

## Research Article

# Exploring curriculum literacy skills: An in-depth analysis through explanatory sequential design

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The aim of this research is to determine the effect of curriculum literacy levels of primary school English teachers on the official and functional curriculum practices. In line with this purpose, an explanatory sequential design was used and qualitative data supplemented quantitative insights. The study was carried out in various primary schools on the European Side of Istanbul in the second semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The participants of the study consisted of 98 English teachers for the quantitative part. For the qualitative part, six teachers were selected by the maximum variation sampling method. The quantitative data of the study were collected with the Curriculum Literacy Scale. Standard deviation, mean and independent groups t-test were used in the analysis of quantitative data. Qualitative data were analysed using the descriptive analysis method through the In-Class Program Compatibility Observation Form. In the analysis of the data, a classification was made for the cognitive process and the knowledge dimensions of Bloom's revised taxonomy for the objectives. In the teaching process and evaluation elements, a comparison was made with the relevant items of the primary school English curriculum. Quantitative results show notably high curriculum literacy levels among primary school English teachers, particularly in reading. Qualitative findings reveal that highly curriculum-literate teachers are better aligned with the official curriculum, while lower literacy levels yield greater compatibility in learning experiences. The study concludes that higher curriculum literacy corresponds to better curriculum alignment among teachers.

Keywords: Curriculum literacy; Official curriculum; Functional curriculum; Curriculum alignment

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## 1. Introduction

The provision of education in societies is shaped by their social, cultural, political, and historical values, thus requiring a systematic plan to guide educational activities. The first definitions of the concept of curriculum specified by systematic planning go back to the 20th century. Caswell and Campbell (1935) stated that the curriculum is the name that can be given to all student experiences. Walker (2003), on the other hand, defines curriculum as a specific way of sequencing content and objectives for teaching and learning in schools. According to Demirel (2020), the curriculum is defined as "the mechanism of learning experiences provided through planned activities in and out of school" (p. 4). Based on the literature, it can be said that the curriculum is the regulation of

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experiences to ensure learning. It is possible to say that all kinds of curriculum studies are very important within the framework of the given definitions. "Because the curriculum affects what teachers teach and thus what students learn, and in so doing it helps to shape our identity and our future" (Walker, 2003, pp. 4-5). Depending on the importance it assumes, curriculum studies can be seen as a huge network that includes many processes from identifying curriculum needs, establishing curriculum teams, developing curricula, and implementing curricula in schools. The development of this network in Turkey is -within the framework of foreign language curriculum, which is the focus of this research- took place following political and social events and was organized in line with the needs of the age.

Education policies for foreign language learning in Turkey have evolved since the establishment of the republic, with curricula being adapted to suit changing political needs. The Ministry of National Education [MoNE] systematically prepared and implemented foreign language teaching curricula in the 1980s (Yücel et al., 2017). English education in Turkey was initially taught at the secondary school level, but since 1997, it has been included in 4th and 5th grade programs (Kırkgöz, 2014). The English curriculum was renewed in 1997, and new methods and approaches were added to the program (Kırkgöz, 2008). In 2012-2013, English lessons began in the 2nd grade due to the implementation of the 12-Year Compulsory Education System (Gürsoy et al., 2013). The English curriculum was updated again in 2017 to include values education and basic skills (MNE, 2017a). Classroom practices and language learning environments have also been revised and changed (MNE, 2017b). The classroom practices have undergone changes, and these changes are attributed to the teacher who is responsible for implementing the program. As Ellis (2004) points out, "the developer proposes, but the teacher disposes" (p. 4). It is reasonable to suggest that the teacher is the driving force behind the implementation of changes in classroom practices within the stated framework.

Many studies in the literature report that the curriculum has undergone a change in practice and this change is realized by the teacher who is the implementer of the curriculum (Furtak et al., 2008; Öztürk, 2012; Yıldırım, 2003). Hewitt (2006) emphasizes that the role of the teacher in the curriculum consists of a series of interrelated practices related to the curriculum, teaching, assessment, evaluation and teaching, and that the teacher is actively interacting with the curriculum in the teaching process. In the same way, Yüksel (1998) mentioned that the teacher, who is the implementer of the curriculum, can see the missing and flawed aspects of the current curriculum and can work to eliminate them, and emphasized that the teacher's contribution to the curriculum can only be possible with sufficient curriculum knowledge. Steiner et al. (2018) states that the knowledge about the curriculum is of critical importance in the teaching process and that the guidance, application examples, content and material support for the curriculum should be provided to the practitioner, that is, the teacher, in this process. "Curriculum literacy can be defined as understanding structure and characteristics of the curricula; revealing the relationship among the dimensions of the curriculum-acquisition/target, content, learning-teaching process and assessment as well as understanding the consistency between these dimensions; determining whether these dimensions are prepared in line with the requirements of the age and whether educators are prepared considering the cultural characteristics of the curriculum" (Aslan, 2019, p. 974).

According to Wang and Cheng (2009), the effectiveness of the written curriculum in the classroom is directly related to the curriculum literacy of teachers. This underscores the critical importance of teachers' curriculum literacy in implementing the curriculum successfully. An (2020) further emphasized that the desired results of education can only be achieved if teachers follow the steps of the curriculum mechanism correctly, and that deviating from the program can hinder progress towards these goals. Curriculum literacy is a type of literacy that teachers and teacher candidates should have (Erdem & Eçmir, 2018). In addition to all these definitions, it is possible to find many studies on curriculum literacy. While Akyıldız (2020) and Bolat (2017) focus on teachers' ability to know and apply the curriculum elements in their curriculum literacy scale development

studies, Aslan and Gürlen (2019), Çetinkaya and Tabak (2019), Erdem and Eđmir (2018) reported that the level of literacy in the curriculum varies according to department, class, academic success, age, department graduated, and experience. Stabback (2016) emphasized the vital role of the teacher as the implementer of a qualified curriculum, while Steiner et al. (2018) stated that teachers' tendency to deviate from the curriculum affects the desired educational outcomes and causes differences in achievement levels. Previous research has also shown that teachers' conceptions and qualifications play a significant role in shaping curriculum practices (Atuhurra & Kaffenberger, 2022; Rouffet et al., 2023; Yeşilpınar Uyar & Eti, 2023). These findings suggest that teachers' knowledge of the curriculum influences curriculum practices, and that curriculum practices should align with the official curriculum. The changes made to the curriculum based on teachers' level of knowledge about it have raised concerns about teachers' alignment to and compatibility with the official curriculum.

Curriculum alignment has been defined by Furtak et al. (2008) as "a way of determining the fit between the implementation of a topic and its original design" (p. 362). Mihalic (2002) defines alignment as "determining how well a curriculum's original design is practiced compared to implementation" (p. 2). Kara et al. (2017) stated that there are differences between the functional and the official curriculum types, and these differences are under the title of "horizontal alignment". The differences between these two curriculum types have been discussed in many studies, and they have brought together studies to investigate the alignment between the functional and the official curriculum. Considering the studies on curriculum alignment, it was stated that the role of the teacher, who is the implementer of the curriculum, was emphasized, and that curriculum alignment was directly related to the teacher (An, 2020; Dusenbury et al., 2003; Kara et al., 2017). This shows that the teacher must be curriculum literate in order for the learning to take place in the desired direction.

