

# English Teachers Question on Education: “Should MEB High Schools be Converted to Anatolian High Schools?”

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**Abstract** — This study aims to investigate the perception of English teachers about the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian high schools within the viewpoints of educational linguistics in Turkish context. Also, whether the perceptions of the English teachers differ regarding gender and regional difference variables is questioned in this study. English teachers working at MEB high schools and Anatolian high schools in a city in Turkey have participated to the study. A questionnaire, “Should MEB high schools be converted to Anatolian High Schools?” has been prepared to check whether the subjects can identify whether MEB high schools should be converted to Anatolian High Schools or not within the viewpoints of educational linguistics. Their experience in both MEB high schools and Anatolian High schools in terms of foreign language quality after the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian High Schools has been analyzed and discussed in the present study. The results show that nearly all of the English Language teachers think that MEB high schools (MEB-HS) should not be converted to Anatolian high schools (AHS).

**Keywords** — Anatolian High Schools, EFL Setting, English Teachers, Turkish Context

## I. INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the Ministry of National Education announced a circular letter in which the conversion of the MEB high Schools to Anatolian High Schools all around Turkey was declared. During the time that the circular announced, 1 million 241 thousand secondary school students were about to start to the school. According to the statements of Ministry of National Education, 659,337 students could take education in the Anatolian High Schools, Anatolian Teacher High Schools, Anatolian Vocational High Schools and Anatolian Imam Hatip High Schools by the high school examinations. Besides, there were 584 thousand students who had not enrolled in any school. That is why, 615 MEB high schools were converted to Anatolian High Schools in Turkey. However, the quality of education in those schools is still questioned by academicians and experts (MEB, 2010; Demirezen, 2016).

### A. EFL Students

In educational setting, students who are going to take education are expected to explain why they learn a foreign language (Tosun, 2014). According to the needs of EFL students, the content of foreign language courses should be designed. Even it is observed that there are some educators who are trying to teach their students a foreign language in the same setting even if the level of EFL students is different from each other (Bayraktaroğlu, 2014). It is vital to understand why EFL students would like to learn a new language. Is it because of their willingness to learn or

because of the requirements of school curriculum? (Tosun, 2014). Students should be informed about the course objectives, content, course principles, learning outcomes, and their roles. Students who have learning difficulties should be observed and included in a well organized course program. Students having motivation, hyperactivity, irresponsibility problems should be handled with an expert and a teacher support (Stern, 1983).

### B. EFL teachers' background

Teachers are role models for their students not only with their professional and personal background but also with their education policy they have reflected to the institution and the country they are working for (Brown, 2000). To what extent teachers feel comfortable, secured, and free at the education setting (Tosun, 2014). Teachers should have some significant characteristics, which forms the essence of being teacher, such as patient, tolerant, professionally well- educated (Demirezen, 2016). In any case of failure in foreign language learning and teaching, teachers are expected to question their teaching methods rather than blaming the education system and students' not studying enough, as well.

### C. Education system in Turkey

Education is regarded as an important teaching and learning process that aims to improve people in a positive way. Educational activities should be evaluated in a planned and systematic way to run this process efficiently (Demir et. al., 2013). Many regulations and changes in different areas have been done to bring effectiveness in education system. English language teaching is one of those areas. Isik (2008) states that despite so many efforts and resources, English language teaching has not reached to the desired point yet. For this reason, different regulations and changes have been brought to English language teaching through the history. Some of them have had positive effect on English Language teaching, some not.

In this study, English teachers working at MEB high schools and Anatolian high schools in a city in Turkey have been chosen as subjects due to the fact that most of them will be practicing English Teachers around 15 years. Their experience in both MEB high schools and Anatolian High schools in terms of foreign language quality after the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian High Schools has been analyzed and discussed in the present study. The research questions handled within this study are as follows:

Q1: What is the perception of English Language teachers of Anatolian high schools about the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian High Schools?

Q2: Is there a significant difference between males and females in terms of the perception about the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian High Schools?

The present research is significant as it defines the perception of English teachers about the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian high schools within the viewpoints of educational linguistics and investigates whether the perceptions of the English teachers differ regarding gender and regional difference variables. In a similar vein, it is a generally accepted fact that due to the differences between MEB high schools and Anatolian High Schools in terms of students' achievement and teachers' motivation, English teachers whose nationalities are Turkish experience problems in the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian high schools. The subjects, English Language Teachers in this research also have various problems on this topic.

