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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Opening Up Classroom Doors: English Teachers' Curriculum Fidelity and Adaptations

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### Abstract

The fidelity of implementing curriculum is acting by adhering to the original content without making any modifications by the individuals responsible for implementing it. Therefore, the implementation phase and the process should be focused on reaching a correct evaluation of outcomes. This research examines the teachers' fidelity to implementing the curriculum and the factors involved in the teachers' fidelity. Drawing on a multiple nested case study research design, this study analyzes a data set gathered from interview and classroom observation forms developed by researchers, students' notebooks, class books, textbooks, curriculum, and more. The data were examined through content analysis utilizing the MAXQDA12 software. The findings explicate heterogeneity of the teachers' fidelity of implementation that has roots in the facilities of the school, participant idiosyncrasies, the course materials, the characteristics of the program elements, and teacher particularities who is the program practitioner.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, English language teaching, English teachers, the fidelity of implementation

### Introduction

Fidelity of curriculum implementation is how well the program practitioners implement the curriculum in comparison with the original design of the curriculum (Century et al., 2010; Dane & Schneider, 1998; Dusenbury et al., 2003; Fagan et al., 2008; Primo, 2005). Fidelity of implementation means the degree to which curriculum practitioners implement curricula as intended by the curriculum developers (Century et al., 2010; Dane & Schneider, 1998; Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000; Dusenbury et al., 2003; Fagan et al., 2008; Mowbray et al., 2003; Primo, 2005). The fidelity of the curriculum can influence the program's achievement level; more importantly, it helps improve program implementation when needed. Therefore, if data on the fidelity of the curriculum has yet to be collected, it will be challenging to determine whether the results are attributable to the program itself or the inadequacy of the program's implementation (Dane & Schneider, 1998). There are also numerous other reasons for collecting information about fidelity, some of which are: determining the flaws in curriculum implementation (Clayback et al., 2023), determining the differences between the intended program and the implemented program (Mowbray et al., 2003), helping curricular realistically understand the factors that contribute to either the success or failure of the curriculum (Sanchez et al., 2007; Yeşilpınar Uyar & Eti, 2023), and fidelity of the curriculum provides an understanding of the changes in a curriculum and how these changes affect the outcomes of the curriculum.

With the advancements in economics, science, and communication, English has become the standard foreign language of today's world. Therefore, the necessity and significance of acquiring proficiency in a foreign language have been frequently emphasized in recent years. In

Türkiye, curriculum changes and innovations in English curricula might indicate how second-language learning is given importance. Studies on improving the quality of English language teaching continue. According to several criteria for speaking English, Türkiye is consistently located very low. English Proficiency Index (EPI) (2019) results show that Türkiye has 46.81 points (mean score of 56.71) and ranks 79th among 100 countries. It has been stated that the Turkish native speakers' average score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language is 75 out of 120, similar to countries such as Sudan and Ethiopia, which do not have a Latin alphabet (2009, Dede). Since the use of a different alphabet would be very different from the Latin alphabet that the English language contains, students need to learn this alphabet first and foremost. These results are convincing that it is seen that Türkiye has some difficulties regarding English language teaching. It should be carefully examined whether the underlying reasons for this result are inadequacies in the curriculum or problems related to curriculum fidelity. Considering the factors affecting curriculum fidelity (time, materials, resources, environment, program practitioners, participants), this study investigated the curriculum fidelity of secondary school English teachers.

For this purpose, the following research inquiries were being explored:

1. What were the opinions of the seventh-grade English teachers about the fidelity of curriculum implementation?
2. How did seventh-grade English teachers evaluate their degree of curriculum fidelity—in terms of objective, content, learning and teaching processes, and evaluation elements?
3. What were the factors affecting the fidelity of the seventh-grade English teachers?

