



Articulation in English Language Curricula: A Systematic Analysis from Basic Education to Secondary Education

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Abstract

Despite many studies on English language curricula over the last two decades in Turkey, any analysis of articulation in the curricula has not been found. Articulation, which addresses the inter-relatedness of a curriculum in many ways, both vertically and horizontally, ensures planning of student's development holistically and the transfer of learning from one education level to another. In this study, basic education and secondary education English language curricula published in 2018 were systematically examined in terms of articulation by looking for an answer to the question "To what extent do the English curricula attain the horizontal and vertical across the school levels?" specifically. Guideline Questions for Determining Articulation which were developed through the literature review and expert opinions, were used in the study adopting a document analysis. The data were analyzed according to descriptive analysis. The findings display that the English language curricula from basic education to secondary education reflect the culture of the target language in a very limited way and that the interdisciplinarity of the curricula is weak. Therefore, it is concluded that the curricula have attained horizontal articulation partially. In terms of vertical articulation, although continuity and sequence across the grades are mostly achieved, the study uncovered the problems about the assessment of four skills in an integrated way, the progress of learning outcomes from lower-to higher-order thinking skills, the coordination of the language proficiency aimed as the final outcome at the school levels as well as the assessment of them. Consequently, the study revealed that both the horizontal and vertical (especially across the school levels) articulation of the curricula are not fully ensured. Various implications have been made to strengthen the articulation of English language curricula.

Keywords

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Introduction

Despite various solution attempts such as starting language education at an early age, changes in lesson hours and curricula, the desired level of English could not be achieved in Turkey searching for success in English education as a foreign language for a long time (Alan, 2017; Coşkun Demirpolat, 2015; Gür, Çelik, & Yurdakul, 2016; Yaman, 2018). Based on the world's most comprehensive and largest ranking of countries by English proficiency; Turkey is in 69th place out of 100 countries; and is among the countries with low qualification levels (EF-EPI, 2020). Similarly, according to the Turkey Economic Policies Research Foundation (TEPAV), most of the state school students' (90%+) English proficiency levels remain at a basic level even after 1000 hours of English education (TEPAV, 2014).

Over the past two decades, many English language curricular changes have been introduced in Turkey; four of them (2006, 2013, 2017, and 2018) are at the primary education level and six ones are (2004, 2007, 2008, 2014, 2017, and 2018) at the secondary education level (excluding preparatory classes) (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2021). Despite all these curricular changes or revisions, students in Turkey have not seen any sign of progress in their educational level, on the contrary, they feel the decrease in their English proficiency throughout the years (TEPAV, 2014). However, to achieve the desired success in foreign language education, the focus should be on ensuring consistency and continuity in English education. It is meaningless to expect success in a foreign language education without an internal coherence and a transition quality of language education from one school level to another (Byrnes, 1990). In this context, the knowledge-base emphasizes the prominence of articulation in foreign language education (Alexson & Kemnitz, 2003; Byrnes, 1990; Demott, 1999; Lally, 2001; Lange, 1988; Lord & Isabelli, 2014; So et al., 2008).

Articulation, which is among the curriculum design principles, refers to the interrelatedness of a curriculum in many ways both vertically and horizontally (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). It is also defined in foreign language education as both the interrelation and continuity of the curriculum components; content, teaching and assessment (Lange, 1988). Articulation is *"both the interrelationship and continuity of contents, curriculum, instruction, and evaluation within programs which focus on the progress of the student in learning to both comprehend and communicate in a second language"* (Lange, 1988, p. 16). In other words, it is *"a spiral, with curricular elements reappearing periodically, each time in more complex form"* (Abbott, 2005, p. 190). Therefore, articulation is also known as the transition from one educational experience to another (Alexson & Kemnitz, 2003; Byrnes, 1990; Hough, 1989). This transition is only possible with the horizontal and vertical articulation of the curriculum.

Horizontal articulation identifies the focus of curriculum on the same outcomes, teaching strategies, materials, and evaluation procedures (Byrnes, 1991; DeMott, 1999; Lange, 1988; Wilson, 1988), and the same topics also covered in different courses (Lee & Yeo, 2015). Specifically, horizontal articulation, which describes *"the association among simultaneous elements"* among different disciplines at the same grade level (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018, p. 187), is also referred to as interdisciplinary articulation. In other words, it is explained as using common content or concepts in disciplines at the same grade level or integrating foreign language into different disciplines (Byrnes, 1990; Lange, 1988). Since the goal of language education is to acquire communicative competence (Byrnes, 1990; Wilson, 1988), *"a well-articulated curriculum can address both the information transmission quality of a language as well as the deeply educational value of cultural and linguistic competency in a foreign language."* (Byrnes, 1990, p. 285). Hence, horizontal articulation in foreign language education includes the communicative language teaching (CLT) principles (Byrnes, 1990; Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition [CARLA], 1994; Lange, 1988; Wilson, 1988).

Vertical articulation refers to *"the sequencing of content from one grade level to another"* (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018, p. 187) or *"agreement within a program over the direction of the curriculum or between levels of schooling such as between secondary schools and colleges"* (Lange, 1982, as cited in Lange, 1988, p. 16). The sequence is defined as *"the order in which the curriculum is presented, how it is progressively organized"* while continuity is defined as *"the continuous way it is organized for teaching"* (Hewitt, 2006, p. 90). Presenting

the same subjects with an increasing level of difficulty across the grades (Abbott, 2005) is one of the most common methods used to achieve vertical articulation (Hough, 1989). Additionally, vertical articulation can be achieved by establishing a connection within the design principles; the scope of the curriculum throughout the transitions from a school level to another (DeMott, 1999); sequence of the curriculum including the differentiation of the subjects across the grade levels (DeMott, 1999; Lee & Yeo, 2015) and continuity referring to the repetition of the subjects (Rivera, 2017; Trabona, Taylor, Klein, Munakata, & Rahman, 2019). In brief, articulation is “*the vertical and horizontal interrelatedness of various aspects of the curriculum*” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018, p. 187). In this sense, the horizontal articulation of the curricula was examined in terms of the CLT principles and interdisciplinarity while the vertical articulation of the curriculum was investigated regarding continuity, sequence, and transitions between the school levels. According to this theoretical framework, the guiding questions were prepared to analyze the curricula in this study.

The knowledge-base around the world argues the articulations through the analyses in foreign language education; in Spanish language education (Lord & Isabelli, 2014), in Japanese language education (So et al., 2008), and in Russian language education (Alexson & Kemnitz, 2003) as well as various projects to ensure articulation (CARLA, 1994). Although the expected success level has not been reached in Turkey, there exists a lack of studies on this concept in the Turkish literature, which points to a need for a systematic analysis of the English language curricula in this respect. Since the initiation of the English language curricula, the studies in Turkey have argued them by comparing with previous curricula (Acar, 2019), evaluating the outcomes and assignments in terms of CLT (Ağcam & Babanoğlu, 2020), through the CIPP model evaluation (Başaran, Özdemir, & Can, 2020), and revealing teachers’ or students’ views on the curriculum (Civriz, 2019; Çarıkçıoğlu, 2019; Demir, 2020; Taşdemir et al., 2018; Türkben, 2019). In this respect, the studies in Turkey are often on program evaluation based on teachers’ and experts’ views (Aksoy, Bozdoğan, Akbaş, & Seferoğlu, 2018; Çelik & Büyükalın Filiz, 2018; Demirtaş & Erdem, 2015; Dilekli, 2018; Merter, Kartal, & Çağlar, 2012), on current situation analysis of foreign language education (Altın & Saracaoğlu, 2018; Coşkun Demirpolat, 2015; Paker, 2012; Suna & Durmuşçelebi, 2013; Şahin & Göksoy, 2019; Yaman, 2018) and yet in limited numbers, on evaluation in terms of curriculum design principles (Canlier & Bümen, 2018; Yücel, Dimici, Yıldız, & Bümen, 2017). The last two of these studies (Canlier & Bümen, 2018; Yücel et al., 2017) analyzed English language curricula published in different years regarding all curriculum design principles (scope, sequence, continuity, articulation, balance, user-friendliness, and flexibility). Articulation, which considers students’ language development from basic education to secondary education as a process rather than a product with a holistic perspective (Lord & Isabelli, 2014), has not been addressed extensively and satisfyingly. Hence, it is needed to examine articulation, which shows the coordination and continuity of the content and activities being offered to students in English language education for about 11 years.

On the other hand, the studies on articulation in curricula have argued it as defining the qualifications that a curriculum should have rather than focusing directly on the analyses of articulation (Alan, 2017), within the program evaluation criteria (Yazçayır, 2016), or by examining the outcomes/content of the curriculum in terms of articulation (Arsal, 2012; Cihan & Gürlen, 2013; Konur & Atlıhan, 2012; Mehmeti & Tezci, 2018). Additionally, in the studies examining the curricula of Mathematics, Information Technologies, and English language courses in terms of the curriculum design principles (scope, sequence, continuity, articulation, balance, user-friendliness, and flexibility), the horizontal and vertical articulation were argued in general or in a holistic manner rather than discussing them separately (Canlier & Bümen, 2018; Geçitli & Bümen, 2020; Yazıcılar & Bümen, 2017; Yücel et al., 2017). Therefore, it might be stated that this study is unique since it examines the articulation of English language curricula from basic education to secondary education vertically, horizontally, and considering the transitions between the school levels.

