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The Alignment between the Official Curriculum and the Taught Curriculum: An Analysis of Primary School English Curriculum*

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyze the alignment between the official primary school English curriculum and the taught curriculum. In this mixed method research, concurrent equal status design was adopted. Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, teachers' reflection diaries, and research diaries were used to collect the data. The participants were the teachers who were teaching English in primary schools in Kütahya in the 2016-2017 academic year. The quantitative data of the study were analyzed by using descriptive statistics analysis and the qualitative data were analyzed with inductive analysis. The result of this research showed that the English teachers can align the curriculum in terms of its learning outcomes and content. However, they cannot completely align the curriculum in terms of its teaching-learning process and evaluation. Moreover, the study found out the classroom teachers can partially align the curriculum and the multigrade classroom teachers cannot ensure the alignment between the official and the taught curriculum to a considerable extent. The lack of technological equipment and materials, challenges of teaching in a multigrade classroom, teachers' professional competencies, and beliefs are among the factors affecting the alignment.

Key words: Curriculum alignment, Curriculum fidelity, Multigrade classrooms, Taught curriculum, Written curriculum

Introduction

Education, which is one of the most discussed concepts in the literature, can be defined as the process of providing experiences to students that will change their behavior in the desired direction, and help them discover and improve themselves. Varış (1994) states that in order to achieve the desired development in the behavior of the individual, the purpose of education, the teaching-learning process and the outcomes should be determined, and these can be achieved through the curriculum. This is to say that the curriculum is crucial to achieve what is intended with education. According to Bobbitt (1918, p. 43), curriculum is the learning experiences that the school consciously plans to complete the abilities of individuals. According to Ertürk, the curriculum guides the teachers by presenting the information they need to know on how to teach the students and to carry out the teaching-learning process effectively (1979, p. 22-23). On the other hand, Wiles and Bondi (2011, p. 1) state that the curriculum includes plans, objectives, activities or learning outcomes presented in different environments and in different ways, but they also relate the curriculum to the textbook, syllabus, teacher guide or learning package.

The wide scope of the concept of the curriculum and the diversity of the meanings attributed to it have led to the emergence of different types of curriculum. There are several classifications of curriculum types in the literature, one of these belongs to Glatthorn (2000), who indicates that there is a big difference between the written curriculum and the taught curriculum. Glatthorn (2000, p. 83-84) refers to seven different types of curricula. The first one is the recommended curriculum which is recommended by scholars. The second one is the written curriculum which can be defined as the curriculum prepared by the government to be used in state

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schools. This type of curriculum is also referred as the official curriculum in the literature. He defines the taught curriculum as the curriculum the teacher actually teaches in the classroom and the learned curriculum as the curriculum that students actually learn. The next type of curriculum he mentions is the assessed curriculum. This includes what is assessed in the tests prepared by teachers and the government. The supported curriculum includes the textbooks and other resources that support the curriculum. As the last type of curriculum, he mentions the hidden curriculum which is the non-intended curriculum that students learn from their environment, or the policies of the school.

Glatthorn and Jailall (2009, p. 111) state that there are gaps between different types of curricula, and this highlights the process of the curriculum alignment. Curriculum alignment not only refers to the alignment between the dimensions of the curriculum but also refers to the alignment between different curriculum types (Squires, 2009, p. 4-5). English (1992, p. 63) defines curriculum alignment as the alignment between the curriculum or the content of a source, such as coursebook used instead of the curriculum and the content of the exams applied. Glatthorn and Jailall (2009, p. 111) state that teachers usually use the written curriculum to look at what they will teach at the beginning of the year and they care about the tested curriculum more. For this reason, they state that the alignment between the written curriculum and the taught curriculum is weak, but the alignment between these two types of curricula is important for the success of the whole curriculum. In order to ensure the success of the curriculum, it is important to find out whether the curriculum is changing in the process of implementing it in the classroom, or in other words whether there is an alignment between the written curriculum and the taught curriculum. While Glatthorn and Jailall (2009) use the term written curriculum, some researchers use the term official curriculum to define the curriculum prepared by the government to be used in state schools. In this study, the official curriculum was adopted as it is thought to reflect the concept of the curriculum analyzed in this study better.

Curriculum fidelity is one of the terms used to analyze if there is an alignment between the official and the taught curriculum (Furtak et al., 2008, p. 362; Dusenbury et al., 2003, p. 240). Curriculum fidelity can be defined as the implementation of the official curriculum by the teacher or the practitioner of the curriculum by staying faithful to its principals (Bümen, Çakar & Yıldız, 2014, p. 205). Penuel, Phillips and Harris (2014), on the other hand, see the alignment between the official curriculum and the taught curriculum from two different perspectives, actor-oriented and integrity. They express the integrity perspective as teachers' degree of alignment of the materials with the objectives and principles of the curriculum. The actor-oriented perspective explains how teachers interpret the directions on how to use the materials and how they adapt the materials to their classroom. Furthermore, they argue that curriculum alignment is the process of determining the difficulties teachers experience during the curriculum implementation and the reasons behind the changes they make.

Curriculum explains the aims, content, activities to be used in the teaching-learning process and how they are organized. However, although there is a detailed official curriculum, the different perspectives of teachers might cause differences in implementation even among the teachers who are using the same curriculum (Walker & Soltis, 2004, p. 1-2). Each teacher implements the curriculum by considering the characteristics of their students, the physical conditions of the classroom, the materials they own, and their own personal preferences (Livingstone et al., 1986, p. 2-7). This causes teachers to make changes in the official curriculum as they implement it, and that affects the success of the curriculum. Morgan and Xu (2011, p. 3-4) state that most studies on the curriculum reveal that the intended curriculum is different from the implemented curriculum. The reasons for this are that teachers are not renovative, they have difficulty in making changes in their teaching styles, and they think the characteristics of their students and the curriculum do not overlap. This causes the curriculum, which is prepared by the state to be applied jointly in all schools, to transform into the taught curriculum due to the changes teachers make while implementing it. The transformation of teachers' official curriculum into the taught curriculum can adversely affect the success of the curriculum.

The changes teachers make while implementing the curriculum affect the success of it. For this reason, finding out what teachers change when they are implementing the curriculum and why they make certain changes is important to make sure the desired outcomes are being reached. In Turkey, there are some challenges faced while implementing and ensuring the success of some curricula, and the primary school English curriculum is one of them. As a result, a lot of studies on teaching English and the English curricula have been carried out over the years. Teaching English in Turkey has gained importance since the Second World War (Cem, 1998, in Demirel, 2003, p. 7) and with the foundation of TED college in the Republic's first years, English was taught partially or completely (Çelebi, 2006, p. 287- 289). With the transition to eight years of compulsory education in 1977, it was decided to start teaching English from the 4th grade for five years; student-centered English curricula were also introduced in 1997 (Demirel, 1999, p. 27). The Ministry of National Education launched a new primary school English curriculum in 2006, which adopted a student and teacher-centered approach

(MoNE, 2006, p. 2). In 2013, with the transition to the 4 + 4 + 4 education system, a new primary school English curriculum was introduced, and it was decided to teach English starting from the 2nd grade (MoNE, 2013). This curriculum emphasizes language learning as a process that not only consists of grammatical structures, but also that enables constant communication and interaction through the use of the language. Communicative approach, learner autonomy and intercultural awareness are defined as the basis of the curriculum. The primary focus of the curriculum at the primary school level is listening and speaking skills, reading and writing skills, on the other hand, are given a very limited focus (MoNE, 2013). For each grade level, there are ten suggested themes which reflect students' lives. In some of these themes, there are elements of traditions of different countries in order to create intercultural awareness. In the teaching-learning process, it is suggested that teachers use different types of materials instead of coursebooks. As for the evaluation, the use of self-assessment, written and oral exams, homework, projects, and the European Language Portfolio is suggested (MoNE, 2013).

Developing reading and writing skills is not an aim in the primary school English curriculum; therefore, students should not have notebooks, and reading and writing activities should not exceed ten words in one lesson hour. The focus is on communication at primary school level, so students should be encouraged to keep the conversation going even if they make mistakes. Therefore, when students make mistakes, the teachers are advised not to correct their mistakes directly but to use the structures correctly to help students learn. Places such as classrooms, parks, and school gardens in students' immediate surroundings were chosen as the context of the teaching-learning process (MoNE, 2013).

The primary school English curriculum, which was enacted in 2013, was updated by taking the opinions of the stakeholders into account. With the Law No. 15 of 2018 of the Ministry of National Education, it was decided to start implementing the new primary school English curriculum as of the 2018-2019 academic year. Although the general structure and approach of the curriculum stay the same, the learning outcomes related to intercultural awareness are omitted in the new curriculum. One other prominent difference between the new curriculum and the previous one is that the new one emphasizes teaching values such as friendship, honesty, and patriotism as part of the language teaching process (MoNE, 2018).

The English language curriculum development studies in Turkey started in 1997, and continued in 2006, 2013 and 2018. Over the years, the philosophy of the curriculum, its objectives, content, the teaching-learning process, the assessment methods, and the roles of the teachers have changed. To illustrate, while evaluation activities used to be limited to pen and paper exams, alternative evaluation techniques have gained importance. The teacher-centered curriculum has become student-centered. In order to ensure the success of the changes in the curriculum, it is important to determine how the official curriculum is implemented in the classroom. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the level of the alignment between the official curriculum and the taught curriculum. The questions to be answered in this research are as follows:

1. What are the opinions of the teachers regarding the implementation of the official primary school English curriculum?
2. What are the problems that teachers experience while implementing the official primary school English curriculum and their suggestions to eliminate these problems?

