

Teachers' Perception of 2nd Grade English Curriculum of Primary School in Turkey

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ABSTRACT This study aims to determine the teachers' perception of primary school 2nd grade English curriculum that started to be applied during the school year 2013-2014. The study uses the case study method, one of the qualitative research methods. The results of the study show that teachers possess generally positive views towards the curriculum but that some problems were experienced concerning the elements of the curriculum and application of the lessons. In this context, teachers have expressed that the curriculum could be extended by taking the levels of the students into consideration but that some of the subjects were not appropriate for the levels of the students; that the speaking and listening skill acquisitions included in the curriculum were adequate and covered important subjects but that the students' preparedness affect the transfer of acquisitions and that the curriculum was not prepared in a way to inform teachers.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important factors in attaining economic, political, and social development in today's society is the ability to communicate internationally. Ability to follow developments in different societies, to be acquainted with different cultures, to engage in international commerce, and to exchange information necessitates the knowledge of at least one foreign language. English plays a key role in it because English is the most widespread language used by different nations to communicate with each other in the globalizing world (Merter et al. 2012). Being the official or semi-official language of many countries, English is also a commonly used language in diplomatic meetings and scientific research. In Turkey, English has the property of being the most commonly used foreign language. Most students learn English as the first foreign language in schools (Genc 1999).

English is a compulsory subject for primary schools, middle schools, and high schools in Turkey. But the necessity to learn English in Turkey that is on its way of integration with Europe necessitates a change in curriculums. In this context, English curriculums are renewed and changes are made in English lesson plans (Seckin 2011). The last one of these changes came into force with the English Curriculum for Primary Education Institutions (primary schools and middle schools, grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) passed by the resolution no. 6 of 01.02.2013 of the Edu-

cation and Training Council (MEB 2013). These changes involve certain radical decisions concerning the English classes. For instance, English has become a compulsory subject for 2nd grade of primary school on the 2013-2014 school year. The same resolution made English compulsory for 3rd grade of primary school starting from the 2014-2015 school year. English curriculums of grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 have also seen extensive changes. For example, number of lesson units has been reduced and the content has seen multiple additions and removals in all curriculums (Aydin 2014). The curriculums state that these changes were in conformity with European language standards (A-1, A-2). The Education and Training Council (ETC) has decided to apply these resolutions starting from 2012-2014 for grades 2 and 5; 2014-2015 for grades 3, 4, 6, and 7; and 2015-2016 for grade 8.

In Turkey, English curriculum, like all other curriculums, is determined by the Ministry of National Education. Curriculum is prepared by academicians, education planners, and a few teachers (Kaya 2015). Points considered for the preparation of the curriculum are the objectives, the content, the learning experience, and the assessment (Demirel 2004). The objectives constitute the acquisition phase of the curriculum and play an important role in its organization from simple to complex and from concrete to abstract (Erden 1998). Learning experience is the adaptation of the education for particular students and the ordering of the learning experience aimed to

be acquired. During this phase where the learning takes place, students' thinking skills have to be developed and they need to be lead to do research. This element comprises the content, the method, the technique, and the material to be used to attain the objective (Demirel 2010). Assessment and evaluation is the final element of the curriculum. Assessment and evaluation is the process of determining the level of achievement of the objectives aimed to be attained by the students (Güven 2007). In light of this information, in order to study the efficacy of the 2nd grade English curriculum, the elements of the curriculum need to be known in general terms (İnceli 2014).

The main objective of the 2nd grade English curriculum is determined to be instilling the love of learning a foreign language in the students learning the language. The acquisitions of the 2nd grade are to learn the basic words, including their pronunciations, such as colors, numbers, objects used in the classroom and at home, animals, fruits and the organs of the human body; and to learn the foreign language, with pleasure, to greet people and introduce oneself and others in a basic way (İyigüç and Aydın 2015). The contents of the curriculum is planned in a way to comprise learning through game-like activities enriched by entertaining visual, auditory, and audio-visual material. The context (environment) is chosen to be the immediate surroundings of the students like the classroom, games, amusement parks, countryside, picnics and trips, and schoolyard (Sahin and White 2015). The activities for the students feature songs, fairytale and cartoon characters, arts and crafts like painting, cutting, and pasting and game based activities (Yurtseven and Altun 2014). In addition to these activities, extracurricular activities (homework, projects, and portfolio) that involve reading and writing comprising no more than ten words are included. The curriculum also recommends leading the students to the portfolio assessment works at the <http://adp.meb.gov.tr> in order to follow their development (TTKB 2013). The implementation of the curriculums by the teachers and their opinions and suggestions about the curriculum are very important in order to assess the new curriculum and to form a judgment about its efficacy. In this context, it will be helpful to evaluate the 2nd grade English curriculum that has come to effect on the 2013-2014 school year in line with the teachers' sugges-

tions and determine the troubles in its implementation and its strengths and weaknesses in order to come up with solution suggestions.

Purpose of the Study

This research aims to quickly determine and fix the problems in 2nd grade English curriculum for primary schools and to come up with solution suggestions to improve the lessons. Since the subject of this study is the assessment of the new 2nd grade English curriculum for primary schools that came into effect just recently and since there are no previous studies on the subject, we think that it will contribute to future studies on the subject.

The objective of this study is to collect the opinions of the English teachers on the new 2nd grade English curriculum. The researcher sought to answer the following questions:

- *What are teachers' opinions on the acquisitions of the curriculum?*
- *What are teachers' opinions on the content of the curriculum?*
- *What are teachers' opinions on the activities of the curriculum?*
- *What are teachers' opinions on the assessment element of the curriculum?*
- *What are teachers' opinions on the problems they have experiences during the implementation of the curriculum?*
- *What are teachers' requests and suggestions on the curriculum?*

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study that uses the qualitative research method, the case study pattern has been used. Case study is the qualitative research method that involves the in depth study of one case (Yildirim and Simsek 2012). The sample has been selected based on the "convenient sampling" method that is a "purposeful sampling method that ensures the speed and practicality of the research by way of selecting subjects easily available and accessible to the researcher" (Yildirim and Simsek 2012).

Participants

The working group of this study consists of 14 2nd grade English teachers who work in 14 different schools in the Eastern Anatolian region of

Turkey. The participants aged between 28 and 40 have professional seniority between 4 and 15; 8 of them are male and 6 of them are female.