Examining articulation at different stages of the curricula can help identify imbalances or inconsistencies that occur (Alexander, 1987). Thus, a well-articulated curriculum encompasses a strong relationship between goals, content, teaching, and assessment (Lord & Isabelli, 2014). In this sense, articulation analysis can provide richer information about the relationship between the curriculum dimensions. It also may reveal what is addressed most or what is neglected at which stages of the school levels since articulation may contain data on what and when students learn at various school levels (DeMott, 1999). Besides, it may also contain data on the association of English among different disciplines at the same grade level (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). In this context, the well-articulated curriculum not only addresses the development of students in a holistic way but also enhances the association and transfer of the skills acquired in one course to others.

The Aim and Significance of the Research

This study aims to analyze the primary and secondary education English language curricula published by the Ministry of National Education in 2018 in terms of articulation and reach findings that can contribute to the curriculum development. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. To what extent do the English language curricula attain horizontal articulation at each school level; primary, secondary, and high schools?
2. To what extent do the English language curricula attain vertical articulation at each school level; primary, secondary, and high schools?
3. To what extent do the English language curricula attain vertical articulation from one school level to another?

This study, in which the English language curricula having a key role in English education are evaluated in terms of articulation with a holistic perspective, can contribute to not only the field of curriculum studies but also the field of foreign language education since effective foreign language education should be supported through well-articulated curricula promoting a coordinated sequence throughout school levels and association of foreign language with other disciplines at grade level. For effective foreign language education, it is necessary to ensure vertical articulation (the well-planned and organized order of curriculum components across the grade levels as well as the school levels) and horizontal articulation (the association of foreign language with other disciplines at each grade level) in the curriculum. As the first study conducted on articulation, this study is regarded as important since it might reveal the deficiencies of the curricula at all school levels (primary, secondary, and high school) in terms of articulation, and propose solutions to eliminate these deficiencies. It is likely to achieve the demanded English language education through this kind of study as it might uncover the imbalances and inconsistencies in the curricula- in other words, what is addressed most or what is neglected at which stages of the school levels. The findings can serve as a guide in the development of English language curricula and in designing curriculum resources (textbooks, student workbooks, teacher guides, printed or digital educational materials, simulations, videos, interactive tools, and assessment tools). To sum up, a curriculum designed regarding articulation indicators might assist student's learning as well as retention. Moreover, the detailed indicators developed to examine articulation in curricula are considered important as they will propose an analytical framework for future curriculum designs and further studies. Particularly, it comprises the guideline indicating what to consider or not when examining articulation in other disciplines.

Method

The document analysis method was used in this study. Document analysis is a systematic method used to review or evaluate documents both in print and as electronic media (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis, which is frequently used in educational research, focuses on how the subject to be researched is reflected in the documents (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Although document analysis is generally used as a complement to other research methods, it can also be used as a stand-alone method (Bowen, 2009). The steps followed in the examination of the documents (Love, 2003; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018) are as follows:

- 1. *Obtaining the Documents:*** The primary and secondary education English language curricula, which were enacted in 2018, were downloaded from the official website of the MoNE (<https://mufredat.meb.gov.tr/>) (MoNE, 2018a, 2018b). The first drafts of the English language curricula examined in this study were presented to the public by the MoNE in 2017 to ask for parents, students, and teachers' opinions (MoNE, 2017). Then, an update was carried out by the committee including English teachers and field experts. The curricula aim the acquisition of English communicative competence in four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) (MoNE, 2018a). In this context, while focusing on listening and speaking skills at the primary school level, the curricula comprise four basic skills in secondary school, and pronunciation skills in addition to four basic skills in high school (MoNE, 2018b).
- 2. *Evaluation of the Originality of the Documents:*** Since the curricula are accessible from the official website of the MoNE, it is accepted that they are original.
- 3. *Analysis of the Documents:*** All the documents presented with the English language curricula were analyzed systematically in this study. In the analysis of the data, the technique of creating categories (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018) was used and the categories were developed initially based on the literature review. Accordingly, the studies on foreign language articulation (Abbott, 2005; Alexson & Kemnitz, 2003; Byrnes, 1990; Canlier & Bümen, 2018; Lange, 1988; Lee & Yeo, 2015; So et al., 2008; Yücel et al., 2017) and the articulation and curriculum analyses in different disciplines (DeMott, 1999; Geçitli & Bümen, 2020; Hough, 1989; Rivera, 2017; Trabona et al., 2019; Yazıcılar & Bümen, 2017) were examined and categories regarding articulation as well as (draft) guiding questions (indicators) related to it were created. The draft guiding questions consisted of five items about CLT principles and interdisciplinary dimensions in the horizontal articulation; eight items about the continuity dimension, eight items about the sequence dimension, and five items about the articulation transition between the school levels in the vertical articulation. Additionally, the balance dimension including six items was considered in the context of both horizontal and vertical articulation. Thus, this draft version consisting of 32 items in total was sent online to experts working in both Curriculum and Instruction (n = 2) and English Language Teaching (n = 3) to increase the validity of the study. In line with the expert opinions, the researchers held meetings (debriefing) and conducted discussions on the guiding questions as well as the dimensions of curriculum principles to be included in the analysis of articulation. By reviewing the literature again, it was decided to remove some of the items on the continuity and put them in horizontal articulation as they are related to the CLT. Also, changes in the expressions of some items based on expert suggestions were made. Although it was initially thought that balance as the curriculum design principle (that the curriculum is suitable for the developmental stages of the students) should be covered in the articulation analysis, it was understood that balance was not directly defined within the horizontal or vertical articulation when reanalyzing the literature on articulation (Byrnes, 1990; Hewitt, 2006; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018; Lally, 2001; Lange, 1988; Yücel et al., 2017). Although the balance principle is argued when explaining what articulation is in general (Lee & Yeo, 2015; So et al., 2008), it is observed that there is no direct reference of balance with defining horizontal or vertical articulation. Since the categories based on well-defined research questions and purpose should be embodied separately (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018), the items related to balance were

removed from the guiding questions developed for the articulation analysis. Then, the new guiding questions consisting of 19 items were sent to the same experts again, and the questions were finalized because they expressed the questions were appropriate (Appendix 1). Curricula were analyzed based on the final guiding questions.

- 4. Use of Data:** How accurately the documents in the study were interpreted (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018) was ensured through the validity measures (expert opinion, discussions, reliability formula). Besides, the findings were supported with direct quotations. The ethical requirements were taken in the use of data; careful attention was paid not to damage the institutions to which the documents belong. Since the curricula examined in this study are published publicly on the MoNE official website, a document was also obtained from the Ege University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board stating that the approval of the ethics board was not required. Therefore, any further application to get permission from the MoNE was not done.

Validity, Reliability, and the Role of the Researchers

While examining the primary and secondary education English language curricula published in 2018, careful attention was paid to ensure that the findings were credible, transferable, consistent, and confirmable (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Credibility was achieved by the reflection of the truth by the researchers as well as the evaluation of the research process by the experts. With a detailed description of research data, transferability was attained. Consistency through comparing the analysis of the programs with similar studies was ensured, and confirmability was achieved by keeping the work done during the research process.

The first author as an English teacher with seven years of experience has been implementing the English language curriculum for three years in primary school and four years in secondary school. The second author is also an English teacher, who took part in the committee established to update the 2018 secondary education English language curricula. After her duty in the update commission, she worked as an author and editor in writing the fourth-grade English textbook for basic education. In this sense, the second author is well aware of both basic education and secondary education English language curricula. However, the author's job in the committee for curriculum revision can be perceived as a bias. To minimize this thread, she constantly consulted the opinions of other experts (other researchers and a measurement-evaluation expert) while doing the analyses. Apart from this, the analyses were carried out separately by the first two researchers, and then the reliability formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used. According to this formula, *intercoder reliability is calculated as = agreed items/total agreed on items + items with disagreement* (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to this formula, the intercoder reliability should be at least 70% in the initial code-checking discussion, and a consensus of 97% was obtained in this study. Besides, since the last author investigated the analysis of the curriculum in different courses in terms of design principles, she contributed to the analysis of the data as objectively as possible and tried to ensure theoretical validity.