Methodology

Research Model

In this study, a mixed research method was used to collect comprehensive data by combining the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods. Creswell (2009, p. 14) states that all methods have their strengths and weaknesses, so collecting both quantitative and qualitative data by applying the mixed method will balance the weaknesses of the two methods. Johnson and Christensen (2014, p. 434-435) state that timing and paradigm should be considered when deciding on the pattern of a mixed method research. Whether the qualitative and quantitative methods will be used concurrently or sequentially is about the timing and whether the qualitative and quantitative methods will be used equally, or one will be more dominant than the other is related to the paradigm. In this study, qualitative and quantitative methods were used equally, and qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were used concurrently. As a result, this study is based on concurrent equal status design.

The Research Process

The research process started in June 2016 with the literature review to form the basis of the research and prepare the data collection tools. The number of primary schools and teachers were taken by contacting the Kütahya Provincial Directorate of National Education to choose the participants of the research. Then, these schools were called, and the exact number of the teachers was finalized. During the calls, it was found that classroom teachers carry out English lessons in some schools and there are multigrade classrooms in some of these schools. Later, data collection tools were prepared, presented to the experts' opinions, and piloted.

The collection of research data started with the reflection diaries. At the end of the first term, questionnaires were conducted, and semi-structured interviews with volunteer teachers were made. To collect data on the implementation of the curriculum during the second term, the teachers started writing the reflection diaries at the beginning of the second term. At the end of the term, first the questionnaires, then the semi-structured interviews were conducted. After collecting all the data, first the questionnaires, then the semi-structured interviews and then the reflection diaries were analyzed, and the findings were revealed. Afterwards, findings which were written separately for each data collection tool were organized and combined under the themes.

Participants

As it was necessary to collect data for a long time and the researcher had a full-time job, contacting the schools and teachers easily was prioritized. As a result, the participants were determined as English teachers and classroom teachers who were teaching English in primary schools in the city center of Kütahya. The participants are presented in Table 1. After deciding on the schools from which to collect the data, the schools were visited, the principals and the teachers were informed, and the teachers were asked to participate in the research voluntarily.

Maximum diversity was considered when determining the teachers who would write the reflection diaries. The criteria to choose them were that they were English teachers, the years of their professional experience were different, and the school they worked in were at different socioeconomic levels. In the first term, fifteen teachers volunteered to write the reflection diary, and ten teachers completed their diaries at the end of the term. At the end of the fall term, three teachers decided to leave the study but the other seven continued to write their diaries along with six new teachers. At the end of the second term, ten of the thirteen teachers completed their diaries.

The teachers to answer the questionnaires were determined by criterion sampling. The criteria to choose them were that the teachers were carrying out primary school English lessons and were not the participants of the reflection diaries. Outside of the teachers who wrote the reflection diaries in the first term, there were 31 English teachers and 28 of them answered the questionnaires. In addition, four classroom teachers in two schools who were teaching English answered the questionnaires. In the second term, there were 32 English teachers except the teachers who wrote the reflection diaries and 27 of these teachers answered the questionnaires. Four classroom teachers who answered the first term questionnaires also answered the second term questionnaires.

Criterion sampling was used when determining the participants of the semi-structured interviews. One of the criteria to choose them was that there were teachers from the three groups; English teachers, classroom teachers and multigrade classroom teachers who were teaching English in primary schools. The other criterion was that the schools where the teachers worked were at different socioeconomic levels. During the school visits, voluntary participation of teachers was requested. From the teachers who agreed to do an interview, three English teachers, two 4th grade classroom teachers and three multigrade classroom teachers were chosen based on the criteria. Semi-structured interviews were held with these eight teachers at the end of the first and the second term. The details about the participants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Information about the participants

		Participants of the reflection diary		Participants of the questionnaire		Participants of the semi-structured interview	
		First term	Second term	First term	Second term	First term	Second term
Branch	English teacher	10	10	28	27	3	3
	Class teacher	-	-	4	4	5	5
Number		10	10	32	31	8	8

Data Collection

In this study, reflection diaries, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and research diaries were used to collect data. Data collection tools were used simultaneously in accordance with the design of the research. In Figure 1, information about the order in which the data collection tools were used is presented.

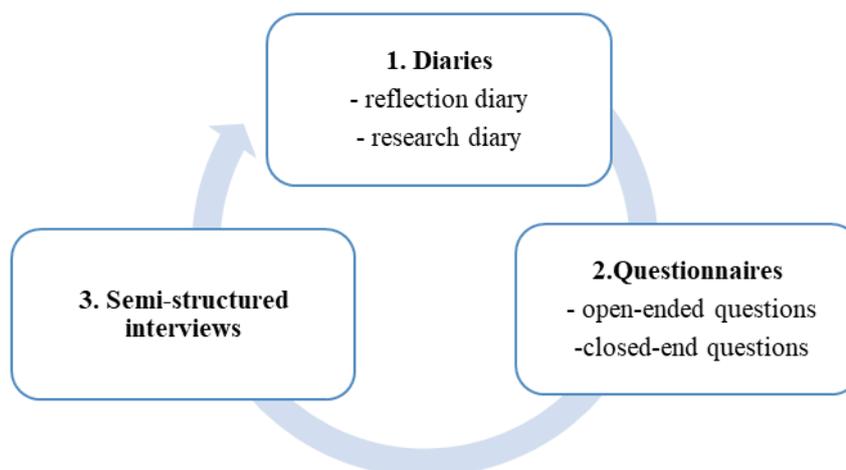


Figure 1: *Data collection process*

As can be seen in Figure 1, the data collection process was circular. It started with the reflection diaries in the first term. Then it continued with questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Throughout this process, the data were also collected through research diaries. In the second term, the data were collected in the order followed during the first term.

Reflection Diaries

The reflection diaries were used to determine the opinions of the teachers about the implementation of the primary school English curriculum, and problems and suggestions regarding its implementation process. First, the teachers were asked to write their experiences by considering the learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning process, and evaluation dimensions of the curriculum. However, because the data obtained were not sufficient, a reflection diary form was prepared to guide the teachers and receive more detailed information. This form started with the learning outcomes of each unit followed by six questions. The questions were about the learning outcomes, the content, text and activity types, the teaching-learning process, the projects and the activities in the assessment section, the problems faced in the process and the suggestions for solutions. The reflection diary forms for the first term were delivered in a file to the teachers who wanted hard copies of them and sent by email to those who asked for soft copies in October and November. The diaries completed were collected from the teachers in January and February. In the second term, the reflection diary forms were delivered to the teachers in February and the completed diaries were collected in June.

Questionnaires

In order to find answers to the research questions, a questionnaire was prepared for each grade level by taking the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade curriculum into consideration (Karabacak, 2018, p. 225-233). There are ten units for each grade level in the curriculum, and the teachers stated that they planned five of these units in the first term and five in the second term in their annual plans. There were a lot of questions in the questionnaire and in the case that they were answered at the end of the year, the teachers might have forgotten the details about what they did during the first term. As a result, two separate questionnaires were developed. The first term questionnaires include five sections which have items about the learning outcomes of the first five units, suggestions for the teaching-learning process and evaluation dimensions, suggested text and activity types, and personal information. The second term questionnaires include a section about the general objectives of each grade level in addition to the sections in the first term questionnaires. After preparing the questionnaires, the opinions of five faculty members working in two different universities in the field of Curriculum Development and Instruction were obtained on the questionnaire forms. Then, they were piloted by ten volunteer English

teachers working in different cities and primary schools. As the questionnaires included items related to all the units to be covered during a term, they were conducted in the last week of each term in order not to miss any data. The fall term questionnaires were conducted in January, in the last week of the 2016-2017 fall term. The spring term questionnaires were conducted in June, in the last week of the second term.

Semi-structured Interviews

For the semi-structured interviews separate forms were created for English teachers, classroom teachers and multigrade classroom teachers. The reason for this is that while English teachers are teaching in all of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades, classroom teachers are teaching in one class and the multigrade classroom teachers can teach in two or four different grades at the same time. The interview form was prepared in five sections considering the curriculum. The form includes questions such as teachers' experiences of teaching English, how they use the curriculum, questions about the learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning process and evaluation dimensions of the curriculum, problems faced during the implementation of the curriculum and their suggestions for solutions. The same questions were used for English teachers and classroom teachers, but the questions of three grade levels were included in the same form for English teachers considering the possibility of English teachers teaching three grade levels. As classroom teachers conduct classes in only one grade level, a separate form has been prepared for each grade level. Before preparing the interview form for multigrade classroom teachers, the researcher did an interview with a volunteer multigrade classroom teacher to have a clear picture of how the English lessons are conducted in multigrade classrooms. After that, the interview form was prepared based on the information taken from the teacher in addition to the principals of the curriculum. Next, the forms prepared were presented to the opinion of a primary school English teacher, who was writing her dissertation in the field of Curriculum Development and Instruction and had taken a qualitative research methods course. Then, the interview form was piloted with a primary school English teacher.