Based on the studies in the literature, it is seen that the literacy levels of the teachers are measured with the help of scales and comments and inferences are made about the curriculum knowledge of the teachers. However, there are limited studies that directly investigate the curriculum alignment and curriculum literacy relationship (Boncuk, 2021; Tanaş & Tuncer, 2023). Some studies also suggest that the curriculum literacy level may influence curriculum practices (Aslan & Gürlen, 2019; Çetinkaya & Tabak, 2019; Kahramanođlu, 2019; Saral, 2019).

The primary school English curriculum, which is examined in this research, aims to transfer foreign language to students through new methods and approaches. Yücel et al. (2017) in the study examining secondary school English curriculum, stated that teachers were not sufficiently informed about the curriculum in the studies in the field and noted that this lack of awareness could indicate either a failure to read the curricula or difficulties in understanding them, even if they had been read. At the same time, he emphasized that the curricula could not be implemented as designed. In this context, it can be seen as an area that needs to be studied on the curriculum literacy of foreign language teachers and their adaptation to the curriculum. In the related literature, it is possible to find studies on the curriculum literacy levels of teachers or prospective teachers (Aslan & Gürlen, 2019; Çetinkaya & Tabak, 2019; Erdem & Eđmir, 2018; Güneş & Gökçek, 2013; Uysal & Yenilmez, 2011), but research on curriculum literacy levels of English teachers is limited (An, 2020). In addition, no research has been conducted on the effect of English teachers' curriculum literacy levels on official and functional curriculum practices.

Although the impact of the curriculum literacy level on curriculum implementation has been studied within the specified framework, there are a few studies that investigate the relationship between alignment levels and curriculum literacy levels. Insufficient research on the effect of the concept of curriculum literacy on curriculum alignment points to a gap in the literature. Efforts to fill this gap are considered important in terms of laying the groundwork for the discussion of the concept of curriculum literacy and curriculum alignment and the role of teachers in the process of curriculum studies, and introducing theoretical analyzes on this subject. It will also help create a vision for teachers' program leadership, from policy makers to school principals, and the concrete

steps to be taken on teacher development efforts and teacher responsibility in these matters. This research aims to investigate whether primary school English teachers' curriculum literacy levels have a significant effect on the practices by examining the teachers' ability to provide the objectives, learning experiences and evaluation elements in the official curriculum. Accordingly, within the scope of this study, an answer to the question "Does primary school English teachers' curriculum literacy levels have a significant effect on official and functional curriculum practices?" is sought. In this regard, the sub-problems of the research are as follows:

RQ 1) What is the curriculum literacy level of primary school English teachers?

RQ 2) What is the level of primary school English teachers' alignment between the official curriculum's objectives and the functional curriculum?

RQ 3) What is the level of primary school English teachers' alignment between the official curriculum's learning experiences and the functional curriculum?

RQ 4) What is the level of primary school English teachers' alignment between the official curriculum's assessment process and the functional curriculum?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Design

In this study, it is planned to conduct a qualitative study that will help to make judgments about the effect of teachers' curriculum literacy levels on official and functional curriculum practices, in line with the data to be collected by quantitative method. For this reason, the mixed method model was preferred. The mixed method is a research method in which the researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative data to understand the research problems and integrates and analyzes these two data sets (Creswell, 2015). Thus, it is aimed to reach detailed and holistic conclusions regarding the research questions in the light of the collected data.

In this study, a mixed method research design called "Explanatory Sequential Design" by Plano Clark and Creswell (2015) was used. The purpose of the explanatory sequential design is to initiate the research with a quantitative study for both data collection and analysis, and then conduct a qualitative study based on the data obtained from this initial quantitative phase (Creswell, 2015). In this study, the curriculum literacy levels of primary school English teachers were determined through quantitative methods. Subsequently, two groups of teachers, one with low curriculum literacy levels and the other with high levels, were identified based on the collected data and a qualitative study was conducted with these groups. Thus, the aim is to provide answers to the research questions.

The first phase of this study, which was carried out with an explanatory sequential design, is the quantitative dimension. The quantitative dimension of the study was conducted based on the descriptive survey model. In the second stage of the study, the qualitative method was used. At this stage of the study, this method was used because the curriculum alignment of the teachers should be observed and analyzed in-depth in the classroom environment. The pattern used in this section is the case study pattern. Case studies are defined as an in-depth investigation of a certain situation and its factors with a holistic approach. In this study, holistic multiple case design was used. In the holistic multiple case design, each situation is handled and compared holistically within itself (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

### 2.2. Participants

In the quantitative phase of the study, simple random sampling was employed to make generalized judgements about the entire population. Gathering information through sampling provides advantages to researchers in terms of using less manpower, financial resources, and time (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020). The study population of the quantitative part of the research consists of 830 English teachers. The sample of the study consists of 98 English teachers; 89.80% of the participants being female and 10.20% being male. The sample includes teachers with varying years of experience, with 8% having 1-5 years, 32% having 6-10 years, 29% having 11-15 years, 19%

having 16-20 years, and 10% having 21 years or more of experience. In terms of education, 90% of the sample holds a bachelor's degree, while 8% have a master's degree. For the qualitative phase of the study, a maximum variation sampling approach was employed. This method allows for the examination of different situations related to the problem being investigated, in this case, curriculum literacy levels, in a more descriptive manner (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020). Two groups were formed based on low and high curriculum literacy levels, with 26 teachers in each group. The groups were labeled as the upper and lower groups, and each group comprised of 26 participants. From each group, three volunteer teachers were selected, resulting in a total of six teachers for the observation study. Among the subgroup of teachers participating in the observation study, one teacher in the lower group was male (coded as L1), while the others were female (coded as L2 and L3). The teachers in the lower group had seniority of 23, 10, and 16 years, respectively, and all held undergraduate degrees. In the upper group, all teachers (coded as U1, U2, and U3) were female, with seniority of 20, 15, and 23 years, respectively. Similar to the lower group, all teachers in the upper group had undergraduate education.

### 2.3. Instruments

Quantitative data related to the study was collected through the Curriculum Literacy Scale (CLS) (Bolat, 2017). The scale consists of 29 items and is arranged in a 5-point Likert type. It has two sub-dimensions: reading and writing. The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 145; the lowest score is 29. The reverse item is not included. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyzes were used in the development of the scale. In the exploratory factor analysis, it was determined that the measurement tool consisted of two sub-dimensions and explained 43.05% of the total variance. The reading sub-dimension of the scale consists of 15 items and the writing sub-dimension consists of 14 items. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, it was revealed that the fit values of the scale consisting of two sub-dimensions were at a sufficient level. The Cronbach Alpha reliability of the reading sub-dimension was calculated as 0.888 and the writing sub-dimension as 0.907. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the entire scale is 0.940. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency value of the total scale was found to be 0.959.