Results

Findings on the First Research Question

In the study, the horizontal articulation has been analyzed in two dimensions addressing CLT principles and interdisciplinarity. Also, the findings are presented by considering the order of the guiding questions. Accordingly, all the English language curricula have been designed based on CLT. In the basic education curriculum, "language use in an authentic communicative environment" is emphasized (MoNE, 2018a, p. 3). The secondary education curriculum states that it is aimed to "foster communicative skills in English among learners" (MoNE, 2018b, p. 5). To achieve this goal, the curricula include communicative contexts created through themes, language functions, and sample language structures and usages suitable for daily life. "To create a link between language learning and daily life, the themes for each unit" are presented (MoNE, 2018a, p. 9; MoNE, 2018b, p. 13). "The functions refer to the communicative role(s) of a given form in a context of the situation." (MoNE, 2018a, p. 11; MoNE, 2018b, p. 8). Sample themes, language functions, and usages for a grade from each school level are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The theme, Language Function, Sample Usages and Structures Examples Regarding CLT in English Curricula

Grade	Theme	Language Function	Sample Usages and Structures
2 nd Grade	At the Playground	Making simple inquiries	Do you dance? -Yes! -Yes, I do. -No! -No, I don't (MoNE, 2018a, p. 22).
5 th Grade	Hello!	Greeting and meeting new people	Nice/Glad to meet you. Nice meeting you. Me, too. My pleasure (MoNE, 2018a, p. 50).
9 th Grade	Studying Abroad	Meeting new people and introducing oneself and family members	-Hello/Hey/What's up? -Hi, long time no see! -Great to see you again! -Hi, how are you? / Hi, how is it going? -Not bad. -Goodbye -Catch you later! (MoNE, 2018b, p. 23)

Another indicator examined in the CLT context is whether the cultural awareness of the target language is aimed or not. In this context, the introductory text of the basic education curriculum states that "appreciation for cultural diversity" is aimed (MoNE, 2018a, p. 8). However, the findings show that such explanations in the introductory text have not been reflected in the curriculum. Thus, it is concluded that there is no information about cultural awareness of the target language in language functions and outcomes in the basic education English language curriculum. In the secondary education English language curriculum, the "Idioms / Proverbs" as the material or task is recommended (MoNE, 2018b, p. 8), which is considered a very limited way to acquire cultural awareness since it is only among the learning environments. Therefore, it is thought that awareness of the target language's culture is not included in language functions and outcomes from basic education to the end of secondary education.

According to the analyses conducted to find "interdisciplinarity" in horizontal articulation, the learning outcomes and themes in the English language curriculum are only associated with the course of Life Science in the third grade and with the Social Studies, and Turkish in the fourth grade. In the secondary school, they are only associated with the Turkish, Social Studies, and Science curricula, which is considered as limited. In the high school level, the number of learning outcomes and themes associated with the other disciplines is highly large. Accordingly, in the ninth grade, they can be

associated with six courses out of 13, with seven courses out of 13 in the tenth grade, with six out of eight in the eleventh grade, and with only one of the seven courses in the twelfth grade. In this context, the examples for the association of English with other courses from one grade at each school level are presented in Table 2. Based on these findings, it can be said that the high school English language curriculum (compared to the primary and secondary school curriculum) has achieved horizontal articulation in terms of interdisciplinarity.

Table 2. Theme and Learning Outcome Examples Regarding Interdisciplinarity in Horizontal Articulation

Grade	Lesson	Theme/ Unit	Learning Outcomes*
3 rd Grade	Life Science	Unit 6: Life in Nature	LS.3.6.1. Understands the importance of plants and animals in terms of human life (MoNE, 2018c, p. 27).
	English	Theme 10: Nature	E3.10.L2. Students will be able to follow short and simple oral instructions about nature and animals (MoNE, 2018a, p. 37).
6 th Grade	Social Studies	Unit 6: Active Citizenship	SS.6.6.4. Explain the importance of democracy in our social life (MoNE, 2018d, p. 22).
	English	Theme 10: Democracy	E6.10.SP2. Students will be able to talk about the concept of democracy (MoNE, 2018a, p. 70).
10 th Grade	Biology	Unit 3: Current Environmental Problems and Human	10.3.2.3. Offers solutions to prevent environmental pollution in local and global contexts (MoNE, 2018e, p. 21).
	Geography	Unit 1: Natural Systems	10.1.11. Evaluates the economic, social and cultural effects of using water efficiently in Turkey (MoNE, 2018f, p. 22).
	English	Theme 6: Helpful Tips	E10.6.S1. Students will be able to talk about the consequences of wasting energy sources. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 39)

* Learning outcomes in the curricula are coded by the Ministry of National Education to show course name, grade, learning areas/skills, and sequence number. For example, the code of E6.10.SP2 indicates that it belongs to the sixth-grade English course, theme 10, and the second spoken production skill.

Another point examined regarding interdisciplinarity is whether the curriculum of other disciplines at the same grade is integrated with the English language curricula or not. According to MoNE (2017), all the curricula have been designed to comprise the eight competencies defined in the Turkey Competencies Framework (TCF). Therefore, the following definition has been given in the introductory text of all the course curricula from basic education to secondary education:

Communication in foreign languages: Sharing mostly the basic skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, it is based on a person's ability to understand, express, and interpret in a range of appropriate social and cultural contexts, such as education, training, workplace, home, and entertainment, according to his/her wants and needs by expressing feelings, thoughts, concepts, facts, and opinions both orally and in writing. (e.g., MoNE, 2018c, p. 4; MoNE, 2018g, p. 6).

However, when examining whether this competence is reflected in the course curricula tangibly, only one learning outcome related to this competence was detected in the tenth-grade Biology course at the high school level. Accordingly, the outcome, "c. gives examples of how biology is associated with other disciplines in the prevention of environmental pollution" (MoNE, 2018e, p. 21) in Unit 3 *Current Environmental Problems and Human* in the tenth-grade Biology course may be a finding on the integration of English language competence into other disciplines. Apart from it, any other outcome was not

detected in other courses and classes. Hence, it can be said that the integration of English lessons with other lessons of the same grade is very limited.

In the light of these findings above, it can be said that the English language curricula from basic education to secondary education mostly covers the CLT principles, however, the culture of the target language is not reflected in the basic education curriculum while there is a limited reflection in the secondary education curriculum. It is also found out that the English language curricula are mostly interdisciplinary at the high school level in the way that the English curriculum covers the learning outcomes associated with the other disciplines at the same grade level. However, other disciplines do not include English language competence (integration of English language competence into other disciplines is weak). Therefore, it is concluded that the English language curricula from basic education to secondary education have attained horizontal articulation partially.

Findings on the Second Research Question

To examine the vertical articulation of English language curricula at each school level (primary, secondary, and high school levels), the "continuity" curriculum design principle was analyzed firstly. Accordingly, it is revealed that the learning outcomes at each school level are interrelated across the classes at that school level. The example interrelated learning outcomes within each school level are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Example Learning Outcomes Interrelated Within Each School Level

Primary School (2nd-4th Grade)	Secondary School (5th-8th Grade)	High School (9th-12th Grade)
E2.10.S1. Students will be able to talk about the animals they like/dislike (MoNE, 2018a, p. 26).	E5.4.S1. Students will be able to talk about daily routines (MoNE, 2018a, p. 53).	E9.3.S3. Students will be able to talk about their preferences of hobbies and free time activities (MoNE, 2018b, p. 25)
E3.10.S2. Students will be able to talk about the animals they like or dislike and nature (MoNE, 2018a, p. 37).	E6.1.SI1. Students will be able to talk about repeated actions (MoNE, 2018a, p. 61).	E10.8.S2. Students will be able to talk about their preferences in technological devices (MoNE, 2018b, p. 41)
E4.4.S1. Students will be able to talk about their likes and dislikes (MoNE, 2018a, p. 42).	E7.5.L1. Students will be able to understand simple oral texts about daily routines and preferences (MoNE, 2018a, p. 76).	E11.2.S1. Students will be able to take part in a dialogue about likes, dislikes, interests and preference (MoNE, 2018b, p. 46).
	E8.2.SI1. Students will be able to talk about the regular activities of teenagers (MoNE, 2018a, p. 84).	E12.1.S1. Students will be able to exchange ideas about their music preferences (MoNE, 2018b, p. 56).

Besides, the linguistic components (sample language usages, words and structures, language functions, and skills) in all the curricula have been recycled and repeated across the grades. In the primary school level, 12 of 28 functions in the second grade, 12 of 22 functions in the third grade, and 12 of 26 functions in the fourth grade are repeated (There are a total of 76 language functions in the primary school English language curriculum). The number of language functions recycled throughout the primary school level is six. In the secondary school curriculum, 12 of 30 language functions in the fifth grade, 14 out of 24 language functions in the sixth grade, 14 out of 25 language functions in the seventh grade, and 13 out of 24 language functions in the eighth grade were repeated (The total number of functions in the secondary school curriculum is 103). The number of language functions recycled throughout the secondary school level is three. At the high school level, 12 of 38 functions in the ninth grade, 15 of 29 functions in the tenth grade, 19 of 27 functions in the eleventh grade, and 13 of 25 functions in the twelfth grade were repeated. While a total of 119 language functions are covered from

the ninth to the 12th grade, only four of them are recycled clearly throughout the high school. In addition, it is detected that pronunciation skills are repeated constantly throughout the high school level. For example, the outcome “E9.8.P1. Students will be able to notice sentence intonation” (MoNE, 2018b p. 30) can be observed at every grade level. The language functions, sample usages, and structures recycled throughout each school level are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. The language functions recycled throughout each school level

Language Functions		
Primary School (2 nd -4 th Grade)	Secondary School (5 th -8 th Grade)	High School (9 th -12 th Grade)
Naming numbers	Accepting and refusing	Expressing opinions
Expressing ability and inability	Stating personal opinions	Expressing preferences
Expressing likes and dislikes	Making simple inquiries	Describing people
Making simple inquiries	(MoNE, 2018a, p. 50, 55, 57, 62,	Talking about past events
Talking about possessions	65, 70, 75, 76, 77, 83, 84)	(MoNE, 2018b, p. 25, 27, 29,
Talking about locations		36, 41, 43, 46, 48, 53, 54, 56,
(MoNE, 2018a, p. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24,		57, 62)
26, 28, 30, 32, 33, 37, 39, 41, 42, 44)		