Data Collection Tool

A questionnaire has been developed by the researcher that consists of semi-structured interview questions. The questions that were prepared by considering the sub-problems of the research has been submitted to three specialist in the fields of curriculum development, foreign language education, and qualitative research, and their feedbacks and corrections were profited from to shape their final forms. A semi-structured interview questionnaire form consisting of six open questions that aim to collect the teachers' opinions on the acquisitions, content, activities, assessment, problems, and requests and suggestions about the curriculum. Interviews are classified under three categories based on the way they are conducted: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured (Merriam 1998; Ekiz 2003; Karasar 2004; Lichtman 2006). Interview is one of the commonly used data collection tools that aim to uncover the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals (Yildirim and Simsek 2012).

Data Collection Process

Interviews have been carried out with 14 English teachers teaching 2nd grade in 2014-2015 school year. Necessary permissions were obtained from the National Education Direction for the research. During the pre-interview, the aims of the interviews were explained to teachers and interview dates were set. Face-to-face interview with the teachers were carried out at the preset dates. Each interview took 44 to 56 minutes. Interviews were taped with a sound recording device and elements not representable on a sound recording (body language, gestures, mimics...) were noted. Interviews were later transcribed using a computer.

Analysis of Data

Data collected through interviews were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. In the descriptive analysis approach, data obtained during the research is organized and interpreted based on predetermined themes. In this approach,

data may be represented using the themes presented by the questions or using the questions and dimensions used during the interview and observation process (Yildirim and Simsek 2012). Data was analyzed using the NVIVO 8 software. Data obtained during the research were analyzed based on the predetermined themes of acquisitions, content, activities, assessment, implementation problems, and suggestions for the improvement of the 2nd grade English curriculum. Also, teachers' suggestions concerning each element of the curriculum were presented under their respective themes. In this study, direct quotations were presented unaltered. Each direct quotation is followed by a descriptive abbreviation noting the source of the quotation. For example, an abbreviation in the form of "T3-F" means the following:

- "T" = Teacher (Source of the quotation)
- "3" = Index number of the source
- "F" = Female (Teacher's sex: Male/Female)

FINDINGS

Teachers' answers to the questions asked during the interviews were analyzed based on the question and shown and evaluated using the following models.

1. Teachers' Opinions on the Acquisitions of the Curriculum

During the research, the teachers' were asked the question "What are your opinions about the sufficiency of the acquisitions found in the curriculum? What are your suggestions about the acquisitions?" in order to collect their opinions on the acquisitions found in the curriculum. Mentioned as Figure 1, showing the constituted theme and its subthemes concerning this question and their frequency values.

Teachers' expressed the opinion that, in general, the acquisitions were sufficient, adequate for the level of the class, and that it contains important subjects concerning the daily life, but that the fact that students pre-learning states (class levels and age differences) and the unequal student preparedness affected the transfer of the acquisitions. Interviewed teachers' assessments about the curriculum acquisitions are presented below:

The acquisitions are sufficient but there are level differences between the classes. That is, in some classes, acquisitions are transferred more slowly. For example, if the students come with

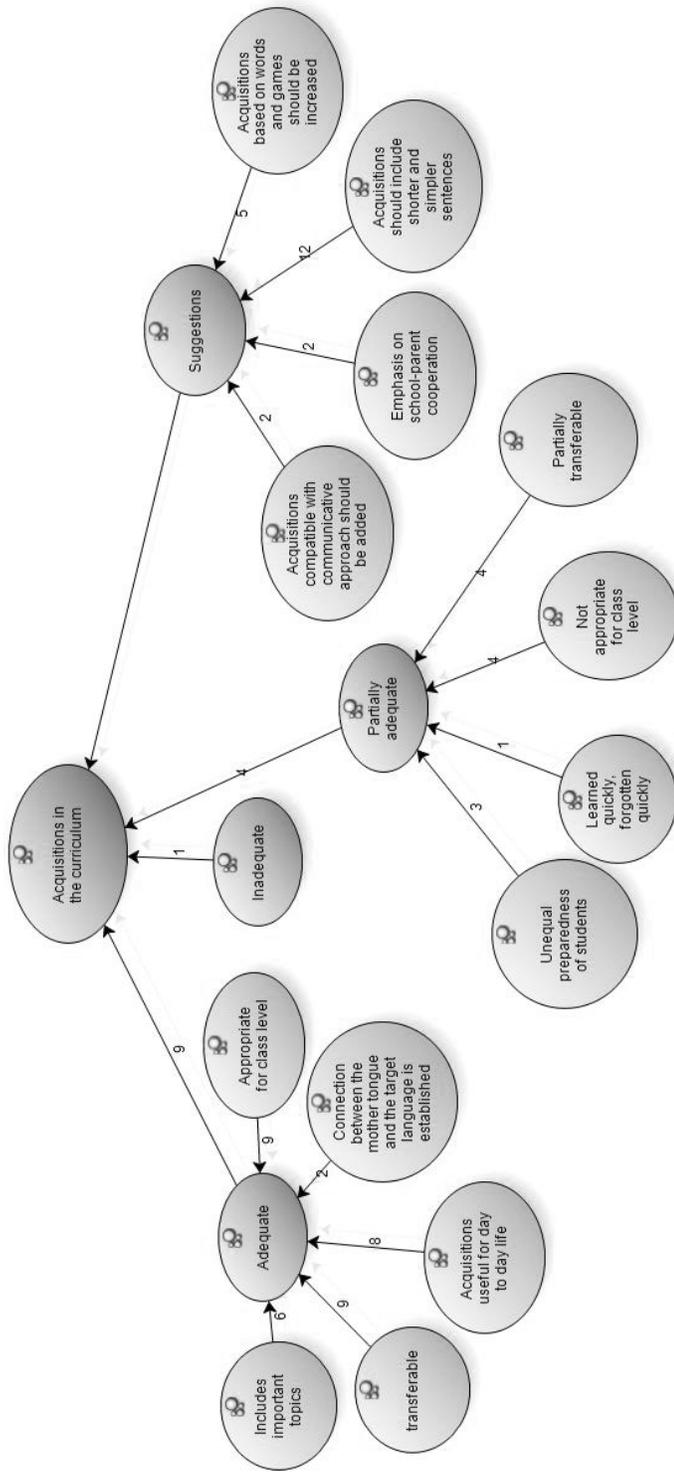


Fig. 1. The model related to acquisitions of the curriculum

the knowledge of reading, writing, and self-expression from the 1st grade, they get the acquisitions more easily. (T3-F)

It is a suitable curriculum for 2nd grade students. It includes knowledge they can use in daily life; it is important in this regard. More would be boring for the children anyway. And 2 hours wouldn't be enough. But I have to say this: Children learn quickly and they forget quickly, for this reason lots of repetition is necessary. (T1-F)

The analysis of teachers' suggestions concerning the acquisitions reveals that acquisitions should be simpler and suitable for students' levels, that number of acquisitions based on words and games should be increased, that it should be compatible with the communicative approach; and that families should cooperate with the teachers concerning the transfer of acquisitions.

