Changing pedagogy: A comparative analysis of reform efforts in Uganda and Turkey

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CHANGING PEDAGOGY

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In the past two decades, there has been a renewed interest in school pedagogy. It has been increasingly linked with economic growth, international competitiveness, and political democratisation. Particularly after the 1990s, the global political discourse on pedagogy has been progressively shaped by approaches that are based on constructivism. Such approaches have become part of a discursive repertoire of international rights and quality education, and have largely influenced educational reforms in several low-income countries. The diffusion of 'progressive' pedagogies has revived the debate on globalisation and curriculum, as scholars enquired whether convergence around discourses and national education policies has resulted in the convergence of educational practices around the world. In other words, has the convergence at the level of global policy talk on pedagogy resulted in convergence at the classroom level? And, to what extent has the global and the official national discourse on pedagogy reshaped teaching and learning practices in classrooms? This books aims to reflect on such questions and seeks to provide an empirical examination of the practice of global education policy, by focusing on the implementation of pedagogical reforms in two countries – Uganda and Turkey. The book analyzes how context and local actors mediate education policies that are imported from the West. It particularly explores the agency of local actors by focusing on the teachers' views and experiences with the borrowed policy.

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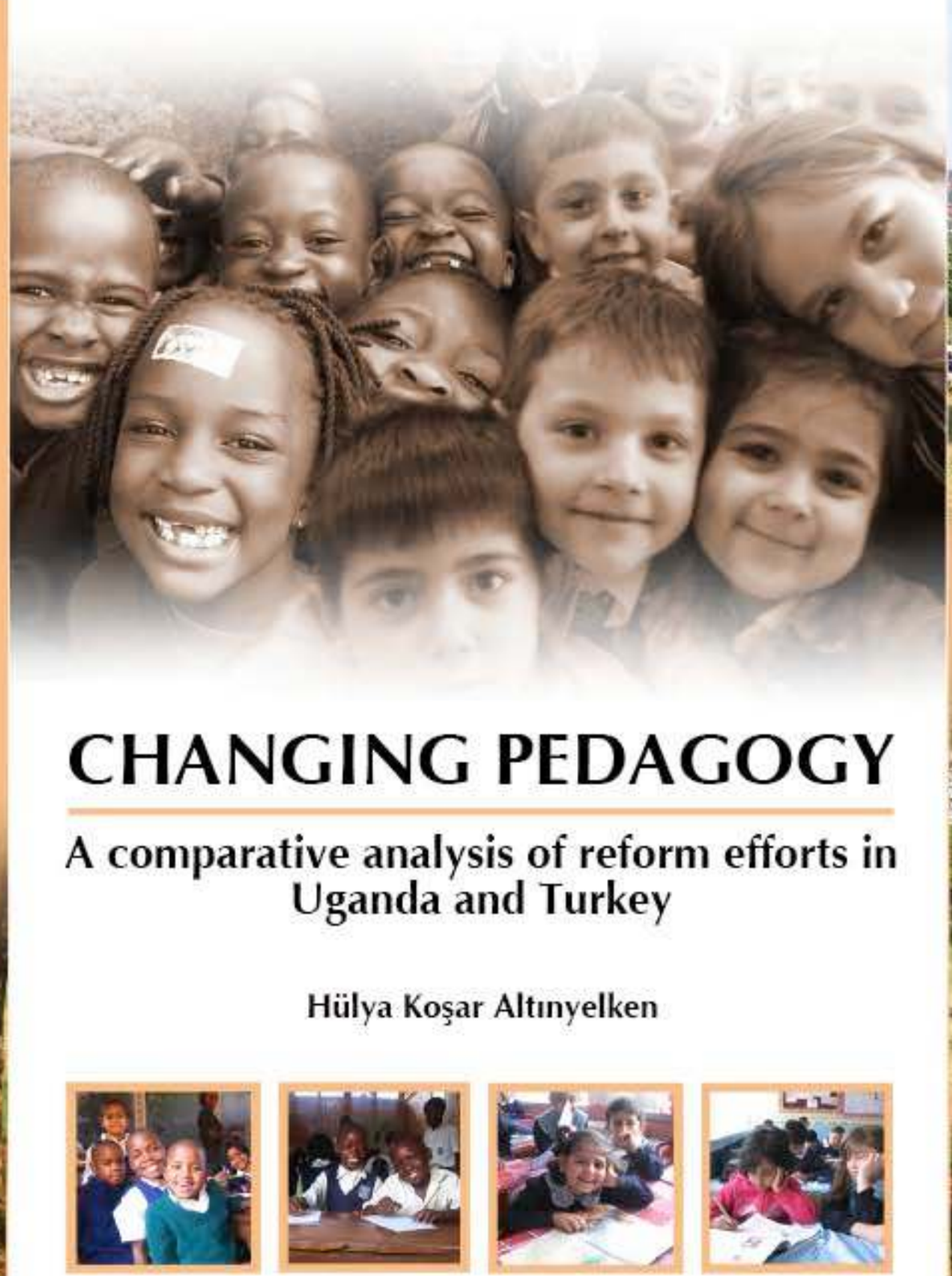

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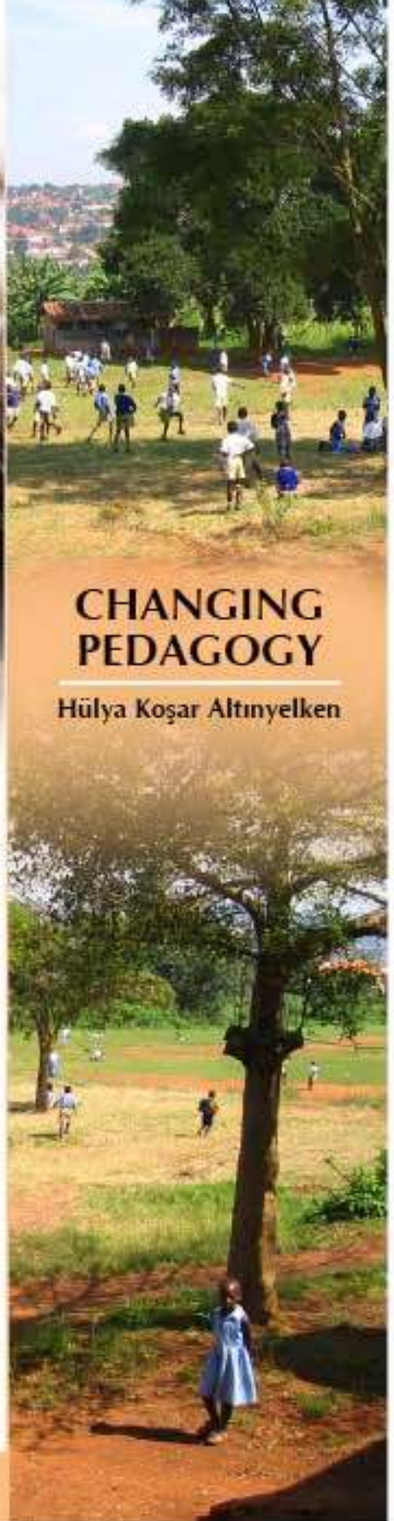

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CHANGING PEDAGOGY

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De Faculteit der Maatschappij en Gedragswetenschappen

To my precious Asya and Deniz

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CONTENTS

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September 2010, Amsterdam

CHAPTER: 1

Introduction[1]

This book is the result of a PhD study that offers a critical and empirical analysis of how a 'global' policy (pedagogical approaches based on constructivism) is adapted locally in two different country contexts – Uganda and Turkey. The study deals with policy transfer in comparative education, focusing on the implementation phase (see Phillips, 2004). The purpose of the study is to analyse how context and local actors mediate education policies that are imported from the West. The study particularly examines the agency of local actors, by focusing on teachers' views and experiences with the borrowed policy. In doing so, the study seeks to contribute to the discussion on globalisation and education, and to respond to a current topic of major academic concern, 'Are national educational systems increasingly becoming similar as a result of borrowing?' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, p.201).

1. Educational change in the contemporary world

Since the 1980s, we have witnessed a speeding up and an increased complexity of change processes in the world. The intensification of change has been nowhere more true than in education systems. In several countries, we have observed 'innovation', 'reform', 'development' and 'improvement' with respect to various aspects of education, including school governance, teacher education, teaching and learning methods, inspection, school financing, evaluation, and community participation. Consequently, change has become central to educational discourse both in the Western world and in low-income countries in the 1980s and beyond (Altrichter, 2000). Educational change is indeed ubiquitous and it has always been with us in some sense or other. However, many of the changes we have been witnessing now are very different in terms of their substance and form (Hargreaves et al., 2005).

[1] The theoretical section is partly based on:

Altinyelken, H.K. (2010). Teachers as curriculum mediators: A study on the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Turkey. In R.V. Nata (Ed.), *Progress in education* (Vol. 22*)*. New York: Nova publishers.

Globalisation and marketisation around the world have resulted in structural and qualitative changes in education and policy, including a focus on the 'lifelong learning', or a 'cradle-to-grave' vision of learning and the increasing prominence of the discourses of the 'knowledge-based economy' in global culture (Zajda, 2010; Dale, 2005; Robertson et al., 2007). Neoliberalism has become the dominant ideology which perceives education as a producer of goods and services that foster economic development. Although UNESCO's humanistic, social justice and human rights traditions were very influential in the 1960s, this has gradually weakened since the 1980s, and the economic and more instrumental paradigm of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has gained in prominence. Hence, the ideals of human rights, social justice and collectivism have increasingly been exchanged for key concepts of the global economy discourse, including productivity, competitiveness, efficiency and profit maximisation. In other words, neoliberal ideology, which defined education as an investment in 'human capital' and 'human resource development', has considerably influenced policymakers in many countries (Zajda, 2010; Karsten, 1999). In recent years, however, this 'narrow economic approach of the major international donors and multilaterals on education appears to have been superseded by a much broader recognition of the role of education which emphasizes its central importance in the socialisation, citizenship and nation-building process – both at home and abroad' (Novelli, 2010, p. 453).

According to Levin (1998) an overview of education policies and reforms in the past 30 years across national and sub-national contexts, reveals six commonalities of themes. The first three of these are related to the framework for policy in education, while the other three concern the substantive policy changes. These are described by Levin as follows:

1. The need for change is largely cast in economic terms and particularly in relation to the preparation of a workforce and competition with other countries.
2. There are increasing criticisms of schools and their failure to deliver what is required, yet the criticism seems to be particularly limited to certain groups or sectors and is not widely shared by parents.
3. Large-scale change is not accompanied by substantially increased financial commitments to schools by governments.

4. Educational reform is promoted through changes in forms of governance, assuming that changes in governance are the key to improved performance of schools.
5. Schooling is made more like a commercial activity or market commodity by policies such as requiring parental choice of schools, tying school funding to enrolments, voucher plans of various kinds and charter schools.
6. There is an emphasis on standards, accountability and testing as in many countries large-scale testing of students and more reporting of the results of these tests are observed (Levin, 1998, pp. 131-133).

Depending on their objective financial situation, their interpretation of that situation, and their ideological position with regard to the role of the public sector in education, countries have embarked on a number of reforms that can be classified into three types: competiveness-driven reforms (e.g. decentralisation, standardisation, improved management of educational resources, and improved teacher recruitment and training), finance-driven reforms (including the shift of public funding for education from higher to lower levels of education, the privatisation of secondary and higher levels of education in order to expand access at those levels, and increasing class sizes in primary and secondary education), and equity-driven reforms (such as reform efforts focused on reaching the lowest income groups with high-quality basic education – youth and adults with no access to basic skills) (Carnoy, 1999). The neoliberal reform movements of recent decades, the globalisation of educational policy, and increasing practice of 'borrowing' and 'lending' school reforms have led many observers to conclude that educational systems around the world are converging towards one international (neoliberal) model (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

2. Renewed interest in pedagogical reform

In the past two decades, there has been a renewed interest in school pedagogy, and it has assumed a central importance in education reforms that are designed to improve education quality. Pedagogy has been increasingly linked with economic growth, international competitiveness (Alexander, 2008), and political democratisation (Tabulawa, 2003). Reforms aimed at modifying teaching and learning practices in schooling contexts can be viewed as competitiveness-driven reforms as they primarily appear to respond

to shifting demands for skill (both in the domestic and international labour markets) and new ideas about organising the production of educational achievement and work skills (Carnoy, 1999). Indeed, these reforms have often been initiated on the rationale that education systems need to prepare citizens for the knowledge society, which is characterised by increasing globalisation, progressively shorter half-lives of knowledge, and the increasing importance of knowledge creation in order to sustain development and economic competitiveness (Riel, 1998). Robertson also suggests that the interest in reconstructing school pedagogy closely relates to 'knowledge-based economy' discourse which she defines as 'a new, very powerful, discursive imaginary' (Robertson, 2007, p. 2). She argues that:

> Education systems are important (though not exclusive) sites for the production of knowledgeable subjects. It would be important, therefore, to realise a knowledge-based economy for education be renovated in ways that would enable this new kind of self/worker/citizen to be constituted. An economy driven by constant innovation would require a rather different kind of self – one that actively produced new knowledge (and potential products and markets) through processes of assembling and reassembling knowledges (Robertson, 2007, p.7).

Particularly after the 1990s, the global political discourse on pedagogy has been progressively shaped by approaches that are based on constructivism. Such approaches have become 'part of a discursive repertoire of international rights and quality education' (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008, p. 4). The international donor agencies have played a central role in placing the notions of constructivism on the international reform agenda (Tabulawa, 2003; Ginsburg & Megahed, 2008). Indeed, an overview of policy documents by influential international organisations reveals that learner-centred and skills-based curricula are increasingly the default position internationally. This trend is particularly supported by organisations or development agencies with strong 'free market' interests, such as the OECD and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Allais, 2010).

Over the years, constructivism has largely influenced educational reforms in low-income countries as many have endorsed reform programmes that are couched in the rhetoric of constructivism. It has been characterised differently in diverse contexts as student-centred pedagogy (SCP), child-centred pedagogy (CCP), learner-centred pedagogy, active learning or collaborative learning. By the late twentieth century, reforms introducing SCP, student participation, democracy in the classroom, hands-on learning, cooperative learning groups, projects, and focus on child interests have become globally ubiquitous (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). Constructivism has

been ‘increasingly taken for granted as part of notions of educational quality’ (Ginsburg & Megahed, 2008, 106).

There are several examples of countries endorsing such pedagogical reforms in the past two decades. In Asia, examples include Tibet (Carney, 2008a), China (Carney, 2008b; Dello-Iacovo, 2009; Huang, 2004), Russia (Schweisfurth, 2002), Kyrgyzstan (Price-Rom & Sainazarov, 2009), Taiwan (Yang et al., 2008) and Cambodia (Bunlay, et al., 2009); in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa (Nykiel-Herbert, 2004), Botswana (Tabulawa, 2003), Namibia (O’Sullivan, 2004; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008), Ethiopia (Serbessa, 2006), Guinea (Anderson-Levitt & Diallo, 2003), Malawi (Mizrachi, et al., 2008; Croft, 2002) and Tanzania (Barrett, 2007; Vavrus, 2009); in the Middle East, Egypt (Ginsburg & Megahed, 2008) and Jordan (Roggemann & Shukri, 2009); and in Latin America, Brazil (Luschei, 2004), Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador (de Baessa, 2002). Reform initiatives aimed at introducing the reformed pedagogies have often been accompanied by a shift towards competency-based curricula and emphasis on authentic assessment as opposed to summative examinations (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008).

The ‘epidemic’ (Levin, 1998) of such ‘progressive’ pedagogies is by no means new to the educational landscape. For instance, CCP was at the core of the educational doctrines in the Western world in the first half of the twentieth century (Oelkers, 2001). For decades, its educational philosophy has proved to be seductively attractive; it has captivated the imagination of the enlightened while its critics have been made to look increasingly uncaring. Indeed, this ‘progressive’ theory constituted a broad platform on which a variety of liberal reformers has discussed schools and their role in society in the Western world (Darling, 1986). Accordingly, education should follow the spiritual, physical and mental growth of the child, and the educational institutions must adapt their policies and actions in line with children’s natural development. In the first half of the twentieth century, most reforms in the West subscribed to the picture of the good and independent child that only becomes neurotic and destructive because of pedagogical authorities. This image of the child was, at the same time, gender-neutral, culturally independent, and socially free (Oelkers, 2001).

In later decades, such ‘progressive’ approaches have been subjected to increasing scrutiny and critique (Mayer, 2004), and a wide range of studies have demonstrated their inefficiency in improving students’ affective and academic skills (see Gauthier & Dembele, 2004 for an overview). Hence, CCP has been in retreat in parts of North America and Europe (Norquay

1999, Hartley, 2009), as demonstrated by a widespread back-to-basics movement in American education in the 1970s (Smith, 1978) and the UK's disenchantment with CCP and shift to 'interactive whole class teaching' starting from the 1990s (Alexander, 2008).

Such a brief historical consideration reveals three features: first, the more recent global diffusion of pedagogical approaches based on constructivism appear to signal a new diffusion pattern of the 'progressive pedagogies' that curiously coincide with the ascendancy of neoliberalism and particularly with the emergence of 'the knowledge-based economy master narrative' (Robertson, 2007); second, although the 'progressive' pedagogies spread hastily in different parts of the globe, particularly in developing countries, they are at the same time contested in some of the countries where these pedagogies have originated in the West; third, there are also counter-currents towards convergence tendency in the global talk and reform about 'progressive' pedagogy as in the case of the UK or the 'back to basics' reform movements in different parts of the world (Anderson-Levitt, 2003).

The recent diffusion of 'progressive' pedagogies raises a number of interesting questions: Although the constructivism and learner-centred curricula are historically associated with social justice and left wing politics (Allais, 2010), how could they gain such a momentum internationally at a time during which right-wing political and economic ideas prevail? How can this seemingly 'paradoxical' development be explained? The diffusion of 'progressive' pedagogies has also revived the debate on globalisation and curriculum, as scholars enquired whether convergence around discourses and national education policies has resulted in the convergence of educational practices around the world (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; 2008; Carson, 2009). In other words, has the convergence at the level of global policy talk on pedagogy resulted in convergence at the classroom level? And, to what extent has the global and the official national discourse on pedagogy reshaped teaching and learning practices in classrooms? This study aims to reflect on such questions and seeks to provide an empirical examination of the practice of global education policy, by focusing on the implementation of pedagogical reforms in two countries – Uganda and Turkey.

Both countries have in recent years initiated a comprehensive review of their curricula for primary schools, proposed changes in the content and organisation of the curricula (adopting a thematic approach and emphasising the development of competencies and skills), introduced alternative assessment methods (continuous assessment in Uganda and authentic assessment in Turkey), and embraced new pedagogical approaches based on

the principles of constructivism (defined as CCP in Uganda and SCP in Turkey). In Uganda, after a one-year pilot phase, the Thematic Curriculum for primary schools was implemented nationwide in February 2007 (NCDC, 2006). Likewise, in Turkey, the Curriculum 2004 was piloted for a year in a select number of schools and has been implemented nationwide since September 2005 (Educational Reform Initiative, 2005). By analysing the reform implementation process, this study seeks to examine how the new pedagogies are conditioned by the particularities of Uganda and Turkey, and how these approaches are interpreted and re-contextualised by local actors, mainly by classroom teachers. In doing so, the study seeks to investigate how a 'global' policy is implemented locally in two very dissimilar contexts. In addition, the study will explore possible explanations accounting for the recent popularity of constructivism.

3. Conceptual and theoretical foundations

3.1. Pedagogy

Pedagogy is a rather complex concept and a variety of definitions is offered as the study on the subject is fragmented. The basic definition of pedagogy refers the knowledge of teaching. The concept is often used as a synonym for teaching. However, as Alexander (2001) suggests, pedagogy and teaching are not the same, even though they are used interchangeably. 'Teaching is an *act* while pedagogy is both act and *discourse.* Pedagogy encompasses the performance of teaching together with the theories, beliefs, policies and controversies that inform and shape it' (Alexander, 2001a, p.540). Brock (2009, p. 68) also defines pedagogy as encompassing 'practice and the principles, theories, perceptions, and challenges that inform and shape teaching and learning'. According to Bernstein (1971), pedagogy refers to the way knowledge is transmitted, and belongs with 'curriculum' as the way knowledge is organised, and 'evaluation' as the way knowledge is realised. This conceptualisation of pedagogy focuses on pedagogic relationship and the social conditions that regulate the transmission of knowledge.

In line with Alexander's definition, in this study teaching will be understood as a practical and observable act, whereas pedagogy will refer to that act as well as the purposes, values, ideas, assumptions and beliefs that inform and seek to justify it (Alexander, 2008). Throughout the book, reference will be made to basic characteristics of classroom practice such as the use of textbooks and workbooks, classroom activities, teacher and student talk, and individual or group learning schemes. Broader curriculum issues,

such as content organisation and student evaluation are also considered as they closely relate to and interact with pedagogy.

3.2. Constructivism

Constructivism is not a pedagogical approach but a theory about how people learn. It perceives learning as an active construction of knowledge (Reusser, 2001). Constructivism is difficult to characterise, as there are many different versions of it, including radical constructivism, information processing, socio-cultural theory and symbolic interactionalism (see Prawat, 1996 for a discussion of the alternative perspectives). Constructivism associates knowledge directly with individual learners and considers it to be the product of students' activities. Through processes of accommodation and assimilation, knowledge is constructed by students as they relate the new information to their already existing cognitive structures (Bruer, 1993). In other words, learning is conceived as 'an active process in which learners are active sense makers who seek to build coherent and organized knowledge (Mayer, 2004, p. 14). Accordingly, knowledge is created by undergoing, researching and actively experiencing reality. Since learning is perceived as a self-regulated activity, providing pupils with ample opportunities for discovery and interpretation of events is emphasized. Learning to learn is viewed as important as mastering content. The role of teachers in this context is mainly geared to stimulating and coaching students in their learning activities.

A number of scholars have contributed to the development of constructivism. However, the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and the philosopher John Dewey have become the icons of the 'progressive pedagogy'. In many countries, their names appeared as signs of educational progress and several pedagogical reform initiatives evoked their ideas, such as in South Africa, Spain, the Scandinavian countries and the US (Popkewitz, 2000). The Piagetian perspective emphasises individual cognitive processes, and argues that individuals construct a personal reality based on their previous knowledge and new experiences. In this view, knowledge is viewed as an interaction between the environment and the individual. Vygotsky, on the other hand, claimed that learners 'construct their knowledge, not only from direct personal experience but also from being told by others and by being shaped through social experience and interaction' (Reusser, 2001, p. 2058). Therefore, his perspective emphasizes social processes and views learning as

an interactive and co-constructive activity in which both society and individuals play essential roles (Windschitl, 2002).

Finally, Dewey emphasized the behavioural dimension of constructivism, and advocated learning by experimentation and practice, engagement, discovery, inquiry, and empirical problem solving. He viewed learning as experiencing, arguing that all genuine education comes about through experience (Dewey, 1998). These theories on learning have often been supported with theories on child psychology, such as the physiological evidence of the independent development of the senses and feelings, the description of the development of the child according to natural 'phases' or 'stages', and the recording of the environment and behaviour of children in research facilities (Oelkers, 2001).

New paradigms of learning and teaching based on the principles of constructivism are characterised by minimal teacher lecturing or direct transmission of factual knowledge, individual and small-group activities, and frequent student questions and extensive dialogue among students (Leu & Price-Rom, 2006). Since learning is viewed as a process during which students must be active, passive venues such as books, lectures, and presentations are often classified as non-constructivist teaching, whereas active venues such as group discussions, hands-on learning, and interactive games are classified as constructivist teaching (Mayer, 2004).

Constructivism is associated with pedagogical approaches that promote active learning, learning by doing and collaborative work, such as CCP, SCP, learner-centred pedagogy, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, discovery learning, problem-based learning or inquiry learning. These pedagogical approaches differ among themselves in terms of emphasizing distinct aspects that are considered to promote learning (e.g. activity, cooperation, hands-on learning) or in terms of actual amount of structure and scaffolding included. However, throughout this book, at the expense of overlooking their differences, they will be grouped as 'progressive' pedagogical approaches that are based on the principles of constructivism. The main reference will be, however, to CCP in Uganda and SCP in Turkey.

