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Newcomer Welcomers: The Assessment of Displaced Students in Urban Middle Schools
in Turkey and Southern-California

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Education

by

Bilgehan Ayik

2020

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Newcomer Welcomers: The Assessment of Displaced Students in Urban Middle Schools
in Turkey and Southern-California

by

Bilgehan Ayik

Master of Arts in Education,

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Christina Christie, Chair

With the increasing number of displaced people all around the world, comparative studies gain more importance in creating better models for education. This study aims to understand assessments of newcomer students in urban middle schools in Southern California, which has coped with migrant education for several decades, and Turkey, which has been hosting the largest number of refugees in the world. The interviews with twenty educators from Turkey and Southern California, twenty field-observation reports, and related documents are analyzed in this qualitative study. It is found that both regions have similar criteria during enrollment of newcomers. In Turkey, mathematics, science, and literature levels of newcomers are also taken into consideration during enrollment. For the academic assessment in integrated

classes, there are more criteria in Southern California, which are standardized at the state or district level, while teachers in Turkey have more flexibility during assessments.

The thesis of Bilgehan Ayik is approved.

Jose Felipe Martinez

Marvin Alkin

Christina Christie, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

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Introduction

Civil wars, terror attacks, poverty, and other reasons have caused 70,800,000 people to leave their countries in recent years (UNHCR, 2019). One of the largest refugee populations has been caused by the Syrian Civil War (UNHCR, 2019). Many Syrian refugees have migrated to neighboring countries, including Turkey, after the start of the Syrian Civil War in March 2011 (Carpenter, 2013; Culbertson & Constant, 2015). This unexpected refugee flow has caused many severe problems in hosting countries. Turkey has faced health and shelter problems, social issues, political and administrative challenges, economic and educational problems (Akgündüz, van den Berg, & Hassink, 2015; Çam, 2019; Kirişçi, 2014; Tayfur, Günaydin, Suner, 2019; and so on.) Since more than half of the population of newcomers are children (UNHCR, 2019), education and schooling have crucial roles in the integration of them to hosting countries (Mamei, Cilasun, Lippi, Pancotto, & Tümen, 2019).

While this is a new challenge for Turkey, many regions in the world have been dealing with migrant-related issues. The United States of America is the most preferred country by immigrants and refugees, and California is one of the states which has the highest immigrant and refugee population (Migration Policy Institute, 2015). Ninety-three percent of the immigrant/refugee population, which are in the age group 3 to 17, has been enrolled in school in California (Migration Policy Institute, 2016). California has many state and local programs conducted to create better lives and futures for youth (Reed, Hill, Jepsen & Johnson, 2005).

According to Ficarra (2017), comparative studies are necessary for creating a better and fairer education. The experiences of Turkey, which has been faced with the largest refugee population, and Southern California, which has been dealing with migrant education for years, can be precious for each other and other countries that struggle with the migrant education problem.

Statement of the Problem

In this study, I have tried to investigate how displaced students are being assessed in urban middle schools in Turkey and Southern-California. This investigation has covered the placement of newcomer students when they first attend school, and the formative and the summative assessments that are applied in integrated classrooms (where newcomers and natives are taught together) of urban middle schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the assessment of immigrant students in urban middle schools in Turkey and Southern-California, to compare these assessment strategies, and to contribute to the literature on migrant education and assessment.

Significance of the Study

When it is considered that the number of displaced people has been increasing in recent years (UNHCR, 2019), the importance of contributing to the literature of newcomers' education can be understood better. This study does not only contribute to the literature but also provides a distinctive perspective on the assessment in migrant education in Turkey and Southern-California. These two regions have their unique problems with responding to the needs of immigrant & refugee students. How they have been dealing with these problems can be inspirational for each other and for the other countries and states who struggle with finding practical and ethical solutions for similar issues.

Definition of Key Terms

In this study, the central concept is the newcomers' education. Here, *newcomers* mean people who came to the US or Turkey from another country five or fewer years ago. The other

terms used throughout the study are *immigrants* and *refugees*. These are two different terms, as given in the Cambridge Dictionary. An *immigrant* is defined as "a person who has come into a foreign country in order to live there." A *refugee* is defined as "a person who has escaped from their own country for political, religious, or economic reasons or because of a war." So, according to these definitions, refugees are subgroups of immigrants. In Turkey, almost all of the Syrian population are refugees because they escaped from the Syrian Civil War. However, in the US, it will be easier to call these people immigrants because it is hard to classify their reasons for coming. Furthermore, *the education program* is used as the design of education, which includes instruction, formative and summative assessments, feedback (to students and teachers), and counseling.

Literature Review

As the number of immigrants has dramatically increased in recent years, migration-related issues become one of the most popular issues of leaders' speeches in international summits such as the United Nations, the European Union, G7, and G20. Unfortunately, since many countries are not willing to share the responsibility of hosting refugees, some regions take more responsibility than others (Christophersen, 2018). California and Turkey are two of these regions that host many displaced people (UNHCR, 2018; Migration Policy Institute, 2017).

According to the Public Policy Institute of California (May 2019), California has been hosting approximately 11,000,000 immigrants, which is the largest immigrant population in the United States. Almost 30% of the population of California is foreign-born; they are mostly coming from Asia and Latin America (PPIC, May 2019). California is one of the most preferred regions by immigrants for decades (US Census Bureau, 2017), and the majority of California residents have positive attitudes towards immigrants (PPIC, May 2019).

Immigrants, who arrived in California less than five years ago, are more likely to have higher education than US-born Californians (American Community Survey, 2017). The school attendance of California children between the ages of 3 and 17 is 93% (Migration Policy Institute, 2016). It is a very high percentage compared to the school attendance percentage of immigrant students in other immigrant-hosting countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt (Carlier, 2018). Besides the high rate of school attendance, several state and local programs are provided for immigrant and refugee students in California (Reed, Hill, Jepsen & Johnson, 2005).

While California has been dealing with the immigrant-related issues for a while, Turkey has heavily faced these problems very recently because of the highest refugee flow of its history

caused by the Syrian Civil War in 2011 (Çakı, 2018). Turkey has been hosting 3,700,000, which is the largest number of refugees in the world (UNCHR, 2019). Since more than half of the refugee population is under 18-year old (UNHCR, 2019), solving education and schooling-related problems has become crucial. According to Culbertson and Constant (2015), more than half a million refugee students were not attended in classes. Those who enroll in school experience adaptation and language problems. Unfortunately, without solving these issues, refugee students are generally assessed in the same manner as their native classmates, and they are usually expected to be adapted to school life by themselves in Turkey (Emin, 2016).

Positionality of the Researcher

Before coming to UCLA for my master's degree, I was working as a mathematics teacher in a public Islamic religious middle school in a slum neighborhood in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, from 2013 to 2018. The crime rate was high there, and unsurprisingly the housing prices were low. So, for a Syrian refugee who wants to benefit from opportunities of the big city, it was a preferable and affordable neighborhood to stay in. That is why the number of Syrian refugee families and accordingly, the number of refugee students at our school had dramatically increased in five years. Throughout my teaching experience there, I saw that the number of refugees increased by at least 500%. Since all refugee children at school age have rights to attend public schools by law (MEB, Circular Letter No: 2014/21), the number of refugee students in my school changed at the same rate as neighborhood's change. I had only a few refugee students in my classes when I first started to work there in 2013, and almost half of my students were refugees in some of my classes when I left in 2018.

When the Syrian Civil War started in 2011, Syrian refugees did not directly come to the inner cities of Turkey. They were placed into the camps near the Syria border. They were taught Turkish in these camps and enrolled in some integration programs to adapt social life in Turkey. However, the camps were full in a short time because the open-door policy of Turkey had

caused an unexpected increase in the number of refugees. Unsurprisingly, the capacity of the camps became inadequate for everyone, and they had to move out through the inner cities of Turkey. The majority of the refugees could not receive adaptation programs and Turkish language classes because of the limited sources. Therefore, refugee children were directly enrolled in regular schools related to their ages without knowing Turkish. Some of them even did not have any school experience before Turkey. So, it was normal to see an 8-grader who cannot read or write in any language and does not even know how to say this to his/her friends or teachers in Turkish.

Three out of twenty teachers could speak Arabic in our school, and unfortunately, I was not one of them. Classroom management was extremely difficult for my colleagues and me. I was teaching mathematics in Turkish for 15 minutes of 40-minute classes. Then, I let one of my bilingual refugee students translate what I taught. The biggest problem was that if the translator student did not understand the topic well (or even worse, if s/he misunderstood), then the rest of the refugee students would also learn as s/he did. Despite teachers' efforts, the learning environment became highly unsatisfactory for both newcomers and native students.

There was one teaching plan for all students, but it could be a little bit flexible considering the needs of students in classrooms. In the last year of my teaching experience, the Ministry of National Education in Turkey provided another teaching plan for refugee students after classes. They were organized to teach especially Turkish terms in mathematics, science, and literature. This plan was useful if the refugee students were able to attend all classes. However, the majority of girls had to leave early to look after their siblings and to do housekeeping, and most boys had to earn money or to help their fathers or elder brothers at work.

The assessment in an integrated classroom was even more difficult than teaching mathematics to them. Although native students and newcomers were in the same classroom, and it seemed as they were getting the same instruction, it was unfair to apply the same tests to these groups. Most of the refugee students were struggling with language problems besides all other difficulties and traumatic experiences they had. The rubrics of tests were assumed to be the same, while one group did not even understand the instructional language. On the other hand, native students were also living in poor conditions in that neighborhood. Some of my native students had at least one family member in jail because of murder, drug usage, involvement with the drug trade, or something else. Native students were also in need of extra care and attention. Some of our students would even tell their teachers that "*You care about me more than my mother/ my father does. I wish I would be your son/daughter.*" So, one can understand the greatness of the responsibilities of teachers in that region and how hard it was to make a balance between native and immigrant students. My colleagues and I did not know how to handle this situation.

In the last year of my teaching career, a different exam started to be applied for refugee students, which was done in a few centers once a year. After that exam, it was decided which students would continue to the next level or repeat the same level. However, this exam did not contain the questions addressed in that year; there were only basic level questions from Turkish Literature, science, and mathematics that we taught in after-class sessions. If students succeed in this exam, it did not mean that they were accomplished well in that grade.

At the end of middle school, there was a high school entrance exam in Turkey. This exam was for choosing the successful students for high rated high schools. In these exams, teachers' assessments were also taken into account (now it is not, but it is still controversial). That made the fairness of the assessment in the classroom extra important for the future of children. When the general situation of refugee students was considered, it was highly

challenging for them to be successful in high school entering exams. So, instead of good and high-rated high schools, they had to go to the closest high school to their homes.

In this study, I want to focus on the fairness of assessment in integrated classes because my experiences showed me how hard it was. I wonder how urban middle schools in Turkey and Southern California are dealing with the unfairness in assessments of these students. I hope this study can help to gather common issues and possible (ongoing and future) solutions, and policymakers can take this study into account to provide systematic amendments in migrant education.

Theoretical Perspective

In this study, I have used two main theoretical perspectives that are also reference perspectives of my lifestyle. These are the Equity Theory (Adams, 1963), and the Justice Theory (Rawls, 2005). Adams (1963) generally built this theory on wage inequity in work life. He claimed that the distribution of the resources should be equal for all stakeholders. When I consider this for an educational setting, I interpret this as each student deserves to achieve all educational sources and to access educational benefits equally. This means that refugee and immigrant students and native students should have equal learning opportunities in class, matching assessment criteria, and equal chance for higher education.

Rawls (2005) shared two principles of justice as:

"First Principle: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all. Second Principle: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity. (p. 266)"

Here, basic liberties can be interpreted as equal access to education, and the further benefits of education as better socio-economic conditions (the first principle). The greatest benefit to the least advantaged can be understood as positive differentiation for immigrant and refugee students (the second principle, part a). Finally, further equality opportunity in this study is that higher education, such as highly qualified high schools and universities, should also be accessible for immigrant and refugee students as native students (the second principle, part b). To sum up, in this study, I will examine how middle school education programs for newcomers in Turkey and Southern California provide the Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) and the Justice Theory (Rawls, 2005).

Methodology of the Literature Review

While discovering the relevant literature, I have delimited my search in terms of some criteria such as time period, regions, keywords, and databases; therefore, this literature review is a bounded search that is described as one of three types of searches by Hallinger (2013, p. 134).

I put regional limitations, such as Southern California and Turkey, which I explained rationally before. Although I have narrowed my study to Southern California because of accessibility and feasibility for me, I have searched beyond Southern California to reach out for more relevant articles in the literature review section.

I have searched articles between 2016 and 2020 because the Ministry of National Education in Turkey regulated refugee education in 2014 (Circular Letter No: 2014/21). After 2014, more refugee students have been enrolled in public schools, and I think that the academic studies after 2015, which was the first year of new regulation would give a clearer perspective on this issue. To be consistent, I have picked articles that have been conducted in the same time

period for the search on Southern California's situation. Surprisingly, this period has coincided with the political atmosphere change of the US, as well.

I used the keywords that are '*assessments of refugee students in middle schools in Turkey and/or in California*', '*immigrant middle school students' assessments in Turkey and/or in California*', '*middle school academic tests for refugee students in Turkey and/or in California*.' I did not have to search the keywords in Turkish because at least abstract sections of the Turkish articles are translated into English before publishing.

As a database, I have used Google Scholar, ERIC (EBSCO), and PsycINFO because I have free access to articles in these databases as a UCLA student. After I applied all the criteria above, I could reach out to some articles that are directly related and somehow related to my study. After this search, I have found the full versions of these articles from the databases ERIC (EBSCO) and PsycINFO.

I have prepared the literature map below (Please see Figure 1). In this map, the center of the circle is my present study. Red boxes represent studies that are related to Turkey, and orange boxes are for California or the US. The first ring (dark blue) near my present study is for the studies which are more relevant to this thesis. The second ring (blue) is for studies are somehow relevant studies, and the studies on the third ring (light blue) have some related parts/details that I can add to this literature review.

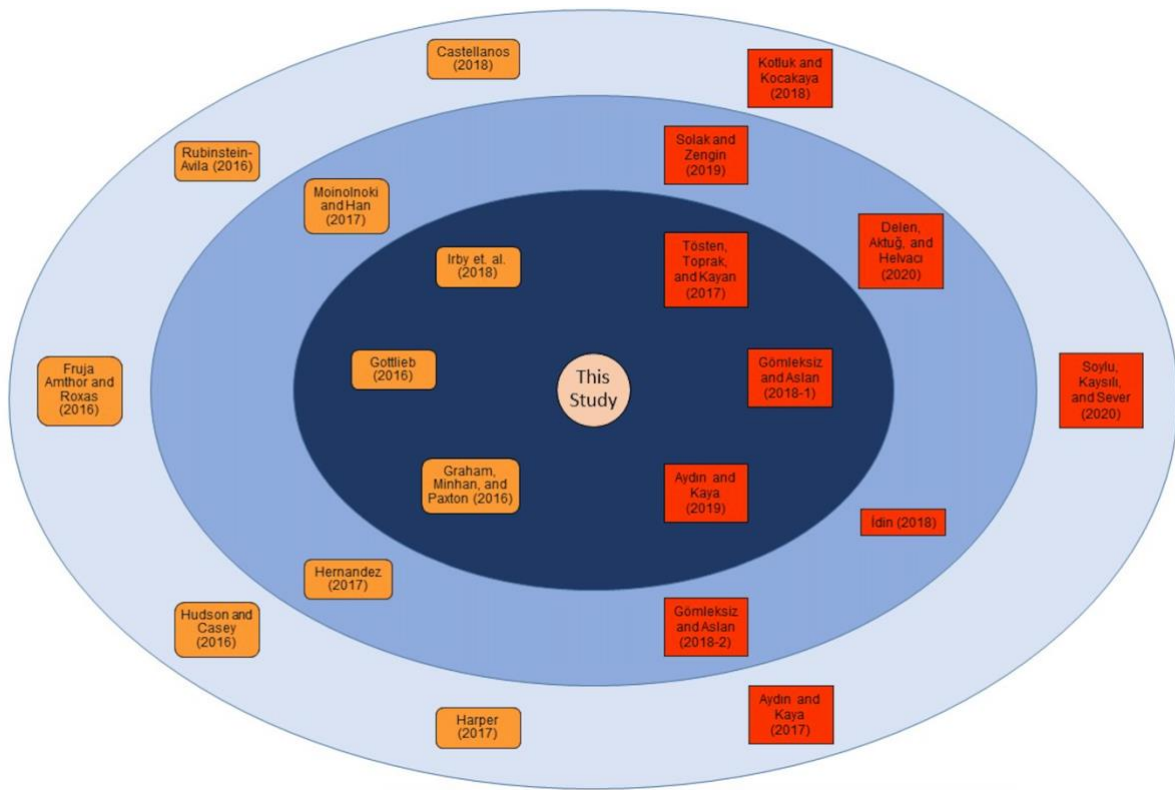


Figure 1. Literature Map

When relevant studies that are conducted in Turkey and California are compared, it can easily be seen that there are relatively more studies related to California than Turkey. Moreover, the studies associated with California cover more details, more perspectives, and harmonious with the previous literature than Turkey. It can be the result of the fact that California has been dealing with migrant education for many more years than Turkey has. However, I could not find any articles directly related to assessments in integrated middle school classes in Turkey and/or in California.

