



Complying with the English language curriculum in Turkey: Speaking activities in local and international coursebooks*

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate whether there is a discrepancy between local coursebooks and international coursebooks in terms of the extent to which they comply with the model of communicative competence depicted in the Turkish foreign language curriculum. Speaking activities in two selected 9th grade English language coursebooks were classified according to the taxonomy developed by Khan and Tas (2019), in which speaking activities are categorised as either pre-communicative or communicative in consonance with which sub-components of communicative competence they tend to address. Results indicate that the international coursebook is relatively more communicative than the local one, gravitating closer towards the communicative goals stated in the official curriculum. The local coursebook, on the other hand, seems to be dependent more upon pre-communicative activities, hence deviating from a balanced progression of learners' communicative competence but focusing on their linguistic competence. The difference suggests an arguable advantage in favour of the international coursebook with respect to developing learners' communicative language ability. It is, therefore, discussed that a truly communicative mindset is not only required in preparing the foreign language curriculum but also in writing local coursebooks that are assumed to reflect the goals set out in the same curriculum.

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Keywords: coursebooks; speaking activities; speaking; curriculum; communicative competence

1. Introduction

Speaking and listening constitute the most common medium of communication for a majority of people. Individuals, habitually adept at making an extensive use of this

* Some of the data presented in this study have been published in Khan & Taş (2020).

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phenomenon, meet their communicative needs on various occasions through spoken interaction. Speaking skills, nonetheless, do not merely consist of the mere act of encoding a thought group into a phonetic scheme framed by prosody to be articulated in the course of interpersonal meaning-making and, then, to be decoded by the interlocutor after acoustic signal passes through a filter of perception. Rather, to illustrate in Levelt's (1989) terms, speech production is a multi-layered process that involves activating relevant conceptualisations and linguistically formulating them into a message to convey the intended meaning whilst being comprehensible and interpretable enough for the interlocutor to carry on communication likewise. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), prevalent in the field of foreign language education for past few decades, is a teaching method that aims to capitalise on an effective and efficient command of this interactive system. The fundamental tenet of CLT is best captured with the term communicative competence, which can be argued to comprise a number of distinct sub-components that shape an L2 user's communicative language ability when conceived of as an integrated but partially modular system (see Tas & Khan, 2020 for a review).

1.1. The communicative principle

Given the assumption that each sub-component of communicative competence should be triggered for a balanced progression in communicative language ability, it is rather a difficult task to be accomplished within a limited frame of time allocated in formal education. As a result of this predicament and other contextual constraints inherent in foreign language classrooms, using coursebooks as a guiding element strikes as a somewhat universal strategy that may save valuable time and effort, especially on the part of teachers. Types of speaking activities contained in coursebooks and the way they are carried out in a language classroom could well be amongst variables affecting the focus of instruction. It is, hence, important to keep in mind whether a particular distribution of types of speaking activities corresponds to curricular aims and instructional outcomes, which could determine the extent of pedagogical orientation towards form, meaning, or forms, conceivably affecting how much communication-oriented the instruction itself is. In other words, if a language teacher attempts to teach the target language communicatively, in the sense of CLT, activities that are done in the classroom should follow the same communicative principle and display characteristics of communicative activities (i.e. functional communication, social interaction) rather than those of pre-communicative ones (i.e. structural, quasi-communicative).

Although the equation mentioned above may seem quite simple, a violation of this communicative principle at any stage of foreign language education may result in disappointing instructional outcomes, as analogous to some Turkish L2 users of English who may have yet to develop a set of communication skills even after many years of formal education. This is one of the reasons why CLT, in certain contexts, has received criticism

for not achieving a proper balance between the experiential and analytic dimensions of L2 competence. In an ideal communicative setting, the curriculum, techniques, materials, and other elements, including the orientation of language teachers and learners, are all expected to follow the same communicative principle with a fair emphasis placed upon form and meaning.

