Preliminary Analysis of the English Language Syllabus for Class 1 (Grade 1) Pupils in English-speaking Cameroon.

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Abstract

Since curriculum development is a cyclical process it is necessary to analyze it to have a better perspective whether it would work, not work or dimensions where there may be possible constraints in a context.

This study sets out to analyze Primary (Grade) 1 English language syllabus in English-speaking Cameroon. Using Posner's (2004) framework the analysis was categorized into four steps: Curriculum Background, Curriculum Proper, Curriculum Implementation, and Curriculum Critique. Analysis of Primary 1 syllabus documentation was descriptive and interpretive. Findings indicated that the purpose for English language syllabus is clearly stated as well as its content; syllabus proper involves acquisition of academic, and lifelong skills, while for syllabus implementation constraints on teaching and learning were extrapolated from the content. A critical analysis was made of frame factors which may be constraints in the classroom. The study ends with a discussion regarding users or curriculum developers in Cameroon and similar global contexts.

Keywords: curriculum, syllabus, Communicative Language Teaching, scope, sequence, frame factors.

1. Introduction

Curriculum is a concept constructed in several ways depending on the angle from which it is perceived (UNESCO, nd); Flake, 2017; Turan-Özpolat and Bay, 2017). Posner (2004, p.5-6) illustrates claims that curriculum is the content or objectives students are accountable for, while others argue that curriculum is the set of instructional strategies that a teacher plans using in class. Kelly (2000) supports this line of argument by distinguishing different strands such as educational curriculum, total curriculum, the 'hidden' curriculum, the planned curriculum and the received curriculum, the formal curriculum and the informal curriculum. Whatever the arguments the major debate seems to be between curriculum as ends and curriculum as means of education. However, the present study would not take the purview of an in-depth analysis if some of the common conceptualizations of curriculum are not outlined.

The first common conceptualization of curriculum according to Posner (2004, p. 6) is a scope and sequence document which lists intended learning outcomes in each class or grade. The assumption seems to be that there is a difference between educational ends and means, thereby placing curriculum in a guiding role for both instructional and evaluation decisions. This view limits curriculum to educational plans and does not consider actualities (Posner, 2004).

A second group sees curriculum as a syllabus which charts a plan for an entire course and generally includes the goals and sometimes rationale for the course. Some syllabi may also include

learning activities, objectives and revision questions. Content outline is another way curriculum is viewed. Here it is assumed that the content of instruction is equivalent to a curriculum plan. When education and teaching have divergent purposes however, the content outline may leave unanswered queries of objectives, and instructional methods. Textbooks are also perceived as curriculum in some cases. Posner (2004, p.6) explains that in some instances the textbook may function as a daily guide both as ends and means of instruction. The more reason why contemporary textbooks are described as instructional systems. For example, teacher guides, teaching soft and hardware, and laboratory kits. Unlike traditional texts with little support for the content. Curriculum is conceptualized by another school of thought as standards. Even though there are arguments about it being a curriculum standard is more than a content outline and different from a scope and sequence. It could be described as things students should be able to do towards achieving the learning outcomes. With standards fundamental ideas in a discipline come first and key ideas are interconnected as well as covering all the school levels.

Curriculum is conceived by others as course of study. The assumption here is that the curriculum is the series of courses a student must get through. Finally, curriculum is seen as planned experiences. The assumption is that curriculum is more than a set of documents (Posner, 2004, pp. 11-12). This school of thought argues that all the intended and unintended planned experiences by the school, for example academic, social and sporting, form the curriculum. Joseph (2011, p.5) supports Eisner's (1985) explanation that the conception of curricula has been grouped into three which all schools are to teach, which are explicit (the written curricula), implicit (the unwritten one), and null (curriculum that is not recognized by the school). Each of these seven concepts and definitions of the curriculum would have consequences in teaching, learning and accountability.

As far as typology of curriculum goes Posner (2004) highlights five: the official, the operational, the hidden, the null, and the extra curriculum. In like manner too Cuban (1993) points four views of curricula, viz, official, taught, learned, and tested curriculum.

The written or official curriculum is a document that may comprise of scope and sequence charts, syllabi, curriculum guides, course outlines, standards, and lists of objectives. Teachers could use an official curriculum for planning lessons, evaluation, and it may be used employed by administrators for supervision of instruction or accountability. The operational curriculum, dubbed taught curriculum by Cuban (1993) is really what is taught and how students know about its importance. The operational curriculum comprises of two things which include the content that is emphasized by the teacher in class, and the learning outcomes. However, there is little curriculum convergence amongst the official, the taught, and the tested curricula of a school. It is worth stating that the operational curriculum and the official curriculum may be influenced by variables such as teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes.