In the observation phase of the study, "In-Class Curriculum Alignment Observation Form" developed by An (2020) was used. The form consists of three main titles and 11 sub-titles. In the first dimension of the form, the knowledge, and skills that the course aims to gain were examined in the dimension of achievements. In the dimension of learning experiences, how teachers make practices to achieve their objectives was examined. In the evaluation dimension, it was desired to examine what kinds of evaluations were made in order to measure the effectiveness of teaching activities and the level of reaching the objectives.

### 2.4. Data Collection

In order to collect quantitative and qualitative data regarding the study, permission was obtained from Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education dated 22.12.2021 and numbered 39618063 and from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee dated 15.11.2021 and numbered 37694. Before the observation, permission was obtained from the participating teachers using the participation acceptance form.

The aim of the quantitative part of this study was to reach the entire population of official primary schools in the European Side of Istanbul. The researcher accomplished this by visiting and contacting schools via telephone to provide information about the study. Initially, information was shared through face-to-face visits, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other reasons, online forms were used to continue data collection. A total of 214 schools were contacted, 129 of which responded and 69 participated in the survey. The decrease in the number of participating schools was influenced by factors such as employing paid teachers, lack of permanent teachers, teacher absence due to health issues, and unwillingness of schools or teachers to participate for various reasons. Participant selection was based on voluntariness, and no identity information was

requested. The collection of quantitative data took 76 days. Contact information was obtained only from teachers who voluntarily wanted to participate in the qualitative part. To increase the sincerity of responses, information about the study was emphasized verbally and in writing prior to the application.

Factors such as the researcher's and teachers' schedules, the subject and distance in the annual plan during the observation period were considered in selecting the schools and teachers to be observed. The 3rd grade level was chosen for observation since all the teachers in the upper and lower groups primarily teach at this level. Unit 8 (Transportation) was selected as the subject to be observed since it coincided with the dates of observation in the annual plan. Before the observations, the participant acceptance form was used to inform the participating teachers and obtain their signed consent. The researcher provided information about the study to both the teacher and administration before the observations were conducted.

Observations took place during the second semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, once a week for two class hours (30-40 minutes) over a period of two to three weeks. The dates and durations of the observations varied for each teacher due to factors such as snow days, teacher absences, and cancellations for trips and shows. Additionally, there were holiday breaks during the observation period that caused disruptions to the classes. The researcher maintained constant communication with the teachers and administrators to keep track of any changes to the schedule and was present in the classrooms at the designated times. Each class was observed for 30-40 minutes, with student numbers ranging from 20 to 45. All teachers except the one with the U3 code dedicated a total of six class hours to the topic. The observer informed the teachers and students that they would not intervene in the lesson and explained their role in the classroom. No audio or video recordings were made during the observations, and no information or statements about the students were included. At the end of the observations, reports were presented to the teachers and any unclear points were clarified. Copies of the worksheets used in the lessons were taken, and the addresses of the online materials used, and the pages of the textbook activities were noted.

## 2.5. Data Analysis

The quantitative data of the study was transferred to a computer environment and analyzed with the SPSS package program. Descriptive statistics and Independent Samples t-test were utilized for the analysis of the data. To group the teachers' curriculum literacy levels as low and high, independent samples t-test was applied to the lower 27% and upper 27% groups to see if qualitative data related to curriculum alignment could be collected between these two groups.

The qualitative data of the study was analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. In this analysis approach, the obtained data can be summarized and interpreted according to predetermined themes; can be arranged according to the themes put forward by the research questions; and can be presented by considering the dimensions and processes used in the interview and observation processes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this study, observation reports from the lessons were analyzed using descriptive analysis and the teachers' curriculum alignment situations were evaluated accordingly. The collected data were organized and analyzed through a systematic approach. Firstly, the data were categorized according to the sub-dimensions within the knowledge and cognitive process dimensions. This categorization was facilitated using a classification table, and the comparison was based on the elements in the official curriculum. This approach necessitated the utilization of descriptive analysis techniques. For the qualitative aspect of the study, the observational reports were digitized and meticulously organized in an electronic platform, while the original hard copies were retained. The teacher's instructional activities pertaining to the predefined objectives were then classified according to the cognitive process and knowledge level dimensions as stipulated in the aforementioned classification table. The verbs associated with the cognitive process dimension and the items representing knowledge dimension were meticulously cross-referenced with the observed classroom activities, enabling the precise placement of specific activities within the classification table. This process allowed for the

identification of the alignment status, gauging whether the practical implementation of curriculum objectives corresponded coherently with specific cells within the classification table. On a complementary note, the evaluation of learning experiences and assessment components involved a direct comparative analysis between curriculum components and classroom activities. By systematically contrasting the classroom activities against the criteria set forth by the official curriculum, alignment between the two could be accurately identified.

To ensure validity and reliability in the qualitative dimension of the study, some methods were used, and precautions were taken. In this study, the researcher personally attended each observation during the data collection process and engaged in long-term interaction with the participants before and during the study. In addition, data obtained from observations were continuously compared and interpreted to form a pattern to collect in-depth data. Expert examination was also utilized in collecting, analyzing, and reporting qualitative data. Furthermore, after each observation, observation notes were shared with the participants to obtain participant confirmation. In qualitative research, the concept of external validity is expressed as “transferability”, and detailed description and purposeful sampling methods are utilized to ensure external validity (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this study, observed events were described in detail by directly quoting them. In addition, purposeful sampling method was used based on the literacy levels of the teachers during the observation phase. While internal reliability is expressed as “consistency” in qualitative studies, “confirmability” is used for external reliability (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this study, after the observations, confirmation was obtained from the teachers regarding the observation notes and unclear points were clarified. Furthermore, raw data obtained from observations (observation notes) and documents (homework and worksheets) were presented to expert examination and analyzed.

## 2.6. The Role of the Researcher

The researcher actively participated in both the quantitative and qualitative data collection stages. Prior to conducting the survey in the quantitative part, the researcher obtained the necessary permissions and communicated with schools to ensure that teachers provided sincere and unbiased responses. The researcher had no personal or professional relationship with the participants. In the qualitative part, before conducting observations, the researcher contacted the schools and teachers, created participant consent forms, and obtained the necessary permissions. The researcher collected data herself in both the quantitative and qualitative parts and personally provided information to school administration, teachers, and students. Subsequently, observations were conducted. During the observation process, the researcher sat in the back of the classroom and took notes without intervening in the lesson, and then presented the notes to the teachers for approval. The data analysis for the observation study was carried out by the researcher, with input from field experts, and the data was reported in an unbiased manner. In conclusion, the researcher played the roles of “researcher and observer” in this study.

## 3. Findings

In this section, the findings obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data are presented. The findings of the study are presented in the order of the research problems.

### 3.1. The Findings Regarding the Quantitative Dimension of the Research

In this section, the findings obtained in the quantitative part of the study are presented.

#### 3.1.1. The curriculum literacy levels of primary school English teachers

In the examination conducted on the curriculum literacy levels of primary school English teachers, the arithmetic mean and skill levels of the responses given by the teachers to the CLS reading and writing sub-dimensions have been determined (see Table 1).

