*

Pt7/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (26.01.2014)

*There should be specific questions being asked to candidates about their own majors. Also, productive skills writing and speaking should be included to this exam.*

Pt11/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

*Knowing a language means predominating four major language skills. So, authorities should prepare the questions in parellel with these skills.*

Pt12/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (26.01.2014)

*We have been educated with a multiple choice system for years. This is also true for language education. We cannot speak, we cannot write or we cannot understand what we listen. We are just used to circling multiple choice questions..We cannot produce anything just we receive by reading or by memorazing rules. This is the system carried out in second or third world*

*countries. However, we still expect to be admitted to EU. Do you think that we will be admitted to EU or important organizations with this education system?*

Pt26/2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire (25.01.2014)

*Actually, since we will be academicians and do research or review the literature from the other foreign resources, we do not need to speak or listen to something. Therefore, learning advanced grammar and vocabulary may be necessary for us.*



## CHAPTER V

### 5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the present study. The implications of the findings are discussed and recommendations for further research are presented. The goal of this study was to seek for the answers of two research questions about the attitudes of candidate academicians and factors affecting their attitudes towards Foreign Language Examination. In order to collect the data two open ended questionnaires were administered to candidate academicians.

#### 5.2. Discussions and Conclusions

In recent years, the number of studies on the attitudes of students towards high-stakes tests has been increasing because very important decisions are taken about individuals' life by means of these tests. One of them is Foreign Language Examination conducted in Turkey for the candidates who aim to apply for the academic programs at universities, significant positions in institutions, getting degree of associate professorship and specialization in medicine. Therefore, the present study has shown the attitudes of candidate academicians and factors affecting their attitudes towards Foreign Language Examination.

The first research question was related to the general impressions of candidate academicians about Foreign Language Examination. It was found that FLE seriously created a negative impact on candidate academicians. For them, studying for the Foreign Language Examination is a time consuming practice because they cannot allocate time for their academic studies. Nevertheless, they are aware of the fact that they must be successful in this exam in order to proceed their academic careers. This can inevitably be considered as an obstacle in their academic life. On the other hand, studying detailed grammar rules and memorization of advanced vocabulary items are really discouraging issues for them to pass this exam since they believe that they will not have to use aforementioned issues in any sorts of areas. Besides, candidates thought that a foreign language examination should measure four major skills mainly listening, speaking, reading and writing, but they also maintain that Foreign Language Examination conducted in Turkey is only based on multiple choice questions which

contains grammar, vocabulary and reading skills, which makes the exam far from measuring English competency. These findings are compatible with the part of literature as in Özmen's (2011) study on the washback effect of ILE (Inter-Universities Foreign Language Examination). In his study he found that candidates have negative attitudes towards ILE and this negative attitude can be attributed to the content and style of the test which is multiple choice. Similarly, Karabulut (2007) conducted a study on university entrance examination in which she examined how foreign language component of the university entrance examination influences teachers and students and he found that the students and teachers focus mostly on the grammar, reading, vocabulary and ignore the skills that are not tested. Consequently, Foreign Language Examination is remarkably mechanical which is based on memorization of the rules and it definitely prevent candidates from using the productive skills of language..

The second research question was about the factors affecting the candidate academicians' attitudes towards Foreign Language Examination. When the second open-ended questionnaire was analyzed, various factors were obtained about the attitudes of candidate academicians towards Foreign Language Examinations. It was found that Foreign Language Examination is not a reliable exam because of the cheating problems that have been experienced in other examinations like UEE and SEPPPO. So, candidates cannot trust in SSPC's examinations anymore. Also, there is a very serious claim articulated by the candidates as to questions which were leaked or sold to students taking the exam by some authorities working inside the SSPC. Besides, there are also some political conflicts concerning the exams may discourage candidates.

It was also found that Foreign Language Examination is not valid. Participants believed that FLE does only focus on reading, grammar and vocabulary and it does not measure language competency. In other words, being competent in multiple question technique, they believe that a person can do grammar and reading questions easily. As a result, when writing, speaking and listening neglected this may result in the invalidity of the exam. In fact, this finding seems to be compatible with the part of literature. Yıldırım (2010) conducted a study on the washback effects of English section of the University Entrance Exam on future English language teachers. He found that even though students spent most of their times in English classes, they barely or never focused on writing, reading and speaking skills. Instead, they mostly studied grammar, reading and vocabulary because this exam emphasizes these three skills, reading,

grammar and vocabulary, and therefore most students think that preparation process is not valuable learning experience and they do not think it improves their overall language proficiency. Instead, they mostly studied grammar, reading and vocabulary because this exam emphasizes these three skills, reading, grammar and vocabulary, and therefore most students think that preparation process is not valuable learning experience and they do not think it improves their overall language proficiency.

Candidates gave two different responses to the necessity of the examination. Those who support the necessity of the exam stated that Foreign Language Examination does improve their reading abilities and this is helpful for reading an article. In literature, it was not encountered with this kind of positive result on the necessity of FLE. The other candidates who believed the unnecessary of the exam claimed that Foreign Language Examination is a barrier in their academic careers. Also it is a serious obstacle for their social life. They complained not being able to see their families even if they are in the same house because they have to study for the exam for hours. In addition, they can not meet their friends since they feel themselves guilty when spending time with something apart from the studying. Thus this causes them to isolate from social life.