Table 5. The sample usages and structures recycled throughout each school level

Suggested Sample Usages in Curricula		
Primary School (2 nd -4 th Grade)	Primary School (2 nd -4 th Grade)	Primary School (2 nd -4 th Grade)
I am a horse. I can run. (2 nd Grade)	I think Superman is brave. (5 th Grade)	I believe this is (9 th Grade)
Can s/he run fast? (3 rd Grade)	What do you think about fairs? (6 th Grade)	I believe (10 th Grade)
– Yes, s/he can.	–I think they are exciting places.	I believe... (11 th Grade)
– No, s/he can't	I think reality shows are pretty boring. (7 th Grade)	I believe/think/suppose... (12 th Grade)
Can s/he jump? (4 th Grade)	I can't stand it. I think it's unbearable (8 th Grade)	(MoNE, 2018b, p. 25, 41, 51, 56)
– Yes, s/he can. /No, s/he can't.	(MoNE, 2018a, p. 55, 65, 76, 84).	
(MoNE, 2018a, p. 26, 30, 41)		

Another indicator for the continuity dimension is the variety and richness of teaching/learning activities suggested by the English language curricula. In this sense, it is observed that all the curricula encompass the teaching activities very broadly. For example, in the primary school curriculum, “arts and crafts, chants and songs, drama (role play, simulation, pantomime), drawing and coloring, making puppets, questions and answers, reordering” (MoNE, 2018a, p. 28) are proposed for the third-grade in the first theme while in the first theme of the sixth-grade “chants and songs, drama (role play, simulation, pantomime), games, information transfer, labeling, matching, questions and answers, reordering, true/false/no information” (MoNE, 2018a, p. 61) have been suggested. These suggestions, which vary in number, usually seven to 17 in the high school English language curriculum, differ in terms of themes as well. For example, “games, road signs, postcards, maps, notes, presentations, songs, biographical texts, a survey on personal life, e-mails” (MoNE, 2018b, p. 23) are proposed for the ninth graders in the first theme while “conversations, songs, interviews/surveys, survey reports, argumentative and descriptive texts, TV/radio recordings, games, project” (MoNE, 2018b, p. 56) are given for the twelfth graders in the first theme. In summary, the English language curricula have ensured continuity by comprising various learning/teaching activities across the school levels.

Finally, in terms of continuity, the assessment of language skills in an integrated way across the school level was investigated. English language curriculum at basic education proposes various assessment methods to measure "reading, writing, listening, speaking, samples for integrated skills and alternative assessment" and a chart on how these methods should be employed (MoNE, 2018a, p. 7). However, in secondary education, any suggestion or guidance has not been detected regarding integrated skills assessment. Only an expression about it has been given in the curriculum introductory part. "Any type of student output can be assessed in language classes, but the main assessment types suggested in the curriculum are evaluating listening/speaking skills and evaluating the integration of all four language skills" (MoNE, 2018b, p. 11). Therefore, although assessment approaches are included with various suggestions (a mixture of classical, alternative, and electronic assessment types) in primary and secondary education curricula, any direct reference to how to measure language skills in an integrated way has not been observed.

Another dimension examined within vertical articulation is the sequence. Firstly, it was investigated whether the subjects/units/themes are proposed by deepening and/or expanding from one grade to another at each school level. In basic education, it is explained as "the themes and functions that make up the program are designed with a spiral structure" (MoNE, 2018a, p. 38). In secondary education, the subjects and linguistic components are deepened through language functions. Moreover, while there are some components or subjects deepened throughout the high school level, the linguistic component delivered for the first time in a grade is deepened in the following grade. Table 6 below presents the example of language functions and related sample usages deepened throughout each school level.

Table 6. The Example Language Functions and Sample Usages Deepened Throughout Each School Level

Language Functions and Related Sample Usages		
Primary School (2 nd -4 th Grade)	Primary School (2 nd -4 th Grade)	Primary School (2 nd -4 th Grade)
Naming numbers (2 nd Grade)	Describing what people do regularly (5 th Grade)	Talking about past events (9 th Grade) Firstly, they carried ...
Numbers from 1 to 10.	I watch TV every evening. Describing what people do regularly (6 th Grade)	Describing past activities and events (10 th Grade)
Naming numbers (3 rd Grade)	S/he listens to the teacher. Describing what people do regularly (7 th Grade)	Talking about sequential actions When the film ended, I was crying.
Numbers from 1 to 20.	I never / sometimes / often / usually / always watch football matches at weekends.	Ordering events (11 th Grade) Talking about personal experiences in the past
Naming numbers (4 th Grade)	Stating personal opinions (8 th Grade)	After I had graduated from high school, I entered the university.
Numbers from 1 to 50.	I usually do my homework, but I also listen to music (MoNE, 2018a, p. 53, 61, 76, 84)	Narrating a past/ experience (12 th Grade) Talking about sequential actions Two people were struck and injured on Monday... (MoNE, 2018b, p. 29, 36, 48, 62)

The other issue examined in the dimension of sequence; is the presentation of the linguistic components or subjects from known to the unknown across the grade levels. In basic education, it is clearly stated that "a transition from the known to the unknown should be achieved by using easily recognizable terms" in the curriculum (MoNE, 2018a, p. 9). It can be said that the English language curriculum in secondary education is also prepared by considering this principle as it is aimed to present the language function that students are already familiar with before presenting new language functions. Particularly, the first theme in the primary school curriculum covers the languages functions that students know, and the first three themes in secondary and high school levels focus on the functions that are proposed

in the previous grade level. Also, a spiral structure is adopted in the teaching of unknown subjects. The related sample language functions according to the findings are presented in Tables 7, 8, and 9. In this context, the programs successfully meet the order of concepts from known to known.

Table 7. The Language Functions Presented in the First Theme in the Primary School English Language Curriculum

Language Functions of the First Theme	
3 rd Grade	4 th Grade
Greeting and saluting (1 st Theme)	Asking for permission (1 st Theme)
Introducing oneself	Making simple requests
Naming numbers	Telling someone what to do
(MoNE, 2018a, p. 28)	Naming numbers
	(MoNE, 2018a, p. 39)

Table 8. The Sample Language Functions Presented in the First Three Themes in The Secondary School English Language Curriculum

Sample Language Functions of the First Three Themes		
6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
Describing what people do regularly (1 st Theme)	Describing characters / people (1 st Theme)	Making simple inquiries (1 st Theme)
Describing what people do regularly (2 nd Theme)	Describing what people do regularly (2 nd Theme)	Expressing likes and dislikes (2 nd Theme)
Describing what people are doing now (3 rd Theme)	Talking about past events (3 rd Theme)	Expressing references (3 rd Theme)
(MoNE, 2018a, p. 61, 62, 63)	(MoNE, 2018a, p. 72, 73, 74)	(MoNE, 2018a, p. 83, 84, 85)

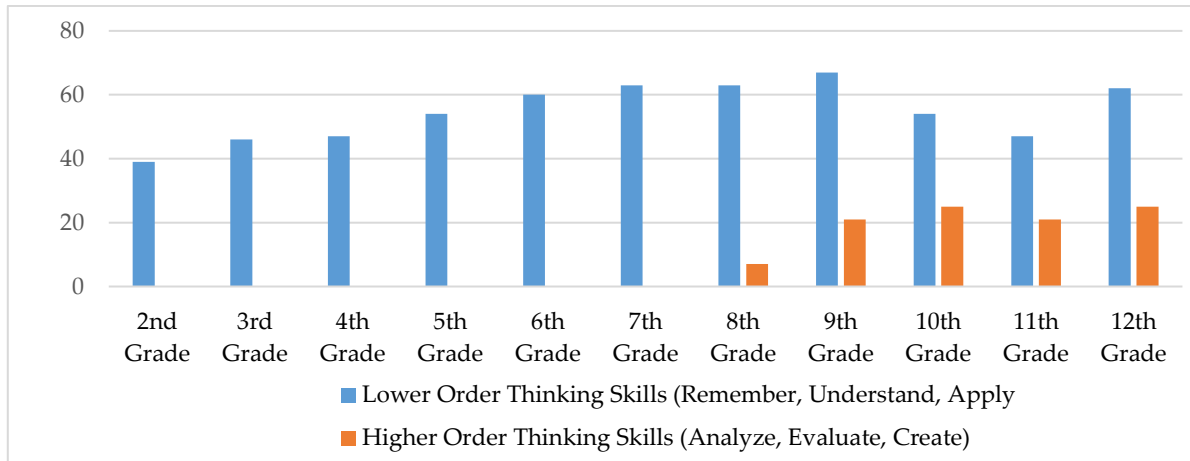
Table 9. The Sample Language Functions Presented in the First Three Themes in The High School English Language Curriculum

Sample Language Functions of the First Three Themes		
10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
Exchanging personal information in both formal and informal language (1 st Theme)	Making plans and predictions (1 st Theme)	Expressing opinions (agreeing, disagreeing, etc.) (1 st Theme)
Describing future plans and arrangements (2 nd Theme)	Expressing likes, dislikes, interests and preferences (2 nd Theme)	Describing personal features (2 nd Theme)
Describing past activities and events (3 rd Theme)	Describing events happening at the same time in the past (3 rd Theme)	Expressing ideas on human rights (gender equality, children rights etc.) (3 rd Theme)
(MoNE, 2018b, p. 34, 35, 36)	(MoNE, 2018b, p. 45, 46, 47)	(MoNE, 2018b, p. 56, 57, 58)

It was also investigated the progression of the learning outcomes from lower-to higher-order thinking skills⁴ (analyze, evaluate, create) in taxonomic terms across the grade levels in the sequence dimension. According to the findings, only the 8th grade English language curriculum includes higher-order thinking skills even if they are in limited numbers. However, any progression from lower-to higher-order thinking skills has not been detected. At the high school level, the English language curriculum comprises higher-order thinking skills in all grade levels (not exceeding the lower order outcomes). Specifically, the learning outcomes in the 2nd-8th grades English curriculum are at the level of remember, understand, and apply (higher-order thinking skills were not targeted at all).

