

Towards a Defensible EAP Curriculum: A Needs Analysis*

Savunulabilir Bir Akademik Amaçlı İngilizce Öğretim Programına Yönelik İhtiyaç Analizi *

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ABSTRACT: This paper reports on the process and findings of curriculum development towards a defensible EAP curriculum in the Department of Foreign Languages at Eskisehir Osmangazi University. In addition, it illustrates the evaluation of newly introduced innovations by the students. The study was designed as a curriculum development project which was based on Brown's needs analysis (NA) framework. The NA studies were conducted in 2016-2017 academic year with the students and the teaching staff employed in the department. Focus group technique was used to take the opinions of the teaching staff about the components of the curriculum, and the opinions of the students were taken through workshops. In 2016-2017 academic year, repeat students' opinions about the innovated curriculum were taken through an open-ended questionnaire. The data were analyzed by using thematic content analysis technique. The emerging themes in the NA study are (a) need for clarification of the program objectives, (b) need for revision of teaching materials, (c) need for improvement in teaching and learning practices, and (d) need for improvement in assessment practices. The emerging themes in the evaluation of the NA study based on the open-ended questionnaire are 'materials', 'assessment procedures', and 'overall structure of the EAP curriculum'.

Keywords: curriculum design, curriculum development, EAP curriculum, needs analysis, English language preparatory curricula.

ÖZ: Bu çalışma Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Bölümü İngilizce Hazırlık Programının geliştirilmesi kapsamında gerçekleştirilen ihtiyaç analizi çalışması sonuçlarını ve ihtiyaç analizi sonucunda yapılan yeniliklerin öğrenciler tarafından değerlendirilmesini kapsamaktadır. Çalışma Brown'un ihtiyaç analizi çerçevesine dayalı olarak gerçekleştirilen bir program geliştirme projesi olarak tasarlanmıştır. İhtiyaç analizi çalışmaları 2016-2017 akademik yılında bölümde öğrenim gören öğrenciler ve öğretim elemanları ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Öğretim elemanlarının öğretim programına ilişkin görüşleri odak grup görüşmeleri yolu ile alınırken, öğrenci görüşlerinin alınabilmesi için çalıştay tekniği kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca ihtiyaç analizi sonucunda gerçekleştirilen yeniliklerin değerlendirilmesi için 2016-2017 akademik yılının sonunda tekrar öğrencilerine açık uçlu bir anket uygulanmıştır ve tekrar öğrencilerinin görüşleri alınmıştır. Çalışmanın verileri tematik içerik analizi yoluyla analiz edilmiştir. İhtiyaç analizi çalışmasının sonuçları 4 tema altında sunulmuştur. Bu temalar şu biçimdedir: (a) programın amaçlarının belirlenmesine ilişkin ihtiyaçlar, (b) öğretim materyallerinin yeniden düzenlenmesine ilişkin ihtiyaçlar, (c) öğrenme-öğretme süreçlerinin geliştirilmesine ilişkin ihtiyaçlar ve (d) ölçme değerlendirme süreçlerinin geliştirilmesine ilişkin ihtiyaçlar. İhtiyaç analizi çalışmasının değerlendirilmesine ilişkin açık uçlu anket sonuçlarına göre ortaya çıkan temalar şu biçimdedir: 'öğretim materyalleri', 'ölçme değerlendirme süreçleri' ve 'akademik amaçlı İngilizce öğretim programının genel yapısı'.

Anahtar kelimeler: öğretim programı tasarımı, öğretim programı geliştirme, akademik amaçlı İngilizce öğretim programı, ihtiyaç analizi, İngilizce hazırlık öğretim programı.

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Over the past two decades, there has been a vast increase in the numbers of English-medium programs in Turkish universities and it has been leading to an increase in English for academic purposes (EAP) context in universities. These contexts are organized and carried through either department of foreign languages or schools of foreign languages in universities. The students have to meet the criteria determined by these institutions to start their faculties in the universities. It seems to be a challenging context for many freshmen students as very limited number of these students can achieve the proficiency tests at the beginning of the academic year. Thus they have to pursue the EAP curriculum offered by the universities and succeed it by the end of their first year in the university.

In our study context, Eskişehir Osmangazi University (ESOGU), one of the three state universities in Eskişehir, Turkey, the Department of Foreign Languages (DFL) has undertaken the role of implementing the language preparatory curriculum for the students who do not have the required language competence to continue their departments. DFL organizes and implements an English language preparatory curriculum for the students of both Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (Departments of Computer Engineering, Electrical and Electronics, Mechanical Engineering), and Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences (Department of International Relations). Although DFL has considerable experience of English language preparation in practice, no written EAP curriculum had been designed in the department until the current study results. This context resulted in problems of adopting the practices in the department by the instructors. In other words, a growing need for a defensible EAP curriculum appeared in our context.