Studying for FLE is very difficult and tiring process for them because they have to spend a lots of time for memorizing the grammar rules and vocabulary. Especially, some of them believed being competent in multiple choice questions take a lot of time and energy. They also complain about going to language courses in the evenings after a very tiring and busy day at work and in the end they finish the day without learning anything. They feel that they pay money in vain.

In the light of what has been discussed above, the results of this study show that Foreign Language Examination has negative effects on candidate academicians. It is a fact that the demand for the graduate or PhD programs and the demand for being an academician are increasing. It would not be useful to suggest the elimination of this exam. However, there is a serious need to think about some change in the exam which may be useful in terms of developing their language skills in a better way.

### **5.3. Implications**

The study has some implications which need to be put into practice. First of all, necessary changes of Foreign Language Examination can be made in terms of content and style. In the light of the findings of the study, it is evident that Foreign Language

Examination conducted for Turkish students could be changed to measure four language skills. Özmen (2011) stated that FLE must be updated in parallel with IELTS and TOEFL because, apart from the national needs, being a part of Bologna process, which aim at improving learners' communicative competence, requires such change

Secondly, it is important to note that reliability and validity are another issues which need to be dealt with. Candidates do not find the FLE as reliable valid because they believe that some political authorities interfere with SSPC's implementations. Particularly, undesired events which were experienced in institution in the past, such as being leaked of questions in return for money or not being published of questions following the exam make candidates distrust towards the exam. Besides, Foreign Language Examination is invalid for them, because they claim, it does not measure their proficiency of English. Accordingly, reliability and validity of this test must be improved and revised comprehensively. On the other hand, University Entrance Examination, which is a similar version of FLE in terms of content and style, is conducted for the candidates who aim at studying at foreign language departments of particular universities in Turkey. For this examination, the same procedures like FLE could be carried out.

#### **5.4. Suggestions for Further Research**

In the present study, candidate academicians' attitudes towards Foreign Language Examination was examined. However, further studies are needed to focus on foreign language teachers' attitudes toward Foreign Language Examination as well. Besides Foreign Language Examination, TOEFL which is an international exam is also accepted by Higher Education Council as an official foreign language document and this creates an alternative for candidates when applying for the universities or institutions. Therefore, candidate academicians' attitudes toward TOEFL could also be another study that needs to be taken into account. The other study could be the comparison of FLE and TOEFL in terms of the attitudes of students and teachers or could be the comparison of those with respect to content and style. Finally, as this study is qualitative, quantitative study can be done with more participants in the same area.

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## 7. APENDICIES

### 7.1. Apendix 1:

Sevgili Arkadařlar,

Üzerinde alıřmakta olduđum arařtırma iin sizlerin deđerli grüşlerine ihtiyacım var. Sizden gelecek olan cevapların benim iin ok önemlidir. Form ierisindeki soruları itenlikle yanıtlayacađınızı inanıyorum.

Görüşleriniz ve katkılarınız iin řimdiden ok teřekkür ediyorum.

#### BÖLÜM 1

1) Daha önce YDS'ye girdiniz mi? Girdiyseniz kaç kez?

Evet ----- Hayır -----

#### BÖLÜM 2

1) Neden YDS'ye giriyorsunuz?

2)YDS hakkında ne düşünöyorsunuz? Neden

## 7.2. Apendix 2:

Dear Colleagues,

I need your precious thoughts for my research that I have been working. Your answers are really important for me. I believe that you are going to give response to the questions sincerly.

Thanks for your ideas and contributions.

### SECTION1

1)Have you ever taken FLE before? If so? How many times?

Yes ----- No -----

### SECTION 2

1) Why do you take FLE?

2)What do you think about FLE? Why?

### 7.3. Apendix 3:

Değerli Arkadaşlar;

Bu sorular sizin daha önce ki ankette var olan sorulara verdiğiniz cevaplar doğrultusunda hazırlanmıştır. Vereceğiniz detaylı yanıtlar araştırmamı daha da netleştirecektir.

Katkılarınız için çok teşekkür ediyorum.

1.Sizce YDS güvenilir bir sınav mı? Neden?

2.Sizce YDS geçerli bir sınav mı? Neden?

3.YDS'nin gerekli bir sınav olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Neden?

4.YDS kariyerinizi nasıl etkiliyor?

5.Sizce YDS uzun ve zor bir sınav mı?

6.YDS sosyal hayatınızı nasıl etkiliyor?

7.Sizce, YDS'ye nasıl çalışılmalı?

8. Sizce, YDS'ye çalışmak yorucu bir süreç mi? Neden?

9.Sizce YDS hangi becerileri ölçmeli? Neden?

#### **7.4. Apendix 4:**

Dear Friends;

These questions have been prepared in accordance with your answers that you gave responses for the previous questionnaire. Your responses to these questions will make my study more clear.

Thanks for your contributions.

1.Do you think FLE is a reliable exam? Why?

2.Do you think FLE is a valid exam? Why?

3. Do you think FLE is a necessary exam? Why?

4.How does FLE affect your career?

5.Do you think FLE is a long and difficult exam? Why?

6.How does FLE affect your social life?

7.How should candidates study for FLE? Why?

8.Do you think that studying for FLE is a tiring process?

9.Which skills should be measured in FLE? Why?