The Assessment in Integrated Middle Schools in Turkey

Although I could not find any directly related articles which focus on the assessment issues in integrated schools in Turkey, I could find some studies that may help to give a perspective on this issue. For example, while Delen, Aktuğ, and Helvacı (2020) examined the need for contextualized STEM learning environments for refugees in Turkey, they provide an

interesting detail about assessments of refugee students before enrolling and the placement (see Table 1). As it is seen from the table, assessing the previous knowledge of refugee students is very limited before enrollment. The schools do not conduct a standard test, and teachers use their own methods to determine the level of students. It is also mentioned in this study that the majority of teachers answered the question of what happens to newcomers who do not know Turkish as “*Nothing, students continue to attend the regular class.*”

The level of contextualization			Understanding refugee students' previous knowledge			What teachers do when the refugee student cannot communicate with them in Turkish		
	All teachers	STEM teachers		All teachers	STEM teachers		All teachers	STEM teachers
Trying to find ways to contextualize	6 teachers (3%)	–	The school conducts an exam before enrolling refugee students	4 teachers (2%)	1 teacher (3%)	Students arrive to class after learning the language	4 teachers (2%)	2 teachers (5%)
Nothing different in their curriculum	181 teachers (97%)	38 teachers (100%)	Teacher conducts an exam when refugee students come to their class	18 teachers (10%)	2 teachers (5%)	School organizes a language course	16 teachers (9%)	5 teachers (13%)
			Teachers asks several verbal questions to understand the student's knowledge	85 teachers (45%)	14 teachers (37%)	Refer students to a language classes organized by MOE	13 teachers (7%)	1 teacher (3%)
			Do nothing to determine students' previous knowledge	80 teachers (43%)	21 teachers (55%)	Nothing, students continue to attend the regular class	154 teachers (82%)	30 teachers (79%)

Table 1. Contextualization and Determining Refugee Students' Previous Knowledge

(Delen, Aktuğ, & Helvacı, 2020, p.106)

Teachers' opinions on the assessment of refugee children in integrated classes are found to be different in different studies. Soylu, Kaysılı, and Sever (2020, p.322) mentioned some teachers' views in their article that teachers have been demanding more training, support,

and materials related to refugee education. Kotluk and Kocakaya (2018, p.113) also advised that culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching & assessment, and multicultural education training should be involved in the teacher training programs.

Gömleksiz and Aslan (2018-1, p. 38) asked teachers their views about the suitability of assessment and evaluation instruments for refugee students, and they received answers as below (see Table 2). As seen in Table 2, only nine teachers out of 32 believe that these instruments are suitable.

Views	<i>f</i>
Unsuitable	11
Suitable	9
Individualized assesment and evaluation	5
Incomprehensible	5
Partly suitable	2

Table 2. Teachers' Views about the Suitability of Assessment and Evaluation Instruments

Gömleksiz and Aslan (2018-1, p. 38)

On the other hand, Tösten, Toprak, and Kayan (2017, p.1154) asked 27 teachers if the assessment processes of refugee children were appropriately made. Twenty-four of them answered that they did not face any problems with assessment because they prepare tests regarding the disadvantageous situation of refugee students. Teachers think that refugee students are not good at verbal lessons and, accordingly, verbal questions because of the language barrier, and they take this situation into account while they prepare exams. Findings of Aydın and Kaya (2017, p.462) also agreed that refugee students have difficulties with solving comprehension-based problems because they need to check their dictionaries, that is why they need more time during exams. However, they are better at questions which are mathematics in nature (like patterns, grammar rules, etc.)

Aydin and Kaya (2019, p.13) asked some teachers' opinions about the assessments of refugee students. Teachers have fewer expectations from refugee students than other students. Since the Ministry of National Education does not have a regulation on the assessment of refugee students in integrated classes yet, they try to find solutions by themselves. They use various methods, such as preparing different exams for each group, adding extra points to refugee students' papers, preparing easier exams for everyone in the class by changing question types or subjects, etc. In the study by Tosten, Toprak, and Kayan (2017, p.1154), some teachers also admitted that they have been grading refugee students' papers differently than other students by considering in-class performances of refugee students. Solak and Gezgin (2019, p.27) mentioned how teachers are confused about grading refugee students because some of them do not even know the language of instruction, and they have no communication with their teachers or other students.

İdin (2018, p.85) found that the average of science exam scores of refugee students is almost half of the average of other students' scores. It is directly related to their language problems because the majority of the refugee students cannot take proper notes and write correct statements in their notebooks. On the other hand, surprisingly, Gömleksiz and Aslan (2018-2, p. 50) asked the views of refugee students about the difficulties that they face in schools, and only one out of sixteen students mentioned the difficulty of exams. There is no other answer about grading, assessment, or test scores. However, since the studies which are conducted in the assessment of refugee students in integrated classes in Turkey are highly limited (Ayık, 2019), more studies should be conducted to understand the problem better and to offer proper solutions.

The Assessment in Integrated Middle Schools in California/US

There are relatively more migrant studies for California/ the US than Turkey. Although I could not find a directly relevant one, I will start with the study that is closest to my research,

which is a very inspirational and detailed assessment of English Language Learners conducted by Margo Gottlieb (2016). She accepted assessment as a bridge of equity, which is highly parallel to the theoretical perspective of this study and my beliefs as a researcher. She described English Language Learners (ELLs) in different settings and identifies educators of ELLs. She also explained the assessment as, for, of learning, which is expressed as bridges to the equity of students, teachers, and administrators consecutively.

I could find many different perspectives on immigrant/refugee education problems when I searched for California/US related studies. Although the majority of them were not directly related to this topic, they could provide different insights for the issue. For example, Graham, Minhan, and Paxton (2016) examined the refugee students' problems with a systematic review, and they have emphasized the importance of accurate educational assessment and refugee students' placement to the appropriate grade for academic success. They point out the necessity of more research on the validity of assessment tools, which are used for refugee-background students and on developing culturally appropriate assessment materials. Fruja Amthor and Roxas (2016) also mentioned the possibility of a positive alternative curricular context led by cultural-relevant pedagogy. In another example, Hudson and Casey (2016) underline the different needs of older refugee students for reaching the higher academic achievement because they may have more difficulties with learning a new language than the younger ones (p. 159).

Moinolnolki and Han (2017, p.5) asked an essential question, "No Child Left Behind: What About Refugees?". They mentioned the segregation of English Language Learners and US-born students. They argue that refugee students have a less challenging curriculum, and teachers have low-performance expectations from refugee students. Hernandez (2017) pointed out another important issue about being identified as an English Learner. She mentions that

how being an ELL can marginalize races and how the extra courses and exams that only ELL students should take can lead to inequality problems.

Rubinstein-Avila (2016, p.5) argued that the academic progress of ELLs is not the responsibility of an English as a second language teacher only. In other words, she stressed the roles of teachers of integrated classes. Irby, Lara-Alecio, Tong, Guerrero, Suttan-Jones, and Abdelrahman (2018, p.7) also mentioned the importance of the use of alternative assessments by other teachers in integrated classes. Castellanos (2018, p.17) also provided a very interesting perspective on being a teacher in an integrated class. She pointed out that teachers of refugee students can suffer from feeling overwhelmed and lowered self-efficacy because their refugee students are also expected to meet specific national standards, and teachers do not have enough training for this. Harper (2017, p. 8) gave an example for asking testable questions by noticing cultural differences in science class. For investigating the journey of the Moon, some children's books, which are about the Moon during Ramadan and mid-autumn Moon Festival, can be read to better appreciate diversity. In this way, the assessment can be more inclusive for everyone.

Since California has been hosting immigrants for decades, the literature about migrant education is very rich. Many studies have been conducted with many different perspectives for years such as English Language Proficiency, special education, comparative education to analyze how are schools in California handle immigrant education issue, how equity and justice could be improved, and how this education could be better (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar & Higareda, 2002; Rumbaut, 1990, Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Olsen, 2009; and so on). In California, reforms on migrant education are continuing to meet the changing needs of English Learners (PPIC, 2019). This study is aimed at contributing to these ongoing efforts of California and Turkey.

Research Methodology

This study is aimed to understand the processes and techniques of the academic assessment of immigrant students who enroll in the integrated classes in urban middle schools in Turkey and Southern California. I have used artifacts, interviews, and site observations to gather data and analyzed them by the top-down analysis method. In this part, I will explain more about my data collection instruments and how I analyzed these data.

Research Questions

For investigating the processes and techniques of the academic assessment of newcomers in urban middle schools in Turkey and Southern California, I have focused on two periods of assessments, which are during the enrollment & placement, and throughout the middle school education.

The first research question is “*How are newcomer students accepted to schools and placed into classes?*” This is about the assessment processes and techniques which are applied when the immigrant children are enrolled in the school.

By asking this question, I have tried to understand:

- How are immigrant students accepted to the schools? Are there any criteria for immigrants to enroll in any specific schools?
- Are there any enrollment exams which are applied to immigrant students when they start middle school education?
- How are immigrant students placed in the appropriate classes and levels? Who decides the placements of students? What are the criteria for this decision?

I have used related artifacts and interviews to answer these questions. Related artifacts are the official documents that regulate the enrollment processes of immigrant children to middle schools. These documents are gathered from the webpages of schools, districts, or ministries. I have used the content analysis method for artifacts. I have classified them in terms of themes and subthemes that I created, then I interpreted and combined them. Besides official documents, I have conducted interviews with educators. I have recorded these interviews and transcribed them. After that, I have used the same method as I did in the content analysis and classified them under subthemes and themes. I have also written down some specific examples provided by educators to use as an example while explaining the related issues in the artifacts.

My second research question, “*How are their academic achievements assessed throughout their middle school education?*” covers all assessment processes throughout the middle school education of newcomer students in integrated classes.

This question has many aspects, such as in-class assessments, participation in the class discussions, midterm and final exams, projects, group works, readiness to the class, homework, etc. I have used related artifacts, class observations, and interviews with teachers. I have used the same data analysis methods while analyzing artifacts and interviews. When it comes to observations, it became hard to classify under themes. So, I used observations for providing examples to understand applications of policies, and what educators told me during interviews.

Setting

The observations are highly crucial for this study. It helped me a lot to understand how written rules are being conducted in real-life settings. I had the chance to observe twenty hours of classes in Turkey and Southern California. These classes were from three different middle schools in each region. I have picked these classes by using the purposive sampling method. I have determined the characteristics of the classes that I wanted to observe in advance. Since

my study is about integrated classes, I picked middle schools that have integrated classes in Southern California and Turkey. Then, I chose the closest schools in the list to my living area (Please see Table 3.)

Region	School Type - Code	Class Code	Course	# of Students	# of Immigrants
Southern California	Public School – SC1	SCA	7 th Grade - Mathematics	29	3
		SCB	7 th Grade - Mathematics	23	2
	Public School - SC2	SCC	6 th Grade - Science	25	3
		SCD	Advanced ELD	14	14
		SCE	6 th Grade - Mathematics	29	6
		SCF	8 th Grade - History	33	1
	Private Islamic Religious School - SC3	SCG	7 th & 8 th Grade - Science (x 2)	10	1
		SCH	7 th & 8 th Grade - Literature (x 2)	12	1
Turkey	Public School - T1	TA	5 th Grade - Information Technologies	29	16
		TB	5 th Grade - Science	26	7
		TC	7 th Grade - The Life of Prophet Mohammed	25	3
		TD	7 th Grade – English (Foreign Language)	9	3
		TE	6 th Grade – Turkish (Literature)	16	6
	Public School - T2	TF	5 th Grade - Information Technologies	13	2
		TG	5 th Grade – Gymnastics	15	3
	Public Islamic Religious School - T3	TH	5 th Grade – Culture of Religion and Knowledge of Ethics	17	15
		TI	5 th Grade - English (Foreign Language)	16	8
		TJ	7 th Grade - Counseling	23	3

Table 3. Characteristics of Observed Classes

As in Table 3, I observed ten classes from each region. The school administrators chose these classes according to appropriateness to my study. Although there were many newcomer students in each school that I have been, the description of newcomers, which is coming to the hosting country less than five years ago, has limited the number of classes that I could visit.

I have been an observer in all the classes. When I joined the class, the teacher generally introduced me to students by saying, *“Please say welcome to our visitor, Bilge! She is here for her school project, and she will listen to the class today.”* In Turkey, teachers also added that *“Don’t worry, she is not an inspector. She’ll not give you scores. She is here for her research.”* It was because teachers wanted to help me to observe the most natural version of their classes. I generally sat down on a back chair that I could see all the students, but they did not see me without an extra effort.

Since I was there to see how immigrant students and native students were being assessed in the classroom and how their in-class performances and attitudes differ (if they do), I needed to know which students were newcomers in the class. Teachers helped me to know without being noticed by children. Teachers or the administrator stood next to the immigrant student or randomly had a chat with them after they let me in the class. So, I could spot the newcomer students and observe them.

The public schools (SC1 and SC2) that I visited were members of school districts in Southern California. I got in contact with the schools which have the largest immigrant populations with the help of districts’ administrators.

SC1 has a similar student population and the ratio of newcomers with SC2. In both schools, the walls were decorated with students’ works, schools’ mottos, and rules. There were some explanatory flyers for parents in the waiting room, and these flyers were in many different

languages such as Spanish, Armenian, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and Vietnamese. (Please see Figure 2). When I was waiting in the waiting area for the school administrator or the assistant administrator, I noticed that the attendants were bilinguals. I observed that some parents talked Spanish and English with them without hesitation.

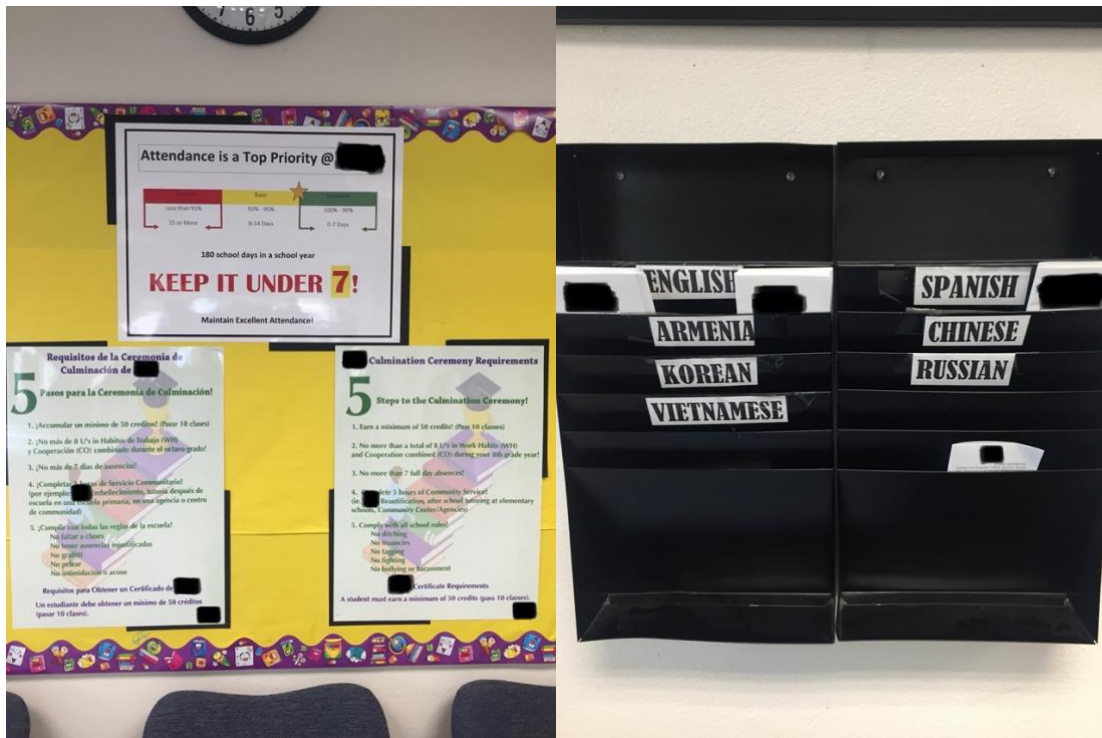


Figure 2. Some images from the SC1 and SC2

SC1 and SC2 had similar classroom environments. In both schools, classrooms had computers at teachers' desks, internet, speakers, and projectors. Except for the ELD class, the desks were designed for group studies, and group work was an essential part of the courses. In the ELD class, children were sitting towards the board.

I wanted to observe an English Language Development (ELD) class, which is designed for immigrant students by the California Department of Education. By watching this class, I had a chance to see the behaviors of the students in ELD classes and regular integrated classes. I observed an advanced level ELD, and all the spoken language was English, although the

mother tongue of the students (and the teacher, as well) was Spanish. Students were practicing an exam (English Language Proficiency Assessments for California - ELPAC) in the class. They all used laptop computers in the class. They entered with a password that the teacher gave them, and they started to listen to a speech with their headphones. Then, they answered the questions online.