3.3. Educational policy transfer

Within the field of comparative education, scholars have studied 'foreign influences' through the notion of 'educational transfer', which is often defined as the movement of educational ideas, practices or institutions across

international borders (Beech, 2006). Studies on the process of educational transfer can be traced back to the early nineteenth century. Until the 1960s, the discussions within the field revolved around two main positions: one position suggested that educational transfer was possible and desirable, while the second position argued that it was neither desirable nor possible. In the 1960s, the debate increasingly focused on the scientific methods that would guarantee the success of educational transfer, and later how the processes of educational transfer could be interpreted as colonialist or neo-colonialist imposition (Beech, 2006), and could be regarded as a form of cultural imperialism (Carnoy, 1974).

Recent studies on the topic attempted to build theory on educational transfer and develop frameworks for analysis (see Dale, 1999; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000; 2004). These studies have also identified a number of political actors that have proliferated as a result of globalisation, including elected officials, political parties, civil servants, pressure groups, policy entrepreneurs, transnational corporations, think-tanks, supranational governmental and non-governmental institutions and consultants (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). For instance, studies have identified 'policy entrepreneurs', that is, groups and individuals who 'sell' their solutions to education problems in the academic and political marketplace (e.g. 'school effectiveness', 'choice' and 'self-managing school') (Ball, 1998).

An important research area in this field is concerned with explaining why countries borrow or lend educational policies across international borders. In other words, why does educational transfer takes place? When we rephrase this question within the framework of this study, we would then ask 'If the countries around the world seem to be engaging in a similar dialogue on how the pedagogy should be reformed, and if the official discourses seem to be converging around the same model, why is this so?' Different and often competing answers have been provided to this question. According to modernisation theorists, countries borrow educational reforms elsewhere because they are better. The emerging global curriculum (and the pedagogical approach as an integral part of curriculum) is a response to the demands of globalised economies and knowledge societies (Anderson-Levitt, 2008). Pedagogical approaches based on constructivism have become popular since they represent the best way of organising teaching and learning in schools in the contemporary world. From this perspective, possible tendencies towards convergence represent progress.

A second view is proposed by world-culture theorists. According to this perspective, countries have more or less freely adopted a global culture of

schooling because a set of ideas and practices are *perceived* as the best and the most modern way, even though they may not actually be the best way to run schools. In other words, nations adopt ideas not because they are truly better, but because policymakers perceive them as modern, progressive and inevitable (Meyer & Ramirez, 2000). For instance, constructivism is *perceived* as effective in improving learning achievements and preparing children and youth for the labour market. In the current globalised, increasingly competitive knowledge economy, the business community demands employees who think in creative ways, adapt flexibly to new work demands, identify and solve problems, and cooperate with colleagues in effective ways to create complex products (Windschitl, 2002). Therefore, the assumption that constructivist learning environments are superior in developing and reinforcing such skills and competencies appears to have contributed to its increased appeal. Indeed, research has shown that approaches rooted in constructivism have been endorsed in many countries on the assumption that such approaches would better prepare workers for the global economy, in which 'the new rules of wealth creation are replacing the logic of Fordist mass production with new "knowledge-based" systems of flexible production' (Ball, 1998, p. 120). Moreover, constructivism is associated with educating citizens who would effectively participate in democratic politics (Ginsburg, 2009), and with creating more capable consumers through education.

These two theories assume that countries import education policies more or less voluntarily, and they downplay the power asymmetries among them. The world system theory, in contrast, considers power central to the discussion. Here, convergence represents power, rather than progress. Hence, if pedagogical practices are converging around the world (at least in the official curricula), it is because a certain pedagogical approach is in the interests of powerful states or international organisations (Gutherie, 1990; Tabulawa, 2003; Carney, 2008a). These perspectives emphasize imposition or coercion as educational transfer mechanisms, and highlight the role of international aid agencies (such as USAID) as major players that have contributed to the diffusion of constructivism by advocating it as a prescription through educational projects and consultancies they funded (Tabulawa, 2003). Although aid agencies frame their interest by focusing on the assumed effectiveness of constructivism in improving learning outcomes, this perspective points to a hidden agenda which is disguised as 'better' teaching. According to this view, the efficacy of constructivism lies in its political and ideological nature.

From this perspective, constructivism is seen as part of an international agenda which aims to improve educational systems in ways that might support the spread of advanced capitalism and global democracy (Carney, 2008a). In this respect, CCP can be considered to be part of the US foreign policy of 'democracy promotion' which was initiated in the early 1980s to promote a weak and elitist form of democracy in developing countries. Elite democracy refers to a type of democracy that had been made safe for capitalism by shifting the majority of real decision-making power outside the democratic domain (to autonomous central banks, financial institutions and so on) and by making the democratically elected state responsible for law and order, and managing the needs of capital (Robinson, 1996).

Ginsburg & Megahed (2008) also caution that what is spreading around the world is not real democracy but a peculiar ideology of democracy. They argue that bilateral and multilateral donors have helped to place the notions of CCP on the international reform agenda, particularly since the 1990s, which coincides with the radical political transformation in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. They suggest that such a political environment has enabled the rise of ideologies of 'democracy' and the ascendance of multinational corporatist capitalism. The discourse favouring CCP reached a crescendo around the same time because of its assumed link to supporting political democratisation and advancement of capitalist markets.

Postcolonial theorists, on the other hand, argue that subordinate countries sometimes consider a global culture of schooling genuinely attractive since it is associated with and promoted by powerful countries (Anderson-Levitt, 2008). Indeed, in many developing countries, constructivism is viewed as a Western 'best practice' and a very well-established educational approach. Therefore, it enjoys an almost hegemonic position with its 'justified', 'admirable', and 'inspiring' educational ideas (Carney, 2008a). Walker and Dimmock (2000) also refer to a dependent and subservient preoccupation with the developments in the West, and describe how policymakers and educationalists in some Asian countries believe that adopting 'modern' Western philosophies, teaching, and learning practices would lead to taking advantage of the forerunners. Ball (1998), on the other hand, points to education of Southern experts in Northern countries as a phenomenon that contributes to the perpetuation of cultural and political dependency. He suggests that their return to home countries 'carries' ideas, and creates dependency, resulting in devaluation or denial of 'local' solutions to educational problems.

Furthermore, Steiner-Khamsi emphasizes the importance of the 'politics' and 'economics' of educational borrowing and lending (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010). The politics of educational transfer is relevant for both the lender and the borrower, and implies political reasons for exporting and disseminating specific education policies or reforms (e.g. by donor agencies, NGOs, consultants), as well as political motives at the local level for importing a set of education reforms. By using the 'externalisation' concept of Schriewer (Schriewer & Martinez, 2004) as an interpretive framework for analysing the politics of borrowing, Steiner-Khamsi argues that borrowing can function as a means to de-contextualise and de-territorialize educational reforms that are contested in a given country. For instance, when policymakers lack political support for initiating a contested education reform, or if they believe that the reform will encounter significant resistance from various stakeholders, they borrow from abroad to gain legitimacy at home. In this sense, borrowing reflects issues of political legitimacy (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000), and 'borrowing does not occur because reforms from elsewhere are better, but because the very act of borrowing has a salutary effect on domestic policy conflict' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006, p. 671).

The economics of policy borrowing and lending, on the other hand, points to the economic reasons for borrowing a specific education reform. The economics of policy borrowing is particularly salient for low-income countries that are dependent on external aid. By analysing the adoption of outcomes-based education in Mongolia and the Kyrgyz Republic, Steiner-Khamsi demonstrates that these two countries have adopted the specific policy at a time when loans by development banks were made available for implementing them. In other words, in several low-income countries, the time has come for a specific reform when international funding for implementing that particular reform is secured (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006). The economics of policy lending and borrowing also helps to explain why education reforms in low-income countries look increasingly similar to those in developed countries. According to Steiner-Khamsi (2010) this is mainly because international donors (such as development banks and international organisations) provide funding to low-income countries under the condition that they adopt a specific reform package, which is often presented as 'best practices'. However, she also adds that the governments of aid-recipient countries are not passive victims as they creatively deal with their economic dependence by redirecting international funds to locally developed 'national'

programs, and often adopting only the language (not the content) of the imposed reforms.

Finally, Dale's *Globally Structured Agenda for Education* approach also considers the relation between globalisation and education, and argues that the world capitalist economy is the driving force of globalisation and that it directly or indirectly influences the content and form of education policymaking procedures around the world (Dale, 2000). According to Dale, the globally structured agenda for education cannot be reduced to the interests and intentions of any individual nation state because it is 'created by them collectively, in the common interest of those transnational forces currently controlling the global economic system, and constructed as external influences on national systems' (Dale, 2005, p. 120).

Dale (1999) further suggests that in addition to the traditional mechanisms of external influence such as 'policy borrowing' and 'policy learning', a series of other voluntary and non-voluntary mechanisms have gained importance in recent decades. These policy transfer mechanisms are themselves diverse rather than homogenous. They are defined as imposition, harmonisation, dissemination, standardisation, and installing interdependence. While developing his typology, Dale identifies five key dimensions on which the 'new' mechanisms that are associated with globalisation differ substantially from the traditional mechanisms of educational policy transfer. These dimensions encompass the scope of the mechanisms, the locus of viability, the initiating source of the policy change, the nature of the parties to the exchange, and the mode of power employed through the mechanisms.

The 'dimension of power' is particularly interesting to consider for this study. It is based on Steven Lukes' three-dimensional theory of power. According to Lukes, power may be exercised in three different ways, with varying degrees of explicitness and visibility. The first form of power refers to relatively 'naked' use of superior power (power to prevail in decision-making), while the second dimension focuses on the politics of non-decision-making and points to the importance of the ability to exercise power through such means as agenda setting (the power to define the agenda around which decisions are to be made, e.g. OECD and the EU). The third dimension involves the ability to set and control the rules of the game (e.g. setting the rules of 'what education is about') (Lukes, 1974, in Dale, 1999; Dale, 2005). As Dale suggests:

> These forms of power are successively less overt and correspondingly more difficult to counter [...] Power over third world states is now much less likely to be bilaterally applied and much more likely to be achieved through a supranationally organized rearrangement of the rules of the game (Dale, 1999, p. 8).

This does not imply that educational policymaking has moved from the national to the supranational level. Dale argues that this is not a zero-sum game, either a national/or supranational game. Rather, he points to the *pluri-scalar* nature of educational governance, and proposes that 'what we are witnessing is a developing functional, scalar and sectoral division of the labour of educational governance' (Dale, 2005, p. 132).

3.4. Re-contextualisation of educational reforms at the local level

The term 'educational reform' tends to be used interchangeably with 'educational change' and 'educational innovation' (O' Sullivan, 1999). In this study, educational reform is understood as change aimed at addressing systemic, deep and large-scale improvement. After reviewing the different phases of educational change, this part will focus on the factors that operate in implementation phase and will sketch three different approaches to curriculum implementation.

3.4.1. Phases of educational change

Education change moves through distinctive stages of *initiation, implementation* and *institutionalisation.* The first phase is defined as *initiation* (also mobilisation or adoption), and refers to a process that leads up to and includes a decision to adopt or proceed with a change. Change can be initiated from a variety of sources, such as central education authorities, districts, teachers or communities. As such, it can be top down or bottom up. A wide range of factors influence the initiation phase, including the existence and quality of innovations, access to information, advocacy from central and school administrators, teacher advocacy, external change agents, community pressure, support, opposition or apathy, new policy and funds, and problem solving and bureaucratic orientations (see Fullan, 2007). The second phase, *implementation*, involves the first experiences of attempting to put an educational reform into practice. The final phase is called *institutionalisation* (also continuation, incorporation or routinisation), and can be viewed as a continuation of implementation phase. It refers to whether the change gets

built in as an ongoing part of the education system or disappears through attrition or as a result of decisions to discard the change (Fullan, 2007; 1993)

There are numerous factors operating at each phase, and influencing the initiation, implementation or institutionalisation phases in multiple ways. Additionally, the phases are not structured in a linear way since events at one phase can consequently alter decisions made in a previous phase. In other words, what happens at one stage of the change process may strongly influence subsequent stages. Furthermore, there are often no precisely demarcated boundaries between the phases, particularly between the implementation and institutionalisation (Fullan, 2007).

3.4.2. Implementation

The literature on educational reforms illustrates how various reform initiatives have failed to achieve their objectives, and how even the most zealously supported and sweeping reforms can be short-lived and vulnerable from a historical perspective (Ravitch, 1983). For instance, in the USA, a series of large-scale curriculum reforms were initiated in the late 1950s and 1960s. The implicit thinking behind these reforms was that desired improvements at school level could be achieved by flooding the system with external ideas. However, research in the 1970s demonstrated the absence of change at the classroom level and documented massive reform failure because schools often adopted reforms on the surface, altering some of the language and structures but not teaching practices. Experiences with large-scale reforms and outcomes of studies on them have not changed significantly in the following decades either (Fullan, 2007). Likewise, research in developing countries has also demonstrated that implementation of several reforms have encountered serious implementation challenges (Havelock & Huberman, 1970), and often resulted in failure to achieve reform objectives, leading to poor outcomes and waste of considerable time, effort and resources (Rogan & Grayson, 2003; O'Sullivan, 2002; Ward et al., 2003).

These experiences have highlighted that implementing reform policies and putting ideas into practice is far more complex and difficult than foreseen by policymakers and curriculum designers (Fullan, 2007), as 'the lived experience of legislated changes by those forced to implement them often bears little resemblance to the outcomes anticipated by policymakers (Schweisfurth, 2002, p. 14). Change is dynamic, non-linear, unpredictable and challenging (Fullan, 2007), and the impact of national reform is often unpredictable and uneven. The intricacies of a change process and the

multiple problems associated with it appear to be universally acknowledged except for those in a position to dictate change. Education reforms are often developed, prescribed and enforced by groups who are superficially familiar with the realities of classroom life and teachers' work. Besides, political agendas play influential roles in formulating reforms as much as empirical evidence and academic debate (Schweisfurth, 2002).

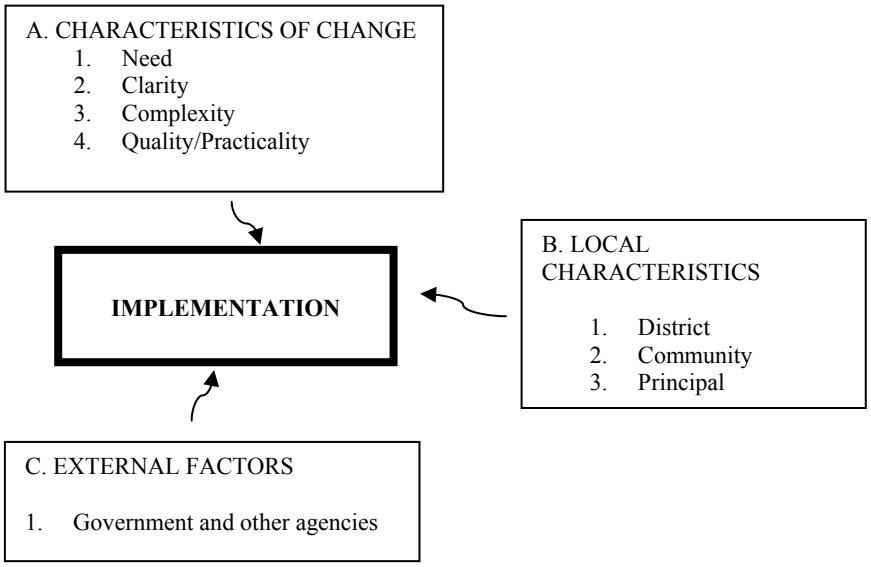
According to House (2000), national leaders formulate their educational policies primarily in response to national economic concerns and they often fail to sufficiently understand or appreciate the educational institutions in their countries. Such focus on economic concerns creates mismatches between educational policies and practices. Policymakers are also often mistaken about their initiatives because:

> [...] they are too far removed from educational work, too wedded to powerful interests, too imbued with misleading ideologies and simply misinformed. Thus, educational policies dissolve into ineffectiveness, to be replaced by other mistaken and ineffective policies' (House, 2000, p. 14).

A range of theories, models and approaches have been developed to identify the factors that affect an implementation process and to analyse the complex relations between these factors. Three of these theories will be outlined here. According to Fullan (2007), there are three groups of interactive factors affecting implementation: characteristics of change, local characteristics and external factors (see figure 1).

The *characteristics of reforms* themselves include need, clarity, complexity and quality, while the *local characteristics* refer to the actors involved in implementation, social conditions of change, the organisation or setting in which people work, and the planned and unplanned events and activities undertaken during implementation. These local factors are identified as school district, school board and community characteristics, the principal, and teachers. Finally, government and other agencies are defined as *external factors* that directly influence the implementation process through monitoring, supporting professional development, or clarifying standards of practice. These factors of implementation reinforce or undercut each other as a complex and interrelated system. Therefore, effective implementation depends on the combination of all the factors rather than on single factors (Fullan, 2007).

Figure 1. Interactive factors affecting implementation (Fullan, 2007).

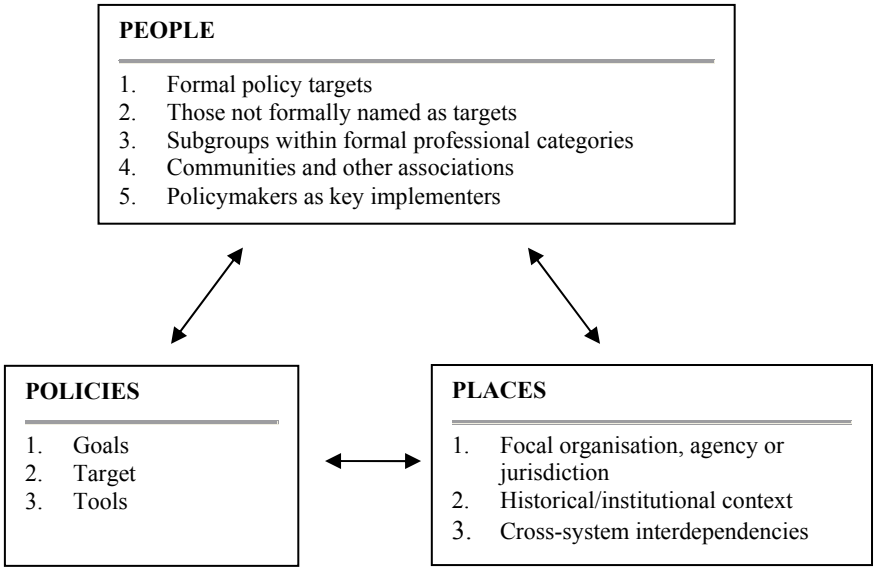


Honig (2006) groups the factors that affect implementation into three: *policy, people* and *places* (see figure 2). These three dimensions point to a highly contingent and situated implementation process. It is not possible to understand the benefits and limitations of one dimension separate from the other as different dimensions of policy, people and places combine to shape implementation processes and outcomes. *Policy* designs generally have three key dimensions – goals, targets and tools, all influencing implementation in distinct ways. For instance, the nature and scope of goals pose fundamentally different implementation challenges.

People who ultimately implement the policy mediate and transform the policy at implementation level. Hence, variation in implementation outcomes is not the exception, but the rule. In contemporary implementation studies, people have begun to take centre stage as researchers examine how they respond to policy demands. People include actors both inside and outside of formal education system, including parents, youth workers, administrators and health service providers. Furthermore, people do not only include those targets formally named in policy designs but also those who nonetheless participate in and influence implementation (e.g. business leaders and city mayors), subgroups within formal professional categories (e.g. teachers with different roles, such as stimulator, storyteller or networker), communities and associations (e.g. teachers' social interactions and trust relationships within

communities), and policymakers as key implementers. The *places* are also fundamental to implementation outcomes, such as educational agencies or school district central offices. Places also include an analysis of deep-seated historical institutional patterns that shape an implementation process. The linkages between schools and other places also matter as educational policies influence other sectors such as health care, social services and community development (Honig, 2006).

Figure 2: Dimensions of contemporary education policy implementation in practice and research (Honig, 2006).



Finally, Rogan and Grayson (2003) developed an analytical framework based on three major constructs: support from outside agencies, capacity to support innovation and profile of implementation. *The support from outside agencies* refers to the kinds of actions undertaken by outside organisations, such as departments of education, aid agencies or teacher unions, to influence (either by support or sanction) implementation practices. The second construct, *capacity to support innovation* is concerned with school factors that are likely to support or obstruct the implementation of innovative curricular proposals, including physical resources, school ethos and management, teacher factors, and student factors. The third construct, *profile of implementation* is developed in order to assist in understanding, analysing and expressing the

extent to which the objectives of the reform programme are put into practice. Since the profile provides a 'map' of the learning area, it is intended to enable curriculum planners to conceptualise levels of curriculum implementation, and to identify strengths and weaknesses in an implementation process (Rogan & Aldous, 2005).

The details of this framework are described in further detail in Chapter 3 and 6 as it is used in this study for analysing the implementation of the revised curricula in Uganda and Turkey. This tool was chosen for analysis as it has been developed specifically for studying curricular reforms. In addition, the framework enables the examination of the profile of implementation, allowing the researcher to observe how 'global' education policies are practiced in diverse contexts.

3.5. Types of curriculum

Three types of curriculum can be broadly differentiated: content, which is expected to be learned, the curriculum that is taught by teachers, and the curriculum that students actually learn. The *intended curriculum* (also defined as 'recommended', 'adopted', 'official', 'formal', 'planned' or 'explicit' curriculum) is the body of content contained in official curriculum documents, list of courses, syllabuses and prospectuses. The intended curriculum incorporates core knowledge and values students are expected to learn. It provides a map of theories, beliefs and intentions about schooling, teaching, learning and knowledge. The *taught curriculum* refers to formal and informal lessons taught in classrooms, it is what teachers do to convey content, ideas, skills and attitudes. It is also called an 'implicit', 'delivered' or 'operational' curriculum. Since teacher beliefs and classroom realities alter an intended curriculum, there can be significant differences between the intended and taught curriculum. Finally, *learned curriculum* (also 'the actual' or 'received' curriculum) refers to the reality of students' experiences, and defines what students have actually learned. There can also be large gaps between what is taught and what is learned (Cuban, 1992; Kelly, 2009). These differences between intended, taught and learned curriculum may be conscious or unconscious. For instance, teachers may deliberately implement the curriculum in ways different from the manner suggested by policymakers or classroom realities may not match up to the intentions and expectations of curriculum designers (Kelly, 2009).

3.6. Approaches to curriculum implementation

Three different approaches to curriculum implementation have evolved while the researchers have studied the gap between intention and reality, between the theory and the practice of curriculum. The initial and most widely applied perspective in such studies has been the *fidelity* perspective. This approach perceives a curriculum as a course of study, a textbook series or a guide for teacher plans. Curriculum content is defined by external experts and it determines what teachers should teach in classrooms. The fidelity approach has been concerned with determining the extent to which an innovation or reform has been adapted and practiced in schools in line with the intended curriculum and seeks to identify factors that aid or obstruct implementation as planned. Curriculum change is perceived as a linear activity starting from the centre (central educational institutions) to the periphery (schools), involving some systematic changes that leave no role for teachers apart from delivery (Snyder et al., 1992).

In recent decades, 'mutual adaptation' and 'curriculum enactment' have also been increasingly considered. *Mutual adaptation* is primarily concerned with how the reform proposal is adapted during the implementation stage rather than measuring the degree to which the reform is implemented according to the expectations of policymakers. This perspective focuses on what actually happens in classroom contexts when a curriculum is implemented and seeks explanations from the contexts and the curriculum implementers (e.g. teachers and head teachers) (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977).The approach foresees inevitable modifications in the course of implementation by both curriculum developers and those who use the curriculum in classroom contexts, and considers such adaptations to be an essential characteristic of implementation. This requires increased communication between teachers and curriculum designers so that necessary changes may be made in a curriculum to adapt it to local contexts. Hence, curriculum change becomes more flexible through mutual adaptations. The teachers assume a more active role in this approach since they adjust and reshape curriculum to match their classroom contexts (Shawer, 2010).

Researchers who apply the third perspective, *curriculum enactment*, are interested in studying how curriculum is mediated by teachers as well as by students. This approach views a curriculum as a process jointly created and jointly and individually experienced by students and teachers. Hence, curriculum knowledge is not a product but an ongoing construction evolved out of the enacted experiences of teachers and students (Snyder et al., 1992).

All three approaches recognise the role of teachers, though to different degrees, as a crucial factor in the implementation process. Since this study focuses on teachers as local actors who are involved in implementation of education reforms, the next part will highlight the centrality of their role in the implementation process.