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### Fidelity of Implementing Curriculum

Jackson (1992) questions what needs changing in schools, so if these needs want to be determined, implementing or enacting the curriculum is essential. The process of curriculum implementation is a substantial variable influencing outcomes. There are different types of curriculum perspectives in the literature: mutual adaptation, curriculum enactment, and curriculum implementation. Snyder et al. (1992) indicate that some teachers are self-directing because the curriculums have been written by people who were too far removed from classroom practice. Mutual adaptation means adjustments to the curriculum created by curriculum developers and implemented by its users in the actual context. It is a dynamic process, so adaptation and adjustment are predictable phenomena, but how they are implemented and the degree is essential. The curriculum enactment perspective suggests joint enterprise as teachers co-construct with students to construct experiences (Snyder et al., 1992). Enactment perspective's defenders point out that achievement tests failed to provide a measure of curriculum fidelity and new tools needed to measure student growth, process, and outputs. All three curriculum perspectives agree on the source, analysis, and evaluation. They differ from their proposed function. In addition, Cho (1998) separates these three perspectives in terms of the methodological paradigm. He matches fidelity with positivism, mutual adaptation with post-positivism, and enactment with constructivism.

In this study, the curriculum implementation perspective is preferred because the curriculum carried out by teachers is more concrete than other perspectives. Although the enactment perspective matches constructivism, it was not an option for this study because achievement tests were used in the education system where the study was conducted. From the beginning of the study, courses are observed, documents such as student notebooks and exams are investigated, and teachers are interviewed. From a fidelity perspective, curriculum knowledge is developed outside the classroom by curriculum developers. In the context of this research, the curriculum was designed in such a manner that the instructor must adhere to the guidelines and execute the curriculum as intended. Also, from a fidelity perspective, valid and reliable measures need to be developed to understand the factors affecting as actualized in this study (Süer & Kinay, 2022; Snyder et al., 1992). Superfine et al. (2015) state that fidelity of implementation is essential because understanding not only the extent to which a teacher follows the literal curriculum during a lesson but also the extent to which the lesson was implemented in line with the intended curriculum.

The Rand report assessed federal programs that endorsed educational innovation and analyzed their implementation, which was one of the early studies to raise questions about the fidelity of implementation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976). In this report, three patterns were observed: (1) modifying the program while retaining its original form, (2) mutual adaptation, and (3) non-implementation and nonadaptation (Dusenbury et al., 2003). The findings indicated that programs that were collaboratively adapted were more successful than those that were co-opted. However, there are many critics of the result. For instance, Blakely et al. (1987) suggested that the instruments utilized in their research were inclined towards adaptation or modification rather than fidelity. Another criticism is that programs chosen in the Rand report might be defined more clearly as general policy changes rather than particular elaborative curricula (Datta, 1981). Cuban (1998) presents the aim of fidelity. It aims to assess the fit between the initial design, the formal policy, the subsequent program it spawns, and its implementation. Examining fidelity is linked to obtaining a comprehensive understanding of how implementation quality can be enhanced.

The fact that a program is well-designed may be a prerequisite for its effective implementation, but more is needed due to conditions that are difficult or even impossible to control in education and training

processes (Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2019). Fidelity of implementation, which is also associated with concepts such as integrity and implementation quality, is to what extent the delivery of the implementation fits into the form or program model designed by the developers of the program (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000; Mowbray et al., 2003).

To see the desired effect of the programs, Arthur and Blitz (2000) stated that the programs should be implemented with fidelity. It is stated that executing a program with weak content but high implementation quality may be more effective than implementing a very well-prepared program with low quality (Gottfredson & Czeh, 2000). At the same time, monitoring fidelity provides a more accurate evaluation of the outputs (Carroll et al., 2007). At this point, examining teachers' fidelity to implementation honestly can give more precise results.

Dane and Schneider (1998), Dusenbury (2003), and Durlak and Dupree (2008) measured fidelity in five ways which also formed the ground of the current study:

- Adherence was used to check whether the content and activity specified in the program were followed and whether the teacher used the materials in the curriculum.
- Dose was used to check whether the teacher followed the time specified in the curriculum.
- Quality of program delivery was used to check whether the materials available in the classroom and school conditions were suitable for processing the curriculum.
- Participant responsiveness was used for students' participation, interests, and levels.
- Program differentiation was used to evaluate the current week specified in the program.