As newly-appointed curriculum unit members, we initiated a curriculum design study in the department with the support of the administration body. This paper reports on the EAP curriculum innovation based on a comprehensive needs analysis (NA) in our department. We used Brown's (2009) suggested framework and steps for NA to go through a methodical process towards a defensible EAP curriculum in the department.

In the section below an overview of EAP context in Turkish universities and our EAP context are given to provide a better understanding of the study context. Prior to the design and methodology of the study, the need for a defensible curriculum and the framework used in the study are explained. The design and methodology of the study is followed by the results and discussion part. Finally, the conclusion gives a brief summary and several implications for further research.

Overview of EAP Context in Turkish Universities and ESOGU EAP Context

Departments or schools of foreign languages which are established within the universities in Turkey serve to improve language proficiencies of freshmen so that they can achieve the essential foreign language skills to pursue the curriculum of their English-medium departments. There is not a national official exit level for these language preparatory programs, so the universities often design these curricula according to their overall and context-specific policies, and the academic needs of students.

Our context does not seem to differ from the overall EAP context in Turkey. ESOGU offers an intensive EAP curriculum to the students of both Faculty of Engineering and Architecture and Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences.

All students have to achieve the required level of English language skills in the language proficiency exam at the beginning of the academic year. Otherwise, they have to pursue the intensive EAP program offered by our department and attain the exit level B1+ of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe) to start their departments. It is a challenging period for these students because they are obliged to drop out or transfer to Turkish-medium departments unless they can succeed in the EAP curriculum offered.

Prior to the present study, the EAP program in our department was carried out by about 50 instructors and there were three levels of the program: Beginner, Elementary and Pre-Intermediate. Students in all levels had to obtain an overall grade of 60 or more from a range of different assessment components at the end of one academic year. These components involved periodical quizzes, classroom performance grades and online task performances, four midterm exams and a final exam. A series of course books from beginner to intermediate level was used in the program. In addition, a grammar reference and exercise pack, and a writing pack prepared by the instructors were used as supplementary materials in the curriculum.

The curriculum, assessment procedures and materials seemed to be comprehensive; however, there appear several major concerns in the EAP curriculum. First, it was observed that classroom performance grades were often assigned through subjective and biased evaluation of the instructors because they did not take the criteria provided by the administration into consideration while grading classroom performance of the students. Second, writing tasks were assigned from the outset of the second semester of the academic year, which means the students were not able to practice writing in the first semester. Third, tasks that could improve students' productive language skills (speaking and writing skills) seemed to be ignored in both teaching and assessment context, which led the students to focus on grammar rules and memorize new words to pass the exams. Fourth, there was neither a written curriculum, nor curricular principles, nor clear objectives, which featured our program as a course book and test-driven EAP curriculum. Taken together, it appeared that we had to try hard to design a defensible and embraced EAP curriculum in our context.

Need for a Defensible EAP Curriculum and Brown's (2009) NA Framework

To make our EAP curriculum more defensible and embraced by all bodies (i.e. administrative bodies, instructors and students), an immediate curriculum innovation was needed in the department. Our deliberate attempt to make changes and to renew the existing EAP curriculum was a curriculum innovation instead of a change as suggested by White (1988) and Nation and Macalister (2010). They distinguish innovation from change in that the latter does not involve conscious planning or intention. Thus our intention of alteration in the curriculum seemed to be a curriculum innovation.

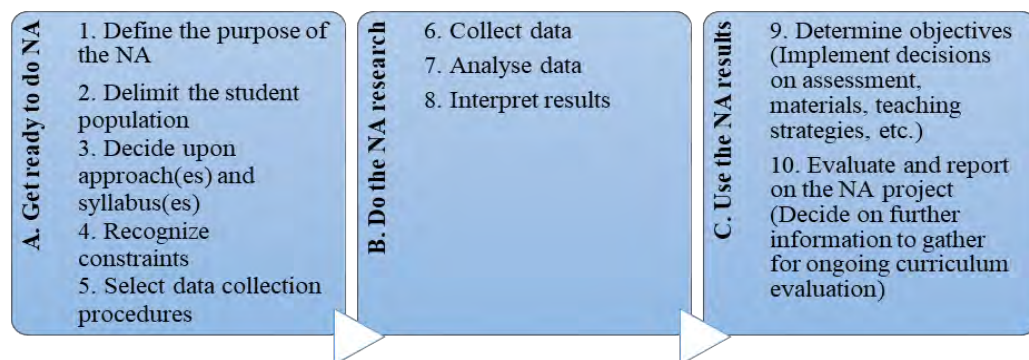
Analyzing the needs is widely accepted as fundamental and initial step in both overall (Demirel, 2011; Henson, 1995; Ornstein, & Hunkins, 2009) and EAP (Benesch, 1996; Braine, 2001; Brown, 2009; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Richards, 2001) curriculum development practices. The goal of needs analysis (NA) studies is simply described by Richards (2001) as collecting information to form a profile of the language needs of the learners and accordingly, to introduce innovations on the goals and content of any language