The hidden curriculum, Posner (2004) explains, may not feature on the school timetable but could leave a huge impact on students than either official or operational curriculum. Another type is the null curriculum that Eisner, 1994) says consists of subject matter not covered by the curriculum. The next type of curriculum is extra-curriculum which refers to all those planned experiences outside of the school subjects. This curriculum responds to students' interests and is an openly acknowledged dimension of the school experience.

Outlining some concepts and types of curriculum, sets the stage to focus on analyzing Primary1 English language syllabus in Cameroon. Since the curriculum was reformed in 2000, no evaluation study has been carried out to throw light on dimensions that teachers, supervisors, and even curriculum developers may be proactive in tackling before English language lessons or prior to curriculum revision. The present analysis, therefore, is a preliminary one.

2. Methodology
This study set out to analyze Primary 1 (Grade 1) 1 English language syllabus in Cameroon.

2.1 Instrumentation
Qualitative content analysis was employed to collect data for this study. The Class 1 (Grade 1) English language syllabus documentation was analyzed and evaluated based on Posner's (2004) framework for curriculum analysis.

2.2 Data Collection and analysis
This was done in four phases which included how the Class 1 (Grade 1) English language syllabus originated and was documented, the syllabus proper, the syllabus in use, and a critique of the syllabus. The researcher went through each step content analyzing the highlights as constructed in Posner (2004, p. 19) so that descriptions, interpretations, and extrapolations could be categorized thereby drawing preliminary conclusions (see *Fig*.
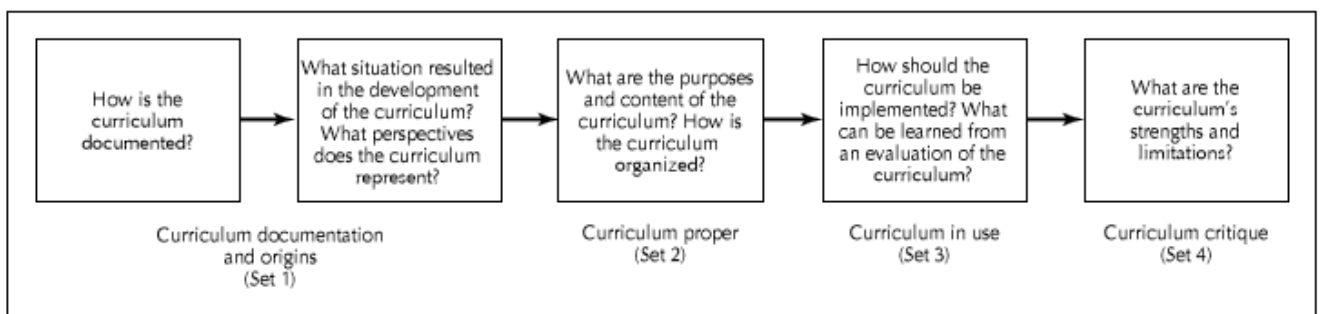

Fig 1: The process of curriculum analysis (Posner, 2004, p. 19)

3. Results and discussion
Step 1: Curriculum Background
The first phase of the analysis, curriculum background, examines the curriculum document, people involved in designing it, the situational factors that prompted educators to develop the syllabus, problem, perspective the curriculum reflects and the assumptions underlying the document.

The *National Syllabuses for English-speaking Primary Schools in Cameroon* (2000) (henceforth *Syllabuses*) is the collection in which is found Primary 1 English language syllabus. Before the syllabus proper, there is a 'Forward' page by the Minister of National Education (now Ministry of Basic Education), then a page and a third of 'Preface' by the Inspector General In-charge of Nursery, Primary and Teacher Education. Next, there is a page which maps the 'Theoretical Framework for English-speaking Primary Schools'. A time table follows allocating total number of hours per subject (there are 17) but English and Math both carry the most number of hours per week, 6.5.

The English language syllabuses begin with a 'Preamble' and 'General Goals' which is followed with the Grade 1 syllabus. It has a caption 'Oral/Aural Language Skills' (Listening, Speaking, [and] Reading). There are two columns under the main one captioned 'Objectives' and 'Content/Sample Structures'. Under objectives 'Speaking and Listening' are the first skills with functional language which under 'Content/Sample Structures' are topics, themes or examples. Next skill is 'Reading' divided into 'Pre-reading skills' and 'Reading proper' under 'Content/Sample

Structures'. Then there is 'Written Expression' which under 'Content/Sample Structures' has only one sub-heading 'Pre-writing skills'.

The syllabus shows that various people were involved in designing the curriculum in three seminars. Unfortunately, they have not been grouped according to subjects or classes/grades taught. The team comprised of six categories: general supervisors (3), steering committee (5), subject group leaders (6) (subjects not indicated), resource persons (2), participants from the ministry and Center Province (capital of the country) (25), participants from the North West and South West Provinces (English-speaking regions of the country) (31). Most members in the team are teachers of various levels, and at the time of developing the syllabus were in administrative and management positions. Another comment to be high-lighted is that the majority of the members were not trained as teachers for the primary level.