### Limitations

This study is limited to the data obtained through individual interviews, classroom observations, and documents conducted with the voluntary participation of ten English teachers from ten public schools working at the secondary school level in Kulu district of Konya province in the 2018–2019 academic year.

### Methods

In the study, a case study pattern was used because the boundaries between an event and context are not clear, and a current situation is examined in a real-life setting (Yin, 2014). In the study design, as stated by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008), there was more than one sub-layer, including teacher groups who examined the seventh-grade English curriculum and explained that they did not use multiple nested cases. The data was collected after the approval of the ethics committees of Hacettepe University (Approval No: 35853172-300, Date: 12.10.2018) and Ministry of National Education (Approval No: 83688 308-605.99-E.1098596, Date: 16.01.2019). Written informed consent was obtained from teachers who participated in this study.

### Participants

In the study, the convenience sampling method was used based on the suggestion that the sample should be selected from easily accessible and practicable units due to limitations in terms of time and labor (Patton, 2005). In selecting teachers who were observed and interviewed, the criterion of having English lessons at the 7th-grade level was considered by obtaining permission from the school administrations. The reason for choosing the secondary school level as the teaching level was that when the primary school (second, third, and fourth grades) English textbooks and teaching programs were examined, the aim was to instill English love and appeal to more practical areas. As stated in the education programs published by the Ministry of National

Table 1.  
*Demographics of Participants*

Teacher	Gender	Type of Program	Graduated	Age	Experience (Year)
T1	Woman	Faculty of Education		24	1
T2	Woman	Faculty of Education		30	7
T3	Woman	Faculty of Education		28	5
T4	Woman	Faculty of Literature		28	2
T5	Woman	Faculty of Literature		35	9
T6	Man	Faculty of Education		36	10
T7	Woman	Faculty of Education		32	8
T8	Woman	Faculty of Education		25	4
T9	Woman	Faculty of Education		31	7
T10	Woman	Faculty of Education		29	5

Education, “writing and reading skills, which are an integral part of language learning only in 7th and 8th grades,” could be included in these class groups (MoNE, Board of Education and Discipline Presidency, English Curriculum for Primary Education Institutions: 4.) The reason for choosing the seventh-grade English curriculum at the secondary school level was the consideration of the eighth-grade students’ exam year group and the possibility of not getting adequate and quality data. The demographics of the participants were summarized in Table 1.

### Data Collection Tools

Interviews, observations, and documents were the primary methods for gathering data in this research.

### Semi-structured Interview Form

The questions were checked by two professors in the curriculum and instruction and a Ph.D. candidate. Each teacher participated in an individual interview that lasted 30–40 minutes. The information regarding the length of the program was obtained through the data collected via the interview form, the number of students, the lesson hours, and the program’s implementation. The interviews were recorded with the teachers’ approval. The recordings were made with a voice recorder, and the interview data were transcribed by the researcher immediately after the interviews.

### Structured Observation Form

Each teacher was observed during the 40-minute lesson, and the researcher filled out the observation form without interacting with the students. A rubric was prepared to increase validity by the researchers. For the draft version of the rubric and form, two experts’ opinions (Professors in the Curriculum and Instruction Department) were taken, and they were finalized in line with their opinions and recommendations, considering the occurrences during the pilot observations. Observations were carried out in a nonparticipant style (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Creswell, 2012).

### Document Analysis

Documents are precious sources of information for qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). In the document analysis stage, student notebooks, textbooks, seventh-grade English curriculum, and class books (which teachers fill in) were used with the consent of the teachers and students participating in the study. Fidelity components and data collection tools were listed in Table 2.

Table 2.  
*Fidelity Components and Data Collection Tools*

Curriculum Fidelity Components	Data Collection Tools
Adherence to the program	Interview, Observation
Dose	Interview, Document Analysis, Observation
Quality of the delivered program	Interview, Observation
Participant responsiveness	Observation

### Process

The data collection process was initiated upon receiving the necessary permissions. After the pilot observations and interviews, data collection was initiated and lasted about 14 weeks.