course. Similarly, Benesch (1996) identifies NA studies to be utilized as bases for change in the targeted contexts. Taken together, we started our attempt to innovate the EAP curriculum in our context.

NA in foreign language contexts is precisely defined by Brown (2009) as “the systematic collection and analysis of all information necessary towards a defensible curriculum” (p. 269). He also describes a defensible curriculum as one that satisfies the learning needs of both students and teachers in specific contexts. As our goal was to make innovations and create a defensible EAP curriculum in our context, we decided to use Brown’s (2009) suggested framework for NA process as our guide in our study. His systematic 10-step framework guided us throughout the process and facilitated the implementation of curriculum innovation in our context.

Brown (2009) draws our attention to three essential sets of steps in NA studies in foreign language learning contexts. The general and secondary steps are illustrated in Figure 1:

Figure 1. Brown’s (2009) 10-step Framework for NA in EFL Contexts.



As depicted in Figure 1, the framework involves 10 steps to follow in NA studies for curriculum development. Brown (2009) extends the scope of NA through using the results, which refers to curriculum innovation. In the present multi-phase study, we started with getting ready to do NA and carried out the NA research in the first academic year. At the beginning of the second academic year, the EAP curriculum was designed according to the results of our NA study. The last phase of our study involved the evaluation of the innovations in the EAP curriculum, which refers to the 10th step in Brown’s (2009) framework. This paper primarily reports on both the process and findings of the curriculum development towards a defensible EAP curriculum in our tertiary-level context. In addition, it illustrates the evaluation of the newly introduced innovations by the students.

Method

The study was designed as a curriculum development project and using Brown’s (2009) framework for NA studies, our overall goal was to develop the curriculum and introduce innovations in our EAP context. As Richard (2001) suggests, a triangular approach that made us collect data from a variety of bodies and motivated us to a participatory process was adopted in the study. Therefore, the first main phase, in particular getting ready to do NA was initiated and carried out in a rigorous cooperation

with the administrative bodies of the department. Preceding the 'Do the NA research' phase, the data collection procedures and the participants were specified. A qualitative approach was adopted in this phase in order to reach in-depth understanding of the context and the needs. After the data analysis and interpretation of the results within 'Do the NA research' phase, various decisions on different aspects of our EAP program were made as the first step of the 'Use the NA results'. Finally, the innovated EAP curriculum was evaluated from the perspectives of the students pursuing the new curriculum, which closely corresponded to the 10th step in Brown's (2009) framework.

Data Collection and Instruments

The study involved three phases. The first phase included informal meetings with the administrative bodies and instructors in the department. It appeared that there were numerous concerns such as no-written curricular principles and texts, discomfort among the instructors and students in the department. It led the department to initiate an innovation movement. Thus, the second phase was doing the NA research and data were collected from both instructors and students. After introducing changes in the EAP curriculum, the evaluation was done through collecting data from students in the third phase of the study.

Regarding the process of the data collection in the second and third stages, the participants took part in this study after giving informed consent. They were informed about the aim of the study, protecting their anonymity and the right to withhold consent to the study. Forty-one instructors and thirty-seven students for the workshops, and sixty-one students for open-ended questionnaires agreed to be volunteers to take part in the research.

The first phase comprised getting ready to do NA study in the department, and it was carried out through numerous informal meetings and talks with the administrative bodies. The procedure and the roles of each body were clarified in this period collaboratively.

The second phase 'Do the NA research' involved two sets of data, in particular focus group interviews with the instructors and two-hour student workshops.

Focus group interviews. First, we started collecting data through five focus group interviews with the eight to twelve instructors in each group. The interviews were done in March, 2016.

In preparation step of the focus group interviews, the instructors were grouped according to pre-determined criteria which were being an administrative member, level coordinator or unit staff, availability of the instructors according to their weekly schedules, and seniority of the instructors. After that, they were sent a guideline about the content and the timing of the interviews a week before. The interviews were pre-supposed to last 1-1.5 hour, yet some of them lasted more than two hours.