Table 1

*The mean and standard deviation values of primary school English teachers' curriculum literacy levels*

<i>Sub-dimensions</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Reading	4.57	.41
Writing	4.33	.57
Total	4.45	.45

Upon examination of Table 1, it is possible to state that the primary school English teachers who participated in the study had a relatively high level of curriculum literacy ( $Mean = 4.45$ ,  $SD = .45$ ). When the teachers' curriculum literacy levels were examined according to the dimensions of CLS, it was seen that the reading sub-dimension ( $Mean = 4.57$ ,  $SD = .41$ ) was higher than the writing sub-dimension ( $Mean = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .57$ ). To group the teachers' curriculum literacy levels as low and high, independent samples t-test was applied to the lower 27% and upper 27% groups created based on the total scores of the scale. This method is used to test whether the observed differences between the groups are significant (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020). For  $N = 98$ , the lower 27% ( $n = 26$ ) and upper 27% ( $n = 26$ ) were determined. The results of the t-test for these groups are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Independent groups t-test results on literacy levels*

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Lower %27	26	111.84	7.52	-21.48	26.68	.000*
Upper %27	26	144.07	1.38			

Note. \* $p < .001$ .

According to the independent groups t-test results presented in Table 2, the mean scores of the Upper 27% group ( $Mean = 144.07$ ) were higher than the mean scores of the lower 27% group ( $Mean = 111.84$ ). The independent groups t-test conducted on the identified high and low groups of primary school English teachers' curriculum literacy levels revealed a significant difference in favor of the top 27% group [ $t_{(26,68)} = -21.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. Based on this finding, it is suggested that qualitative data related to curriculum alignment could be collected between these two groups.

### 3.2. The Findings Regarding the Qualitative Dimension of the Research

In this section, the findings obtained in the qualitative part of the study are presented. The findings related to the research problem were obtained through in-class curriculum alignment observation form.

#### 3.2.1. Primary school English teachers' alignment of functional curriculum with the official curriculum objectives

The findings regarding the qualitative data of this study were obtained from the classification table and observation reports. Prior to the observation applications, the levels of the knowledge and cognitive process dimensions of the 8th unit of the 3rd-grade English language teaching curriculum (MoNE, 2017a) were analyzed to determine which levels they corresponded to in the classification table, and these analysis results were compared with the observation reports. Based on these data, an attempt was made to make judgments about the alignment of the official and functional program applications of primary school English language teachers.

The learning outcomes of the 8th unit of the 3rd grade curriculum of the primary school English lesson are as follows:

- 1) E3.8.L1. Students will be able to recognize the types of vehicles.
- 2) E3.8.L2. Students will be able to understand simple and short oral texts about transportation.
- 3) E3.8.L3. Students will be able to follow short and simple oral instructions about transportation.



- 4) E3.8.S1. Students will be able to talk about where vehicles are.  
 5) E3.8.S2. Students will be able to talk about the using of transportation vehicles.

In Table 3, the classification of the learning outcomes is shown according to the knowledge and cognitive process dimensions.

Table 3

*Analysis of the 8th unit outcomes in the 3rd grade English course curriculum*

Knowledge dimension	Cognitive process dimension					
	Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Factual knowledge		Outcome 1				
Conceptual knowledge		Outcome 2	Outcome 3			
Procedural knowledge			Outcome 4			
Meta-cognitive knowledge			Outcome 5			

As seen in Table 3, in the first learning outcome, the phrase “vehicle types” mentioned refers to students having knowledge of the Turkish equivalents of vehicle names. Therefore, it is located in the factual knowledge cell of the knowledge dimension. The action of “identification” in the objective refers to knowing what the vehicle names mean in Turkish and creating meaning from the given vehicle name. Therefore, this outcome is located in the understanding level of the cognitive process dimension.

For Outcome 2, students are expected to understand simple and short oral texts about transportation. The part described as “simple and short oral texts about transportation” points to the knowledge of the structures related to transportation; for this reason, it is included in the conceptual knowledge level of the knowledge dimension. The action of “to understand” in the statement shows that the understanding step is included in the Cognitive Process dimension.

For Outcomes 3, 4 and 5, it has been determined that the statements referred to conceptual knowledge in the application level of the classification table. In Outcome 3, the information referred to as “short and simple verbal instructions about transportation” indicates knowledge about transportation structures. Therefore, the outcome is located at the conceptual knowledge level. The verb “to follow” in this outcome is used to mean understanding and implementing transportation instructions. Students are expected to know the words related to transportation and to respond to instructions (such as forming sentences, answering questions, stating word meanings) related to these words. For this reason, it is placed in the application step of the cognitive process. The phrase “where vehicles are” shown in the outcome refers to knowledge of the names of the locations where the vehicles are located. Therefore, Outcome 4 is located at the conceptual knowledge level of the knowledge dimension. The action of “speaking” in the outcome refers to performing an action based on the information at hand and carrying out an application based on the given structure. Therefore, it is located in the application level of the cognitive process dimension. The phrase “using of transportation vehicles” mentioned in the outcome refers to determining the places to go with these vehicles by using the knowledge of the names of the vehicles. This can be defined as using the elements that make up the structure together in a structured sentence. Therefore, Outcome 5 is located at the conceptual knowledge level of the knowledge dimension. Since the action of the outcome is expressed as “speaking”, it is placed in the application level of the cognitive process dimension.

During the evaluation of teachers' applications to the objectives in terms of curriculum alignment, a classification has been made as mentioned above, and accordingly, the teachers' alignment levels with the curriculum have been evaluated as aligned, partially aligned, and misaligned. Practices that fall in the same levels of the knowledge and cognitive process dimensions are considered aligned, partially aligned if one of these two dimensions is different, and misaligned if both dimensions are located different levels. The evaluation based on the curriculum implementations of the teachers in the lower and upper groups towards the outcomes is presented below.

**The alignment levels of lower and upper groups towards Outcome 1.** When the curriculum practices of the three teachers in the curriculum literacy lower group are examined for Outcome 1, it is observed that the teachers introduced vehicle types as words and thus had factual knowledge, which is in line with the official curriculum. It is seen that the teachers used the structures “What is this?” and “How many motorbikes?” in these applications aimed at this outcome; however, in their explanations after the lesson, it was stated that these structures were expressions related to previous topics and that only the words of the new unit were repeated in this lesson. Therefore, these expressions were not taken into consideration in the classification aimed at the outcome. It was seen that all teachers in the lower group made applications that are compatible with the knowledge dimension of Outcome 1. When the curriculum applications of the teachers in the lower group were examined in terms of the cognitive process dimension, it is seen that the teachers made activities focusing on the level of remembering, such as identification, repetition, and expression, as well as activities focused on the application level. While the repetition and identification-oriented activities in the lessons of teachers coded L1 and L2 indicate the remembering stage, the coloring and forming words from mixed letters activities are at the application stage. The activities performed by the teacher coded L3 in the class (repetition, note-taking, matching, and saying the selected vehicle name) are at the remembering stage of the cognitive process. When the activities of the teachers coded L1, L2, and L3 in this group were examined considering both the knowledge and cognitive process dimensions, it was observed that all teachers' work was aligned with the knowledge dimension; however, the activities related to the cognitive process dimension show inconsistent characteristics by varying between the remembering and application stages. Therefore, it can be said that the work of the teachers in this group is partially aligned with the program.