This study has been conducted at MEB High Schools and Anatolian High Schools in Kayseri, Turkey and only English teachers who have experienced the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian high schools attended the study. The same results may not be obtained in another MEB high schools and Anatolian High Schools in other cities all around Turkey. In addition, finding equal number of gender among English teachers is the most challenging limitation in this research. In the present research, the number of female English teachers is more than the male individuals. It may change the validity of the perception level on conversion in terms of gender. These facts constitute the limitations of the study.

## II. METHOD

### A. Setting and Participants

The number of the subjects who have participated in this study is 71 (49 females and 22 males). Their ages range between 45 and 34. All of the subjects attend the English classes in all proficiency levels in the foreign language at MEB high schools and Anatolian high schools. The participants have similar educational background and they have graduated from the English language teaching departments of the state universities in Turkey. The teachers have not taken any courses on how to deal with the probable difficulties during the conversion of the MEB high schools to the Anatolian high schools but they have some idea about the different education systems in both MEB high schools and Anatolian high schools.

**Table 1.** Anatolian High Schools (AHS) and Number of English Teachers

Anatolian High Schools	Fatma Kemal Timucin A.H.S.	8-4F/4M
	S.N.Aydın Sagir A.H.S.	7-3F/4M
	Demir Karamanci A.H.S.	10- 6F/4M
	Hisarcik A.H.S.	8-7F/1M
	Kadir Has A.H.S.	9-8F/1M
	Seker A.H.S.	11-7F/4M
	Kayseri A.H.S.	10-8F/2M
	Istikbal A.H.S.	8-6F/2M

### B. Data Collection Procedure

In this study, a questionnaire, "Should MEB high schools be converted to Anatolian High Schools?" has been prepared to check whether the subjects can identify whether MEB high schools should be converted to Anatolian High Schools or not within the viewpoints of educational linguistics. The questionnaire includes 15 items and the validity of the questionnaire has been achieved by a commission; three academicians and experts in their fields. As the main focus of study was to analyze the perception of the English Teachers working in EFL context, 15 items in the questionnaire were about the quality of education in both MEB and Anatolian High Schools, the motivation of students in both schools and teachers' expertise, and each item were listed in a meaningful order in the questionnaire to make the comprehension of the item reliable. The questionnaire has been conducted to the participants. During the implementation, the participants were informed to fill in the blanks in the demographic section and then choose the statements from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) for each item in the questionnaire.

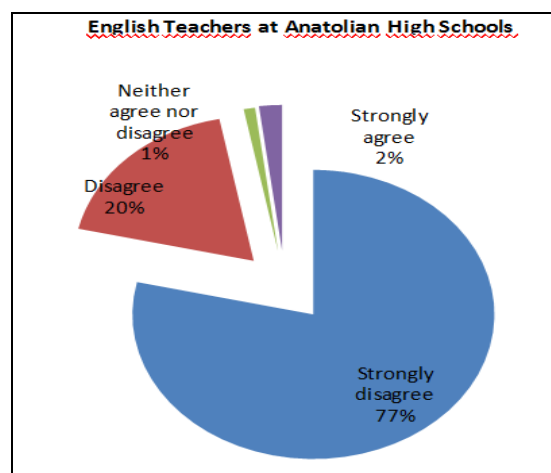
### C. Data Analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed through Statistical Package of Social Sciences 19. Descriptive statistics and frequencies have been calculated to find out the means and standard deviation of the items in the questionnaire applied to the participants and to see the distribution of normality. Besides independent samples t-test procedures have been applied to reveal differences between female and male students and to notify the difference of the perceptions of the participants on the conversion of MEB high schools to the Anatolian high schools.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the collected data will be discussed separately in relation to the research questions of the study. R.Q1: What is the perception of English Language teachers of Anatolian high schools about the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian High Schools?

### 1. MEB high schools (MEB-HS) should be converted to Anatolian high schools (AHS).

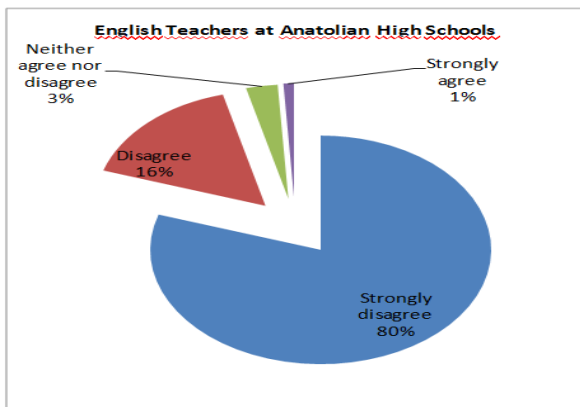


**Figure: 1** The chart of item 1

As seen in the pie chart above, nearly all of the English Language teachers think that MEB high schools (MEB-HS) should not be converted to Anatolian high schools (AHS). Only 1 percent of the participants state this issue as neither agree nor disagree. 2 % of the individuals assert that MEB high schools (MEB-HS) should be converted to Anatolian high schools (AHS). It is understood that the majority of the English teachers believe the conversion of the MEB to Anatolian high schools is not what is really expected.