3.7. The role of teachers

The role of implementers at the 'bottom' of the education system is critical, since change is ultimately a problem concerning the smallest unit. In this respect, the teacher's role as interpreter of and responder to policy is as crucial as that of policymakers at the 'top' who develop and formulate policy decisions (Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977). Indeed, 'hundreds of implementation studies testify to the fact that any given policy varies across and within implementing systems and sites and that the "policy" that matters ultimately is the one enacted within the system, not the one originated outside of it' (McLaughlin, 2006, p. 212). Research has shown that teachers mediate the external demands placed on them in order to produce interpretations of their priorities and desirable classroom practices, which often tend to be very different from those intended by policy directives (Osborn, 2001). In keeping with their knowledge, beliefs, and pre-existing teaching practices (Fullan, 2007), as well as contextual factors, teachers adopt, mediate, resist, or reject reforms. While doing so, they influence the degree of penetration of education reforms at the school level (Napier, 2003). Therefore, the image of the teacher as a neutral conduit between policy and the child is naive and distorted. Such an image ignores teachers' active and creative selves, and the fact that they have an agenda (Schweisfurth, 2002).

A number of factors influence teachers' capacity and motivation to internalise change and implement curriculum reforms, including education level, knowledge, skills, identity and beliefs (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Van Veen et al., 2005; Vulliamy et al., 1997). Teachers also respond to reform initiatives depending on what point they have reached in their own personal lives and careers (Fullan, 2007). Teachers' beliefs about teaching and reform initiatives are particularly influential in their classroom practices (Lumpe et al., 2000; Van Driel et al., 2001). Beliefs function as information filters and they influence how knowledge is used, organised and retrieved. In addition, beliefs are powerful predictors of behaviour as they can reinforce actions that are consistent with beliefs (Gess-Newsome, 1999). Beliefs also aid formation of attitudes concerning particular situations, and such attitudes

might develop into action agendas that guide decisions and behaviours (Pajares, 1992).

In relation to teachers' beliefs, three factors have been identified in the literature as critical for bringing about sustained change. First, teachers' professional and personal motivation is important for complying with and carrying out policy directives (Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977). For instance, in order to embrace an innovation and initiate change in their practices, they need to believe that change is necessary and the proposed change would address the needs adequately. They need to be confident that the change proposals would benefit their students, education and society in general. Second, teachers need to have the capacity, knowledge and skills to undertake the new tasks and responsibilities required by curriculum reform, and they should have confidence in themselves (competency beliefs). Third, there should not be some contextual factors (such as physical resources, institutions or organisations), and people (parents or other teachers) that interfere with teachers' willingness and decision to change (contextual beliefs). In other words, teachers need to perceive the context or the environmental factors as favourable for carrying out a curriculum initiative (Bandura, 1997; Ford, 1992).

The following typology of teacher responses to education reform is generated by some studies: compliance, incorporation, mediation, retreatism, and resistance. Incorporation has been the most common response as teachers most often consolidate innovations selectively into their own practices (Pollard et al., 1994). This selectivity protects teachers from radical change and allows them to preserve those beliefs and practices that they consider important (Schweisfurth, 2002). Reform initiatives are ultimately translated and modified by teachers, and in some cases, they are openly resisted. Teacher resistance has often been viewed as a 'problem' and reduced to some sort of conservative attempt to frustrate reform initiatives. Hence, the good sense embedded in teachers' resistant actions is overlooked and their understanding of what is good for students is discounted (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995).

4. Research questions

This study considers pedagogical approaches based on the principles of constructivism as the 'global' policy that has been subject to significant educational transfer in developing countries in recent decades, and seeks to analyse 'How was the transfer implemented?' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2000, p.164),

in a select number of schools in Uganda and Turkey. The study aims to respond to Steiner-Khamsi's suggestion that we 'must direct our attention to agencies resisting, inverting, or indigenizing educational imports' (2000, p. 158). She argues that research on educational transfer has often tended to neglect agency (Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000). The current study strives to analyse teachers' views and interpretations of the new pedagogical approaches as well as their classroom practices. While doing so, the study aims to identify to what extent teachers welcome or resist 'global' policies, and how they mediate the imported policies in their daily practices. Because of the focus on teacher mediation, rather than a 'fidelity' approach, the study adopts a 'mutual adaptation' perspective in analysing curriculum implementation (Snyder et al., 1992). Since the research focuses on the implementation process, it does not study the policy development phase. However, based on literature review and some interviews with policymakers, it also briefly describes the mechanisms of educational transfer and the patterns of external influence in the case-study countries.

The main research question that framed this study was 'How is the "global" policy on pedagogy mediated locally in Uganda and Turkey?' In order to provide a comprehensive answer to this question, the following sub-questions are formulated:

1. Why and how are the new pedagogies borrowed by the case-study countries?
2. How are the new pedagogies defined in curriculum documents?
3. What are the teachers' views on the new pedagogical approaches?
4. How do teachers implement the new pedagogical approaches?
5. What are the perceived implementation challenges from the perspectives of teachers?
6. What kinds of outcomes of the new pedagogical approaches are observed by teachers?

5. Research methodology

5.1. Comparative education

Within comparative education, considerable attention has been given to why and how countries borrow education policies elsewhere (see case studies in

Steiner-Khamsi, 2004); however, the re-contextualisation of these policies is considered less often, particularly in relation to reforms aimed at pedagogical renewal. According to Alexander (1999a), comparativists have, in general, tended to focus on national education systems and policies rather than on school and classroom processes. Pedagogy is neglected because: it is not the intellectual field from which comparativists have traditionally emerged; it encapsulates all that is difficult and problematic about cross-cultural and cross-national investigation; it is time-consuming, labour intensive, methodologically fraught and acutely vulnerable to charges of cultural naïveté and ethnocentrism. Yet, pedagogy requires particular prominence in comparative studies to rectify this imbalance of attention.

From a pragmatic perspective, comparativists can no longer ignore pedagogy due to some recent developments in the field, such as the growing prominence of 'process' variables in OECD type of studies which have been traditionally based on input-output variables, the rise of school effectiveness research and the extension of its focus to classroom level processes, and the attempts of educational statisticians to encompass the totality of the educational enterprise, including teaching, in multi-level modelling. Besides, policymakers who have been caught up in the international league table game have increasingly acknowledged that what happens in classroom is indeed critical (Alexander, 1999a). Furthermore, Alexander (1999b, p. 149) argues that:

> [...] comparative perspective is an important and necessary part of the quest to understand and improve the science, art or craft of teaching, and to enable us to distinguish those aspects of teaching which are generic and cross international boundaries from those which are culture-specific.

He suggests that more attention needs to be paid to teaching, learning and the classroom transactions as they are at the heart of education. Furthermore, a comparative perspective is critical for developing a better understanding of how local agents and stakeholders encounter and respond to global forces of education reform (Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000).

5.2. Case study approach

As explained by Yin (2009, p.18): 'A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'. In other words, studying a real-life phenomenon in depth requires understanding important contextual conditions that are highly

pertinent to the phenomenon of study (Yin, 2009). Attention to the subtleties and complexities of the case, providing rich detail and being embedded in reality offers advantages to the case study approach. Case studies can penetrate situations in ways that are not possible in numerical analysis (Cohen et al., 2007) and they opt for analytical rather than statistical generalisations (Robson, 2002). Besides, case studies help to establish cause and effect as they observe effects in real contexts, recognising that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects (Cohen et al., 2007). Case studies also focus on individual actors or groups, and seek to understand the events from their perspectives (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). In this study, the processes of interpretation and sense-making as well as the context particularities were central as they focus on teachers' experiences and perspectives in relation to large-scale reforms. Therefore, case study was a natural choice.

5.3. Sampling

5.3.1. Country cases

Uganda and Turkey have been chosen as country cases for this study. Originally, the research project only involved a case study of Uganda. However, as the project evolved, Turkey was also added as an additional country case with the desire to examine the re-contextualisation process in a comparative perspective, to generate more compelling and robust findings, and to strengthen analytical conclusions. Therefore, the fieldwork conducted in Uganda was replicated in Turkey at a later stage.

The choice of country was based on a number of factors, including the appropriateness of the cases for the objectives of this study, language, research interest, and access to suitable fieldwork sites. As explained earlier, Uganda and Turkey have recently revised their curricula for primary schools and adopted new pedagogical approaches based on constructivism. In that sense, they are considered suitable for the purposes of this research. I chose Uganda out of several other low-income countries that have recently adopted CCP because of my research interest in sub-Saharan Africa, and my knowledge of English and inability to converse in any of the other languages spoken in the region. Proficiency in the medium of instruction was critical since the research not only involved extensive interviews with teachers and school management but also classroom observations and analysis of documentary data. In addition to being a potentially very interesting case, I added Turkey because of my research interest in the country. Besides, selecting Turkey as the second case was convenient due to my earlier

research experience in the country, knowledge of its socio-economic, political and education system, and my language skills in Turkish as a native speaker. Because of these reasons, adding a second country case did not prolong my PhD study, which would have been a deterrent if I was required to choose a country that I was not familiar with.

Uganda and Turkey are similar in terms of undergoing major curriculum review processes within similar time-frames and scope, and for being 'late adopters' of pedagogical approaches couched in the rhetoric of constructivism. However, they differ significantly in many other ways, including their geographical size, population, history, political economy, donor involvement and education system. The national context chapters (Chapter 2 and 5) consider these issues and present the particularities of the two countries. Choosing cases that are very different from each other may be considered appropriate for this study, since the research is aimed at analysing how context (structural aspects) and agents (teachers) mediate 'global' policies, and what kind of indigenised implementation profiles emerge as such policies are enacted at school level. In other words, the nature and type of pedagogical reforms which Uganda and Turkey have recently experienced offered enough similarities to warrant comparison, with large differences to help highlight the influence of contextual factors and teacher agency.

I am fully aware that choosing two different education systems, instead of similar ones, does not enable me to have a strong case for studying divergence, as it would be logical to expect a higher probability of divergence between two distinct countries. However, the opposite would be true for studying convergence, since finding traces of convergence between them would be more unlikely. It is important to note here that although the study seeks to respond to the debate on convergence versus divergence of education systems, making a case for either of the arguments does not constitute the primary objective of the research. Besides, the study does not have a normative concern or interest in the reform implementation process. In other words, it does not seek to establish the features of what a pedagogical reform based on constructivism should involve, and how the classroom practices should be. In this sense, the study does not seek an evaluation of the reform implementation process or aim at a comparison of which of the country cases has better 'succeeded' in pedagogical renewal.

5.3.2. Sampling schools and grades

A non-probability sampling approach, which is also known as purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990), was used in selecting schools. Among the different variations of purposeful sampling, intensity sampling was chosen in this research, as focusing on information-rich cases was considered important. In both countries, prior to the nationwide implementation, the new curricula were piloted in select public schools. For this study, these schools were selected as research sites since they were considered as information-rich sites due to the following factors:

1. They started implementing the new curriculum a year before the nationwide implementation, so they had longer experience with the new curriculum at the time this research was conducted.
2. Teachers in these schools received more extensive in-service training compared to non-pilot schools, and have often been involved in training other teachers.
3. Pilot schools in both countries (particularly in Turkey) have received teaching and learning materials and some other resources from the authorities to enable more effective implementation, so teachers were better equipped with resources to realise curriculum objectives.
4. Selection of schools by the authorities for the piloting process was done in both countries while considering a number of criteria, which involved perceived and actual quality of schools (in terms of student achievement scores, particularly in national tests), student background (e.g. socio-economic status, linguistic and ethnic diversity) and commitment of head teachers to large-scale reform processes.

In Uganda 90 schools in 11 districts, and in Turkey 120 schools in nine provinces piloted the revised curricula. Among these schools, pilot schools in the capital cities were selected for this study as the above-mentioned factors were even stronger for these schools due to proximity to the central authorities, resource availability, and diversity of their populations. In Kampala, there were eight pilot schools, and all were visited for this study, so no further sampling was necessary. However, in Ankara, eight pilot schools out of 25 were sampled randomly. By choosing schools where teachers had longer experience with the new curricula, and were better trained and better equipped with resources, the research aimed at going beyond stating the obvious, and explore the teacher views and practices in 'best possible circumstances' existed in these two countries.

Once schools had been selected, the next stage involved sampling grades. In Uganda, the new curriculum was introduced into each grade level one year at a time. Grade one teachers piloted the Thematic Curriculum in 2006, and grade two in 2007 (NCDC, 2006). Therefore, at the time of this study, the Thematic Curriculum was implemented only in grade one and two; hence, the natural choice was to select these two grade levels. In Turkey, on the other hand, the Curriculum 2004 was piloted at all grades up to grade five at the same time, and nationwide implementation started in the following year in the first five grades of primary education (MONE, 2005a). To replicate the case study in Turkey, grades one and two were selected. However, grade five was also added since it was expected to offer some new perspectives and generate new insights. The particularities of grade five were related to pupils and teachers: these pupils were the only pupils in Turkey who have been educated according to the new pedagogical approach since the start of their schooling. Besides, grade five classroom teachers were teaching grade one when they were first asked to implement the new curriculum five years earlier. So they had the unique opportunity to observe the development of their pupils, as they were educated according to the new pedagogical understandings.

In Uganda, schools had up to three streams at grades one or two (e.g. grade 1/A, 1/B or 1/C). Since the total number of streams was manageable, no further sampling was needed. However, in Turkey, the number of pupils per school – hence, the number of streams at a grade level – could be up to 12. In such cases, the classrooms at each grade level were randomly selected.

5.4. Access negotiation

Negotiating access to schools was an important issue, particularly in Turkey. In Uganda, the authorities at the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) provided the list of pilot schools in Kampala, together with the telephone numbers of some of the head teachers. Subsequently, I called the head teachers, introduced myself and explained the nature, scope and purposes of the study, and asked permission to visit their schools. All head teachers responded positively. At school sites, I first visited the head teachers and held an interview with them. In case of their absence, I was welcomed by deputy head teachers. Access to classrooms and classroom teachers was facilitated by deputy head teachers who were responsible for the infant section (for grades up to five), as they introduced me to classroom teachers.

In Turkey, access to schools was first negotiated with the central authorities, since it was virtually impossible to get access to schools otherwise. Teachers are not allowed to participate in any research activity without observing official research permits. I made an application in May 2008 to the Educational Research and Development Department of the Ministry of National Education (MONE) which is in charge of evaluating research applications and granting permits. The evaluation process took a few months during which my research proposal as well as preliminary interview questions were evaluated. Once I was granted the research permit, it was sent to the Provincial National Education Directorate in Ankara. The Directorate sent letters to selected schools informing them that I would be visiting to conduct research. Copies of my research proposal were also sent to each school. I called the head teachers or deputy head teachers who were responsible for coordinating research activities to request their collaboration for this study and made appointments. At each school site, I first visited head teachers and they assigned a deputy head teacher to facilitate my research. I was subsequently introduced to classroom teachers by deputy head teachers.

5.5. Research methods

Three types of research methods have been used for this study: collection of documents, interviews and observation.

5.5.1. Collection of documents

A range of documents was collected at different sites, including schools, universities, Ministry departments and teacher unions. These documents involved curriculum documents (e.g. educational programmes for Turkish, Mathematics, Life Knowledge and Social Studies in Turkey), teachers' guidebooks, booklets, reports and some published works (e.g. publications of teacher unions or reports prepared by Ministry officials). Some papers and presentations were also provided by teachers and school management.

5.5.2. Interviews

The interview is a flexible tool for collecting data, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used, such as verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard ones (Cohen et al., 2007). It is a particularly flexible and powerful tool for probing into complex and deep issues, and understanding individual actors'

perspectives, understandings, and interpretations of events and processes. The interview guide approach (Patton, 1990) yields the preferred type of interview for this study. Accordingly, topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in an outline form which allows a certain structure in the data collection without losing flexibility to adjust to the particularities and idiosyncrasies of individual accounts. The interviewer decides sequence and wording of questions during the course of the interview. Having an outline improves the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection more systematic. Interviews remain reasonably conversational and situational. There are also less constraints and limits to the naturalness and relevance of questions and answers in comparison to standardised open-ended interviews and closed interviews (Patton, 1990).

Interviews were conducted with a range of actors within the education sector, including Ministry officials, members of education institutions, academics, teacher union representatives, school counsellors, and of course the head teachers and teachers who are the focus of this study. By talking to different stakeholders within the education system, the research aimed to explore how different actors understood and viewed recent curricular reforms. Their involvement was also critical to understanding broader discussions and contextual issues that have influenced curricular processes. In total, 24 interviews were conducted with individuals other than teachers and members of school management. Interviews were typically conducted in their offices, on one to one basis (with some exceptions), and the duration of the interviews ranged between 40 minutes and two hours. The interviews were open-ended and informal since it was almost impossible to devise an interview guide that would be relevant to actors working in such diverse positions. With the consent of the participants, the majority of the interviews were tape-recorded.

At school sites, interviews were conducted with school management (Uganda 10 and Turkey 14) and teachers (Uganda 34 and Turkey 69). In line with the chosen interview approach, an interview guideline was developed and used in both contexts with necessary adaptations to the particular contexts. The guideline included the following questions: the background of teachers (age, gender, years of experience, training); their experiences of in-service training prior to piloting, and their views on its appropriateness and quality; general views on the revised curriculum; views on curriculum changes introduced in the curriculum content, pedagogical approach and assessment system (and changes in language of instruction policy in Uganda); how they practise the new curriculum in those areas; perceived and

experienced constraints in the implementation process; perceived outcomes of the revised curricula; and responses they have received from pupils and parents. In addition, multiple other subtopics were probed and explored during interviews.

In both countries, the majority of interviews were conducted in classrooms and in some cases in teacher staff rooms or schoolyards during lesson hours. Although conducting interviews within the classroom in the presence of pupils was not ideal, the circumstances did not allow any other option. In Uganda, the classroom teacher system has been recently introduced together with the new curriculum to lower grades, which meant that teachers were expected to teach all learning areas in classrooms they had been assigned to. However, due to high student numbers, a co-classroom teacher system existed in some schools. This allowed me to interview a teacher outside of the classroom while the co-teacher was in charge of the class.

Turkey also has a classroom teacher system up to grade five, but only one teacher is assigned per classroom. While negotiating my access to classrooms with school management, I was clearly told that they would facilitate my research as long as it would not disturb the normal school day. Classroom teachers were teaching consecutive hours non-stop, with only a 20 minute lunch break. They appeared to be reluctant to stay at school at the end of the school day for interviews due to their other commitments. Therefore, the school management suggested that I could conduct teacher interviews in the classrooms during 'reading hours', or when teachers assign some other activities (such as drawing) that would keep the children quiet and occupied. Teachers were advised to stay in the classroom during those hours to manage the classroom. Grade five teachers, however, had more flexibility since some of the subjects were taught by subject specialists. Therefore, I could made appointments with grade five teachers when they were not teaching. No serious limitations were observed during interviews in classrooms, although some interruptions were experienced when teachers were guiding pupils or maintaining classroom order.

The interviews ranged between 30 minutes and an hour, and interviews were recorded in writing, as the majority of teachers have displayed an apparent preference for this type of data recording. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted in English in Uganda and in Turkish in Turkey. The Ugandan teachers were fluent in English; therefore, apart from some negligible difficulties arising from differences in pronunciation, no apparent communication problems were experienced. In Turkey, conversing in Turkish greatly aided interviews in terms of establishing a cordial

relationship with teachers, building confidence, and covering several issues in relatively shorter periods of time.

5.5.3. Observation

Observation allows the researcher the opportunity to collect 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations. Thus, instead of solely relying on second-hand accounts, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place. Such opportunities have the potential to yield more valid or authentic data than would otherwise be the case with mediated or inferential methods (Cohen et al., 2007). Furthermore, as what people do may differ from what they say they do, observation provides a reality check (Robson, 2002). In this study, unstructured observations were conducted on school premises (such as in a staff room or the corridors) and semi-structured observations were performed in classrooms. Observations focused on *facts* (e.g. infrastructure, resource availability, the number of pupils, seating arrangements), *events* (e.g. student teacher interaction, classroom activities, group work), and on *behaviour* (e.g. teachers' approach to pupils, the degree of friendliness or aggressive behaviour).

In Uganda, lessons were observed in 28 classes in primary one and two, while in Turkey 76 lessons were observed in primary one (31), two (28) and five (17). In both countries, lesson observation was carried out at different times of the day and on all working days. The duration of lesson observation ranged from 30 minutes to two hours in Uganda. Lessons were observed almost in all learning areas, yet the majority were in English, Literacy and Mathematics. Teachers seemed to focus mainly on these areas, and they also appeared to prefer teaching these learning areas in the presence of the researcher, possibly due to the high importance attached to the achievement of literacy and numeracy. These learning areas also appear in the curriculum more often than others.

In Turkey, the duration of lesson observation was 40 minutes. At primary levels one and two, classroom observations were carried out in three lessons, Turkish, Life Knowledge and Mathematics, whereas at primary level five, only Social Studies lessons were observed. In both countries, before lesson observations, I introduced myself to pupils, and answered their questions about my own background and about the research. Afterwards, I maintained a passive presence by sitting in the back, and not interacting with the children. I used a checklist during classroom observations, which included items on classroom organisation, teacher and student activities, student talk,

the level of interaction between students and teachers, teacher feedback, classroom management and atmosphere. The observations were aimed at documenting the presence or absence of learning activities set out in the curriculum and at comparing teacher accounts of what they do in the classroom with their actual practices.

5.6. Reflections on the researcher role

In both countries, I was considered an 'outsider', yet to different degrees. For Ugandan teachers I was someone who lived in a Western country but also someone who originated from another, distant country that many of them knew little about. In that sense, some considered my experience inspiring as I was viewed as a woman 'who could make it in the Western world'. My researcher position as an 'outsider' seemed to aid open discussions with Ugandan teachers as some remarked that 'I can tell you such things; you are not from here and you will leave soon'. In general, the Ugandan teachers appeared to be used to having researchers from foreign countries studying their education system.

In Turkey, I was also seen as an 'outsider' since I no longer lived there. However, I was at the same an 'insider' since I was a Turkish citizen and moved abroad at an adult age after completing my university degree in Turkey. My Turkish identity appeared to be critical for the research process as many Turkish teachers considered education and the new curriculum a very sensitive and political issue. There was considerable distrust among some teachers towards Europeans and their historical 'imperial ambitions' over the country. Therefore, I was also questioned with regard to my affiliations in the Netherlands and motivation to conduct the study. Some directly asked with much suspicion 'Why do they want to know about the Turkish education system?' I needed to highlight that I was the one who had developed an interest in the topic and had added Turkey as a case to my doctoral studies. Indeed, in both countries, it was important to emphasize the independent nature of the study.

I tried to build trust with research participants by explaining the scope of my study, my interest in studying this subject, and my educational and professional background. I also highlighted my interest in education in general, as someone whose father as well as several extended family members had been primary school teachers. Such accounts seemed to help with my rapprochement with teachers. I also underscored the fact that I was not in their school to inspect, control or evaluate their work, or to determine

how well they implemented the reforms. I explained that I wanted to learn from their experiences, interpretations and reflections. I encountered several questions about my life and work, and I tried to be open about these questions. However, I tried to avoid teachers' questions and requests for evaluating their performance. Some approached me directly to ask if they were 'doing it right' and some asked for instructional strategies to improve their teaching and for managing large classrooms.

5.7. Data analysis

Data analysis relied on a systematic organisation of primary data into categories and themes. It involved activities to organise, account for, and explain the data, and to identify patterns, themes, categories and regularities. The data can be organised and presented by people, by issue and by instrument (Cohen et al., 2007). In this study, data is organised by methods and people (groups and individuals). The interview notes, verbatim transcription of the audio tapes as well as classroom observation notes were typed and organised as interviews and observations. Then interviews were further categorised as interviews with key actors, school management and teachers. The texts were read for a general understanding and for delineating emerging themes and codes. Then, the responses were coded with the aid of specialised computer software (ATLAS.ti). The information per code was printed out, read and compared systematically, looking for shared responses, patterns of response and significant differences. While doing so, tentative interpretations and explanations were developed.

5.8. Ethical considerations

The informed consent of those who took part in the study both in and outside school contexts was sought. For this purpose, before interviews and observations, the participants were told about the nature, scope and purpose of the study. The participants had the right to refuse to take part in the research or to withdraw afterwards. Nevertheless, there may have been some issues relating to volunteering, as some teachers in both contexts might have felt 'coerced' to participate due to the fact that I was introduced to them by school management and (kindly) asked to collaborate. Besides, in the case of Turkey, I had research permission from the Ministry and the schools received a letter from the provincial administrative authorities that I would be conducting research in their schools in due time. These might have created

the impression among some teachers that it was their duty to take part in the study. However, I stressed particularly that they had a right not to take part in the study. I also explored the slightest signs of reluctance to make sure that it was the teachers' own free choice to share their opinions and experiences for the purposes of this study. Furthermore, to ensure confidentiality, school names are not mentioned in any of the publications. Likewise, identities of the participants are not revealed. However, since the research was conducted in public schools involved in piloting the new curricula in the capital cities, the schools are easy to identify (particularly in Uganda). Then again, the relatively large number of teachers who took part in the study makes anonymisation possible.