When the curriculum activities were examined, it was seen that three teachers in the upper group of curriculum literacy repeated previously learned sentence patterns in their classes like the teachers in the lower group, and at the end of the lesson, they stated that these structures were previously learned structures and that they only taught words for this acquisition. Therefore, these structures were not included in the assessment of learning outcomes. When the knowledge level of the three teachers in this group was examined in terms of their implementation of the curriculum, it was seen that all three teachers made factual knowledge level applications in parallel with the curriculum. When the curriculum applications of the teachers are examined in terms of cognitive process dimension, it is seen that the question-answer, singing, note-taking, and vehicle recognition activities carried out in the classroom by the teacher with the code “U1” are at the understanding stage of the cognitive process. While the repetition, definition, and matching activities carried out by the teachers with the codes “U2” and “U3” are at the remembering stage of the cognitive process, the coloring, pasting, and creating vehicles from shapes activities are at the application stage. Based on these, it can be said that the teacher with the code “U1” is aligned with the program, while the teachers with the codes “U2” and “U3” are partially aligned.

**The alignment levels of lower and upper groups towards Outcome 2 and 3.** Outcomes 2 and 3 points to the same content and activities in the curriculum, but they correspond to different cognitive process stages. Since these outcomes deal with the same content with different actions, these two outcomes have been examined under the same title. In addition, since these outcomes are inclusive of other outcomes, it is also possible to come across activities related to other outcomes here.

When the teaching process of the teachers coded as L1, L2, and L3 in the curriculum literacy lower group is examined based on the knowledge dimension, it is seen that all three teachers in this group ask their students to generate answers using the elements given and engage in activities related to this. All three teachers conducted studies on the conceptual knowledge level of the knowledge dimension in accordance with Outcome 2 and 3. When the activities carried out in the teaching process of the teachers in the lower group are examined in terms of the cognitive process dimension, it is seen that all teachers carried out activities in the application stage. Therefore, while

the teachers in this group are not in line with Outcome 2, they seem to be in line with Outcome 3. Based on this, it can be concluded that the teachers coded as L1, L2, and L3 are partially aligned with Outcome 2 and aligned with Outcome 3.

When looking at the practices of teachers in the upper group of the curriculum literacy, it is seen that all teachers have worked at the conceptual knowledge level in parallel with the knowledge level of Outcome 2 and 3. All teachers showed alignment in the knowledge dimension for both outcomes. In the cognitive process dimension, the teacher with the code U1 has performed activities at the comprehension level, while the teachers with codes U2 and U3 have carried out activities at the application level. Based on this, it can be said that the teacher with the code U1 is aligned with the cognitive process dimension of Outcome 2 but misaligned with the cognitive process dimension of Outcome 3. The teacher with the code U1 can be said to be aligned with Outcome 2 and partially aligned with Outcome 3. U2 and U3 coded teachers have worked at the application level. Based on this, it can be said that they are misaligned with the cognitive process dimension of Outcome 2, while aligned with Outcome 3. As a result, U2 and U3 coded teachers are partially aligned with Outcome 2 and aligned with Outcome 3.

**The alignment levels of lower and upper groups towards Outcome 4.** When looking at the practices of teachers in the lower group of the curriculum literacy, it can be seen that all teachers presented the knowledge of the structure and its elements in class and worked on the conceptual knowledge level of the knowledge dimension. All teachers coded L1, L2, and L3 are aligned with the knowledge dimension of Outcome 4 in the curriculum. When looking at the cognitive process of teachers, it was observed that teachers L1 and L3 carried out activities such as repetition, matching, and question-answer. When these activities are examined, it can be said that they are based on the students internalizing the knowledge about structures, therefore, they are in the understanding stage in the cognitive process. Teacher L2 also conducted an activity of creating words from mixed letters in addition to these activities. Since this activity aims to create the target element with a piece of information in the student's hand, it is in the application stage. Therefore, teachers L1 and L3 are placed in the understanding stage, and teacher L2 in the application stage. Based on this data, it can be said that teacher L2 in the lower group of the curriculum literacy is aligned with Outcome 4, while teachers L1 and L3 are partially aligned.

All of the teachers coded U1, U2 and U3 who belong to the upper group of the curriculum literacy, have shown expressions related to the locations of the tools in their classes with their components and supported the topic with question-answer sessions. Therefore, it can be said that they have worked on the conceptual knowledge level in alignment with the knowledge dimension of Outcome 4. When the studies related to this outcome were examined in terms of the cognitive process dimension, it was observed that all teachers worked on the basis of repetition and matching to internalize a concept. Therefore, all teachers in this group coded U1, U2 and U3, who are in the upper curriculum literacy level, are at the understanding stage in the cognitive process dimension. Regarding Outcome 4, the teachers in this group are partially aligned.

**The alignment levels of lower and upper groups towards Outcome 5.** When the practices of the teachers in the curriculum literacy level lower group are examined in terms of Outcome 5 in the knowledge dimension; it is observed that the teachers with codes L1, L2, and L3 presented the structure related to the alignment with its components and conducted activities related to the subject. These practices are at the conceptual knowledge level in accordance with Outcome 5 in the knowledge dimension. When the in-class activities of the teachers in this group are analyzed in terms of cognitive process dimension, it is determined that all teachers focused on the relationship of knowledge with other concepts and its assimilation. These activities are in the understanding stage of the cognitive process. Therefore, it can be said that all teachers with codes L1, L2, and L3 in this group are partially aligned with Outcome 5.

When the classroom practices of teachers coded as U1, U2, and U3 in the upper group of curriculum literacy level were examined in terms of the knowledge dimension of Outcome 5, it

was seen that all teachers conducted conceptual knowledge level studies by presenting the components of the structure with examples and activities. When the teachers' practices towards the outcome were examined in terms of the cognitive process dimension, it was observed that the U1-coded teacher was at the understanding stage with activities such as repetition, matching, and expression. On the other hand, U2 and U3 coded teachers carried out activities at the application stage, such as creating words from mixed letters and removing expressions that disrupt the meaning of the sentence, unlike the U1 coded teacher. Therefore, it can be said that the U1-coded teacher in the upper group of curriculum literacy level is partially aligned with the curriculum, while the U2 and U3-coded teachers are aligned.