Private Islamic Religious School (SC3) was highly different than the first two schools. It was a small school in a more disadvantaged neighborhood. There were only 55 students and five teachers. The classes were combined; in other words, 5th and 6th graders were taught in the same class, and 7th and 8th graders were taught together. The entrance and the waiting room was decorated with inspirational quotes and school rules (Please see Figure 3.)

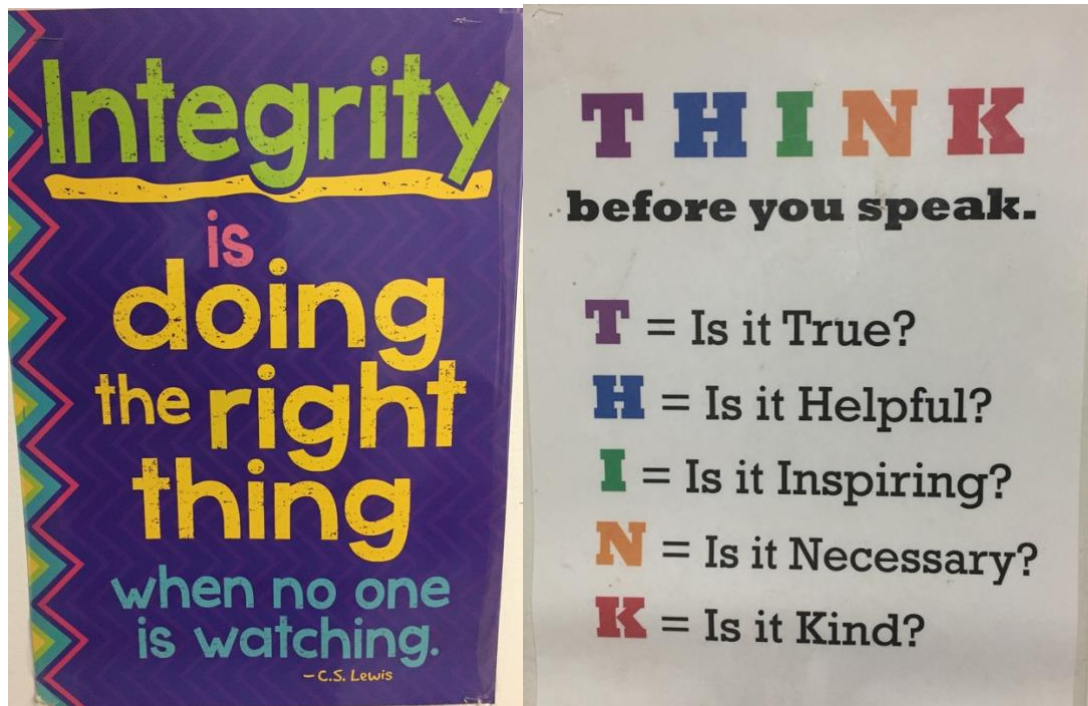


Figure 3. Some photos from the SC3

Generally, I have found middle schools that I observed in Southern California different than classrooms in Turkey in many aspects. Desks of students were generally towards the teacher and the board in Turkey, while students in the SC1-2-3 were usually sitting in groups. I saw that there were more lecturing in T1, T2, and T3, while there were more group activities in Southern California. There was always noise in the classes in SC1-2-3. This noise was generally about class activities. If some students distracted others, the teacher warned them. If

a student repeatedly distracted others, the teacher told them if they wanted him/her to call their parents, then the student immediately stopped. In Turkish classes, this warning did not work well generally. It looked teachers have specific warning styles for each student. Sometimes just telling a student with his/her name could work, but sometimes the teacher had to ask if the student wanted to visit the administrator's office. The administrator's office was scary for them because their inappropriate behaviors would be reported there. If these reports were repeated, they could be punished. Classes in T1-2-3 were generally silent. The teacher was teaching, and students were listening to the teacher. Then, they worked in pairs or individually. The biggest difference that I observed is that the classes were assigned to teachers, and students were going to the classes by their schedules in all schools that I observed in Southern California. On the other hand, in Turkish public schools, students are generally constant in the classes, and different teachers come to the classes for each hour.

As I mentioned before, I was working as a mathematics teacher in a public religious school in Turkey. That is why I am already familiar with the system there, so I wanted to visit more public schools than religious ones. Since I have very limited time in Turkey for data collection, I chose the schools from Ankara, the city where I live. I picked two regions that have the largest refugee populations, and then randomly chose public schools from there. There are some schools in Turkey that most of the population are refugees. I eliminated those schools because they are extreme cases for this study. In Southern California and Turkey, the majority of schools have more native students than immigrants. I wanted to observe classes that can represent other classes in the region.

T1 and T2 were public schools, and T3 was a religious Islamic public school. They all have similar equipment in the class. There are smartboards, and teachers generally use the course materials provided by the Ministry. They follow the same curriculum in all courses. The

only difference between public schools and public religious schools is that there are some more religious-related courses in religious schools besides the regular program. More details about schools will be given in the Findings section.

Participants

The participants of this study are twenty educators from each region (Please see Table 4.) I have used purposive and snowball sampling methods while choosing my participants. I have reached out to middle school teachers who teach in integrated classes. Then I have asked them if they knew other teachers who could join this study. I have conducted semi-structured interviews in person or via phone.

Region	Teacher Code	Course
Southern California	SCT-1	Mathematics & Science
	SCT-2	History
	SCT-3	Advanced ELD
	SCT-4	Multiple Subjects
	SCT-5	Data Assessment Coordinator
	SCT-6	Social Sciences
	SCT-7	Counselor
	SCT-8	Mathematics & Science
	SCT-9	Literature
	SCT-10	Administrator
Turkey	TT-1	Turkish (Literature)
	TT-2	English (as a Foreign Language)
	TT-3	Compliance Class / Turkish (Literature)
	TT-4	Culture of Religion and Knowledge of Ethics
	TT-5	Technology and Design Teacher
	TT-6	Mathematics
	TT-7	Technology and Design Teacher
	TT-8	Turkish (Literature)
	TT-9	English (as a Foreign Language)
	TT-10	Counselor

Table 4. Participants of the Study

In Table 5, I summarized the participants' educational backgrounds and carriers as they shared with me.

Participant Code	Description
SCT-1	Science & Mathematics Teacher. 17-year experience in elementary schools, 3-year experience in middle schools. Now, he is teaching 6 th graders. He was an immigrant child. He has bachelor's degrees from biology and business, and master's degrees from education and biology.
SCT-2	History teacher. After graduating from high school, she took a gap year, went to South Africa and Cambodia, and taught English. After that, when she started to college, she wanted to major in History because of her increasing interest about the relation of history of particular places and education. She focuses on Latin American History, and the history of the United States. After college, she got a Fulbright teaching grant to teach at a university in South America. After that, she came back to the US and teach history. She went to graduate school and she got her master's degree. She has teaching credentials on ethnic studies.
SCT-3	ELD Teacher. She came to the US when she was 17 years old. She had some of her high school education in the US. She is teaching for more than 30 years. She went to college and then study abroad program (Spain). She came back to the US for having Ph.D. in Spanish Literature. But then, she accepted an opportunity to teach in elementary school. After that, she started working at high school level for 20 years, and she has been working in middle school for seven years.
SCT-4	Multiple Subjects Teacher. She has multiple subject credentials from California State University, Fullerton from the department of Education. She also has a master's in Education from the same university. She can teach K-8. She taught all the core subjects, Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. She worked at a private Islamic school. It was a small school and the total population was around 120 kids. The migrant students were around 80% in the entire school. In her classes, she had 60-70% migrant students.
SCT-5	Data Assessment Coordinator. She worked as elementary school teacher for 10 years. She has been coordinating all of the state assessments for her school district, and she is in charge of the whole student information system in her district and the state assessments.
SCT-6	Social Sciences Teacher. She graduated with a bachelor's in history and minor in geography. She used to work in museums, and she has been working in a private Islamic school for four years as a social sciences teacher. More than 10% of students in her school are newcomers.
SCT-7	School Counselor. She is the main social worker in her school district. She is working for two years in a public school with a high immigrant population. She has also a master's degree from the social work.
SCT-8	Mathematics & Science Teacher. He got his bachelor's degree from communication. He is getting his master's education, and I teach 4 th through 8 th grade both math and science. He is working at SC3.

SCT-9	Literature Teacher. This is her second year of teaching. She received her bachelor's degree in 2017, and she was working for her credentials. She believes that working in this school is a good practice opportunity for her before starting to work in a district school. She does not have a master's degree yet, but she plans to have it. She is working at SC3.
SCT-10	Administrator. She has been an educator for 22 years. She started at public schools at urban areas of Southern California. For the last six years, she has been working as an administrator in the private Islamic school (SC3). She had her master's degree on administration and leadership. She got her teaching credentials from urban teaching program.
TT-1	Turkish (Literature) Teacher. She has been working for 17 years as a teacher. She has bachelor's degree from Turkish Education. Her school has double-shift education, and 15-20% of the students are refugees. There are generally 30-35 students in each class. Students are generally from medium socio-economic level families.
TT-2	English (as a Foreign Language) Teacher. She has been working for 13 years as a teacher. Her school has double-shift education, and approximately 10% of 1000 students are refugee children. The school is in a disadvantaged area, and there are limited physical and technological sources. Teachers are generally young and motivated, on the other hand, parents are generally careless. There is adaptation class for refugee students who do not know Turkish, and they learn how to read and write in Turkish there.
TT-3	Compliance Class / Turkish (Literature) Teacher. He is working at the same school as TT-2. He is teaching Turkish to refugee students. He had 27 students, but two of them never showed up. Three of the students did not take the exams. Only ten students passed the exam.
TT-4	Culture of Religion and Knowledge of Ethics Teacher. She worked one year as a teacher in a public middle school last year. She is graduated from the Divinity Faculty and continuing her master's education on philosophy and Islam. She was teaching 5 th and 7 th graders. Her school was the only middle school in a disadvantaged neighborhood. This is why it was very crowded (more than 1000 students). There were generally 25-30 students, and at least one student was refugee in each class. There was double-shift education in the school as morning groups and afternoon groups.
TT-5	Technology and Design Teacher. He has been working for 28 years. He had bachelor's degree from vocational education and technology. He started his teaching career as an elementary school teacher, then he became an administrator assistant for four years. There are approximately 16 refugee students out of 900 in his school, and there is double-shift education. There are almost 50 students in each class. Physical and technological sources are inadequate.
TT-6	Mathematics Teacher. She has a master's degree, and she is writing her dissertation for her Ph.D. She has been working for 8 years as a teacher. She has worked in five different schools. She started to work in an urban middle school in a city center which is located in the northern part of Turkey this year. Her school is highly big and there are many displaced students. Although the school is in the city center, students generally have low socio-economic levels, and the majority of them is not successful. She is teaching 5 th and 7 th graders. We have also an adaptation class for refugees. This is the only adaptation class in the city.

TT-7	Technology and Design Teacher. She has been working for 17 years as a teacher, and she has two master's degrees, and continues to her education. She is a teacher at a public religious school now. She describes her school as a small and happy school. Her students are generally from lower-medium socio-economical level. There are 240 students, and generally one out of 20 students are refugee in each class.
TT-8	Turkish (Literature) Teacher. He has been working for 31 years as an educator. He worked in elementary schools, and then transferred to middle schools. He has been teaching to 5 th , 6 th , 7 th , and 8 th graders. Since he worked in Arab countries, he knows Arabic. This is why he is more active in refugee students' education. Before the extra classes had been started for refugee students by the Ministry, he was voluntarily teaching Turkish to refugee students whenever he had time.
TT-9	English (as a foreign language) Teacher. She is working as a teacher for six and a half years. She is teaching 5 th , 6 th , and 8 th graders.
TT-10	School Counselor. This is her 10 th year as a school counselor. She is the only counselor in the school which is in a very disadvantaged area, and she is responsible from 5 th , 6 th , 7 th , and 8 th graders. She is working as a bridge between parents, teachers and families. She has an important role in adaptation of refugee students to the schools. She leads some school projects.

Table 5. Educational Backgrounds and Careers of Participants

Artifacts

One of the most important sources of this study is artifacts. These artifacts are generally legal documents which regulate the migrant/refugee education in Turkey and Southern California. These are open sources that can be found in the websites of school districts, the United States Department of Education, the Department of Education – California, and the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. (Please see Table 6.)

Turkey	Southern California
Directorate General of Migration Management, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior, Temporary Protection Statistics (2020)	U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division; U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and Office of the General Counsel; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Information on the

	Rights of Unaccompanied Children to Enroll in School and Participate Meaningfully and Equally in Educational Programs
Directorate General for Basic Education, Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, The Circular Letter no. 10230228/235/4145933, 2014/21 (09.23.2014)	U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division; and U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and Office of the General Counsel, Joint Guidance Letter: School Enrollment Procedures (May 8, 2014)
Directorate of Strategy Development, Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, Strategic Plan for 2015-2019 (09.16.2013)	U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division; and U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and Office of the General Counsel, Fact Sheet: Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School, (May 2014)
Head Council of Education and Morality, Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, Accreditation Processes of Syrian and Iraqi Students, Document no. 67951427-215.01-E7112335 (07.09.2015)	U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division; and U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and Office of the General Counsel, Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School: Questions and Answers for States, School Districts and Parents, (May 8, 2014)
Head Council of Education and Morality, Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, Accreditation Processes and Foreign Students (2017)	U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, and U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Guidance on The Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools (2011)
Directorate-General for Lifelong Learning, Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, The Circular Letter 2019/15 no. 32782069-10.06.01-E.16186880 (09.06.2019)	California Department of Education, Overview of Migrant Education in California, December 11, 2018.
Directorate-General for Lifelong Learning, Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, The Explanation of	U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division; U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and Office of the General Counsel; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement. Ensuring

Circular Letter 2019/15 no. 32782069-10.06.01-E.17709105 (09.20.2019)	Unaccompanied Children Who are English Learner Students Can Participate Meaningfully and Equally in Educational Programs.
Project on Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids into the Turkish Education (PIKTES), Framework Plans for Classes of Integration (2019)	Los Angeles Unified School District, Board of Education, We Are One L.A. Unified Standing with Immigrant Families, Education & Immigration Resource Guide for Staff, Educators & Principals, March 1, 2018.

Table 6. Artifacts which are Related to Newcomer Students' Enrollment and Placement

Procedures in Turkey and Southern California

Ethical Considerations and Assumptions

Before starting this study, I received all required permissions from UCLA IRB Office, the Research, Competition and Social Activity Office of the Ministry of National Education in Turkey, and the relevant school districts' research offices. I have asked by signed consent form to participants, and I have asked teachers to waive their consent for observations. I have not used any artifacts which are not placed in public sources without permission.

I shared my research questions and the purpose of this study with participants before starting the data collection. They became volunteers to contribute to this study. I tried not to distract students and teachers during my observations; this is why I sat down back seats and became silent.

I have not used any descriptor throughout the study, which may cause me to reveal any participants' names or school/district names. I have changed some gender pronouns while giving information about participants and used numeric codes instead of pseudonyms or initials. Numeric codes are chosen randomly. There is no meaning in the ranking.

In this study, I have some assumptions based on my own experiences and research. Firstly, I had assumed that newcomer students have been facing with language problems in these two regions. Secondly, I thought that teachers (at least) notice the difference between

newcomer students and other students in terms of attendance, participation, success, and exam scores. Finally, I assumed that some parts of the newcomers' assessment strategies in Southern California and Turkey would be comparable. So, I can address some common points and different points for them.

Research Design

I used a qualitative approach in this study. I tried to understand the academic assessment of middle school level newcomers by listening to teachers' experiences, observing integrated classes, and searching related documents. I made interpretations by analyzing the data that I gathered.

Creswell (2014) explains four worldviews, which are commonly discussed in the literature: postpositivism, constructivism, transformative, and pragmatism. The worldview guides this study is mostly transformative because the focus of this study is diverse groups and their experiences. This research also aims to investigate inequality between groups and methods to handle inequality at the classroom level, or the state and country level. In the Discussion Section, there are also some suggestions for both regions to provide a fairer education environment for newcomers.

Ravitch and Carl (2015) explained that “*Design complexity refers to the ways that you strategically plan, design, and structure your research processes so that you can answer your research question(s) in the most complex, rigorous, and nuanced ways possible*” (p.152). To answer my research questions as they explained, I have designed this study as a comparative case study to explore the assessment of newcomer students in urban middle schools in Turkey and Southern California and to compare these assessment strategies.

Data collection methods are semi-structured interviews with educators of newcomer students in two countries, site observations, and gathering political and general artifacts which

are helpful for me to understand better the program. I had prepared observation and interview protocols before starting the data collection. I believe that the content, the scope, and the sequencing of data collection are appropriate to answer research questions.

Since I have chosen Justice (Rawls, 2005) and Equity (Adams, 1963) theories as to my main theories, the research concern is about disadvantaged groups. I have used interviews, observations, and artifacts to check my findings as a triangulation method, which helps me to check the reliability of my findings. I had one year to conduct this master's thesis, and I followed the timetable below (Please see Appendix A.) It can be seen that this is a back-and-forth process.

