Laying the Theoretical and Practical Foundations for a New Elementary English Curriculum in Turkey: A Procedural Analysis

Türkiye'deki Yeni İlköğretim İngilizce Programın Teorik ve Pratik Temellerinin İncelenmesi: Bir Süreç Analizi

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Abstract

New educational curricula are regularly put into practice worldwide; and the issues related to curriculum design are frequently discussed from a pedagogical perspective. However, the processes involved in preparing a statewide English as a foreign language (EFL) curriculum are rarely elaborated from an inside view. As the experiences of program designers may provide insight on meeting the challenges of diverse teaching contexts, this article systematically describes the procedures that took place in preparing an elementary EFL curriculum for Turkish state schools, focusing on the political, pedagogical and contextual factors affecting the implementation. Suggestions and guidelines are offered on the basis of insights arising from the process.

Keywords: English curriculum, language curriculum, curriculum development, language education, language teaching, English as a foreign language

Özet

Dünyadaki eğitim sistemlerinde müfredatlar genellikle belirli aralıklarla yenilenmekte ve müfredat geliştirme ile ilgili konular sık sık teorik ve pedagojik açıdan ele alınmaktadır. Ancak, bir ülkedeki yabancı dil olarak İngilizce müfredatının hazırlanmasında geçen süreçlerin müfredatı hazırlayanların kendi gözüyle irdelenip detaylandırıldığı nadir görülmektedir. Farklı deneyimlere sahip müfredat tasarımcılarının görüş ve düşünceleri farklı öğretim bağlamlarına özgü zorlukların nasıl aşılabileceğine dair önemli bilgiler sağlayabileceğinden, bu çalışma Türkiye'deki ilk ve ortaokullarda uygulamaya konulan İngilizce dersi müfredatının hazırlanması sırasında takip edilen süreci sistematik bir şekilde betimlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Özellikle ilgili müfredatın hazırlanmasına etki eden politik, pedagojik ve bağlamsal etkenlere odaklanılmış olup, bu süreçte ortaya çıkan fikir ve anlayışlar çerçevesinde çeşitli öneri ve talimatlar paylaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *İngilizce müfredatı, dil müfredatı, müfredat geliştirme, dil eğitimi, dil öğretimi, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce*

1. Introduction

The evolving educational requirements of the 21st century have led to a widespread demand for curricular reform in all areas of education (Frey & Whitehead; Voogt & Roblin, 2012). As a result, new curricula are frequently put into practice around the world aimed at addressing the need for tomorrow's citizens to develop critical competences in areas such as information technology, mathematics and health sciences, as well as foreign languages. With respect to foreign languages, English, in particular, is increasingly included as a compulsory subject from the earliest years of education in public schooling worldwide. Among other educational concerns, this expansion of instruction in English as a foreign language (EFL) has resulted in the need for many educational systems to redesign their English language teaching (ELT) programs to meet the unique challenges of teaching a foreign language to young learners (Copland & Garton, 2014; Enever, 2011). In this respect, Wood and Attfield (2005, p. 138) point out that a curriculum designed for young children should "reflect a set of beliefs and values about what is considered to be educationally and developmentally worthwhile in terms of children's immediate needs, their future needs and the wider society." Thus, a foreign language curriculum for young learners should be seen as much more than an inventory of specified lexical or grammar points to be taught. Rather, it should define an effective approach to teaching and learning; it should take into consideration current instructional practices and the recognized principles of language learning (Bourke, 2006; Enever, 2011); it should be responsive to existing contextual variables and constraints; and it should be aligned with the social, economic, political and educational requirements of a given nation, at the same time accounting for ongoing change in the global context (Enever, 2011; Enever, Moon, & Raman, 2009; Johnson, 2007; Kouraogo, 1987).

Indeed, with this extensive array of concerns, developing a foreign language teaching curriculum for use in public schooling across an entire country is a highly complex undertaking. While existing publications provide information on various educational, political and practical aspects of designing a teaching program (e.g., Connelly, He, & Fallion, 2008; Gatbonton & Gu, 1994; Sandrock, 2002), no single protocol can encompass all of the issues that may arise during the process. Therefore, the researchers believe that reports from a wide range of experiences and perspectives on the procedural aspects of curriculum development may add depth to the current understanding of how best to meet the needs of today's language learners. Accordingly, this article aims to illuminate, in a systematic fashion, the steps that were followed in designing a new English language teaching (ELT) curriculum for primary (grades two through four) and elementary (grades five through eight) learners in the Turkish context.