Semi-structured interviews on the implementation of the curriculum during the 2016-2017 fall term were held in February and March. Interviews for the spring term were conducted in June. Some of the teachers who had already been interviewed were interviewed again during the term to get additional information. These interviews were held between February and June. Interviews lasted a minimum of 5 minutes 13 seconds and a maximum of 49 minutes 56 seconds.

Research Diaries

The researcher who collected the data kept diaries to follow her progress on the research and plan her next steps from the time she started her preparations for this research until the research was completed. The diaries also include impressions gained before and after interviews with teachers, additional information given by the teachers, and information obtained from telephone interviews. The data in the diaries were used as supporting data when necessary.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data collected during the research started with quantitative data, then qualitative data were analyzed. Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed by descriptive statistical analysis. The purpose of descriptive statistics is to describe data with techniques such as central tendency measurements, percentage, and frequency distributions (Büyüköztürk, 2018, p. 5). Quantitative data obtained from this research were analyzed by the researcher using SPSS, percentage and frequency values were taken for each item. To make the findings reader-friendly, the findings of the quantitative data were presented in four categories: a small minority of the participants (≤ 25), a minority of the participants (26%-49%), a majority of the participants (51%-75%), a great majority of the participants (≥ 76).

After the analysis of quantitative data, the qualitative data obtained from the reflection diaries and the semi-structured interviews were analyzed by thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the coding of data and creating categories and themes by trying to find patterns between these codes (Glesne, 2013, p. 259-260). In this study, one of the researchers first transferred the semi-structured interview data, the reflection diaries data, and the qualitative data in the questionnaires to Nvivo. Then, the semi-structured interview data were coded by the researchers using Nvivo. Expert opinion on the congruence of the codes was received from a Ph.D. student who was working as an instructor of English and was writing her dissertation in the field of Curriculum Development

and Instruction. After necessary changes were made in line with the expert opinion, themes were created. For the congruence of the themes, expert opinion was received from a faculty member working in the field of Curriculum Development and Instruction. Following the expert opinion, the necessary changes were made, and the analysis of the semi-structured interviews was completed.

The data obtained from the reflection diaries were coded and themed by one of the researchers using Nvivo. The congruence of the codes and themes was checked by the other researcher. Then, the necessary changes were made, and the analysis of the reflection diaries was completed. Finally, as the qualitative data received from the questionnaires were not dense, they were analyzed manually by one of the researchers.

Credibility and Ethics in Research

Different data collection tools such as semi-structured interviews, reflection diaries, questionnaires, and research diaries were used to support each other for the credibility of the study. The questionnaire, semi-structured interview and reflection diary forms were prepared based on the primary school English curriculum. Throughout the process, establishing positive relations with the participants by keeping constant communication with school visits, telephone calls and social media was given importance. Thanks to the positive relationships established, additional interviews were held to get detailed information throughout the process or to eliminate any conflicts between the data.

During the analysis of the data, expert opinions were obtained, and the reliability of the analysis was ensured. In addition, it was ensured that all experts were working in the field of Curriculum Development and Instruction and in areas related to teaching English. All findings were described in detail and presented by establishing relations between the data obtained from different data collection tools. In addition, the findings were presented with quotations of the participants.

Ethical and research permits have been obtained from the relevant institutions to provide research ethics. All the administrators and participant teachers in the schools where the research would be conducted were informed in detail about the purpose and the process of the research. Teachers were asked to participate in the study voluntarily, and they were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time and that their personal rights would be protected. During the semi-structured interviews, both verbal and written approvals of the participants were obtained. Based on the principle of fair gain, printed and electronic materials such as educational games, flash cards, power point presentations that could be used in their lessons were shared with teachers throughout the process. While presenting the research findings, nicknames were used instead of the participants' names.

Findings

Findings Regarding the Learning Outcomes of the Curriculum

According to the reflection diaries used to monitor the process regarding the achievement of the learning outcomes of the curriculum, the teachers taught the learning outcomes in the first, second, third, fourth and fifth units of the 2nd grade curriculum. However, there were teachers who stated that they experienced problems while teaching the learning outcomes in these units. For example, one teacher stated that students could not learn the alphabet in the 1st unit because of the lack of time. In the 2nd unit, two teachers stated they had problems in teaching one of the learning outcomes which is stated as “Students will be able to greet people others in other languages in addition to Turkish and English.” in the curriculum. One of them stated that the students had difficulty in learning the words related to greeting in different languages, and the other stated they had problems with pronouncing these words. When the questionnaire data were analyzed, it was found that three teachers stated this learning outcome was not achieved, and five teachers did not teach it. Three of these teachers stated that they did not find this learning outcome necessary and one stated they did not want to cause confusion. Another stated that they did not spend time on it because of time constraints and as they did not want students to be confused. A teacher interviewed stated that she taught all the learning outcomes except for this one because she thought students could feel confused. Hazal explained the reason for not teaching this learning outcome by saying:

“They learned how to read and write in Turkish the previous year, I thought teaching them words in different languages might make them confused. That's why I didn't want to teach them.” (Interview 1, 05'56"-06'16")

While five of the teachers stated that the 3rd unit of the 2nd grade curriculum was difficult compared to the students' levels, one teacher stated that there was content density in the 4th unit. In the 5th unit, one of the teachers stated that they experienced a shortage of time. In the 6th unit, one of the teachers stated that she taught most of the learning outcomes, but she did not state the learning outcomes she did not teach. The other teachers stated that they taught all the learning outcomes in the 6th unit. In the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th units, all the teachers taught all the learning outcomes. However, in these units, there were teachers who stated that the students had difficulty in learning and pronouncing the words.

According to the questionnaire data, one teacher did not teach the learning outcomes in the 3rd unit. The teacher said they will teach this unit during the second term since the unit is hard and confusing for the student level. Ayla, one of the five teachers who stated that the 3rd unit was difficult for the level of the students in the reflection diaries, said that this unit should be at the end of the curriculum. She said “For the 3rd unit, it was a little heavy for my students. These topics should have taken place in the 9th or 10th unit, but we have mostly achieved our goals.” Zehra, one of the teachers interviewed on the subject, explained that this unit is above the student level, and expressed her opinions by saying:

“Because there are verbal directives that consist of direct verbal and sentence patterns of two or three words, and I have tried and failed in previous years for children to perceive, accept, practice and speak them. So, I left it to the second semester because their level of English and their vocabulary will be a bit better, and they'll be familiar with the language.” (Interview 1, 9'45 " - 10'05 ").

According to the questionnaire data, it was found that teachers taught all the learning outcomes except for the ones in the 2nd and 3rd units mentioned above. On the other hand, in the semi-structured interviews, Zehra stated that she did not teach the learning outcomes in the 3rd unit in the first term, but she taught them in the second term. The other two English teachers stated that they taught all the learning outcomes. One of the two multigrade classroom teachers, who had the 2nd grade students in her class, stated that she taught the words and sentence patterns she chose from the textbooks, and the other teacher said he chose topics from the 2nd and the 3rd grade coursebooks and taught them to both grades.

When analyzing the reflection diaries for the 3rd grade units, it was seen that there are not any learning outcomes that the teachers did not teach. However, there were some teachers stating that they had problems in some units. For example, Özge said the 1st unit was difficult for her students by saying: “It takes a while to teach the Wheel of Fortune unit. It is not possible to spend a lot of time on teaching numbers. Due to this, the teaching hours must be longer.” In the semi-structured interviews, a teacher stated that this unit was an unnecessary unit because it is not related to students' daily lives. Three of the teachers who wrote the reflection diaries stated that they had a lack of time in the 3rd unit while two teachers stated that the present continuous tense was difficult for the students in the 4th unit.

According to the questionnaire data for the 3rd grade learning outcomes, one teacher could not reach the learning outcomes stated as “Students will be able to ask and answer questions about the quantity of things.” in the 5th unit. The data show there are no other learning outcomes which were not taught or reached. In the semi-structured interviews, the English teachers stated that they taught all the learning outcomes. One of the multigrade classroom teachers stated in the second term interview that he was not sure whether he taught all the learning outcomes because he did not do the listening activities, so he thought he might have skipped some learning outcomes related to the listening skills. On the other hand, two multigrade classroom teachers stated that they taught subjects, words and sentence patterns that were in the coursebooks.

The opinions of the teachers who wrote the reflection diaries about the 4th grade units show that all the teachers except for one taught all the learning outcomes in 1st unit. However, three teachers stated that there were too many learning outcomes, and two emphasized the lack of time. In addition, one of the teachers did not teach one learning outcome which is stated as “Students will be able to say ‘thank you’ in different languages.” because it was hard. The questionnaire data show that there are two other teachers who did not teach the same learning outcome. One of them did not teach it because they thought it was not necessary for the students. The other stated that they did not find it necessary and it was not related to English. In the interviews, Hazal stated that she taught all the learning outcomes of the 4th grade curriculum except for this one because she thought other learning outcomes were more important. She expressed her opinions as follows:

“Well, I didn’t spend much time on this learning outcome and set it aside because I wanted to focus on teaching other learning outcomes fully. This was necessary for me to focus on the others. I thought it wasn’t really important to teach this learning outcome before I could finish teaching the others.” (Interview 1, 07’58- 08’13”)

The reflection diaries show that the teachers taught all the learning outcomes of the 2nd unit. However, one teacher mentioned that she had a lack of time. In the 6th unit, all the teachers except for one stated that they taught all the learning outcomes. Kemal, who stated that he did not teach some learning outcomes in the 6th unit because they were not in the book or on the internet, explained his opinion by saying “I couldn’t teach some of the learning outcomes above because not all of them are in the book or on the internet. I taught only three or four of them.” The teachers said that they taught all the learning outcomes in the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th units. However, one teacher said that there were too many learning outcomes in the 7th unit, one teacher said there were too many learning outcomes in the 8th unit, and one said the allocated time was not enough in the same unit.