As Wolcott (1994) explains that the data analysis as the combination of three steps, which description, analysis, and interpretation, I have used these three steps for analyzing the data that I collected. This analysis process did not happen in order; on the contrary, it was a back-and-forth process throughout the study. When I started to describe, I began to analyze and interpret, too. When I was listening to my interviewees, I was taking out some codes from what they told and trying to figure out which sub-themes would be the best for these codes. I have used a top-down analysis method because I have already had the themes in my mind before starting to data collection from my previous experiences and studies. I have created these themes under the light of my positionality and the research question. I have found the codes with the help of these themes. (Please see Appendix B.) I tried to ensure internal validity by triangulation of the data that I gathered from different sources, and I asked some of participants to check my interpretations if they were correct.

Findings

In this section, I have analyzed the data that I gathered from related artifacts, interviews with educators, and classroom observations to answer the research questions of this study.

The first research question is how newcomer students are accepted to schools and placed into classes. By asking this question, I tried to understand the enrollment processes, assessments, and criteria that are used during the enrollment and placement of newcomer middle school students into appropriate classes, levels, and schools. I have used artifacts and interviews to answer this research question.

The second research question which covers all assessment processes throughout the middle school education of newcomer students in integrated classes is how their academic achievements assessed throughout their middle school education. I have taken into consideration many aspects such as in-class assessments, participation in the class discussions, midterm and final exams, projects, group work, readiness to the class, homework, etc. To answer this question, I have used artifacts, observations, and interviews with educators.

I have tried to explain my findings in this section under two subtopics for each research question.

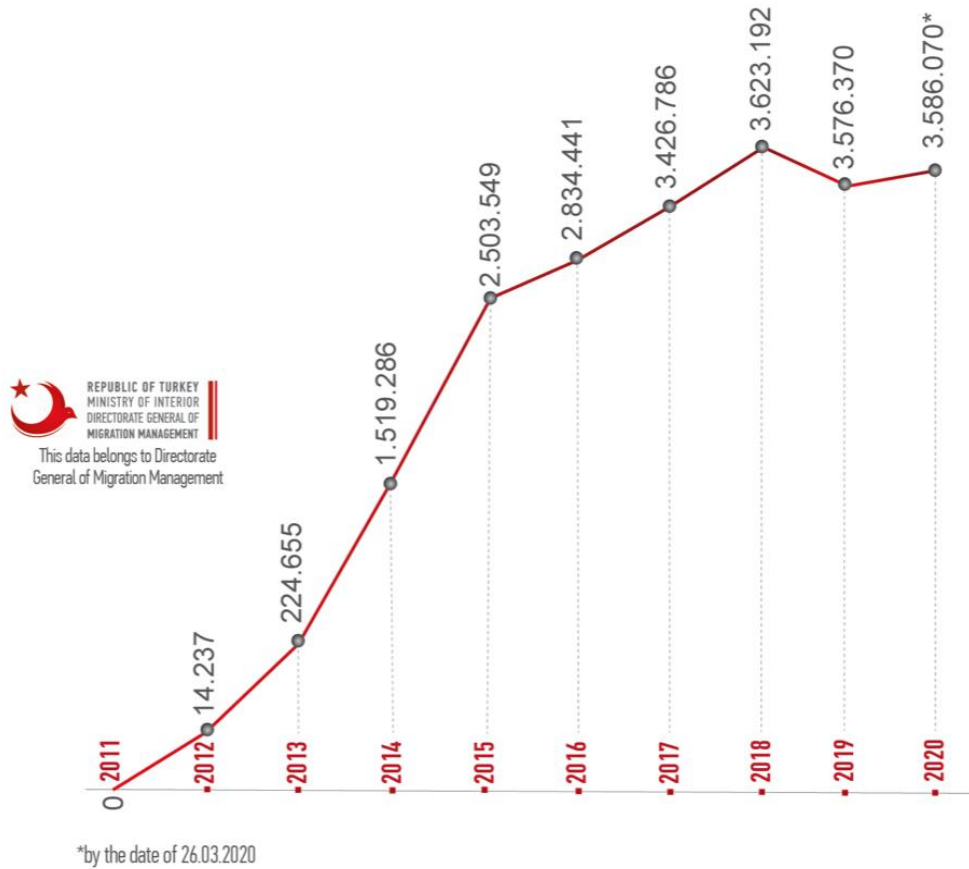
Research Question 1: How are newcomer students accepted to middle schools and placed into classes?

In this section, I have primarily used related artifacts, which are the official documents that regulate the enrollment processes of newcomer children to middle schools. These documents are gathered from the webpages of schools, districts, and the governmental regulations of the Ministry of National Education in Turkey, California as a state and the United States of America (Please see Table 6.)

I have analyzed these articles to understand the enrollment process of middle school level newcomer students. I have selected specific parts of these documents and combined them to provide a framework as below for Turkey and Southern California separately.

Enrollment of Newcomer Middle School Students in Turkey

Turkey has faced a mass flow of refugee population since 2011 with the start of the Syrian Civil War. According to Emin (2016), in the first part of the civil war, it was thought that this flow was a temporary situation, and Syrian people would return to their countries in a short time, as soon as the civil war stopped. This is why the issues related to this guest population were being tried as temporary measures and actions for specific regions. For example, education-related solutions were prepared only for Syrian children in the camps near borders until 2013. However, then, with the rapid increase of the refugee population day by day all over the country, the problems were again being considered from various perspectives. Educational issues and solution suggestions came to the forefront, and the Ministry of National Education published circular letters for newcomer children's education in 2014 (Emin, 2016).



Graph 1. Distribution of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection by Year
(Directorate General of Migration Management, 2020)

Considering the Graph 1 and analyses of Emin (2016), the period between 2011-2014 is a blurred time in considering the refugee situation in Turkey. When the number of Syrian people under temporary protection exceeded one and a half million, a circular letter was issued by the Ministry of National Education about education and training services for newcomers (no. 10230228/235/4145933) on September 23, 2014. It was accepted that “Turkey is not a transition country anymore, it is a target country for many people,” and the education for refugee children out-of-camps was regulated. According to this circular letter (no. 10230228/235/4145933, September 23, 2014),

“The condition of having a “newcomer identification document” given by the relevant institution will be asked to newcomers at the school-age and grown-ups who are volunteers for attending classes, who have come to our country with the mass influx, to be able to register in the temporary education centers or any type and degree of educational institutions (excluding higher education institutions) affiliated to our ministry; and, through the student placement and transfer commissions, registration will be made to educational institutions or temporary education centers affiliated to our ministry by the provincial commissions.” (4-b)

This clause is critical and has become highly controversial since it was published because this was the first-time that open-door policy for the borders became open-door policy for the public schools.

In the same circular letter (no. 10230228/235/4145933, September 23, 2014), provincial commissions were constituted and assigned for the placement processes. An assistant provincial director of national education or a departmental manager would lead these commissions in each province. The other members of these commissions are at least one administrator from all types and degrees of educational institutions, a foreign language teacher or a translator who can interview with newcomer students, an authorized person from each of the other relevant institutions (such as the provincial immigration directorate, the provincial police directorate, etc.) and education coordinators in provinces with temporary education centers.

There are two critical assignments of these provincial commissions about the placement of newcomer students. The first one is determining eligible newcomer students' accreditations/equivalent grade levels based on their diploma, study documents, and/or their

declarations by conducting interviews and written or oral exams (if necessary). The second assignment of the commission is directing students to the educational institutions that they will attend through student placement and transfer commissions.

The refugee education issue also had a place in the strategic plan of the Ministry of National Education from 2015 to 2019 (Directorate of Strategy Development, 09.16.2013, p.37). Studies were to be conducted on the integration of newcomer students into the education system, to ensure that they receive education as long as they are in Turkey, to eliminate the problems that they faced during accreditation, and to solve general educational issues in cooperation with international organizations.

When the placement and enrollment processes of newcomer students were included in the 4-year strategic plan of the Ministry, more circular letters were issued to regulate these students' participation in the Turkish education system and the accreditation processes for them in the following years.

The Head Council of Education and Morality, Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, issued a document (no. 67951427-215.01-E7112335), which is named Accreditation Processes of Syrian and Iraqi Students on July 9, 2015. In this document, the differences between the decisions of provincial commissions about accreditations of newcomer students are emphasized. This document declares that these students' accreditation would be determined by the placement test to eliminate regional differences during the decision on the placement of appropriate grade level. This placement test has been explained by the Head Council of Education and Morality (2017). Accordingly, newcomers who cannot provide official documents because of the war or similar reasons will take written, oral, and applied exams for determining the appropriate grade levels for them. These tests will be conducted by related teacher commissions, which are led by school administrators. Turkish, Mathematics,

Science, and Technology exams will be held for enrollment in elementary and middle school education (p.11).

The Head Council of Education and Morality issued four documents (no. 67951427-215.01-E.8143260, no. 67951427-215.01-E.3718129, no. 67951427-215.01-E.7090519 and no. 67951427-215.01-E.12780440) specifically about the accreditation processes of Syrian, Iraqi and Libyan Students, on August 18, 2015, April 1, 2016, June 27, 2016, and November 11, 2016, consecutively. These documents are generally out about the accreditation in high schools and higher education, graduation, and the acceptance of the papers received from other countries; there is no need to give details on this study. So, they do not specifically mention middle school enrollments and accreditations. Yet, it might be essential to know that newcomer students entered a central exam to receive accreditation documents and to be placed into universities.

To sum up, when the related documents are analyzed, it can be understood that the schools which are determined by the national education directorates will apply the placement exams for newcomer students. The schools decide which students start at which grade level, and they send a report to national education directorates. These documents are what I am able to receive since they are nation-wide open documents. Since the education system in Turkey is a central education system governed by the Ministry of National Education, nation-wide documents are applied in all schools.

I have learned from my interviewees that there are also more recent regulations in practice to decrease the differences in applications and provide justice during enrollment. Educators that I interviewed helped me to understand how these circular letters are being followed in practice during the admission and placement of newcomer students.

TT-10 is the only school counselor in a middle school (T3), which is in a very disadvantaged area. I know her personally for more than six years, and I have witnessed several times her extra efforts as being a bridge between parents, teachers, and families. She also has a vital role in the adaptation of refugee students to the schools. So, she knows a lot about how newcomer students enroll and place in schools. She (TT-10) answered my questions about enrollment procedures of newcomer children that:

“..., at first, we put them (newcomer students) all in 5th grades regardless of their ages. But there is also a quota; for example, they do not accept newcomer students who are over the age of 15 to middle schools; those students have to apply to high schools. A commission is formed by teachers of 4 basic lessons (Turkish Literature, Mathematics, Social Sciences, and Physical (Natural) Sciences) at the school for newcomer children who are older for starting from the 5th grade. Written and oral exams are held by this commission. ... (Those) teachers prepare the exam, but the Ministry of National Education wants (to see) the exam papers. The questions are mixed, like both multiple choices and open-ended questions... Those (newcomers) who pass the score of 85 (out of 100) in the exam are sent to the district national education (directorate) with their exam papers. The district national education (directorate) upgrades their classes (newcomer students' grade levels) in the e-school system (This is an official nation-wide online system which includes all information of all students). However, no matter how academically successful and older s/he is, the newcomer student cannot be jumped from grade 5 to grade 7 or grade 8. S/he can skip at most one class (one level) (during the enrollment).”

At this point, I asked her a question from my own experiences. I remembered that I had a student in 8th grade, and he came to the country just a little while ago. So, I was confused about why he could directly start from 8th grade, instead of 5th grade. As I remember, in those times (four years ago), newcomer students were placed according to their ages and with a placement exam that we as teachers prepared. She said that I was right, and they were doing in that way those times; however, this year it has changed. She also added their plans in order to not to waste students' time if they ready to jump one more grade after they complete the first year in the school:

“When the 5th graders become the 6th graders next year, or when the 6th graders become the 7th graders next year, we are planning to apply another exam to them, and we will try to make them skip one year (5th graders will start to the 7th grade, or 6th graders will start to the 8th grade) if they pass that exam.”

I asked TT-10 to help me understand more about the placement of newcomer students after their appropriate levels are determined. She answered:

“When (newcomer students) placed in classes, they are placed randomly, regardless of any feature. But the number of Turkish and newcomer students in the classes is equalized. For example, if there are 21 newcomer students, they are divided into three classes, equally as seven newcomer students for each class. If the student is in the same class with his/her very close friend and cannot adapt to the class (because of this reason), or if the (especially) male students make clics among themselves and tend to violence, their classes are changed during the school year.”

Other educators that I interviewed also gave some information about newcomer students' placement processes in their schools. Since all the educators are not involved in the

placement commissions in school, just some of my interviewees had some ideas about these processes in their schools. For example, when TT-7 was talking about that there are a few newcomer students in each class, I asked her if they (the administration) purposely placed the students in this way (a few students in each class), and she said that it was just a coincidence. She also added that:

“I don’t know too much about the enrollment processes; however, normally, if a student comes to the religious middle school from a regular school in the mid-levels (6th, 7th, and 8th grades), s/he had to pass an exam. If they have proficiency, especially in vocational courses (religious classes like the Quran and Arabic), they are enrolled accordingly. But... [S]ometimes, if a newcomer student in a difficult position... For example, I know one of them. She was in another school. Her sibling was in our school. They were stuck in a difficult situation. They experienced some difficulties in the other school. The student in the other school (wanted to be) transferred to our school. We accept her without any objection (or applying any exam).”

I have found this answer very important to have an idea about how strict the rules are. According to my own experiences, if there is a benefit of a student, then the rules can be bent up to some extent, as in the example of TT-7. Some exceptions can be made to save children from some difficulties, and then these are reported to the directorate of the district. I want to share something from my experience here. I had a student five years ago, and she was supposed to start the 12th grade according to her official documents from her country. But her other siblings were coming to the middle school that I worked. Her father could give her permission to go to school if and only if she would go with her siblings; otherwise, she had to quit her education life. Although our school was not allowed to accept her because she was 17 years old, all permissions were taken to make her continue her education. She continued to high

school with her siblings, and the last time when I saw her, she was preparing for university entering exams. These kinds of exceptions are welcomed by decisionmakers if children are benefited.

Another interviewee, TT-5, who has experience as an administrator shared her experiences from previous year:

“... [We] placed the (newcomer) students generally in terms of their ages. For example, to which grade their (newcomer students’) age groups are appropriate, they are placed accordingly.”

From her answer, I had noticed that TT-5 was talking about the same system that I experienced when I was a teacher. So, as TT-10 explained, making all newcomers start from 5th grade (or 6th grade if they pass the exam) is a very recent regulation that started this year. TT-2, an experienced educator, emphasized the address as an enrollment criterion while the age is not:

“The address is enough. The only thing that is sought is the address. [... ..] (We place them) by checking their (newcomer students’) diplomas which came from there (the other countries), they especially came from Iraq and Syria, or in which grade they were there, it continues in the same way. Ages aren’t taken into consideration. This is the problem!”

I have compared and summarized the information provided by the educators TT-2, TT-5, TT-7, and TT-10. When one comment contradicts with the other one, I have used the most recent experience because this is not a real contradiction. Since the applications were updated yearly, the most recent experience gives clues about the latest regulation. For example, although TT-5 said that the newcomer students are placed regarding their ages into the

classrooms, TT-10 said that all newcomers have to start from the 5th grade unless they become successful in the placement tests. Since TT-10 knows the most recent regulations, and TT-5 shared her experience from the previous years, I have used TT-10's comments to provide the latest application method. Therefore, I have generally found out from all educators' comments that (Please see Figure 4):

- 1) The national education directorates (NEDs) direct students to the schools by checking their address information.
- 2) The middle school administrations accept the applications of newcomer children if they are under the age of 15.
- 3) If newcomer students have an official diploma or a grade record from the country that they came, they are allowed to continue from the same level directly.
- 4) If newcomer students do not have a diploma or a grade record, they will start from the 5th grade.
- 5) If newcomer students are older than the age of 5th graders (generally 11-year-olds), they took an exam to skip the 5th grade. This exam is applied by a school commission formed by teachers of 4 basic lessons, which are the Turkish Literature, Mathematics, Social Sciences, and Physical (Natural) Sciences. Those who pass the score of 85 out of 100 in the placement exam are sent to the district national education directorates with their exam papers. The district national education directorate upgrades their grade levels in the online system. They can skip only one grade with the placement exam regardless of how academically successful and older they are.
- 6) When newcomer students' grades are determined, the school administration decides which specific class they will join. In this decision, the number of students in a class, the gender ration, the learning environment, the social structure of the class (clics) can be effective. During the school year, their classes can be changed to improve the learning environment for everyone.

The class system is different in Turkey than in Southern California. Students generally stay in a specific classroom assigned to them, and teachers visit classrooms. There are some exceptions such as art room, labs, or physical education areas, etc. So, here, the decision to send a class means placing newcomer students in specific classrooms. These classrooms generally do not change throughout the middle school education of students. For example, a student starts from 5-B (the 5th grade, room B), then continues as 6-B, 7-B, and 8-B until s/he graduates from the middle school if the school administrator does not let him/her change his/her class.