In order to provide the necessary background information related to the design of the new curriculum, the authors first review the previous primary and elementary ELT curricula that were introduced in 1997 and in 2005 successively. The theoretical considerations in teaching a foreign language to young learners are also discussed in order to illuminate the principles that served as a guide for the program design. Afterward, a

step-by-step description of the development process itself is provided, followed by a presentation of the program.

2. Background Information and Contextual Issues

English Language Education for Young Learners in Turkey

English was introduced as a compulsory subject for young learners at the elementary level (grades four through eight) in Turkey in 1997, when the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MNE) initiated a major overhaul of the existing educational system. As a result of this legislation, fourth- and fifth-grade students were required for the first time to participate in 64 hours of English instruction annually (two 40-minute lessons per week), while students in grades six through eight received 160 hours of instruction (five 40-minute lessons per week). In addition to including younger learners in the English language learning process, the 1997 reform laid the foundations for a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to the instruction of English. Consistent with this model, priority was given to acquisition of the basic communicative skills needed for daily life. With respect to younger learners, in particular, English instruction was provided within the context of games and other enjoyable activities, considering age appropriateness and the need to support motivation while creating a positive attitude toward the learning of English language skills (Kocaoluk & Kocaoluk, 2001).

The introduction of the communicative approach was expected to lead to a shift in pedagogy, moving from the traditional teacher-centered paradigm to student-centered teaching with a view to promoting communicative language proficiency in young learners (Kırkgöz, 2006). However, the MNE, which has historically taken full responsibility for the planning and delivery of all national curricula, as well as publishing textbooks and disseminating official information to school principals and teachers, has often been criticized for falling short in completing these tasks effectively. In this respect, research revealed a gap between rhetoric and reality in terms of how the planned curriculum was put into practice. Teachers' inadequacy in transferring theory into practice was largely blamed for this problem (Kırkgöz, 2008).

As a means to address these issues, the ELT curriculum was revised in 2005 in order to improve the English language teaching program prescribed by the 1997 curriculum. In addition to strengthening the communicative dimension of language learning, the 2005 teaching program underlined the importance of a constructivist approach to instruction. This was supported by the implementation of experiential learning, use of tasks, and application of Multiple Intelligences Theory, Neuro-linguistic programming, and content- and language-integrated learning; and as such, it constituted an effort to align Turkey's ELT curriculum with the European Union's language teaching standards.

More recently, in 2012, a comprehensive educational reform bill was passed that mandated a transition from the previous eight years of compulsory elementary education, followed by four years of secondary education. The new educational model comprises three four-year segments and is popularly known as "4+4+4" (MNE, 2013). The four-year segments of this twelve-year cycle correspond to the primary, elementary and

high school levels, respectively, and lower the starting age of public schooling by one year. With respect to English language education, this legislation entails lowering the starting point at which English is to be taught from grade four (age nine) to grade two (six to six ½ years of age), a feature based in part on the research-based recommendations outlined later in this article.

Theoretical Considerations in Teaching Foreign Languages to Young Learners

One of the most significant factors in adapting the English language teaching process to the new educational model was the consideration for teaching a younger group of learners (Çelik & Karaca, 2014), as English instruction is now compulsory from the second, rather than the fourth grade; and the age at which learners enter each grade has been effectively reduced by one year. In this respect, Vygotsky's influential theory holds that children learn best through social interactions with others – parents, caregivers, teachers and even peers – in constructing their understanding of the world around them (Cameron, 2001); this understanding has affected curricular and teaching applications worldwide (Çelik & Karaca, 2014, Enever, 2011; Enever, Moon, & Raman, 2009). According to Vygotsky, as children interact with more knowledgeable helpers, they develop the ability first to talk about new information; and then to think about it; and finally, to understand it and apply it in new situations (Cameron, 2001).

Building on Vygotsky's work, a substantial body of research has also made it clear that young children learn differently than adults. Cameron (2001) points out that, while younger students are not able to grasp the abstract concepts (for instance, grammatical structures and other linguistic forms) that older learners are able to comprehend, they are enthusiastic learners who learn best through hands-on activities that they perceive as fun. With this in mind, an ELT curriculum for young learners may incorporate a variety of meaningful tasks and activities that may appeal to the relevant age groups (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2013), as well as accounting for a variety of different learning styles; these activities may include role play, dialogue, songs and chants, Total Physical Response (TPR) exercises, art projects and story-telling. Such implementation may encourage learners, with the help of their teachers, to relate new information to what is already familiar to them and to build on their existing knowledge. By doing so, learners may be supported in mastering new material, at the same time reinforcing what has already been learned.

