

# Examining the Respondability of the English Course Curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade) to the Needs of the Digitalized Age, According to the Opinions of English Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

In this research, the responsiveness of the English course curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th grade) to the needs of the digital age was examined, according to the opinions of English teachers. The research was conducted by using the phenomenology design, which is one of the descriptive research designs. The study group of the research consisted of English teachers in primary schools in Sakarya, affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. In the research, a semi-structured interview form was applied to determine teachers' opinions on the responsiveness of the English Language Teaching Program to the needs of the digital age. Content analysis was used to analyze the data in the research. As a result of the analysis, teachers' opinions about the responsiveness of the primary school English course curriculum to the needs of the digital age, how often digital education tools are used, whether the program improves students' English speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, and whether it provides the skills needed in the digital age; opinions have been reached. According to the opinions of the teachers, it was learned that the English language teaching program has improved compared to the previous programs, but it is not yet sufficient for the current era. In addition, it is among the information obtained that the treatment of the subjects has become easier with the inclusion of developing technology in the program

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## INTRODUCTION

The Digital Age refers to the modern era characterized by the rapid advancement and widespread adoption of digital technologies, especially information and communication technologies. The Internet represents a significant shift in the way societies work, communicate and interact, driven by innovations such as mobile devices, artificial intelligence, big data and cloud computing (Bozkurt et al, 2021).

The Digital Age is marked by the continuous development and integration of digital technologies into daily life. This includes the development of faster and more powerful computers, the proliferation of smartphones and tablets, and the proliferation of high-speed internet connections (Ersöz et al, 2020). At the heart of the Digital Age is the Internet, which has revolutionized the way information is accessed, shared and disseminated globally. The Internet enables instant communication through email, social media platforms, video conferencing and online collaboration tools. In this way, globalization has been facilitated by making uninterrupted international communication, trade and cooperation possible (Chayko, 2014). However, in addition to these positive features of the Digital Age, it also has negative features such as changing people's social interactions and cultural practices. Social media platforms have become ubiquitous and shape how people connect and share information online (Acerbi, 2019). As digital technologies become more widespread, concerns about data privacy, cybersecurity, and digital ethics have intensified among people. Issues such as data breaches, online surveillance and misinformation have begun to emerge, increasing the need for robust regulations and ethical frameworks (Eroğlu, 2018). Digital media is not limited to these, but has also affected entertainment and education.

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The digital age is also changing the education system with the creation of online learning platforms, digital textbooks and interactive educational resources. It has begun to close educational gaps across geographic and socioeconomic boundaries by expanding access to information and lifelong learning opportunities (Bozkurt et al, 2021).

Another impact of the digital age has been on the business field. It has also begun to change the nature of work and employment. Individuals are expected to have new skills such as critical, creative, metacognitive, divergent thinking and the ability to adapt to different situations (Gouda,2020).

In short, the Digital Age represents a paradigm shift driven by digital technologies that profoundly impact every aspect of human society. It continues to shape how individuals, businesses, governments and organizations operate, communicate and innovate in an increasingly interconnected and digital World (Bozkurt et al,2021). The Turkish education system has also been affected by digital age and has undergone innovation and change. One of these changes is on the English course curriculum. However, it has been observed that there are no studies in the literature on whether the English course curriculum meets the needs of the digital age. For this reason,

"The purpose of the research is to examine the responsiveness of primary school English course curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th grade) to the needs of the digital age, according to the opinions of English teachers. For this purpose, English teachers working in primary schools in Sakarya were interviewed and answers were received to the following questions.

1. Has the English course teaching program (2nd, 3rd and 4th grade) been prepared in accordance with the general needs of the digital age? What are the opinions of the relevant teachers on this issue?

2. Are technology-based goals and achievements, which are one of the requirements of the digital age, included in the English lesson teaching program (2nd, 3rd and 4th grade)? What are the opinions of the relevant teachers on this issue?

3. Has the content of the English lesson teaching (2nd, 3rd and 4th grade) program been arranged in accordance with the digital age? What are the opinions of the relevant teachers on this issue?

4. Are the skills needed in the digital age included in the English language teaching program (2nd, 3rd and 4th grade)? What are the opinions of the relevant teachers on this issue?

Clarifying this situation reveals the importance of the study." (Alemdar,2024).

## **METHOD**

In this research, qualitative data was conducted because it was aimed to reach the opinions of English teachers about the responsiveness of the English course curriculum to the needs of the digital age. For this purpose, a semi-structured interview form was used. The semi-structured interview form prepared included items that would enable English teachers to express themselves clearly and understandably. While preparing these items, the opinions of two experts were obtained. Corrections were made where necessary according to the opinions of experts. After corrections were made, the form was applied to two teachers as practice. As a result of the application, the form was rearranged and became ready for application (Alemdar,2024).