While preparing the interview and observation forms, more than one expert opinion was taken, rubrics were prepared for the forms. Two coders (the researcher and the expert) were randomly selected and coded the forms and compared their coding and wrote the common ones directly and reached an agreement on the different ones. In the analysis process, feedback was received from an expert while creating themes and codes. The number of categories has been increased from eight to nine, making it more comprehensive, and some words (such as target, outcome, activity) have been changed. In this research, ensuring the reliability of qualitative data analysis was achieved through member checking and auditing. Specifically, a teacher and an instructor validated transcriptions and themes to enhance accuracy. The data was analyzed by the researcher and an outside expert separately and themes, categories, and codes emerged from the comparison of this analysis. Auditing, as another method, provided an external perspective, ensuring control over the qualitative data interpretations (Creswell, 2012). This comprehensive approach allowed for a thorough and well-guided analysis in this study. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008) state that in qualitative research, the accuracy and validity of research results gain more importance than reliability.

For validity and reliability, Creswell’s (2009) strategies were used. In this study, three different data sources (interview, observation, and document analysis) were used to enhance triangulation; for member checking, the results and findings of the study were sent to the majority of the participants, and their feedback was obtained. In terms of rich and thick descriptions, the data, the research model, the study group, the data collection tool process, and the findings section were explained in detail. For opposing or discrepant information, contradictory information was also presented, and for spending prolonged time during the observations and interviews, sufficient time was spent in the field to the extent that sufficient and quality data could be obtained. To provide peer debriefing, two experts approached almost the whole process impartially and objectively, gave feedback and suggestions, and provided an external auditor; during the analysis process, the feedback was received from an expert, the number of categories was increased from eight to nine, and some words (such as goal, achievement, activity) were changed.

### The Role of the Researcher

In this study, the researcher, who had the role of observer as a participant and gathering information, benefited from her past experience and current teaching experience in conducting the research process, but she carefully avoided bringing her insights or experiences into a situation that could affect the process or people in a way that threatened credibility.

### Data Analysis

In this study, the MAXQDA 12 qualitative analysis program was utilized during data analysis. The data was analyzed using content analysis methodology. The fundamental process carried out within the framework of content analysis is primarily to gather similar data under specific themes and interpret them in a way that is understandable to the reader (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

During the content analysis, Hansen’s (2000) steps were followed.

1. Identifying the problem and determining the content: The research questions are clearly explained and applicable, theory-relevant content is presented.



2. Sample selection: The sample which the research requires was selected, and the selection was explained in detail.
3. Determination of analyzing units: codes, themes, and categories were determined by the researcher and an expert as units of analysis.
4. Create a coding chart: In coding, the researcher planned how to break down the data to be analyzed into meaningful wholes. The researcher tried to understand whether the data in different categories could be analyzed with similar codes by reading the data set several times or repeatedly working on the emerging codes and created meaningful pieces from the documents. Thus, the planning process was completed by drawing clear category boundaries.
5. Analyzing the data: Content analysis was conducted according to the coding sheet prepared before the analysis. The coding sheets were filled in depending on the text and separately for each sample. The main purpose of analyzing the data was to reach concepts and relationships that could explain the data obtained. As a result, the data obtained at the end of the study gained meaning and a relationship could be established.

The themes, categories, and codes emerged from this analysis process are presented in the following figure (Figure 1).

## Results

### English Teachers' Perceptions on Fidelity of Implementing Instructional Program

The themes of "teachers' curriculum literacy", "curriculum review," and "prominent approach and elements in the curriculum" were divided into the codes "fidelity of the curriculum," "weaknesses of the curriculum," "strengths of the curriculum," and "approaches and elements." Analysis findings also provide data for monitoring program differences and control situations. Some of the teachers stated that they did not examine the program (T1, T5, T8, T9, and T10), while the rest stated that they did:

"I have not examined. I don't remember when I last viewed it; it's that old. I didn't need it, maybe because I didn't think they were too useful or reflected the real system. "(T5). "At the beginning of the year, I looked it up." (T7)

As it can be understood from the excerpts, some teachers such as T5 believe that the program is not worth examining as it seems useless or unrelated to the real teaching environment.