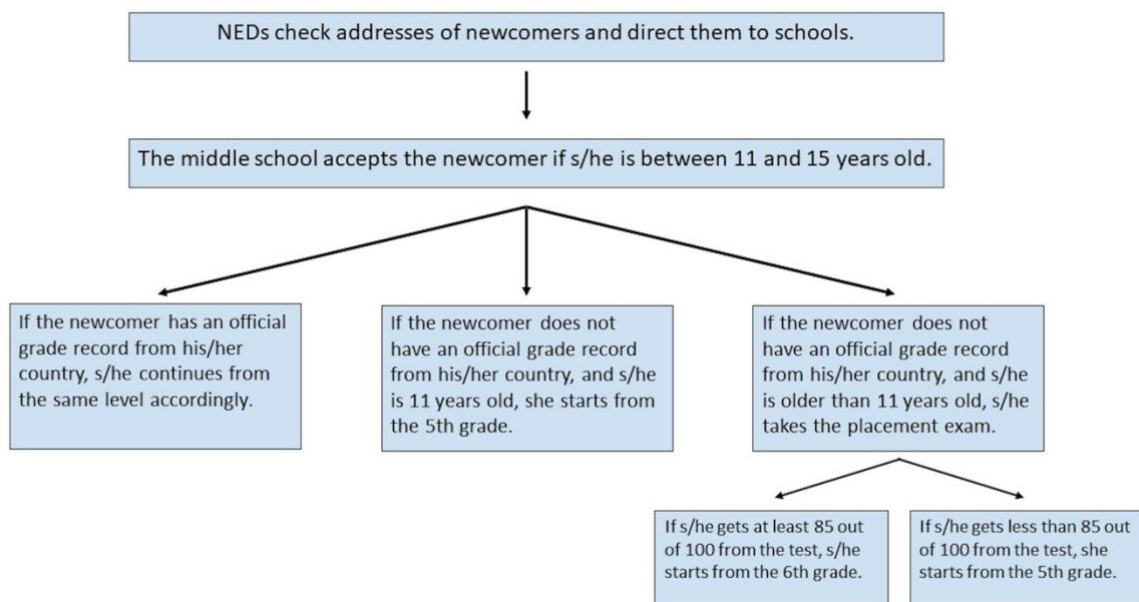


Figure 4. The Enrollment and the Placement Processes of Newcomer Middle School Level Students in Turkey

These steps are how the majority of middle schools in Turkey accept the newcomer students. I could not find anything which contradicts the official documents in practical application. This year, there is also a new implementation for newcomer students, which are called as compliance classes. I wanted to mention these classes because it is also essential for the enrollment of newcomer students who do not know Turkish. These compliance classes were

regulated by the Directorate General for Lifelong Learning with the circular letter 2019/15 (no. 32782069-10.06.01-E.16186880, 09.06.2019), and with the explanation of the circular letter 2019/15 (no. 32782069-10.06.01-E.17709105, 09.20.2019). According to these circular letters, compliance classes would be started for newcomer students from 3rd grade to 12th grade. In order to attend these classes, newcomers first take a Turkish Language Skill Exam, which is conducted twice a year. Those who get less than 60 out of 100 from this exam would be accepted to the compliance classes. Students can join compliance classes for at most two consecutive terms, and those who are successful in the language proficiency exam at the end of the semester are transferred to the current class by the school administration at the beginning of the next semester. If they fail, they are transferred to the current class level, but they might attend the Primary Education Program in Primary Schools (İYEP) and Turkish / Turkish language and literature courses, Support and Education Courses (DYK), or language courses.

When we take the compliance classes into consideration, the new chart is becoming like this (Please see Figure 5):

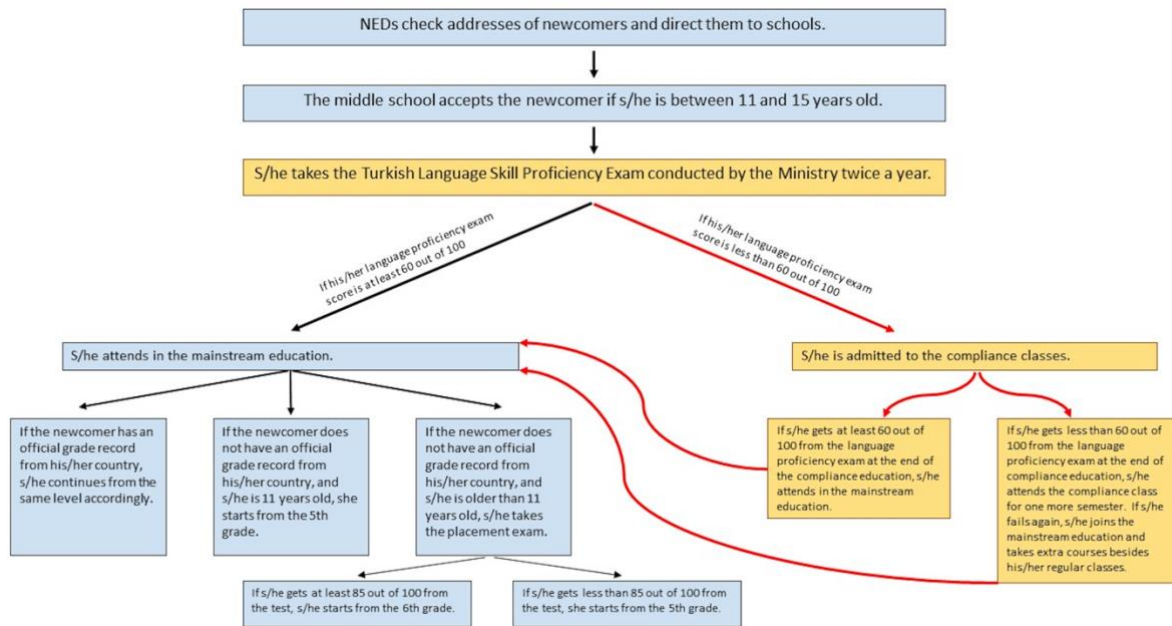


Figure 5. The Enrollment and the Placement Processes of Newcomer Middle School Level Students in Turkey Considering Compliance Classes

To sum up, hosting a significant number of refugees is a very recent issue for Turkey, and the newcomer students' enrollment and placement processes in Turkey generally depend on recent regulations and circular letters. My analyses of legal documents and interviews with educators show that the system for handling newcomers' education has been continuously improving since 2014.

Enrollment of Newcomer Middle School Students in Southern California

Southern California has a very different story from Turkey about hosting newcomers. According to the data provided by PPIC (May 2019), California has had the highest percentage of foreign-born residents (27-39%) in the United States for more than a century, while 5-14% of residents in the U.S. are foreign-born since 1860. For regulating the participation of newcomers into the U.S. education system, many steps have been taken by the U.S. Department of Education, and California Department of Education besides other government offices of

departments such as U.S. Department of Justice, and U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (Please see Table 7.)

The first and one of the most important things that should be known about immigrant education is that any students from any immigration status have right to attend in public schools according to the U.S. Supreme Court decision of the Plyler v. Doe case in 1982 (Justia, US Supreme Court, Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202, 1982). Since 1982, students from any immigration status have been receiving education in K-12 public schools in all of the states of the United States.

The Civil Rights Division (CRD) of the United States Department of Justice, and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) of the United States Department of Education have issued a joint guidance letter, a fact sheet and a set of questions and answers in May 2014 about *'the federal law requiring states and school districts to provide all children in the United States with equal access to basic public education, regardless of their or their parents' actual or perceived race, color, national origin, citizenship, or immigration status.'*

The mentioned fact sheet (Fact Sheet: Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School, May 2014) emphasizes that *"School districts that either prohibit or discourage, or maintain policies that have the effect of prohibiting or discouraging, children from enrolling in schools because they or their parents/guardians are not U.S. citizens or are undocumented may be in violation of Federal law"* and provides some examples of acceptable enrollment policies.

It starts with the proof of residency in the school district. School officials may ask the proof of residency, and they can accept many documents for this purpose, such as water bills

or lease agreements. If the newcomer is a homeless child or cannot provide the proof of residency for any reason, the school cannot refuse to register him/her. The other documentation that can be asked by the school during enrollment is proof of age. Schools can accept a variety of documents for this reason, such as an adoption record or a religious birth certificate. The third document that may be asked is the social security number to be used as a student identification number if parents are voluntary for sharing it. The fourth one is data related to race or ethnicity because school districts have some Federal and state obligations to report this information, and school officials may request this information for this reason. However, school districts and school officials cannot discourage or bar students from being enrolled in their schools even if these four documents cannot be provided by parents, or they refuse to give this information.

The Joint Guidance Letter was written by the CRD of the U.S. Department of Justice, and the OCR and the OGC of the U.S. Department of Education (May 8, 2014) because they emphasized that enrollment practices which discourage the participation or lead exclusion contravene the Federal law, and school districts must ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity and no one is discouraged from enrolling in the class because of their citizenship or immigration status.

The document “Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School: Questions and Answers for States, School Districts and Parents” issued by the CRD of the U.S. Department of Justice, and the OCR and the OGC of the U.S. Department of Education (May 8, 2014) had the same aim with the Joint Guidance Letter above and covered the similar issues with the fact sheet (May 2014). In this document, here are some more detailed answers for some specific issues such as how to communicate with parents who have limited English proficiency during enrollment, and whether school staff should be trained to not to discourage

students and parents from enrolling at the school. Since there is not a specific list of documents required during enrollment that can be applied for all school districts nationwide, a question is asked about how to distinguish the information that must be collected as opposed to need not be collected. The answer is the minimum information to make enrollment, such as proof of residency and age, or immunization history that students or parents can provide. Not to discourage children and parents from enrolling, and not making discrimination are emphasized again in this document.

The document ‘Information on the Rights of Unaccompanied Children to Enroll in Schools and Participate Meaningfully and Equally in Education Programs’ has been published by the CRD of the U.S. Department of Justice, the OCR and the OGC of the U.S. Department of Education, and the Office of Refugee Resettlement of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). It aimed to clarify the previous three documents (the joint guidance letter, the fact sheet and the set of questions and answers) and to answer the related concerns shared with the HHS. According to this document, HHS provides unaccompanied children’s sponsors with some papers such as proof of immunization, age, or residence for enrollment.

To sum the four documents mentioned above, it can be understood that any children can enroll in the school regardless of their race, ethnicities, and status of immigration in the United States since 1982. School districts may request proof of residency, age, and immunization for enrollment. These proofs also have some flexibility to make sure that children and/or their parents are not being discouraged from participation. Children and their parents cannot be forced to share any information that they do not want to.

I have generally mentioned the basic rules of accepting newcomer students to the school in the United States. The other document which highlights the basics of the diversity perception in the schools during enrollment of newcomer students is “Guidance on the Voluntary Use of

Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools (2011)” published by the CRD of the U.S. Department of Justice and the OCR of the U.S. Department of Education. I have found this paper very insightful in providing the notion of diversity in schools in the U.S. Two approaches attempt to achieve diversity and/or to avoid racial isolation. The first group does not rely on the race of individual students, while the second does. The first approach employs two different methods: race-neutral and generalized race-based. In the race-neutral method, the race can be taken into consideration, but it is not accepted as a criterion for the enrollment while other measures such as socioeconomic status and parental education are used. The generalized race-based approach is an expressed criterion, but no one is treated differently because of their race. It is emphasized in the document that the preferable strategies are race-neutral approaches. If these approaches cannot be used, then generalized race-based approaches can be followed. However, if approaches that do not rely on the race of individual students cannot be used because they contradict the goals of the school district, the second group approaches that depend on individual racial classifications are used. In this group of approaches, student’s race can be a plus factor for the school district’s specific goal. I have found very remarkable that many scenarios and alternatives are considered and systematized to achieve diversity in the schools all around the U.S. with this document.

Enrollment and placement policies in the U.S., which are explained above, are being followed in California. California Department of Education (CDE) mentioned in the document “Overview of Migrant Education in California” (December 11, 2018) the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in California, which is a federally funded program and supported by federal and state laws. In this document, it is emphasized that the MEP of California is the largest MEP in the U.S. because one-third of migrant students in the U.S. live in California. There are many support programs for these migrant students in California (CDE, January 29, 2019). With all these federal and state-level supports, I will try to explain how schools and districts practically

follow the federal and state rules and policies about newcomer students' enrollment in education with two examples.

The first example is the largest school district of Southern California, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). It is the second-largest school district in the U.S. There are 60,000 employees, 1386 schools & centers, and more than 600,000 K-12 students in LAUSD (LAUSD, 2020). 'We are One L.A. Unified: Standing with Immigrant Families' (March 1, 2018) is an education & immigration resource guide for LAUSD staff, educators and principals. Accordingly, LAUSD ensures that parents will not have any obstacles during enrollment. Parents/guardians will need an enrollment packet for each child, and they can obtain this packet from the main office of each school in the district. Besides the enrollment packet, a copy of the student's birth certificate/passport, immunization record (children must have required immunizations before attending a school in California), proof of residency, and parent/guardian identification card/passport will be asked. If there are any missing documents which are required, school officials will supply affidavits during the enrollment. It is also mentioned that registration can be done anytime during the school year during office hours (p.27). So, this school district is highly encouraging for enrollment of newcomers as it is required by federal and state law. Furthermore, it can be said that the general rules that are explained before and the practice in this school district have been matching.

The second example of the practice is more about the placement of newcomer students when they enroll in the school. I want to mention one of the schools that I have visited during my observations. It was a small private Islamic religious school in Southern California, and I had a chance to interview with the administrator (SCT-10) of that school. I have asked her some questions about the enrollment and placement procedures of newcomer students, and she explained to me as below:

“So, we have a database, a computer database, that does test on English and math levels. If they are able to read in English, they can take that test. We also have a test that they can take which tells us about what reading level in they are. So, we have different assessment that we use for students who are coming in to see where they are...”

In this part of the interview, I asked her how they test English and math level of students, and she said:

“It's done by a company called The Renaissance Star. It's an educational company. It's a database... well the online database and it keeps the students' scores, it tracks them, successes. It tells the teachers with what standards they need to focus on to help that student. It's really comprehensive look at where the student is.”

From this part of speech, I have understood that “The Renaissance Star” has an essential role in the assessment processes of newcomer students. I checked their website, and I saw that they are working with more than one-third of the schools in the US. This company has been providing assessments for reading and mathematics skills for more than 30 years. These assessments are not only for newcomer students but also for students that struggle with reading and mathematics. The assessments have been periodically conducting, and the company provides improvement reports about individual students, schools, or districts. (Renaissance, 2020).

SCT-10 showed me some sample assessment reports. In Figure 6, a migrant student's math assessment results can be seen. I have blacked out some words that can be descriptive. The report starts with some information about the test, test date, the student, the teacher, and

the school & district. The colored horizontal bar shows if the student is at the same level as other students, or s/he needs an intervention. According to the report, this student neither needs urgent intervention, nor s/he is at/above the benchmark. S/he is at the “on watch” interval with a scaled score of 740. His/her percentile rank is 37, which means s/he scored higher than 37% of students nationally in the same grade. Although s/he is in the seventh grade, his/her actual degree is found as 6.4. This report also shows his/her competency in algebra, geometry, numbers, and operations.

These tests are conducted periodically, so teachers and the administrator can see the difference, and help the student improve his/her skills on specific subjects. SCT-10 told me that, when this student first came to the US last year, his/her actual level was found as third grade, although s/he started from the 6th grade. Now, s/he almost has caught up to the other students’ levels in her class. From this example, I inferred that newcomer students are placed to the grade levels with respect to their ages instead of scores of their assessment tests. So, these students catch other students’ levels during their education.

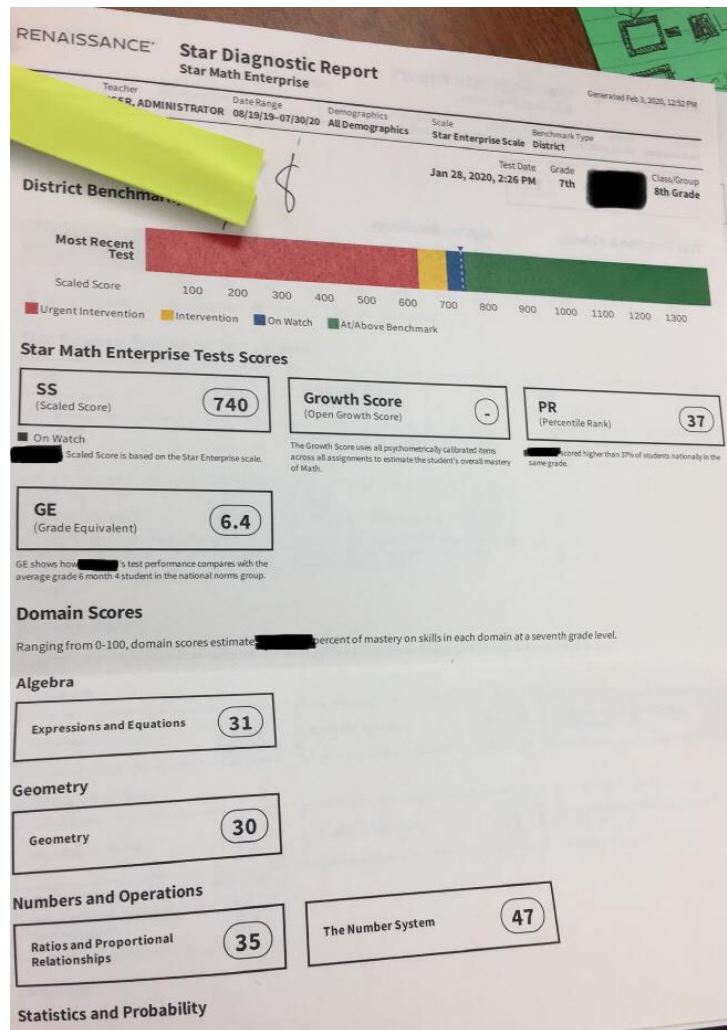


Figure 6. A Migrant Student’s Math Assessment Results from SC3

Last but not least, I want to mention the language issues of newcomer students and how these issues affect enrollment and placement procedures of these students. In US schools, there is a concept of English Learners (ELs). These are newcomer students who do not know English enough when they attend school. These students have a little bit different curriculum than other students.