5.9. Limitations of the study

A number of limitations were observed in this study. As a Turkish citizen and someone who was born and educated in Turkey, I have a deeper understanding (compared with Uganda) of the political economy of Turkey, its culture and education system. In addition, factors such as my Turkish identity, the opportunity to converse in my native language, the longer stay and more extended fieldwork period in Ankara, and participation of higher numbers of Turkish teachers in the study have contributed towards a richer and more expanded account of Turkish teachers' experiences and practices in comparison to the data on Ugandan teachers.

The second limitation is related to the choice I made at an early stage in my project in favour of doing my PhD in articles. This not too common strategy had certain benefits, as it allowed me the opportunity to receive comments and criticism from journal editors and anonymous peer reviewers while the PhD was still in progress. It generated a sense of accomplishment as the submitted articles were published or accepted for publication, and provided a certain degree of reassurance. However, there were also some inherent disadvantages to it. A thesis in book format allows for more detail than a journal article, and this is also expected. Due to the word limits journals demanded, detailed information on various aspects explored in this study could not be reported in the articles. For instance, providing 'thick descriptions' of teachers' classroom practices or verbatim presentation of their accounts was not possible because of space limitations, although such descriptions are important and common to research based on case studies.

6. Outline

Following this introductory chapter, the book is structured into two parts, each focusing on a single country. The first part starts with a brief chapter introducing the national context of Uganda by providing an overview of its political history, economic and demographic background as well as its education system (Chapter 2). Then, the implementation of the Thematic Curriculum is analysed from the perspectives of teachers by using an analytical framework developed by Rogan and Grayson (2003) (Chapter 3). The final chapter of this part focuses on reforms relating to pedagogy, and examines teachers' views on CCP, their classroom practices and the perceived implementation challenges (Chapter 4).

The second part follows a similar structure, as it first briefly explores the broader contextual issues, political history, economic and demographic background and education system of Turkey (Chapter 5). The following three chapters present the findings of the Turkish case study by first analysing the implementation of Curriculum 2004 (Chapter 6), then examining teachers' opinions on SCP, their classroom practices and perceived challenges in implementation process (Chapter 7), and finally by exploring teachers' views and responses to change proposals regarding curriculum content, emphasizing the 'good sense' embedded in teachers' resistance to education reforms (Chapter 8). The final chapter of the book provides a conclusion by highlighting the key findings of the study, and attempts to respond to the questions raised in this introductory chapter (Chapter 9). It also considers the implications of the major findings for theory and policy on educational reforms, teachers and pedagogy, and offers some directions for further research.

PART I

UGANDA

CHAPTER: 2

National context

Uganda is a landlocked country in the eastern part of Sub-Saharan Africa with a total area of 241,039 square kilometres (about the size of the United Kingdom), neighbouring Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Kenya. The country has a population of nearly 30.6 million (2007 figures) (UNDP, 2009), characterised by huge ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. At independence in 1962, there were 15 major ethnic groups, speaking an estimated 63 languages or dialects, of which Luganda, spoken in the Buganda region encompassing the capital Kampala, is the most widely spoken. However, since independence, the official language as well as the dominant language of instruction is English due to the colonial links with Britain. There are four main tribal groupings: Bantu, Nilotic, Nilo-Hamites and those of Sudanic origin. The majority of Ugandans adhere to Christianity, as 41.9 percent of the population is Roman Catholic and 42 percent is Protestant. Additionally, 12 percent of Ugandans are Muslims, and the rest adhere to indigenous religions. Ethnicity continues to dominate group formation; however, other divisions, religious and economic, cut across these ethnic divisions. Uganda is divided into four statistical zones (Northern, Eastern, Central and Western) and into 80 administrative districts.

1. Political history

The early inhabitants of Uganda included Bantu-speaking people who came to the region from present Congo around 500 BC. From the north-east, the Hima (present-day Ankore), and from the north, the Luo, moved into the region. These groups have often joined and mixed together. At the same time, they fought against each other for resources. Through these interactions, the early tribal groupings were formed. Later on, these groupings were translated into kingdoms and societies that were led by chiefs and clan leaders. The societies had no central authority and the land was held communally under clan leadership. These groups included, among others, the Lango, Acholi, Karimojong, Iteso, Lugbara and Kakwa in the North and Eastern regions. Battles between them took place on a regular basis. In contrast, the present Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole and Toro were structured as kingdoms and organised on hierarchical lines. They all had a central authority under a king

who had control over populations through clan leaders and chiefs. Occasionally, these kingdoms also fought for superiority and access to land (Nganda, 1996).

The first Europeans came to Uganda in the 1860s. Muteesa the First, who was the king of Buganda at that time, accepted help from the British, to protect and reinforce his position against other foreigners. In the following period, British traders and missionaries came to the Kingdom of Buganda and their influence increased when the British East African Company was given responsibility by the British to administer the area. In 1890, Germany, which was the colonial power in what is now Tanzania, and Britain, drew the boundaries between their East African colonies. From 1900 till its independence, Uganda remained a British Protectorate (Leggett, 2001; Nganda, 1996). In 1962, Uganda achieved its independence from British colonial rule. Its formation as a state, however, was not the result of a gradual national integration process. On the contrary, Uganda's existence and its borders were determined by intense rivalry and competition among imperial powers aiming to control the headwaters of the Nile (Leggett, 2001).

During the decades following independence, Uganda has remained a deeply troubled and divided country in which cultural, political and economic divisions from the pre-colonial and colonial past were exacerbated (Bwengye, 1985; Boas, 2000; Klugman et al. 1999). The colonial boundaries created by Britain to delimit Uganda brought together a wide range of ethnic groups who had inhabited the region for at least 2000 years and had different political systems, languages and cultures. These differences prevented the new establishment from having a working political community after independence.

Moreover, the legacy of the British divide-and-rule policy had some devastating consequences. The British managed to maintain order between the country's numerous ethnic groups by sub-dividing Ugandan society along ethnic lines. They categorised and stereotyped ethnic groups based on their perceived abilities and capabilities. For instance, it was believed that people from the north were more suited to the police force and the army, while those from the south, especially Buganda, were more capable of pursuing jobs that require academic competence (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). As a result, members of Alcholi and Lango from the north dominated the military, while southern groups were active in business. Consequently, some parts of the country, primarily Buganda, came to acquire more privileges compared to other groups. These privileges included improved opportunities to receive formal education and influential positions in society. As Baganda chiefs

administered various regions on behalf of the British, their cultural influence also expanded. These divisions, in turn, contributed to an escalation of tensions and grievances between various ethnic groups (Boas, 2004; Deininger, 2003).

Following independence, the country endured numerous coups and military dictatorships. The authoritarian regime of Idi Amin (1971-79) was responsible for the deaths of some 300,000 opponents, and guerrilla war and human rights abuses under Milton Obote (1980-85) claimed at least another 100,000 lives. During this period, Uganda became notorious for tyranny, oppression, corruption, tribalism, human rights abuses and civil war. It was widely perceived as the basket case of the continent (Leggett, 2001). The political turmoil of those decades resulted in decreases in GDP, decline in agricultural and industrial output, a deterioration in export performance, high rates of inflation, widespread poverty and poor health and educational services (SACMEQ, 2005). During this period, the structural inequalities within the country were also further compounded.

In 1986, the army of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) took power. Under the leadership of Museveni a new government was formed. Whilst the victory of the NRM failed to end Uganda's national divisions and violent conflicts (Boas, 2004) it did bring some stability to the country. The new government's ambitious economic recovery programme succeeded in high growth rates and some reduction in poverty levels. The country's economic performance in the 1990s became a success story and Uganda was praised by the West as a model for sub-Saharan Africa (OECD, 2008). Nevertheless, violent conflict continued, particularly in the northern part between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the government. In fact, the conflict in northern Uganda became a profoundly violent war in which civilians, particularly women and children, were the main victims. An estimated 2 million people were internally displaced, and each week more than 1,000 died, primarily from malaria and HIV/AIDS, in the area (Sullivan-Owomoyela, 2006). A Comprehensive Peace Plan was discussed for two years with LRA. However, in 2008 the war broke out again when the armies of Uganda, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) attacked the rebels in the DRC's Garamba National Park. Joseph Kony, the LRA leader, refused to sign the Comprehensive Peace Plan, insisting that his indictment by the International Criminal Court should first be dropped (OECD, 2009).

Since 1986, president Museveni has governed Uganda under a 'movement system', which is a de facto single party without any opposition. Museveni envisioned a political system without political parties, and

legitimatised this choice by his concerns for sectarianism and ethnic conflict. Accordingly, all Ugandans were supposed to be represented by the National Resistance Movement and elections were to be held on the basis of individual merit. The Ugandan experience with 'no party' or 'movement' democracy came under criticism from both domestic actors and international donors as it was increasingly seen as a hegemonic party system in disguise (Bogaards, 2010). Indeed, many critics described Uganda's political system as a quasi-authoritarian regime (Tangri & Mwenda, 2010).

Consequently, a referendum in 2005 led to the adoption of a multi-party system and opened the upcoming elections to other political parties. Several amendments were made to the Constitution and other Acts of Parliament, enhancing the election prospects of Museveni and his political party. One of the most important amendments was abolishment of the constitutional limit on the President's tenure of office to two terms. The Presidential and Parliamentary elections held in February 2006 were the first multi-party elections in Uganda in the last 25 years. Incumbent President Museveni was re-elected with 59 percent of the vote (OECD, 2009). Soon after coming to power in 1986, Museveni had attributed the 'problem' of Africa in general and Uganda in particular to political leaders 'who want to overstay in power'. However, he continues to see himself as indispensable to the stability and prosperity of Uganda, and seems to be determined to contest the Presidential elections in 2011 and run for a sixth term (Tangri & Mwenda, 2010).

2. Economic and demographic background

After 1986, the NRM initiated a national reconstruction process including large-scale reforms in major areas of social and economic policy. The donors have also been highly involved in this process. The reform efforts generally displayed a commitment to democratisation and economic reconstruction, and were characterised by liberalisation, privatisation, deregulation, decentralisation of governance, and the consolidation of private property rights (Brett, 1995). These measures aimed at enabling the private sector to become the major engine of growth. In the 1990s, Uganda experienced significant economic growth and substantial increases in national revenue. The country is regarded by some as one of the most successful economies in Africa, and its strong economic performance was attributed to prudent macroeconomic management and bold structural reforms (OECD, 2006). It is also important to highlight that the role of donors in the recovery and growth

process has been critical, as economic reforms were supported by large inflows of foreign aid, making Uganda a strongly aid-dependent country (Wiegratz, 2006). In 2007, ODA net total (all donors) amounted to USD 1.7 billion (African Economic Outlook, 2010), accounting around 30 percent of Uganda's annual budgetary resources (Reuters, 2010).

Economic growth has largely been fuelled by expansion in agriculture, construction and the communications sectors, and averaged 7 percent for much of the 1990s (Ward et al., 2006). Despite the slowdown in the beginning of 2000s, the country recorded high growth rates in recent years, well above sub-Saharan African average. The real GDP growth was 8.1 percent in 2007. Growth was driven by the service sector (led by financials services, transportation and communications), which accounted for half of GDP. Agriculture and fishing accounted for 22 percent of GDP in 2007. Coffee, cotton and cut flowers are important cash crops. The industrial sector (manufacturing, construction and mining) accounts for 23 percent of GDP and is estimated to grow further. The discovery of commercially viable oil deposits in the western part of the country has raised hopes that Uganda will soon become a net oil exporter (African Economic Outlook, 2010).

Despite high growth rates recorded in the past two decades, Uganda remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with a GDP of USD 16.6 billion and a per capita GDP of USD 521 (2008 figures) (African Economic Outlook, 2010). The country is classified as a lower income country by the World Bank (World Bank, 2009), and listed under the 'medium human development' countries by UNDP (ranking as the 157th out of 182 countries in the world) (UNDP, 2009). Although poverty has fallen, it still remains high. According to Uganda National Household Surveys, the poverty levels have fallen in the past two decades. The 1992/93 survey estimated that 56.4 percent of Ugandans were poor. The 2002/03 survey reported the share of poor people as 38.8 percent and the latest 2005/06 survey recorded further decline to 31.1 percent. The final survey indicated substantial urban/rural and regional differences in poverty levels: 94.1 percent of poor people were living in rural areas and half of the poor were from the northern region, and 24 percent from the east (UBOS, 2006).

According to international benchmarks, the rate of population with an income below USD 1.25 a day was 57.4 percent in 2002, and 51.5 percent in 2005. In addition, the rate of population below with an income USD 2 a day was 79.8 percent in 2002 and 75.6 percent in 2005 (World Bank, 2010). There are significant regional differences in Uganda, as the Northern region has the highest poverty rate (60.7 percent), highest annual average population

growth (4.2 percent), highest fertility levels (an average of 7.9 children per woman) and highest proportion of people living in a hut (68 percent) according to 2005/06 figures. The second most disadvantaged region is the eastern region, followed by the western region. The central region, on the other hand, scores much higher on several social and economic indicators (UBOS, 2006).

Recent statistics point to low life expectancy at around 52 years. The population growth is 3.3 percent, which is one of the highest in the world. Over 87 percent of the population lives in villages and small trading centres. In fact, there is only one significant city in the country, the capital Kampala in the south (UNDP, 2009).

3. Education system

3.1. Historical overview

During the colonial period, educational development in Uganda was highly dependent on the initiatives of Christian missionaries. Educational opportunities were available only to small elite (e.g. children of the aristocracy, clergy and tribal chiefs) and the masses remained largely illiterate. After independence, the Castle Commission (1963) recommended expansion of post-primary education, improvement of educational opportunities for girls, provision of adult education, increased parental contribution to education and a strong emphasis on education quality. The government took measures to realise the Commission's recommendations, making massive capital investments into secondary education and constructing schools throughout the country. These policies also reflected the prevailing strategies of international aid agencies at the time on high-level manpower development (Tumushabe, 1999). The Castle Commission report guided education policies until the 1992 Government White Paper.

In the post-independence period of 1960s, the education system of Uganda was considered as one of the best in East and Central Africa. However, the enduring conflicts from the second half of the 1960s to the mid-1980s had a devastating impact on all aspects of Uganda's social, economic and political life, including its education system. Prior to mid-1980s, budgetary allocations to the education sector had dropped to less than 1 percent of GDP, only 50 percent of the children could go to school, and over 90 percent of educational costs were paid directly by parents. Furthermore, in the majority of the schools, infrastructure had been either destroyed or

damaged severely; textbooks, teacher manuals and other supplementary materials were in short supply; and teachers were underpaid, under-trained or untrained and consequently highly demoralised. Additionally, educational planning and management systems could not function effectively, rendering curricula and related assessment systems obsolete (Eilor, 2005; MOES, 2001). In addition to political instability and violent conflicts, heavy debt burden, declining commodity prices, and rising orphanhood associated with war and AIDS have also disabled the education system's ability to provide good quality education to the growing number of Ugandan children (Tumushabe, 1999).

After NRM came to power, the new government appointed the Education Policy Review Commission. The Commission published its report in 1989 and recommended the universalisation of primary education by the year 2000. A second committee, which was appointed in the early 1990s, published a Government White Paper in 1992 entitled *Education for National Integration and Development*, and set out a major education reform programme to be realised in the next 25-year period. The White Paper also emphasized providing education opportunities for all Ugandan children by a slightly later date of 2003 (Ward et al., 2006). This was motivated by the Commission's conviction that participation in primary education is a prerequisite for achieving national unity and accelerating economic growth in Uganda (Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005).

Nevertheless, the government was slow to implement these recommendations and to commit adequate resources to the education sector. Stasavage (2005) argues that education was not high on the reconstruction agenda in the post-1986 period, and that even a decade later President Musevini was reluctant to commit to a primary education strategy that would require significant increase of public expenditures. Instead, he continued to favour prioritising road building and defence expenditure. Nonetheless, the return to multi-candidate political competition in 1996 helped lead Musevini to promise abolishment of primary school fees. In response to public enthusiasm for the issue, the emphasis on Universal Primary Education (UPE) became more and more pronounced during the course of 1996 campaign. Democratic party politics was also critical to the successful implementation of UPE: in the post-election period, it was soon understood that education would be one of the main areas by which government's performance would be evaluated by the public. Therefore, unlike some other governments who came to power with similar promises in African countries, Musevini steadily increased public expenditures on education (Stasavage, 2004).

In the early 1990s, reconstruction of education was initiated with a series of reforms under the umbrella of the Primary Education and Teacher Development Project funded by the World Bank and USAID. The reforms were designed to increase enrolment rates, reform teacher training, improve supply of textbooks and instructional materials, and revise the primary school curriculum. Furthermore, the UPE, which was launched in 1997, aimed at reducing the high cost of primary education and making primary schooling compulsory and tuition-free. The policy also sought to increase budgetary allocations to primary level; indeed more than half of the total education expenditure was directed at primary sector in the following years (Tumushabe, 1999). The UPE has resulted in dramatic increase in primary school enrolment rates, as primary enrolment grew from 3.1 million in 1996 to 7.4 million in 2008 (UBOS, 2009). There were also significant improvements in the provision of infrastructure (e.g. classrooms and teacher houses) and the recruitment and deployment of teachers. Several donors in Uganda have also supported universal primary education as an objective and at various platforms, they have tried to persuade the Ugandan government to devote more resources to primary education. From the perspective of donors, in addition to being a basic human right, provision of primary education is an effective means of poverty eradication and economic growth. Donor support has played a critical role in implementation of UPE and other educational reforms since external agencies have covered more than 50 percent of the education sector budget in grants, loans and technical assistance (DGIS, 2003).

Furthermore, in 2006, the Ugandan government announced the free Universal Secondary Education (USE) programme, and became the first sub-Saharan African country to adopt such a policy. The programme was motivated by increasing demand for secondary education, employers' need for more highly educated workforce, and Musevini's aim to draw more votes by the promise of free secondary education. The policy was adopted with little attention to system capacity, organisational planning for implementation stage, financial resources or for anticipating consequences of rapid expansion of secondary schooling. As Chapman et al. (2010, p. 81) suggests, 'USE is best understood as a symbolic and political decision of Government'. Therefore, its implementation was plagued with various challenges (see Clegg et al. 2008 for an in-depth analysis of implementation challenges).

The White Paper continues to guide the current educational policies in Uganda. Furthermore, the country is committed to achieve the EFA goals and the MDGs. Education is considered an important sector in national

development; it has been identified as a key component of human capital quality and an essential ingredient for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. The education sector was also linked directly to a multi-sectoral Poverty Eradication and Action Plan, and the role of education in strengthening civil institutions, building a democratic society, empowering women and protecting the environment has been underscored (MFPED, 2004).

Educational goals and objectives are laid down in strategic plans by the Ministry. The Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) was developed for the period of 1998-2003 and prioritised improving access to primary education through UPE programme. Since this objective was largely realised by 2004, the new plan – the Education Sector Strategic Plan for 2004-2015 – set out new priorities, including raising the quality and relevance of education and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the education sector. The government focuses on improving the capacity and the quality at primary level and reducing inequalities in access to primary schooling. The government is also taking action to increase educational opportunities at secondary levels, which has been primarily financed by parents (Winkler, 2007). Higher education, on the other hand, is increasingly liberalised and privatised (Syngellakis & Arudo, 2006).

3.2. Structure of the education system

Uganda's education system includes education and training at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Pre-primary education is not part of the formal education system, but provided by private individuals and NGOs. It is mainly concentrated in urban areas. Primary education comprises seven years and the official age range is 6 to 12 years. Secondary schooling involves two levels: ordinary secondary (four years) and advanced secondary (additional two years). The official school age range is 13 to 18 years old. Pupils who complete ordinary secondary education are awarded with the Ugandan Certificate of Education or 'O' level, and those who successfully complete advanced secondary are awarded with the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education or 'A' level (Ward et al., 2006). Tertiary education involves universities, colleges of commerce, technical colleges, as well as teachers' colleges. The A-level secondary school certificate is required as a basic entry to universities and colleges of commerce. In addition to the formal system, there is a non-formal education system which aims to serve the educational

needs of disadvantaged children and young people (see Hoppers 2008 for an overview of non-formal education in Uganda).

Transitions between different levels of education are governed by a national examination system. At the end of their primary schooling, pupils take a national examination, the Primary School Leaving Examination, at grade seven. Likewise, at the end of lower and upper secondary schooling, students sit in for centrally administrated exams. At each transition stage, high numbers of students are forced to leave the education system because of the lack of capacity at post-primary levels (Syngellakis & Arudo, 2006). The national examinations are designed and conducted by the Ugandan National Examinations Board (UNEB). Curriculum development at all levels of education other than tertiary is the responsibility of the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) which was established in 1974. Since the 1990s, planning and administration of education has been gradually decentralised to the districts. Districts are required to manage the delivery of primary and secondary education in collaboration with schools and communities. The role of the central authorities has mainly become policymaking, investment management and quality assurance. At the district level, education is supervised, planned and overseen by the District Education Officers. The Government provides for the inspection and supervision of all educational institutions (Tumushabe, 1999).

3.3. Patterns of participation

According to most recent statistics provided by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report, there were around 7.5 million Ugandan children enrolled at primary schools in 2007. The net enrolment ratio was 95 percent, and gender parity index was 1.03 in the same year. The number of out of school children was reported as 341,000, of which 36 percent were girls. Repetition rate for all grades for the year 2005 was 13.1 percent (UNESCO, 2010) Completion rates have been considered unsatisfactory as more than half of the pupils do not finalise their primary education (MOES, 2008). For instance, only 685,000 children were enrolled at grade five in 2006 out of 1.8 million children who were registered at grade one in 2000 (UBOS, 2009). In 2008, a new law was passed to make attendance compulsory. Parents can face up to seven years in prison if their children are not in primary school. The pupil-teacher ratio at primary level has improved slightly since 2000, from 59.4 to 57 in 2008. Class sizes remain large at 72 (OECD, 2009). There were 131,000 teachers working in the education sector in Uganda in 2008 (UBOS, 2009).

At secondary level, around one million students were enrolled in 2008, which corresponds to a 23.5 percent net enrolment ratio. Participation levels at tertiary level are much lower as there were only 155,000 students attending tertiary education institutions in 2007 (MOES, 2008).

It is also important to highlight the significant differences in educational attainment across the country (see Higgins, 2009; Tumushabe, 1999). According to the findings of 2005/06 Uganda national household survey, 20 percent of the population aged 15 years and above had never had any formal education, 43 percent had had some primary education, but had not completed primary seven. The proportion of people without any formal education was higher in the rural areas (23 percent) than in urban areas (9 percent), and the proportion of females who had never had formal education was higher (28 percent) than that of males (11 percent) (UBOS, 2006). Gender disparities in education are mostly caused by high dropout rates of girls in upper primary school, characterised by low retention, repetition, dropout and non-completion. Therefore, while overall enrolment figures for girls are comparable to boys at lower grades, from grade four onwards there is widening of the gender gap (MOES, 2005). This is caused by a mix of complex factors, including poverty, domestic work, differential parental attitudes towards girls' education, early marriage and gender-based violence at school (see Tumushabe, 1999 for a detailed discussion of these issues).

3.4. Major issues at primary level

The Ugandan primary education system suffers from some system-wide problems. According to a study aimed at analysing the efficiency of the Ugandan public education system, the main issues at primary level included the leakage of financial resources between the central government and the school; high teacher and head teacher absenteeism; and poor teacher deployment (Winkler, 2007). Six percent of total budgeted recurrent primary education expenditures is estimated to be leaked through ghost teachers, misuse of UPE grants by district governments and questionable expenditures of the Ministry. Teacher absenteeism is high in Uganda, estimated around 27 percent, a rate which is much higher than other developing countries. Moreover, across districts, teachers are not deployed to the regions where they are most needed. Also, although early grades have a larger class size and later grades a much smaller one, the number of teachers allocated to early grades is fewer. In addition, the lack of an effective inspection system at the district level contributes to lack of accountability by districts and schools to

parents, the public and the Ministry, and contributes to low levels of educational quality (Winkler, 2007). In relation to teacher deployment, the inadequacy of teacher training is also frequently highlighted as an important issue. All teacher education programmes were reviewed in 2006 and their improvement was underscored as critical to enhancing education quality (O'Sullivan, 2010).