⁴ In the literature, the last three levels of the cognitive domain (analyze, evaluate, and create) are generally expressed as higher-order thinking skills (e.g. Anderson et al., 2001). In this study, the terminology in the revised Bloom's taxonomy (Bümen, 2006) was used.

Nevertheless, with the emphasis on understand and apply levels most, the English curriculum in the eighth grade targets few outcomes at the evaluate and create levels. Similarly, there are learning outcomes in understand and apply at all grades at the high school level, however, learning outcomes aiming high-order thinking skills are mostly concentrated on reading and writing skills. Graphic 1 shows the number of the lower- and higher-order thinking skills from the second grade to the twelfth grade, and the learning outcome examples from the analyses are presented in Appendix 2.



Graphic 1. The Learning Outcomes of English Language Curricula (2018) Regarding Cognitive Domain

Another indicator for the sequence of the curricula is whether prerequisite learning is considered across the grade levels. The primary English language curriculum states that “*it is aimed that students can use the words and structures they have learned before by blending them with what they have learned while performing these functions*” (MoNE, 2018a, p. 38). Also, the other findings show that all the English language curricula from basic education to secondary education have been designed by considering students’ prerequisite learning and knowledge. Accordingly, each grade level has addressed to not only the functions and subjects given from the previous class but also proposing new ones. The sample language functions and usages related to the findings are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. The Language Function and Usage Examples Regarding Prerequisite Learning in English Language Curricula

Language Functions and Usages		
Primary School (2nd-4th Grade)	Secondary School (5th-8th Grade)	High School (9th-12th Grade)
Talking about locations of things (2 nd Grade) —The birds are in the tree. ... on the car. ...under the table. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 24)	Stating personal opinions (5 th Grade) I think Superman is brave. What’s your favorite film? —I like Spirited Away. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 55)	Describing daily routines (9 th Grade) My friends help the victims/casualties of natural disaster. Making predictions about the future To me, we won’t use television in the near future, because... (MoNE, 2018b, p. 26, 32)
Talking about locations of things (3 rd Grade) Where is ...? — It’s in the bathroom. — It’s on the bed. — It’s under the table. — It’s over here/ over there. — It’s right here/ right there (MoNe, 2018a, p. 33)	Stating personal opinions (6 th Grade) What do you think about fairs? —I think they are exciting places. —I disagree. I think they are fun. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 65)	Talking about consequences (10 th Grade) If we don’t use the energy sources wisely, the Earth will ... Talking about imaginary situations Expressing wishes If I were a hero, my superpowers would be... (MoNE, 2018b, p. 39, 42)
Talking about locations (4 th Grade) Where is the brush? —It’s in front of the bottle. —Behind the box. —Near that glass. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 44)	Stating personal opinions (7 th Grade) Talk shows are usually amusing, but I think reality shows are pretty boring. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 76)	Talking about unreal past (11 th Grade) If he hadn’t been addicted to alcohol, he wouldn’t have lost his family. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 49)
	Stating personal opinions (8 th Grade) I never listen to pop music; I can’t stand it. I think it’s unbearable. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 84)	

According to the findings on the sequence indicator, which is addressing new components and subjects by considering the principle of "from simple to complex", all the English language curricula propose the components and subjects in a manner of difficulty level. Accordingly, at the primary school level, the 2nd grade curriculum comprises teaching of basic vocabulary while the usages of them in simple sentence structure are included in the 4th grade curriculum. On the other hand, students are expected to form simple statements in the 5th grade while forming more than one or two statements is the goal of the curriculum in the eighth grade. At the high school level, the English language curriculum states that "*the 9th Grade Syllabus is intended to revise most of the content learned up to the 8th Grade English Syllabus.*" (MoNE, 2018b, p. 14). Additionally, the curriculum regards this principle in the presentation of the language functions. The learning outcome examples addressing the difficulty level are as follows (Table 11):

Table 11. The Learning Outcome Examples Addressing the from Simple to Complex Principle in English Language Curricula

Learning Outcomes		
Primary School (2nd-4th Grade)	Secondary School (5th-8th Grade)	High School (9th-12th Grade)
E2.7.S2. Students will be able to give short, simple and oral instructions (MoNE, 2018a, p. 23)	E5.8.S3. Students will be able to give simple personal information (MoNE, 2018a, p. 57)	E9.2.W2. Students will be able to describe different environments in simple sentences and phrases. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 24)
E3.4.S2. Students will be able to make simple suggestions (MoNE, 2018a, p. 31)	E6.9.SP1. Students will be able to talk to people about the protection of the environment (MoNE, 2018a, p. 69)	E10.2.W1. Students will be able to write an opinion paragraph about their plans. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 35)
E4.4.S3. Students will be able to ask for clarification in conversations (MoNE, 2018a, p. 42)	E7.2.SP1. Students will be able to talk about routines/daily activities by using frequency adverbs and giving explanations and reasons (MoNE, 2018a, p. 73)	E11.4.W1. Students will be able to write an essay about a well-known figure from Turkish history (MoNE, 2018b, p. 48)
	E8.10.SP2. Students will be able to give reasons and results to support their predictions about natural forces and disasters (MoNE, 2018a, p. 92)	E12.3.W2. Students will be able to write an argumentative essay including solutions for disadvantaged people's problems. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 58)

The principle of “near and far transfer” in the presentation of components or concepts, which is another sequence indicator, is clearly expressed in the primary school curriculum. In the basic education, English language curriculum states that “*the environment and places such as classroom, amusement park, house, and school that constitute the students’ near surroundings were chosen*” (MoNE, 2018a, p. 16) and “*The principle of “from me to the universe” played a primary role in the contextualization and the themes and functions that constitutes the curriculum are designed with a spiral structure*” (MoNE, 2018a, p. 38). In secondary education, there is not any explanation in the English language curriculum, so the themes focusing on the same language function have been examined, and it is found out that this principle is mostly regarded in the curriculum design. The most typical examples of these findings are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. The Examples of Themes Comprising the Concepts Regarding the Principle of “Near and Far Transfer in the English Language Curricula

Themes		
Primary School (2nd-4th Grade)	Secondary School (5th-8th Grade)	High School (9th-12th Grade)
Body Parts (2 nd Grade) What is this? — This is my finger. — It’s my hand. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 23).	Fitness (5 th Grade) How about jogging? — Sorry. I can’t now. I must study. — No. I am too tired. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 57)	Invitations and Celebrations (9 th Grade) My family is going to throw a birthday party for me tomorrow. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 31)
My Family (3 rd Grade) Who is s/he? — S/he’s my ... Who is this/that? — This/that is my ... (MoNE, 2018a, p. 29).	Yummy Breakfast (6 th Grade) Do you want some tea? — Yes, please. — No, thanks. I don’t want any tea. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 62)	Plans (10 th Grade) I’m going to fly to New York this summer. I’ve already bought my ticket. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 35)
Cartoon Characters (4 th Grade) This is her/his/my/your guitar. Is this his/her/my/your...? (MoNE, 2018a, p. 41).	Celebrations (7 th Grade) Would you like some cake? — Yes, please. Just a little. — No, thanks. I am full. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 77) The Internet (8 th Grade) Would you like to join our WhatsApp group? — Yes, sure/That sounds great. — No, thanks. I am really busy. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 87)	Future Jobs (11 th Grade) Some students are going to be teachers, some are going to be doctors and some are going to be fashion designers. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 45) Coming Soon (12 th Grade) I imagine driverless cars will be common in the near future. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 50)

The last indicator of the sequence dimension is whether the curricula have achieved to present the components and subjects "from concrete to abstract ones" across the grades. To analyze it, the themes focusing on the same language functions were considered and it was determined that the linguistic components in English language curricula have been mostly achieved the sequence of them from concrete to abstract ones. The most typical examples of this finding are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. The Example Themes Regarding the Sequence of the Linguistic Components from Concrete to Abstract Ones in English Language Curricula