The document “Ensuring Unaccompanied Children Who are English Learner Students Can Participate Meaningfully and Equally in Educational Programs” published by the CRD of the U.S. Department of Justice, the OCR and the OGC of the U.S. Department of Education,

and the Office of Refugee Resettlement of the U.S. Department of HHS has given a space for the enrollment of ELs including EL unaccompanied children. According to this document, school districts' have a responsibility to identify and assess ELs. After they are identified, parents/sponsors should be informed about the child's English proficiency levels and educational needs besides possible programs and services. The other responsibility of school districts is providing language assistance to ELs and equal opportunity for them to participate in all curricular and extracurricular programs. ELs must be evaluated for their needs for special education, and ELs should not be faced with unnecessary segregation based on the national origin or EL status.

California Department of Education (CDE) has also given information about the ELs (April 8, 2019) with the document 'Facts about English Learners in California.' According to this document, the CDE helps schools and districts to achieve the goals for ELs, such as making ELs fully proficient in English and meeting the same graduating standards as other students. It also gives some examples of program options, such as the Dual-Language Immersion Program, the Transitional or Developmental Program, and the Structured English Immersion. Besides these basic facts, there is a detailed document written by CDE, The State Board of Education, "the English Language Arts/English Language Development (ELA/ELD) Framework" (July 9, 2014). In this document, the needs of ELs from each level have been explained. Although these are highly informative documents about the English education of newcomers, I could not find details about enrollment and/or placement procedures of ELs.

LAUSD (March 1, 2018) provides enrollment procedures for ELs with a practical pathway (Please see Figure 7) that includes technical information mentioned above. During enrollment, if the child only speaks English, that child is not considered an EL and attends the Mainstream English Program. If his/her native language is different than English, then s/he

takes a proficiency exam. If s/he cannot get a large enough score to enroll in the Mainstream English Program, then s/he will receive an information letter about Instructional Program Options for ELs. This letter will include the English Proficiency exam score, instructional program, and reclassification requirements, and then parents will be asked to choose an appropriate plan for their children.

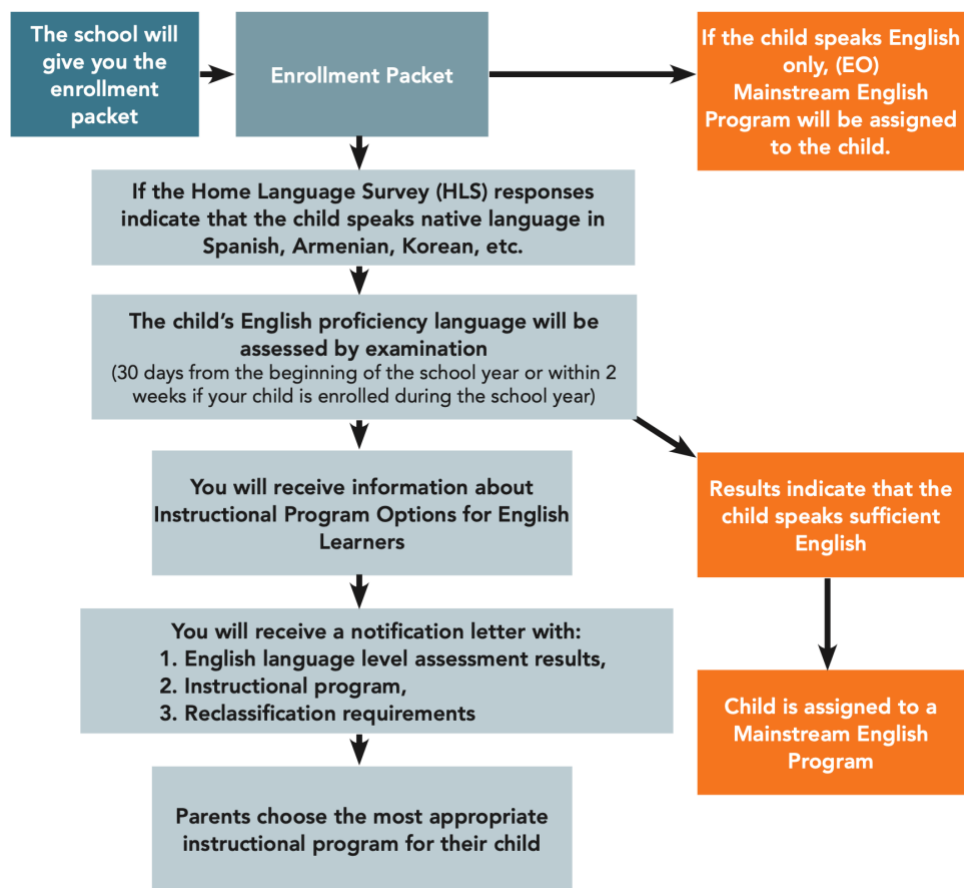


Figure 7. English Learner Pathway for Student Enrollment (LAUSD, March 1, 2018, p.31)

To sum up, the United States and specifically California have very systematically regulated the enrollment and placement procedures of newcomer middle school level students. Written rules and applications of these written rules have been matching. Related offices of federal and state-level relevant departments have continuously improved the system by publishing regulative letters, fact sheets, and the sets of questions & answers.

Finally, some important points and criteria used during enrollment and placement processes of newcomer middle school level students in Turkey and Southern California can be summarized as below (Please see Table 7.)

Turkey	Southern California
Proof of residency and age are the basic required documents.	Proof of residency, age, and immunization are the basic required documents.
The Ministry of National Education applies a Turkish Language Proficiency exam twice a year for all newcomers. The results of this test are used to determine students who attend in compliance classes (like ELs in the U.S.).	Schools and districts apply English Proficiency tests to determine ELs.
Teacher commissions in schools apply placement exams to newcomers to decide their grade levels from four subjects (Turkish, Mathematics, Social and Natural Sciences).	School districts may apply exams to test English and Mathematics levels of newcomers, but these tests are not specifically for the placement. These are for deciding the needs of children. Schools can buy these assessment services from private companies.
Placement to the appropriate grade levels is generally based on placement tests and ages of children.	Placement to the appropriate grade levels is generally based on ages of children.
Although there is no specific explanation for race-criterion, according to my experiences, race-neutral approaches are used.	Race-neutral approaches are preferred. Generalized race-based approaches or approaches that depend on individual racial

	classifications can be used according to school districts' goals.
There is no specific regulation for special education needs evaluation during enrollment.	Newcomer children evaluated for their special education needs during enrollment.
Segregation of newcomer students from other students is not welcomed if it is not necessary. Each student can join the compliance classes, in which there are only newcomers, at most two consecutive semesters.	Segregation of newcomer students from other students is not welcomed if it is not necessary. After English learning classes, newcomers join in the mainstream classes as other students.

Table 7. Comparison of Turkey and Southern California about Enrollment Procedures of Newcomer Middle School Level Students

When Table 7 is examined, one can see that both regions have similar priorities about the enrollment of newcomers in middle schools. Southern California and Turkey have been using standardized language proficiency tests to determine children's language levels during the registration. Middle schools in Southern California apply these tests whenever newcomer students want to enroll in during the school year; on the other hand, the Ministry of National Education in Turkey applies the central language proficiency test twice a year. Both application methods make sense when their education systems are considered. Southern California does not have a central education system as in Turkey, so testing newcomers during enrollment in schools is more encouraging for newcomers there because they will not waste time until while waiting for the central language test. On the other hand, Turkey's method can prevent differences between the assessments of different schools and provide a more unified strategy

for the enrollment of newcomers. One drawback of this method can be wasting the time of newcomers until the next exam. However, newcomers are accepted to the schools anytime when they enter the country. They are allowed to take the language proficiency exam even after they start their education. After they receive their test scores, their situations are examined again by the regional education directorates and school administrations.

There are two critical differences between the enrollment and placement criteria of the two regions. The first one is determining special education levels of newcomers. Southern California takes measures for newcomers who need special education during the enrollment. However, I could not find any specific information about this issue in Turkey. The second difference is the placement exam that is applied in Turkey. Turkey gives a chance to skip one level during enrollment if the newcomer students pass the placement exam prepared by the schoolteachers' committee. This committee prepares an exam to test Mathematics, Literature, and Science levels of newcomers. Except for this placement test, there are no tests to assess newcomers' levels for other subjects than the language in both regions.

Research Question 2: How are newcomer students' academic achievements assessed throughout their middle school education?

To answer this research question, I have mainly used my observation notes and interviews with educators while getting help from some related artifacts. I did not have a chance to interview with all teachers that I did observations in their classroom. This is why it is difficult to compare what I observed and what I heard from the teacher. However, I believe that my observations and my interviews can provide a general framework for the assessment of newcomer students in urban middle schools in Turkey and Southern California.

In this section, I answered the second research question under two subtopics for Turkey and Southern California. Under each subtopic, I have written my observations about the in-

class assessments of newcomer students in integrated classes. I could not observe midterm or final exams, so these observations generally cover in-class activities such as class participation (questions, answers, & comments of newcomer students), homework controls, and group works. Then, I have provided the related parts of my interviews, which have more details about midterm and final exams, or the academic assessment strategies that I could not see in the class. Finally, I have combined what I observed in integrated classes and what I heard from educators to make a holistic inference. I have followed this order for both regions, and in the end, I have made a general comparison between the two countries.

Assessment of Newcomer Middle School Students in Turkey

After the open-door policy of the Ministry of National Education in Turkey for the schooling of newcomer children, the majority of public schools accepted newcomer students all around the country. The percentage of newcomer students in the schools has generally depended on the location of schools. Refugee families settled in neighborhoods that have more job opportunities and/or less living expenses. This is why some public schools have a very high newcomer student population, while others do not.

Although the education system is central in Turkey, the changing population of newcomers may cause differences in the application of some rules and regulations. For this reason, I chose three schools from different locations and with varying percentages of newcomers.

The first school that I observed in Turkey was T1, which a public middle school. People who live in this school's neighborhood are generally from the middle socioeconomic level. There are approximately 600 students in the school, and more than 25% of the total population is newcomer students from Iraq, Syria, and Uzbekistan. The percentage of newcomers can change in each class. For example, the first class that I observed in T1 was TA which 55% of

the students were newcomers. Since the compliance class application is a new regulation, small or middle scale schools may not have compliance classes yet. TA did not have a compliance class, either. As I explained before, classrooms are generally assigned to student groups in Turkey, and teachers visit each classroom for each subject. There are a few exceptional classes that are assigned to teachers, such as science laboratories, physical education classes, art, or information technology rooms. For these exceptions, students visit the classes, and teachers wait for them in those rooms. So, in integrated classes, native students and newcomers stay in the same classrooms, and they sit in assigned seats for 5-8 hours.

When I visited the TA, they had the Information Technologies class in the computer laboratory. There was one computer for every two students, and they were learning how to write and send an email. The teacher was asking students some questions and picking a volunteer student to answer. I realized that only Turkish students were raising hands while other students were silently sitting. I could not be sure that if they were even listening to the teacher. Some of them were not looking at the board. The teacher demonstrated how to write and send an email on her computer by projecting it to the board. She warned some students when they put their heads on desks. After finishing explaining, she asked students to practice on their computers, and admonished: “Please, students who know Turkish do not sit together. Please be sure that you are sitting with those who don’t know Turkish.” Then, Turkish students arranged their seats by themselves accordingly. Turkish students were actively using computers with the newcomers silently watching them. If they did not look at the computer, the teacher warned them again in Turkish. Finally, each group sent one email to the teacher, and they got a “+” (plus) as a group.

After the TA, I went to the TB, which was a science class for 5th graders. Seven students out of 26 were newcomers in this class. The teacher told me before the class that “You will

directly understand who the newcomer is, and who is not. Refugee students in this class are never interested in the lesson. They just come and go. I tried many things, and I don't know what to do more. I just keep continuing to teach other students, and to make newcomers at least busy with something related to the lesson." As she said, it was easy for me to understand which students were newcomers. They were sitting as two groups, and they were talking to each other in their language. The teacher firstly checked the homework from students' notebooks quickly. Newcomer students who at least tried to write something on their notebooks related to the assignment got "+" (plus) from the homework check, but only two of them could get "+." Then, the teacher projected some questions to the board, and they solved altogether. She picked the volunteer students, but newcomers did not volunteer. The teacher asked the newcomer students to draw graphs on their notebooks, so they started to draw the diagrams in the question while others were answering the questions loudly. One native student complained about a newcomer student because the newcomer was staring at him instead of drawing the graph, and the teacher warned the newcomer student in Turkish. The newcomer understood the teacher and turned back drawing. I could see a difference between newcomers and natives in this class. I felt that newcomers looked like visitors more than students. They were not involved in the learning environment and in-class assessments. The third class in T1 was TC which was the Life of Prophet Muhammad course for the 7th graders. Three out of 25 students are newcomers in this class. The teacher showed me who the refugee students were by standing near them. While teacher was explaining the topic, students asked many questions by raising their hands. Newcomers did not raise their hands, but the teacher said their names to encourage them while she was talking as: *"Isn't it, Student-Y? ... Don't you agree, Student-Z?"* Newcomers nodded instead of answering. One time a refugee student asked a question silently, and the teacher answered him enthusiastically. She several times said "What a good question! Thank you!" Although I did not observe any in-class assessment processes throughout the course, the teacher

gave me details after the class. She said that she was doing oral exams, and newcomers were good at them. She generally made natives and newcomers sit together to help each other. She said she gave extra time during the exams for newcomers and gave some clues about the answers if they needed.

The fourth class that I observed, the TD, was English as a Foreign Language course for 7th graders. This was a very small-sized class with nine students, and three of them were refugees. The teacher was reviewing the topic with an activity game on the smartboard. She asked students to come voluntarily to do matchings on the touchscreen. Native students raised their hands, but newcomers did not at first. Then, she said that “Everybody will come to the board with a partner, not alone.” Newcomers raised their hands immediately. The teacher came near to me and said: “Look! They want to come, but they are shy to do it alone. This is why I said you would come in pairs. What they need is just a small push, that’s it. They are smart kids!” All students solve the questions twice, and they got “+.” They all looked like they enjoyed the activity.

The final class that I visited in the T1 was the TE, which was the Turkish Literature class for 6th graders. There was a total of 16 students, and 6 of them were newcomers. I observed another activity hour about Turkish grammar rules. The teacher projected a set of questions to the board, and students wrote down the questions on their notebooks. Students were prepared for this activity hour, they studied, and they were ready to answer questions. They were voluntarily going to the board, underlining some words, and determining their grammatical structures. The student who solved the question could choose the next volunteer student. Some students were more enthusiastic than others. At first glance, it was difficult to understand who newcomers were, but the teacher helped me. Two of the newcomer students were actively participating in the class, but the other four were silent. But, almost the same

percentage of native students was also quiet. So, I could not claim that there was a difference between natives and newcomers about participation in in-class activities. Besides this, I also did not observe any difference in teacher's attitudes towards these two groups about giving feedbacks during the class activity.

After the T1, I went to the T2, which is a large public middle school with more than a thousand students, and in a neighborhood, which can be classified as from upper-middle socioeconomic level. Approximately 20% percent of the students were newcomers who came from different countries such as Iraq, Syria, Kirgizstan, and Azerbaijan. There were also four compliance classes in this school. The first class that I observed in this school was the TF, which was the Information Technologies course for 5th graders. There were 13 students in the class, and two of them were newcomers. The teacher helped me to understand which students were newcomers before the class, and she told me that they would have a review for this hour. I could not have distinguished newcomers if the teacher did not inform me earlier. All students were actively participating in the class discussion, and they were all speaking Turkish very fluently. Since there were compliance classes in the school, the students that I observed in integrated classes had already known Turkish very well. Therefore, I did not observe any difference between the two groups during the class, and the teacher behaved in the same way to all students.

The second class that I observed in the T2 was the TG, which was the Gymnastics course for the 5th graders. There was a total of 15 students in this class, and 3 of them were newcomers. Students and the teacher were in the playground. In the first 15 minutes, the teacher asked them to make some specific moves, and then for the rest of the class, students were allowed to play by themselves because it was almost the end of the semester. Again, I did not observe any difference between the groups. The teacher was directing and encouraging all

students in the same way. Newcomers were also speaking in Turkish between themselves. They were participating in activities as much as native students. In short, I could not notice any assessment related difference in this school.