Question-answer sessions should contain shorter acquisitions. For example, the students hit a wall on the 2nd or 3rd questions. I think the themes of the acquisitions should be short and clear to ensure memorability. (T5-F)

Harder subjects can be replaced by more basic subject suitable to their levels. Word intensive activities based on entertainment and game could be added. This would increase their interest into English in their first years and the class would be more pleasurable... (T9-M)

...I think the transfer of this much acquisition requires cooperation between the parents, the teachers, and the students. In fact, it's indispensable. (T2-F)

2. Teachers' Opinions on the Content of the Curriculum

During the research, the teachers' were asked the question "What are your opinions about the sufficiency of the contents of the curriculum? What are your suggestions about the content?" in order to collect their opinions on the content of the curriculum. Mentioned as Figure 2, showing the constituted theme and its subthemes concerning this question and their frequency values.

Teachers' expressed the opinion that the content of the curriculum was sufficient in general, that it could be further simplified, and that it was transferrable to the students in general. On the other hand the teachers said that some of the content wasn't suitable to the level of the students

and that it didn't contain enough repetition and examples. Below are some of these evaluations:

I think some subjects contain sudden overloads. For example, in the book, the unit about the numbers, right after teaching how to count from 1 to 10, jumps to the "How many erasers do you have?" question. There are problems in the transfer of some subjects. For example, words are easy to grasp for the children but they have difficulty expressing things they like and they don't like or introducing their favorite characters. (T11-M)

Not all of it can be transferred because of the business of the subjects. It also starts with easy subjects and suddenly gets too difficult. For instance, game and painting activities are immediately followed by forming sentences. (T1-F)

The content, up to a point, is suitable to the children's age and sufficient. But I think some of the words and sentences are not useful. (T2-F)

Teachers' suggestions concerning the content are, in order, that it should be simpler and easier to understand, that it should be enriched depending on the students' levels, and that it should include more daily life English language. Interviewed teachers' assessments about the curriculum content are presented below:

I think the content should be extended and should include more daily English language... (T5-F)

Some subjects should be narrowed. In any case, a teacher can stretch and extend the subject when necessary. But when the subject is already wide, it's both hard to acquire and boring for the children. (T13-M)

Making a comment on the broadness or specificity of the content is not right, it depends on the subject. The subject about the fruits may be broad but dialogs written in order to make them speak English on the playground may be more specific. (T4-F)

If the subjects are simplified, they can be extended. I'm not sure if it is possible to make the content more flexible but the content might be spread in time. That is, a curriculum that reinforces its content can enable a more permanent learning. (T14-M)

3. Teachers' Opinions on the Activities of the Curriculum

During the research, the teachers' were asked the question "What are your opinions about

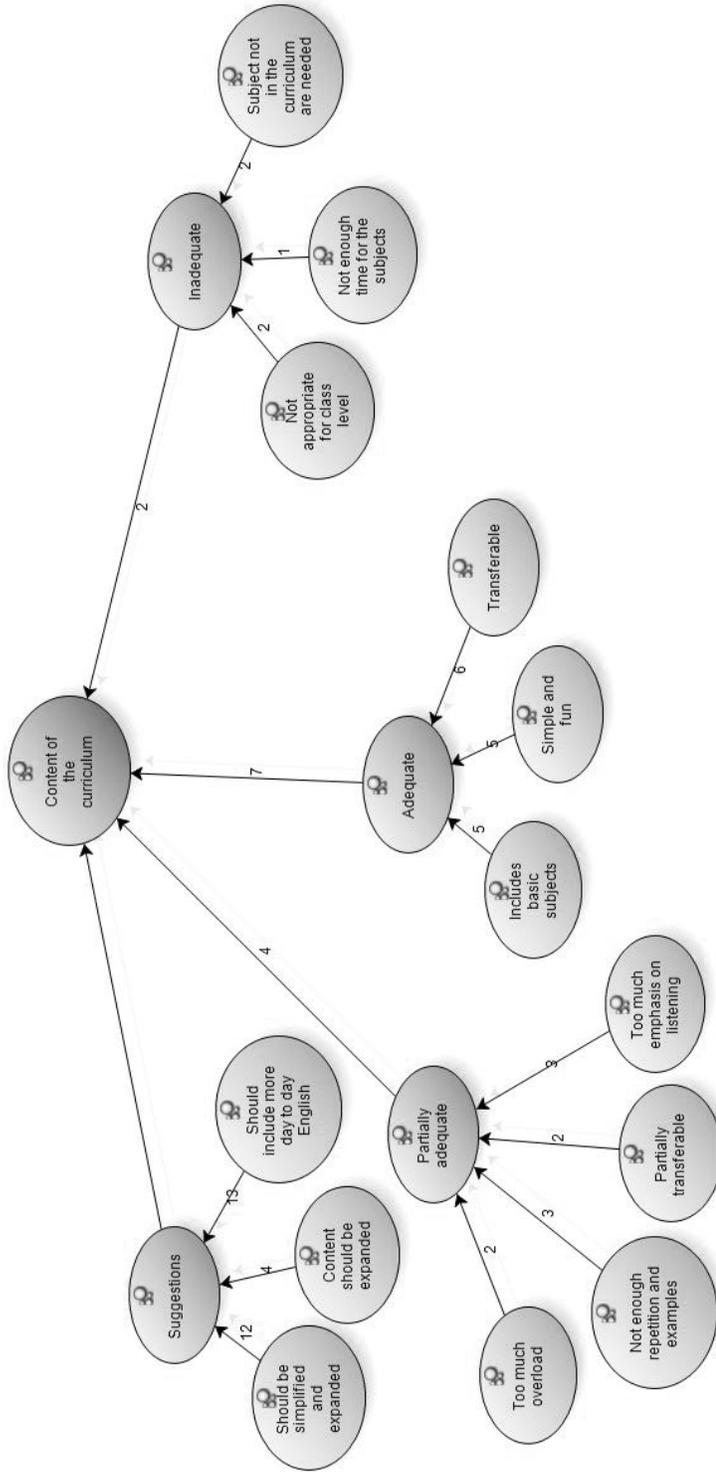


Fig. 2. The model related to content of the curriculum

the applicability of the activities of the curriculum? Why?" in order to collect their opinions on the applicability of the activities of the curriculum. Mentioned as Figure 3, showing the constituted theme and its subthemes concerning this question and their frequency values.