Although enrolment rates have increased sustainably after the introduction of the UPE programme, and Uganda is projected to achieve UPE and Millennium Development Goal 2, there are serious concerns about high dropout, absenteeism and repetition rates. Besides, the learning achievements of those who stay in school are distressingly low. For instance, in 2008, the percentage of children who achieved expected competencies in literacy was 47 at primary three and 51 at primary six. For numeracy, the achievement levels were lower: 46 percent at primary three and 44 percent at primary six (MOES, 2008). Although these levels are considered low, they nevertheless indicate some improvement in recent years. Indeed, the periodic studies conducted by UNEB have shown much lower achievement levels in the past years (UNEB, 2005; 2003).

Ownership in education policymaking is another concern. While external donors tend to believe that education policies have been driven largely by the Ugandans themselves, this perception is not fully shared by their Ugandan partners (DGIS, 2003; Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005). High dependence on donor aid, which accounts for more than 50 percent of the Ministry budget, makes it very likely that the Ugandans conform to donor priorities and refrain from policies that would alienate the donor community in Kampala. For instance, between 1998 and 2002, external assistance funded between 54 percent and 61 percent of the recurrent costs of primary education (DGIS, 2003). The urgency of improving the efficiency and quality of primary schooling as well as the announcement of universal secondary education have intensified the Ministry's need for financial resources. However, there is fierce donor criticism directed at mounting corruption and government's reluctance to combat it. Some donors are already considering a range of actions, such as withholding disbursement, reductions in aid or reprogramming aid away from direct budget support. Cutbacks in aid would likely endanger the government's key public investments in the education sector (Reuters, 2010).

4. Concluding remarks

This chapter attempted to describe the broader contextual background in order to portray under which circumstances the curriculum for primary schools was revised in Uganda. It also helps to better comprehend the contextual factors that are likely to influence the implementation of the new curriculum. As the chapter highlights, Uganda is characterised by a young population, huge regional income inequalities, high levels of poverty and (inter-ethnic) tension, resource scarcity, and overdependence on donor support. The country takes great pride in its UPE programme as it resulted in dramatic increases in access to primary education. Indeed, Uganda came very close to achieving universal enrolment and gender parity. Many referred to Uganda as a success story and an exceptional case on a continent which has some of the lowest enrolment rates and largest gender disparities in the world. However, although UPE increased access to education, it has paradoxically compromised access to knowledge because of declining education quality. In an attempt to reverse such negative trends and improve children's access to good quality learning processes, the Ministry introduced a new curriculum in 2006, called the Thematic Curriculum. The next two chapters will trace the curriculum review process and critically examine the implementation of the Thematic Curriculum and the new pedagogical approach from the perspectives of teachers.

CHAPTER: 3

Curriculum change in Uganda: Teacher perspectives on the new Thematic Curriculum

ABSTRACT[2]

Based on a fieldwork study, this chapter seeks to investigate the implementation of Thematic Curriculum in Uganda from the perspectives of teachers. The chapter shows that although the majority of teachers are enthusiastic about the new curriculum, their implementation efforts are constrained by a multitude of challenges. The findings raise questions with regard to the appropriateness of the new curriculum initiative to the structural realities of Ugandan classrooms, and calls for increased attention to the implementation process.

1. Introduction

In the past few decades, almost all sub-Saharan African countries have been involved in educational reforms, particularly in development of new curricula (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). Often, these curricula are well-designed and have laudable aims to achieve. Nevertheless, in many cases, their implementation has resulted in less than desirable outcomes and led to waste of considerable resources, time, and effort since well-intentioned policies were never translated into classroom reality (Rogan & Grayson, 2003).

The literature on education reforms in developing countries has been increasingly focusing on the extent to which numerous educational reform initiatives were rarely effectively implemented and have often failed to achieve their objectives (Fullan, 2007; Higgins, 2004; O'Sullivan, 2002; Psacharopoulos, 1989; Ward et al., 2003). There is now a common acknowledgement that policymakers need to consider and plan for the implementation stage if reforms are to be successful. Indeed, policymakers need to view implementation as a critical stage and understand all stages of reform process as interdependent, rather than as distinct from each other

[2] The chapter is based on:

Altinyelken, H.K. (2010). Curriculum change in Uganda: teacher perspectives on the new thematic curriculum. *International Journal of Educational Development,* 30 (2), 151-161.

(O'Sullivan, 2002). Nevertheless, sufficient analytical attention has not been given to the implementation processes in developing countries; hence, many aspects of such processes are not yet well understood. Consequently, there is a limited information base that policymakers can draw on (Dyer, 1999). For this reason, Dyer (1999) argues that there is an urgent need for research that focuses on the implementation process in order to improve our knowledge on the actual processes of change, the potential problems and issues that can emerge, and methods of addressing them.

This chapter aims to respond to Dyer's call for more research on the implementation process by looking at the experience of Uganda. Similar to other African countries, Uganda has engaged in various curriculum reforms in the post-independence period after 1962. The new curriculum for primary schools, called the 'Thematic Curriculum', has been recently developed and implemented nationwide starting from February 2007. There are high expectations associated with the new curriculum. A literate and numerate population is regarded imperative for sustainable development and economic growth in Uganda. In this context, the Thematic Curriculum is believed to contribute to such processes by improving education quality, and more specifically by increasing the achievement levels of in literacy, numeracy and life skills.

Similar to many other curriculum initiatives, the Thematic Curriculum has many laudable goals and objectives. Yet, it remains to be seen whether the new curriculum initiative will be adequately implemented by teachers and whether the well-intentioned policies incorporated into the curriculum will be translated into classroom reality. This chapter seeks to explore these issues from the perspectives of teachers. It is based on a fieldwork study in primary schools that were selected to pilot the new curriculum in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. The chapter adopts an analytical framework developed by Rogan and Grayson (2003), and explores to what extent and how teachers have been implementing the Thematic Curriculum.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. The significance of implementation stage in education reforms

Decision-making is a complex and crucial event in the policy process. It is preceded by analytical and/or political activities and followed by equally significant planning activities. Although both types of activities are crucial in

developing and realising education reforms, more attention has often been given to policy formulation at the expense of implementation stage. This is particularly the case in developing country contexts (Haddad, 1995). As Rogan (2007) confirms, the attention and energies of policymakers are too often focused on the 'what' of desired educational change and neglect the 'how'.

A considerable amount of planning and even de facto policy formulation takes place during the actual implementation process. These include the following reasons: (1) circumstances related to implementation constraints cause policy modifications to take place; (2) feedback obtained during implementation causes reassessment of aspects of the policy decision and subsequent modifications by policymakers; and (3) the mere translation of abstract policy intentions into concrete implementation causes reassessment and redesign. Undertaking such changes is not exceptional during educational reform process since implementation problems are frequently under-estimated during policy planning. Indeed, 'misjudging the ease of implementation is probably the most frequent error in policy-making' (Haddad, 1995, p. 36). Dyer (1999) warns that when implementation stage has not been well planned and structured, it may result in strong resistance to policy messages and unexpected outcomes. Consequently, the reform policy may be diluted by ad hoc adjustments and short-term strategies for coping.

Referring to the experiences of USA and Australia in educational change, Porter (1980) notes that those who are concerned with policymaking and enacting the relevant legislation hardly ever pay attention to the implementation stage. Likewise, in his analysis of 21 the World Bank-supported educational reform programmes, Verspoor (1989) concludes that such programmes tend to emphasize adoption and neglect implementation phase. Therefore, even if these programmes were essentially based on a good idea, the majority of them resulted in low outcomes due to poor implementation. Dyer (1999) also maintains that such neglect is highly regrettable, particularly in developing country contexts, as they can ill afford the wasted resources, time and effort. Moreover, cumulative and comparative knowledge of successful and less successful implementation experiences is hardly used in the design of new reform programmes. Therefore, the same mistakes can be repeated rather than being avoided (London, 1993).

2.2. Analytical framework

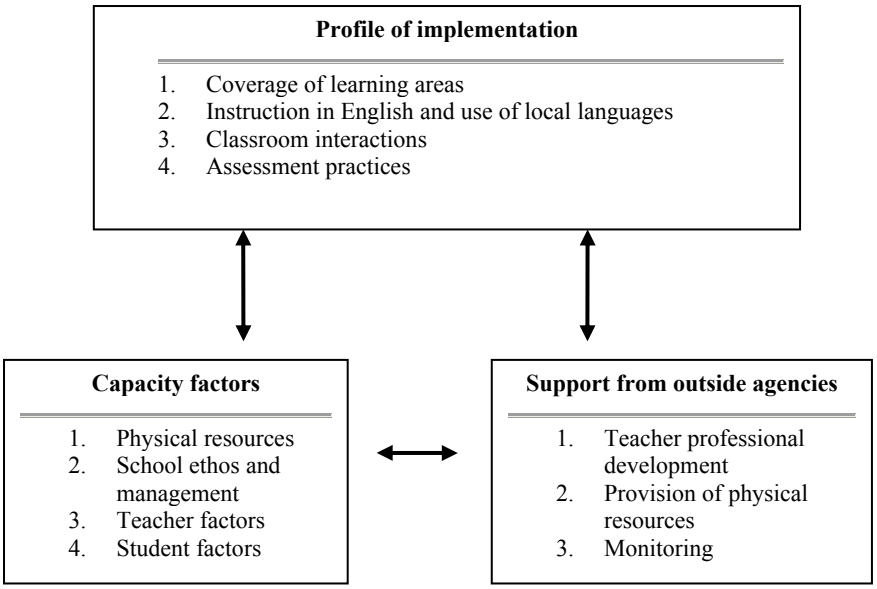
Within this study, in order to explore how teachers implemented the Thematic Curriculum in selected schools in Kampala, a framework developed by Rogan and Grayson (2003) is used with some adaptations. The framework draws on the school development, educational change, and science education literature, and attempts to overcome some of the shortcomings of earlier frameworks developed by Beeby (1966), and Verspoor and Wu (1990). Beeby (1966) categorised schools and educational systems according to four developmental stages (Dame School, Formalism, Transition and Meaning), and assumed that schools progress from 'lower' to 'higher' stages. However, Beeby's model underestimates the complexity of an educational system and focuses only on teachers, making no reference to other aspects of the school context.

The more comprehensive model, which was developed by Verspoor and Wu (1990) and later on adapted by De Feiter et al. (1995), broadens the focus of development by including factors related to teachers, curriculum and school. However, this model neglects students. Similar to Beeby model, it proposes four stages of development: Unskilled, Mechanical, Routine and Professional. This model also implies a linear view of curriculum change, moving from one stage to the next higher stage. Therefore, both models tend to obscure the complex and idiosyncratic nature of the process (Rogan & Grayson, 2003).

Rogan and Grayson (2003) base their theory of implementation on three main constructs: support from outside agencies, capacity to support innovation, and profile of implementation (Fig. 3) The 'support from outside agencies' describes the kinds of actions undertaken by outside organizations, such as departments of education, to influence practices, either by support or sanction. In many developing countries, outside agencies may also involve international development agencies and local or international NGOs. The sub-constructs are divided into two: material support and nonmaterial support. Material support may include provision of physical resources such as buildings, books, or apparatus, and direct support to students (such as school-lunch programmes). Non-material support is mostly provided in the form of professional development. It is probably one of the most visible and obvious ways in which outside agencies attempt to bring about change in schools. As the literature on 'learning organisation' suggests, teacher professional development can also be promoted through cooperation and support among teachers (Karsten et al., 2000). Therefore, it can also be regarded as a sub-

construct of school capacity. To bring about change, outside organisations can also exert pressure, such as by way of monitoring.

Fig. 3. The analytical framework (Adopted from Rogan & Grayson, 2003).



The construct 'capacity to support innovation' is concerned with factors that are likely to support or hinder the implementation of new ideas and practices in the new curriculum. This construct recognizes that schools differ in terms of their capacity to implement innovations. Possible indicators fall into four categories: physical resources, school ethos and management, teacher factors, and student factors. Physical resources are crucial as poor conditions and limited resources can limit the performance of even the best teachers and students. The school ethos and management are not the same, yet they are considered together as they are closely intertwined, particularly in schools in developing countries. If the school is in disarray and not functioning well, innovation cannot or will not be implemented. Research has also shown that the leadership role of the principal is critical in reform implementation (Fullan, 2007). Teachers play a pivotal role in reform processes, and factors such as their background, training, subject matter knowledge, motivation, commitment to teaching, and attitudes towards proposed innovation influence their capacity and willingness to implement change. Likewise, the background of students, and the kind of strengths and constraints they might

bring to the school are crucial. A range of issues influence student attitudes to learning and responses to change, such as their home environments, parental commitment to education, health and nutrition, and proficiency level in the language of instruction. The contribution of these four factors to the capacity of school to support innovation is likely to be dynamic and changing over time.

The third construct, 'profile of implementation' assists in understanding, analysing and expressing the extent to which the objectives of the reform programme are put into practice. It recognizes the fact that there can be multiple ways of putting a curriculum into action. However, it assumes that some broad commonalities of what constitutes excellence will emerge. In addition, the profile recognizes that there can be different levels at which implementation might be said to occur. Therefore, implementation of a new curriculum is not an all-or-nothing proposition.

3. Contextual background

3.1. Curriculum review process

Uganda has made enormous efforts and invested substantially through UPE to increase access to primary education. These efforts have resulted in dramatic increases in primary school enrolment rates. Immediately in 1997, enrolment rates doubled and continued to increase afterwards. Enrolment at primary level rose from 2.6 million in 1996 to 7.5 million in 2008. Gross enrolment ratio for all grades was 113.1 percent in 2008 and the net enrolment ratio was 93.3 percent in the same year (MOES, 2008). Other major gains included construction of new schools and classrooms, deployment and training of additional numbers of teachers, and increases in the production and distribution of textbooks. In 2008, there were 104,899 classrooms and 127,694 teachers on government payroll. Pupil teacher ratio in government schools was 53 (MOES, 2008).

Nevertheless, since the primary goal of UPE has been on access to primary education, it has significantly overshadowed issues relating to education quality. There is a widespread perception, especially among parents, that the quality of primary education has suffered because of the rapid expansion of the system with the UPE. There are indeed a number of weaknesses and challenges evident in the education system, such as poor student performance, frequent student absenteeism, high dropout and repetition rates, and poor quality of new infrastructure (Hoppers, 2008). In

fact, the quality of education at primary level remains largely unsatisfactory. For instance, as a result of high dropout rates, only 22 percent of the 1997 primary one cohort was progressing through primary seven in 2003. Various studies have also shown that the majority of Ugandan pupils were failing to achieve adequate levels of literacy and numeracy. For instance, studies conducted by Ugandan National Examination Board (UNEB) in 2005 revealed that only 38 percent of the primary three pupils and 30 percent of the primary six pupils reached the defined competency levels in Literacy. Figures for Numeracy were 14 percent and 33 percent for primary three and primary six pupils, respectively (UNEB, 2005). These results were considered by many to be both disappointing and unacceptable.

A number of research studies have tried to analyse the underlying causes of low quality at primary schools. These studies highlighted lack of qualified teachers (especially in rural areas), inadequate lesson planning, overly large classes, lack of basic materials, and high teacher and head teacher absenteeism (ESA, 2003). These studies also raised questions about the quality and appropriateness of curriculum. Indeed, there had already been some criticism of the 2000 curriculum before it was introduced into primary schools. Therefore, the curriculum issue was kept very much at the centre of the growing debate on education quality in the past years. Consequently, the MOES initiated a curriculum review process, and installed a Task Force to consider the 2000 primary curriculum (Penny et al., 2008; Ward et al., 2006).

The subsequent report of the Task Force confirmed earlier concerns over the curriculum. The report concluded that the overall performance of pupils at primary level had not significantly improved, and that literacy levels in English and in local languages were unacceptably low, especially outside Kampala and in rural areas. The curriculum was overloaded, emphasized the acquisition of facts in various subjects, and the teaching and learning also focused mainly on recall and other lower cognitive skills. In addition, 'reading, writing, listening and speaking were not allocated sufficient time in the current primary curriculum and that literacy and numeracy teaching skills in lower primary grades were seriously inadequate. Because students failed to develop early literacy, they performed poorly in all curriculum subjects and failure to perform led directly to loss of interest by both parents and students with consequent high dropout rates' (Read & Enyutu, 2005, p. 9).

The Review Report also highlighted that reform of the primary curriculum, by itself, would not be sufficient to achieve higher education quality, and suggested a number of other, closely related areas that needed urgent reforms, including local language policy, learning materials provision

and use, pre-service and in-service teacher training, primary school supervision and mentoring, and assessment (Read & Enyutu, 2005). The Review Report was subsequently shared with all education stakeholders in Uganda and their views were sought in various meetings. These meetings informed the Roadmap, which was intended to guide the curriculum development and implementation processes. The writing process for the new curriculum began in 2005 and was completed in the following year.

3.2. Thematic Curriculum

The Thematic Curriculum is based on three main principles (NCDC, 2006a):

1. Rapid development of literacy, numeracy and life skills at lower primary;
2. The treatment of concepts holistically, under themes of immediate meaning and relevance to the learner; and,
3. The presentation of learning experiences in languages in which the learners are already proficient.

In terms of content, the new curriculum covers almost the same areas that existed in the 2000 Curriculum. However, the knowledge and competencies are arranged in accordance with a thematic approach. At the same time, it strives to adopt a 'child-centred approach' by putting the child's interests, experience and needs at the centre of the curriculum. The thematic approach also helps to avoid content overlaps and repetition that existed in the subject-based curriculum. Although a theme-based approach is used for curriculum for primary one, two and three, the subject-based curriculum will remain at upper levels (NCDC, 2006a).

The new curriculum also stipulates that wherever possible the child should learn in the home language or at least in a language that is familiar to the child. It is based on the conviction (and evidence recorded by various research studies) that higher achievement levels are reached in literacy when children study in a language of which they already have a strong oral command. Therefore, all learning materials used in the first three years of primary education will be provided in the child's own language or a language familiar to the child. In addition, all written tests that are used for assessment purposes will be administered in the local language except for the assessment of English language competence. However, English will be the language of instruction in schools in which there is no predominant local language or area language. At P4, both English and the local language will be used during

teaching and learning, yet a gradual transition from local languages to English is expected. By the end of the year, the local language will be used only for explaining the most difficult concepts. Written materials, including textbooks will be in simple English and all assessment will be carried out in English (NCDC, 2006a). During the remaining three years of primary education, English will be used as the language of instruction across the country.

The language of instruction policy was the most controversial issue during curriculum development process. There are more than 60 local languages used in Uganda, hence, there are many potential language of instructions. Selection of a local language as the language of instruction at school has financial, staffing and training as well as political implications. Such cultural and political considerations assume huge importance particularly in districts with various different and sometimes rival, competing languages (Read & Enyutu, 2005). Furthermore, urban schools are allowed to use English as the language of instruction as there are pupils from various language backgrounds in such schools. However, since all schools are expected to teach in English in upper grades and since the Primary Leaving Examination is in English, some considered schools in urban areas to be in an advantageous position. There were fears that such a language policy would augment the performance gap between urban and rural schools.

The 'child-centred' approach of the Thematic Curriculum is further emphasized in teaching and learning methodologies. By child-centred, the new curriculum particularly refers to the following (NCDC, 2006b, p. 3):

1. Children should have a chance to interact with each other and with the teacher during the lesson;
2. Class activities should be organised so that children learn by doing. They should be able to move around from time to time, and to use their hands;
3. Activities should be organised around a variety of learning materials, and children should be able to handle the materials;
4. Children should have an opportunity, from time to time, to have influence on the direction that the lesson (or day) takes. Allow the lesson to reflect the interests, abilities and concerns of the children.

According to the official curriculum documents, several components of the new curriculum reflect a child-centred approach, such as the focus on thematic areas and choosing themes that closely relate to children's interests, experiences and background. The recommended pedagogical approach emphasizes children's activities rather than teachers. Therefore, there is a

strong focus on activating children during lessons, encouraging them to participate and perform. Instead of being passive receivers of what they are told, children are expected to engage actively in learning by way of exploring, observing, experimenting, and practising. The curriculum also suggests some enjoyable activities, such as games, acting, drawing, dancing, and singing. According to the new approach, the majority of lesson time should be spent on classroom activities, which might involve group or pair work or individual pupils working on assignments independent of the teacher. Moreover, a rich and varied literature environment is viewed important, therefore the curriculum recommends the use of a range of learning resources, such as flash cards, sentence cards, wall charts, work cards, simple readers and children's own written work. Teachers are also encouraged to think of other creative ways that would engage children in learning, and stimulate learning through play (NCDC, 2006a; 2006b).

With regard to student evaluation, the new curriculum adopts continuous assessment and requires teachers to assess their pupils on a daily basis. The purpose of such assessment is considered to be diagnostic and remedial. It is assumed that frequent assessment would facilitate appropriate feedback and corrective action on the part of teachers. For instance, it would enable teachers to identify individual learning difficulties and provide adequate help so that the child would catch up with the rest of the class. Likewise, high achievers can be identified and given more challenging tasks to stimulate their learning (NCDC, 2006a). The main principles of assessment are laid down as such within the curriculum:

1. The assessment should be done during the normal lessons as children carry out their daily tasks.
2. Teachers keep records for each child, showing competencies achieved.
3. Assessment is cumulative. For example, if a child has not achieved a particular competence in one Theme, the same child may achieve it at a later stage and this should be recorded at that time.
4. Assessment can be conducted through the following: by the teachers observing children, listening to them in class, looking at their exercise books, marking handwriting and looking at the class work they produce and recording what they have achieved. The teacher should not set separate 'assessment' tests/examinations (NCDC, 2006a, p. 12).

The new curriculum was introduced into each grade level one year at a time. It was first piloted at P1 in 90 selected schools in 11 districts staring from

February 2006. After the pilot phase, the Thematic Curriculum was launched nationwide in February 2007. In the same year, it was piloted at P2 at the same 90 schools. The implementation of the new curriculum will be completed through P1 to P7 in 2013 over a period of seven years (Read & Enyutu, 2005).

4. The present study

4.1. Sample

The analysis presented in this chapter is based on research conducted in Uganda between June and July 2007. All the eight schools which were selected to pilot the Thematic Curriculum in Kampala were visited. These were all government aided, so called UPE schools. The criteria for school selection were decided upon by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), yet the actual selection of schools was done by the District Inspectorate of Schools. The criteria included geographical location, socio-economic background of pupils, and head teachers' commitment to the new curriculum. The oldest school visited was established in 1932, and the others were founded mostly in 1950s. The school size ranged widely between 500 and 2,258. According to the information provided by head teachers and teachers, the pupils came mostly from poor and some from middle-income families. Only in one school were pupils from comparatively higher-income groups also enrolled. The schools were all mixed in terms of ethnic background, and in three of them children from the conflict-affected northern and eastern regions were in the majority. These children migrated with their families to Kampala due to prolonged insecurity in those regions. Some were also sent by their parents to stay with their relatives and attend schools in Kampala, as they were considered to have better quality.

There were six head teachers, four deputy head teachers, and 34 teachers who took part in the study. Although there was only one female head teacher, all the other teachers, except for one, were female. The ratio of female teachers in primary education is around 40 percent in Uganda, yet in Kampala district, female teachers outnumber male teachers. Besides, in general there are more female teachers at lower grades across the country. Therefore, the dominance of female teachers at lower grades in the visited schools was not exceptional. Unlike the pupils, teachers were dominantly Baganda.

4.2. Methods

The research methods included interviews and classroom observations. Since the Thematic Curriculum was implemented at P1 since February 2006 and has been piloted at P2 since February 2007, all teachers teaching at P1 and P2 classes were interviewed on one-to-one basis, and in some cases on group basis, following classroom observations. Teachers' views were recorded on the new curriculum content, language policy, teaching methodologies, student assessment methods, as well as the responses they have received from pupils and parents. The interviews were also held on one-to-one basis with head teachers and deputy head teachers. In total 44 interviews were conducted at schools: 34 interviews were with teachers, four with deputy head teachers, and six with head teachers. Furthermore, interviews were also conducted with a selected number of officials in the Ministry, NCDC and UNEB, as well as with academics.