During the interviews, one of the researchers acted as a moderator while other researcher, as a reporter, noted down the views expressed during the interviews. The interviews were also audio-recorded with the consent of the participants.

After the interviews, the notes taken by the moderator and the reporter were blended together. The audio records were consulted in case of a disagreement between

the researchers or need for clarification of the views of the instructors. After, organized notes were e-mailed to the instructors in 2-3 days after the interviews for member-checking procedure. Finally, the views were re-organized in consistence with the feedbacks and reported under the titles of views of single groups and common views of the groups.

Workshop sessions. Following the focus group interviews, student workshops were organized in the department. Prior to the workshops, a protocol and form were formed by the researchers and permission was obtained from the administration. The form entailed questions as to “overall objectives and outcomes of the EAP curriculum”, ‘the EAP content’, ‘materials and assessment procedures’ and “other concerns”. Then, one representative student from each class was invited to the workshops.

The students were categorized according to their levels in the program, in particular beginner, elementary and pre-intermediate. Before the sessions began, they had been informed about the time, content and procedures of the workshop. Three workshop sessions were done on 25th May, 2016. The students were asked to identify a group leader, monitor and reporter in their groups. Each group was delivered the form and they were instructed to fill in the form to express their views about the curriculum implemented in the department. The researchers also monitored each session occasionally throughout the sessions. The workshops lasted about two hours and the forms were completed and delivered to the researchers in the end.

In the third phase, the results of the needs analysis study were benefited to draw the frame of the curriculum including the context, core values and the aims, assessment system, and the outcomes. Accordingly, some changes in teaching and learning processes, assessment processes and teaching principles were made and implemented through 2016-2017 academic year. Repeat students who had an education in prep-class program in the last two academic years (2015-2016 and 2016-2017) as they failed the class in their first academic year (2015-2016), were delivered an open-ended questionnaire to compare the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment processes applied in the academic years of 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. A total of 62 students completed the questionnaire.

Open-ended questionnaire. An open-ended questionnaire was developed by the researchers and permission was obtained from the administration. It was prepared in three sections, specifically the materials used during the lessons, assessment and evaluation, and the overall structure of the program.

The questions in the first section asked the students to express their views about the elimination or use of grammar pack and writing pack as a course material and justify their view. In addition, the students’ views about the course book were asked in the first section. The second section constituted three questions exploring the ideas of the students about the evaluation of the speaking skills in the exams and quizzes, CPG replacing with project work grade, and administration of the writing quizzes at the lessons. In the third section of the questionnaire, firstly, the students’ expectations about the program were explored. For this aim, they were provided a table indicating the current structure, and they were also given a blank table to fill in taking their expectations into consideration. Lastly, the second question inquired the problems the students had encountered so far.

Participants

The participants were different in three sets of data. A total of forty-one instructors participated in five focus groups, one of the qualitative research techniques. Twenty-eight female and thirteen male instructors took part in the focus group interviews. They were all teaching EAP in the Department of Foreign Languages at the time of the study.

Also, workshop technique was used to get the views of the students. There were a total of thirty seven classes in the department. The number of students in each class was between 20 and 25, and the students had been assigned to one of three levels in particular beginner, elementary or pre-intermediate according to their scores in the placement exam at the very beginning of the academic year. A representative student who was chosen by the students in each class functioned as communicative bridges between the students and the administrative bodies of the department. These representative students were invited to participate in the workshop and all of them participated in the workshops.

The students who could not achieve the exit level in the former EAP and had to repeat the innovated EAP were the participants in phase 3. All the repeat students in the innovated EAP program ($N=236$) were invited to complete the open-ended questionnaire and 61 students responded.

Data Analysis

Except for the first phase which was based on informal meetings and discussions on planning the curriculum, the study involved two sequential phases of data collection. Thematic content analysis was conducted for both sets of qualitative data. Thematic content analysis is defined as one of the qualitative methods for identifying, analyzing and reporting themes within a data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The initial categories emerged as ‘overall objectives and outcomes of the EAP curriculum’, ‘the EAP content’, and ‘materials and assessment procedures’ in phase 2–Do the NA research. The views by the instructors in focus group interviews and students’ views in workshop sessions were categorized under these emerged categories first by each researcher separately.

In phase 3–Evaluation of the NA study, the emerging categories in phase 2 led us to ask questions in three areas, i.e. ‘overall structure of the EAP curriculum’, ‘materials’ and ‘assessment procedures’.