The situation that gave birth to the *Syllabuses* (2000, p. ii) started as far back as 1967 when government was to reform primary education on the philosophy of 'ruralization of education' (Fomenky, 2000). To do so a research institute was created for curriculum development and syllabi design in 1974. In 1980 a national seminar held which only made recommendations. Research work continued until 1989 when the National Forum on Education (see Tambo, 2000) was to finalize work on the syllabi which would harmonize the two systems – English-speaking and French-speaking. This attempt failed and in 1995 following recommendations of another national forum on education a bill was passed in the National Assembly instituting two education systems in Cameroon (Nwana, 2000). Another reason for a curricula reform was globalization of the world so maintaining only the traditional school subjects was obsolete. *Syllabuses (2000)*, therefore, is as a result of the English-speaking sub-system.

As far as the specific situation for English language goes there are several issues from which it grew. Historically (colonialism) Cameroon has English and French as official languages and it is the language of instruction in the English-speaking part of the country despite that the country has over 240 Home Languages (HLs) (Echu, 2004).). The language is used in many other contexts such as the media, business and informal communication (Schröder, 2003*)*. The 'Preamble', (p. 1) points out that 'the mastery of English by the pupil enables him or her to grasp with ease the other subjects of the curriculum' (p. 1). The document makes a rationale for English language that the primary school graduate to operate well in these communication communities need:

> … to acquire a good command of the language at four levels: listening, speaking, reading and writing. This will help the pupil to work and use English efficiently in the Cameroon society and the world at large, besides using it as an essential tool for research, trade and communication (*Syllabuses,* 2000, p.1).

The problem on which the curriculum team worked maybe extrapolated from a description of the situation. This is seen in the 'General Goals' of learning English after six years:

- communicate his/her feelings, ideas and experiences both orally and in writing, listen attentively to utterances, stories, news items, instructions, poems and songs, and respond correctly to them orally and in writing,

- communicate correctly his/her ideas, feelings and experiences orally, and in writing,

- read and understand authentic documents, write correct sentences or/ and text, further his/her education, pass the FSLC *(First School Leaving Certificate my addition)* and Common Entrance

examinations, integrate actively in society with ease, behave well individually and in a group (*National Syllabuses for English-speaking Primary Schools in Cameroon*, 2000, p.1).

The goals indicate that the curriculum designers think that the document high-lights the problems of learning English at the primary level in Cameroon, precisely in Class/Grade 1. The curriculum designers have developed the syllabus with the perspective of using the language for instruction across the curriculum and to communicate. They would desire a Class/Grade 1 learner who is able to demonstrate a developmental use of English in relation to input at that level. Another perspective of the designers is for learners to use the language in authentic situations for functional communicate.

On studying the curriculum of Primary/Grade 1 it is seen that the designers base their epistemological assumptions of learning English language on social constructivism (communicative language learning). Psychologically, the assumption is that human development is facilitated by the social context and so knowledge is constructed via interaction. In other words, knowledge of English language would be acquired faster and easily in a context and culture that is familiar to the learners. The assumptions are built on reality, knowledge and learning (see the developmental theories of Vygotsky and Bruner, and Bandura's social cognitive theory (Shunk, 2000). For reality social constructivist hold that it is constructed through human activities, while knowledge is socially and culturally constructed and learning is a socially constructed process. The pedagogical assumption lies in facilitating interaction in class, plus supporting learners to make attempts at communicating using English even when errors and mistakes occur. The schema is used to set appropriate challenges for the learner in a learner-friendly environment. This assumption also takes into consideration learning resources as well as all that makes a classroom fit for Primary/Grade 1 leaners of English language.