In addition, lessons were observed in all P1 and P2 classes, 28 in total. Lesson observation was carried out at different times of the day and during all working days. The duration of lesson observation ranged from 30 minutes to two hours. When the school had many streams at one grade, lessons were observed at each stream for one particular learning area, approximately 30 minutes. In other cases, observations continued for longer periods. This allowed me to study how teachers shifted from one learning area to another. Lessons were observed almost in all learning areas, yet the majority were in English, Literacy and Mathematics. Teachers seemed to focus mainly on these areas, and they also appeared to prefer teaching these learning areas in the presence of the researcher, possibly due to the high importance attached to the achievement of literacy and numeracy. These learning areas also appear in the curriculum more often than others. During observations, I was seated either in the front at the teacher's desk or at the back next to pupils. I also reviewed student work while they carried out written tasks or when they were engaged in 'free activity'. A checklist was used during classroom observations. It included items on classroom organisation, teacher and student activities, the level of interaction between students and teachers, teacher feedback, classroom management, and atmosphere.

5. Findings

In line with analytical framework explained above, the findings will be presented in three parts: support from outside agencies, capacity to support innovation, and profile of implementation.

5.1. Support from outside agencies

5.1.1. Teacher professional development

Both before the pilot phase and nationwide implementation, teachers who were expected to implement the new curriculum were asked to participate in a training programme. The programme was designed as a cascade system: first, the trainers and Centre Coordinating tutors (CCTs) were trained in the Thematic Curriculum approaches, methodology and requirements. They were in turn expected to train, upgrade and support teachers in classrooms. Before the nationwide implementation, a ten-day, intensive training programme was designed for teachers and took place in January 2007 during school holidays, just before the start of the new academic year in February 2007. The participation level of head teachers and teachers in these training programmes was reported to be high. Likewise, District Inspectors of Schools were trained so that they can effectively carry out their supervision role.

According to some official accounts, the training was sufficient to prepare teachers for the implementation of the new curriculum. Nevertheless, the majority of the teachers who took part in this study believed that the training was severely inadequate. First, its duration was viewed as too short to deal with all aspects of a new curriculum. Therefore, for them the training was too hectic and hurried. Some teachers also raised questions with regard to the quality of training, suggesting that the trainers themselves were not knowledgeable enough about the new curriculum. The account of the following teacher describes the frustration felt by many teachers:

> They have rushed Thematic Curriculum too much. They should have spent more time on training teachers, preparing them for it, letting them to digest and understand it. They should have provided longer and better training to us. We just had 10 days, and they tried to talk about everything there. It was too much to deal with in such a short period. Many of us came back to school without understanding what thematic was all about. We were confused. We were not convinced of its importance, its necessity or difference. The shortness of the training created a negative attitude towards the Thematic Curriculum.

Throughout the school year, teachers were visited by trainers and CCTs to get feedback from them and also to provide additional support. Many teachers were also invited for shorter training programmes on specific issues, such as assessment or lesson planning. Shorter training programmes were also considered insufficient. Consequently, teachers in general did not feel well equipped to implement the Thematic Curriculum. Some commented that they had understood nothing from the training they received, or they were very much confused at the end. Some were not sufficiently convinced of the benefits of the new curriculum, or in which areas or how it could make a difference in education quality. The confusion and inadequate information even created resentment and opposition to the new curriculum, which was detrimental to its effective implementation. Only a few teachers with long experience in teaching commented that they were satisfied with the quality and duration of the training they received. Yet, they also noted that inexperienced teachers would have even greater difficulty in teaching the new curriculum.

5.1.2. Provision of physical resources

Once the new curriculum was ready, P1 Thematic Curriculum and accompanying Teachers' Guides were printed in both English and in nine local languages, and distributed to schools. Nevertheless, no textbooks were provided to teachers as they were still in the process of writing. Furthermore, although the new curriculum encourages the use of teaching and learning materials, such as wall charts, flash cards and sentence cards, these were also supplied to schools in limited amounts. The schools were allocated a budget to buy such resources. However, since printed materials were expensive, the budget was only a fraction of what was needed. Consequently, head teachers and teachers noted that school budgets were further constrained.

5.1.3. Monitoring

The pilot schools were visited occasionally by trainers, CCTs and the representatives of NCDC. However, the frequency of these visits varied greatly from one school to another, and the purpose was mainly to get feedback from teachers to revise the curriculum documents before nationwide implementation. Some head teachers and teachers brought up the issue of supervision as an important concern. They thought adequate supervision was crucial not only to make sure that teachers come to school and engage with

their students, but also to foresee whether they were implementing the curriculum according to the guidelines provided by the Ministry. This issue was particularly important for making sure that teachers were developing adequate sheets and report cards and carrying out continuous assessment as intended. Otherwise, it could lead to inconsistencies and incomparable assessment results across schools.

Nevertheless, regular and effective school inspection is largely considered inadequate in Uganda in a number of studies (Ward et al., 2006). Inspection is carried out by the district inspectorate, which is understaffed both at the headquarters and district levels. For instance, more than half of the senior positions are unfilled or occupied by junior officers acting in post. They often lack logistical support and an adequate budget to cover their operating costs. For example, there is a chronic lack of funds at district level to ensure regular travelling to all schools in all districts (Read & Enyutu, 2005). Besides, inspectors are underpaid as their salaries compare unfavourably with those of most teachers. Consequently, although the inspectorate is perceived as key link between the development and delivery of the curriculum and overall educational quality, it does not have sufficient resources to fulfil its role (Ward et al., 2006). The issue was also considered a high priority issue in the Road Map due to concerns about teacher absenteeism and lower than expected primary school contact hours.

5.2. Capacity factors

5.2.1. Physical resources

As stated earlier, the new curriculum encourages the use of different learning materials and visual aids in teaching and learning. As one teacher put it: 'Previously all we needed was a blackboard and chalks, now we need lots of other materials to teach'. Teachers seemed enthusiastic about use of learning aids, as they believed it made learning more enjoyable and interesting for children, and simplified their work. However, these materials were in inadequate amounts in visited schools. Teachers claimed that lack of adequate learning materials limited the implementation of the Thematic Curriculum. Very often teachers tried to make the materials themselves. The classrooms were indeed very colourful, and the walls were mostly filled with handmade drawings, charts, writings, and pictures. The quality of these visual aids depended on material availability, and the creativity and time of individual teachers. Teachers also noted that making learning materials cost them a lot in

terms of time and energy. They spent afternoon hours making materials or some even came to school at weekends. Teachers found such activities tiresome as well as difficult as they were not necessarily talented in drawing.

The Road Map highlights the importance of providing adequate teaching and learning materials for good quality education. It is considered critical in improving achievement levels in literacy, one of the main objectives of the Thematic Curriculum (Read & Enyutu, 2005, p. 24):

> It seems obvious that the rapid and effective development of literacy must depend to a considerable extent upon the availability of suitable teaching and learning aids [...] and a variety of interesting and stimulating reading books and materials [...] And yet in English, and particularly in local languages, there is still a great shortage of reading materials in the overwhelming majority of primary schools. In effect, the system is attempting to achieve fluent reading in young children without the provision of anything for them to read.

Among the eight visited schools in this study, only in one classroom did the teacher distribute story books to children so that they could begin to recognise certain words and expressions. Furthermore, inadequate storage facilities emerged as a serious concern. Available learning aids were piled on teacher desks, on empty desks, or on the floor. The classrooms had a cupboard, but it was mainly used to keep notebooks, which were not handed over to pupils until they were completed. This issue was also highlighted in some other studies. Often, learning and teaching materials have been kept in teachers' houses at some distance from the school. Or they are kept in a central school store where the keys may not always be available when required, particularly when the head teacher travelled. Field investigations conducted during curriculum review process in 2003 suggested that classroom based storage was required if the learning and teaching materials were to be used regularly and effectively (Read & Enyutu, 2005).

5.2.2. School ethos and management

The Thematic Curriculum seems to generate a lot of excitement and expectation within the Ministry and other institutions that were involved in its development and implementation. This enthusiasm is largely shared by head teachers as well, and some of them appeared to be strong advocates of the Thematic Curriculum. They highlighted the strengths of the new curriculum as being content organisation, focus on literacy and numeracy, and assessment methods. They believed that it could potentially contribute to

improvements in the quality of education in Ugandan primary schools. They could already see some visible gains in terms of reduced dropout, increased attendance, higher achievement levels in literacy and numeracy, and improvements in life skills education. However, head teachers also underlined serious obstacles to effective implementation; they were convinced that if authorities would take necessary remedial measures, a great leap could be achieved in improving the quality of education. Indeed, only one head teacher seemed undecided about the possible benefits of the Thematic Curriculum.

The schools were visited unannounced in this study and the majority of head teachers were present at the schools, except for two. However, head teacher as well as teacher absenteeism is a serious problem in Uganda. For instance, a study of teacher absenteeism conducted in 2004 revealed that an average rate of 27 percent of teachers were absent from schools in Uganda. This was a considerably higher rate in comparison to other countries that had similar surveys in the same year. For example, it was 15 percent in Bangladesh, 25 percent in India, 11 percent in Peru, 17 percent in Zambia, and 14 percent in Ecuador (Chaudhury et al., 2006). Inadequate inspection, low teacher salaries, poor working conditions, and low teacher morale are among the primary reasons of high teacher absenteeism.

5.2.3. Teacher factors

Studies suggest that pre-service teacher education has not been providing adequate support to teachers in Uganda for the development of key skills of lower primary teaching. Particularly, training in the basic techniques of teaching reading, writing, listening comprehension, speaking, and mathematical skills and concepts is considered insufficient. Besides, the curriculum for teacher education is often criticized for being too theoretical, focusing on content and giving very little pedagogical orientation. In other words, the curriculum emphasizes knowledge acquisition and overlooks development of skills and attitudes. Such an approach encourages student teachers to only read and pass their exams (MOES, 2006). Therefore, it prepares teachers inadequately to teach the Thematic Curriculum. Furthermore, it was observed that in many schools across the country, often the least qualified teachers were allocated to lower primary classes. Indeed, education policies have tended to give emphasis to upper primary in the allocation of the most qualified and experienced teachers (Read & Enyutu, 2005). Within this study, the teachers were all professionally trained; a very few had university degrees in education, the rest were either diploma holders

or Grade II certificate holders. They all had long years of experience in teaching. The minimum number of years of experience was five. Teachers were in general not satisfied with the in-service training they had received prior to the implementation of the Thematic Curriculum. Therefore, they reported that they were learning by improvising and practising on a daily basis. Indeed, P1 teachers who had been teaching thematically for a second year seemed more confident with teaching the Thematic Curriculum. Yet, more confusion, disillusion and apprehension were observed among P2 teachers who were practising it only five months at the time of this research.

Teachers had distinct views on the new curriculum, which can be grouped into three main groups. The first group, which was the smallest, did not think that the Thematic Curriculum introduced anything new for schools in Kampala. The same themes were just organised differently, the contact hours for certain learning areas were increased, and a new assessment system, which did not work very well in reality, was introduced. Members of this group were found more among P2 teachers. The second group, which was larger than the first group, believed that the Thematic Curriculum had many strong points, including increased relevance, emphasis on literacy and numeracy, catering for slow learners, better assessment system, increased student participation, and being more enjoyable for children. Yet, they believed that many of these could not be realised in schools outside of Kampala, especially in rural schools due to grim systemic problems. These included large classes, lack of adequate teaching and learning materials, low teacher morale, and inadequate teacher training and supervision. Lastly, the third and the largest group thought that the Thematic Curriculum had already led to some visible improvements in the quality of education. They acknowledged that the systemic issues or problems encountered during implementation process restricted its effective implementation. Yet, some of these, if not all, would be resolved in time. Hence, they had much more faith in the Thematic Curriculum and hoped that it would not be abandoned in a couple of years and replaced by new reforms. They have seen in the past that some reforms were discarded soon after they were introduced.

One of the issues that concerned teachers most and influenced their attitude towards the new curriculum was the introduction of the classroom teacher system. In the previous system, teachers were responsible for certain subjects; for instance, one teacher would teach Mathematics or Social Studies at various streams at a grade. Although the new system leaves this structure intact in higher grades where teaching is still organised according to subjects, at P1-3 teachers are now assigned to one classroom and expected to deliver

all learning areas. The new system was appreciated by few teachers. They believed the new system enabled teachers to interact with their pupils more frequently and for longer periods. Therefore, they had more opportunities to get to know them, follow their progress, understand their strong and weak points, and provide assistance accordingly. Deeper knowledge of pupils was also considered indispensable to carry out continuous assessment in an effective way. Additionally, in this system students will have the opportunity to get to know their teachers better.

There were also a lot of objections to the classroom teacher system. The most commonly cited reason was the problem of replacing teachers during their absences. It was argued that when the teacher was on holiday, sick, or had some other excused absence, the entire class missed out schooling on those days. Often, the classrooms at the same level were combined in such cases. However, since the classrooms were already large, it was not always feasible to combine the classes due to space limitations. Except for one school, classrooms in all the other schools were already fully occupied, in some classrooms pupils were sitting on the floor while they were doing exercises.

A second argument against classroom teacher system relates to teachers' heavy workload which was perceived to be augmented with the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum. Teachers argued that teaching different learning areas was already a big challenge. A teacher might be more talented or developed expertise in teaching literacy or mathematics. Or, a teacher might not be talented at all in teaching music. Furthermore, a teacher was supposed to teach during four consecutive hours, teaching eight learning areas per day, switching from one to another every half an hour. This was also considered very demanding and tiring.

Teacher motivation is considered crucial for the successful implementation of the Thematic Curriculum and for improving the quality of education in general. The Thematic Curriculum makes further demands on teachers by asking them to engage children in learning more, and to be more innovative and creative in their teaching. Yet, the majority of teachers noted that teacher morale was alarmingly low. A number of reasons were discussed in this respect including low teacher salaries, lack of incentives, the low social status of teaching profession, and inadequate working conditions. Low teacher salary was cited as the main cause of low teacher morale. Teacher salaries in Uganda are lower than average teacher salaries in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2007). Teachers unanimously noted that their salary was not sufficient to lead a decent life, especially in urban areas. Financial

problems seem to occupy their minds constantly, and distract their attention and concentration in the classroom as well. Sometimes, their own children had to stay at home because they could not afford to pay their tuition fees. Financial difficulties also seemed to interfere with their wellbeing and health. The account of one of the teachers is illustrative in this sense:

> We are not boosted. Out health is not good. We sometimes come just for the sake of coming to school. Teacher motivation is very low. You keep quiet since there is no solution. We are overworked, we do not eat well. We have too much responsibility. They want us to work a lot but they give very little. They also want us to work lovingly. This job requires people who teach lovingly, so that children would also love learning, get motivated, interested and enjoy schooling. But in order to do that you need to motivate teachers in the first place. When you are tortured here and there, how can you come and teach enthusiastically and lovingly [. . .] When my mind is busy and preoccupied with basic necessities of my own life, how can you expect me to perform well in the classroom?

Another dissatisfaction that relates to their low income was the fact that years of experience or performance makes little or no difference in their salaries. Therefore, there is little incentive for teachers to improve their teaching. A third issue that worried teachers was the little respect they seemed to enjoy in society. Previously, both children and parents respected teachers, and teaching profession was in general a high status, esteemed job. Nevertheless, teachers felt that they were no longer respected. One teacher explained: 'People respect money and material things. We teachers do not have money, so we have less credibility, less weight on parents and children.' The status of teachers teaching at lower grades was considered particularly low, even among teachers.

Such concerns regarding deterioration of teacher status and motivation are not peculiar to Uganda. Indeed, similar issues are raised in many parts of the developing world and their interrelationship with education reforms are highlighted in some other studies (Barrett, 2008; Mooij, 2008). As Robertson (2007) point out the neoliberal policies and programmes in education have eroded teachers' working conditions and undermined teaching as a profession. This is a paradoxical development given the fact that the knowledge economy discourse places education quality at the centre of policymakers' agendas.

5.2.4. Student factors

Class size was a big concern in all the schools visited except for one, as they had around 70 or more pupils per classroom at P1 and P2. Teachers discussed a variety of issues in relation to large class sizes affecting their teaching practices. Classroom management was one of the most important concerns according to many teachers:

> The large number of students in the class makes it impossible to work with the Thematic Curriculum. You look at one group; try to explain things while behind you there is another group which is throwing things to each other, or doing absurd things. Just keeping things in order requires a lot of time and effort.

Indeed, various other challenges that they highlighted were in line with the findings of a study that looked at teachers' experiences of teaching large classes in 20 schools in Kampala and Wakiso districts (Nakabugo et al., 2007, pp. 6–7). These included: classroom control and management difficulties resulting in indiscipline (e.g. excessive noise and children dodging exercises); difficulty to prepare enough teaching and learning materials for the large numbers; difficulty to reach out and interact with all learners, especially those with learning disabilities and the slow ones; difficulty in giving comprehensive helpful feedback; due to marking difficulties giving less exercises and practice; difficulty developing children's handwriting skills because of limited writing space due to overcrowding; easy spread of infectious diseases such as flu and colds; time constraints and failure to complete the syllabus if one attempts to give individual attention; limited space for group work; and lack of attention for individual learners. Teachers noted that teaching in large classes was already a big challenge for them because of the reasons mentioned above, yet, effective implementation of the Thematic Curriculum particularly requires smaller class sizes. The general impression of teachers was that the Thematic Curriculum would not work with such large numbers because the recommended teaching methodologies, such as increasing student participation, learning by doing, and group work, were very time consuming.

Moreover, teachers believed that there was a huge gap in ability levels of , and this was also considered a big challenge in teaching and learning. The primary causes of such differences were identified as three: age differences among students, participation in pre-primary education, and rural versus urban backgrounds. The official entry age for primary education is six, yet more than two thirds of pupils studying at P1 in 2004 were older than six,

and 25 percent of these pupils were even older than ten. Within the UPE programme, schools were obliged to register children to the appropriate grades irrespective of their ages. This resulted in considerable age differences among students enrolled at a given grade. According to a recent evaluation study of primary education in Uganda (IOB & MOES, 2008), those face low probabilities of academic success and are likely candidates for repetition and dropout.

Teachers also reported that there was often a considerable difference between ability levels of who had attended nursery schools and those who had not. Depending on the duration of their attendance as well as the quality of those centres, when children came to P1, they had a basic understanding of English, literacy, and numeracy. Therefore, they were ahead of students who did not have the chance to go to nursery schools. Pupils in the first group, therefore, needed further stimulation and tasks that are more challenging. When teachers were asked about participation levels of their students in early-childhood education, they could not provide precise figures, but commented that more than half of them went to nursery. In few schools, this rate was believed to be much higher.

Furthermore, differences were observed among pupils with urban and rural backgrounds. The first group was considered advantageous due to higher levels of parental education, exposure to English, exposure to printed documents and written texts on the streets and so on. Teachers reported that some children from rural backgrounds had significant learning difficulties. Teachers were trying to address differential learning needs of these pupils by grouping them together and providing adequate tasks. Yet, due to overcrowding, this was not always done effectively. Use of English rather than a local language from their immediate environment, that children are already familiar with and fluent in, seems to be an impediment for some of the children. Children who did not receive early childhood education and children who had recently moved from rural areas to Kampala especially seemed to encounter more difficulties. As a result, their progress was slower in comparison to others and their participation was also more constrained.

5.3. Profile of implementation

The following sub-constructs of profile of implementation will be considered: (1) coverage of learning areas defined in the curriculum; (2) instruction in English and use of local languages; (3) the nature of classroom interactions; and (4) assessment practices. The chapter will focus on these four sub-

constructs since they are highlighted as being among the most important objectives of the Thematic Curriculum.

5.3.1. Coverage of learning areas

There are eight learning areas scheduled for each day in the new curriculum, and each learning area is designed to last 30 minutes. In general, time planning within the Thematic Curriculum was considered unrealistic by teachers. They believed that Thematic Curriculum took longer time to teach as the recommended teaching methods required teachers to use learning aids and real objects in teaching. So they need to demonstrate objects and provide explanations about them. Written exercises and drawings were also time-consuming. During classroom hours, in addition to active teaching, teachers were required to distribute notebooks to children and collect them after the exercises, to take care of pencil sharpening, and to organise learning aids before moving into the next learning area. These responsibilities also took time and ate into active teaching and learning time.

Consequently, 30 minutes was often insufficient, especially for literacy or Mathematics. Teachers argued that hardly any teacher could manage to teach eight learning areas in a day. What they seemed to do is to shorten the time scheduled for some learning areas, or skip them altogether. Learning areas such as News, Physical Education, Music, Free Activity or Religious Education were often considered less important. Teachers ended up teaching four or five learning areas per day, mostly emphasizing Literacy, English and Mathematics. This problem echoes similar problems experienced in the 2000 Curriculum. There as well, teachers emphasized Volume I and hardly taught Volume II. According to the Curriculum Review, large parts of the 2000 Curriculum were not being delivered in the majority of the schools. Besides, the curriculum had too much factual content and most schools reported that they were unable to complete many subject syllabus requirements in a school year (Read & Enyutu, 2005).

5.3.2. Instruction in English and use of local languages

In line with the language policy, all schools within this study were using English as language of instruction both at lower and upper primary levels. When teachers were asked about their opinion on language policy, they acknowledged that use of local languages at lower primary could accelerate reading and writing. In many classrooms, teachers spoke local languages

when they needed to clarify a concept, give instructions or maintain order within the classroom. Luganda, the local language widely used in central region, was used by teachers. Yet, in some schools, where a large proportion of pupils came from northern or eastern regions, teachers asked children who came from those regions and also had a basic understanding of English to translate what they said into local languages. Pupils were also given the opportunity to speak in their local languages during News hours. Teachers commented that speaking a language that they felt comfortable with made a big difference. Those children who were quiet might suddenly became vibrant and articulate. Some of the teachers had the opportunity to observe classrooms in rural schools where a local language was used as language of instruction. They noted that classroom atmosphere was somewhat different there, as student involvement was higher.

Although use of English was considered a big challenge for some children, and cause for slower progression in literacy, in later stages pupils who received instruction in English were regarded to be in an advantageous situation. Already at P4, all pupils are expected to learn in English, and the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) is also administrated in English. Some teachers argued that those who start to learn in English at an early age might do better at PLE at the end of P7. Teachers did not encounter any parental resentment for the use of English either. Due to the high status of English, and perceived advantages in terms of PLE, parents were pleased with the use of English. Additionally, given the ethnic and linguistic diversity of schools in Kampala, parents would be more opposed to Luganda or any other dominant language in a given school.

In addition to English, each school is supposed to chose a local language to be taught as a subject. Indeed this issue generated more heated discussions. Schools are supposed to select the local language in consultation with parents. In schools, where children who were ethnically Baganda, selection of Luganda as a subject is not contested. Yet, in some other schools, groups from northern or eastern regions were the biggest majority. In one of those schools, parents preferred Acholi (a language spoken in the north). Yet, non-Acholi, especially Baganda parents were strongly opposed to this suggestion. They argued that all pupils should be learning Luganda; after all, it was the local language of the region. School management was also supportive of the second group. There were also problems of finding teachers who could teach in Acholi.

5.3.3. Classroom interactions

Teachers often commented that with the new curriculum children have become much more involved in their learning and assumed more responsibilities. This made learning much more enjoyable and interesting for children as they easily got bored when the teacher was talking all the time. The level of pupils' involvement differed from one classroom to another and from one school to another. Yet, in general, their involvement included activities such as answering teacher questions individually or in chorus, repeating in groups after the teacher, doing exercises at the blackboard, demonstrating certain lessons, or telling news and stories. During lessons, often children were asked to come to the front to demonstrate certain activities to their classmates. Some teachers believed the relatively more participatory nature of teaching and learning contributed positively to children's self-esteem, assertiveness and confidence. Since pupils were given more space in the classroom, they talked more and they had more opportunities to express themselves (e.g. News and Story hour).

Although group work is emphasized by the new curriculum, and teachers were willing to experiment more with pair or group work, they admitted that they often failed to do group work because of the high number of students, limited space within classrooms restricting teacher and student movement and rearrangement of desks for special group activities, and lack of adequate learning materials that would facilitate group work. In the majority of classrooms, pupils were seated in groups. However, these groups were often very large making it impossible to carry out meaningful group activities. The group sizes ranged from six to 30. Consequently, grouping was used as a tool for clustering pupils according to their ability, thereby making it easier for teachers to identify ability level of pupils and give them differential tasks. The opportunity to cooperate and learn from group members seemed limited though not exceptional. Pupils were sometimes given exercises to be completed as a group in Mathematics, or they were given a teaching aid to discuss within the group.

5.3.4. Assessment practices

The introduction of continuous assessment seemed to be the most important issue that concerned teachers about the new curriculum. They unanimously commented that they learned little about assessment issue after the training, so they did not know how to carry out continuous assessment in practice.