Analyses of data from both phases were conducted separately by each researcher first. Before organizing several meetings to consolidate the codes and the sub-themes, each researcher coded the data. After several consolidation meetings, a total consistency between the researchers was ensured between the codes and sub-themes by both researchers, which provides evidence for the reliability of the analysis. Other signs of evidence for the reliability of the data analysis were (a) the explicit description of both researchers’ roles in the study, (b) the connectedness of the whole study to the framework i.e Brown’s (2009) framework for NA studies, (c) intercoder agreement checks between both researchers’ codes were regularly made throughout the study as Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) suggests for ensuring reliability in qualitative studies.

The Role of the Researchers

We, as the two curriculum unit members, planned a comprehensive multi-phase NA study which involves all the steps in Brown's (2009) framework. We both received our master degrees in English Language Teaching and got PhD degrees in Curriculum and Instruction. Also, we had been teaching EFL for more than ten years at the time of the study, which means we had a considerable experience of teaching EFL. As the curriculum unit members, we were responsible for organizing, carrying out, monitoring and reporting the curricular practices in the department to the administrative body of the department.

In the current study, we took the role of agents of curriculum development in the department. After several meetings with the administrative bodies, the curriculum development project was initiated by the curriculum unit. In all phases of the project, the administrative body was informed about the planning of the data collection and results. However, the confidentiality of both instructors and students was strictly ensured in the project.

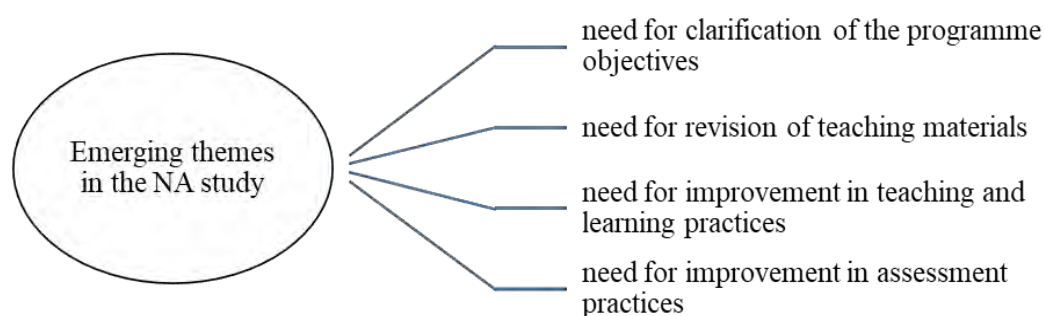
Results

The results involve three consistent phases with the data collection procedures of the research. First, results of the initial NA study are presented in terms of the data sources which cross-validate each other and any differences occurring among two data sources. Second, it is followed with the innovations introduced so as to connect NA to the rest of the curriculum. Last, the results obtained from the evaluation of the NA study are demonstrated.

Results of the NA study

The results of the NA study are presented in line with four themes: need for clarification of the program objectives, need for revision of teaching materials, need for improvement in teaching and learning practices, and need for improvement in assessment practices (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Emerging Themes in the NA Study.



Theme 1: Need for clarification of the program objectives. Initially, concerning the need for clarification of the program objectives, the results reveal that vague objectives pushed the instructors to follow the series of coursebook and supplementary materials throughout an entire academic year, which demotivated both the students and instructors. Similarly, absolute requirement to catch up with the syllabus robbed the instructors out of their skills to vary lessons through creative

activities they would bring to the class. Another demotivating factor was the primary focus on grammar teaching for both groups. Obviously, a clear consensus existed over the necessity to adopt objectives that aim to improve productive skills. In addition, both groups agreed on overall objective of English prep-class program that is “to teach English for General Purposes”. However, regarding English for Specific Purposes (ESP), there seemed to be a mismatch between the demands of the students and the instructors. The students demanded ESP teaching before they left the preparatory program to continue their departments; however, the instructors did not consider themselves as qualified enough to deliver lessons of ESP. Last, contrary to the current practice, the program was in need of enhancing free writing skills of the students prior to their academic writing skills, so the EAP curriculum is needed to adopt objectives as to improvement in free writing skills, which is highly confirmed by the participant instructors in focus groups.

Theme 2: Need for revision of teaching materials. Second, both groups reached at a consensus about the need for revision in teaching materials. Initially, there appeared a wide gap between the language proficiency level of the students and the packs. Especially, the proficiency level of the packs were pretty higher than language proficiency of beginner level students. Additionally, variety and number of the activities in the packs were proved to be inadequate. They were not consistent with in-class activities, either. Similarly, high price, repetitive content and scarcity of a wide range of grammar activities were the problems encountered about the course book.