With the code "weaknesses of the program," when the responses provided by the educators were examined, it was observed that they mentioned weak points such as the program not being focused on speaking skills (T2, T7), insufficient course hours (T3, T8, T10), and not being able to create language classes according to the students' levels (T1, T4). The following quotation shows that the teachers are willing to create more opportunities to develop students' speaking skills with additional courses or lessons; however, as the current program do not emphasize the speaking skill, teachers do not have the option to implement such additional lessons.

"I would concentrate more on speaking; I wish the children had at least one language laboratory." (T2)

As a positive side of the current program, the teachers stated that the program is suitable in terms of the content, objectives, and technology integration. When the data obtained with the code "strengths of the program" was analyzed, it was established that the educators were satisfied with the achievements and content of the curriculum (T6, T9, T10), as well as that the program was vital in terms of encouraging the use of technology (T7) and content (T5).

The code "approaches and elements in the curriculum" was created in order to determine whether teachers are knowledgeable about the curriculum or not. While a small number of teachers (T1, T3, T6, T7) had ideas about the approach in the seventh-grade English teaching program, it was observed that the other teachers' knowledge of the approach needed to be stronger.

Although teachers agree on the importance they attach to having information about the curriculum, it has been observed that the rate of examining the curriculum is low. They need to gain knowledge of the approaches and elements in the curriculum.

### Level of Fidelity of Elements of the Instructional Program of English Teachers

In this context, it was examined whether the teachers who examined and did not examine the curriculum differed in the execution of the program. For the program to be implemented at the desired level, the curriculum and the teaching process must be compatible and support each other. To look at this compatibility, the program's duration, activities, expected homework, content, and achievements should be examined. Among the criteria defined by Dane and Schneider (1998), Dusenbury (2003), and Durlak and DuPree (2008) to determine the level of fidelity, "compliance with the program," "duration of the program," "quality of implementation," were discussed. Another point where teachers' opinions about their fidelity levels can be understood is the content and objectives of the program, so "content" and "objectives" codes were created. In terms of objectives, it was observed that eight teachers (T1, T3, T4, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10) stated that they could not reach these objectives that should have been gained at the end of the year; only two of them (T2, T6) achieved. It was understood that teachers who did not examine the curriculum had difficulties achieving the program's objectives. Moreover, the lack of balance between the curriculum objectives and the exam system leads teachers to ignore some objectives in the curriculum in order to fulfill the ones directly related to the exam.

"I do not think I have reached all of them. Unfortunately, I cannot reach the objectives, especially in speaking and writing. That is because they argue that students need to complement their shortcomings for the exam rather than speaking and writing. That's why they are not willing to speak and write." (T7)

As another code "homework" emerged from the data obtained from the observations revealed that the homework specified in the program was not identified as homework at the end of the course, and in the students' notebooks examined within the scope of the document analysis.

With the "exam" code, it was aimed to learn the teachers' opinions about the assessment dimension, and the exams they applied were reached within the scope of document analysis. Looking at the data, teachers generally stated that they were more flexible and obtained more efficient results because they prepared for the exams. It was pointed out that except for only one teacher (T6), the others did not include speaking and listening skills in the exams.

In summary, although there was no significant difference between teachers who examined the curriculum and did not examine it, it was understood that both groups' fidelity to the curriculum could have been at a higher level. It was observed that teachers who did not examine the program experienced more significant difficulties and could not implement the activities compared to those who examined the program in subjects such as reaching the objectives and applying the activities specified in the program. In addition, it can be understood that exams are a bigger motive for teachers to decide on the lessons' objectives.