Themes		
Primary School (2nd-4th Grade)	Secondary School (5th-8th Grade)	High School (9th-12th Grade)
Numbers (2 nd Grade) board, -s book, -s desk, -s notebook, -s pencil, -s (MoNE, 2018a, p. 20)	Health (5 th Grade) – You should stay in bed. – Have a rest. – Stay in bed. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 54)	Emergency Health Problems (9 th Grade) You should see a doctor when you have a high fever. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 30)
My House (3 rd Grade) Is it big? – Yes, it is. – No. It is small. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 33)	Saving the Planet (6 th Grade) What should we do to save our world? – We should recycle the batteries. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 69)	Helpful Tips (10 th Grade) You can remove a stain with baking soda. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 39)
Classroom Rules (4 th Grade) Look at the board, please. Go back to your place, please. Open the window, please. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 39)	Wild Animals (7 th Grade) What should we do to protect wildlife? – We shouldn't hurt them (MoNE, 2018a, p. 75)	Open Your Heart (11 th Grade) You should have been more patient in the traffic jam yesterday. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 50)
	Natural Forces (8 th Grade) – I think there will be serious droughts. So schools should educate students to use less water (MoNE, 2018a, p. 92)	Psychology (12 th Grade) I suggest going for a walk. What do you do to clear your mind after school? (MoNE, 2018b, p. 60)

In the light of these findings, the continuity in the English language curricula from basic education to secondary education is mostly attained; however, the findings show that any suggestions or guidance for the assessment of integrated skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) are not proposed in the 9th-12th English language curriculum at the secondary education level. Similarly, although it is detected that sequence is mostly achieved, the progression of the learning outcomes from lower-to higher-order thinking skills is not observed. Therefore, it is concluded that the English language curricula from basic education to secondary education have attained vertical articulation partially.

The Findings on the Third Question

In the vertical articulation analysis, the articulation between the school levels has also been examined by considering the continuity of English education from primary school to secondary, and then to the high school level. Initially, the continuity of the CLT principles between the school levels was analyzed. Accordingly, all the English language curricula from primary school to high school have been designed to propose communicative competence in both oral and written English through thematic-based contexts, language functions, and skills. Besides, the curricula consider English education as a means of communication rather than a field of study including structures and grammar

(MoNE, 2018a, p. 3; MoNE, 2018b, p. 5). Since the 2nd-4th grade curriculum emphasizes only speaking and listening at the primary school level (MoNE, 2018a, p. 3), four language skills have been incorporated into the secondary school curriculum. Similarly, by emphasizing four language skills at the high school level, the 9th-12th grades English curriculum also comprises pronunciation skills. Hence, from basic education to high school, all the English language curricula have proposed English education with the same curriculum structure and philosophy. Therefore, it might be concluded that all the curricula have been designed consecutively in terms of the CLT principles, which enables the continuity of the approach adopted in English language education.

Secondly, the continuity, as well as the variety of learning experiences proposed in the curricula were analyzed in the study. “*An eclectic approach*” (MoNE, 2018a, p. 3; MoNE, 2018b, p. 13) is adopted in all the English language curricula from basic education to high school. Besides, a rich variety of learning experiences has been proposed as suggested materials and tasks for each grade level. This suggestion has been followed in all the school levels, which might be an indication of continuity as well. While “*ads, cartoons, pictures dictionaries, illustrations, songs, chants, drawing and coloring, maps, lists, and conversations*” are suggested mostly at the primary school level (MoNE, 2018a, p. 43), activities such as “*stories, posters, and coupons*” (MoNE, 2018a, p. 50) have been added from the 5th grade in the secondary school. On the other hand, in the 8th grade just before high school, the activities like “*blogs, dairies and questionnaires*” (MoNE, 2018a, p. 83) have been recommended. Before the transition to high school, activity suggestions such as “*blogs, diaries, surveys*” (MoNE, 2018a, p. 83) were given in the eighth grade while these suggestions were continued in the ninth grade (MoNE, 2018b, p. 23) and they were expanded. At the end of high school, the 12th English language curriculum includes more sophisticated activities and materials such as “*argumentative essays, techno-projects, vlogs, survey reports*” (MoNE, 2018b, p. 56). Thus, it is concluded that the continuity of learning experiences has been enhanced between the school levels with a smooth transition. Consequently, at the start of each school level, not only the suggested learning experiences from the previous school level have been proposed again, but also the new ones have been added.

As a third indicator of the articulation between the school levels, the consistency of the language proficiency levels aimed as the outcome of each school level has been analyzed. Accordingly, the language proficiency levels, as well as the language skills aimed at the end of each school level have displayed in Figure 1 below.

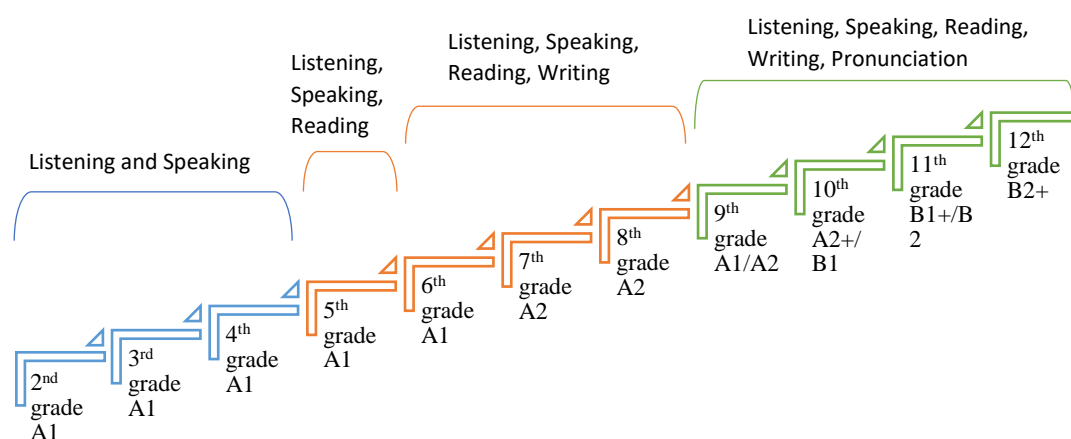


Figure 1. The Language Skills and The Language Proficiency Levels Aimed as the Outcome at Primary, Secondary and High School Levels

Figure 1 indicates that the proficiency level of A1 has been included repeatedly in the curricula and aimed for five years in total. Also, it is expected students to have a level of A2 when they finish secondary school. Nevertheless, when starting high school, proficiency levels of A1/A2 have been spotted in the 9th grade. Hence, the revision of the language proficiency targeted at the previous level has been detected when starting at a higher school level. The reason behind it is explained as the fact that “the emphasis is on only speaking and listening skills at the primary school” (MoNE, 2018a, p. 3) at the basic education. At the high school, since “students enter the 9th grade English classes with different levels of capacities” (MoNE, 2018b, p. 7) a need for the revision of the proficiency level aimed in the 2nd-8th grades English curriculum is stated. Therefore, several recycles and revisions of A1 proficiency level as well as A2 are observed from basic education to high school. Additionally, no progress throughout the classes in terms of higher-order thinking skills is also detected (see, Graphic 1) in the vertical articulation analyses. To sum up, it is quite difficult to conclude well-articulated English language curricula by considering the proficiency levels and language skills proposed throughout the school levels.

Finally, any suggestion about the assessment of the language proficiency level aimed at the end of each school level has been examined for the vertical articulation between the school levels. However, any finding on this indicator has not been detected since there is no explanation or suggestion related to the assessment of the language proficiencies (A1, A2, B1, etc.) given in all the English language curricula. Although the aimed proficiency levels are determined according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the curricula (MoNE, 2018a, p. 6; MoNE, 2018b, p. 7), it has the lack of information about the assessment of those proficiencies, which implies the assumption that students will graduate from each school level achieving the language proficiency aimed in the curricula.

The findings related to the articulation in 2018 English language curricula from basic education to secondary education have been displayed in Table 14.

Table 14. The Horizontal and Vertical Articulation Analyses of 2018 English Language Curricula from the Basic Education to Secondary Education

Articulation Dimensions	Detailed Indicators	Primary School	Secondary School	High School	
Horizontal Articulation	1. Communicative Approach Principles	1. Has English education been proposed through communicative contexts? What kind of communicative contexts/ examples/ suggestions has been proposed? (see Table 1)	Yes (see Table 1)	Yes (see Table 1)	Yes (see Table 1)
		2. Has the curriculum aimed the cultural integration related to the target language? Which cultural knowledge has been comprised and how?	No	No	Partly
	2. Interdisciplinarity	3. Have the objectives/ themes been clearly related to the learning outcomes/ content of other disciplines at the same grade level? (see Table 2)	Partly (see Table 2)	Partly (see Table 2)	Partly (see Table 2)
		4. Has the curriculum been integrated with the other curricula of the disciplines at the same grade level? How?	No	No	No
Vertical Articulation	3. Continuity	1. Are the learning outcomes interrelated with the other learning outcomes throughout the different grade levels? (see Table 3)	Yes (see Table 3)	Yes (see Table 3)	Yes (see Table 3)
		2. Is there any recycled content (sample usages, functions, vocabulary and phrases) and language skills throughout the different grade levels? (see Table 4)	Yes (see Table 4)	Yes (see Table 4)	Yes (see Table 4)