### 3.2.2. *Primary school English teachers' alignment of functional curriculum with the official curriculum learning experiences*

The evaluation of this item is based on the items under the title "Important Issues for the Application of the Curriculum" in the English Language Teaching Curriculum developed by the Ministry of National Education were used (MNE, 2017a). Accordingly, the alignment of the practices of teachers in the lower and upper groups of the curriculum literacy level in their learning experiences was examined by comparing them with the items in the official curriculum. The section of the curriculum also includes items related to teacher and student motivation, parent involvement, and book authors or editors. Since these items were not taken into consideration in terms of curriculum alignment, they were excluded. Below are the relevant items that were evaluated:

- Communication is carried out in English as much as possible.
- Communication is focused on the creation of real meaning.
- Students are continuously exposed to English through audio and visual materials.
- Enjoyment of language learning is fostered through activities such as arts and crafts, TPR, and drama.
- L1 (first language) usage is not prohibited or discouraged, but it should be employed only as necessary (i.e., for giving complex instructions or explaining difficult concepts).
- The focus of learning is on deepening communication, rather than on completing curricular items within a given period of time.
- Errors are not addressed during communication, so as not to disrupt the flow; problem areas are noted by the teacher and addressed at a later time through practice and reinforcement.
- Students frequently encounter materials that have previously been covered in order to reinforce what they already know.
- Students produce materials to share with the rest of the school and the outside world.
- Students develop communicative skills in English by "doing things with the language" rather than by "learning about the language".

Based on the items mentioned above, practices related to the learning experiences of teachers in the lower group of curriculum literacy have been examined. As stated in the first item, all teachers in this group used English as the communication language and repeated each expression in Turkish. In this sense, they are aligned with the curriculum. It has been observed that they use communication in the activities they perform in the lesson not to create real communication but to focus on teaching certain grammar structures and related activities. In this sense, they are not aligned with the curriculum. In accordance with the use of visual and auditory materials of the curriculum, it has been observed that all teachers in the lower group are aligned with this item. All teachers presented various materials through the smart board. While only the teachers coded L1 and L2 included handicraft activities such as painting and pasting in their lessons related to manual and all bodily reaction activities, it was observed that the teacher with L3 code carried out a drama activity in which he/she simulated a daily conversation. Based on these activities, it is possible to conclude that the teachers have worked in alignment with the program in this context.

In the examinations regarding the use of mother tongue, it has been observed that Turkish was used as a translation after English in all observed classrooms, and no limitation was imposed on its use. Teachers are aligned with this item. In the teaching practices of the teachers in the lower group, it has been observed that due to the limited time allocated to the lesson, they assigned some works as homework or skipped them instead of focusing on the item that emphasizes the deepening of meaning. All teachers are misaligned with this item. In the curriculum, it is stated that errors should be corrected not during communication but afterwards. However, it has been observed that all teachers in this group interrupt communication to correct student errors at the moment of error. The curriculum emphasized the repetition of previously learned functions and knowledge. In the observed lessons, teachers repeated the structures previously learned and then presented new information related to the new topic after completing the activities related to these structures in the textbook. Therefore, it can be said that teachers work in accordance with the curriculum in this item. The curriculum mentions the production of materials to be shared within or outside the school. However, no study related to this item has been observed in these lessons. In the examinations for the last item, it was seen that grammar structures were presented in the lessons of teachers L1 and L2, and then the activities in the textbook were completed. Only a drama activity was observed in the lesson of the teacher coded L3, and this activity can be said to be aligned with the item "doing something with language". When the curriculum alignment of teachers with L1, L2, and L3 codes is evaluated in terms of the items in the curriculum, it is seen that the teachers are aligned with different items. It is possible to say that teachers who are included in the lower group of curriculum literacy show partial alignment both individually and as a group in terms of the learning experiences element of the curriculum.

When the learning experiences of the teachers in the upper group of the curriculum literacy were examined according to the items in the curriculum, it was determined that teachers coded as U1 and U3 used Turkish as their communication language, while only the teacher coded as U2 communicated in English, in relation to the first item of the curriculum. Therefore, it can be said that teacher U2 is aligned with this item, while U1 and U3 coded teachers are misaligned. In the second item, it was stated that the focus should be on understanding the real meaning; all teachers in this group presented information about grammar structures in their lessons and then reinforced the subject with activities. Communication is fundamental in teaching and reinforcing structures in this item, so teachers were determined to be misaligned with the curriculum in this item. It is seen that all teachers are aligned with the item emphasizing the use of visual and auditory materials, such as pictures, videos and music, in smart board applications. In the examinations regarding the item, which recommends activities such as handicrafts, all bodily reactions and drama, no activity has been found in U1 and U3 coded teachers' lessons that have the mentioned qualifications. The teacher coded as U2, on the other hand, included a coloring activity in their lesson. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that U1 and U3 coded teachers are not aligned with this item, while the teacher coded as U2 is aligned. Considering the item regarding the prohibition of using the mother tongue, it is not restricted to use the mother tongue in the class because the teachers coded as U1 and U3 use Turkish as their communication language. The teacher coded as U2, on the other hand, communicated in English and used Turkish when students indicated that they did not understand. Therefore, all teachers are aligned with this item as well. Similar to the teachers in the lower group, the presentation of grammar structures and examples regarding the topic was given priority due to the limited time. The curriculum emphasizes the correction of mistakes after communication, not during communication. In this regard, it was observed that the teacher coded as U1 advised the students to find their own mistakes at the end of the activity in a compatible way with the curriculum and provided peer or self-help when necessary. U2 and U3 coded teachers, on the other hand, showed incompatible characteristics by correcting the mistakes instantly during interaction. As specified in the curriculum, all three teachers were observed to refer to the previously learned structures while presenting a new topic with the help of activities in the textbook. The curriculum mentions the work for the students to present a material. No production

of a material for presenting either in school or outside of school was observed in the lessons observed in this group. In addition to these, regarding the last item, it was observed that the teachers' presentations were parallel to the item "learning about the language" rather than the item "making something with language", and they worked on reinforcing grammar structures with activities. It is possible to say that teachers have misaligned practices in this item. It can be seen that teachers in the upper curriculum literacy group who are composed of teachers coded U1, U2, and U3 show different levels of compliance with the elements determined in the curriculum. Therefore, it can be said that all teachers in this group are partially aligned in showing different characteristics in the learning experiences element of the curriculum.

### *3.2.3. Primary school English teachers' alignment of functional curriculum with the official curriculum evaluation practices*

Examinations related to this problem have been examined based on the points emphasized under the title "Testing and Evaluation Approach of the Curriculum" in the English Language Teaching Curriculum developed by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2017a). Accordingly, the evaluation practices carried out in the lesson should have the following features:

- Cover four language skills and implicit assessment of language components.
- Vary in terms of learning styles and cognitive characteristics of the students.
- Be in consistent with the learning and teaching methodology depicted in the curriculum.
- Include self-assessment, reflection and feedback.
- Help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work.

It is emphasized in the curriculum that no summative assessment is made at the 2nd and 3rd grade levels and that formative evaluation is the basis. No official exam has been applied to students at this level. During the observation process, the practices carried out by the teacher regarding the students' learning levels have been taken into consideration. Accordingly, below are the evaluation practices and assessments of the teachers.