According to the questionnaire data, while there are two teachers who said they did not teach the learning outcome stated as “Students will be able to extract the gist and relevant specific information in short, recorded passages about predictable everyday routines which are spoken slowly and clearly,” one teacher stated that this learning outcome was not achieved. A teacher who stated that they only taught this learning outcome in the 5th unit due to the density of the content expressed his opinions by saying, “Due to lack of time and learning outcomes density in each unit, we started unit 5 the last week.” There are three teachers who stated that they did not teach the other four learning outcomes in this unit. One teacher stated that they were behind the schedule and could not start the 5th unit, and one teacher said that they did not start doing this unit.

In the questionnaires, one teacher stated that they could not achieve the learning outcome stated as “Students will be able to start and continue a conversation by using simple phrases and sentences, along with mimics and gestures, to make their meaning clear.” One teacher who stated that none of the learning outcomes in the 9th and 10th units were taught expressed why by saying, “We had fallen behind the schedule.” While there is one teacher who could not achieve the learning outcome stated as “Students will be able to express how they feel and what they want in simple and short sentences and phrases,” in the 10th unit, there are three teachers who stated they could not achieve the learning outcome stated as “Students will be able to identify popular food across cultures.” Apart from these learning outcomes, there are no others which were not taught or achieved.

In the interviews, two of the English teachers said they taught all the learning outcomes. One of the classroom teachers said he taught all the learning outcomes in the first term, but not all of them during the second term. The other classroom teacher, Ferhat, said that he mostly taught words and he did not teach all the learning outcomes since he did not know much English. One of the multigrade classroom teachers said he was not sure if he taught all the learning outcomes because he did not spend time on listening exercises so he might have not taught some learning outcomes related to listening skills.

Findings Regarding the Content of the Curriculum

Findings in the reflection diaries of the 2nd grade units indicate that most of the teachers focused on teaching the alphabet and similar words in Turkish and English in the 1st unit. In the 2nd unit, teachers stated that they spent time on teaching words, sentences, and questions about greetings and meeting. The subjects taught in the 3rd unit were the directions, orders, and in-class instructions. While the numbers and classroom objects were focused on by the teachers in the 4th unit, likes and dislikes, objects, their colors, and numbers were taught in the 5th unit. The teachers said that they taught toys, games, the games students like and dislike, instructions, and the simple present tense in the 6th unit. In the 7th unit, clothes, the parts of the body, requests and pronunciation were taught by the teachers. In the 8th unit, they focused on animals and where they live, pronunciation and prepositions. They taught fruit, prepositions, pronunciation in the 9th unit while they focused on teaching animals, abilities of animals and students, and likes and dislikes in the 10th unit.

The teachers who wrote the reflection diaries for the 2nd grade mentioned various problems. For example, they said that there was a lexical density in the 3rd, 4th, 7th, 9th, and 10th units. Two teachers said the words in the 6th unit were difficult for the students’ level. Özge explained her opinions on the lexical density by saying “There are too many words, 18 words about fruit and other words were too many for the students and they had difficulty in memorizing them.”

The 3rd grade reflection diaries show that the teachers taught numbers, verbs, directions, instructions, and words about the wheel of fortune game in the 1st unit. The teachers focused on the members of family in the 2nd unit while they focused on adjectives, abilities, physical appearance, and objects in the 3rd unit. In the 4th unit, they taught feelings and the present continuous tense. They taught shapes, toys, the numbers, and colors of toys in the 5th unit whereas they taught prepositions, rooms, objects and where they are in the 6th unit. Buildings, where buildings and people are, prepositions and simple instructions were their focus in the 7th unit. In the 8th unit, they taught vehicles, asking for and giving directions, asking and saying where vehicles are. Weather conditions and the present continuous tense were their focus in the 9th unit while they focused on animals, their colors, numbers, abilities, likes and dislikes in the 10th unit. The teachers addressed the problems they experienced about the content of the 3rd grade units. For example, two of the teachers stated that the content of the 1st unit was dense while one teacher mentioned that the 5th unit was dense in terms of the content. One teacher mentioned that they did not have enough time to complete the content in the 6th unit.

The 4th grade reflection diaries show that the teachers taught numbers, classroom objects, words, sentences and questions for in-class instructions, requests, asking for permission, and accepting or refusing an offer in the 1st unit. In the 2nd unit, it is seen that the teachers' focus was on the subjects such as countries, nations, where people are from and their nationality, introducing yourself while they focused on leisure activities, verbs, activities they like and dislike in the 3rd unit. They taught abilities, activities, possessive adjectives, possessions in the 4th unit and telling the time, days, daily routines, and prepositions in the 5th unit. In the 6th unit, they focused on saying where objects and people are, prepositions, laboratory equipment, imperatives and orders related to doing experiments. In the 7th unit, they taught occupation and where people work, daily routines, the simple present tense, likes and dislikes while they taught clothes, weather conditions, seasons, possessions, requests, likes and dislikes in the 8th unit. In the 9th unit, personality traits and physical appearance were the topics they focused while their focus in the 10th unit was on food, drinks and their amount, feelings, requests, offers, accepting and refusing.

The problems raised by the teachers regarding the content of 4th grade units are subject density and some subjects' being difficult for students. Five teachers mentioned that there were too many topics to teach in the 1st unit. For example, Ayla said "There are too many topics in one unit. To be honest, I had a lot of difficulty, I was able to finish the unit in time, though. I spent quite a lot of time on each topic." In addition, some teachers stated that the content of the 2nd, 5th and 8th units were dense. In the 5th unit, four teachers said that the students had difficulty in learning how to tell the time. One teacher said the words in the 6th unit were hard for the students and two teachers said the students found the simple present tense in the 7th unit hard.

In the reflection diaries and interviews, the teachers mentioned that they had problems because the content of the English and other courses were not parallel. For example, a teacher who wrote the reflection diary stated that students had difficulty in learning how to tell the time in English because they did not know how to do it in Turkish. Two teachers stated that students had difficulty in learning terms such as nation, country, and continent in the 2nd unit of the 4th grade curriculum as they did not know them in Turkish. Pınar, one of the teachers who touched on this problem, said: "The learning outcome on recognizing the flags does not coincide with the Social Studies course, which means they have not learned most of them. They did not even know what the country meant, what the nation meant Turkish." On the other hand, Nehir suggested some courses should be parallel to English by saying "First of all, the lessons must be connected. The students must first recognize these concepts in their own language." Metin, one of the two teachers who were interviewed and touched on the problem of lessons not being parallel, said, "I'll teach adjectives, well, in the 3rd grade, but first I have to teach what an adjective is. If they did not learn this in Turkish lesson, I cannot explain it, we had such problems." (Interview 1, 06'26 "- 06'39")

Findings Regarding the Teaching-Learning Process of the Curriculum

In the interviews, the teachers were asked how they used the curriculum and what other resources they benefited from while they were preparing for their lessons. While the two classroom teachers stated that they benefited from the curriculum in the process, an English teacher emphasized that she benefited from the curriculum when choosing the content to be taught. Ferhat, one of the classroom teachers, stated in his interview that he took advantage of the curriculum which was implemented in 2008 by saying "The current curriculum is not guiding me. I am following the old curriculum." (Interview 1, 06'33"- 06'40"). In the second term interview, Ferhat said that he was using the curriculum which was implemented in 2013. On the other hand, he said he did not take a look at this new curriculum. Six of the teachers said they did not use the curriculum. There are six teachers who used the yearly lesson plans. One of these teachers used them only to fill in the classroom notebook, in which

the teachers write the learning outcomes and topics they cover during the lesson. Another teacher said she used the yearly lesson plans to follow the dates of the exams. In addition to these, all the teachers use the students' coursebooks and seven of them use the teacher's books while getting ready for their lessons. Metin, who used the teacher's books to choose the content to be taught, expressed his opinion in these words:

"I used the teacher's books, but only partially. The reason we use them is that you do not have to make a lesson plan when you use them. If I do not use them, then I will have to prepare a daily lesson plan, I used them because of this reason." (Interview 2, 06'10"-06'27")

One of the English teachers, Hazal said she used the students' coursebooks by saying:

"I follow the students' coursebooks. I conduct my lessons as the same way the book is organized. I mean, I look at the words in the book. I try to teach the words, the highlighted words, sentence structures, the sentences in the listening and speaking parts in the books." (Interview 1, 11'01"-11'28")

Two of the classroom teachers stated that they got help from their colleagues while they were getting prepared for the lessons. They explained they were doing this as they were concerned with not knowing English and teaching something wrong. In addition to this, Ferhat, who is a classroom teacher, emphasized his professional competencies in determining the subjects to be taught while planning his lessons. He explained his opinions by these words:

"In fact, I decide what to teach by thinking over what I can teach because I mean, I don't try to teach something I don't know... First, I take a look at the topics I can teach a few days before the lesson, then I teach them. I don't try to teach a topic that is beyond my abilities, to be honest." (Interview 1, 05'30"-05'38"; Interview 06'22"-06'31").