Theme 3: Need for improvement in teaching and learning practices. Third, both stakeholders put forward their demand for improving teaching and learning activities. Especially the need for production-oriented and skill-based activities was obvious according to the students and the instructors. In view of the students, grammar focused lessons and traditional teaching techniques hindered their progress in productive skills. The students were in need of activities that required them to use the target language for communicative purposes. In the same vein, the instructors demanded the use of productive activities which let the students use the language to accomplish communicative aims inside and outside the classroom and, also, add variety to the lesson.

Theme 4: Need for improvement in assessment practices. Lastly, regarding the need for improving assessment practices, both controversial and noncontroversial findings were obtained. The main concern of both groups was the inconsistency between the teaching and learning practices and the assessment procedures. It was apparent that style and level of the in-class activities were at odds with the questions the students were required to answer in the exams. Additionally, production skills of the students were not evaluated throughout the entire year, which caused them and the instructors to ignore the tasks that could improve productive language skills. In conclusion, both the students and the instructors demanded skill-based assessment procedures evaluating both receptive and productive skills. Last but not least, two sources of data revealed contradictory results about class performance grade. According to the students, CPG was not a fair assessment system as it was assigned through subjective evaluation of the instructors. On the other hand, most of the instructors

resisted any change in the CPG as they perceived it as a tool to assert their authority on the students.

The Innovations Introduced in 2016-2017 Academic Year

After getting the findings, it is necessary to fit what was learned in the NA to the actual instruction that will be delivered (Brown, 2009). Brown (2009) suggests specifying the objectives led by the findings of the NA and determine the innovations to be reflected on the curriculum. In this process, as the curriculum unit members, we shared the results of the NA study with the instructors and answered their questions. Afterwards, we suggested a set of possible changes to the administration. Fortunately, most of the changes were supported by the administrative body except the adoption of skill-based approach and selection of a new series of course book. The lessons are still delivered with a holistic approach based on the integration of four skills in a single lesson. However, the existing series of course book was used in the following academic year and a new one has been selected to pursue from the outset of the 2017-2018 academic year. Table 1 illustrates the differences between teaching context prior to the current study and the innovations introduced according to the results of the NA study.

Table 1

EAP Context Before and After NA Study.

Context prior to the current study	Innovations introduced
-No written EAP curriculum	-Specified core values, objectives, assessment system and the outcomes of the curriculum
-Grammar-based activities	-Skill-based activities
-Grammar & vocabulary focused assessment	-Skill-based assessment
-Obligatory writing and grammar supplementary packs	-Optional supplementary materials
-Primary focus on academic writing	-Primary focus on free writing
-Writing pack used from the outset of the second term of the academic year	-Portfolio approach adopted from the outset of the academic year
-Class performance grade (CPG)	-Project grade (PG)

As illustrated in the Table 1, the initial step ensuing from the NA study was to draw a frame that indicates core values and objectives, assessment system, and the outcomes of the curriculum. Later, the use of skill-based activities in the lessons has been encouraged. For this aim, the progress of the students in four language skills has been evaluated in all assessment components. Similarly, CPG replaced with PG which helps the students improve speaking skills. Also, writing performance of the students is evaluated through the tasks assigned to them from the outset of the academic year, which gives them greater opportunity to practice and improve free writing skills. Last,

the obligatory supplementary materials were eliminated to provide the instructors with sufficient flexibility about the timing of the units and use of various materials.

Results of Evaluation of the NA Study (Open Ended Questionnaire)

The 10th step of Brown's (2009) model requires the evaluation of innovations in EAP curriculum. The results of the evaluation study illustrate the views of the students who had to repeat the innovated curriculum as they could not achieve the exit level in the former EAP. The results are presented in line with three themes that are 'materials' and 'assessment procedures', and 'overall structure of the EAP curriculum'.

Theme 1: Materials. First, the results indicate that most of the students tend to have a favourable attitude towards the changes in supplementary materials. Regarding the grammar pack, three different views revealed. The first view that is in favour of its elimination finds the production-based lessons more useful than the grammar-based ones. The second view that is against the elimination highlights the inadequacy of the course book in terms of having a full coverage of the grammar topics. The third view favors neither the use of the grammar pack nor its elimination and suggests the use of a grammar reference book as a supplementary material. Concerning the writing pack, the majority of students seems to favor the change as they are frequently allowed to practice writing skills in an enjoyable way.

Theme 2: Assessment procedures. Second, the changes in assessment procedures have satisfied the students to an extent. CPG replacing with PG seems to be positive for a great number of students in terms of the objectivity of the evaluation and improving productive skills. On the other hand, counter views reveals concerns about poor classroom management and low level of participation in lessons. Also, skill-based evaluation is favored by majority of the students as it pushes them to improve their productive skills throughout the academic year. However, the contradictory views highlight the concerns of the students about the objectivity of the assessment and high anxiety the speaking exams cause.