The final school that I observed in Turkey was the T3. It is an Islamic religious public middle school in a very poor slum. There is a big refugee population around because the area located close to the work centers of the city, and housing is highly affordable comparing to other places in the city. There are approximately 300 students in the school, and 20%-30% of each class are newcomers. Genders are not mixed in the classes, but these are integrated classes regarding citizenship status. In other words, newcomers and native students are taught in the same classes, and there was not the compliance class in this school.

I observed three classes in the T3. The first one was the TH, which is the Culture of Religion and Knowledge of Ethics class for 5th graders. When I first entered the class, the teacher knew that I would be there for observation, but he did not know that my research was about newcomer students. In the first ten minutes of my observation, I was highly impressed because this was the first time that I had seen a fully bilingual class in a public school in Turkey. The teacher was speaking in Arabic and Turkish fluently, and the majority of students was participating in the class discussion. After that 10 minutes, the teacher came to ask me if I needed anything for my observation, and I told him if he could stand near newcomer students so I could understand which students were newcomers. In the next five minutes, he stood near almost all students. I thought that he misunderstood me, and I asked him again to stand only newcomers. He told me that 15 out of 17 students in the class were newcomer students, and only half of the students knew Turkish. This was why he talked in Arabic, and all students could understand him. (Turkish students also know some Arabic in the class, because in Islamic religious public schools, Arabic and English are taught.)

In this class, the teacher had given students homework last week, and he checked this homework when I was in the class. The assignment was memorizing sentences from the Quran. The teacher was asking one by one to each student to say these sentences loudly, and if the student could say it, she was getting a “+” (plus) which would affect their general scores later; otherwise, she got “-” (minus), and this also affects the overall score. As I observed, there was no difference between newcomers and natives during this homework check. I was expecting that newcomers could answer better because they generally knew Arabic, and it would be easy to memorize sentences in Arabic for them. But they were also struggling to say the sentences as Turkish students do. The teacher had to encourage some students because they were shy and did not want to say it out loud. The teacher came near them and helped them say it out loud. The teacher did not look angry with those who could not memorize; he just said, *“Oh, I did not expect this from you. I will wait for you to memorize it until the end of today, and you can come and tell me during breaks; otherwise, you will get a minus.”* If the student did not understand him, he repeated in partially or fully in Arabic.

After the homework check, I observed that newcomer students were participating in the class discussion, and they were making jokes between themselves. The teacher was asking questions, and students were answering questions voluntarily. I did not observe any difference between newcomer students and natives about any in-class assessment processes. I want to add the teacher’s comment here. I noticed that Turkish students were not sitting together; they were with newcomer students. I asked the teacher after the class whether they chose to sit down in this way or teachers made them sit. He said: *“This is their preference. Frankly, I think they aren’t even aware of who are newcomers or who are natives. They are just classmates, and no one cares who is Syrian, who is Afghan, who is Turk.”*

The second class that I observed in the T3 was the TI, which was the English as a Foreign Language class for 5th graders. The teacher knew that I would observe her class, and she let me know the seats of newcomers before the class. Eight out of 16 students were newcomers, and two of the newcomers were sisters. Students were sitting in a mixed way, and I did not observe any student clics in the class. The teacher was doing a general review and asking some questions to the students. In the first couple of minutes, only native students raised their hands, and the teacher did not push the other students. Then, she started to ask questions by saying students' names, and if the student did not want to answer, she encouraged them by making the question easier and giving some clues smilingly. I found the class environment positive, although newcomer students behaved more shyly than the native ones while participating in the class discussion. I did not hear any Arabic words in this class. The teacher did not know Arabic, and students were not talking to each other. They were directly speaking and listening to the teacher, or carefully writing the notes on the board to their notebooks.

The last class that I visited in the T3 was the TJ, which was the Counseling hour for 8th graders. Counseling hours are not usual courses as others, such as mathematics or literature. The counseling teacher has a room, and generally accepts students one by one in this room. However, if there is a need for general counseling for a specific group, then a counseling hour is organized. This need may be an urgent intervention such as a committed crime that affects a group of students, or a loss of someone in the class, but generally, these counseling hours are for reducing stress or motivating students for exams. The counseling hour that I observed was teaching some effective studying methods to 8th graders because there is a national exam at the end of 8th grade. Students who get good scores from this national exam will continue to top high schools, while others will be placed in high schools regarding their addresses. There were three newcomer students and twenty native students in this class. The principal wanted me to join this class because there would be general feedback about students' academic

achievements according to their exam scores throughout the semester besides the presentation of effective studying methods.

The school counselor started to talk by thanking students for their efforts throughout the semester. She said: *“I know all of you are trying hard, but I specifically want to congratulate the Student-X today. She did a great job, and she has become the top of the class according to her exam scores as she did the last year, too.”* After the class, the counselor told me that the Student-X came to Turkey four years ago from Afghanistan. She did not know Turkish when she first came. She tried so hard, and some teachers specifically helped her after observing her efforts. Then, she became the top in almost all exams after the second year that she arrived in Turkey. The counselor continued to give feedback to other students. She was speaking only in Turkish. I could not have distinguished newcomers and natives if she did not tell me before the class. Newcomers were also actively participating in the discussion and asking questions about effective studying methods. As I understand from the general feedback about the academic achievements of students, there was no difference between refugee students and native students. There were successful students and other students that should have studied harder in both groups.

Until here, I shared my observations for the academic assessments of newcomer students in integrated classrooms in Turkey. To provide more insight into the assessment processes, I have written related parts of interviews with educators. Educators generally said that the assessment of newcomer students was challenging for them, and they explained their academic assessment strategies in their classes as below.

TT-1, TT-2, and TT-9 said that they used the same criteria during written exams in integrated classes for both groups. TT-2 explained this by saying: *“If newcomer students fail the exam, we can make them continue the upper grade at the end of the year. There is a general*

meeting of teachers at the end of the year every year. If all teachers agree that the student who fails the exams does not have any behavioral problem, and it would be better if s/he continues his/her education with classmates the next year, then we sign a paper that s/he is allowed to pass to the upper grade. So, newcomer students can be accepted as successful even though they fail from my exams.”

TT-1, TT-2, and TT-9 helped newcomer students to adapt in classes with different methods, and they did in-class assessments with these methods. TT-2 provided easier and more explanatory activity sheets for newcomer students for class exercises, and TT-1 used the peer education method. TT-1 said that she matched the newcomer students with other migrant students who have been in Turkey for a longer time. So, the other student could translate what was taught in the class and could help the newcomer student to answer his/her questions by asking the teacher. TT-1 also gave different types of homework regarding the levels of newcomers. TT-1 added that *“I wish we could have more time in the class, so we could specifically spend time with all students one by one. But we have a curriculum to follow, and we have other students in the class as well. We do our best to include all students in the learning environment. I observe that native students understand these difficulties and help newcomers to be successful even if we don’t assign them to do this. Both groups (natives and newcomers) put extra efforts.”*

TT-9 used the methods shared by TT-1 and TT-2, and she indicated that she felt the urge to behave more tolerantly for newcomers in the class. She tried to communicate with each newcomer student one by one during the lesson, and it became highly difficult. She said: *“A fair academic assessment is possible only if there is a common language that can be understood by everyone in the class. Since this problem cannot be solved soon, I believe that positive differentiation can be a solution to provide justice. It should be possible to apply different and*

easier exams for newcomers, to give them extra time during exams, or to change criteria for the graduation of these students.”

TT-4 stated that all assessment criteria should be the same for newcomer students as native students. She said that *“I believed that this is fairer for both natives and refugees. The only exception for me is the students who don’t know Turkish. I can help these students while assessing them. For example, I can make them individual exams in their language (TT-4 knows Arabic), or if the newcomer student understands the question in Turkish but wants to answer in his/her language, I can accept this. But, if they can understand and reply in Turkish, then they are equal with native students, and there is no need for different assessment methods.”*

TT-6 also believed that there was no difference between newcomer students and native students in terms of academic achievement, and she did not apply different assessment methods in her classes. She said: *“The success of students is about their interests in the lessons, their socioeconomic level, and their families. In my school, they are all the same for me. A refugee student doesn’t join in the class activities; a native student does that too. A refugee student fails from the exam; a native student fails too. The general academic level of my students isn’t high. So, newcomers aren’t too different from other students. Indeed, for example, my Afghan student is the most hardworking one in his class. I have a few successful students, and they motivate me to do more for them. As I said before, their citizenships are not important; it (the motivation) should come from the inside of students.”*

TT-7 is a technology and design teacher, and she did not face problems in her class during the assessment of newcomers and native students. Her classes were generally on the practice, and she needed to describe the activity at the beginning of the class. She generally experienced difficulties while she was describing the assignment. She said that since she did not know newcomers’ language, she asked other students to translate for her, or used her phone

to translate. Except for this, she was pleased with the academic performances of her newcomer students, and she did not need extra strategies for assessing them. She added: *“We, all teachers in this school, are lucky because the population of our school is smaller than other schools. We generally have 15-20 students in each class, and we have time to communicate with each student. It could be difficult to handle with integrated classes if we had more students.”*

TT-8 followed a different approach than other teachers that I interviewed. He used the same assessment materials with varying contents for newcomer students according to their levels. If a newcomer student did not know how to write even in his/her language, he assessed the student with oral exams in Arabic. He also let newcomers speak in their tongues during in-class assessments, so his classes were somehow bilingual because he also knew Arabic. He emphasized how important being bilingual of teachers who teach in integrated classes was. He added: *“I think we all have to do positive differentiation for newcomer students because they are traumatized, and they are like little trees that were cut from their roots. We have to encourage them to participate in education and assess them regarding their situations and individual differences.”*

When I consider my observations and the opinions of educators, it can be understood that teachers have been facing difficulties during the academic assessment of newcomer students in integrated classes. Their methods for providing justice in the classroom differ, and there is not an effective method specified by the Ministry on this occasion. Common issues that they face are language-related problems, and this problem is intended to be solved by starting compliance classes. For now, teachers lessen the inequality in integrated classes with different methods such as easier exams, different activity sheets, individual homework, and peer education methods.

Assessment of Newcomer Middle School Students in Southern California

Newcomer students enroll in schools in Southern California according to their addresses. The percentage of newcomer students in schools can change according to the ratio of newcomers in neighborhoods of the schools. I visited three schools from three different areas to have a broader idea. Two of these schools were public middle schools, and one was a private Islamic religious school.

The first school that I observed in Southern California was the SC1, which was a large-scale public middle school, a member of a broad school district in Southern California. There were approximately 1000 students in this school, and around 30% of them were English learners. The number of newcomers could change in each class. I had a chance to observe two integrated classes in this school. The first one was the SCA, which was a mathematics course for 7th graders. There were 29 students in the class, and three of them were newcomers in this integrated class. They were learning inequalities in math. There was one math teacher, one special education teacher, and one teaching assistant in the class. After the class, I learned that those teaching assistants came from high schools or colleges, and they helped teachers. Students in the class were sitting as groups and working on an activity sheet with their calculators. The teacher collected the papers after the class to assess them. Newcomers were sitting in different groups, and it would be impossible to understand which student was the newcomer if the administrative assistant did not help me. The teacher asked some questions to the students, and they answered voluntarily. Newcomers were volunteers, too. I generally heard English in the class, except for some conversations between newcomers, and the teacher warned a newcomer in Spanish only one time because she was distracting other students. In short, I can say that I did not observe any differences between newcomers and other students in this class about participation in class discussions, asking or answering questions, or teachers' attitudes towards them.

The second class that I visited, the SCB, was another mathematics class for 7th graders. There was a total of 23 students and two newcomers in this class. The topic was the same, but instead of group work, they solved firstly individually and then all together. Students solved problems one by one, and the teacher waited for them until they finished each question. Then, she asked who solved the problem, and students who solved raised their hands. She asked one of the students to read the question out loud and answer while she was writing the solution on the board. After they solved altogether, she asked again who found the same answer and told other students to correct their answers as on the board. They did not solve all questions in the assignment paper because the assignment was due tomorrow; this was why the teacher was picking specific questions to review all topics. Again, there were one special education teacher and one teaching assistant beside the mathematics teacher in the class; however, this time, the special education teacher was teaching three students in a small room connected to the classroom. They were not newcomers as I learned; they were special education students. Just like the SCA, I could not observe any difference between newcomers and other students in this class.

After the SC1, I went to the SC2, which was another public school in a school district in Southern California. This school also had more than 1000 students, and almost 25% of students were English Learners. I went to a science class for 6th graders, the SCC, at first. Three out of 25 students were newcomers in this class, and newcomers were sitting separately with different groups. First, the teacher asked some questions about the research homework, and the students answered voluntarily. Then, they watched a video, and sometimes the teacher stopped and asked some more questions about the video. He did not give any “+”s and “-”s while he was asking questions about homework or the video. There was a teaching assistant in this class, too, and she was sitting and watching students. I did not observe any specific difference between newcomers and other students throughout the class.

I visited the SCD, which was an ELD class after the SCC. It was not an integrated class; this was a class designed for only English Learners to learn English, and there were 14 students. I did not have a chance to observe the in-class assessment strategies of the teacher in this class. This observation provided me a perspective about how newcomer students participated in class discussions when they were all newcomers. I found students more active in the ELD class than they were in integrated classes. They were making jokes with their classmates, and they looked more self-confident while asking questions and giving answers. I do not know if this was because of the ELD teacher or the classroom environment. I felt that sharing similar experiences with other students made newcomers more relax and active in the ELD class.

I went to the SCE, which was a 6th-grade mathematics class after the SCD. There were 29 students, and six of them were newcomers. There were eight group-tables in the class, and all newcomers were sitting with different groups. The teacher started the class by asking some review questions, and newcomers did not raise their hands. Some of them had been in the ELD class that I observed, and they were more talkative there. After the teacher reviewed some questions, students started group activities. Newcomers were more silent than others, and the teacher was interested in newcomer students more than other students. He was encouraging them to get more involved in group work. This could be because the teacher knew that I was interested in newcomers, but I think that he was caring newcomers because he was a newcomer when he was a child, and this made me believe that he could make empathy with them.

The final class that I observed in the SC2 was the SCF, which was a history class for 8th graders. There was only one newcomer student in this class, and the total number of students was 33. It was the most crowded class that I observed in Southern California, but the teacher could interact with all students one by one. They were actively participating in class discussions, and there was a highly festive atmosphere in the class. The newcomer student was

one of the most active students in the class. He raised his hand several times voluntarily, and he spoke for his group during group activities. The teacher was carrying a list in which there were students' names, and she was putting "+"s and "-"s while students were answering her questions. All students were supposed to be ready for this class activity; it was the homework. The teacher checked who was prepared and who was not and encouraged students to listen to her and to focus on the activity sheet by thanking students who did properly. It was a beneficial experience for me. There were three different assessment periods in this class, and actually, they were being prepared for the next day's big writing assessment. The first one was the homework check; the second one was about understanding the article, and the third one was analyzing the article and choosing proper quotes from the article for the next day's assessment. The lesson was smoothly passing, and there were no gaps between the assessments. The teacher was checking all students one by one for each step. I did not see any difference between the newcomer student and the rest of the students regarding the teacher's attitudes and assessment criteria that she used.

The last school that I visited in Southern California was SC3, a private religious Islamic school in a low socioeconomic level neighborhood. There was a total of 55 students and five teachers in this school. Although the migrant student population was high, only two of them had been in the US for less than five years. It was a very interesting experience for me because this was the first time I had been in an integrated and combined class at the same time. In this school, there were two groups at the middle school level. The first group was for 5th and 6th graders, and the second group was 7th and 8th graders. Each group was taught in one class together. I observed four hours of the second group (7th and 8th graders); the first two hours were science, and the second two hours were literature.

There were ten students in the SCG, which was the science class of 7th and 8th graders, and one of these students were newcomers. Four of the students were 8th graders, and six of them were 7th graders. The newcomer was in the 7th grade. It was a very small classroom, and I saw no technological equipment in the class. There were two big tables in the class, and each level was sitting around each table. The teacher was teaching two different topics to each level at the same time. 8th graders were discussing photosynthesis, and 7th graders were learning the work, energy, and power. The teacher was teaching a group and giving an assignment to them, such as reading an article, answering questions on a paper, or a group discussion, then he went to teach the other group. When he finished explaining the topic and answering students' questions in the group, he turned back the first group to check what they were doing. It was a noisy class, and students in a group were distracted easily when the teacher was interested in students of the other group. The teacher did not give any "+"s or "-"s during the class, or he did not check homework. He generally asked if they understood or if there was any problem with the activity. The newcomer student was actively participating in the group discussions and asked questions when she did not understand. The teacher gave an example of playing bowling while he was teaching about the energy, and the newcomer student did not know what bowling was. Then, he described it by pretending like he was throwing a bowl, and she understood. Before the break, the teacher gave two different homework assignments to each grade, and the class was over. Generally, I can say that I could not observe any specific moment about the assessment of students in this class.