The first phase of this analysis places the work in focus to begin an in-depth scrutiny of the Primary/Grade 1 syllabus in English language in Cameroon.
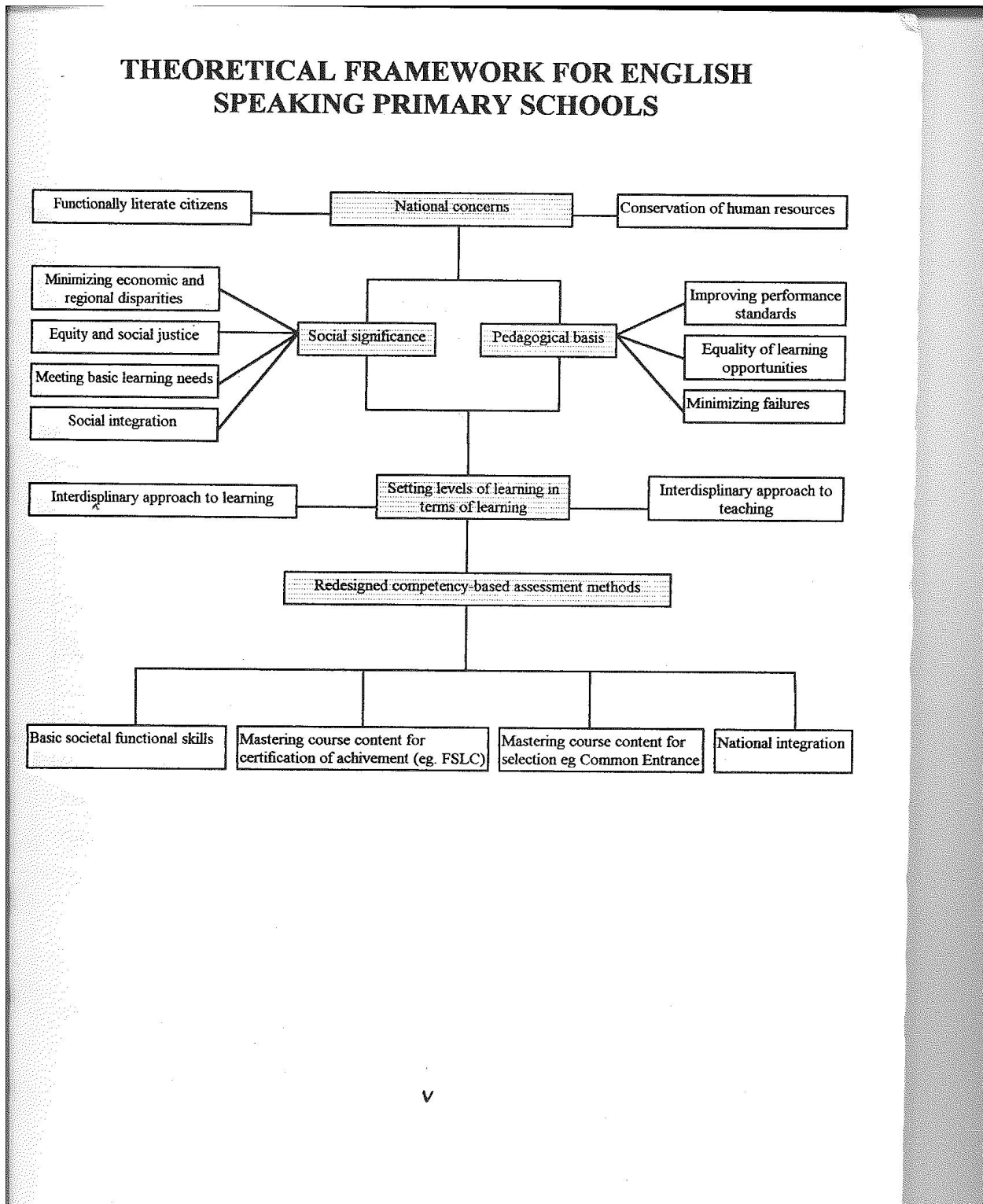
Step 2: Curriculum Proper

Purpose of curriculum

The theoretical framework of the *Syllabuses* (2000, p. v) describes the aims of primary education in general, including English language. Flow Graph 1 depicts societal and administrative goals. On the topmost horizontal level are the main goals: functional citizens, national concerns and conservation of human resources. These goals are planned from two components, which are, 'Social significance' and 'Pedagogical basis'. Under social significance are sub-components such as, minimizing economic and regional disparities, equity and social justice, meeting basic learning needs, social integration. Sub-components imbedded in pedagogical basis include improving performance standards, equality of learning opportunities, minimizing failures.

The graph (*Flow Graph 1*), next flows directly to 'Setting levels of learning in terms of learning', accompanied on the same horizontal level by 'Interdis[sic]plinary approach to learning' and 'Interdis[sic]plenary approach to teaching'. The flow graph next continues directly downwards to 'Redesigned competency-based assessment methods' which carries the last sub-components all at the same level: 'Basic social functional skills, mastering course content for certification of achievement (eg FSLC [*First School Leaving Certificate*- researcher], Mastering course content for selection eg Common Entrance [*examination into post-primary school*- researcher], National integration'. From the outline of the aims, it is noticed that *Syllabuses* (2000, p. V) has many aims

including social, intellectual, physical, psycho-social and cultural, moral, vocational, social justice and equity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING PRIMARY SCHOOLS

| Functionally literate citizens | National concerns | Conservation of human resources |

- Minimizing economic and regional disparities
- Equity and social justice
- Meeting basic learning needs
- Social integration

Social significance — **Pedagogical basis**

- Improving performance standards
- Equality of learning opportunities
- Minimizing failures

| Interdisplinary approach to learning | Setting levels of learning in terms of learning | Interdisplinary approach to teaching |

Redesigned competency-based assessment methods

| Basic societal functional skills | Mastering course content for certification of achivement (eg. FSLC) | Mastering course content for selection eg Common Entrance | National integration |

Flow Graph 1: Goals of elementary education in Cameroon (Syllabuses, 2000, p. V).