To focus on the issue related to teaching materials used in CLT classrooms, coursebooks may differ in terms of the distribution of pre-communicative and communicative activities they contain. In this line, if a set of communication-oriented goals is set at the curricular level, this should accordingly be reflected in coursebooks selected to be used as part of instruction. For example, it is maintained in the Turkish foreign language curriculum that developing learners' communicative competence is one of the primary aims of English language education (MNE, 2018), which, in turn, necessitates a fair balance between pre-communicative and communicative speaking activities in local coursebooks that are distributed to the state schools across Turkey. Since teaching materials have a direct impact on how instruction takes place in a classroom setting, coursebooks can be regarded as another variable in the connection between theory and practice. It is for this reason that English language coursebooks, whether local or international (i.e. global), should ideally match with principles stated in language education policies, leading to an enquiry as to how well the local coursebooks written in Turkey can meet the standards set out in the Turkish foreign language curriculum.

1.2. English language teaching programme in Turkey

Foreign language policies of a country are amongst areas where the effects of globalisation could be observed through an examination of revisions made on its foreign language curriculum. The situation in Turkey, where there have been several decisive points changing the direction of foreign language education, is no exception to this case. The Ministry of National Education (MNE), having acted in accordance with the principles and techniques of Grammar Translation Method, in addition to those of Audiolingual Method in certain cases, for nearly 40 years, introduced the term *communicative* with a curricular revision in 1997, which is assumed to be an important 'landmark' in the Turkish history of foreign language teaching (Kirkgoz, 2005). As a consequence of this curricular revision, it was recommended in the English Language Teaching Programme (ELTP) that CLT should be implemented in primary and secondary education.

Another significant revision on the ELTP was that made in 2013, through which a new system called '4+4+4' was introduced, extending the course of compulsory education up to 12 years (MNE, 2013). In terms of language education, this change is mostly known for lowering Turkish students' first encounter with a foreign language in a classroom setting from the 4th to the 2nd grade. This revision, re-structuring primary and secondary levels of formal education, could be considered as a reflection of the worldwide tendency towards

exposing young learners to a foreign language at the earliest age possible. Despite doubts raised about the effectiveness of its implementation in classrooms, as stated by some Turkish teachers of English (Gursoy & Eken, 2018), the ELTP revealed in 2013 is acknowledged as one of the major changes made to the foreign language education policies in the Turkish context.

The most recent curricular revision, as of 2021, dates back to the ELTP that was announced in 2018 (MNE, 2018). In this curriculum, an action-oriented approach to teaching English is claimed to be adopted, in which the language is regarded as a vehicle for communication and a means of interpersonal meaning-making rather than as a subject of decontextualised grammatical points to be learnt by rote. The current ELTP explicitly acknowledges the theoretical basis of the model of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) in order to facilitate a balanced and process-driven progression of learners' communicative language ability. Accordingly, the educational aim is declared to be training autonomous L2 learners of English, who are skilful interactants and can get their message across successfully, through applying a model of integrated-skills instruction that focuses on the four basic language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, writing) in a meaning-oriented fashion. This ELTP, by implication, is up-to-date as regards the contemporary issues in foreign language education and could arguably be deemed well-designed at the theoretical level: it is not neglected to touch upon such concepts as English as a lingua franca, communicative competence, integrated learning, collaboration amongst learners, learner autonomy, and authenticity in materials and teaching.

1.3. Types of language coursebooks

A curricular change is turned into reality if it is effectively transmitted by teachers (Fullan, 1993), whose active role in a language classroom may, indeed, determine how well theory is reflected in practice. It is highlighted through this whole process of revising educational policies and adjusting foreign language curricula that teaching materials can be employed as a tool of mediation. In the widespread formal education, a major component of teaching materials is coursebooks, which can further be divided into three categories according to the degree of their sensitivity to the target learner profile. In order from the least to the most sensitive to the target learner profile, coursebooks used in language teaching are often classified as international (or global), localised (or glocal), and local (Lopez-Barrios & Villanueva de Debat, 2014). International coursebooks, on a worldwide scope, are intended for any type of language learners irrespective of their L1 or cultural background and are thus written to be used with both homogeneous and heterogeneous language learner groups at a given level in a classroom setting. Localised coursebooks, on the other hand, are those adapted in various ways to fit with the needs of a group of learners in a specific country or region and to conform to their cultural values in keeping with the corresponding curriculum. Located at somewhere in-between international and

local, localised coursebooks are expected to cater for a group of learners who are relatively more homogeneous than the target profile of international coursebooks. Lastly, local coursebooks are ones that are written for a specific group of learners sharing a similar linguistic and cultural background. The increased sensitivity to the target learner profile accentuates the use of local coursebooks in a language classroom where L1 is possibly shared, and instructional outcomes are shaped according to learners' particular expectations.