Interviewed teachers expressed the opinion that the activities of the curriculum are somehow applicable but that they experienced some problems, especially concerning the listening activities. General findings show that the teachers' classroom activities are generally similar. It has been determined that they do mostly cutting/pasting, painting, game, and singing and song listening activities. Below are some of the assessments of the teachers concerning the activities of the curriculum.

Activities are all based on listening but we have to read these exercises ourselves if we don't bring our laptops. Language laboratories are necessary for the proper implementation of the activities. The classroom and the material are not sufficient for these activities. (T3-F)

The activities in the curriculum are not too bad but they're not very different from the other Ministry of National Education books; because an excess of videos and songs does not make the activity easier. In any case, we give written material too, it can surprise children. (T4-F)

...students find some of the activities difficult. I use activities like cutting-pasting, painting, various versions of the train game on the book, singing, song listening, and speaking. (T6-F)

The analysis of the teachers' suggestions concerning the activities reveals that they expressed the following opinions: It should be taken into consideration that not all classrooms in Turkey have the same sufficiency; the curriculum should contain more descriptive activities that can grab children's attention more; and that more time should be made available for the activities. Below are some of the teachers' suggestions about the activities;

... I think the activities should be more descriptive. That is, they can talk about not what we should do but how we should do it. More descriptive activities and activities close to what the children do in their daily lives may be increased. (T5-F)

...there could be more activities like one-on-one, painting, and riddles. And the class-

room has to have the necessary equipment for the activities. (T11-M)

If there was a space where the students can move freely for the activities, if every classroom had a projector; in short, if the classroom environment was improved, it would be better. (T8-M)

4. Teachers' Opinions about the Assessment Element of the Curriculum

During the research, the teachers' were asked the question "*What are your opinions about the assessment element of the curriculum?"* in order to collect their opinions on the assessment element of the curriculum. Mentioned as Figure 4, showing the constituted theme and its subthemes concerning this question and their frequency values.

Teachers expressed a positive opinion about the fact that the assessment was, in general, based more on application and less on tests. But it is understood that the assessment suggestions of the curriculum are not very clear and that there are problems in the assessment because the acquisitions are mostly based on listening and speaking. Below are the opinions of teachers' concerning the assessment element of the curriculum;

At first, there was an uncertainty about how to do the assessments. In fact, we had to ask the National Education whether we were supposed to do exams or not. It is good that there is no exam-based assessment. At least it doesn't cause stress for the children. So we assess based on their activities. (T1-F)

...Some recommended assessments of the curriculum cannot be implemented in the classroom. For example, we use question and answer for listening based assessment. (T3-F)

Since our aim is to make the student love English, learning 6 or 7 out of 10 words should be considered success. Each student should be assessed based on his/her potential... (T2-F)

At first I didn't know what the assessment involved since the curriculum was implemented for the first time. After examining the curriculum I saw that assessment was mostly based on activities like making a puppet or a mask and making it speak, playing a favorite character, and role-playing. Students have difficulty doing most of these. So I use activities that the students do more easily, like preparing visual dictionaries, cutting/pasting, and painting. (T12-M)