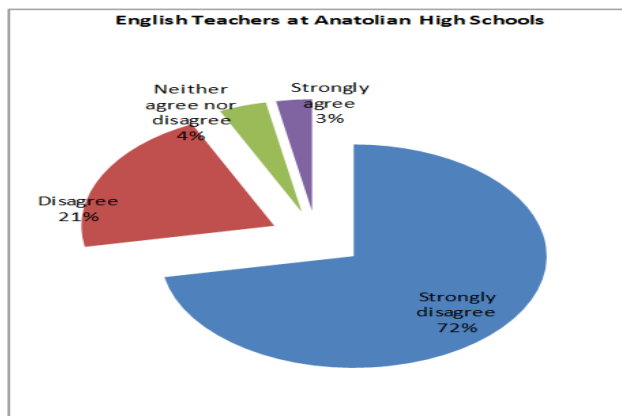
**2. There is no need to change MEB-HS to AHS.**

The second item in the questionnaire was about whether there is a need to change MEB high schools to Anatolian high schools, or not. 85% of the English teachers strongly disagree with these idea and 16 % of them are disagree. On the other hand, only 3 % of the teachers neither agrees nor disagrees with this idea and 1 % of them agree with this idea. The ratio of English teachers who have a positive perception on this issue is higher than the negative perception (See Figure 2).



**Figure: 2** The chart of item 2

**3. The conversion of MEB-HS to AHS will generally increase the quality of education in Turkey.**

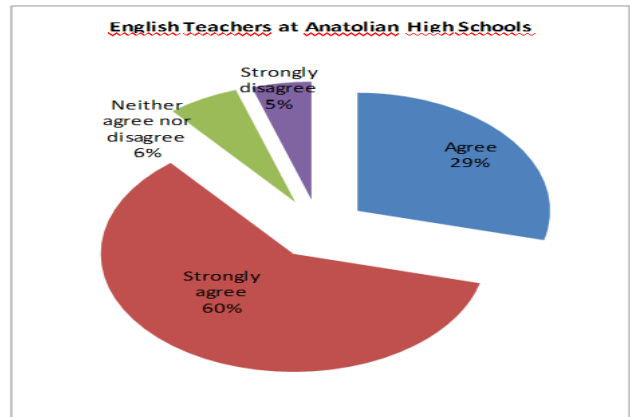


**Figure: 3** The chart of item 3

The third item of the questionnaire was that the conversion of MEB-HS to AHS will generally increase the quality of education in Turkey. The results revealed that only 3% of the English teachers thought that the conversion would increase the education quality, but this

ratio is very low compared to the rest of the participants. 72 of the English teachers thought that the conversion have not changed the quality of education in a positive way. The results reveal that the majority of the English teachers do not accept the conversion meaningful regarding educational values.

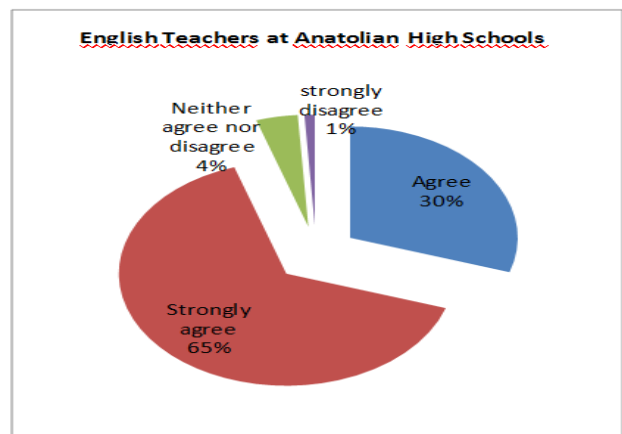
**4. The conversion of MEB-HS to AHS will decrease the quality/ productivity of education in AHS.**



**Figure: 4** The chart of item 4

As seen above, the fourth item was that the conversion of MEB-HS to AHS will decrease the quality/ productivity of education in AHS. Only 60 % of the English teachers strongly agree that the conversion decreases the quality of education, whereas this ratio is 5 % disagreement for the rest of the teachers. 29 of the English teachers agree with this idea, on the other hand 6 % of them neither agree nor disagree. According to the results, it can be inferred that the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian high schools is not appropriate to increase the quality of education.