In addition to these ideas, scholars such as Hymes (1972) and Widdowson (1978) stress that language should be construed as a means for communication, rather than as an abstract exercise that is carried out strictly for the sake of learning. The communicative approach to language teaching, which is grounded in this view and has strongly influenced the Turkish approach to English instruction, highlights the forms and lexis of English in real-life contexts in order to create relevance in learners' daily lives. Furt-

hermore, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (*CEFR)*, a set of guidelines for language teaching and learning that is widely observed in the European context and beyond, emphasizes the development of communicative competence in foreign languages (CoE, 2001). The Vygotskyan approach to teaching and learning, as well as the need for developing communicative competence in foreign language learners, serves as a foundation for modern language instruction in educational contexts worldwide, and as such, strongly informed the development of the new Turkish ELT curriculum that is discussed in the following sections.

3. Procedures Followed in Designing the New ELT Curriculum

Signing of the "Cooperation in Education" Agreement

On March 14, 2012, a collaborative agreement titled "Cooperation in Education" was signed between the Turkish Ministry of National Education, the Turkish Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology, and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK). One of the provisions of this protocol involved analyzing the existing primary and elementary level English language instruction system and carrying out research and development of alternative instructional methods (MNE, 2012). This agreement was grounded, in part, in the structural changes brought about by the recently enacted 4+4+4 program, along with other methodological concerns raised in the research related to foreign language education in Turkey.

Formation of the Research Team

In accordance with the newly signed protocol, TÜBİTAK launched an educational research unit under the Science and Society Department and began assembling a group of experts whose task was to help implement the needed reform of the English language teaching curriculum. At this point, the second and third authors were hired as experts in curriculum design and foreign language education to serve as senior researchers and to direct the English-related activities at TÜBİTAK; they were joined in this capacity by an associate expert from TÜBİTAK. They were initially asked to inspect English language curricula in different parts of the world and note successful practices, and considering the current research and the realities in Turkey, to suggest a framework for language teaching to be presented to the MNE. In carrying out this task, several reports and presentations were prepared for TÜBİTAK, some of which were shared with representatives from the formal parties involved in the "Cooperation in Education" protocol. The resulting recommendations revolved around lowering the onset of instruction for English instruction and emphasizing speaking and listening skills through a system that reflects mother tongue acquisition; e.g., listening and speaking before reading and writing—a departure from the existing integrated skills approach.

The first necessary step in lowering the age of instruction, particularly in consideration of the new 4+4+4 system, where learners begin formal schooling at a younger age, was to revise the existing English language teaching program that had been designed for the 4th-8th grades and introduce a new program for the 2nd-8th grades. This undertaking

required forming a team of scholars with extensive knowledge and experience in curriculum development, as well as foreign language teaching for young learners; accordingly, a careful search was carried out by the educational research unit of TÜBİTAK to form a core committee of experts who, along with the project coordinators, would be responsible for writing the new curriculum. Ultimately, eight individuals were selected, including the first author of this article, who has an extensive research background in curricular design.

Drawing the General Framework of the New ELT Curriculum

As the committee of program designers was assembled, the coordinators asked the MNE to contact English teachers throughout the country to determine their views on what was needed in terms of a teaching program, instructional tools, activities and tasks, as well as their opinions concerning aspects of the existing program that were effective or that needed improvement. The MNE shared the resulting reports obtained from different regions of the country to provide insight into the perspectives of classroom teachers. With the committee members in place, a series of individual reports was prepared, with each member asked to provide their opinions on the following:

1. Problems associated with all aspects of the 2005 curriculum, both theoretical and practical, with an emphasis on its applicability in young learners' classrooms.

2. Grade by grade analysis of the existing problems in terms of the topics, lexis, techniques, activity and material types, and suggestions for replacing the problematic items, and

3. The ideal curricular model for Turkey's young learners of English.

On the basis of these reports, the problematic aspects of the existing curriculum were identified, and suggestions for addressing these were collected during further meetings. This process resulted in the points outlined below that were considered as necessary features of the new teaching program:

- Following a spiral curriculum, as advanced by Bruner's (1960) cognitive theory, so that students' prior knowledge is solidified and put to use in such a way as to promote meaningful communication, rather than teaching discrete points in each unit.