4. Sequence	3. Are there any learning experiences to attain continuity throughout the different grade levels?	Yes (see Table 5)	Yes (see Table 5)	Yes (see Table 5)	
	4. To attain continuity throughout the different grade levels, is there any information or guidance about the assessment of four skills in an integrated way?	Yes	Yes	No	
	5. From a grade level to another, do the content/units/themes move by deepening and lengthening?	Yes (see Table 6)	Yes (see Table 6)	Yes (see Table 6)	
	6. From a grade level to another, are the content/units/themes sequenced from known to unknown?	Yes (see Table 7)	Yes (see Table 8)	Yes (see Table 9)	
	7. From a grade level to another, do the objective move from lower-to higher-order thinking skills?	No (see Graphic 1)	No (see Graphic 1)	No (see Graphic 1)	
	8. From a grade level to another, is the new content proposed by considering the pre-requisite knowledge?	Yes (see Table 10)	Yes (see Table 10)	Yes (see Table 10)	
	9. From a grade level to another, is the transition of content from simple to complex achieved?	Yes (see Table 11)	Yes (see Table 11)	Yes (see Table 11)	
	10. From a grade level to another, is the transition of content from near to far achieved?	Yes (see Table 12)	Yes (see Table 12)	Yes (see Table 12)	
	11. From a grade level to another, is the transition of content from concrete to abstract concepts achieved?	Yes (see Table 13)	Yes (see Table 13)	Yes (see Table 13)	
	5. Articulation Across the School Levels	12. Have the curricula attained the continuity of the CLT approach across the school levels?	Yes	Yes	Yes
		13. From a school level to another, is the continuity of the learning experiences achieved?	Yes	Yes	Yes
14. Do the curricula have the coordination of the language proficiencies aimed as the final outcome of each school level?		Partly (see Figure 1)	Partly (see Figure 1)	No (see Figure 1)	
15. Is there any sufficient information or guidance about the assessment of the language proficiencies aimed as the outcome of each school level?		No	No	No	

Discussion

In the quest for foreign language education success, the discussions on how to improve the curricula have always been argued in the knowledge-base (Alan, 2017; Coşkun Demirpolat, 2015; Erarslan, 2019; Gür et al., 2016; Paker, 2012; Yaman, 2018). However, the coordination within the English language curricula from primary school to high school as well as the coordination of them across the other field of studies has not been examined with a holistic perspective so far. Indeed, an effective foreign language education program proposes a planned sequence of study articulated vertically through primary, secondary, and high school education, and horizontally connected to other fields (North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction, 1999). By keeping this in mind, firstly this study has investigated the horizontal articulation in terms of the CLT principles and interdisciplinarity. Accordingly, it might be stated that all the English language curricula have been designed with the same structure and philosophy by considering the CLT. The communicative competence in the target language has been fostered through themes, functions, language skills, and sample usages related to real-life experiences. However, in the knowledge-base, studies are asserting that they are not sufficient enough to enhance communication. For instance, in the study comparing the European English language curricula with the curricula in Turkey, Şahin and Aykaş (2019) note that the language functions and themes proposed to enhance the communicative competence foster a language-centered approach rather than a learner-centered and communicative one since they focus on the instruction of language structures. The studies arguing the reasons of the failures in English education in Turkey (Alan, 2017; Coşkun Demirpolat, 2015; Gür et al., 2016; Paker, 2012; Yaman, 2018) point out the dominance of the language-centered approach in English teaching by emphasizing that teachers do not adopt a communicative approach in Turkey. Additionally, the curricula evaluation report 2020 published by MoNE acknowledges that the participant teachers have focused on the language structures rather than the language functions in their evaluations (MoNE, 2020). Hence, even if CLT is supported with themes, language functions, and skills in theory, the previous studies refer to the problems in practice. Therefore, research and initiatives for the enhancement of the communicative approach in practice are needed.

In terms of horizontal articulation, the study has also revealed that the acquisition of the cultural knowledge about the target language is disregarded in the English language curricula, which agrees with the other studies (Çarıkçioğlu, 2019; Şahin & Aykaş, 2019; Tok, 2006). However, the culture of the target language has a pivotal role in foreign language education (Byrnes, 1990; Çarıkçioğlu, 2019; Lally, 2001; Lange, 1988; Nation & Macalister, 2010). Disregarding this critical role in the curriculum causes the same mistake made for years. Thus, teaching English cannot go beyond the memorization of the structures and grammar forms, which subsequently risks the ultimate goal of the curricula, communicative competence in English. The activities encouraging the use of the language forms rather than the memorization of them are required (Alan, 2017). When students have acquired cultural competence with their communicative competencies in foreign language education, they perform problem-solving skills by using the target language (Lally, 2001).

Another finding hindering the communicative competence related to the curricula is the coordination of the English curricula across the other disciplines at particularly the primary school level. The curricula evaluation report 2020 by MoNE has indicated a similar result. In the report, the participant teachers have mentioned that some content of English curricula has been proposed by disregarding mother language education; Turkish language curriculum (MoNE, 2020). The reason why the English curricula do not adopt an interdisciplinary approach at especially primary school level might be considered as students' ages and the limited number of English input. Nevertheless, at the basic education level, children perceive the world in a holistic way rather than a fragmented way, and they need to see the big picture, not the ones divided into small pieces (Brazee & Capelluti, 1995; Byrnes, 1990). Moreover, they have an enormous learning potential, so, the broader and the richer the language learning experience is provided for children, the more they are likely to learn (Cameron, 2001). Therefore, at the primary school level when students are open to construct meaning and learn, more

integration of English into the other disciplines is required. If the information is not transferred to knowledge, in other words; if it is not interpreted based on other disciplines, learning does not take place (Alan, 2017). Competence in foreign languages has been aimed in all the other fields' curricula by MoNE with a brief explanation (e.g., MoNE, 2018c, 2018d, 2018e). Nevertheless, it has been disregarded in the design of curricula and the interdisciplinarity has been ignored subsequently.

The vertical articulation, which is a necessity for the achievement of effective foreign language education, has been examined in terms of continuity firstly. According to the findings, all the English curricula from basic education to high school have attained the criteria except for the detailed indicator about the integrated four skills evaluation and assessment. Although the needed information and guidance have been included in the 2nd-8th grade English curriculum, any information or guidance has not been detected in the 9th-12th grade English curriculum. However, the prominence of sufficient information on the evaluation of four skills is emphasized (Lange, 1988; Yaman, 2018). According to the English teachers in the study by Çarıkçioğlu (2019), the English language curricula do not comprise an approach of evaluating four skills in a balanced way. Besides, the teachers need information on how to evaluate these skills in an integrated way and the techniques to be used (Cihan & Gürten, 2013). Özmat and Senemoğlu (2020) have also uncovered that English teachers demand materials and sources related to the evaluation of four skills. Briefly, even if all the English curricula from primary school to high school have proposed interrelated and recycled learning outcomes as well as content, and the richness in learning experiences, they do not support the communicative competence in terms of assessment, which might be an obstacle for the goal of the curricula again. However, a well-designed curriculum comprises strong and operational assessment components (Cihan & Gürten, 2013).

Secondly, the findings have displayed that the learning outcomes do not progress to higher-order thinking skills throughout the grade levels, which threatens the dimension of the sequence in the curricula. The knowledge-base includes the studies revealing that the English language curricula of 2006 and 2015 contain the learning outcomes at the levels of "understand" and "apply" with a very limited number of higher-order thinking skills (Gökler, Aypay, & Arı, 2012; Kozikoğlu, 2018; Tok, 2006). Hence, this problem has not been resolved in the revised curricula. Moreover, Demirci and Gökdeniz (2020) state that there is not any higher-order thinking skill in the English language curricula 2018. However, it is expected that students should move from lower- to higher-order thinking skills with the progress of the classroom levels as well as the proficiency levels. For the acquisition of abstract thinking, students should make use of knowledge, and then transfer them to analysis and hypothesis (Alan, 2017). Otherwise, as mentioned earlier, teaching a foreign language will become the mechanical repetition and memorization of certain grammar forms, and eventually, the ultimate goal of communicative competence will be threatened. Similarly, TEPAV report (2014) indicates that students do not experience any development in English education; on the contrary, they feel a regression throughout the years.