**5. The conversion of MEB-HS to AHS will promote the motivation of student to learn foreign languages.**

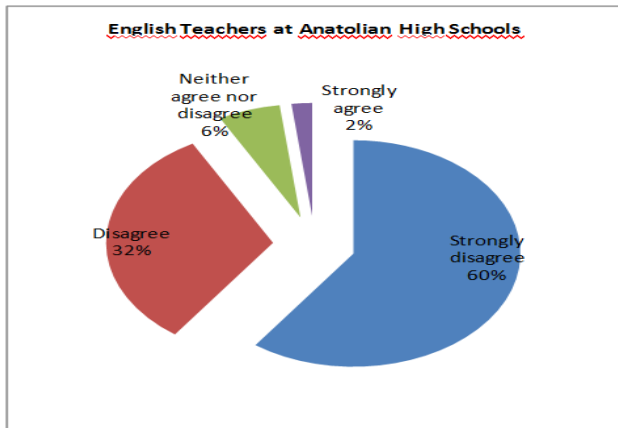


**Figure: 5** The chart of item 5

The participants were asked whether the conversion of MEB-HS to AHS will promote the motivation of student to learn foreign languages or not. There is a high difference among the ratios of English schools. According to the results, only 1 % of the English teachers think that it

would increase the motivation of students, but 65% of the English teachers state that the conversion of MEB-HS to AHS will promote the motivation of student to learn foreign languages. As indicated before, there was a statement in the questionnaire asking participant teachers to add more if they wish. Some of the English teachers indicate that they are not ready for the take education in Anatolian high schools. The results show that there is a big problem about promoting students' motivation in learning foreign language.

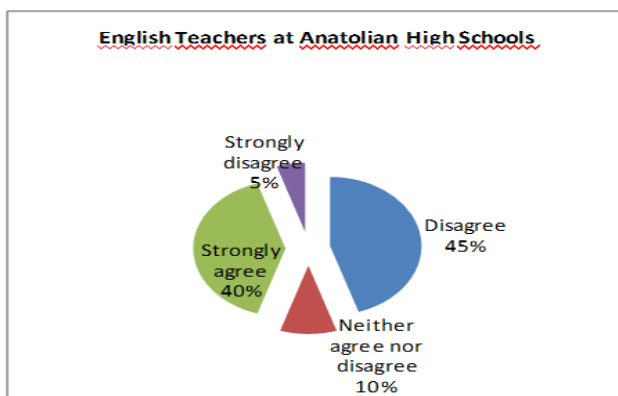
6. *The conversion of MEB-HS to AHS is impossible because the educational and expertise teacher background is inadequate at the moment.*



**Figure: 6** The chart of item 6

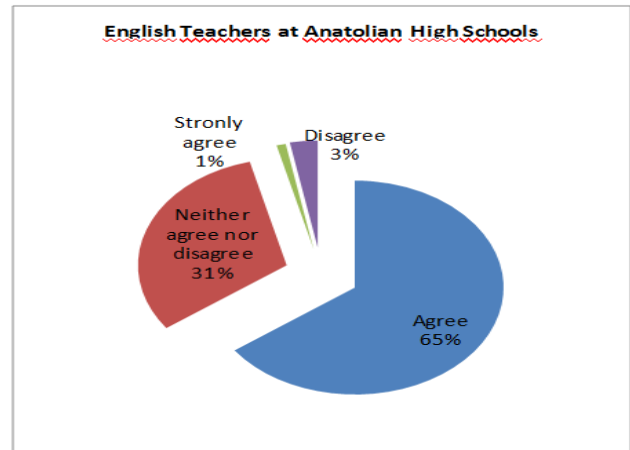
Interesting results are also seen on the issue of the conversion of MEB-HS to AHS is impossible because the educational and expertise teacher background is inadequate at the moment. As seen in the table and graph given above, none of the state school teachers see the class sizes as appropriate for the implementation of the new system in an effective way and 81, 3 % of them accept this issue problematic. On the other hand, 73, 7 % of the private school teachers think that the class sizes are appropriate and only 5, 3% of them disagree with this idea. Students in most of the state schools are taught English in crowded classrooms. This may hinder the effectiveness of language education.