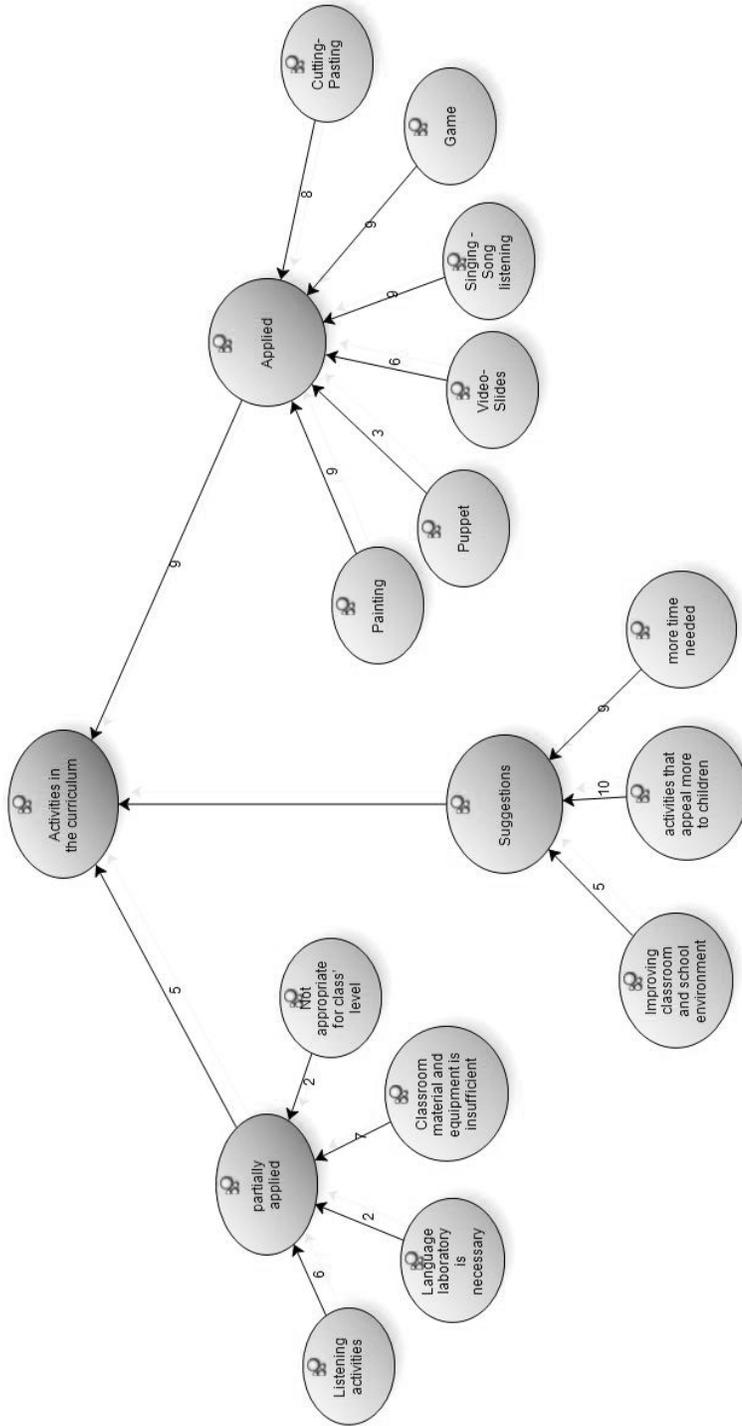


Fig. 3. The model related to activities of the curriculum

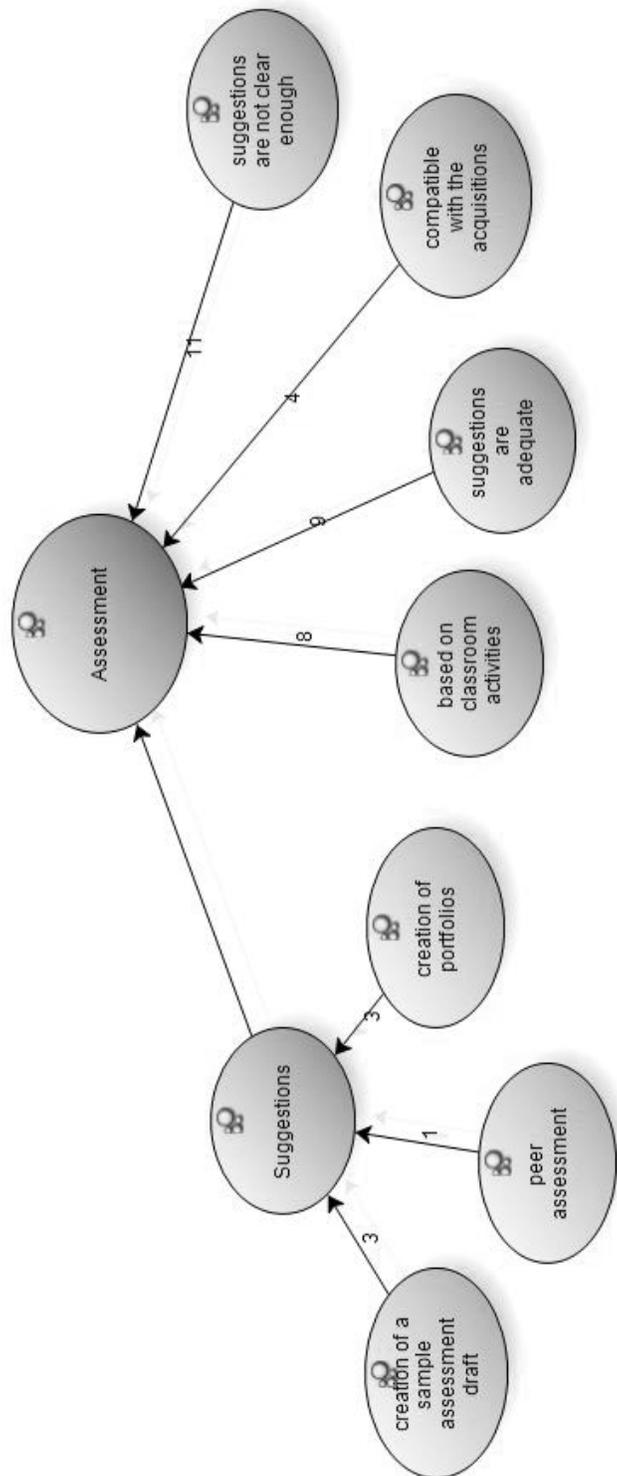


Fig. 4. The model related to assessment element of the curriculum

The analysis of the findings obtained through the interviews reveals that the teachers have suggestions of making the assessment information more clear, giving more descriptive examples, including an assessment draft or form. Below are the teachers' suggestions concerning the assessment element of the curriculum;

A more informative curriculum in terms of assessment and evaluation can be prepared. With examples, for instance... (T1-F)

...they could have prepared a clearer draft or example form for teachers. (T5-F)

There's no need for this many assessment projects oriented towards speaking. Even in the second level, there are students who can't make a puppet and voice it and create an imaginary character and make it speak. I think more basic assessment criteria like games, one-on-one, and introducing oneself should be emphasized. (T12-M)

5. Teachers' Opinions about the Problems They Experienced in the Implementation of the Curriculum

During the research, the teachers' were asked the question "What are the problems you've experienced in the implementation of the curriculum?" in order to collect their opinions on the problems they experienced in the implementation of the curriculum. Mentioned as Figure 5, showing the constituted theme and its sub-themes concerning this question and their frequency values.

Concerning the problems they have experienced in the implementation of the curriculum, teachers cited the insufficiency of classroom material and equipment, business of the schedule and the high level of the content compared to the levels of some students, insufficiency of class hours, and the difference in preparedness of the students. The analysis of the findings reveals that the biggest trouble is the lack of material and equipment. Below are the opinions of teachers' on the problems experienced in the implementation of the curriculum;

...due to the lack of written material, students sometimes have difficulty understanding what they see. (T7-M)

There are pronunciation difficulties in the implementation. They get demoralized when they can't pronounce words correctly. I don't insist when they have difficulty. Also the con-

tent is combined too much under some units. It also constitutes a problem in my opinion. (T4-F)

We can experience stemming from lack of material and equipment. Apart from that, students can have difficulty understanding some of the listening texts. (T10-M)

Classroom materials and equipment is not fully sufficient. Sometimes I have to bring my laptop for some of the activities, like when making children listen to songs. I think every classroom needs a projector and a computer. (T3-F)

...It is good that English lessons are there for 2nd grade students but there are a few deficiencies. There are places where the level raises suddenly. Students have difficulty with dialogs, mutual question and answer sessions, introducing something, or talk about something. Class hours are not enough to do activities with every student. (T11-M)

In some classes, students start already knowing the numbers, greetings, and colors, having learned them in preschool, from their parents, or from their 1st grade teachers. For this reason, we can even surpass acquisitions in some classes with students with previous knowledge or exposure to English. But in some others, we find ourselves repeating the same thing over and over again. (T6-F)

6. Teachers' Requests and Suggestions about the Curriculum

During the research, the teachers' were asked the question "What are your requests and suggestions about the curriculum?" in order to collect their opinions on their requests and suggestions about the curriculum. Mentioned as Figure 6, showing the constituted theme and its sub-themes concerning this question and their frequency values.