Theme 3: Overall structure of the EAP curriculum. Regarding the overall structure of the curriculum, the views are presented according to two sub-themes that are the expectations of the students and the problems the students encounter. Initially, the expectations of the students are categorized into three sub-categories that are changes in percentages of the assessment components, use of in-class activities that matches to English language in real life and ESP lessons preparing the students for their undergraduate programs. Second, the results indicate four categories as the sources of problems that are instructor-oriented problems, coursebook-oriented problems, administrative problems, and problems as to in-class practices. Regarding the first category, instructor-oriented problems are poor classroom management skills and instructors' improper behaviors such as insulting, humiliating, losing temper during lessons, and treating students unfairly while grading their project works or speaking performances during the examinations. Second, high price, repetitive content and inadequate grammar activities in number and range are among the coursebook-oriented problems. Third, administrative problems result from compulsory attendance, long

lesson hours and lesson hours high in number. Last source of problem is in-class practices that do not correspond with needs and interests of the students.

Discussion

Apart from the first phase of the study which includes both formal and informal meetings with the department directors and the colleagues, the study reveals two overall bodies of results, particularly the results of the NA study and the results of the evaluation by the students. Building on the curriculum development in our EAP context, a number of changes are introduced in a variety of curricular aspects which are highlighted in the results section above. In this essence, the very key strength of this study is its practical outcomes in our institutional EAP context. The present study makes several noteworthy contributions to our institutional curriculum and organizational policies. On the other hand, the evidence from the study also extends our theoretical and practical understanding of NA in EAP contexts.

First of all, it is worth discussing the practical outcomes in our institutional context as there appeared concrete changes in the EAP curriculum based on the results of the study. In brief, core values, principles and objectives are specified; skill-based activities and assessment are favored; the writing aspect of the EAP curriculum is strengthened with involving free writing prior to academic writing task from the beginning of the academic year and classroom-performance grades are replaced with performance-based project grades.

In addition, an awareness of curricular studies is developed in our institution. Currently, it is certain that the innovation motive will never end and all parties in our context will benefit it in further years. As Nation and Macalister (2010) suggests, it was a participatory and continuing attempt to innovate the curriculum, which also seemed to be a crucial part of instructors' professional development as most of them attended the focus groups, shared their opinions intimately and learnt a lot from each other. Nevertheless, innovation in curriculum is a 'complex, multidimensional phenomena' (Markee, 1997, p. 40) and we, the curriculum unit, only activated both the instructors and students to take part in the continuum and moderately negotiate the curriculum. In addition, our experience in this study confirms the principles proposed by Markee (1997) for any curricular innovation movement in these we clearly find out that good communication among participants is needed for success in curricular innovation, adopting a strategic approach from the outset of the process is a must, working through opinion leaders who can influence their peers is crucial, and change agents need practical skills and energy.

The overall results of the study also confirm that involving teachers–instructors in our context–in curricular decisions and innovation movements as they are those who deliver the curriculum and actualize the changes in classrooms. In our study, majority of the instructors seem to adopt the changes and show high effort to actualize them. This result ties well with the critical warning by Brown (2009) that teachers need to feel respected and ignoring them will result in failure in any movement of curriculum innovation. Although integrating more writing tasks and interactive tasks into the curriculum increased the workload of the instructors, majority of the instructors adopted the renewed practices and tried to be part of the innovation. The evidence comes from the high participation in the regular feedback meetings and high rates of responses

during the study period. This also increases our hopes for further innovation movements and the applicability of them in our context.

Results from our study on the needs of both instructors and students confirm what has been found in a number of previous studies in similar EAP contexts. Perceived need for skill-based activities and assessment by both participant groups almost completely corroborates the findings of Karatas and Fer's (2009) study. They evaluate English preparatory curriculum using well-known Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model developed by Stufflebeam (2003). Both students and instructors complain about the low rates of speaking and writing practices in their EAP curriculum. Thus both groups of participants are in favor of skill-based improvement of students. Similarly, vast majority of the tertiary level students feel the need and expectation to use English language through oral communication, producing written texts and giving presentations in Chostelidou's (2010) study. In addition, demanding for more focus on productive skills and learning in a higher education EAP context is emerged as one of the five major innovative changes in Kirkgoz's (2009) research. Another relevant finding in her study is inserting writing portfolios into the EAP curriculum. Moreover, EAP students' preferences of skill-building and emphasis on speaking and writing skills is found in Afshar and Movassagh's (2016) and Helmer's (2013) studies. The NA phase results of current study appear to be in satisfactory agreement with earlier findings in the literature. The result of EAP students being content with the inserting productive skill practices into the curriculum also provides further support for the need of skill-based activities in EAP contexts.