7. *MEB-HS have enough numbers of expertise teachers for the conversion of all MEB-HS to AHS.*



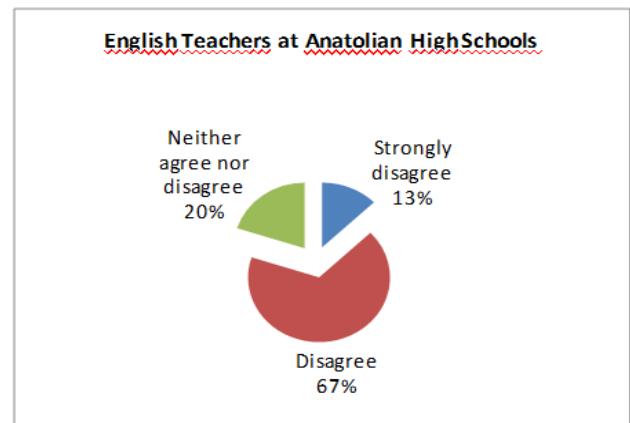
**Figure: 7** The chart of item 7

8. *The teaching efficiency of MEB-HS teachers is much better then AHS teachers.*



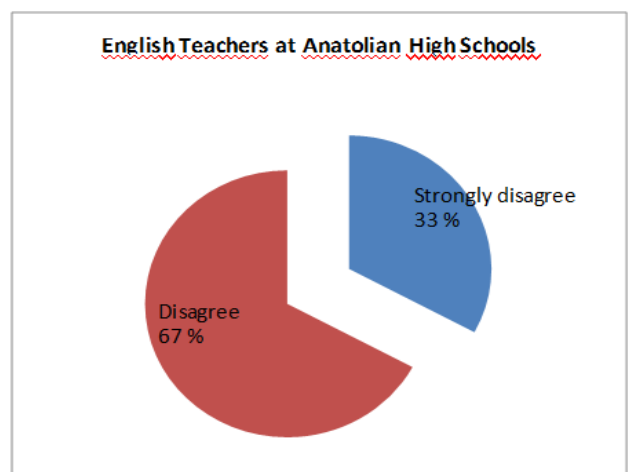
**Figure: 8** The chart of item 8

9. *Students of MEB-HS are academically ready for the conversion of MEB high schools to the Anatolian high schools.*



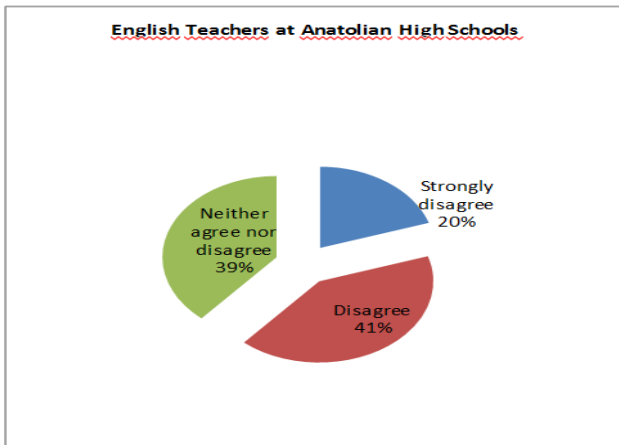
**Figure: 9** The chart of item 9

10. *MEB-HS should continue its education policy and system as it has been following for years.*