Furthermore, large class sizes were considered as a serious impediment to carrying out continuous assessment. This new assessment system requires teachers to observe and follow each student on a daily basis, and record their progress over a variety of competencies. This expectation was considered unrealistic as it was considered beyond the capacity of a single teacher to follow up to 70 students on daily basis. As a result, continuous assessment was hardly done. This was also why some teachers preferred exams to continuous assessment even though they acknowledged certain benefits and advantages of continuous assessment in improving education quality.

Furthermore, many parents were concerned about the new assessment system which replaced examinations with periodic progress reports. These progress reports made no reference to marks, but included descriptions of how children are performing in pre-defined competencies in certain learning areas, and how they can improve their performance. The progress reports seemed to create confusion due to a number of reasons. Some parents, especially in neighbourhoods with lower socio-economic backgrounds, were illiterate. Therefore, even if they could still identify marks and make judgements on achievement levels of their children, they failed to read the descriptions mentioned in the progress reports.

Moreover, those who were literate could make little sense of the statements in the progress cards, such as 'Sharon can read sentences' or 'can count to five'. Teachers have often heard of parents saying: 'So what?' Instead of such vague statements, they preferred to see marks as well as the position of their children within the classroom. Some of those parents who were displeased with the new system took measures that are more drastic and transferred their children to private schools where implementation of the Thematic Curriculum was delayed. Almost all schools in this study reported student transfers to private schools or threat of transfers. Alarmed by these and similar parental dissatisfaction, some schools carried out exams, or added marks and even position of the child in progress report. Indeed, NCDC also revised the progress report and included both marks and descriptions on achievement levels in selected competencies.

6. Conclusion

The findings of the study suggest that although teachers were in general enthusiastic about the new curriculum and appreciated the improvements they have noticed in their students, they were also rather critical of a variety of issues over the curriculum and the implementation process. These issues

range from heavy load of the curriculum to lack of teaching and learning materials, from large classes to inadequate teacher training. Yet, most of the criticisms were concerned with the implementation process, suggesting that the introduction of the Thematic Curriculum is accompanied with similar problems as the introduction of the 2000 Curriculum. Despite the limitations imposed by structural problems and the way the curriculum was implemented, teachers stated that they did their best in trying to implement the new curriculum as effectively as possible since they believed it contributed to the improvements in their students' achievement levels, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

The Thematic Curriculum incorporates many good ideas; it is well-designed and well-intentioned according to many education stakeholders in Uganda. However, systemic problems within the Ugandan education system, such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching and learning aids, inadequate number of textbooks, and low teacher motivation, suggest that some of the expectations are unrealistic and indeed very difficult to realise in classrooms. For instance, none of the teachers claimed to teach eight learning areas per day, as they felt the need to squeeze or avoid learning areas that were deemed less important. Likewise, even if the majority of teachers acknowledged the advantages of continuous assessment, they were hardly practicing it in their classrooms that had often more than 70 pupils. Implementation of CCP was constrained similarly due to overcrowding and lack of aids. Since schools in Kampala are far more well-equipped in comparison to schools in rural areas, teachers who are implementing the Thematic Curriculum outside of Kampala are likely to encounter even more severe challenges. Consequently, there is a danger that some of the mistakes of Curriculum 2000 might be repeated in implementation of the Thematic Curriculum, and might lead to demoralising experiences and further waste of time, energy and resources.

The failure of policymakers to adequately consider the classroom realities, as well as other subjective and objective realities within which teachers work, is not uncommon in sub-Saharan Africa. South Africa's most ambitious curriculum initiative, the outcomes based-education, exemplifies this failure. Yet, according to Jansen (1998), this was not because politicians and bureaucrats were misinformed about the conditions of South African schooling, but because the policy was primarily driven by political imperatives which had little to do with the realities of classroom realities.

Furthermore, studies conducted in Namibia (O'Sullivan, 2002), South Africa (Rogan & Aldous, 2005), Botswana (Tabulawa, 1998) and

Ethiopia (Serbessa, 2006) highlight that capacity of schools to support educational innovation is taken for granted. Factors that determine school capacity to support curriculum implementation, including teacher and student factors, school ethos and management, and physical resources are inadequately considered or ignored. Yet, successful implementation of curriculum reforms or any other educational innovation will ultimately depend on the extent to which policymakers and planners take school realities into account (Heneveld & Craig, 1996). As Rogan and Grayson (2003) underline, in order to be effective, strategies for curriculum implementation need to consider both the current level of curriculum and classroom practice, and the current capacity to support innovation.

CHAPTER: 4

Pedagogical Renewal in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Uganda

ABSTRACT[3]

There has been an unprecedented interest in reforming pedagogical practices in sub-Saharan Africa in the past two decades. The reform efforts are often characterised by a move away from teacher-centred instruction to CCP. Uganda has been no exception to this trend as the new curriculum adopted the principles of CCP and efforts were made to popularise and institutionalise the reformed pedagogies in primary schools. Based on fieldwork conducted in selected schools in Kampala, this chapter seeks to explore teachers' views on CCP, their classroom practices, and the perceived challenges in implementing CCP. The chapter suggests that the implementation of CCP in Ugandan classrooms has not occurred in the ways intended by policymakers and offers some explanations for the discrepancy between policy and practice. It also raises questions with regard to the appropriateness of CCP as the most suitable pedagogy in African classrooms.

1. Introduction

In the last two decades, there have been numerous initiatives to reform pedagogical practices in sub-Saharan Africa as a means to improve education quality. In the majority of African classrooms, pedagogical practices are described as authoritarian, teacher-dominated and lecture-driven. Evidence suggests that this type of teaching merely fosters rote learning and does not support development of conceptual learning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Dembele, 2005). The reform efforts often emphasised a move away from teacher-centred instruction to child-centred pedagogy (CCP). The international development agencies have been influential in the diffusion of CCP across the continent, as many have advised CCP as a prescription through educational projects and consultancies they funded (Tabulawa, 2003). Although substantial resources have been invested in pedagogical renewal, recent studies show that teaching and learning in African classrooms continues to be characterised by traditional, teacher-dominated instruction

[3] The chapter is based on:

Altinyelken, H.K. (2010). Pedagogical reforms in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Uganda. *Comparative Education*, 46(2), 151-171.

(O'Sullivan, 2002; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). Research also shows that some teachers have undertaken substantial changes and revised their practices, contributing to improved education quality in their schools (Anderson, 2002; Farrell, 2002).

Uganda has followed the lead of many other African countries and adopted the principles of CCP in their new curriculum for primary schools. The so-called Thematic Curriculum has been recently developed and, after a one-year pilot phase, was launched nationwide in February 2007. Based on fieldwork conducted in Uganda, this chapter seeks to investigate the emergence of CCP in Ugandan primary schools and examine the patterns of practice in response to reforms introduced by the Thematic Curriculum. Before engaging in a debate on the case of Uganda, the chapter will first outline the extent of the diffusion of CCP in sub-Saharan Africa and describe different views on the rationale of such widespread adherence. Then, the chapter will elaborate on the outcomes of pedagogical reforms by referring to various countries as examples. These two sections will be followed by a descriptive background on Ugandan education system and the introduction of CCP in primary schools. The last parts of the chapter will present the findings of the fieldwork in Kampala by focusing on three issues: teachers' views on CCP, their classroom practices, and the perceived challenges in implementing CCP.

2. Diffusion of CCP in sub-Saharan Africa

Recent studies on pedagogical renewal and teacher development in sub-Saharan Africa have shown that traditional teaching practices persist in classrooms. These practices are often described as teacher-centred, lecture-driven, rigid and authoritarian. Students have a passive role in this pedagogy; their activities are limited to memorising facts and reciting them to the teacher (Dembele & Miaro-II, 2003; Pontefract & Hardman, 2005). There is a general understanding on the part of various education actors, policymakers, educationalists, teachers and parents that traditional teaching does not facilitate student learning, and is largely responsible for low levels of education quality on the continent. Such practices do not encourage spontaneity or taking initiative on the part of students, and restrict critical and creative thinking (O'Sullivan, 2004). As the low educational outcomes of such teaching methods have become apparent and new analytical skills are increasingly being demanded, many African countries have adopted reforms of teaching and learning based on constructivist principles. These new

paradigms include active learning, problem-solving, learner-centred and discovery approaches, whereby students not only acquire information but also do something active with it. By way of analysing and using such information, students are expected to create more profound understanding and new knowledge (Leu, 2005).

The discourse on child-centeredness has developed over many years, yet its origins are rooted in the works of Jean Piaget (1896–1980), Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) and John Dewey (1859–1952). Both Vygotsky and Piaget support the notion that individuals construct knowledge; however, nature (individual) and nurture (social context) are viewed differently in this process. According to the Piagetian perspective, individuals construct a personal reality based on previous knowledge and new experiences. Therefore, knowledge is an interaction between the environment and the individual. For Vygotsky, learning is an interactive and constructive activity in which both society and individuals play essential roles. In other words, knowledge is constructed as a result of social interactions and then internalised by the individuals. Both perspectives highlight the importance of peer interaction and cooperation in promoting children's learning (Dockett & Perry, 1996). Dewey viewed education as a powerful agent of societal transformation. He considers democracy as one of the central goals of education. According to his Progressive Theory, learning is experiencing, hence, his education model emphasises individualised learning based on active engagement, discovery and empirical problem solving (Dewey, 1998).

Although these understandings provide a theoretical foundation for child-centred instruction, there is no prescribed format for education practices. In general, child-centred principles are typically in contrast to the teacher-centred instruction model. A shift from traditional teaching to child-centred teaching assumes changes in four areas: a fundamental change in views on the nature of knowledge, pupils and their role, teachers and their role, and classroom organisation in general. In child-centred approaches – since learning is viewed as a natural and constructive process – the most productive learning experiences are considered to take place when learning is relevant and meaningful to children. Their engagement with learning and assuming responsibility in the process are deemed crucial. Teachers need to provide supportive learning opportunities that are appropriate and challenging for children. For this reason, teachers need to know their pupils well and identify their potential so that they can successfully support their existing capacities.

At the same time, within the child-centred model, children are given opportunities to draw on their own experiences and interpretations of the learning process. It also aims to modify teacher-student relationships by defining the teacher's role in the classroom as that of motivating, facilitating and structuring chidren's own discovery and search for knowledge. In general, child-centred approaches are considered to be more participatory and democratic. Furthermore, the physical arrangement of the classroom is organised in a way that allows for working together. Some of the observable measures of this model include more or equal student speaking and asking questions, more individual and moderately sized group instruction, varied instructional materials, and evidence of student choice and organisation of content (Cuban, 1983; Schuh, 2004).

In the past two decades, African countries have shown an unprecedented interest in modifying instructional practices and CCP is regarded as an 'effective antidote to the prevalence of teacher-centred didactic classroom practices' (O'Sullivan, 2004, p. 585). Therefore, across the continent, pedagogical renewal has mainly included attempts to move away from teacher-dominated teaching practices to child-centred, activity oriented pedagogy (Storeng, 2001; Anderson, 2002; O'Sullivan, 2002; Nykiel-Herbert, 2004). The adoption of CCP is often accompanied by changes in the official curriculum (enhancing the focus on competencies rather than content), and with shifts in assessment policy (increasing the significance of continuous assessment as opposed to examinations) (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). Such reforms are considered essential to stimulate and reinforce the use of CCP in classrooms.

By the late twentieth century, CCP has been diffused across sub-Saharan Africa. As Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008, p. 3) note: 'It is one of the most pervasive educational ideas in the contemporary sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere.' Currently, curricular reforms in many African countries emphasise CCP as the official pedagogy in schools. Examples include Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Kenya. Some authors emphasise the traditional mechanisms of policy borrowing and policy learning, and argue that CCP has become popular in sub-Saharan Africa as new pedagogical ideas spilled over from the USA and Europe to the continent. This has particularly resulted from development import by sub-Saharan African countries, development export on the part of the Western world, and increased international communication (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). CCP has long been established in the Western education systems and is considered a Western 'best practice' (Carney, 2008a) in many countries. It

enjoys an almost hegemonic position with its 'justified', 'admirable' and 'inspiring' educational ideas. According to Nykiel-Herbert (2004), CCP has become increasingly preferred in developing countries which are making the transition to democracy. The pedagogy is highly appealing in such countries because it carries the promise of intellectual liberation from traditional approaches that are considered oppressive.

Moreover, CCP became popular since it was viewed as being more progressive, effective in improving learning achievements, and valuable for preparing children and youth for the world of work. It was widely recognised that when it comes to effective functioning in the work environment and the capacity to adapt to a rapidly changing economic environment, general competencies (such as imagination, creativity, adaptability, problem solving and innovation), attitudes (such as self-discipline, tolerance and teamwork) and interpersonal skills (such as assertiveness and conflict resolution) are critical (Hoppers, 1996). In this context, CCP was perceived as far superior in stimulating and reinforcing such desirable general competencies, attitudes and skills, and educating the youth for the increasingly competitive global 'knowledge economy'. Some other views on the issue highlight the role of international aid agencies, which have indeed played a very influential role in diffusion of CCP in sub-Saharan Africa and in other low-income countries. These authors question aid agencies' interest in diffusing CCP and draw attention to a hidden agenda. Guthrie (1990, p. 222) argues that CCP aims to inculcate 'affective, moral and philosophical values about desirable psycho-sociological traits for individuals and for society'. It reflects the norms of a liberal Western sub-culture and represents a process of Westernisation with its political and economic connotations. Yet, aid agencies disguise it as 'better' teaching.

Likewise, Tabulawa (2003) argues that although aid agencies express their interest and preference for CCP in terms of its perceived effectiveness in improving learning outcomes, in essence its efficacy lies in its political and ideological nature. In other words, CCP is promoted by international donor agencies for ideological purposes rather than for realising educational or pedagogical objectives. The author supports his argument by pointing out that aid agencies have become explicitly concerned with pedagogy since the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 and demonstrated an extraordinary interest for CCP in the years following. Before this period, aid agencies displayed an apparent lack of interest in pedagogical issues since education was viewed in technicist terms. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, with the ascendancy of neoliberalism as a development paradigm, political democratisation has been

increasingly viewed as a prerequisite for economic development. As education assumed a central role in the democratisation project, CCP has become a natural choice for aid agencies due to its democratic tendencies and its perceived role in stimulating democratic social relations in classrooms and schools. Hence, Tabulawa argues that 'the pedagogy is an ideological outlook; a worldview intended to develop a preferred kind of society and people. It is in this sense that it should be seen as representing a process of Westernisation disguised as quality and effective teaching' (Tabulawa, 2003, p.7). This view is shared by Carney (2008a, p. 40) as he suggests that:

> [CCP can] be viewed as part of an 'international agenda' aimed at improving educational systems in ways that might support the spread of advanced capitalism and global democracy… such pedagogical reform is a form of cultural imperialism where key forces in the West (e.g. states, multi and bilateral lending and development agencies) attempt to change subjectivities in the 'south' via seemingly political neutral technical interventions.

These accounts echo postcolonial approaches and highlight the continuing impact of colonial encounter in formerly colonised countries, regions and people (Crossley & Tikly, 2004). Chisholm and Leyendecker give credit to the significance of these arguments, yet they believe that they only partially explain the favourable reception of CCP in sub-Saharan Africa. According to these authors, CCP was positively viewed in African countries, because 'they were not entirely new ideas and were ambiguous enough to be seen as key vehicles for achieving not so much educational, as economic, social and political goals' (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008, p. 2).

3. Outcomes of reform initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa

Regardless of the intention of those advocating CCP, there is considerable research evidence which demonstrates that pedagogical practices are resistant to reform, partly because pedagogy is complex, vast and multidimensional (Spillane, 1999). The experiences in sub-Saharan Africa also confirm that changing classroom instruction is indeed an arduous and long process. Although some authors report successful cases where teachers have modified their practices and adopted more 'progressive' teaching methods (Farrell, 2002), many others argue that the idea of CCP has not taken root in classrooms (Akyeampong et al., 2006; Chisholm, 2007; O'Sullivan, 2004), or that results are inconclusive (Gauthier & Dembele, 2004; UNESCO, 2005).

Within the context of sub-Saharan Africa, Farrell identifies a few cases of alternative models or programmes of education, including the Multi-grade Program in Zambia, the Convergent Pedagogy Program in Mali, the Community Schools Initiative in Zambia, and the Community Schools Program of UNICEF in Egypt. He reports that all these programmes have adopted child-centred, rather than teacher-driven pedagogy, and focused on active rather than passive learning. These programmes emphasized peer tutoring whereby older or faster-learning children assist and teach younger or slower-learning children. These programmes also encouraged pupils to take responsibility for their learning. Through carefully developed self-guided learning materials, children could study alone or in small groups at their own pace. In these schools, the focus has been much less on 'teaching' and much more on 'learning'. According to Farrell, these programmes demonstrate that child-centred, active pedagogy 'works'. He asserts that 'It can be done, and where done, it generally produces remarkable learning gains among even the poorest and most "disadvantaged" children' (Farrell, 2002, p. 256).

Conversely, several other studies in sub-Saharan Africa reveal that although CCP is increasingly promoted by policymakers, there is little sign of it in the classrooms. Therefore, there is a substantial gap between policy and practice (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). In Ethiopia, for instance, government policies and implementation strategies encourage child-centred, active pedagogy, cooperative learning and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Yet, there is ample evidence that teacher-dominated pedagogy is the norm in the vast majority of Ethiopian primary schools. Little application of active learning methods is made (Serbessa, 2006). Tanzania's education policy also recommends CCP; however, studies have shown that teaching styles continue to be teacher-dominated and based on rote learning. The main learning method of pupils is to answer teacher questions individually or in chorus (Osaki & Agu, 2002). Also, in Namibia, interviews with teachers suggested that they were familiar with CCP and the majority of the teachers claimed that they were implementing CCP in their classrooms. However, lesson observations did not substantiate teachers' accounts as they have demonstrated that teachers were indeed not implementing CCP (O'Sullivan, 2004). Likewise, the rhetoric of child-centred learning is strong in Gambia and South Africa, but teaching practices are characterised by traditional teaching (Jessop & Penny 1998).

These case studies seem to suggest that prescriptive instructional behaviour is so deeply embedded in the professional culture that even if child-centred approaches are initially embraced, they disappear with time and

are replaced by traditional instructional behaviour (Akyeampong et al., 2006). Furthermore, Nykiel-Herbert (2004) draws attention to the dangers of CCP when it is practised by teachers who lack the necessary conceptual knowledge and practical skills. The author believes that CCP can turn into a 'dangerous weapon' as demonstrated by the case of South Africa. In similar fashion to many other African countries, South African teachers were mainly left to themselves to construct the knowledge of the new pedagogical paradigm. However, in the process of translating CCP from training course notes or curriculum documents into classroom practice, the conceptual and pedagogical meaning of the CCP became altered beyond recognition, like a message in the popular children's game 'telephone'.

Having laid out some of the core issues related to the introduction and implementation of CCP in sub-Saharan Africa, the next section will explore the case of Uganda, illustrating what new insights can be brought to the discussion.

4. The case of Uganda

Following independence from British colonial rule in 1962, Uganda was immersed in state failure, political violence and civil war for more than two decades. The education system could not escape the devastating impact of the conflict. Prior to the mid-1980s, budgetary allocations to the sector dropped to less than 1 percent of GDP, only 50 percent of children were able to go to school and over 90 percent of educational costs were paid directly by parents. Furthermore, in the majority of schools, infrastructure had been either destroyed or severely damaged; textbooks, teacher manuals and other supplementary materials were in short supply and teachers were underpaid, untrained and highly demoralised (ADEA, 2005). Consequently, the conflict adversely affected the education system by restraining access, exacerbating equity concerns and reducing education quality.

In 1986, the army of the National Resistance Movement achieved victory and Museveni assumed leadership. In the following period, particularly starting from the mid-1990s, Uganda initiated wide-ranging, ambitious educational reform programmes to revitalise the education sector, encompassing reforms in teacher training, curriculum development, supply of instructional materials, and language policy. Since its early years of political independence, Uganda has recognised education as a powerful tool for social and economic development and transformation. More specifically, education has been considered critical for the achievement of national unity, democracy

and social justice for all citizens (Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005). Likewise, in the past decade, education has been increasingly seen as an important sector in national development; it has been identified as a key component of human capital quality and an essential ingredient for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. The education sector has also been linked directly to a multi-sectoral Poverty Eradication and Action Plan, and the role of education in strengthening civil institutions, building a democratic society, empowering women and protecting environment has been underscored (MFPED, 2004).

4.1. Concerns over education quality and pedagogical practices

Since the UPE programme was initiated in 1997, there has been a steady increase in enrolment figures at primary level; for instance, although 2.6 million students were enrolled in 1996, the figure reached 7.2 million in 2006 (Mbabazi, 2007), extending to a net enrolment ratio of 95 percent in 2005 (MOES, 2008). Although these improvements have been largely applauded, a number of studies questioned the quality of education and the sustainability of the gains. Indeed, there are a number of weaknesses and challenges evident in the system, such as poor student performance, frequent student absenteeism, and high dropout and repetition rates. For example, as a result of high dropout rates, only 22 percent of the 1997 P1 cohort was progressing through to P7 in 2003. Besides, the UNEB annual tests have identified alarmingly low levels of achievement in Literacy and Mathematics. The 2005 report (UNEB, 2005), for instance, revealed that only 38 percent of the P3 pupils and 30 percent of the P6 pupils reached the minimum competency level in Literacy. Results for Numeracy were equally depressing since only 14 percent of P3 pupils and 33 percent of P6 pupils could attain minimum competency levels.

Poor teaching practices were reported by several studies and these were largely considered responsible for low levels of education quality in Uganda. Ineffective teaching and learning practices included poor planning, the non-participatory nature of classroom work, and the use of inappropriate methodology in the instructional process. Furthermore, lack of displays, under-utilisation of instructional time, and an approach to instruction that is over-authoritarian, teacher-centred, mechanical and unduly repetitive were reported. Other issues that concerned education stakeholders in relation to pedagogy included over-concentration on recall of information, non-use or under-use of teaching aids and textbooks, preponderance of lower-order questioning, viewing students as imbibers of information, and not catering for different needs (ESA, 2004; Heneveld et al., 2006; UNEB, 2003).

4.2. Introduction of CCP in Uganda

Similar to many other sub-Saharan African countries, Uganda also embraced CCP as the antidote to traditional teaching. A number of international development organisations have been influential in this process, such as Aga Khan Foundation and the USAID. In the early 1990s, Aga Khan Foundation introduced CCP to Ugandan primary schools through the Kampala School Improvement Project. The aim of the project was to promote and institutionalise the adoption of child-centred teaching methods and resources. The pedagogical approach emphasized activity-based learning through greater student-participation during lessons and group discussions (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). In the following period, the Foundation implemented two more projects, The Enhancement of Universal Primary Education in Kampala, and The Enhancement of Universal Primary Education and Community in Kampala. The last project was initiated in 2005 and would continue till the end of 2009. The essential activities of this project are the same, yet it strives to do more by working through the system personnel, such as inspectors and teacher trainers, to ensure the sustainability of CCP at classrooms beyond the project period. The Aga Khan Foundation has been at the forefront of pedagogical renewal and popularising CCP in primary schools in Uganda as well as in some other East African countries.

Furthermore, in October 2002, USAID initiated a six-year programme that aimed at improving teacher effectiveness. An important component of the programme addressed pedagogy by introducing a teaching and learning methodology that sought to increase interactions within classrooms, and to facilitate learning through cooperation. Cooperative learning also encourages pupils to conduct research on various topics and make group presentations. Cooperative learning was introduced into government-aided schools in 29 districts and to eight of the eleven core Primary Teacher Colleges that are responsible for pre-service teacher training (UPHOLD, 2006). The programme is said to be very influential in policymaking circles, and has influenced the pedagogical approach in the last curriculum review process, which resulted in the development of the Thematic Curriculum in 2006.

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) has adopted some of the principles of CCP in Curriculum 2000, and recommended teachers to group children and encourage their participation in classroom activities. Nevertheless, classroom observations conducted by the Ministry itself have revealed that the policy has made little impact at classroom level, and that

teachers continue to employ didactic, authoritarian teaching styles. The widely acclaimed Thematic Curriculum also adopts CCP and considers pupils to be the centre of the teaching and learning processes within classrooms. The new curriculum is based on three main principles (NCDC, 2006a):

1. Rapid development of literacy, numeracy and life skills at lower primary;
2. The treatment of concepts holistically, under themes of immediate meaning and relevance to the learner; and,
3. The presentation of learning experiences in languages in which the learners are already proficient.