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Turning specifically to the English language syllabi there is no reference to the word 'aims' but extrapolation links the statements to these. The *Syllabuses* (2000, p.1) states that:

> …the primary school pupil must acquire a good command of the language at four levels: listening, speaking, reading and writing. This will help the pupil to work and use English efficiently in the Cameroon society and the world at large, besides using it as an essential tool for research, trade and communication.
>
> All the four language skills should be developed to avoid training pupils who could master reading and writing well but not be able to express themselves orally with efficiency. This English syllabus, in addition to being interdisciplinary tries to cater for the three main domains of learning ie the cognitive, the psychomotor and the affective…

As for the general goals the *Syllabuses (*2000, p.1) concentrates on school and state:

> The English-Speaking Cameroonian Primary School pupil after six years of schooling would be able to:
>
> - communicate his feelings, ideas and experiences both orally and in writing, listen attentively to utterance, stories, news items, instructions, poems and songs, and respond correctly to them orally and in writing,
> - communicate correctly his/her ideas, feelings and experiences orally,
> - read and understand authentic documents,
> - write correct sentences or/and texts,
> - further his/her education,
> - pass the FSLC [First School Leaving Certificate] and Common Entrance examinations,
> - integrate actively in society with ease,
> - behave well individually and in a group
>
> (*Syllabus*es, 2000, p.1).

After describing the goals of the English language syllabi, it is relevant to focus on the organization of the Primary/Grade 1 syllabus. At the broadest educational level (see Posner, 2004, p.126) the English language syllabi covers primary schooling (macro level of organization), while specifying Primary/Grade 1 is the micro level since there are relations between concepts, facts, or skills within lessons. The present current analysis dwells for the most part on micro-level organization, with references to the macro level to make arguments. In terms of dimensions of organization, the syllabi are both vertical and horizontal. That is to say it displays the sequence of the English language content in Primary/Grade 1, as well as the scope dimensions. Curriculum sequencing (vertical organization) refers to the content, while curriculum scope describes the integration or correlation of content taught concurrently (horizontal organization) (Posner, 2004). The English syllabus shows similar skills and language abilities but maintains gradual demands from one Class/Grade to the next. For example, Primary/Grade 1 reading extends the scope to 'pre-reading skills' and 'reading proper', but in Primary/Grade 2 they are dropped.

Regarding the organization of the content structure, it displays linear configuration which encourages mastery learning. Linear learning, practitioners believe (Posner, 2004), is an effective way for learners because learning is through gentle development of concepts and practice over considerable time (incremental development, continual practice and review). The linear approach to

structuring the English syllabus seems to be informed by the fact that language is crucial for a child's progress at the initial stage of education in a second language.

For media structure the English language syllabus shows a convergent structure especially in mixed-ability classrooms, a range of learner differences and backgrounds. The assumption is that there are several ways to achieve an objective using different media (methods). With the content revolving around the four language skills, the syllabus shows that different methods, strategies may be used to help the mixed-group of Primary/Grade 1 pupils.

The Primary/Grade 1 English language syllabus is developed around a cross-curricular organizing principle of leaners and learning. The objectives, contents and samples of the syllabus focus on language drawn from other subject pupils are studying. However, the objectives and contents take into consideration pupils' interests, needs, abilities and developmental level. For example, the contents in Primary/Grade 1 English language covers things such as practice counting, practice time and date (numeracy) and say the use of water (environmental studies).

The milieu in which curriculum is organized may affect it. With the English syllabus at the primary level, the social, economic, political, physical and organizational context may affect curriculum organization (frame factor).

Looking at the issue of alignment and coherence it is seen that there may exist a number of gaps in the syllabus for Primary/Grade 1. While the general curriculum policy is clearly stated, when it comes to design there is the possibility of misleading teachers particularly Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and those who require support at the level of content and cognition. Briefly, the syllabus is structured into two main headings of 'Objectives' and 'Content/Sample Structures' (Fig 2). The objectives state the things learners 'will be able to' do. Content/structure column indicates the kind of activities or things related to the objective. There does not seem to be any alignment here because the objectives column actually states broad categories, not specific ones expected of objectives. For example, under speaking and listening there is an objective, 'Describe the rule of a game; Appreciate other peoples' actions'. These examples would be more suitable as content. The main heading at the topmost position has 'Oral/Aural Language Skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading)'. It becomes difficult to find a logical reason for this mismatch and confusing order of things. The same mismatch and inconsistency is noticed when a cursory glance is taken on the objectives of the various skills which do not fit. Objectives at times are not aligned with their proper skills. These are some of the short comings of the syllabus design which may have negative consequences on teachers using it.