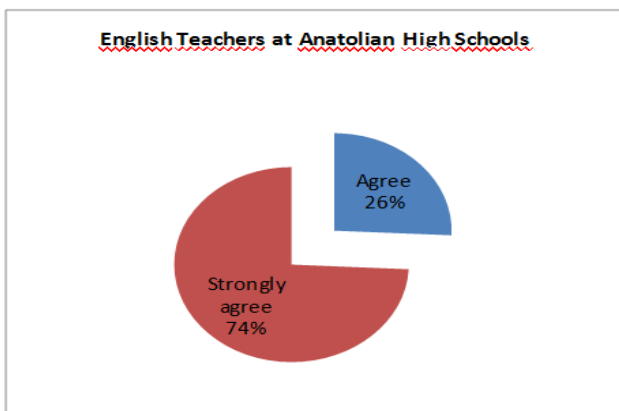
**Figure: 10** The chart of item 10

11. The quality of the education both in MEB and Anatolian high schools is equivalent.



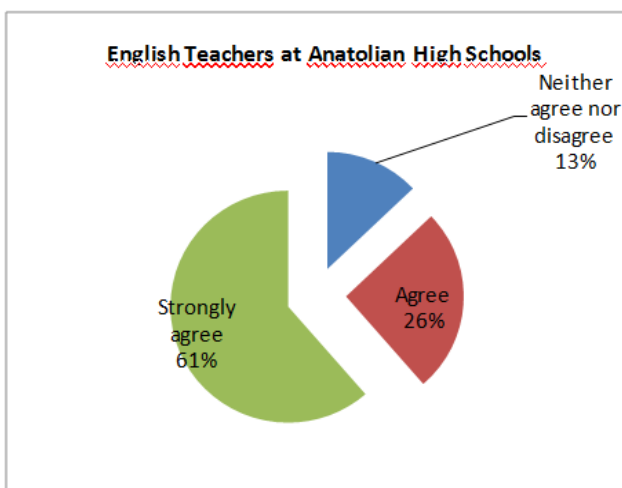
**Figure: 11** The chart of item 11

12. The educational program of AHS is much better than the MEB-HS.



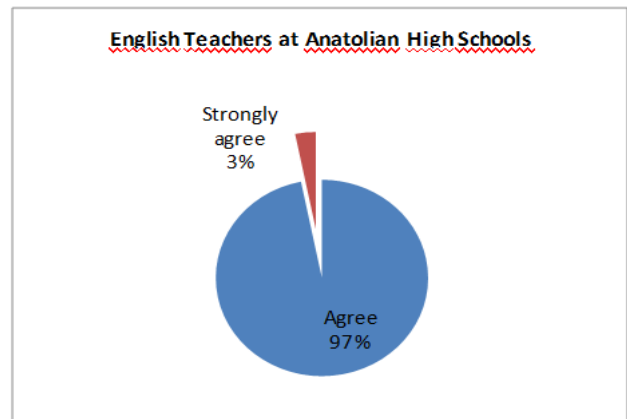
**Figure: 12** The chart of item 12

13. The educational program of AHS creates learners who have better mastery of a foreign language.



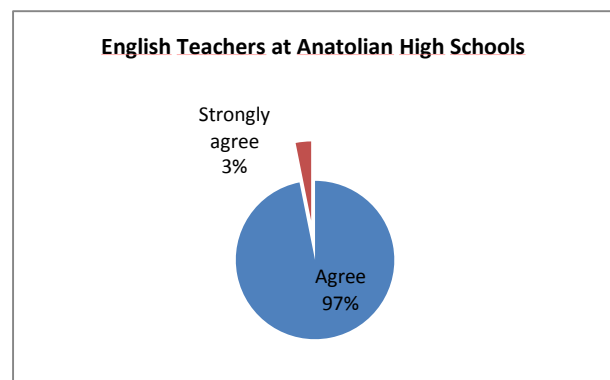
**Figure: 13** The chart of item 13

14. AHS teachers have much better mastery of English than the MEB-HS teachers.



**Figure: 14** The chart of item 14

15. AHS should continue its educational policy and system as it has been following for years.



**Figure: 15** The chart of item 15

R.Q2: Is there a significant difference between males and females in terms of the perception about the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian High Schools?

As it is shown in the following table, there is a significant difference between males and females in terms of the perception about the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian High Schools. Yet, only 3 items described in a clear way below are considered and commented differently among both male and female EFL teachers working in a Turkish educational context: Item1 is “MEB high schools (MEB-HS) should be converted to Anatolian high schools (AHS)”. Item2 is “There is no need to change MEB-HS to AHS”. Lastly, Item3 is “The conversion of MEB-HS to AHS will generally increase the quality of education in Turkey”.

**Table 2.** Independent Sample T-Test results.

Items	Sig.	Mean	Standard Deviation
Item1	.002*	.13358	.10857
Item2	.002*	.13358	.10857
Item3	.047*	.17996	.11739

\*Sig. p<0.05

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The present research has revealed that English teachers working at Anatolian High Schools have very highly negative perceptions towards the conversion of MEB high schools to Anatolian High Schools within the viewpoints of educational linguistics. Also, it investigated that there was a significant difference in the perception of the stated conversion by the English teachers working at Anatolian High Schools regarding gender variable. This study supports the idea that Turkish education policy makers and teacher unions should meet and discuss the problems in the educational settings to increase the quality of the foreign language education in Turkey.

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