Nationwide educational policies and large-scale pedagogical aims generally dictate which one of the mentioned coursebook types could be viable for use of schools and other educational institutions. In the Turkish context of foreign language education, the state schools are recommended to use local English language coursebooks that are written under the supervision of the MNE. The local coursebooks, often prepared by Turkish writers, are distributed to nearly 18 million students free of any charge (MNE, 2020). Therefore, these local English language coursebooks could be regarded as the main source of teaching materials at Turkish EFL teachers' disposal. Considering that successful implementation of curricular revisions requires logistic and professional conditions to be met in the first place (Kennedy, 1996), it is of utmost importance for a type of coursebook to conform to the goals stated in the curriculum. Nonetheless, studies in this regard tend to report a perceived gap between some of the education policies stated by the MNE and their actual reflections in language classrooms (e.g. Basok, 2020; Brodin, 2014).

1.4. Problem statement

It is a general presumption that teaching materials used in language classrooms should reflect what is set out in the official curriculum. Bearing in mind that local English language coursebooks in Turkey are specifically written under the supervision of the MNE, a hypothetical proposition would be that the degree to which they comply with the communicative and action-oriented approach described in the latest ELTP (MNE, 2018) should be quite high. Nevertheless, unofficial classroom observations done by the corresponding researchers, within the scope of practicum courses in which pre-service Turkish EFL teachers work in primary or secondary education with the teaching materials provided to them for a given period of time, indicate that a considerable number of in-service language teachers working at state schools seem to prefer international coursebooks instead of the local English language coursebooks that are readily distributed to them free of any charge. This variation between international and local coursebooks is further supported by studies conducted with Turkish EFL teachers, who tend to report a perceived difference in favour of the former in terms of developing speaking skills and other language components (Saricoban & Can, 2013).

As is indicated by such observations that imply Turkish EFL teachers' preference in favour of foreign publications, the sufficiency of local coursebooks in terms of the quality

and quantity of the communicative content they deliver to language teachers and learners strikes as a significant enquiry worth investigating. Considering that the choice between a local coursebook and an international alternative for classroom use may, indeed, depend upon how well the content they offer stands up to the communicative goals stated in the official curriculum, this study aims to analyse a local English language coursebook and an international one in a comparative fashion to investigate whether they differ from each other with respect to meeting the demands of the communicative and action-oriented approach described in the ELTP (MNE, 2018), in which the model of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) is referenced as the theoretical basis for developing learners' communicative language ability. In this line, it is aimed within the scope of this study to examine the content of speaking activities in two comparable coursebooks through a taxonomy-based classification.

1.5. Research questions

RQ1: What is the distribution of pre-communicative and communicative activities in the local coursebook (*Teenwise*) and the international coursebook (*Talent 1*)?

RQ2: Based upon the distribution of communicative speaking activities, which one of the selected coursebooks complies more with the premise related to developing learners' communicative competence?

2. Method

This section will describe sampling procedures applied on the coursebooks, the taxonomy used as the instrument, and other details pertaining to data analysis.

2.1. Selected coursebooks and sampling procedures

In alignment with the purpose of the study, two comparable 9th grade English language coursebooks have been selected for content analysis. One of these is the local coursebook *Teenwise* (Bulut et al., 2018), which is written by local Turkish writers under the supervision of the MNE and is recommended for the general use of state schools across Turkey. The other coursebook, chosen as a result of its availability in the aforementioned observations, is *Talent 1* (Kennedy et al., 2018), which is deemed an international alternative to the local 9th grade English language coursebook as regards the target learner level (A2) claimed to be addressed. Following the selection process, 60 per cent sampling method has been applied on both student's books, as illustrated in the following table with highlighted cells.