The analysis of the suggestions of the teachers' about the curriculum in general reveals that they mostly come up with suggestions concerning the solutions of the problems they experienced in the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers who work in classrooms without sufficient technologic equipment stated that the materials and equipment element of the curriculum should be prepared by taking into consideration classrooms with inadequate material and equipment or that the deficiencies should be remedied. Increase in the number of acquisitions based

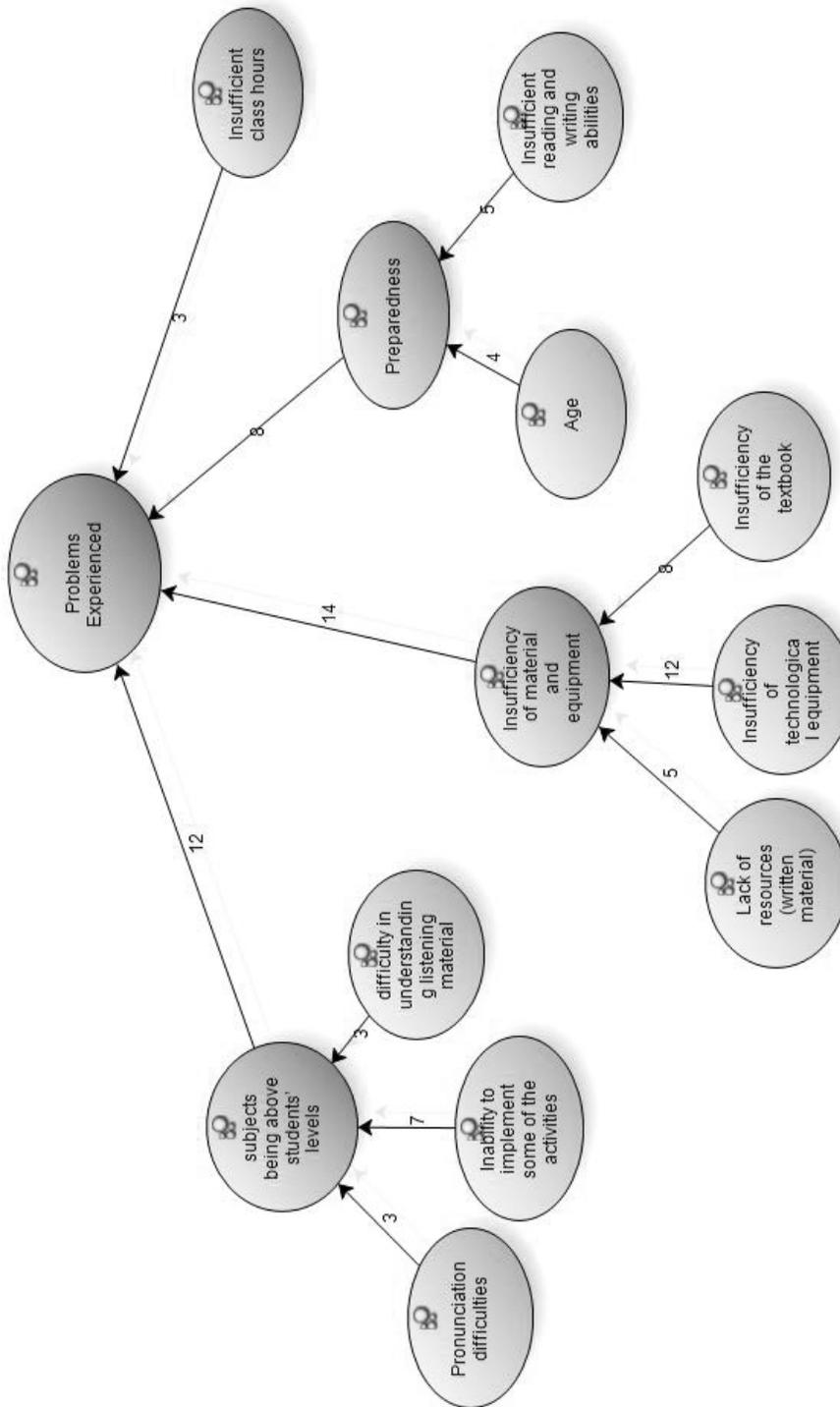


Fig. 5. The model related to problems experienced in the implementation of the curriculum