The teachers were asked about which text and activity types they used in the teaching and learning process. Twelve teachers, who wrote the reflection diaries about the 2nd grade curriculum, stated that they used "Songs, Games, Listening, Matching, Drawing and Coloring, Dialogues, TPR, Speaking, Filling the blanks, Questions and Answers, Puzzles, Drama/Miming, Pair Work, Flashcards, Puppets, Reading, Cartoons, Roleplay, Video/Film, Writing". 12 teachers, who wrote the reflection diaries about the 3rd grade curriculum, said "Listening, Matching, Games, Drawing and Coloring, Songs, Questions and Answers, Drama/Miming, Arts and Crafts, Visuals, Speaking, Dialogues, Reading, Animations, Videos, Puzzles, Flashcards, Cut and Paste, Finger Puppets, TPR, Writing" were the text and activity types they used. The text and activity types that the 4th grade teachers used were "Matching, Questions and Answers, Listening, Games, Dialogues, Drawing and Coloring, Songs, Speaking, Writing, Roleplay, Drama/Miming, Puppets, Flashcards, Reading, Film/Video, Stories, Pictures."

In the interviews, the teachers said that they used "Songs, Cartoons, Illustrations, Stories/Fables, Picture Dictionaries, Lists, Posters, Tables, Charts, Dialogues, Rhymes, Menus, Dictionaries" as the activity types. On the other hand, two classroom teachers and two multigrade classroom teachers stated that they rarely used text types during the class, and they did not use activity types. Two of them said that the reason they did not use text types was because of their lack of professional competencies. Ferhat, who did not use activity types, explained his reason by saying "Because I don't know English, I have incompetency." (Interview 1, 09'43"- 09'45"). Mehmet, who is a multigrade classroom teacher, stated that he did not use activity types so as not to cause distraction in the class where there were students from three different grade levels.

In the questionnaires, teachers were asked about the frequency of following one of the suggestions for the teaching-learning process in the curriculum, which is stated as "Using fun visual, audio, and audiovisual tools and materials in learning." It is seen in the 2nd grade level questionnaire data that a majority of the teachers in the first term and a great majority of them in the second term said they "always" used them. According to the 3rd grade level data, a great majority of the teachers "always" used them both terms. The 4th grade data show that a majority of the teachers both terms said they "always" used them. In the semi-structured interviews, English teachers stated that they used audio, visual and audio-visual materials. Two of the multigrade classroom teachers stated that they could not use audio materials because they did not have the technological equipment to use them whereas one of them said he did not use them in order not to distract students. One of the classroom teachers said that he used visual and audio materials while the other said that he used only visuals in the first term, but he did not use either visual or audio materials in the second term.

In the questionnaire, teachers were asked about the frequency of spending time on teaching listening skills which is one of the main focuses of the primary school curriculum. Looking at the questionnaire data of the 2nd grade, it is seen that a minority of the teachers "always", another minority of them "generally," and a small minority of them "sometimes" taught it in the first term. In the second term, a minority of them "always," another minority of them "generally," and a small minority of them "sometimes" spent time on the listening skills. When the 3rd grade questionnaire data were analyzed, it was seen that a minority of the teachers "always," another minority of them "generally," and a small minority of them "rarely" taught listening skills in the first term. In the second term, a majority of the teachers "always," a minority of them "generally," a small minority of them "sometimes" and another small minority of them "rarely" did listening activities to improve listening skills. Considering the frequency of teaching listening skills in the 4th grade, a minority of the teachers "always," another minority of them "generally," and a small minority of them "sometimes" spent time on improving listening skills in the first term. In the second term, it is seen that a minority of the teachers "always," another minority of them "generally," a small minority of them "sometimes" and another minority of them "rarely" taught listening skills.

In the interviews, the teachers were asked the kinds of activities they used to develop the four basic skills and how often they used these activities. Six of the teachers stated that they used the listening activities in the book or the ones they found on the internet to help students to improve their listening skills. One of the multigrade classroom teachers stated that he did not do any listening activities since they would distract the students. When the teachers were asked how much time they spent doing listening activities, one of the English teachers said in each lesson, one said once a week and one said rarely. Zehra, who rarely did listening activities, said the following statement:

"I spend time on listening activities rarely. I can honestly confess that doing listening activities has only twenty or twenty five percent of importance to me. It has to be this way because the education system is mostly test-based. While we are teaching for the exams and we are trying to make them have more true answers on tests, listening exercises always remain in the background." (Interview 1, 24'28"-24'47")

One of the multigrade classroom teachers stated that he did listening activities once a month, one of them spent one hour a week on listening activities, and the other one did not focus much on listening due to the lack of technological equipment. One of the classroom teachers indicated that he did not do any listening activities because of the lack of technological equipment whereas the other teacher said he did not spend much time on listening during the first term and he did not do listening activities at all during the second term. In addition to these, one of the classroom teachers said that he did not do listening activities due to the lack of materials and technological equipment.

In the questionnaires, teachers were asked how much time they spent on teaching speaking skills which is given a primary focus in the curriculum. The 2nd grade questionnaires show that a minority of the teachers "always," a minority of them "generally" and another minority "sometimes" spent time on teaching speaking skills in the first term. In the second term, it is indicated that a minority of the teachers "always," another minority of them "generally" and a small minority of them "sometimes" taught speaking skills. In the 3rd grade, it is seen that a minority of the teachers "always," a small minority of them "generally," and another small minority "sometimes" taught speaking skills in the first semester. In the second term, a minority of the teachers "always," another minority of them "generally," and a small minority of them "sometimes" spent time on teaching speaking skills. When 4th grade questionnaire data were analyzed, it was understood that a minority of the teachers "always," another minority of them "generally," and a small minority of them "sometimes" spent time on speaking skills in the first term. In the second term, a minority of the teachers "always," another minority of them "generally," and a small minority of them "sometimes" and another small minority "rarely" taught speaking skills.

In the interviews, the teachers stated that they used pair work and group work activities, dialogues with puppets, questions and answers, role play and drama in order to improve students' speaking skills. Three of the teachers said they had speaking activities with their students every week. One of the teachers did speaking activities in each lesson during the first term, but twice a month during the second term. One of the teachers did speaking activities once a week during the first term and once in two weeks during the second term. Moreover, one of the English teachers said she did not focus much on improving their speaking skills.

During the interviews, five of the teachers said they spent time on reading and writing activities in the classroom. Zehra, who is one of the English teachers, said she spent more time on reading and writing than listening and speaking. She expressed her opinion by saying "Yes, reading and writing is more often because of

the importance of the state exams, just like I said before. Reading and writing are thought to be more useful, so I spend more time on these in my classes.” (Interview 1, 30'23"- 30'39"). Two of the teachers said they used reading and writing activities rarely, one of them used them in each lesson, and one teacher used reading activities generally but used writing activities sometimes. One of the teachers said he always used these activities during the first term, but he said he used them less during the second term. In addition to these, one classroom teacher and three multigrade classroom teachers stated that they focused teaching vocabulary a lot in their classes.

In the interviews, the teachers were asked questions about the suggestions for the implementation of the curriculum. For example, it is recommended that students should not use notebooks in the primary school level. Based on this, the teachers were asked whether their students had notebooks. All the teachers, except for one, stated that the students had notebooks. When asked why they prefer to use notebooks; for example, two of the classroom teachers and an English teacher stated that they made students use notebooks because they thought that they learned more permanently when they wrote.

The primary school English curriculum advises teachers not to correct students' mistakes directly. In the interviews, two classroom teachers stated that they made immediate corrections whereas the English teachers stated that they said the correct pronunciation of the words themselves in order to make the students realize their mistakes and learn the correct pronunciation of the words.

The 2nd and 3rd grade curricula propose to take advantage of the extracurricular environments in the teaching-learning process. When the questionnaire data for the 2nd grade were analyzed, it was seen that a small minority of the teachers “always,” another small minority of them “generally,” a minority of them “sometimes,” and a small minority of them “rarely” did activities out of the classroom, and a small minority of the teachers did not do any activities outside the classroom. In the second term, it is seen that a small minority of the teachers “always,” a minority of them “generally,” another minority “sometimes” and a small minority “rarely” did activities in different places outside the classroom while a small minority “never” did activities outside the classroom. When the 3rd grade questionnaire data for the first term were analyzed, it was found that a small minority of the teachers “generally,” a minority of them “sometimes,” a small minority “rarely,” and another small minority “never” did activities outside the classroom. The second term questionnaire data show that a small minority of the teachers “always,” a small minority of them “generally,” another small minority of them “sometimes,” a small minority of them “rarely,” and another small minority of them “never” did activities outside the classroom. In the interviews, when the teachers were asked if they followed this recommendation of the curriculum, two of them stated that they benefited from environments such as the playground and school garden, one of them stated that they did not do any activities outside the classroom due to lack of time and two of them said they did not do activities outside the classroom due to inconvenient weather conditions.

The curriculum recommends that teachers conduct their lessons in English. During the interviews, the teachers were asked which language they prefer as the language of instruction in their classes. A multigrade classroom teacher stated that she was teaching in Turkish because she could not speak English. Two classroom teachers and two multigrade classroom teachers stated that they mostly used Turkish because of their low proficiency level of English while one English teacher stated that he spoke Turkish more so as not to create negative attitudes towards the lesson. One of the English teachers said that she used English more as the students' English levels increased while one explained that she used English but explained complicated instructions in Turkish.