Table 1.

60 per cent sampling applied on two student’s books

Materials	Sample size									
Teenwise (Local)	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8	Unit 9	Unit 10
Talent 1 (International)	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8	Unit 9	Unit 10

2.2. Instrument: Taxonomy for Identification of Coursebook Speaking Activities

Taxonomy for Identification of Coursebook Speaking Activities (TICSA) (see Appendix A), developed by Khan & Tas (2019) on the basis of Littlewood’s (1981) classification of classroom activities, is an instrument that can be used for analysing the communicative content of coursebooks. In TICSA, speaking activities are divided into two categories according to learners’ degree of communicative involvement (i.e. pre-communicative and communicative), each of which, in turn, comprises two distinct activity types (i.e. structural, quasi-communicative; functional communication, and social interaction). As claimed by Tas and Khan (2020), the types of speaking activities denoted in TICSA plausibly relate to the sub-components of the model of communicative competence put forth by Canale and Swain (1980). It is assumed that whilst pre-communicative activities cater for the development of the linguistic system (i.e. grammatical competence and discourse competence), communicative activities target functional aspects of the language (i.e. strategic competence and sociolinguistic competence). The ELTP of secondary education states one of the goals of foreign language teaching as ‘foster[ing] communicative skills in English’ (MNE, 2018, p. 5), throughout of which the theoretical framework of the mentioned model (Canale & Swain, 1980) is claimed to be adopted. In this connection, TICSA was used for analysing the communicative content of speaking activities in order to investigate if the communicative premise stated in the curriculum is met by any of the selected coursebooks.

2.3. Study design

It is feasible to define the evaluation of teaching materials as ‘the systematic appraisal of the value of materials in relation to their objectives and to objectives of the learners using them’ (Tomlinson, 2011, p. xiv). In keeping with this definition, content analysis of coursebooks with respect to their communicative value is one of the aspects that could be included in this evaluative framework. As suggested by Littlejohn (2011), types of teaching/learning activities, comprising what learners are asked to do and how this relates to their development in the target language, are an important dimension of coursebook

analysis. On this ground, the study is designed as a coursebook analysis that aims to investigate the communicative content of speaking activities in given coursebooks through a taxonomy-based analysis. There are two consecutive steps involved in the process of data analysis. First, the data are qualitatively analysed in terms of communicative content according to the criteria denoted in TICSAs. Second, the qualitative findings from the first step are formulated in a way to be represented in quantitative terms, allowing an empirical comparison between the two student's books.

2.3.1. Data analysis: Qualitative step

In the first step of data analysis, the sampled speaking activities were classified as either pre-communicative (structural and quasi-communicative) or communicative (functional communication and social interaction). Using TICSAs as the guiding instrument, five main aspects were taken into consideration when evaluating the communicative content of an activity: source of the language (i.e. isolated, designated, or up to learner repertoire), nucleus (i.e. focus on form or meaning, and other contextual factors), measurement of success (i.e. accuracy/fluency, functional effectiveness, and social appropriacy), types of meaning conveyed (i.e. locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary), and lastly activity context (i.e. form-and-accuracy, bridging, meaning-and-fluency, or task-oriented). Consistent with the direction of inclination they exhibited on a communicative continuum, the sampled speaking activities were classified into one of the mentioned four activity types, which are assumed to foster the development of a specific sub-component of communicative competence (see Tas & Khan, 2020). The reliability coefficient between the researchers was .90 for the pooled data, calculated via the formula 'number of agreements divided by number of disagreements plus agreements' (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

2.3.2. Data representation: Quantitative step

In the second step of data analysis, the findings obtained from the content analysis were converted into values of percentages, calculated via the formula '100*number of a specific activity type/total number of activities in the given unit'. For example, if a unit had 50 activities, and 20 of them were quasi-communicative, it would be $100 \times 20 / 50$: 40%, which allows a unit-based quantitative comparison of the regarding activity type and indicates how much emphasis placed upon a specific sub-component of learners' communicative competence. In this line, a continuum-type representation was employed in order to determine how communicative a coursebook tends to be. Therefore, the formula '100*number of communicative activities/total number of pre-communicative and communicative activities' was used to indicate where each student's book stands on a communicative continuum.