The evaluation of the teachers in the lower group has been examined taking into account the items mentioned above in the program. In the first item, the evaluation of the four language skills and language components has been addressed. Teachers in this group have conducted activities using audio materials they used in class, worked to complete activities using listening passages or videos. The teachers have tried to make judgments about the students' skills from these activities. For the speaking skill, no direct activity was carried out; only the expressions of the answers were given verbally. An activity aimed at this skill was only carried out in the class of the teacher coded A3 in the dialogue activity. However, the teacher did not make any evaluation of this skill. There are no activities for reading or writing skills at this class level. The teachers did not work directly on these skills, only practicing by reading the questions and sentences in the activities and noting their answers. No judgment was made in these practices. It is possible to say that the teachers in this group were partially aligned with the item. In the next item in the curriculum's evaluation section, it was stated that evaluation practices should be differentiated according to students. All teachers in the lower group have applied all activities at the same level and intensity for each student in the class. It can be said that the teachers were misaligned with this item. When the alignment of the evaluation practices with the learning and teaching methodology indicated in the curriculum was examined, it was observed that the "communicative approach" was emphasized in the curriculum. In this approach, the aim is to teach language through daily life and interaction. The expectation of the curriculum is for students to learn the use of the language in real communication rather than learning it as a set of rules. Therefore, no evaluation practices based on this approach were observed in the observed classes. All teachers in this group applied the multiple-choice test at the end of the book in the classroom, asked for the number of correct and wrong answers from the students and gave feedback on them. Only the teacher coded L3 performed a dialogue activity involving interaction, but the students did not make any judgments about learning the subject in this activity. In this context, it was observed that the teachers were

misaligned with the item. The next item specified in the curriculum states that evaluation practices should include self-evaluation, reflection, and feedback. All teachers in this group have applied the multiple-choice test at the end of the book in the classroom. The teacher coded L1 performed the test on the board, calling students one by one and giving feedback to those who answered incorrectly. The teacher coded L2 performed the test, explained the answers in the classroom, and then checked the students' books and gave feedback. The teacher coded L3 asked each student for their correct and incorrect answers at the end of the activity. It can be said that all three teachers provided feedback. In addition, the teacher with code L1 instructed the students to fill out the self-assessment form in the textbook at home. Reflection practice was not observed in the lessons. It can be seen that the teachers are partially aligned with this item. Regarding the last item specified in the curriculum, no expression was found in the subgroup where all the teachers did not indicate their students' strengths or weaknesses. The teachers provided feedback by looking at the correct and incorrect answers in the activities but did not emphasize the individual or class areas that require further work. It is possible to say that the teachers were not aligned with this item.

The lessons of the teachers coded U1, U2, and U3 in the curriculum literacy upper group were analyzed based on the evaluation practices. The first item specified in the curriculum emphasizes the evaluation of the four language skills and language components. Teachers in this group have carried out listening activities with smart board applications. In addition, speaking activities were included since answers to questions were verbally expressed. Teachers have paid attention to students' correct and incorrect answers in these activities and provided feedback accordingly. Similar to the teachers in the lower group, regarding reading and writing, no direct activity was carried out, and no evaluation data related to this was found. It can be said that the teachers in this group are partially aligned with this item. In the next item, it is stated that evaluation activities should be differentiated according to students. Teachers in this group, like the teachers in the lower group, have not resorted to differentiation in evaluation practices. Thus, they show an aspect of misalignment with this item. When the alignment with the methodology specified in the curriculum is examined, it is observed that the evaluation practices carried out in the classroom do not focus on communication-based use of language that is parallel to real-life experience. All of the evaluations indirectly carried out through activities are aimed at finding the equivalents of the previously taught language structures and words. In this context, all of the teachers are considered to be misaligned with this item. In the next item specified in the curriculum, the use of self-assessment, reflection, and feedback is emphasized. Among the teachers in this group, the teacher with the code U1 checked the student books after some activities in class; the teacher with the code U2 asked the students about their correct and incorrect answers after the activities; and the teacher with the code U3 provided feedback to the students by walking around the classroom after the activities. The teacher coded U3 told the students to do the self-assessment activity in the textbook, while the other teachers did not carry out any work related to this element. None of the teachers carried out reflection practice. It can be said that the teachers partially align with this item. In the examination of the item regarding determining students' strengths and weaknesses or identifying areas that need improvement, it was observed that only the teacher coded U1 emphasized the need for careful work by showing the parts where the students made mistakes and encouraged peer assistance when necessary. The activities of the teachers coded U2 and U3 are misaligned. Therefore, it has been determined that the majority of teachers in this group are partially aligned with this component of the curriculum.

#### **4. Discussion**

According to the findings related to the curriculum literacy levels of primary school English teachers, it was determined that the curriculum literacy level of the teachers was high, and the scores obtained in the reading sub-dimension were higher than the writing sub-dimension. In the related literature, there are many studies to determine the curriculum literacy level of teachers. These studies emphasize that the curriculum literacy levels of teachers or pre-service teachers are

at medium and high levels and present inferences parallel to this study (Çetinkaya & Tabak, 2019; Erdem & Eğmir, 2018; Kahramanoğlu, 2019; Yıldız, 2019). In addition, the fact that the curriculum literacy levels of teachers in this study were higher in the reading sub-dimension than in the writing sub-dimension supports the findings of the studies in the field (Çetinkaya & Tabak, 2019; Erdem & Eğmir, 2018; Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Yıldız, 2019). Similar to the aforementioned studies, this study showed that teachers were more proficient in the reading sub-dimension of the curriculum. Therefore, teachers find themselves successful in understanding the curriculum. On the other hand, teachers show a lower level of proficiency in the writing sub-dimension, which is based on teacher production and includes activities such as designing materials, preparing assessment tools, designing activities, writing objectives and preparing content. Based on these data, it is possible to say that teachers need improvement in the “writing” sub-dimension of the program, which refers to higher level skills.

When the alignment of primary school English teachers towards the objectives of the official curriculum is examined, the findings indicate that the teachers in the upper group show a higher level of alignment with the objectives of the curriculum than the teachers in the lower group; however, although the alignment levels of the teachers differed, no pattern was found regarding this difference. In order to better understand this situation, the classification of the learning outcomes is shown according to the knowledge and cognitive process dimensions analysis results were evaluated within the framework of the observations made about the level of teachers' handling of these acquisitions. In the knowledge dimension of the classification of learning outcomes, it is seen that all teachers are aligned with all of the learning outcomes. During the observations, it was observed that all teachers used the book provided by MNE and the smart board application of this book. All of the teachers used the same book, in some cases by supporting it with other resources (worksheets, videos, picture cards, etc.). This situation can be shown as a reason why the learning outcomes are compatible in the knowledge dimension. In the comparison for the cognitive process dimension of the classification table, it was observed that the teachers who were misaligned often used practices that were one step below or above the determined step. Based on the observation notes, it is seen that the teachers are incompatible because they carry out the activities in the textbook and other resources independently of the learning outcomes in the program. It is possible to say that the activities for the outcomes in the resources used are included in steps independent of the curriculum. Teachers are aligned or misaligned with these activities they use in the classroom. This finding constitutes evidence that teachers are partially aligned and aligned due to the parallelism of content and materials, without considering compliance or adherence to the program. In addition, during the observations, there were no practices or statements of the teachers to examine the learning outcomes or to make students aware of these learning outcomes. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about an awareness of the learning outcomes. For this reason, the fact that the teachers carried out activities in the same direction with the material content constitutes evidence that the alignment of the learning outcomes in the knowledge dimension is due to alignment to the content. Unlike this study, in other studies that examined alignment towards the objectives, teachers' level of alignment with the curriculum was low (Arslan Çelik, 2020; Aykaç & Ulubey, 2012; Bateman et al., 2007; Kara et al., 2017). However, similar to this study, it is emphasized that the factors affecting misalignment are content and materials. As a result, it can be interpreted that content and materials are determinant in determining the alignment with the learning outcomes.

