

## Chapter 12

# EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CURRICULUM IN TURKISH PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A META-ANALYSIS STUDY

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### INTRODUCTION

As the English language has gained importance in the globalized world, it has become more crucial than ever to teach and learn the language more effectively (Daly, 1991). In the Turkish educational context, Turkey has responded to English's global influences in its education system through different reform initiatives (Kırkgöz, 2017a). The first reform in the English teaching curriculum took place in 1997. As a consequence of the reform, English as a foreign language course was introduced to young learners in grades 4 and 5. As a result, students could have longer exposure to foreign languages (MEB, 1997). The 1997 curriculum brought about innovation in teaching methods and strategies in national classrooms. For example, communicative language teaching (CLT), which aims to improve learners' communication skills, became popular and traditional teacher-centered instruction changed to student-centered teaching (Kırkgöz, 2007).

Later in 2005, the second curriculum change happened. In addition to strengthening the communicative purpose of language learning and teaching, the new curriculum included new global educational trends like constructivism, active learning, multiple intelligences, performance-based assessment and content and language integrated learning through cross-curricular subjects (Kırkgöz, 2017a).

In 2013 further changes were introduced in the English language teaching curriculum as a response to the policies to harmonize education with that of the European Union (Kırkgöz, 2007b). In 2012, the former model of 8 years of primary education followed by four years of secondary education was changed to a new educational model called "4 + 4 + 4". In the new model, each of the primary, elementary and secondary education lasts four years. The new model led to important changes in the English language teaching curriculum. In this new

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about the program, especially the underlying philosophy of the curriculum and teaching-learning process as well as the expected teacher roles. They should also be taught about the appropriate teaching activities and materials use. It is well known that the program outcome depends on the implementation and although the curriculum is very well designed on paper, it may not have the expected outcomes without successful implementation. Thus, a well-designed and conducted teacher training for all English language teachers using the program is highly recommended. This way, the gap between theory and practice will be reduced and they will be better aligned.

Assessment and evaluation in the new curriculum is another component that requires significant changes. In the curriculum revision process, it is imperative that there should be more guidance for teachers about the alternative ways of assessment such as portfolios, projects, compositions, and performances, and giving feedback to each student without burning out. Teachers should also be taught how to evaluate the language learning processes of their students, not only their products. Either through traditional way or online, training and guidance seminars can be organized both before and during the program implementation to equip teachers with summative and formative assessment skills.

To conclude, when planning new curricular changes, it should be kept in mind that teachers are the ones who implement the curriculum just like they do any educational policy; thus, they play important roles in the accomplishment of the objectives of the curriculum. That is why they should be informed, guided and trained about the demands, necessary knowledge and skills and possible problems that can emerge in the process. In addition, the implementation also requires non-human resources. Hence, the ministry should well plan the physical, technical and financial resources to ensure high-quality curriculum implementation.

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