National Syllabus for English Speaking Primary Schools in Cameroon

CLASS ONE: ORAL/AURAL LANGUAGE SKILLS (Listening, Speaking, Reading)

OBJECTIVES	CONTENT/SAMPLE STRUCTURES
SPEAKING AND LISTENING Pupils will be able to:	
• listen to common sounds in the environment	• common sounds
• Listen to classroom commands and respond appropriately	• Simple commands
• Greet their peers and adults	• Greetings
• Introduce themselves and others	• Self introduction and introduction of others
• Ask about other pupils name	
• Identify things and colours	• Identification of objects
• Count things up to 100	• Counting
• Describe what they or others are doing	• Use of present simple continuous tense
• Ask questions about school and games	• Simple questions
• Listen to each other	• Listening and responses
• Listen to rhymes and say them correctly	• rhymes
• Describe one's and others' possessions	• Possessions
• Ask for permission, information, directions	• Polite requests
• Give the names of different games	• Types of games
• Describe the rules of a game	• common games and rules
• Organise a game and play it	
• Give the names of different parts of the body	• Parts of the body
• Tell the different functions of the main parts of the body	• Functions of various parts of the body
• Say what water is used for	• Importance of water
• Ask about peers and other peoples' health situations	• Questions on health
• Identify and name toiletries	• Toiletries
• Identify and name tools used to keep the house, the classroom and school clean	• Cleaning tools
• Say what they are used for	• Cleaning
• Describe actions in a chronological order	• First I… second I… finally I…..
• Identify kitchen utensils	• Kitchen utensils and their uses
• Say what they are used for	• Kitchen utensils and their uses
• Name and appreciate different meals…	• At home, I eat fufu corn, with huckleberry, fufu and eru, rice and pudding…
• Describe a journey	• Description of journeys
• Tell a story	• Story telling
• Make polite requests	• Polite requests
• Appreciate other peoples' actions	• Appreciation
• Express their feelings	• I like it, it is good
• Identify and name different professions/trades using simple sentences	• Types of professions and their functions
• State what a medical doctor, a farmer, a teacher, journalist… does	• occupations
• Locate an event in relation to time	• Yesterday, today, tomorrow…
• Tell the days of the week	• Days of the week
• Tell the duration of an event	• Activities and duration

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Fig 2: English Language Syllabus for Class/Grade (Syllabuses, 2000, p. 2)

When it comes to assessment the syllabus is remarkable for its vague and unclear policy (*Syllabuses,* 2000, p.18):

> *ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES*
> Although language skills are interrelated and cannot be taught totally in isolation, they should be tested separately. Therefore, aural tests, oral tests, reading tests and writing tests should be done independently. The teacher should use a variety of tests to assess different competencies: multiple choice, essays. The teacher should not forget to assess the mastery of pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation by the pupils.
> *NB The aforementioned* [*…*] *assessment strategies are not exhaustive. The teacher should feel free to complement them.* (These italics are in the original document).

For English language syllabi spanning seventeen pages, guidance on assessment is merely four sentences quoted above. The teacher is requested to "feel free to complement" the suggestions. In addition, the curriculum calls for affective and participatory methods that enhance critical thinking, but there is neither a core document on assessment, nor any pre-service training in Young Learner assessment or any form of assessment, so it is not evident how teachers should go about all of this. Such gaps create different forms of biases like teacher professional practices.

Step 3: Curriculum Implementation

As hinted before, the implementation of a curriculum would be influenced by the interaction among teachers, students, and subject matter, and the curriculum frame factors (temporal, physical, political, organizational, personal or personnel, economic and cultural). Frame factors, then are likely to shape implementation of a curriculum. According to Posner (2004, p. 193) frame factors may function either as a limitation or positive trust to curriculum implementation. However, in this study it is constructed more as constraints on teaching and learning, rather than   the resources that make teaching possible.

In the Class/Grade 1 English language syllabus it is seen that English language has a duration of 6hrs, 30mins weekly. The subject's frequency is daily but the duration is not indicated, same as the quantity of work to be covered. It is left to each sub-inspectorate of basic education to decide on duration and quantity of work.

The physical frame factor leaves a lot to be desired. The natural and built environment of the majority of schools, state, mission, and privately-owned, are not quite suitable for children, some of whom are as young as four years. There is hardly access is all the schools even though there is talk of inclusive schooling for every child. In some schools, there are no provision of energy and potable water for the children. Not all the classrooms are properly ventilated. Teaching and learning materials, most often are basic, such as, charts, cards and paper visuals. However, at times some teachers devise their own didactic materials which remain basic. Very few schools have any equipment for language teaching.

On the political-legal plane, enrolment to Class/Grade 1 should begin at age five, but this is hardly observed, especially in urban areas. Parents usually enroll children who are younger so

that they might go to work. Day care and pre-nursery centers are at an embryonic stage in Cameroon.