When the alignment of primary school English teachers towards the learning experiences of the official curriculum is examined, the findings show that the teachers in the curriculum literacy lower group are aligned with more items than the teachers in the upper group. A pattern was found in the analysis of these items; accordingly, in cases where alignment with learning experiences was achieved, teachers were directly aligned by adhering to the content, materials and resources; whereas in cases of misalignment, teachers showed inconsistency due to factors independent of them, such as student numbers and time allocated to the lesson. These factors were



also cited as reasons for misalignment in other studies in the field (Bütün & Gültepe, 2016; Kara et al., 2017). In another study, Phaeton and Stears (2017) reported that teachers' level of adaptation in the teaching process was low and that the reason for the incompatibility was teachers' insufficient curriculum knowledge and the inadequacy of the curriculum. Unlike Phaeton and Stears, in this study, when the activities of the lower and upper group teachers are examined, it is seen that the curriculum alignment of the teachers with lower curriculum literacy level does not show significant inferiority to the teachers in the upper group. Based on this, it can be interpreted that teachers' curriculum knowledge alone does not determine the alignment towards learning experiences. As a result, it was determined that the alignment of teachers in the lower and upper curriculum literacy groups towards learning experiences was affected by various factors such as content commitment, student numbers, insufficient course time and curriculum intensity. In the context of this problem, it is possible to say that teachers' curriculum literacy levels do not have a determining feature in ensuring adaptation to learning experiences and that curriculum alignment is influenced by many factors.

When the alignment of primary school EFL teachers towards the assessment activities of the official curriculum is examined, it is possible to say that all teachers' alignment is at a low level. Accordingly, all teachers were misaligned with the items of differentiating assessment practices, following the methodology specified in the curriculum, and helping students identify their strengths and weaknesses. It was observed that only one teacher from the upper group tried to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, all teachers had partial alignment with the items of covering the four language skills and using self-assessment, reflection and feedback. In the observations, the teachers stated that they only did activities and made judgments about teaching based on these activities, since there was no formal assessment. In these activities, it was observed that most of the teachers left the activity halfway through, skipped some activities or gave these activities homework. Teachers often cited lack of time as a reason for these practices. In addition, in some classes, test (multiple-choice) activities were conducted, and students were asked about their correct and incorrect answers. However, students were not asked which questions they got wrong and which ones they got right; only the correct answers were shown to the whole class. In some cases, students were not asked the number of correct and incorrect answers. As can be seen, the teachers in both groups showed almost the same level of alignment on the basis of the same items. It is possible to say that the reason for this is that all teachers performed activities from the same book with different frequency and intensity. As a result, it was determined that the high level of alignment of the teachers in the upper group was due to the commitment to the content. In addition, another reason for the low level of adaptation of assessment activities to the curriculum may be factors such as the duration of the lesson and the number of students. Thus, it is possible to conclude that this difference between the upper and lower groups is not significant and that the teachers in both groups are at the same level of alignment in all items except one item. In addition to this, it was observed that some activities and practices were not carried out due to reasons such as insufficient class time and student numbers, and therefore the level of alignment varied for one item. All these show that different variables play a role in determining alignment with the assessment element of the curriculum.

In addition to these, many studies in the field emphasize that the proper implementation of a prepared curriculum significantly affects curriculum practices (Fer, 2019; Hunkins & Ornstein, 2016; Stabback, 2016). Building on these studies, it can be concluded that teachers' alignment with the curriculum is influenced by their curriculum literacy levels. Alongside curriculum literacy, the intensity of the curriculum content, with more content than allocated class time, and class sizes are seen as effective factors in lower alignment levels. As observed, the findings of this study support the results of previous research in the field. Furthermore, in many studies, positive effects on student achievement have been identified in classes with high program alignment (Bateman et al., 2007; Brent & Diobilda, 1993; Mitchell, 1999). Based on this, it is possible to suggest that when program alignment is achieved, student achievement will also increase.

## 5. Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

After analyzing the study's findings, there have been several limitations to consider for further studies. The data obtained from the CLS are limited to English teachers in official primary schools located on the European Side of Istanbul, during the 2021-2022 academic year. Additionally, the data obtained through observations are confined to six teachers working in Istanbul during the same academic year, as well as the 8th unit of the 3rd-grade English curriculum that was implemented in the same year.

In this study, the impact of curriculum literacy level on curriculum alignment was investigated by observing the curriculum practices of primary school English teachers. The study revealed that teachers with higher curriculum literacy levels exhibited higher alignment with the program. Consequently, similar studies could be conducted in different subjects and grade levels. Furthermore, in investigations regarding curriculum alignment, it was identified that factors beyond teachers' literacy levels also influence alignment status, such as textbook content, class durations, and class sizes. Therefore, it is recommended to closely examine these factors in studies related to curriculum alignment. Similar practices can be conducted using different methods and tools at various time intervals. In future research on curriculum alignment, the effects of alignment level on student achievement could be explored.

## 6. Conclusion

In this study, the effects of curriculum literacy skills of primary school English teachers on official and functional curriculum practices were examined. As a result of the study, it was determined that primary school English teachers had relatively high curriculum literacy levels and it was determined that curriculum literacy level had a low effect on curriculum practices. It was also seen that teachers with higher curriculum literacy level showed more competence in objectives and evaluation elements while teachers with lower curriculum literacy levels showed better performance in learning experiences. Based on the findings, it can be said that improving teachers' knowledge and skills about the curriculum will increase alignment with the curriculum. In addition to curriculum literacy levels, it can be interpreted that factors such as insufficient course hours and student numbers also affect curriculum alignment. This study shows the importance of teachers' curriculum knowledge and skills by determining the effect of curriculum literacy skills on curriculum implementation.

“The 'alignment' aspect involves teachers setting a supportive learning environment that matches the intended learning outcomes. This includes ensuring that the teaching methods and assessment tasks align with the learning activities aimed by those outcomes” (Biggs, 2003, p. 1). The elements together form a whole. This study revealed the harmony differences in the items. From this point of view, it is seen that a whole cannot be formed. Even if the whole is created, it cannot lead to an inference that the alignment program in an item is compatible. In this respect, although teachers' knowledge about each element of the curriculum is high, it is seen that this knowledge is not reflected in the practice and does not affect the program harmony unless it is associated between the elements. Therefore, it can be said that teachers need to think and discuss the relations between curriculum elements. In this context, it can be said that it would be beneficial to organize professional development studies in this direction.

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