Another recommendation of the curriculum to teachers is to enable students to develop positive attitudes towards language learning. In order to achieve this, some teachers stated that they tried to make the lessons fun, gave awards, and used different materials. There are also teachers who stated that they gave additional exercises to highly motivated students, gave more space to the activities that students enjoyed, and established positive communication with students.

Findings Regarding the Evaluation Process of the Curriculum

There are projects in the assessment section of each unit of the primary school English curriculum. For example, in the 1st unit of the 2nd grade curriculum, there is a project stated as "Students prepare a visual dictionary to show the words they know in English." In the reflection diaries, questionnaires and interviews, the teachers were asked if they did these projects, and if they did not, why they did not do them. When the opinions of the teachers who wrote the reflection diaries for the 2nd grade curriculum were analyzed, it was understood that four

teachers did the projects in the 1st and the 2nd units while six teachers did the projects in the 3rd, 4th and 5th units. Seven teachers stated they spent time on the projects in the 6th unit and there were no teachers stating that they did not do the projects in the 7th unit. Six teachers in the 8th unit and eight teachers in the 9th and 10th units stated that they completed the projects. In addition to these, there are teachers who stated that they had the projects done as homework because there was not enough time to cover them in the classroom. However, Ülkü stated that the activities were not beneficial for her student when they were assigned as homework because the activities were done by the families. She expresses her opinion by saying “We did not do the projects. Families do homework assignments and students are passive while doing them. When we want to do them in the classroom, we cannot have enough time.”

When the questionnaire data regarding the unit projects were analyzed, it was seen that a majority of the teachers completed the project in the first unit. In the second unit, there are three projects and the data show that a majority of the teachers did not do the first and the third projects while a majority of them did the second project. There is one project in the 3rd unit, and it is seen that the majority of the teachers did this project. There are two projects in the 4th unit, and it is seen that a minority of the teachers did the first project, and another minority partly did it. The second project was partly done by a minority of the teachers while it was not done by another minority. There are two projects in the 5th unit, and it is seen that the majority of the teachers did both. In the 6th unit, there are two projects; the data show that the first of these projects was done by a majority of teachers, and the second one was done by a great majority of the teachers. There are two projects in the 7th unit, and it is seen that a great majority of the teachers did both projects. The data show a majority of the teachers did both projects in the 8th unit and a majority of the teachers did both projects in the 9th unit. There are two projects in the 10th unit, and it is seen that a majority of the teachers did both projects.

When the opinions of the teachers who explained the reason for not doing the projects in the first five units of the 2nd grade curriculum were analyzed, it was understood that the lack of time, economic problems and lack of technological equipment were the reasons for not doing the projects. For example, one of the teachers who stated that the first project in the second unit was not done due to the lack of technological equipment said, "Because most of the students do not have the necessary equipment to record sound." A teacher who stated that they did not do the second project in the 4th unit due to the lack of time said “There was no time for them to prepare within 2 lesson hours, but I brought them a puzzle and we played with it.” A teacher who said that he did not do any projects in the last five units of the 2nd grade curriculum said, “I could not catch up with the pacing of the curriculum because I am not an English teacher.” Other teachers who explained the reasons for not doing the projects stated that they did not do them because of the lack of time or because the projects were not suitable for the level of the students.

There are also teachers who stated that they did different activities instead of doing projects in the 2nd grade units. For example, a teacher who stated that she did not do the second project in the 2nd unit said, "They did not prepare masks, I took puppies to the class." Another teacher who stated that she did not do the second project in the fourth unit said, “The making puzzle activity was not done. Instead, they learned a song about the numbers, and they danced to the song with the moves of it.” A teacher who stated that she implemented the second project in the 9th unit by changing it said “The second project about Fruits in the 9th unit was applied differently. The students prepared a poster about the fruit.”

When the reflection diaries of the 3rd grade units were analyzed, it was found that three teachers in the 1st unit, six teachers in the 2nd unit and four teachers in the 3rd unit did projects. While there were five teachers in the 4th unit stating that they did the project, six teachers in the 5th unit, seven teachers in the 6th, 7th and 8th units did projects. While the number of teachers who did the projects in the 9th unit was five, eight teachers in the 10th unit did the projects. There were teachers who stated that they did not do the projects in the 3rd grade units and assigned them as homework due to the lack of time. For example, one of these teachers, Gözde, expressed that she assigned the project in the 6th unit as homework by saying "Project: They did “dream home” project as homework. We didn't do it in the classroom so as not to waste time and not to let some students lose their attention.” In addition, Nilüfer stated that she did the project of the 9th unit by making changes to it and explained the reason as follows:

“In the project part, I asked them to make pictures about weather conditions and prepare questions and answers instead of the weather conditions in different cities. I did it this way because they said they wouldn't be able to find and draw pictures about different cities.”

When the 3rd grade questionnaire data were analyzed, it was seen that there is only one project in the 1st unit and a great majority of the teachers did this project. There are three projects in the 2nd unit, and the first and the

second projects were done by a great majority of teachers. However, a majority of the teachers did not do the third project. There are two projects in the 3rd unit, and it is understood that a minority of the teachers did the first of these projects, and another minority partly did it. It is seen that a majority of the teachers partly did the second project and a minority of them did it. The data show that a majority of the teachers did the first project in the 4th unit while a minority of them did the second project. A majority of the teachers did both projects in the 5th unit. In the 6th unit, there are two projects, and a majority of the teachers did both of them. There is one project in the 7th unit and a great majority of the teachers did this project. There are two projects in the 8th unit. It is seen that a majority of the teachers did the first of these projects while a minority of the teachers did the second project and another minority partly did the second project. It is understood that the first of the two projects in the 9th unit was done by a majority of the teachers and the second was done by a great majority of the teachers. It is seen that a minority of the teachers did the first project in the 10th unit, another minority partly did it, and a small minority did not. It is seen that the second project in this unit was done by a majority of the teachers.

When the statements of the teachers explaining the reasons for not doing the projects in the 3rd grade units were analyzed, it was understood that they did not do the projects due to the lack of time, the lack of technological equipment, economic problems and teachers' lack of professional competency. For example, a teacher explained the reason for not doing the third project in the 2nd unit by saying "Students do not have the tools to record sound." On the other hand, a teacher explained the reason for not doing the second project in the 8th unit by saying "Lack of time and knowledge." In addition, there are teachers who stated that they had different activities done instead of the projects in the units. For example, one teacher who said they did not do the projects in the 4th unit stated that "The projects of the Feelings unit were made in different ways. Instead of making a poster, games that students guess what their friends did in the classroom were played."

When the 4th grade reflection diaries were analyzed, it was observed that six teachers in the 1st unit, five teachers in the 2nd unit, and eight teachers in the 3rd and 4th units did the projects. Four teachers in the 5th unit, six teachers in the 6th unit, seven teachers in the 7th unit, and eight teachers in the 8th, 9th and 10th units stated that they did the projects. The teachers who stated that they did not do the projects in the 4th grade curriculum said that they did not do the projects and assigned them as homework due to the lack of time. On the other hand, a teacher said that the project was difficult in the 3rd unit, so he had another activity done instead. In the 6th unit, a teacher stated that she did not do the project because it was difficult. In the 7th and 9th units, a teacher stated that she did not have the projects done because she did not find them useful for the students. In addition, Kemal, who stated that he wrote the reflection diaries based on the student's coursebook and not the curriculum, said that he did not do any projects in the 1st unit since there were no assessment activities in the book. He explained his opinion by saying "Unfortunately, there are not many activities in the assessment sections of the book. I also did not evaluate them with something else."

According to the data obtained from the 4th grade questionnaires, it is seen that the first project in the 1st unit was done by a majority of the teachers and the second project was done by a minority of them. There are two projects in the 2nd unit, it is seen that a majority of the teachers did the first one of these projects. On the other hand, a minority of the teachers did the second project and another minority partly did it. There are two projects in the 3rd unit and a majority of the teachers did both of them. There are two projects in the 4th unit, and it is seen that a majority of the teachers did the first project. The second project was done by a minority of the teachers and another minority of them partly did it. There are three projects in the 5th unit, the first of these was done by a minority of the teachers, and another minority partly did it. It is seen that a minority of teachers did the second project while another minority partly did it. The third project was done by a majority of the teachers. There is one project in the 6th unit and a majority of the teachers did this project. There are three projects in the 7th unit, and it is seen that a majority of the teachers did all three of them. There are three projects in the 8th unit, it is seen that a majority of the teachers did the first and second projects. A minority of the teachers did the third project in this unit, another minority partly did it, and a small minority did not. It is seen that a majority of the teachers did both projects in the 9th unit. While a majority of the teachers did the first of the two projects in the 10th unit, a minority of the teachers did the second project, and another minority partly did it.