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

"The research is limited to 39 English teachers working in 33 primary schools in Sakarya province."(Alemdar, 2024).

## FINDINGS

In this research, after examining the responsiveness of the English Course Curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade) to the Needs of the Digital Age, according to the Opinions of English Teachers, the Effect of the Digital Age on the Content of the English Course Curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade), English Opinions and Thoughts on the Adequacy of the Course Curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade) in Meeting the Needs of the Digital Age, and the Contributions of the Digital Age to the English Course Curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade) are included.

**Table1.The Effect of the Digital Age on the Content of the English Course Curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade)**

Theme	Category	Codes	Frequency	Participants	%
The impact of the digital age on the content of the English teaching program	Positive responses	Including scientific topics	7	Ö2,Ö13,Ö18 Ö33,Ö34,Ö36,Ö37	2,73
		Shaping the dialogues in the units according to the era	2	Ö6,Ö14	0,78
		Creating content that will increase creativity and improve thinking skills	3	Ö8,Ö37,Ö38	1,17
		Encouraging the use of technology	1	Ö11	0,39
		Progression of content in connection with digital devices	4	Ö15,Ö17,Ö26,Ö30	1,56
	Negative responses	Domination of traditional teaching	4	Ö1,Ö5,Ö20 Ö28	1,56
		Goals and achievements are not appropriate	4	Ö4,Ö31,Ö35 Ö39	1,56
		Lack of innovativeness	1	Ö19	0,39
		Inability to fully adapt to the times	6	Ö4,Ö5,Ö19,Ö20 Ö31,Ö39	2,34
		Hesitant answers	Not fully sufficient at the point of application	1	Ö3
	Going for innovation without improving reading comprehension skills		2	Ö10,Ö12	0,78
	Making limited arrangements		3	Ö16,Ö24,Ö27	1,17
	Lack of adequate communication skills		3	Ö10,Ö22,Ö25	1,17
	Not giving four skills at an adequate level		2	Ö23,Ö25	0,78
	Inability to fully adapt to the times		1	Ö29	0,39
	Not mentioning the innovations made much		1	Ö32	0,39

According to table 1, 17 English teachers responded positively. 28 teachers stated that the digital age had no impact on the content of the English course curriculum or gave hesitant answers about it. The majority of teachers who gave negative answers think that the content of the program is not fully adapted to the age. The majority of teachers who have undecided answers gave this answer because their communication skills were not at a sufficient level in the program.

**Table 2. Opinions and Thoughts on the Adequacy of the English Course Curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade) in Meeting the Needs of the Digital Age**

Theme	Category	Codes	Frequency	Participants	%
Adequacy of the English Course Curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade) in Meeting the Needs of the Digital Age	Positive responses	Allowing group work	1	Ö8	0,39
		English practice/Development of listening texts	3	Ö2,Ö6,Ö14	1,17
		Measuring four skills	3	Ö11,Ö13,Ö24	1,17
		Compatibility of the program with digital tools	1	Ö21	0,39
		Increasing reading passages and visuals	2	Ö30,Ö39	0,78
		Shaping of achievements according to age	1	Ö38	0,39
		Negative Responses	Not developing thinking skills	1	Ö35
	Insufficiency of facilities		2	Ö28,Ö27	0,78
	Lack of flexibility		2	Ö25,Ö32	0,78
	Lack of interactive content		1	Ö10	0,39
	Lack of command of daily spoken language		1	Ö1	0,39
	It is aimed at testing solutions		1	Ö4	0,39
	Not interesting		1	Ö7	0,39
	Not developing problem skills		1	Ö12	0,39
	Not suitable for innovations		1	Ö15	0,39
	Lack of speaking, listening and writing skills		4	Ö16,Ö26,Ö31,Ö39	1,56
	Lack of awareness of English		1	Ö17	0,39
	Hesitant answers	Inequality in the use of technology	2	Ö39,Ö27	0,78
Inadequate use of technological devices		5	Ö5,Ö18,Ö19,Ö20,Ö23	1,95	
Being exam focused		1	Ö22	0,39	

The majority of teachers gave negative and hesitant answers. The reason why teachers respond in this way is that the program does not include much daily spoken language and is not designed to cope with the problems that may arise.