After the SCG, I visited the SCH, which was a literature class for the same group, but this time two more students joined in the class. There were three tables, and this time, students were sitting mixed regardless of their grades. She wrote down two review questions to the board and picked volunteer students to answer. After the class, I learned that this was the strategy of the teacher for checking the homework of students. The newcomer student was

highly active in this class. She gave an example that students seemed to like a great deal, and the teacher found her answer very poetic. The teacher was teaching students as they were all from the same grade levels and using the same activity paper. I could not notice any difference between the newcomer student and other students about the class participation, asking questions, or being a volunteer to answer questions. Also, the teacher did not behave differently towards her than other students.

According to my observations, I can say that generally, there was no difference between newcomers and other students in Southern California in terms of in-class assessments. Newcomers did not have any language problems, or they did not isolate themselves or were not isolated by the other students or the teacher in the class. Teachers used the same criteria for assessing students during lessons. It can be good to remind that I visited only ten classes and all teachers knew that I was there for newcomer students. After my observations ended, I have checked my observations with interviews.

SCT-1 and SCT-2 were working in a very institutional school belonging to a large school district. They were trained to teach in multicultural classrooms, and they had standard criteria for handling issues in integrated classes. SCT-1 was also an immigrant child when he first came to the US. He said that he had empathy for newcomers. He prepared his lesson plans for teaching three different levels in the same class to reach out to all students. He taught the whole class first, and then he continued with small group work so he could teach one more time for each group. Then, he gave extra attention to each student who was still behind others. He used technology while he was assessing students. He prepared different assessment tests for different levels, and students were taking these tests individually by using computers in their classes. I asked him if newcomers knew how to use technology, and he said that yes, they were lucky for this. It did not matter which country they were coming; students were all familiar

with the internet and computers. He said that the final assessments were the same for all students because they needed to meet standards. But, for the other assessments such as homework or in-class activities, he could accommodate the criteria for students. He added that a student who did not know English, as well as others, could draw or write a smaller piece than others or take a multiple exam test at his/her level. Teachers were trying to make testing comfortable for students. If newcomer students did not participate in class discussions or not asking questions as others, he made them share out their ideas in small groups. Sometimes, he did not wait for them to raise their hands voluntarily during whole-class discussions, and he picked students randomly to give them more chances to speak.

SCT-2 explained how she was trying to provide justice during in-class assessments as: *“I do a lot of heterogeneous grouping, so there is usually maybe like one student who is high functioning on reading, and then there’s one student who excels in writing or in presenting or in grammar spelling.”* She believed that in this way students were benefiting each other, and she assessed the outputs of all groups beside individual assessments. She used the same rubric for newcomer students with the general district test that had been taken at the beginning of the year, so she could follow the improvement of newcomer students overtime in different categories by comparing the scores. She also used technology to track students’ levels by state standards. She added that *“I track student participation; I always have a clipboard with the roster. Every time they participate in class, I give them a point and it also allows me to take notes on it throughout the day. I use that to make sure that I hear all of my students’ voices because especially with students who are emerging bilinguals or still learning English like I want to make sure that I hear them speak on a daily basis and so tracking that helps me to make sure that I’m doing that.”* She sometimes provided some English supports to newcomer students for some writing assignments. She gave some starter sentences to help them, but she wanted to be sure that at the end of the year, all students met the same standards.

Newcomer students of SCT-4 knew how to convey their messages because they went to public schools before starting the school of SCT-4, but their writing or mathematics skills were below basic. Some of her students did not have any school experiences before, she differentiated her instruction most of the time for them. She said: *“When I took at level students, then they were put on a computer to learn English and develop vocabulary. When I worked with the migrant students, then the rest would do independent work. I felt that when the students came from public schools their spoken English was developed, but if they came directly then I had to work on the spoken English as well. I felt that kids coming from Afghanistan had more issues because some of them have never gone to a school before. Sometimes they have no one to help them at home. The Syrian kids were able to pick up fast because they went to schools in Jordan and then came here. When we differentiate instructions, then we differentiate assessment as well. I never used the same for migrant students. If a spelling test has 20 words, then my spelling test of a migrant student would have 10 words and they would be first grade level. They take two computerized tests one in fall and the other in the spring and both are adaptive.”*

SCT-6 explained her assessment strategy by giving an example of a newcomer student she had. Her student was going to 8th grade, but her actual level was 2nd grade. She was having difficulties, especially at reading. So, what SCT-6 did was to make adjustments in her lessons for the newcomer student. She was sitting next to her during her exams, and she was reading questions to her student and writing her answers. She always tried to encourage her. However, since the general exams were meant to meet state criteria, she did not have too much to do for those exams. She also emphasized the importance of the parent’s interests and supports for students to provide additional help for coursework or sending summer schools.

SCT-7 was a school counselor in a school, and I asked her some questions about if she encountered any complaints from newcomer students about their scores or assessment-related problems. She said that these kinds of problems were, unfortunately, secondary issues for newcomer students. They came to her office for very different problems, such as the transition to a new life, being separated from their parents, or other traumatic situations. So, they were struggling with other significant issues than the fair assessment in integrated classes.

SCT-8 and SCT-9 were working in a school in a very disadvantaged area. It was a small school, and there was one teacher from each subject in this school. So, which strategies they applied for their classes were based upon individual teacher decisions; in other words, there was not a standard criterion for handling educational problems in integrated classes. SCT-8 explained to me how they were aware of the academic/linguistic levels of newcomer students and helped them accordingly. He said that they used the same assessment strategies in midterm exams and final exams for all students, but he made some accommodations for newcomer students in his class. Since he knew the levels and paces of all students and his classes were not crowded, he calls students one by one to help them. For example, he was telling newcomers which problem in the exam could be more challenging for them than other students, so he explained the question for them individually or let them use calculators during math exams. He was encouraging newcomers if they participated in class activities less than others.

SCT-9 said that she was also using the same tests for newcomers and others, but she grades by using different rubrics. If newcomer students understood what lesson was taught and they had a good foundation of it, then she felt like she was done well enough, and she let them move on to the next topic. She did not want to bombard them with too much information because she believed that this was how she lost them. She emphasized that there were not too many differences in the assessment rubrics of these two groups in her current classes because

their levels were not too different. She gave homework to all students, but she said that *“They all come from different backgrounds, a little troubling sometimes... so I don’t want to bombard them with too much homework. I do one or two pages of the homework. They come back the following day; we go over it to see if everybody understands the lesson before we move on. So, I give homework every single day, but ... I’m lucky if I get three days out of the five days of homework back because kids are doing other stuff outside the classroom.”*

When I was observing classes, I could not notice that how teachers were accommodating the assessment of two groups. After I interviewed, I could see that teachers were following some invisible steps to provide justice in the classroom for both groups. (Please see Table 8.)

Turkey	Southern California
I could not find specific written rules about the assessment of newcomers in integrated classes.	I could not find specific written rules about the assessment of newcomers in integrated classes.
Teachers did not have multicultural education training when they earn their teaching credentials.	Teachers had to take some related courses to learn how to teach in multicultural classrooms when they earn their teaching credentials.
Teachers generally spend their personal times to teach newcomers.	Teachers generally do not spend their personal times to teach newcomers.
Teachers have more flexibility about the assessment of newcomers.	Teachers have to follow some steps and meet some criteria about the assessment of newcomers.
Teachers generally prepare assessment tools according to the levels of students in their	Teachers generally use the same assessment tools to meet the district or state criteria.

classes, and they differentiate the levels of difficultness regarding the newcomer students' levels.	
Teachers let newcomers pass the level if they do not have any behavioral problems even though they do not meet the passing score criteria.	All students have to meet the specific criteria to pass the level.

Table 8. Comparison of Turkey and Southern California about Academic Assessments in Middle School Level Integrated Classes

I have found teachers more prepared and informed in Southern California about migrant education. They did not tell me that they did not know what to do, or that they did not know how to handle specific problems related to education in integrated classes. I learned that they had to take training about how to teach in multicultural classes when they earned their teaching credentials.

On the other hand, in Turkey, teachers did not have multicultural education training when they were in universities except those who took some elective courses about it. Although the ministry has been providing in-service training (online and face to face), teachers think that they need more information, more materials, and more support to deal with problems in integrated classes.

In Southern California, teachers did not mention language problems if I specifically did not ask them. I can see that the ELD education is a crucial and inseparable part of mainstream education, while Turkey has been trying to improve and generalize compliance classes throughout the country.

I understand that more criteria are standardized at the state level or the district levels, and teachers try to follow the given steps in Southern California. However, in Turkey, teachers are more flexible about the education of newcomers. Many things are up to teachers about their education, such as the assessment criteria, providing extra support for them, or creating a group learning area, etc. This situation forces teachers to create their solutions. While some teachers do not push the limits, some teachers who try to make a difference for newcomer students do extraordinary jobs, and their students become so lucky.

The importance of parents' attention was emphasized by Turkish teachers several times, while only one educator from Southern California mentioned it. It can be related to the school culture. In Turkey, parents are expected to see teachers regularly, and teachers visit students' houses at least once in a semester. These family and teacher meetings help students to keep motivated. This is why teachers give extra importance to these meetings and emphasize the necessity of them. In Southern California, teachers generally do not visit students' houses, and meetings of parents & teachers are usually done on specific days with appointments. In some schools, parents are informed regularly via emails about their children's improvement. Maybe this is why parents' effects on the academic achievements of students were not emphasized a lot in Southern California as much as in Turkey.

Discussion

In this study, I tried to understand the education of newcomers in Turkey and Southern California. I asked the question of how displaced students are being assessed in urban middle schools in these two regions, and searched answers by analyzing documents, interviews with educators, and integrated class observations. My investigation has deepened in two areas. The first one is the placement criteria of newcomer students when they first attend middle schools, and the second one is formative and summative assessments of newcomer students throughout their middle school education.

According to the placement criteria of Turkey and Southern California, I found that Southern California has already regulated its standards, while Turkey continues to improve newcomers' placement regulations. Of course, there is a big impact on the starting year of hosting immigrants and refugees for these two countries. Turkey has been handling these issues for less than a decade, while Southern California has been a top-rated destination for immigrants for many years. In both countries, education is free for newcomers, and they can be placed in the schools regarding their ages and addresses. There are placement exams for both regions, but these are not compulsory for registration. These are for determining their language levels, or (for Turkey) the grades that they should start from.

When it comes to the general assessment that is applied to newcomers throughout their middle school education, I have found some differences between two regions. For example, teachers' training involves education in multicultural environment in Southern California, while it does not in Turkey. Instead, there are several in-service trainings to teach educators how to handle problems in integrated classes. Another important point that I notice was that almost all criteria are standardized by the state and school districts in Southern California. On the other hand, there are fewer standards in Turkey about the assessment of newcomers.

This situation also gives more flexibility and responsibility to teachers in Turkey. I have noticed that this flexibility can be useful for students because some teachers even spend extra personal time on these students in Turkey. Almost all of them told me that they helped them during breaks, or after classes if they need further explanation for a topic that they did not understand. TT-6 said: *“My time has no limit if they need me. If a student asks me help, I stay in school no matter how late it is.”* TT-8 also said: *“No one asked me to teach Turkish to these students, or no one paid me for this. I do it just for these innocent children. It comes from here (He showed his heart).”* However, this flexibility can also lead to the isolation of newcomers. None of my participants was ignoring their newcomer students, but they said that some of their colleagues did not push themselves for doing something for them. Therefore, the faith of many newcomers is in the hands of their teachers.

It is hard to say that having more written rules or having flexibility is better. Both systems have benefits and drawbacks in different ways. I asked teachers how newcomers’ assessment processes can be improved to provide more justice for them. Almost all of the educators from Southern California said that they did not think about it before, and after they thought about it, they answered what they could do more individually. They replied that they could spend more time with newcomers in the class to motivate them, or they could encourage them more, etc. On the other hand, teachers answered this question with broader perspectives and without hesitation. They mentioned what the state, the school administration, teachers, and parents could do. I found their answers very interesting. Teachers from Southern California follow the rules, and they did not feel the urge to make a change about it. I do not know the exact reason, and there can be many different thoughts behind it. For example, they may believe that Southern California has a pretty fair assessment system for newcomers, so there was nothing to change. Or, they did not feel like a part of the decision process; that is why they did not think about it before, etc. On the other hand, the reason for the enthusiasm of Turkish

teachers to answer this question can have many reasons, as well. They may have many more problems in practice than teachers in Southern California have, or they can believe that their suggestions can change something in a good way. More research can be conducted in this area to understand the meaning of this difference.

The other noticeable difference for me was the teachers' ethnicities. Almost all educators that I met in Southern California were migrants, first generations, or second generations. This situation can make it easier to empathize with newcomers or their families. On the other hand, all educators that I interviewed in Turkey were Turks. The empathy levels of teachers could be studied in integrated classes, and accordingly, more bilingual teachers would be active in newcomer education.

Assessing needs of newcomers for special education is another difference between two regions. In Southern California, these needs are detected during the enrollment. In Turkey, I could not find such a process for newcomers. Testing these needs can be added to enrollment procedures in Turkey, as well.

There are some limitations of this study because of my positionality, the nature of the research methodology and methods that I used, and some other reasons. First, I was a teacher in integrated classes for five years in Turkey, and I tried not to manipulate my comments during interviews with educators. It was also difficult for me to observe classes objectively. This study is qualitative research, so during analyzing the data that I gathered, I might be under the effect of my previous experiences. Before starting the analysis, I already had themes and codes in my head and followed those during data collection. A person who does not have any experience with newcomers' education may interpret these data more differently than I did. Secondly, qualitative analysis is naturally more subjective than quantitative or mixed methods. Thirdly,

if the number of participants and the number of observations were higher than this, there could be a better interpretation with more details.

The biggest limitation of this study is the lack of literature about the assessment of newcomer students in Turkey and/or Southern California. Although many studies are conducted about newcomer students' psychologies, traumas, adaptation processes, and general education, there are just a few studies about their assessments. There is a need for more studies in this area.

More studies could help to improve justice in education. I think that one of the essential tools to create a fair educational environment is a fair academic assessment system. In both countries, the priority is teaching newcomers the language of the country. However, both countries expect newcomers to become successful in other subjects as much as others when newcomers join mainstream education even though they do not have any schooling experience before. For example, a 12-year-old girl starts from the 5th grade or 6th grade and learns Turkish or English, and she is expected to meet the same standards as other students in a year in mathematics even though she has not been in a school before coming to the hosting country. I believe that more basic classes should be added to compliance & ELD classes for making adaptation easier to the mainstream education for newcomers. Further research can be done about this issue. For example, views of teachers, students and people, who were newcomers once, can be asked.

The other point that may need further research is the difference in language classes for newcomers in Turkey and Southern California. Newcomers take ELD classes besides other courses, such as mathematics, literature, etc. So, they follow the same curriculum as other students, and they take extra English courses besides that curriculum. On the other hand, students who are in compliance classes in Turkey only learn Turkish, and they have their

classrooms and own curriculums. They take music, art, and gymnastic classes besides Turkish, but they are not assessed in those courses. They only take a Turkish general exam. Since the compliance classes are new applications in Turkey, I do not know how these classes affect the academic achievement of these students compared to newcomers who take ELD classes.

Both Southern California and Turkey has its unique educational problems regarding newcomer children. They have been improving their ways of dealing with these issues. These efforts may be helpful and inspirational for each other. Migrant/refugee education is not only the problem of these two regions, and there are many countries/regions that struggle with the same issues. Increasing the amount of research conducted in this area can help create a fairer education system for all children.

Appendices

Appendix-A: Data Collection Timeline

Process	Period
Permissions	July 2019-January 2020
Preliminary research	September 2019-October 2019
Literature Review	November 2019-February 2019
Designing data collection instruments	July 2019-December 2019
Data collection-Observation	December 2019-March 2020
Data collection-Interviews	December 2019-March 2020
Data collection-Artifacts	July 2019-March 2020
Data Analysis	December 2019-April 2020
Editing	April 2020-May 2020

Appendix B: Codes and Themes

Code/Code Label	Theme
<p>Interview, test, acceptance, enrollment, enter, placement, LTELS, ELD, mini-test, depends, document, legal, legal status, compulsory, language exam, academic exam, successful, immersion, bilingual, proficiency, separate, extra, assessment, materials, separate course, adaptation class, advanced ELD, requirements, additional, compliance classes, mathematics, literature, science, school commission</p>	<p>Enrollment and Placement</p>
<p>Meeting, credits, courses, extra, additional, separate, in class activities, attendance, homework, fair, student report, conversation, mother, father, child, disappointed, raised, raised themselves, immigrant, illegal, legal, documented, displaced, suit, working, busy, married, single, home, tired, rich, money, finance, borrow book, textbook, notebook, comfort zone, same group, clicks, feel, recommend, emotional, support, trauma, counselor, home, drop out, aunt, siblings, Spanish, English, language, ELD, half, policy, practice, native, policy, practice, document, legal, teacher, subjective, objective, include, test, inadequacy, training, education, Arabic, student home language, language usage in the classroom, district, teachers' language, Sit down, group, raise hand, ask question, manage, pictures, activities on the wall, jokes, talk first, late, attendance, sit together, equal group, angry, upset, funny, clicks, friendship, student group, engage, classroom management, behavior, affective, social, culture, district, California, Arabic, Turkish, bully, talk to, counselor, parent, grade, adaptation, stress, insecure, alone, silent</p>	<p>Academic Assessment in Middle Schools</p>

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