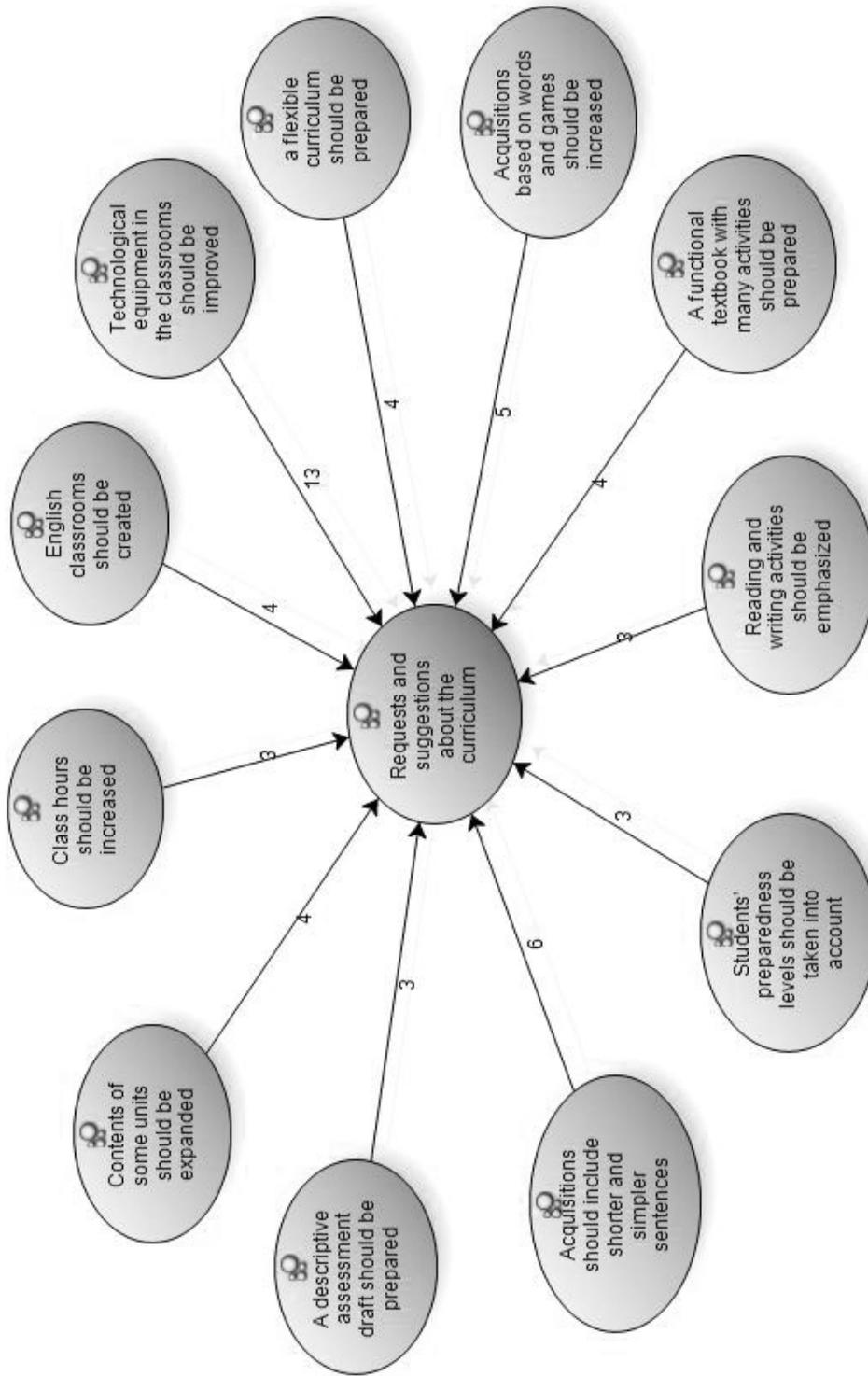


Fig. 6. The model related to requests and suggestions about the curriculum

on words or games; the creation of a language classroom; expanding the content of some units; teachers who think that the subjects are busy and difficult state that class hours should be increased or the subjects should be narrowed; teachers who find the textbook insufficient state that a book with plenty of activities with increased reading and writing material. They also stated that the curriculum should contain more descriptive information on the activities and assessment, and that the textbook should contain more description and examples. Some of the suggestions stemming from teachers' opinions on the curriculum as a whole are presented below:

I'm sure they take into consideration the circumstances of Turkey while preparing the curriculum but the classes are crowded, one can't pay attention to each child while small children need individual attention. So I think the curriculum should be made smaller, that is, restructured. (T1-F)

... putting words into context is, in general, left to the teacher. But children sometimes find it difficult or they forget it the next week. Presenting them within dialogs and texts instead of word for word may be more effective by putting them into the visual memory without even noticing using the so called "peripheral learning". Some activities support the student's "I can't do it" feeling, for this reason we just skip some parts but more one-on-one matching can be added instead of fill in the blanks. (T4-F)

I think English classrooms should be formed everywhere. Also a funding support, exclusively for English, should be created to buy flashcard, posters etc. (T5-F)

...The student forgets quickly with only two hours a day and no repetition at home, so one can think of increasing the class hours. In addition to us, the class teachers should also be educated about the new curriculum. (T13-M)

...I don't think the curriculum informs the teachers sufficiently. In particular, assessment and evaluation should be clearer. (T8-M)

DISCUSSION

In the present study, teachers were asked questions about each element of the curriculum and asked to express their suggestions and the data on this matter was collected. Assessments and suggestions stemming from the findings are presented under the respective heading of the curriculum element.

Findings obtained from the teachers' overall opinions of the curriculum in general show that starting English lessons from 2nd grade is a positive thing. Similarly, Kucuktepe et al. (2014) stated that primary school students are willing to learn and that their high awareness poses a good opportunity for language education. But the findings obtained from teachers' opinions demonstrate that there are deficiencies concerning the elements of this curriculum. Teachers generally stated that some subjects are difficult but that it can be extended; that there are difficulties in the acquisition of speaking and listening skills, that they have difficulty finding material, that the assessment is not descriptive and explanatory enough, and that the curriculum does not prepare the teachers in an informative way.

It is understood from teachers' opinions that the curriculum's acquisitions based on speaking and listening skills are sufficient and cover important subjects but that there are problems in the transfer of acquisitions due to the differences in the preparedness (age difference, ability to read and write) of the students, the insufficiency of class hours to achieve the acquisitions, and the high level of some of the acquisitions compared to the levels of the students. On his research about primary school English curriculums, Buyukduman (2005) states that the inclusion of the regional differences in the preparedness of students in the process can affect learning and that there is a time deficiency, especially in the acquisition of speaking and listening skills. Similarly, Yildiran and Tanriseven (2015) state that the difference in the levels and preparedness of students in tandem with the insufficiency of class hours and the crowdedness of classrooms affect the transfer of acquisitions while Topkaya and Kucuk (2010) and Gurlen and Cihan (2013) state that the acquisition level of speaking and listening levels are not attained and that students have difficulty obtaining these skills.

Teachers stated the negative opinions that the content can be expanded based on the students' levels but that some subjects are not suitable for the students' levels, that the content does not include enough repetitions and examples. Seckin (2011), in his study where he evaluates the teachers' opinions on the primary school 4th grade English curriculum states that the content is not suitable for repeating what has been learned, that the contained examples are insufficient, and that the content should be simplified

depending on the students' levels. The fact that similar opinions are coming from 2nd grade teachers may be stemming from the fact that teachers want the subjects in the curriculum to be descriptive, applicable in class, and easy to transfer. In fact, some teachers stated that some of the subjects were difficult and that they were not repeated so they were forgotten quickly. Similarly, Alkan and Arslan (2014) in their study where they examined the 2nd grade English curriculum determined that the content of the textbook was not compatible with the general objectives of the curriculum.