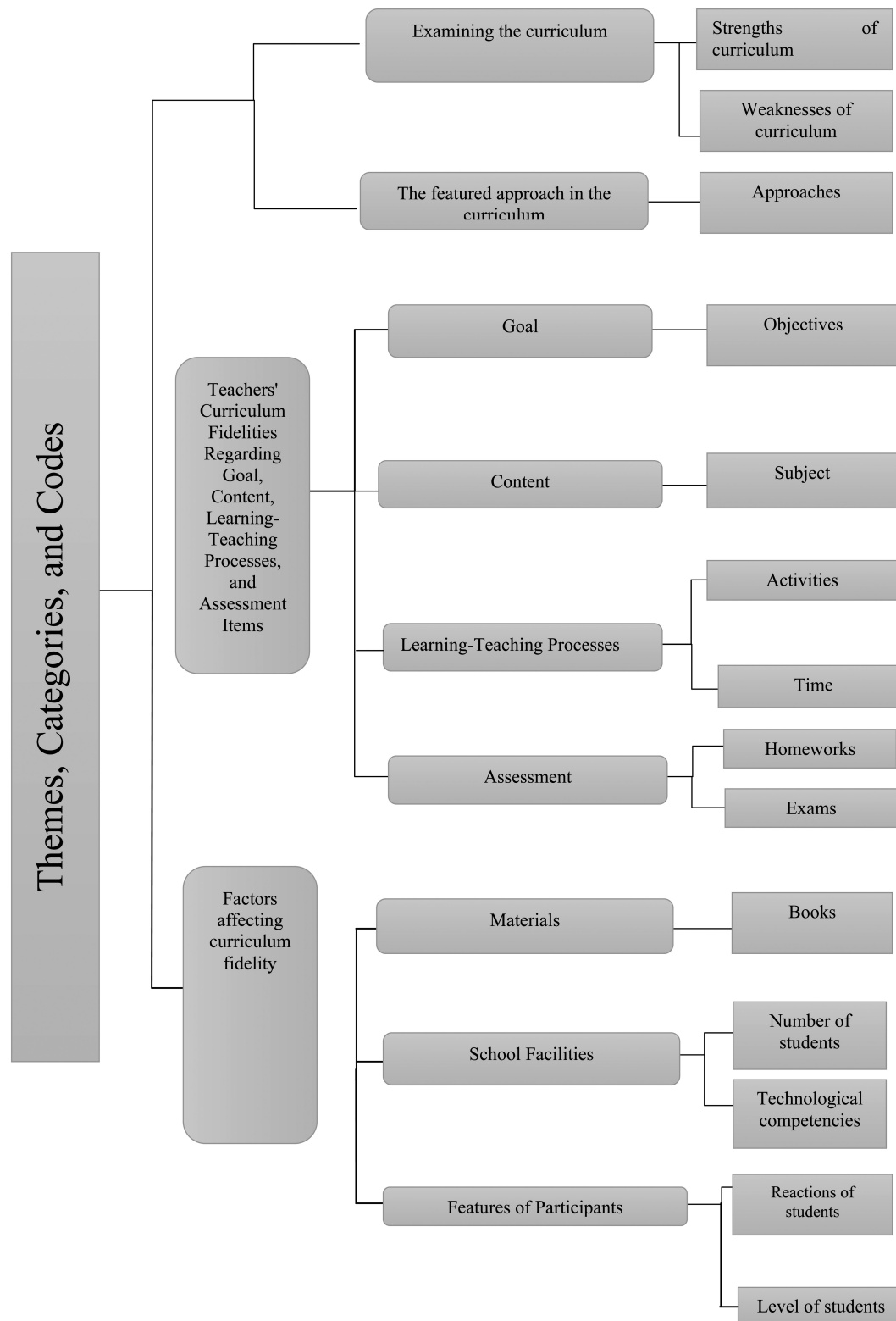


Figure 1.  
Themes, Categories, and Codes Emerging from the Data.

### Factors Affecting the Fidelity of Implementing Curriculum of English Teachers

The quality of the implementation, one of the criteria, was also examined for fidelity within the scope of “course materials” and “school facilities.”. The code “textbook” was used in the “course materials” category. Except for one of the teachers (T7), the others emphasized the inadequacy of the textbook and stated that they used different sources together with their reasons:

“there is not much activity in the school book. It is suitable for children. There is no exercise, no reinforcement, or sometimes it is necessary to support it with video. That’s why I use other sources.” (T5)

The “technological infrastructure of the school” code was created to examine the technological possibilities of the school, such as smartboard and internet access, which are in the category of “school

facilities." All teachers have smartboards and internet access in their schools. Although some teachers thought it was sufficient, some emphasized that it was not enough.