Another significant finding of the study is the fact that there is not remarkable coordination among the proficiency levels aimed in all the English curricula. The curriculum at a school level appears to propose the proficiency level all over again aimed at the previous school level. At the primary school level, the emphasis of the curriculum is on only speaking and listening, which might be a rationale for two years of English education focusing on A1 again at secondary school (MoNE, 2018a, p. 3). However, the findings of the sequence have displayed that learning outcomes do not contain any progress from lower-to higher-order thinking skills throughout the grade levels. Therefore, the constant repetition of A1 proficiency at all school levels might be concluded, which is also explained in the introductory of the 9th-12th English curriculum (MoNE, 2018b). Nevertheless, aiming the same proficiency levels repeatedly and starting from the beginning may cause demotivation of students as well as a decline in their language learning. When the goal of a foreign language curriculum is a means of development and communication, longer learning will be facilitated (Wazke, 1994). In a long and tiring journey of language learning (Alan, 2017), proposing the same proficiency level constantly might cause a sense of failure in students. When it is combined with the other findings of the study, which indicates no assessment approach for the proficiency levels, more unpleasant results might occur. What is more

needed in foreign language education is to specify the proficiency levels of students, in other words; to determine what students can do and to what extent they can apply (Council of Europe, 2001). Nevertheless, the insufficient usage of assessment tools makes learning English more challenging in Turkey (Cihan & Gürten, 2013; Yaman, 2018). Similarly, Alan (2017) points out a requirement of a holistic approach in language education by emphasizing the employment of the philosophy to the assessment process. Consequently, it is needed to evaluate the students' performances in skills rather than their knowledge of concept and grammar forms, which might be resolved through a certification system indicating students' progress in language education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in terms of horizontal articulation, all the English language curricula from basic education to high school have achieved to propose English through themes, functions, and sample usages related to real-life, but they disregard the cultural integration and the interdisciplinarity of the curricula. Considering the vertical articulation, from a grade level to another, all the curricula introduce interrelated and repeated learning outcomes; content deepening students' learning; the rich variety of learning experiences; linguistic components and learning outcomes from known to unknown, from simple to complex, from near to far, from concrete to abstract concepts; new content considering the prerequisite knowledge. Although the continuity and sequence of the curricula have been attained due to these findings, there are problems about the assessment of four skills in an integrated way, the progress of the learning outcomes from lower-to higher-order thinking skills, the coordination of the language proficiency aimed at the school levels as well as the evaluation of those proficiencies. Hence, all the English language curricula from the primary school level to high school have not attained both the horizontal and vertical articulation successfully. Not only all the opportunities and learning experiences related to the aim of the curriculum should be organized and articulated at the same grade level but also all the components proposed at each grade should move by expanding to reinforce and support each other (Saylan, 1995). As a result, English language education considered as a process is required to establish its coordination across other fields, to provide the integration of its culture and the bridge between the school levels by ensuring the continuity as well as the sequence of the content across the school levels.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

Within the scope of results, the learning outcomes, functions, contexts, and learning experiences should be revised to address the cultural knowledge. Furthermore, these components of the curricula should focus on communicative competence more. To integrate English language education into other fields at grade levels, not only the English language curricula should comprise more content of other disciplines, but also other disciplines should reflect more components related to foreign language competencies. The needed information and guidance about the assessment of four skills in an integrated way should be added to the curricula at the high school level particularly. Additionally, a progression from lower-to higher-order thinking skills through the recycled learning outcomes across all the school levels should be enhanced. From a school level to another, a formative assessment approach should be adopted, and feedback about students' language development in English education considering all four language skills should be provided. In this context, a certification system indicating students' proficiency levels at the end of the academic year should be promoted. Briefly, the English language curricula from basic education to secondary education should be revised holistically.

Since the articulation indicators applied in this study have been developed by the researchers' experiences and expert opinions, this can be considered as a limitation. Besides, horizontal articulation at the high school level has been examined by focusing on only the courses that students need to take during an academic year, which might be another limitation. Therefore, new detailed indicators for especially other disciplines might be developed according to the discipline to be examined for further studies. In other words, curriculum articulation, which is not argued efficiently in Turkish literature, is needed to be investigated in the curricula of many disciplines. Revealing both horizontal and vertical

articulation, and also articulation from basic education to secondary education might contribute to the knowledge-base. Lastly, as this study is limited to the examination of the curricula articulation, the curriculum resources having a role in the implementation of the curriculum such as textbooks, teachers' books, students' workbooks might be analyzed in terms of the articulation.

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Appendix 1. Detailed Indicators of Articulation for English Language Curricula

Articulation Dimensions	Detailed Indicators
Horizontal Articulation	1. Communicative Approach (Contextualization, Authenticity, Cultural Integration) Has English education been proposed through communicative contexts? What kind of communicative contexts/ examples/ suggestions has been proposed? Has the curriculum aimed the cultural integration related to the target language? Which cultural knowledge has been comprised and how?
	2. Interdisciplinarity Have the learning outcomes/ themes been clearly related to the learning outcomes/ content of other disciplines at the same grade level? Has the curriculum been integrated with the other curricula of the disciplines at the same grade level? How?
	3. Continuity Are the learning outcomes interrelated with the other learning outcomes throughout the different grade levels? Are there any recycled content (sample usages, functions, vocabulary and phrases) and language skills throughout the different grade levels? Are there any learning experiences to attain continuity throughout the different grade levels? To attain continuity throughout the different grade levels, is there any information or guidance about the assessment of four skills in an integrated way?
Vertical Articulation	4. Sequence From a grade level to another, do the content/units/themes move by deepening and lengthening? From a grade level to another, are the content/units/themes sequenced from known to unknown? From a grade level to another, do the objective move from lower-to higher-order thinking skills? From a grade level to another, is the new content proposed by considering the pre-requisite knowledge? From a grade level to another, is the transition of content from simple to complex achieved? From a grade level to another, is the transition of content from near to far achieved? From a grade level to another, is the transition of content from concrete to abstract concepts achieved?
	5. Articulation Across The School Levels Have the curricula attained the continuity of the CLT across the school levels? From a school level to another, is the continuity of the learning experiences achieved? Do the curricula have coordination of the language proficiencies aimed as the final outcome of each school level? Is there any sufficient information or guidance about the evaluation and assessment of the language proficiencies aimed as the outcome of each school level?

Appendix 2. Examples of Learning Outcomes in English Language Curricula in terms of Taxonomy of Cognitive Domain

School level	Examples of learning outcomes in lower-order thinking skills (remember, understand, apply)	Examples of learning outcomes in higher-order thinking skills (analyze, evaluate, create)
Grade 2	E2.4.L1.Students will be able to identify and understand the names of some classroom objects (MoNE, 2018a, p. 20). E2.6.S1.Students will be able to make suggestions in a simple way (MoNE, 2018a, p. 22).	---
Grade 3	E3.4.L1. Students will be able to recognize the names of emotions/feelings (MoNE, 2018a, p. 31). E3.8.L2. Students will be able to understand simple and short oral texts about transportation (MoNE, 2018a, p. 35).	---
Grade 4	E4.3.L2. Students will be able to recognize possessions of others in a clear, short and slow oral text. (MoNE, 2018a, p. 41). E4.10.L1. Students will be able to recognize simple words and phrases about food and drinks (MoNE, 2018a, p. 48).	---
Grade 5	E5.5.L1. Students will be able to identify common illnesses and understand some of the suggestions made (MoNE, 2018a, p. 54). E5.2.R1. Students will be able to understand information about important places (MoNE, 2018a, p. 51).	---
Grade 6	E6.1.L1. Students will be able to recognize phrases, words, and expressions related to repeated actions (MoNE, 2018a, p. 61). E6.8.SP1. Students will be able to describe the locations of people and things (MoNE, 2018a, p. 68).	---
Grade 7	E7.2.L1. Students will be able to recognize frequency adverbs in simple oral texts (MoNE, 2018a, p. 73). E7.9.W1. Students will be able to write short, simple messages about environment (MoNE, 2018a, p. 80).	---
Grade 8	E8.2.L1. Students will be able to understand phrases and expressions about regular activities of teenagers (MoNE, 2018a, p. 84). E8.6.L2. Students will be able to understand the main points of simple messages (MoNE, 2018a, p. 88).	E8.7.W1. Students will be able to design a brochure, advertisement or a postcard about their favorite tourist attraction(s) (MoNE, 2018a, p. 89). E8.10.SI2. Students will be able to negotiate reasons and results to support their predictions about natural forces and disasters (MoNE, 2018a, p. 92).

Grade 9	<p>E9.1.L1. Students will be able to identify frequently used vocabulary for greetings and conversations in a simple recorded text.</p> <p>E9.1.S1. Students will be able to introduce themselves and their family members. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 23)</p>	<p>E9.3.R1. Students will be able to scan film reviews on blogs to decide which movie to see.</p> <p>E9.4.W2. Students will be able to write a short paragraph about love for nature. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 25, 26)</p>
Grade 10	<p>E10.1.L1. Students will be able to identify expressions related to school/ everyday life and free time activities.</p> <p>E10.2.R1. Students will able to identify specific information about people's future plans and arrangements in a text (MoNE, 2018b, p. 34, 35)</p>	<p>E10.2.R2. Students will be able to skim a text to draw a conclusion.</p> <p>E10.2.W1. Students will be able to write an opinion paragraph about their plans. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 35)</p>
Grade 11	<p>E11.1.L1. Students will be able to detect factual information about job related topics in a recorded text.</p> <p>E11.1.S1. Students will be able to talk about future plans and predictions. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 45)</p>	<p>E11.1.R1. Students will be able to analyze different job ads from newspapers/websites to match them with CVs.</p> <p>E11.1.W1. Students will be able to write CVs/Letters of intent for different job applications. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 45)</p>
Grade 12	<p>E12.2.L1. Students will be able to extract specific information from a conversation between friends.</p> <p>E12.2.S1. Students will be able to ask and answer questions about personal features. (MoNE, 2018b, p. 57)</p>	<p>E12.1.R2. Students will be able to analyze surveys/interviews to answer related questions.</p> <p>E12.1.W1. Students will be able to write a survey report on their friends'/teachers' music preferences (MoNE, 2018b, p. 56)</p>