Organizational frame factor also impacts on the Class/Grade 1 English language curriculum. There are administrative factors to be considered such as policies. The height, and width of a classroom, are usually specified, as well as the number of pupils in a classroom but it is hardly followed primarily because of increasing pupil number to enroll since primary schooling is free. The maximum number in a class should be 60 but few schools respect this policy. There is no policy for grouping the learners but generally, mixed-ability grouping holds in most schools. However, in many privately-owned schools, children who are judged by the school as slow learners are registered as external candidates for the certificate examination because the school would not want them to be bring poor publicity regarding its performance.

Personal or personnel frame factor may also have an influence on implementation of the Class 1 English language syllabus in Cameroon. The background of learners is different in a mixed-ability class. This means that learners' experiences brought to the classroom are varied depending on characteristics such as, exposure to English language out of school, modes of English usage like radio, television and DVDs. The staff might develop stereotypical ideas about some pupils because of their background. Parents themselves may hold perspectives which are not convenient for schooling and the learner. For example, demands made on parents for the provision of school needs or participation at Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meetings.

Economic frame factor would greatly influence the implementation of the Class 1 English language syllabus. The benefits would be the pupils beginning formal education in a language they are going to use in all other school subjects. However, the costs involved with implementing the syllabus is huge, especially if teacher development and provision of materials are considered.

In the context of Cameroon, the cultural frame factor would have a strong impact on syllabus implementation. The values and beliefs of the school are important considerations, but those of the community are even stronger. Those of the school may bring adaptations or outright rejection by the school authorities. In like manner, society may influence what actually is embraced or thrown away from the syllabus. Things that are considered improper in a society would be jettisoned or adapted.

It can be said then, that the English language syllabus for Class 1 in Cameroon has adopted, in the main, the Research Development and Demonstration approach in its implementation. The implementation adopts explicit taught skills probably because the syllabus is innovative and teachers' knowledge, including pedagogy needs to be upgraded. Curriculum change is directed by objectives and evaluation methods are not mentioned specifically but psychometric method is hinted at. For the question of what the focus of development efforts should be in implementation, the present syllabus adopts professional goals of teachers (see Kwakman, 2003).

Program evaluation
1. *Inquiry questions on **intended and enabled** curriculum*
a. How confident are teachers in using the Class 1 English language syllabus?
b. What are teachers' interpretation of the Class 1 syllabus in English language?
c. Are teachers adequately trained to practice Communicative Language Teaching in class?
d. What is the impact on teaching of the availability of teaching-learning materials?
e. How do teachers carry out on-going assessment during English language lessons?
2. *Inquiry questions on **experienced or learned** curriculum*
a. What is the nature of learners' experience using the Class 1 syllabus?

b. Does availability of learning materials have any impact on language development of children?
c. What are learners' perception on teacher classroom assessment?
d. Does the teacher empathize with learners in English lessons?
e. Is the learner given adequate attention by the teacher?

Step 4: Curriculum Critique

English language is one of two subjects with a higher frequency and duration at all the levels in primary school. This is good because English is not only a subject but equally, it is a language of instruction used across the curriculum (Echu, 2004; Schröder, 2003*).* That means pupils' cognitive, psycho-social, and psycho-motor development would likely relate to the degree of their language acquisition. However, the primary school curriculum is overloaded with too many subjects. For learners who are still developing physically and mentally, it is possible that they become confused. It might have been good for teachers to have a syllabus guideline document to help with question of quantity. Not been aware of this consideration, many teachers are likely going to work from book cover to the end. A difficult venture because the primary school curriculum is overloaded and this can have negative consequences (Majonii, 2017).

A teacher guide to the syllabus would be supportive of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in making suggestions on how to use the document, strategies, methods and techniques that may be useful, and even how to make the English language classroom more engaging and inclusive (Peercy, et al., 2015). Of importance, also a syllabus guide for teachers could be relevant to teachers when making decisions about elements which may be culturally inappropriate in some communities. This could keep teachers' practice in check. The syllabus needs to be revised or changed after seventeen years because the world is not static. As Nhlapo and Maharajh (2017) stress one of the properties of curriculum its visuality, not being stagnant but changes frequently to cater for new ideas. Learning theories, practice of English language teaching and learning do change.

The present syllabus would need to take into account the mismatches and misnomers which mislead teachers. New concepts and methodologies are introduced to English language teaching, but inadequate provision is made for pre-service and teacher development programs to upgrade teachers' knowledge, skills and perspectives. Teachers are merely at the bottom to implement but they may not be aware of their partnership role in the curriculum implementation process (see Penuel, et al, 2007).

The implementation of the syllabus does not take note of classroom space. The communicative language approach requires relevant space for interaction. The approach also is in need of language learning materials and equipment which are going to facilitate language development and progress, particularly for second language users, just beginning learning a new language. Yet no suggestions are made to teachers (see Evans, 2006).