Another point that can be understood about the school's facilities is determining whether the schools and classes are suitable for processing the curriculum. Therefore, another code under this category, "the number of students," was created. It was seen that the teachers, in complete consensus, stated that the number of students affected the implementation of the program:

"Of course it does. Because I work in a class of 40 people and it takes a long time to get that class ready, so of course, it affects." (T4)

Under the category of "participants' characteristics," "student reactions," and "student level" codes, which are frequently mentioned by teachers regarding the factors affecting fidelity, was created. Under this category, "participants' reactions," another criterion for measuring fidelity, was also examined.

With the data obtained from observation, document analysis, and interviews, it is understood that teachers need to implement the current program in accordance with the original by changing the curriculum to the students' reactions.

Despite the absence of a significant difference in the devotion of teachers who examined the program within the scope of participatory characteristics and school facilities and did not examine the program, it was understood that the group who stated that they did not examine the course materials had more difficulties in using the course materials. The elements are similar, as mentioned earlier, between the teachers who examined the program and stated that they did not examine it because teachers substitute textbooks for the curriculum and stick to the books in their implementation.

### Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This study was conducted according to five criteria defined by Dane and Schneider (1998), Dusenbury et al. (2003), and Durlak and DuPre (2008) to determine the level of fidelity of implementing curriculum. Similar to the previous studies in the Turkish context, it was seen that teachers tried to comply with the program but could not do this due to reasons such as insufficient time (Çağlar et al., 2012; TEPAV, 2014; Kaya, 2018; Akdeniz, 2018), student level (Çobanoğlu & Çapa-Aydın, 2015), and the duration of the program (Zengin, 2010).

To increase the quality of the implementation criterion (Burul, 2018; Clements et al., 2016; LaChause et al., 2013), teachers made some adaptations such as skipping some activities, changing an activity or content according to the students' levels and reactions (Burkhauser & Lesaux, 2015; Karen et al., 2022). Also, the differentiation criterion was examined through the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Teachers' fidelity to the curriculum differs from each other, and the difference is caused by the resources available at the school, the qualities of the participants (number, level), the instructional materials, the features of the program elements, and the attitudes of the teachers who are the implementers of the program.

Considering the interviews, observation, and document analysis findings in responding to the research questions, it was evident that the teachers were aware of the need to comply with the curriculum. However, some of them still need to examine the curriculum they applied. In his research, Fullan (2007) stated that teachers should be aware of features such as the structure, scope, and elements of the

curriculum and emphasized that this awareness should also be considered by teachers. This awareness might be called clarity, which means understanding the goals of the applicants (Gross et al., 1971; Popkewitz et al., 1981). According to the research findings, teachers need to read the curriculum they apply (Synder et al., 1992), and it causes disruptions such as skipping some objectives and not using expected alternative assessment tools such as portfolio preparation. Accordingly, this study explored whether there is a difference in the fidelity of the English teachers who examined the curriculum and stated that they did not examine the curriculum. It was observed that the two groups were independent of the program at the desired level. However, it was inferred that educators who indicated that they did not examine the program had more difficulties in implementing the program than those who did.

When the findings obtained from the interviews were analyzed to predict the extent to which teachers knew about the program, they emphasized that its strengths were technology-friendly during implementation. One of the points teachers cite as one of the limitations of the curriculum is that the curriculum needs to focus more on speaking skills. Also, it was concluded that the English course hours needed to be increased. This result overlaps similarly with other studies (Alkan & Arslan, 2014; Akdeniz, 2018; Büyükduman, 2005; Dönmez, 2010; Genç, 2002; Merter et al., 2012; Kaya, 2018; TEPAV, 2014). In the studies mentioned above, it was stated that problems such as not being able to allocate time for some skills, such as speaking experience in English teaching, were caused by insufficient time in the Turkish context. Analyses of the classroom review in the interviews, observations, and document analysis made in the scope of the document analysis also confirm this finding. Cowden and Cohen (1979) and Yin et al. (1977) support this finding in their studies. Their studies revealed that time plays an essential role in implementation. Thus, the impact of the concept of time on curriculum fidelity in language teaching in both international and local contexts overlaps. It can be said that when enough time is provided, students will have more opportunities for questions and participation, even in crowded classes. Bloom (1979) also mentioned this issue with the statement that if suitable environments are provided, every person can learn everything.