3. Results

3.1. What is the distribution of pre-communicative and communicative activities in the local coursebook (*Teenwise*) and the international coursebook (*Talent 1*)?

In order to answer the first research question, the sampled speaking activities were classified into one of the four activity types denoted in TICSA. It is assumed that structural and quasi-communicative activities are pre-communicative, yet functional communication and social interaction activities are communicative. As maintained by Tas & Khan (2020), the former is presumed to aim at the analytic dimension whilst the latter is about the experiential dimension of communicative competence. The distribution of pre-communicative and communicative activities in the two coursebooks is presented as follows:

Table 2. *The local coursebook (Teenwise) compared with the international coursebook (Talent 1)*

Assumption	Analytic		Experiential	
	Linguistic competence	Discourse competence	Strategic competence	Sociolinguistic competence
TICSA	Pre-communicative		Communicative	
	Structural	Quasi-communicative	Functional communication	Social interaction
Unit 1				
Local	21.2%	–	–	–
International	10.4%	25%	4.2%	–
Unit 2				
Local	10%	10%	3.3%	–
International	11.6%	20.9%	4.7%	–
Unit 3				
Local	13.3%	10%	–	–
International	4.7%	23.3%	4.7%	–
Unit 4				
Local	12.9%	16.1%	–	–
International	9.3%	27.9%	2.3%	–
Unit 5				
Local	10.3%	20.7%	–	–
International	2.6%	23.7%	5.3%	–
Unit 10				
Local	6.9%	24.1%	–	–
International	11.1%	20%	6.7%	–

As is indicated in the table above, the pedagogical focus in both coursebooks seems to be on structural and quasi-communicative activities, with occasional instances of functional communication. The distribution of structural activities in the local coursebook is 21.2% in Unit 1, 10% in Unit 2, 13.3% in Unit 3, 12.9% in Unit 4, 10.3% in Unit 5, and 6.9% in Unit 10. Somewhat different from the local one, the distribution of the same activity type in the international coursebook is 10.4% in Unit 1, 11.6% in Unit 2, 4.7% in Unit 3, 9.3% in Unit 4, 2.6% in Unit 5, and 11.1% in Unit 10. Compared with the international coursebook, the local coursebook was found to contain relatively more structural activities, which suggests that linguistic competence was a major concern for its writers. As for quasi-communicative activities, the distribution in the local coursebooks is 0% in Unit 1, 10% in Unit 2, 10% in Unit 3, 16.1% in Unit 4, 20.7% in Unit 5, and 24.1% in Unit 10 whilst in the international coursebook, it is 25% in Unit 1, 20.9% in Unit 2, 23.3% in Unit 3, 27.9% in Unit 4, 23.7% in Unit 5, and 20% in Unit 10. This suggests that the international coursebook shows a strong preference in favour of quasi-communicative activities, which, by implication, highlights the relative importance given to discourse competence in addition to linguistic competence.

The only type of communicative activity encountered in the content analysis was functional communication. The distribution of functional communication activities in the local coursebook is restricted to 3.3% in Unit 2, whereas it demonstrates a regular pattern in the international coursebook, which is found to be 4.2% in Unit 1, 4.7% in Unit 2, 4.7% in Unit 3, 2.3% in Unit 4, 5.3% in Unit 5, and 6.7% in Unit 10. As these figures clearly demonstrate, the international coursebook attaches relatively more importance to strategic competence when compared with the local coursebook. It is also indicated by the lack of social interaction activities that sociolinguistic competence, a significant sub-component of learners' communicative competence, is not directly addressed by any of these coursebooks. Overall, it is revealed that there is a strong inclination towards pre-communicative activities, placing a considerable emphasis upon linguistic competence and discourse competence whilst somewhat marginalising strategic competence and sociolinguistic competence, as far as speaking activities are concerned.