Therefore, suggestions made take in consideration the context of Cameroon, plus similar transitional contexts in the world where English is a second or foreign language bearing in mind tight budget for education. It would be relevant for the Ministry of Basic Education either to revise or develop a new syllabus for English language. It would be necessary to match such a syllabus with classroom teacher continual professional development, whose organization may be stratified into teaching zones that would cost very little for teachers to participate once a month. Proposals should also come from teachers in each zone. The new syllabus should not be overloaded because it may lead to ineffective teaching since teachers may be interested more in

covering the syllabus than improvement in learners' language. The developmental growth of learners should be a guiding frame for syllabus content.

It is important for teachers to be encouraged to upgrade their certificates as this is usually accompanied by an increased improvement in academic knowledge which is useful for awareness of current theories and practices. That way the teacher would develop better confidence in selecting pedagogical practice.

Basic teaching-learning resources should be made available to teachers. The greater part of Class 1 learning is through the senses (touch, smell, taste, hearing and sight). By associating different senses to various language prompts, acquisition, development, and performance.

It is suggested to the Ministry of Basic Education to make teachers aware of issues such as class-size, school environment, and school inclusive policy so that they are better prepared because teachers are required sometimes to implement policies they are not aware of. It would be important for textbook writers to be aware of the educational context they are basing their writing on. There should be plenty of opportunities for learners to practice the syllabus content in a realistic and meaningful manner.

4. Conclusion

Emerging curriculum dimensions which may be considered are of a wide range categorized under the three curriculum analysis steps adopted from Posner (2000). Studies that would follow should provide salient pictures of Class 1 English language syllabus for a better understanding. By highlighting potential areas which may pose as obstacles, the curriculum developers in Cameroon and similar contexts are better prepared for fast proactive decisions. The issues raised would guide those (nationally and internationally) who develop the intended curriculum to have diverse different dimensions of the curriculum in view.

Step 1: Curriculum Background
1. Objective to develop all language skills of fluency and accuracy; to be able to use English for interaction both nationally and internationally; for certification; English as a second language. *Issues: Epistemological, ontological and pedagogical assumptions.*
2. Various people designed the syllabus at three seminars. Some were not teachers. Only a handful of elementary teachers in the team. *Issue: Representation, expertise and Continuous Professional Development (CPD).*

Step 2: Curriculum Proper
1. The English language syllabus emanates from the broad goals set for elementary education (*Syllabuses,* 2000, p. V). *Issue: alignment of aims, state, legal and administrative.*
2. Goals for English language (*Syllabus*es, 2000, p.1). *Issue: adequately trained teachers, resources, state, councils, parents and other stakeholders.*
3. In terms of **dimensions of organization**, the syllabus is both **vertical** and **horizontal.** *Issue: are sequence and scope appropriate? Continuous Professional Development, economic.*
4. Regarding the **organization of the content structure**. *Issue: language in determining access to the whole primary curriculum, state, legal. economic*
5. The Class 1 English language syllabus is developed around a cross-curricular organizing principle of leaners and learning. *Issue: are teachers comfortable with new concepts,*

such as Communicative Language Teaching, child-friendly strategies, and task-based/activity-based learning? What about their beliefs and practices?

6. *Alignment* (curriculum) *and coherence,* there exists a number of gaps:

- While the general curriculum policy is clearly stated, when it comes to design there is the possibility of misleading teachers particularly Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and those who require support at the level of content and cognition.
- The syllabus is structured into two main headings of 'Objectives' and 'Content/Sample Structures'. The objectives state the things learners 'will be able to' do. Content/structure column indicates the kind of activity or things related to the objective. There does not seem to be any alignment here because the objectives column actually states broad categories, not specific ones expected of objectives. For example, under speaking and listening there is an objective, 'Describe the rule of a game; appreciate other peoples' actions'.
- The same mismatch and inconsistency is noticed when a cursory glance is taken on the objectives of the various skills which do not fit. Objectives at times are not aligned with their proper skills.

7. When it comes to assessment the syllabus is remarkable for its vague and unclear policy (*Syllabuses,* 2000, p.18)

Step 3: Curriculum Implementation

1. Frequency of English language is 6.5 hours a week. Class 1 curriculum is overloaded allowing inadequate time to use the language *(Issue: temporal frame factor)*
2. The natural and built environment of the majority of schools, state, mission, and privately-owned, are not quite suitable for children, some of whom are as young as four years *(Issue: physical frame factor)*
3. Enrolment to Class 1 does not usually follow government policy of 5 years *(Issue political-legal frame factor)*
4. Policies specifying school buildings and classrooms, such as height, width and number of pupils per class *(Issue: administrative)*
5. The background of learners is different in a mixed-ability class (personal frame factor)
6. The benefits would be the pupils beginning formal education in a language they are going to use in all other school subjects. However, the costs involved with implementing the syllabus is huge, especially if teacher development and provision of materials are considered *(Issue: economic frame factor)*
7. The values and beliefs of the school are important considerations, but those of the community are even stronger *(Issue: cultural frame factor).*

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