When the statements of the teachers explaining the reasons for not doing the projects were analyzed, it was understood that the reasons for the teachers not doing the projects were lack of time, crowded classes, lack of opportunities and teachers' lack of knowledge in English. For example, a teacher explained their reason for not doing the first project in the 3rd unit by saying "I am not good at English and there's time constraint." A teacher who stated that they did not do both projects in the 3rd unit due to the crowded classes said "There are 6 class hours for one unit and there are 35 students in the class. Unfortunately, I cannot spare time because such activities take a lot of time in the classroom." A teacher who did not do both projects in the 4th unit stated that

they cannot do the projects due to the heavy load of the curriculum. One of the teachers who did not do the project: "Students prepare a puppet with seasonal clothes and describe him / her (video recording is suggested)" said that they did not do this project due to the limited opportunities.

In the interviews, English teachers stated that they did not do all of the projects. Two teachers stated that they assigned the projects as homework. One of them stated that she assigned them as homework due to the lack of time, and the other teacher said she did this because the students did not bring their materials to the class. The teachers also mentioned that when they assigned the projects as homework, parents complained, or some students did not do their homework. In addition, two of the teachers stated that they sometimes changed the projects to make them more suitable for their students and easier to do on their own. On the other hand, classroom teachers stated that they did not do the projects due to their low proficiency level of English and the lack of physical equipment.

In addition to the projects in each unit of the curriculum, there is the European Language Portfolio which starts in the 1st unit and ends in the 10th unit. The teachers were asked if they spent any time doing the European Language Portfolio and if not, why they did not. The questionnaire data show that in the 1st unit of the 2nd grade curriculum, a small minority of the teachers did the European Language Portfolio, a minority of them partially did it and another minority of the teachers did not do it. In the 10th unit, a minority of the teachers spent time on it, another minority partially did it and a minority of the teachers did not spend any time on it. The 3rd grade questionnaire data show that a small minority of the teachers started the European Language Portfolio in the 1st unit, a minority of them partially did it and another minority of them did not do it. In the 10th unit, a minority of the teachers did the European Language Portfolio, another minority of them partially did it and a small minority of them did not do it. The 4th grade questionnaire data show that in the 1st unit, a small minority of the teachers did the European Language Portfolio, a majority of the teachers partially did it and a minority of the teachers did not do it. In the 10th unit, a minority of the teachers spent time on completing it, another minority of them partially spent time on it, and a small minority did not do it.

When the reasons why the teachers did not do the European Language Portfolio were analyzed, it was understood that they did not spend time on them due to the lack of time and their low proficiency level of English. Moreover, they did not do it because they did not find them necessary and they think it was not suitable for primary school students' level. For example, a teacher who did not do the European Language Portfolio, which starts in the 1st unit of the 2nd grade curriculum, said "We do not do this portfolio since the application of (CEF) for foreign language has not been implemented in the primary school curriculum yet." Another teacher who did not do the European Language Portfolio in the 10th unit of the 3rd grade said, "Their level was not suitable." A teacher who stated that they did not do the European Language Portfolio in the 1st unit of the 4th grade explained the reason for not doing it by saying "My low level of English and time limitation."

Five of the teachers who were interviewed, expressed their opinions on the European Language Portfolio. They all stated that they did not spend time doing it. Two of the teachers stated that they did not have any information about it while one stated that they did not do it because it was difficult to follow the students. The two classroom teachers stated that they did not do it because of their low proficiency level of English.

The curriculum recommends teachers use alternative assessment techniques such as peer assessment, self-assessment, and portfolio. Based on this, during the interviews the teachers were asked if they used such activities. Six out of the eight teachers stated that they did not use peer assessment or self-assessment. Only two of the teachers stated that they benefited from the portfolio while evaluating the students. Seven teachers said that they graded students based on their performance in class. In addition, two of the teachers stated that they used observation forms. The teachers stated that they used pencil and paper exams only for the 4th grade students. However, a multigrade classroom teacher stated that she gave quizzes to the 2nd and the 3rd grade students to determine whether they learned the words she taught.

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

In this study, the alignment between the official primary school English curriculum and the taught curriculum was analyzed. By working with English teachers, classroom teachers and multigrade classroom teachers who carry out primary school English lessons, the alignment was investigated by trying to reveal how faithful the teachers were to the curriculum during the implementation of the official curriculum, the reasons for not following the curriculum, the problems they had and their suggestions. In the study, it was observed that English teachers ensured the alignment in terms of the objectives and the content of the curriculum, but they had

problems in implementing the recommendations of the curriculum regarding the teaching-learning process and evaluation process. Therefore, they were not able to fully ensure the alignment between the official curriculum and the taught curriculum. The study showed that the classroom teachers were not able to fully achieve the curriculum alignment due to their professional competencies, the lack of technological equipment and materials. On the other hand, multigrade classroom teachers were found to be unable to ensure the alignment as a result of the problems they experienced due to the unique structure of multigrade classes and the same problems experienced by the classroom teachers.

When the alignment of the objectives between the official curriculum and the taught curriculum was analyzed, it was seen that English teachers taught all the learning outcomes in the 3rd grade curriculum. This shows that the curriculum alignment was achieved in terms of the learning outcomes of the 3rd grade curriculum. However, there are learning outcomes that some teachers did not teach in the 2nd and 4th grade curriculum. One of these teachers stated that the reason for not teaching all the learning outcomes in the 6th unit of the 4th grade curriculum was that those learning outcomes were not in the book or on the Internet. This can be considered as an indication that the teacher was not following the curriculum but the coursebook. Other learning outcomes not taught are the two learning outcomes under the heading of intercultural awareness in the 2nd and 4th grade curricula. They did not teach these learning outcomes because they thought these goals were not related to teaching English, they were challenging for students and teachers found it more important to focus on teaching English words than teaching words in different languages. The fact that the teachers did not teach these learning outcomes can be interpreted as an indication that the curriculum alignment was not fully achieved in terms of the learning outcomes of the 2nd and 4th grade curricula. In the study where the relationship between the secondary school science technology curriculum and the taught curriculum was analyzed, Ntoi (2007) found that the objectives of the curriculum could not be achieved. The results of this research also support our study as it showed that the lack of curriculum alignment was related to the deficiencies in teacher training, the teachers' implementation of the curriculum based on their own perspectives and the readiness level of the students. While the process of analyzing the data of this research was continuing, the new curricula were introduced in 2018. When the 2018 curriculum was analyzed, it was seen that the learning outcomes related to intercultural awareness were omitted, and this change in the curricula can be seen as a result of curriculum development studies conducted with the feedback received from the teachers.

The findings obtained from the classroom teachers and the multigrade classroom teachers show that the curriculum alignment could not be ensured in terms of the learning outcomes of the curriculum. According to the teachers' opinions, this is because the teachers have problems in terms of their proficiency level of English and their professional competencies in teaching English. In addition, the fact that these teachers attach more importance and devote more time to teaching core lessons such as Turkish and Mathematics causes the lack of alignment. The fact that there are students from different grade levels in a multigrade classroom also makes it difficult to implement the curriculum designed for single-grade classes and to teach all learning outcomes. For example, one of the multigrade classroom teachers stated that he did not do listening activities since that would cause distraction in the classroom; therefore, he was not sure that he taught all the learning outcomes in the curriculum. Sidekli, Coşkun and Aydın (2015) also reached a similar conclusion in the study they conducted with the multigrade classroom teachers in order to identify the problems they had and possible solutions. Summak, Summak and Gelebek (2011) express that it is very difficult for the teacher to implement the curriculum developed for single-grade classes in multigrade classrooms, and all the learning outcomes cannot be reached. In their study, they also found out that the teacher could sometimes accomplish one learning outcome of one grade level in a classroom with three different grade levels. Based on these results, it can be said that it is important to develop a separate English curriculum for multigrade classes.

In terms of the content of the curriculum, it was found that English teachers taught subjects not included in the curriculum in four units at three grade levels. Apart from this, the content that teachers taught in their lessons is aligned with the curriculum. One of the subjects which is not in the curriculum, but the teachers taught in their lessons was "clothes" in the 7th unit of the 2nd grade curriculum. This unit is related to the parts of the body, and it is thought that the teachers taught clothes in this unit because they were related to the parts of the body. It can also be said that based on the flexibility of the curriculum, the teachers shape the curriculum to fit the needs of their students. The study conducted by Ziebell (2010) on the alignment of the elementary mathematics curriculum and the implemented curriculum support our research as it also found that the teachers changed the curriculum to meet the students' needs. It is seen that the teachers taught "likes and dislikes" in the 8th unit of the 4th grade level that is not included in the curriculum. This topic is in the 7th unit and it is thought that teachers spent time on this topic in the 8th unit to revise the previous unit. As a matter of fact, as the primary school English curriculum is spiral, it recommends teachers repeat the previous subjects. When the content that

the teachers taught is considered as a whole, it can be said that they were able to ensure the curriculum alignment between the official and taught curriculum in terms of the content of the curriculum.

Considering the alignment of the text and activity types that the curriculum suggests being used in the teaching-learning process and what is actually used in the classroom, it is seen that English teachers use the text and activity types suggested by the curriculum. The study conducted by Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu-Küçüktepe and Baykın (2014) on the 2nd grade curriculum also shows that teachers use the activities suggested by the curriculum. The fact that the multigrade classroom teachers and classroom teachers used the text types in a limited way and did not use the activity types is not only related to the professional competencies of the teachers, but also related to the unique structure of the multigrade classes. For example, one of the multigrade classroom teachers stated that he did not use the activity types to avoid distraction in the classroom. This shows that the teacher had problems in ensuring the curriculum alignment due to the features of the multigrade classroom. While English teachers always use audio, visual and audiovisual materials, multigrade classroom teachers and classroom teachers rarely use them due to the lack of technological equipment in their schools and the coexistence of two or four different grade levels in one classroom. Kaya and Ok (2016) carried out research on the implementation of the 2nd grade English curriculum of 2013 and most of their participants were classroom teachers. Similarly to our research, their study revealed that teachers did not use the visual and audio materials sufficiently due to the lack of equipment in schools.