- Use of headlines, especially at lower levels ("*Water?*" rather than "*Are you thirsty?*" or "*Do you want some water?*").

- Giving importance to cultural and individual differences (Çelik & Erbay, 2013).

- Involving parents in their children's language learning so as to extend foreign language learning to home life (Enever, 2011).

- Making use of Internet technology as much and widely as possible due to its familiarity to many learners and its demonstrated educational benefits.

In consideration of these points, it was determined that the new curriculum should

also account for the general features of the contemporary Turkish educational system, such as crowded classrooms (around 35 students per classroom); teachers' weekly workload of approximately 20 hours; the recent addition of technological devices such as tablet computers for learners; and the need to prepare learners for various standardized national examinations.

It was further agreed, on the basis of current research and the international curricula previously reviewed, that the new teaching program should encourage young learners of English to communicate with people from different cultures through face-to-face as well as online interaction. Drawing on Bourke's (2006) work in syllabus design for the teaching of English to young learners, a topic-based curriculum was found to be most appropriate, delving into the world of the child to create context within which to present the designated structures and vocabulary items.

Moreover, it has been generally acknowledged that a major shortcoming of English language education in Turkey has been the tendency to treat English as simply an academic subject to be mastered, with an instructional focus on the successful acquisition of grammatical structures and vocabulary, rather than on language as a means for human interaction (MNE, 2013). As a result, English has often been viewed by learners as an abstract exercise with little relevance in their daily lives, which has in turn often led to poor motivation for learning and substandard achievement. Therefore, on the basis of the scholarship of Hymes (1972) and Widdowson (1978), it was determined that the role of the language as a means for communication should be emphasized, as was the case with the 2005 curriculum. To accomplish this, the program was designed to encompass a communicative approach to language teaching, highlighting the forms and lexis of English in real-life contexts in order to create relevance in learners' daily lives.

Finally, the committee members agreed that it was important to design the new curriculum around the principles of the *CEFR*, which emphasizes the development of communicative competence, as well as intercultural awareness and learner autonomy (CoE, 2001). Accordingly, it was established that learning activities should be centered on authentic communication in real-life scenarios, where learners can practice using the language to carry out fun and interesting activities, such as songs, chants, games and stories. In terms of intercultural awareness, not only English-speaking culture, but also home and international cultures, should be featured as a means to develop appreciation for cultural diversity and to underscore the role of language as a bridge between world communities (CoE, 2001; Çelik & Erbay, 2013). Furthermore, learner autonomy should be encouraged through the inclusion of self-assessment procedures, as well as asking learners to keep a record of their own progress through maintaining a dossier of their language encounters, projects and other evidence of their learning (CoE, 2001).

Preparation of the Tentative Curriculum

With the theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings in place, the entire committee was assembled for a meeting that took place on August 15-16, 2012. At this time, the characteristics of the new English teaching model were reviewed with the entire group, and the process that would be followed in writing the curriculum was discussed. The committee was then divided into groups of two or three and assigned to one or more

grade levels (comprising grades 2 through 8). Each group was asked to prepare a draft for a teaching program for the assigned grade levels under the headings *Unit, Theme*, *Communicative Language Functions*, *Key Words and Phrases*, and *Sample Activities*.

While each group was responsible for developing the content for the specified grade levels, they also shared their evolving plan with the other groups, soliciting feedback and offering suggestions for improvement. In this manner, the basic foundations of the program were laid out, comprising key content and suggested materials specific to each grade level. Games, activities and question-and-answer sequences were included as the primary manifestation of spoken language and the optimal context for language learning.

The draft program was then carefully examined by the coordinators for compliance with the established framework, as well as issues such as grammar, content and flow. The program writers were also asked to comment on the programs written by their colleagues for the other grade levels, and then to revise their documents based on the suggestions of the coordinators and the other members of the committee. The 2nd author reviewed and compiled the revised documents; these were subsequently read by native speakers of English to identify any language-related issues, and on September 14, 2012, the completed draft of the teaching program was submitted to TÜBİTAK.

In October, 2012, news regarding the new ELT curriculum began to appear in national headlines (e.g., "MEB," 2012; TÜBİTAK, 2012). On October 10, the 2nd author, as well as another of the program writers (a former English lecturer and an associate researcher with TÜBİTAK), met with a member of the Turkish Board of Education, a former English teacher, to discuss any potential enhancements needed. The 2nd author noted all points mentioned and forwarded them to the curriculum group. The writers were asked to take these suggestions into account and make further revisions as appropriate.