Another result in the current study is the demand of ESP materials that may familiarize the students with subject specific English. This result accords with findings of relevant research which found students' needs for ESP syllabi and materials (Chostelidou, 2010; Karatas & Fer, 2009; Kirkgoz, 2009). Chostelidou (2010) concludes her study by designing the tertiary level curriculum with a focus on ESP and target disciplines. Considerably, the results of our study are in line with her conclusion. The students in our study expressed their demands for an EAP curriculum which includes subject-specific vocabulary, reading and writing during the NA study. Unfortunately, the department was not ready to initiate such a curriculum in the study. Accordingly, the students still insisted on their expectations for ESP courses and materials in the curriculum. These expectations also appeared as one of the problems they highlighted in the overall structure of the EAP curriculum. It seems that the students would like to start learning some aspects of their subject areas. This result implies that we need to seek ways to integrate subject-specific materials into our EAP curriculum in further movements. These can transform our curriculum to a more focused on students' needs, consequently to an efficient and effective EAP curriculum as Fox (2009) suggests.

Considering the results related to assessment element of curriculum, students' views of perceiving the learning tasks as performance assessment to enable them to start their department appear to be fit well with Salter-Dvorak's (2016) study findings. Similarly, Helmer (2013) also finds that passing the writing exam is among the priorities of her EAP students and it negatively affects the forms of learning tasks in classrooms. Both the culture-specific explanation by Salter-Drovak (2016) and the effect of test-driven context in Helmer's (2013) study seem to explain the reason for our

EAP students misperceptions of the learning task as only a part of assessment procedures. To clarify, the students start to take and achieve a series of exams to be able to be accepted into universities and it unfortunately motivates the teachers to pursue test-driven syllabi in middle and high schools. Therefore our students are already used to study for the tests in our national context. Therefore they might perceive each learning task as a step or challenge to start their department.

Conclusion

The results of the NA study led the curriculum development unit to specify the principles of the curriculum and to revise the materials and assessment/evaluation procedures. In addition, the evaluation study done in 2016 and 2017 academic year reveals that most of the students had a positive attitude towards the current practices applied in teaching learning process. The results related to the course materials shows that majority of the students positively commented about the elimination of the writing pack as a course material. The use of writing portfolios (free writing) helps the students improve their free writing skills and prepare them for further academic writing tasks. However, the comments of some students reveal that grammar teaching still poses problems. The results indicate the necessity of a grammar supplementary book and a broader coverage of grammar topics in the classroom.

The results which were based on the responses by the students in the second section of the questionnaire prove that the students had positive attitude towards the current applications in assessment and evaluation. Inserting the writing and speaking quizzes into the assessment and evaluation process has brought considerable benefits both for the students and the teaching staff. While the students have found more opportunities to practice writing and speaking skills, the teaching staff has been able to adopt a skill-based approach which is compatible to the assessment and evaluation practices. Replacing the CPGs with the project work grade helped the students improve productive skills as well.

The results about the overall structure and the principles of the curriculum indicated that the problems still exist in various areas. The behaviors and the attitudes of the teaching staff towards the students are among the problems commonly expressed by the students. Therefore, the instructors need to be informed about the effects of their behaviors and attitudes on affective characteristics of the students in language learning process. The views of the students may be kept in mind while planning in-service training activities targeting the instructors. Also, it is obvious that there is a need for further studies exploring and explaining the other problems expressed about administration, teaching and learning processes, assessment and evaluation processes. In order to explore and explain the problems, the views of the teaching staff may be taken in addition to the views of the students.

To conclude, we initiated a curriculum innovation movement in our EAP context. However, further studies of NA, curriculum development and curriculum evaluation studies in accordance with an existing model in the literature in order to provide sustainability of the curriculum development studies are still needed. The views taken from the curriculum development experts may increase the effectiveness of follow-up studies. To illustrate, Richards (2001) highlights several variables such as political, economic, social and institutional factors as key determinants of the success of

a language curriculum. Thus he suggests analyzing these factors i.e. situation analysis to complement the needs analysis studies. The areas or factors he suggests might be used as frameworks for further NA or curriculum development studies. In addition, instructors' beliefs and understanding of the principles of any curriculum innovation movement need to be considered and they should be supported in taking part in these innovations (Kirkgoz, 2008).

Statement of Responsibility

Onur Ergünay; conceptualization, methodology, validation, formal analysis, investigation, resources, data curation, reviewing & editing, visualization, supervision and project administration. Derya Uysal; methodology, validation, formal analysis, investigation, resources, data curation, visualization, supervision and project administration.

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