The primary school English curriculum focuses on listening and speaking skills. However, this study shows that teachers do not spend much time on improving these skills, and the activities they use to develop these skills are limited. The reasons for these are related to the lack of technological equipment in schools, the unique structure of the multigrade classes and professional competencies of the teachers. Similarly, Kaya and Ok (2016) revealed that the activities teachers spent the least time on were listening and speaking activities, which is due to the professional competencies of teachers and the low proficiency level of students to perform these activities. Primary school English curriculum states that reading and writing activities in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades should be included as extra-curricular activities, and that they can be used in the 3rd and 4th grades without exceeding ten words (MoNE, 2013, p. VI). However, the interviews show that two classroom teachers and one English teacher often did reading and writing activities within the lesson while other English teachers rarely did. These show that teachers could not fully ensure the curriculum alignment in terms of implementing the suggestions of the curriculum on four basic language skills.

When looked at how the suggestions of the curriculum for the teaching-learning process are implemented in the classroom, it is seen that none of the teachers were able to fully create the alignment. While the curriculum states that students should not have notebooks in English lessons, the students of all the teachers, except for one, had notebooks. The curriculum recommends that students' mistakes should not be corrected immediately. English teachers carry out their classes in accordance with this recommendation of the curriculum, but classroom teachers correct students' mistakes immediately. In their study, in which most of the participants were classroom teachers, Kaya and Ok (2016) also reached the conclusion that students' mistakes were corrected during communication. Based on these, it can be said that this is related to the professional competencies of the classroom teachers on teaching English. The curriculum advises teachers to benefit from out-of-class environments during the teaching-learning process, but it seems that teachers do not follow this suggestion of the curriculum due to adverse weather conditions and lack of time. Another suggestion of the curriculum is that the courses are conducted in English. While a multigrade classroom teacher does not speak English and conducts her lessons entirely in Turkish, other teachers use both Turkish and English. However, multigrade classroom teachers and classroom teachers use Turkish more. Similarly to the result of this study, in the study they carried out Şad and Karaova (2015) found that the classroom teacher conducted his lessons mostly by speaking Turkish. The study revealed that all the teachers acted in accordance with the curriculum's suggestion of encouraging students to have a positive attitude towards learning English.

There are projects in the assessment section of each unit in the curriculum; moreover, it suggests alternative assessment techniques such as peer assessment and self- assessment. The findings of the study show that the alignment was not fully ensured in terms of the evaluation dimension of the curriculum. English teachers do not do all of the suggested projects in each unit of the curriculum. The greatest reason for this is the lack of time. Similarly, Ari's study (2014) with teachers teaching the 6th grade and Yörü's study (2012) with teachers teaching the 8th grade show that teachers do not do the project and performance assignments because they take a lot of time. Sometimes teachers assign projects as homework due to the lack of time, and some teachers make changes on the projects to make them more suitable for their students. This can be interpreted as teachers trying to make the curriculum suitable for their students by considering their competencies and needs. The classroom teachers, on the other hand, do not do projects due to the lack of equipment in schools and their professional competencies. In his reflection diaries, one of the English teachers explained the reason for not doing the

projects in some units as there were no evaluation activities in the book. It can be said that this shows the teacher sees the coursebook as the curriculum and does not follow the suggestions of the curriculum in terms of the evaluation dimension.

One of the evaluation components of the curriculum is the European Language Portfolio, and the study shows that the teachers did not spend time on it. The reasons for this are the teachers' lack of knowledge on how to do it and the classroom teachers' professional competencies. When the curriculum that was put in action in 2018 is examined, it is seen that the European Language Portfolio is omitted. This change is also thought to have occurred as a result of the curriculum development studies. It is also seen that most of the teachers do not follow the curriculum's suggestion of using peer assessment, self-assessment, and portfolio to evaluate students. Except for one multigrade classroom teacher, the others used paper and pencil tests only in the 4th grade level. The teachers also evaluate students by considering their in-classroom performance. When the findings of the evaluation dimension of the curriculum analyzed as a whole, it can be said that the alignment could not be fully ensured. The results of the research carried out by Özüdoğru (2016) on the 2nd grade curriculum also showed that the implementation level of the items related to the assessment was not sufficient.

Teachers were asked how they used the curriculum while getting ready for their lessons. While an English teacher stated that she benefited from the curriculum when deciding what content to teach, both classroom teachers stated that they used it while preparing for their lessons. However, one of the classroom teachers stated that he used the book prepared in accordance with the curriculum that was put in action in 2008 and ended in 2013. The second term he stated that he used the 2013 curriculum. When asked if the teacher read over the curriculum, he said he did not. Verhoeven and Verloop's (2010) study supports the findings of our study as they also found that the teachers acted according to the old curriculum in terms of the objectives and evaluation dimensions of the curriculum, not the new curriculum and the reason for this was related to the teachers' beliefs. Other teachers stated that they used student coursebooks and teacher guidebooks while preparing for their lessons. Based on these findings, it can be said that the teachers did not fully benefit from the curriculum while preparing for their lessons and during the teaching-learning process. It is thought that the reason for this might be related to the teachers' beliefs that coursebooks and guidebooks are sufficient to carry out their lessons and their lack of information on the curriculum. In the studies they carried out on the 2nd grade English curriculum, Kandemir (2016) and Özüdoğru (2016) also concluded that the teachers' knowledge of the curriculum was insufficient, which supports the finding of our research. Büyükduman (2005) and İyitoğlu and Alıcı (2015) found that teachers perceived the textbook as the curriculum, and this also supports the results of our study. MoNE (2017, p. 13) describes one of the field knowledge competencies of teachers as "They can explain the curriculum of their field with all its elements.". However, this study shows that the teachers' information on the curriculum is not sufficient. This affects the alignment between the official curriculum and the taught curriculum. For this reason, it can be said that in-service trainings are crucial to improve their awareness and information about the curriculum, and thus ensure the curriculum alignment and make the curricula successful.

This research shows that English teachers, classroom teachers and multigrade classroom teachers ensured curriculum alignment in different levels. It is seen that English teachers created curriculum alignment in terms of the objectives and the content of the curriculum. However, considering that these teachers did not benefit from the curriculum except for one teacher, it can be said that the alignment ensured was not the curriculum alignment but the coursebook alignment. Furthermore, the reason teachers could not ensure the curriculum alignment in terms of the teaching-learning process and evaluation is about teacher beliefs and their lack of information about the curriculum. This study is supported by Hannigan's (2015) conclusion that teachers' lack of information about the curriculum caused them to become inadequate in preparing sufficient resources and assessment activities to support students' learning. In addition, the lack of time, and density of the learning outcomes and the content negatively affected teachers to ensure the curriculum alignment. Turan Özpölat (2015) also reached the conclusion that teachers could not fully achieve the curriculum alignment and that various factors related to school, teachers and students affected it. The study conducted by Scheker Mendoza (2011) on the alignment of the reading comprehension curriculum and the taught curriculum also supports this study with its conclusion that the decisions teachers made while implementing the curriculum were related to their previous experiences, beliefs, and the trainings they received. Based on all these, it can be said that it is important to make the curriculum balanced in terms of time, learning outcomes and content by conducting curriculum development studies and carrying out in-service trainings to increase teachers' literacy of the curriculum.

In the study, it was concluded that the classroom teachers and the multigrade classroom teachers were not able to ensure the curriculum alignment. This is due to the teachers' professional competencies, lack of information on the curriculum and the unique structure of the multigrade classrooms. In their study on the curriculum

fidelity, Nevenglosky, Cale and Aguliar (2019) also reached the conclusion that teachers did not have enough information about the expectations of the curriculum and how to implement it successfully, and they needed in-service training for the implementation of the new curriculum. The study carried out by Shah (2015) on the English curricula also shows that along with teacher beliefs, the level of students, lack of resources and problems related to teachers' professional competencies negatively affect the curriculum alignment, and by supporting the teachers with in-service trainings, curriculum alignment can be improved. As a result, teachers should be supported with in-service trainings so that they can improve their proficiency level of English and learn how to teach English. The teachers who have the most difficulty in ensuring the curriculum alignment are multigrade classroom teachers. For this reason, curricula specific to multigrade classes can be prepared to ensure curriculum alignment and success in teaching language. In addition, it was observed that the teachers did not read the curriculum and did not have sufficient information about the concept of the curriculum. Thus, supporting teachers with in-service trainings on the scope of the curriculum and how they can be used in the most effective way is important for the success of the curriculum. This study is limited to the views of the primary school English teachers and classroom teachers in the center of Kütahya. Collecting data from a variety of teachers from different regions and cities can provide a more comprehensive insight of the curriculum alignment. In this study, the teachers could not be observed in the classroom. Thus, the findings are limited to the teachers' views collected through interviews, reflection diaries and questionnaires. In future studies, the alignment between the official and the taught curriculum can be analyzed through observations to get a clearer picture of the alignment between the two types of curriculum.

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