3.2. Based upon the distribution of communicative speaking activities, which one of the selected coursebooks complies more with the premise related to developing learners' communicative competence?

In order to answer the second research question, the distribution of pre-communicative activities was put into a comparison with that of communicative ones so that it could be examined if any of the coursebooks demonstrated a more balanced understanding of communicative competence. The assumption underlying this research question is that pre-communicative and communicative activities relate to the analytic and experiential dimensions of the language, respectively (see Table 2).

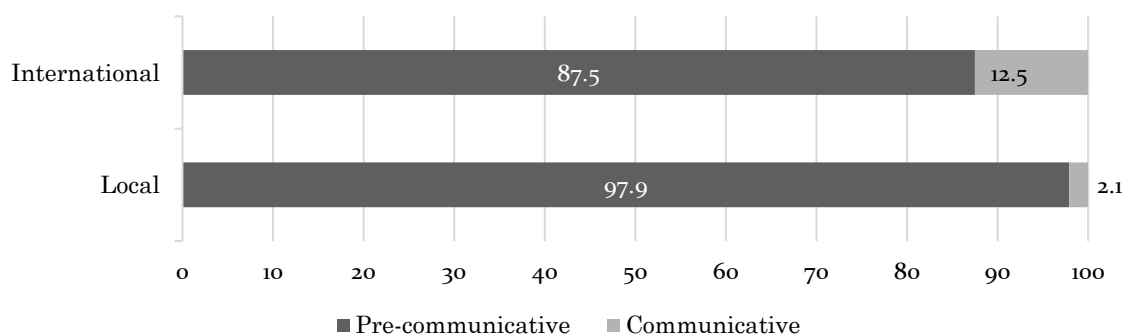


Figure 1. Degrees of communicative involvement in the local coursebook (Teenwise) compared with the international coursebook (Talent 1)

As is indicated in the figure above, 87.5% of the sampled speaking activities in the international coursebook are pre-communicative, and 12.5% are communicative. These results suggest that a considerable amount of emphasis is placed upon developing the analytic dimension of learners' communicative competence. On the other hand, 97.9% of the speaking activities that the local coursebooks contains are pre-communicative, and 2.1% are communicative, which reveals a rather limited utilisation of the experiential dimension. When compared with one another, the international coursebook contains more communicative activities (12.5%) than the local coursebook does (2.1%), signifying a relative discrepancy between the two in terms of which sub-components of learners' communicative competence are foregrounded.

Although both student's books are primarily reliant upon the analytic dimension, it is revealed that the distribution of speaking activities in the international coursebook complies relatively more with the communicative premise stated in the official curriculum (MNE, 2018) thanks to containing more communicative activities dedicated to developing the experiential dimension of learners' communicative competence. The local coursebook, marginalising the experiential dimension, does not necessarily meet the demands of a communicative and action-oriented approach described in the official curriculum (MNE, 2018), in which language functions are seen as a vehicle for communication and accordingly necessitate a greater number of communicative activities. It is, hence, indicated that the international coursebook could become a comparatively viable option for classroom use with respect to helping learners improve their communicative language ability through tasks that focus on functional communication, albeit still limited in number.

4. Discussion

Within the scope of this study, it was found that both the local coursebook (Teenwise) and the international coursebook (Talent 1) prioritise pre-communicative activities and set the analytic dimension of communicative competence as their main target. On this ground,

linguistic competence and discourse competence appear to have been the major concern for the writers of the examined student's books, whereas strategic competence, a sub-component within the experiential dimension, was rarely found to be the focus of classroom instruction. An implication of this finding is that an accuracy-oriented approach in which form and usage are upheld could be claimed to be in effect in both coursebooks, in strong contrast with the communicative and action-oriented approach described in the curriculum (MNE, 2018). Notwithstanding similarities in terms of prioritising pre-communicative activities, the local coursebook was found to be more structural than its international counterpart, which is an important finding confirming the perceived discrepancy that Turkish EFL teachers happen to report between foreign and local publications (Saricoban & Can, 2013).