Teachers stated that the activities of the program are applicable to a certain extent but that there are some difficulties in the application of some activities, especially the listening activities. Also, interviews reveal that teachers mostly prefer activities involving the teaching of words in class. Parallel to this view, Alkan and Arslan (2014) expressed an unfavorable opinion about the compatibility of the proposed methods in realizing the acquisitions even though they found the activities in the curriculum positive in general.

In this study, concerning the element of assessment, the lack of an assessment exam and the application based assessment of the curriculum were found positive by the teachers. Similar views were expressed by primary school first level English teachers in Buyukduman (2005). Teachers interviewed by Buyukduman defended that the students shouldn't be alienated from the class with the threat of grades and that, consequently, exams in the primary school first level shouldn't be used in the assessment of academic success criteria like the GPA and grade retention. In this context, the fact that the assessment element of the curriculum is not based on exams that contribute to the GPA can be considered a positive trait. On the other hand, teachers expressed that the assessment proposals of the curriculum are not very comprehensible and that they had problems in assessments based on listening and speaking. The comparison of the assessment angle of the present study with other studies give similar results. Alkan and Arslan (2014) and Yildiran and Tanriseven (2015) stated that the teachers were not well informed on the issue of assessment and that they had difficulty in using the assessment methods proposed by the curriculum. Also, Yildiran and Tanriseven (2015) determined that teachers were also trying to as-

sess reading and writing skills because of their teaching habits. However, the curriculum keeps the writing and reading skills to a minimum because of the students' levels and emphasizes speaking and listening skills instead. But the assessment of these skills, as expressed by the teachers, is more difficult compared to the assessment of reading and writing skills. The difficulty in assessing speaking and listening skills was also stated by Seckin (2011).

Concerning the problems in implementation, teachers stated that their biggest difficulty was in finding materials, that the classrooms were technologically ill-equipped, and that the textbook was insufficient in terms of activities. These findings are supported by numerous other studies including Kucuktepe et al. (2014), Gurlen and Cihan (2013), Topkaya and Kucuk (2010), and Seckin (2011). According to these findings, material and equipment are required to be complete in order to transfer the aimed acquisitions and to properly implement the activities. In particular, for 2nd grade students to follow the class without getting bored, to gain a positive attitude towards the new language, and to improve their speaking and listening skills in their first encounter with English, they need to have the necessary material and technological equipment necessary for entertaining activities. Also, it is essential that the textbook, which is the main tool of the teachers and the students, possesses the leading and informative qualities that enable the implementation of the necessary activities. In short, it is safe to conclude that, according to the findings of this study, there are certain deficiencies in the elements of the primary school 2nd grade English curriculum and that it can be used more productively in the years to come if a revision is carried out to eliminate these deficiencies.

CONCLUSION

According to the results of the research, teachers stated that the acquisitions were sufficient in general, adequate for the level of the class, and that it contains important subjects but that the fact that unequal student preparedness affected the transfer of the acquisitions. Teachers' suggestions about the acquisitions are that they should be simpler and more suitable for the level of students, that the number of acquisitions based on words and game should be increased, that it should be compatible with com-

municative approach, and that it is necessary that the parents cooperate with the teachers in order to transfer it to the students more easily.

On the content, teachers' stated that the content is generally sufficient, that it can be further simplified and extended, and that it is generally transferrable to students. On the other hand, teachers also expressed some negative opinions like the content not being appropriate for the level of the students in some subjects and that it doesn't contain enough repetition and examples. Teachers' suggestions are that it should be simpler and easier to understand, that it should be enriched in consideration of the levels of the students, and that it should comprise more day-to-day English.

Teachers stated that the activities proposed by the curriculum are applicable to some extent but that there are some problems in implementation, especially concerning the listening activities. Teachers stated that they mostly use activities like cutting/pasting, painting, games, singing, and song listening. Teachers' suggestions about the activities are: that not all classrooms in Turkey have sufficient equipment and material to implement the activities proposed by the curriculum, that it should contain more descriptive activities that grabs children's attention, and that there should be more time available for the activities.

In general, teachers have expressed a favorable opinion on the fact that the assessment is not based on exams but on application. But they also stated that the assessment recommendations of the curriculum are not well described and that they have difficulty in assessment due to the fact that it is based on listening and speaking. Teachers' suggestions on the assessment element are: that it should be better described with examples and that a curriculum that contains an assessment draft or an assessment form could be designed.

Concerning the problems in implementing the curriculum, teachers cited, above all, the insufficiency of classroom material and equipment, the business and inappropriately high level of the curriculum compared to the general levels of students, insufficiency of class hours, and the unequal preparedness of students. The analysis of the findings reveals that the biggest problem in implementing the curriculum is the lack of material and equipment.

Concerning the overall curriculum, it has been found that teachers' have suggestions, above all, about the solutions to the problems in implementing the curriculum.

The analysis of the suggestions of the teachers' about the curriculum in general reveals that they mostly come up with suggestions concerning the solutions of the problems they experienced in the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers who work in classrooms without sufficient technologic equipment stated that the materials and equipment element of the curriculum should be prepared by taking into consideration classrooms with inadequate material and equipment or that the deficiencies should be remedied. Increase in the number of acquisitions based on words or games; the creation of a language classroom; expanding the content of some units; teachers who think that the subjects are busy and difficult state that class hours should be increased or the subjects should be narrowed; teachers who find the textbook insufficient state that a book with plenty of activities with increased reading and writing material. They also stated that the curriculum should contain more descriptive information on the activities and assessment, and that the textbook should contain more description and examples.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, the following suggestions can be made:

- ♦ Textbooks can be revised and improved in terms of both content and usability and the classrooms can be raised to a sufficient level in terms of technology.
- ♦ Acquisitions can be restructured by taking into considerations of students' age and developmental characteristics and it can be reorganized by taking the class hours into account.
- ♦ The content can be redesigned in a simpler and more comprehensible way to use more time and repetition.
- ♦ Classroom and school environment can be redesigned based on the activities or alternative activities can be organized for environments with insufficient circumstances. The curriculum can contain more descriptive activities that are more interesting for children.

- ♦ The assessment element of the curriculum can be redesigned to be more descriptive and the curriculum can contain a sample assessment draft or form.

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