**Table 3. Contributions of the Digital Age to the English Language Curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade)**

Theme	Codes	Frequency	Participants	%
Contributions of the digital age to the English teaching program	Provides ease of application	5	Ö2,Ö13,Ö22 Ö30,Ö36	1,95
	Changing his perspective on English	3	Ö7,Ö9,Ö34	1,17
	Visual enhancement (Books and Apps)	7	Ö2,Ö8,Ö14,Ö29 Ö32,Ö35,Ö38	2,73
	Making listening texts easier	5	Ö24,Ö28,Ö31,Ö35,Ö38	1,95
	Easier access to information	4	Ö3,Ö10,Ö11,Ö37	1,56
	Facilitates word learning	4	Ö11,Ö16,Ö18,Ö21	1,56
	Changing the traditional understanding of education	4	Ö20,Ö26,Ö28,Ö37	1,56
	Compatibility of digital applications with the program	10	Ö6,Ö13,Ö14,Ö17,Ö22, Ö24,Ö28,Ö31,Ö36,Ö37	3,90
	Provides flexibility for digital skis	10	Ö6,Ö13,Ö14,Ö17,Ö22, Ö24,Ö28,Ö31,Ö36,Ö37	3,90
	Development of new methods and techniques	3	Ö26,Ö28,Ö37	1,17
	Bringing digital tools to education	4	Ö7,Ö13,Ö14,Ö17	1,56
	Making the content clear and understandable	6	Ö20,Ö23,Ö27,Ö29 Ö33,Ö38	2,34

According to Table 3, teachers think that the biggest contribution of the digital age to the English curriculum is the harmonization of applications created with developing technology with the English course curriculum. In this way, English teachers stated that they taught lessons more easily and efficiently. In addition, they added that with the introduction of digital devices in education, students' access to information has become easier and their perspectives on English have also changed.

## RESULTS, DISCUSSION, and SUGGESTIONS

The digital age has affected every aspect of human life. In the face of these changes, individuals had to keep up with the times and have the skills necessary for the age. The Turkish education system has also undergone innovation and change in response to changing conditions (Bozkurt et al,2021). The English course curriculum was also affected by these changes. In this regard, interviews were held with English teachers teaching in 33 primary schools in Sakarya province, in order to learn how the English teaching program was affected by the changes. As a result of these interviews, information about the impact of the digital age on the content of the English language teaching program in Turkey, the contributions it has made to the program and the adequacy of the program in meeting the needs of the age are included in this article.

As a result of the interviews with teachers, it is seen that there are positive, negative and undecided answers regarding the impact of the digital age on the content of the program. Teachers who responded positively think that the subjects of the program are shaped according to the scientific age and that content that will increase creativity and improve thinking skills is included. They also argue that the prepared program encourages students to use technology. However, teachers who gave negative and undecided

answers argue that although the program was prepared in accordance with the era in terms of achievements, it was inadequate in terms of implementation and traditional methods dominated.

When the table regarding the contributions of the digital age to the English language curriculum is examined, teachers think that the digital age contributes to the curriculum. The reason for this is that it provides ease of application, changes students' perspective on English, increases visuality (Books and Applications), provides flexibility for digital resources, makes digital applications compatible with the program, etc. They show things as examples.

In the interviews about whether the English course curriculum is sufficient to meet the needs of the digital age, it was observed that the teachers gave positive, negative and undecided answers. Teachers who responded positively think that the Internet and digital technologies offer a wide range of resources for English language teachers and students in Turkey. They have opinion that it is in line with the needs of the age that the developed applications are compatible with the program and that the achievements are shaped according to the age. However, teachers who gave negative answers argue that the program is inadequate to meet the needs of the age because it does not provide equal opportunities to every student. They also point to the fact that students cannot use technology equally in class or outside of class as the reason.

The study titled "Echnology and English language teaching and learning: a content analysis" by Nawaila, M. B., Kanbul, S. and Alhamroni, R. (2020) was examined. As a result of the study, researchers have proven that communication technologies have a positive effect on learning. This result obtained by the researchers is similar at one point to the result of the research titled "Examination of the Responsability of the English Language Teaching Program (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade) to the Needs of the Digitalized Age, According to the Opinions of English Teachers". With the technology brought by the digital age, it has become easier for teachers to conduct lessons and technology has contributed to English education in many aspects.

As a result, the impact of the digital age on the English language teaching program in Turkey has made significant contributions to creating a more participatory, interactive and student-oriented educational environment. However, in this process, issues such as reducing digital inequalities, encouraging safe internet use and ensuring balanced technology integration should also be taken into consideration.

#### **Declarations**

#### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) had no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research or publication of this article.

#### **Ethics Approval**

The formal ethics approval was granted by Human Research Ethics Committee of Aksaray University.

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#### **Research and Publication Ethics Statement**

We, as the authors, consciously undertake to fulfill the following points in our article titled "Examination of the Responsability of the English Language Curriculum (2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade) to the Needs of the Digitalized Age, According to the Opinions of English Teachers":

- The article truly and completely reflects the authors' own research and analysis.
- Results are placed in the context of previous and existing research.
- All sources used are appropriately disclosed.

#### **Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article**

The authors provide equal contribution to this work.

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