The lack of social interaction activities denotes a sort of de-emphasis on sociolinguistic competence within the experiential dimension. To Bayyurt (2013), 'foreign language teaching in a broader sense involves the teaching of successful communication in L2 through the use of correct register or appropriate variety ...' (p. 70), highlighting the significant position of sociolinguistics in foreign language education. Although the claims made in the official curriculum revolve around a balanced progression of learners' communicative competence (MNE, 2018), the local coursebook was found to attenuate the experiential sub-components of communicative competence, which is, in fact, in conflict with student expectations too, since they often 'prefer a more communicative language learning experience where they have the chance to converse in the target language' (Armagan et al., 2016, p. 186), as also supported by other studies from the same context (e.g. Denkci-Akkas & Coker, 2016; Ozsevik, 2010). The de-emphasis placed upon sociolinguistic competence in this regard raises doubts about the sufficiency of the communicative content offered by the selected coursebooks considering the model of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980) acknowledged (MNE, 2018).

Unfortunately, there are not many evaluative studies based upon taxonomic classification of classroom activities. It is, nonetheless, confirmed that most language coursebooks are primarily pre-communicative (Littlewood, 1981). The results obtained in this study also agree with those of studies from similar EFL contexts that found the analytic dimension to be the focus of English language coursebooks due to containing more non-communicative and pre-communicative activities than communicative ones (e.g. Lim, 2019). Were we to contemplate a communicative continuum as the one Littlewood (2004) suggests, it is plausible to speculate that the focus of local coursebooks tends to be on forms and accuracy, perhaps due to an assumption that most L2 users would not be likely to engage in authentic communication, as opposed to the communicative end of continuum where tasks focus mainly on meaning, functional effectiveness, and social appropriacy.

If it is taken into account that Turkish is a country where English is largely taught and learnt for instrumental and pragmatic purposes, it leads to a point of discussion that the

writers of the local coursebook might have been under the influence of a more form-focused mindset, whereas a considerable number of premises stated in the curriculum (MNE, 2018) display characteristics leaning towards authentic communication. Many in-service Turkish EFL teachers do not deny mismatches between communicative expectations made in the curriculum and actual classroom implementations (e.g. Arslan & Uçok-Atasoy, 2020; Ozsevik, 2010). Some underline an exam-oriented teaching practice that has long ruled the reigns of foreign language teaching in Turkey (Ozsevik, 2010): ‘You simply cannot teach students speaking because it is not assessed in these exams... the tests focus on grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills only, all tested through multiple-choice questions (Original data from Ozsevik, 2010, p. 73)’, lending further credence to the finding that most of the activities in the local coursebook were designed to cater for the development of learners’ linguistic competence.

Classroom observations done in 9th grade English classes (e.g. Denkci-Akkas & Coker, 2016) give support to the finding that local coursebooks in Turkey are largely pre-communicative. Observations suggest that it is often ‘not the ideal communicative classroom depicted in the text of the national curriculum’ (Denkci-Akkas & Coker, 2016, p. 72). The distribution of speaking activities presented in this study confirms such claims made about difficulties that Turkish EFL teachers face in implementing CLT (Basok, 2020; Ozsevik, 2010) because the findings indicate that the focus in the selected coursebooks seems to be on linguistic competence and discourse competence to a great extent, rather than on strategic competence and sociolinguistic competence. It is, hence, tempting to argue that there is, indeed, a perceived discrepancy between foreign language planning and actual classroom practice. Turkish EFL teachers’ positive attitude towards CLT notwithstanding, local coursebooks provided to them appear to be largely devoid of the communicative premise asserted in the text of the official curriculum.

The dilemma of theory and practice is not exclusive to the Turkish context. In many parts of the world where English is taught and learnt as a foreign language, there are likely to be recurring problems about turning national curricular reforms into reality (Cullinan, 2016; Njogu, 2018; Underwood, 2012). Failure to implement curricular reforms cannot merely be attributed to language teachers’ methodological practice; rather, such reforms should first encompass changes in teaching materials, students’ learning experiences, contextual factors inherent in classrooms, and teachers’ capability of adapting to those changes (see TEPAV, 2013). As stated by Fullan (2007), this paradoxical situation of constant change with little to none advance may best be defined as a ‘subjective reality of curriculum implementation’, in which changes only occur in the texts of official curricula.