Regarding the second research question, another point that attracted attention was the objectives of the curriculum. Teachers complain about the high number of objectives; this has been confirmed by other data collection tools, such as the observation form. According to the findings obtained from the observations, it was seen that the communication language used in all ten classes was not English, the target language was not used in communication, and the lessons were conducted in the mother tongue. Slattery and Willis (2001) recommended using English for classroom communication and using the mother tongue only when a new activity is to be done, but no one understands it. When the English curriculum was examined, it was emphasized that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) principles were followed and that students should be users of the target language. The CEFR system states that students should apply what they learn to their real lives and that language should be used in the learning environment (CoE, 2001). However, when the results obtained from the interviews were analyzed, none of the teachers asserted that they conducted the lessons in English, and the observations confirmed this.

In some schools where the research was conducted, it was observed that the contents were skipped because they were above student levels, it was confirmed by teacher interviews, and it was noticed that these issues were not covered in student notebooks within the scope of the document analysis. The result that teachers made various

changes was similarly revealed in the studies of Sherin and Drake (2004), Drake and Sherin (2009), Burkhauser and Lesaux (2015), Li and Harfitt (2017). Blakely et al. (1987) stated in their study that although changing any of the elements of the program does not affect the fidelity of implementing the curriculum very much in some cases, skipping content or removing any item is not acceptable. Ben-Peretz (1990) stated that making the changes in the program is a normal process, and it is not possible for a program without any changes during implementation. However, it is important to what extent these changes are made.

It has been observed that another factor affecting the implementation of the teaching program is the student level. In differences in the content, activities, or implementation of the evaluation phase encountered by the teachers and with the reactions of the students, they ignore the issues that cannot be understood by the students. Durlak (2008) stated in his study that the levels and reactions of individuals are the factors that impact the fidelity of the curriculum. As seen in Durlak's study and some local studies (Yazıcılar & Bümen, 2019), it can be said that this situation is similar in both the international and Turkish contexts. In this case, teachers also made some changes. At this point, it should be underlined once again that teachers are the implementers of the program and are the main factor affecting fidelity (Fullan, 2007; Gearing et al., 2011; Kennedy, 1996; Kırkgöz, 2006; Kırkgöz, 2008, Petruzzelli, 2010).

As Varış (1997) says, achieving the desired success in the class depends on the development of all elements related to the program. It can be exemplified as the skills and knowledge of school administrators, supervisors, and teachers about the program, the attitude of parents, and the facilities of the institution. From the results of the study, it can be said that success in the classroom directly depends on the organization and implementation of the program.

Distinct curricula can be created for diverse types of schools and student levels, and teachers can faithfully implement the curriculum. Teachers' involvement, students' levels, interests, and hidden issues of the ideology of the school or community can be considered while developing the curriculum. Moreover, principals and other teachers provide assistance, conviction, courage, and willingness are given importance. Curriculum fidelity in the Turkish education system necessitates a structured evaluation framework that assesses the alignment between prescribed curriculum objectives and their actual implementation in classrooms, emphasizing the need for comprehensive monitoring and support mechanisms. For policy-makers, prioritizing resources and strategies that bolster curriculum fidelity in Türkiye's education system is pivotal for ensuring consistent and high-quality educational outcomes, fostering equity, and meeting the evolving needs of a diverse student population. This study is believed to shed light on the issue at hand, develop solutions, inform future researchers, expand our understanding of curriculum fidelity, and increase the awareness of teachers' fidelity to implementation.

**Ethics Committee Approval:** Ethics committee approval was received for this study from the ethics committee of Hacettepe University (Approval No: 35853172-300, Date: 12.10.2018).

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