Obtaining Feedback on the Curriculum from Educational Experts

On October 19, 2012, a workshop was organised to bring together 30 language professionals, including university faculty members and lecturers, as well as public school teachers, to review the tentative curriculum; the Board of Education member mentioned previously also attended this meeting. The participants were first given time to go over the draft program; afterward, they discussed its features briefly in the group session; and then they were asked to provide individual written feedback on the actual printed document to allow each of them to share their thoughts about each aspect of the program anonymously and freely.

These individual reports on all aspects of the curriculum were analysed, and overall, they confirmed that the tentative curriculum was up-to-date and applicable in the Turkish setting. Furthermore, they drew attention to potential problems that might occur, such as regional, parental and social class differences that might affect classroom implementation. Further changes to the tentative curriculum were made based on these considerations.

On November 15-16, 2012, another two-day meeting was organised for the commit-

tee of writers. On the first day, a professor of English language teaching with extensive knowledge and experience with the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* gave a presentation regarding the suitability of the program to the descriptors of *CEFR*, including specific references to the content of the draft program. The group then worked together on the 2nd day of the meeting to consider his suggestions, implementing some amendments to the program to make it truly consistent with the *CEFR*.

For the final round of review and revisions by the committee, each group of writers was asked to examine and provide feedback for at least two of the programs prepared for the other grades as a means of member checks. The reviews were to be completed by November 22, 2012. The 2nd author then organised the feedback and suggested revisions for each grade level and sent to them to the writers to be considered and completed as appropriate. Afterward, an academic advisory board consisting of five professors of English language teaching were invited to offer their feedback on the revised draft, and further minor revisions were implemented based on their suggestions. Finally, on December 14, 2012, two professors of Early Childhood Education and two professors of Assessment and Evaluation were invited to assess the program draft and shared their suggestions, which were likewise subsequently incorporated into the new program.

The final draft was then sent to all members of the committee for their approval. A copy of the final program draft was also submitted to TÜBİTAK's educational research unit; and a copy of the same document was emailed to the aforementioned member of the Board of Education on December 27, 2012, along with information about the final phases of the process.

Acceptance by the MNE

The completed curriculum was accepted unanimously by the committee and offered for the approval of the MNE as the curriculum to guide all English language instruction for grades two through eight. On February 2nd, 2013, the 2nd author defended the program at an assembly of the Turkish Board of Education, where he responded to their questions and concerns. A vote was then taken from the Board members, and the program was ultimately passed. On February 13, it was officially introduced during a press release.

As a final step, the curriculum was disseminated on the MNE website (MNE, 2013), and course book developers were asked to follow this model in preparing course books to meet the needs of young learners of English. The second author of this study was invited by the MNE to provide suggestions for implementing the new curriculum to course book writers and publishers at an official meeting organised in Ankara by the MNE.

4. The New English Language Teaching Curriculum

The newly developed curriculum, in accordance with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and the *CEFR,* gives primacy to spoken language in grades two through four, with the main emphasis on the development of oral-aural skills. Reading,

writing, and grammatical structures are not a focus at this level, in line with educational research indicating that younger children learn languages best through songs, games, and hands-on activities (Cameron, 2001). In grades five and six, reading is incorporated, and for grades seven and eight, age-appropriate writing in English is gradually introduced (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Model English Language Curriculum (2nd-8th Grades) (MNE, 2013, p. v).

Levels [*CEFR**] (Hours / Week)	Grades (Age)	Skill focus	Main activities/ strategies
1 [A1] (2)	2 (6-6.5)	Listening and Speaking	TPR/Arts and crafts/Drama
	3 (7-7.5)	Listening and Speaking Very Limited Reading and Writing	
	4 (8-8.5)	Listening and Speaking Very Limited Reading and Writing	
2 [A1] (4)	5 (9-9.5)	Listening and Speaking Limited Reading Very Limited Writing	Drama/Role-play
	6 (10-10.5)	Listening and Speaking Limited Reading° Very Limited Writing°	
3 [A2] (4)	7 (11-11.5)	**Primary:** Listening and Speaking **Secondary:** Reading and Writing	Theme-based
	8 (12-12.5)	**Primary:** Listening and Speaking **Secondary:** Reading and Writing	