Given the mismatch between foreign language policies and teaching materials, language teachers’ inclination towards international coursebooks or other alternatives could be justified by the extent to which the experiential dimension of communicative competence is addressed. For example, if a language teacher, working at a state school, happens to

prefer an international counterpart to the local coursebook, it may possibly be an optimistic effort towards meeting the communicative goals depicted in the national curriculum. By the same token, any disagreement between teachers' positive beliefs about CLT and actual classroom implementations could be explained in this way because what teachers have at their disposal is constrained to pre-communicative activities that prioritise linguistic competence, unless they make certain adaptations or expand their repertoire of communicative classroom activities on their own initiative.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, the communicative content of two English language coursebooks has been comparatively analysed against the communicative premises stated in the official curriculum. It was revealed that whilst both coursebooks prioritise the analytic dimension of communicative competence, the international coursebook attaches relatively more importance to the experiential dimension, implying that it complies somewhat more with the official curriculum than the local coursebook does. The lack of social interaction activities indicates that sociolinguistic competence is de-emphasised although a balanced progression of learners' communicative competence is claimed to be aimed. Furthermore, the scarcity of communicative activities reveals an insufficiency of communicative teaching materials at Turkish EFL teachers' disposal. As a result of this predicament, many teachers could be suffering from being expected to teach 'communicatively' with 'pre-communicative' materials, which possibly compel them to opt for using foreign publications instead of local coursebooks.

Rather than merely expecting English language teachers to be communicative, the content of local coursebooks delivered to them should be communicative enough to reflect accurately the goals stated in the curriculum through a balanced treatment of linguistic, discourse, strategic, and sociolinguistic competences. It must be borne in mind that language teaching is a dynamic process that involves teachers, learners, materials, and other instructional variables, all of which are under the profound impact of contextual factors. It is, hence, a feeble attempt to turn traditional teaching practice into a communicative one just by making changes in the text of the national curriculum. Basic conditions need to be met for successfully implementing a curricular revision, one of which is preparing teaching materials that fit with the aims of foreign language planning.

A precise co-ordination between the MNE and the departments of ELT in Turkey is recommended to eliminate the degree of disagreements between changing language policies and classroom practices. As a possible solution, language teachers could be offered more flexibility in their choice of coursebooks given that local coursebooks happen to fail to meet the demands of CLT. It is also feasible to provide language teachers with in-service training on materials adaptations and to revise the ELTP in a way to allow for more 'spontaneity' in English classes. Further research may be advised to focus on ways to adapt

pre-communicative speaking activities in local coursebooks to involve some communicative elements. It could also be worthwhile to investigate the relationship between materials and communicative competence from the perspective of students, whose opinions may reveal to what extent they think using local coursebooks contributes to their communicative language ability.

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Appendix A. Instrument used for data analysis

Below is reproduced the instrument that was used for analysing the communicative content of the selected coursebooks.

Taxonomy for Identification of Coursebook Speaking Activities (TICSA) (Khan & Tas, 2019)

Classification	Source of the Language	Nucleus	Measurement of Success	Meaning Conveyed	Activity Context
Pre-communicative	Isolated	•Form	•Accuracy	•Locutionary	•Form-and-accuracy
	Isolated or designated	•Form •Function	•Accuracy •Relative fluency •Communicative acts	•Locutionary •Illocutionary	•Bridging
Communicative	Learner repertoire	•Form •Function •Situational context	•Relative accuracy •Fluency •Communicative acts •Functional effectiveness	•Locutionary •Illocutionary •Perlocutionary	•Meaning-and-fluency •Task-oriented
	Learner repertoire	•Form •Function •Situational context •Social context	•Relative accuracy •Fluency •Communicative acts •Functional effectiveness •Social appropriacy	•Locutionary •Illocutionary •Perlocutionary	•Meaning-and-fluency •Task-oriented

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