For each grade level, a series of ten sample units is provided. A spiral approach is emphasized, beginning with cognates and borrowed words that are currently used in modern Turkish (MNE, 2013). Rather than teaching a long list of new words each year, students make use of what they have already learned to construct new knowledge and speaking skills. Accordingly, language proficiency is developed by building on existing knowledge of lexis and linguistic structures in introducing new information. In addi-

tion, material that has already been covered is revisited in order to increase retention. To create relevance to students' daily lives and underscore the nature of English as a means for real communication, rather than an academic exercise, familiar and engaging topics (e.g., *"My Family*," *"My Town,"* *"Sports,"* *"Friends,"* and so on) are provided as themes for each unit, with consideration for learners' ages and developmental levels. Culture and the intercultural aspects of the language are also emphasized in accordance with *CEFR* guidelines. In this respect, the focus is not only on target culture, but on home and world cultures, as suggested by Çelik and Erbay (2013). A sample unit from the curriculum that demonstrates these features is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Grade 8, Unit 2 (MNE, 2013, p. 69).

The theme for the sample unit shown in Figure 1 - unit 2 of the 8th grade program – revolves around *"Teen Life"* and covers topics that are relevant to young teens. The communicative aspects of the unit involve functions such as expressing likes and dislikes concerning typical teen-oriented activities, as well as daily habits and routines. An intercultural element is introduced in relation to films, music and other aspects of teen culture around the world.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The project described here is the result of the cooperation of the largest group of academics, researchers and teachers in the history of Turkish education; this undertaking is especially relevant in terms of Turkey's candidacy to the EU, which calls for the development of new education programs in all subjects, including English. In order to provide insight into the underlying process, the authors have examined in detail the

transformation of the English language teaching curriculum for primary and elementary learners in Turkey, describing the guiding pedagogical and methodological factors, as well as the contextual issues, that impacted its development.

This curriculum was prepared following a thorough review of contemporary curricula used effectively in other countries, with consideration for the most recent methodological and technological developments and current, research-based practices related to the teaching of English to young learners. The discussion of the procedures that were followed in its development provides a unique, inside view of the work involved in curriculum development. In addition to the procedural aspects of designing the curriculum, the authors note the following insights that may be of use for others involved in similar efforts.

First, the process of developing or updating a national curriculum necessarily involves a large number of stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and other specialists; as well as school administrators, community members, parents, and the students themselves (Çelik & Kasapoğlu, 2014; Enever, 2011; Johnson, 2007). Among these, the input and views of classroom teachers should be given substantial consideration, as they have direct experience with the realities of the classroom. In this case, along with the contributions of the research and development team and the various educational experts involved, the viewpoints of classroom teachers were instrumental in drawing attention to the practical issues related to the existing curriculum, the immediate needs of learners, and the sociocultural factors in their teaching context that directly impact the learning process. Furthermore, they provided valuable input concerning the newly drafted curriculum, noting the aspects that might not be workable and making suggestions for improvement.

Second, while a curriculum must take into account the existing educational requirements and expected learning outcomes, it is essential for designers to aim for flexibility and responsiveness to its users (Johnson, 2007; Nation & Macalister, 2010), rather than creating a static, rigid program. Leaving room for adaptation within a general structure allows for adjustments to be made at the classroom level for differences such as teaching context and learning needs. In this case, the curriculum provides for various interpretations on the part of course book designers, as well as classroom teachers, in how the communicative functions and skills, and lexical items are introduced to learners. By doing so, the new curriculum constitutes a dynamic framework that emphasizes the nature of English as an avenue for meaningful, real-life interaction that may continue to serve young learners as they grow as global citizens.

Finally, it is important to note that, even with the existence of a viable curriculum, successful implementation does not depend solely on the program itself, but on understanding and cooperation from all parties involved (Çelik & Kasapoğlu, 2014; Enever, 2011; Johnson, 2007; Kouraogo, 1987). In designing classroom texts and other teaching tools, materials designers must ensure that these resources can effectively serve as bridges between the program and the actual teaching context; and classroom teachers, with support from school administrators, must take an active stance in applying the suggested activities in the classroom. Parents are also an essential part of this process, as their attitudes toward the curriculum and toward the language learning process may strongly

affect the motivation and efforts of learners. The students themselves, as the ultimate beneficiaries, must be encouraged to view language learning in a positive light, allowing them to become not only learners, but lifelong users of English, as strongly emphasized by the *CEFR* (CoE, 2001).

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