4.3. CCP in the Thematic Curriculum

By child-centred, the new curriculum particularly refers to the following:

1. Children should have a chance to interact with each other and with the teacher during the lesson;
2. Class activities should be organised so that children learn by doing. They should be able to move around from time to time, and to use their hands;
3. Activities should be organised around a variety of learning materials, and children should be able to handle the materials;
4. Children should have an opportunity, from time to time, to have influence in the direction that the lesson (or day) takes. Allow the lesson to reflect the interests, abilities and concerns of the children (NCDC, 2006b, p. 3).

The recommended pedagogical approach focuses on the child's activities rather than the activities of teachers. It encourages the participation and performance of children, including those with special needs. Rather than being passive receivers and doing only what they are told, children are expected to be active participants in their learning by way of exploring, observing, experimenting, and practising. It suggests activities that are enjoyable for children, such as songs, games, acting and drawing. The teachers are encouraged to organise a variety of activities that keep all children involved. It recommends that in any lesson there should be at least three of the following activities: teacher speaking, children writing, children working in pairs, children making something, a child coming before the class to the front, everyone answering questions, and so on. Teachers are encouraged to think of other more appropriate and creative ways of enhancing children's participation in their learning. Furthermore, the new curriculum

aims at providing children with a rich and varied literate environment. For this purpose, use of a range of learning resources is recommended, including flash cards, sentence cards, wall charts, work cards, simple readers (both factual and story-based), and the children's own written work (NCDC, 2006a).

Group or pair work is advocated by the Thematic Curriculum as it is considered to provide opportunities for children to learn cooperatively, to direct their own learning rather than depending on the teacher all the time, and to allow for a variety of learning experiences and styles. Activities that are considered to be group work include shared reading, role-play, group investigation, debate, presentation, and discussion. Teachers are advised to use group work to motivate children to learn, to encourage children to talk to each other, to give children confidence, to promote cooperative learning and personal development, to improve and practise speaking and listening skills, to ensure that anything children write, say or do has an audience, and to share scarce materials. Groups can be arranged according to ability or can also be mixed. Ability groups are recommended when the teacher intends to give differential tasks to children according to their abilities. Use of ability groups is promoted as long as teachers can give these different materials and provide additional attention to weaker pupils. When all children are doing the same activity, mixed groups are to be used (NCDC, 2006b). Then, it is assumed that the more capable children can act as group leaders and help the other children. This is considered particularly useful during shared reading activities.

5. Description of the research

The data were collected during fieldwork between June and July 2007 in Uganda. The government aided (public) schools which piloted the Thematic Curriculum in Kampala were visited for this study. There were eight of them in Kampala, and all agreed to participate in this research. The pilot schools were chosen by the District Inspectorate of Schools, however, the criteria were provided by the NCDC. In school selection, NCDC considered aspects such as geographical location, socio-economic background of pupils, and head teachers' commitment to the Thematic Curriculum. The smallest school in the sample had around 500 students and the biggest had more than 2,000. The pupils mainly came from poor and middle-income families. Their ethnic background was mixed, yet in their schools students from the conflict-affected northern and eastern regions were in majority.

During school visits, I first contacted the head teacher and/or deputy head teacher responsible for the infant section (refers to lower primary education from P1 to P4). I explained the purpose of the research to school management as a doctoral study on the implementation of CCP in Ugandan primary schools. During these meetings, I explained the independent nature of the study and emphasized the anonymity of the respondents. Afterwards, I was introduced to the classroom teachers by deputy head teachers and their collaboration was sought. I also stressed confidentiality before teacher interviews by explaining that the information gathered from them would not be discussed with others (including other teachers, school management, and Ministry officials) and the findings would not be presented in ways that allowed identification of the respondents. Such an explicit commitment seemed crucial for facilitating the honesty of the responses. Indeed, during some interviews further confirmation of confidentiality was sought by some teachers. Besides, my position as an 'outsider', someone from a distant, foreign country seemed to aid open discussions. Some teachers remarked that 'I can tell you such things; you are not from here and you will leave soon'.

Two data collection methods informed this study: semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. At the time this research was conducted, the Thematic Curriculum was implemented only at P1 (since February 2006) and at P2 (since February 2007). All available teachers who were teaching at P1 and P2 participated in this study. Except for one, all teachers were female. They had professional education and had many years of experience. Unlike the pupils, the teachers were dominantly Baganda, yet there were some from other regions also. In total 44 interviews were conducted at schools: 34 interviews were with teachers, four with deputy head teachers, and six with head teachers. The interviews were on one-to-one basis, and in some cases on a group basis. During interviews, teachers' and head teachers' views were recorded on CCP, perceived outcomes of the new approach, classroom practices, implementation problems, and responses received from pupils and parents.

Furthermore, lesson observations were conducted in all P1 and P2 classrooms. In total, 28 classrooms were observed. The duration of lesson observation varied, in some classrooms it was 30 minutes and in some, it extended to two hours. In schools where there were many streams at one grade (e.g. primary 1/A, 1/B or 1/C), lessons were observed in each classroom during a learning area which lasted approximately 30 minutes. In other cases, classroom observations continued for longer periods. This allowed me to study how teachers shifted from one learning area to another.

Lessons were observed in almost all learning areas, yet the majority were in English, Literacy and Mathematics. Teachers seemed to focus mainly on these areas, and they also appeared to prefer teaching these learning areas in the presence of the researcher, possibly due to the high importance attached to the achievement of literacy and numeracy. These learning areas also appeared in the curriculum more often than others. During observations, I was seated either in the front at the teacher's desk or at the back next to pupils. I also reviewed student work while they carried out written tasks or when they were engaged in 'free activity'. I used a checklist during classroom observations, which included items such as classroom organisation, teacher and student activities, the level of interaction between pupils and teachers, teacher feedback, classroom management, and atmosphere.

In the next section, the findings of the fieldwork will be presented in three parts. First, teacher views on CCP will be described by highlighting their predominantly positive appraisal of the new pedagogical approach and perceived outcomes on student performance and improvements in life skills. The second part will look at implementation patterns in classrooms by comparing teacher practices with teacher accounts and the reform policy. The last section will delineate obstacles in implementation of CCP from the perspectives of teachers, highlighting several challenges and concerns that are also identified in other sub-Saharan African countries.

6. Teacher views on CCP

Teachers' understanding of CCP was mainly dominated by grouping children and providing them with some tasks that needed to be completed cooperatively. The new curriculum added some new dimensions to this understanding as teachers also emphasised the importance of student participation in classroom activities and the use of learning and teaching aids. In other words, the pedagogy advocated by the new curriculum was interpreted as more student talk and activity within the classroom, use of aids, and grouping.

There was a high level of receptiveness to CCP as teachers generally appraised the pedagogical approach introduced by the Thematic Curriculum. However, they had serious concerns regarding their implementation due to limitations imposed by structural problems, such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of aids. According to teachers, the teaching and learning strategies recommended by the new curriculum had a number of positive aspects. They believed that it contributed to student participation in the classroom. Pupils

became much more involved in their learning and assumed more responsibilities in their learning process. This made learning much more enjoyable and interesting for children as they easily got bored when the teacher was talking all the time. Lessons were also more enjoyable because various learning aids were used in teaching, teachers organised activities for children, or they participated in demonstrations. Teachers argued that use of learning materials improved student learning since practical work or experimenting with concrete objects strengthened student memory. Teachers also noted that use of such materials made teaching enjoyable for them as well, and simplified their work. Student motivation and alertness were also reported to have improved because when pupils were more active in the classroom, they were more motivated to learn. Some even claimed that increased motivation led to improvements in attendance rate.

Furthermore, teachers believed that participatory pedagogies improved life-skills, which is identified by the new curriculum as a critical area, in addition to literacy and numeracy. The new curriculum defines life skills as 'the skills that help children to flourish within their social and physical environment and make the most of the environment to ensure a healthy and happy life' (NCDC, 2006b, p. 66). It identifies six life skills which occur in every theme within the curriculum: effective communication, critical thinking, decision-making, creative thinking, problem-solving and self-esteem. In addition, the curriculum recommends that the following life skills are given specific focus during certain activities or themes: interpersonal relationships, negotiation, coping with emotions, non-violent conflict resolution, assertiveness, friendship, and coping with stress (NCDC, 2006b).

In discussions relating to the development of life skills, teachers mainly emphasised self-esteem, assertiveness, confidence, and effective communication. They believed that these skills were strengthened by the relatively more participatory nature of teaching and learning. They claimed to give more space to pupils in the classroom, and noted that children talked more and had more opportunities to express themselves. In particular, the News and Story Hour gave such opportunities to children to express themselves, not only in English, but also in their own local languages. Teachers also argued that the new pedagogy improved interaction levels among pupils; hence their skills in forming friendships and maintaining good interpersonal relationships also developed.

Teachers' positive view on CCP also originated from their perception on the impact of the new curriculum on learning achievement. Some teachers

claimed that use of learning materials, group exercises, and increased student talk led to improvements in student achievement. Many observed significant improvements in literacy and numeracy levels since the implementation of the Thematic Curriculum. Yet, it was difficult to attribute these improvements to the pedagogical approach alone. Indeed, improvements in learning achievements were mainly attributed to the emphasis of the new curriculum on literacy and numeracy, and on content organisation.

7. Classroom practices

Although teachers demonstrated much enthusiasm for CCP during interviews and claimed to practice it within the limitations imposed by classroom realities, lesson observations only partly substantiated their accounts. This suggests that pedagogical reforms permeated classrooms to a lesser extent than alleged by teachers. Similar findings were recorded in some other studies (O'Sullivan, 2002; Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002), confirming that teacher self-report is a weak proxy in analysing the progress of reform policies in practice.

It seems that the reformed practices were embraced unevenly among schools and classrooms. Some of the teachers seemed to have undertaken substantial changes, and practised various aspects of the new pedagogy, yet many others managed only modest, formalistic revisions. The were far fewer teachers in the first group and their teaching was primarily distinguished by the quality of their interaction with pupils, by their superior ability to engage children with the lesson, and by using a variety of teaching and learning approaches to stimulate and reinforce student learning. Furthermore, some aspects of the pedagogical reforms were more easily and readily adopted by teachers than others. For instance, almost all teachers revised seating arrangements and organised pupils in groups. Likewise, all teachers attempted to make greater use of teaching and learning aids during their lessons, though these were mostly in short supply. Yet, some other dimensions of the reform seemed to be ignored, such as facilitating interactions among pupils, allowing them to influence the direction of the lesson or the day, or organising meaningful group activities in mixed ability groups.

In general, teacher practices revealed a hybrid of traditional and reform-oriented practices, such as talking to the whole class from the front, extensive use of question and answer with the whole class, individual or group exercises, demonstrations, use of visual aids, practical activities, and field visits. Besides, several characteristics of structured learning were observed, including lesson planning, clear introduction of the objectives and

themes of the lesson, making links with previous lessons, and use of formative assessment. Indeed, research evidence from various sub-Saharan African countries shows that many initiatives that claim to be child-centred incorporate some aspects of structured pedagogy. This further confirms that 'a polarized view of pedagogy fails to do justice to the educational values and teaching practices of many teachers working within contexts of scarcity' (Barrett, 2007, p. 274).

Lesson observations also revealed that reform policies were interpreted and practised differently from the ways intended by policymakers, and in some cases, they were only adopted in a formalistic fashion. Teachers' understandings of student participation and group work illustrate this point. As highlighted earlier, student participation in the classroom is highly praised by teachers and has almost become a buzz-word among them. Teachers often argued that pupils talked more in the classroom and there was more room for them to express themselves. This was facilitated mainly through two new learning areas, the News and Story Time. The curriculum advises teachers to start the day with these learning areas, during which children were expected to tell stories or news from their home or community. Although some teachers claimed that pupils also talked more in other learning areas, during classroom observations pupils were mainly observed as giving answers in chorus to teacher questions. Indeed, most of the lessons were dominated by questions, yet these were limited to basic information recall, or were aimed at checking whether the pupils were paying attention. Not a single pupil asked their teachers questions and there were few instances of teachers asking questions that required more than one or two-word answers.

In group work, a formalistic adoption of the policy was evident. The research findings reveal that, in various African countries, the change of seating arrangement in classrooms is the first and in some cases the only sign that the teachers are implementing CCP (Nykiel-Herbert, 2004). Likewise, in the majority of classrooms observed in this study, pupils were seated in groups. These groups, however, were often very large, ranging from 6 to 30, making it impossible to carry out meaningful group activities. Moreover, in some classrooms, seating arrangements enabled pupils to face their group members, yet in some others pupils were facing the blackboard or another group that was in the middle.

Although the official curriculum advises mixed ability groups, very few teachers preferred to have pupils in mixed ability groups since they believed that children can cooperate better if their achievement level is more or less the same. Some of these teachers have noticed that when high-

achievers were grouped with low-achievers, they were not challenged enough, and they also got distracted and performed worse over time. Yet, when they were seated with pupils who performed well, they were more motivated and inspired. Additionally, these teachers also realised over time that low achievers copied the exercises from high-achievers when they were in the same group. By doing so, even if they did not perform well, they hid among high-achieving pupils. A few teachers occasionally assigned high-achievers to help the low-achievers, particularly when they were busy and needed some help.

Teachers also believed that grouping children according to ability simplified their own work and helped them to work more effectively with pupils. They gave differentiated tasks to the groups according to their ability level. Otherwise, they noted, high-achievers would get bored and distract other children, or low-achievers would be challenged beyond their capacity. Some teachers also used grouping as a motivation mechanism. They openly announced the achievement level of the groups, and encouraged pupils to do better so that they would be promoted to the higher-ranking group. They believed this also provided an extra stimulus for children to work harder. Nevertheless, despite teachers' willingness to experiment with meaningful group activities, these were hardly observed in lessons. According to teachers, resource scarcity and overcrowding were the main explanatory factors for organising limited group activities. Consequently, grouping seemed to function mainly as a tool for clustering pupils according to their ability, thereby making it easier for teachers to identify the ability level of children and give them differentiated tasks. The opportunity to cooperate and learn from group members seemed limited, though not exceptional. Children were sometimes given exercises to be completed as a group in Mathematics, or they were given learning aids to discuss within the group.

8. Perceived obstacles in implementing reformed pedagogies

Although implementation of CCP has proved to be highly context-specific, the challenges experienced by teachers in various African countries reveal certain similarities. Within the Ugandan context, teachers' pedagogical choices and 'successful' adoption of CCP seem to be circumscribed by, among others, inadequate teacher training, large class sizes, lack of adequate learning and teaching materials, instruction in English, unrealistic time-planning, low teacher morale, cultural appropriateness and the examination system.

8.1. Inadequate teacher training

Teachers who participated in this study had a training course of 7 or 10 days before they started to implement the new curriculum. During their training, they were taught about all aspects of the new curriculum. Except for a few teachers, all thought that training was too short, too hectic and hurried. Some also raised questions about the quality of training and about the lack of demonstrations on how CCP could be practised in a classroom context. Teachers reported that they were learning by improvising and practising on a daily basis. Indeed, P1 teachers who had been teaching the Thematic Curriculum for a second year were more convinced of its value, and they seemed more confident to teach it. Yet, more confusion, disillusion and apprehension were observed among P2 teachers who had been implementing it for only five months at the time of this research. Teachers also noted that during their own schooling and pre-service training, they were mainly exposed to traditional teaching methods; hence, they had little familiarity with the new, progressive pedagogical approaches.

Such concerns are expressed in several other African countries where the Ministries of Education have embarked on introducing CCP in primary schools. Studies show that teachers' knowledge and understanding of CCP are limited; indeed many do not understand the meaning of these approaches. They also have problems in understanding a significant number of concepts in CCP, such as facilitate, analyse, and synthesise. Therefore, the way the Ministries of Education conceptualise CCP is viewed as unrealistic. Furthermore, CCP require highly qualified and experienced teachers. Yet, the majority of teachers in sub-Saharan Africa are either under-qualified or unqualified. Hence, implementation of CCP is beyond their professional capacity (O'Grady, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2004). Furthermore, teachers have been exposed to traditional teaching methods as students during their studies and during their pre-service and in-service training. Therefore, they tend to practise what they have experienced themselves (Jessop & Penny, 1998; Serbessa, 2006). Besides, even if several institutions responsible for teacher training advocate CCP, they hardly use and model these same methods, which contributes to perpetuation of traditional teaching approaches (Leu, 2005).

8.2. Large class sizes

CCP necessitates a specifically designed environment with adequate space, resources and small classes. Yet, these are also not available in the majority

of African classrooms, since they are mostly overcrowded (O'Sullivan, 2002; USAID, 2006). There was a general acknowledgement among teachers who took part in this study that the use of CCP is more challenging when teachers are working with large numbers of pupils. The class sizes in this study ranged from 30 to 108, yet the majority was around 70. Teachers unanimously commented that it was very difficult to teach such overcrowded classes. For instance, group work was emphasized by the new curriculum, and teachers were willing to experiment more with pair or group work; however, they admitted that they often failed to do group work because of the high number of pupils, limited space within the classroom restricting teacher and student movement, and arrangement of desks for group activities. Furthermore, the recommended teaching methods, such as increasing student participation, learning by doing and group work were considered time-consuming, therefore very difficult to apply in large classes.

Moreover, it was impossible to pay individual attention to 70 or 80 pupils in a classroom during a half-hour lesson. Therefore, it was also very challenging to follow pupils' progress and provide adequate feedback. Some teachers noted that just keeping things in order requires a lot of time and effort in such classrooms. As explained by one of the teachers: 'You look at one group; try to explain things while behind you there is another group which is throwing things to each other, or doing absurd things.'

8.3. Lack of adequate learning and teaching materials

As highlighted earlier, the new curriculum promotes use of learning aids. One teacher commented that 'Previously all we needed was a blackboard and chalk, now we need lots of other materials to teach'. In observed classrooms, almost all teachers used real objects or some other learning aids, such as wall-charts and name cards. Although teachers were happy to use learning aids, they complained that they did not have enough of them. Sometimes they asked children to bring real objects, such as beans or banana leaves. Yet, even this was problematic as some children could not bring such materials due to extreme poverty. Some printed materials were provided in limited amounts to teachers or not supplied at all. Materials were often expensive, yet the budget for such expenses was only a fraction of what was needed. Consequently, school budgets were further constrained. Storage was also a real problem in classrooms as there was not enough space or cupboards to store notebooks, books or any other materials. According to a study commissioned by the Ministry (Read & Enyutu, 2005) even if textbooks were provided by the

Ministry to schools, many schools did not use them since they did not have safe storage in classrooms.

8.4. Instruction in English

The majority of sub-Saharan African countries have adopted colonial languages as their official language and the language of instruction at schools. However, there is a growing trend to use vernacular languages at the lower levels of primary education, during which pupils receive language lessons as well, such as English or French. Similarly, English is the medium of instruction in the most parts of Ugandan education system. With the Thematic Curriculum, the Government has introduced the use of local languages as the language of instruction at lower levels (P1–P3). However, all schools in Kampala use English owing to the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the city.

Language directly relates to student participation in the classroom because when children are not fluent in the language they cannot freely talk or interact with their teachers and classmates. CCP calls for higher student participation, increased interactions between pupils and teachers, and among children through group work and discussions. Nevertheless, inadequate language competency limits pupils' opportunities for participating in classroom activities. In observed schools, some children were fluent in English yet others were introduced to the language for the first time when they came to school. Those who had been to nursery schools spoke better English, and those who came from other regions, especially from rural areas in the north or east, had the most difficulties. Teachers commented that such pupils were much quieter in the classroom and had learning difficulties. Teachers often used the local language, Luganda, when they needed to explain something in detail, or to give directions to pupils. Some of them also asked children to translate what they were saying into local languages for those pupils who understood neither English nor Luganda. Similar findings were also reported in Namibia. Storeng (2001) suggests that the introduction of English as the medium of instruction into a society where English is hardly spoken seems to deprive children of a language to construct meaning. The ability of Namibian students' to reason and participate in discussions is found to be directly related to their mastery of English.

8.5. Unrealistic time-planning

Time-planning within the new curriculum was considered unrealistic. Teachers were required to teach eight learning areas per day. Yet, they believed that the Thematic Curriculum took longer to teach. The recommended teaching methods required teachers to use learning aids, such as real objects, so they needed to demonstrate objects and provide explanations about them. Written exercises and drawings were also time consuming. Therefore, 30 minutes was often insufficient, especially for literacy and Mathematics. Teachers argued that hardly any teacher could manage to teach eight learning areas in a day. Instead, they shortened the time scheduled for some learning areas, or skipped them altogether. These were often learning areas that were considered less important, such as News, Physical Education, Music, Free Activity or Religious Education. Teachers ended up teaching four or five learning areas per day, emphasizing mostly Literacy, English and Mathematics. Consequently, there was less time allocated to News and Story time which gave more opportunities to children to express themselves in the classroom. Time pressure also adversely affected teachers' tendency to organise group activities, practical work, and discussions.

8.6. Low teacher morale

Teacher motivation is considered crucial for the successful implementation of the Thematic Curriculum and for improving the quality of education in general. The Thematic Curriculum makes further demands on teachers by asking them to engage children in learning more, and by being more innovative and creative in their teaching. Yet, the majority of teachers noted that teacher morale was alarmingly low. A number of reasons were discussed in this respect including low teacher salaries, lack of incentives, low social status of the teaching profession, and inadequate working conditions.

Low teacher salary was cited as the main cause of low teacher morale. Teacher salaries in Uganda are lower than the average teacher salary in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2007). Teachers unanimously noted that their salary was not sufficient to have a decent life, especially in urban areas. Financial problems seemed to occupy their minds constantly, and distracted their attention and concentration in classroom as well. Sometimes, their own children had to stay at home because they could not afford to pay their tuition

fees. Financial difficulties also seemed to interfere with their well-being and health. The account of one of the teachers illustrates this:

> This job requires people who teach lovingly, so that children would also love learning, get motivated, interested and enjoy schooling. But in order to do that you need to motivate teachers in the first place. When you are tortured here and there, how can you come and teach enthusiastically and lovingly… When my mind is busy and preoccupied with basic necessities of my own life, how can you expect me to perform well in the classroom?

8.7. Cultural appropriateness

The appropriateness of CCP to Ugandan culture did not come up as an issue in most of the teacher interviews, yet it was raised as a topic in some of the interviews held with other key informants in the education sector. CCP is trying to develop children's critical skills and seeking to encourage children to question adults, to analyse and to explore knowledge. Yet, in traditional Ugandan culture, children are brought up to respect adults and those in authority. Questioning or challenging them is not often considered appropriate behaviour. Indeed, in many African societies, the relationship between adult and child is one of respect and authority. Children are not encouraged to question; they are expected to be respectful, charming and smiling in the company of elders. Consequently, the expectations raised by CCP directly contradict with the cultural context of African societies (O'Sullivan, 2004; Serbessa, 2006), including that of Uganda. Similar conclusions were drawn elsewhere in Asian countries as well (Nguyen et al., 2006).

8.8. Examination system

In many African countries, the education system is examination oriented. Similarly, in Uganda, the PLE causes significant anxieties and stress for schools, pupils and parents as it determines who will be eligible for admission into the limited number of places available at secondary schools. As one official explained, the PLE is very high-stakes in Uganda: 'People are struggling to get into very few places. Politicians and parents put pressure on head teachers and teachers. They even threaten their jobs.' Such substantial pressure and expectations on pupils and schools have implications for the implementation of CCP as well because teaching and learning strategies that are perceived to have little impact on student achievement in national

examinations are unlikely to be fully implemented and sustained. Hopkins (2002) suggests that this is a particularly difficult challenge for CCP as it focuses on development of skills and competencies that are not assessed by national examinations.

9. Conclusion

There has been a growing homogenisation of educational discourse in sub-Saharan Africa since 1990 (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008), and CCP has featured as one of the most widely endorsed educational policies in these countries. However, at the level of practice, there appear to be many convergences as well as divergences as educational policies are adapted and re-contextualised through multiple processes (Dale, 1999; Phillips & Ochs, 2003). Often, during the implementation stage, educational policies were interpreted and practised in a different way than that envisaged by policymakers, resulting in considerable gaps between policy and practice.

Uganda has been no exception to this; the findings of the research demonstrate that implementation of CCP in classrooms has not occurred in the ways intended by policymakers. One of the factors that seem to explain this discrepancy is the tendency of educational policies to focus on educational, social and economic development goals to be achieved through the new pedagogy and less on what is feasible and realistic in the contexts of implementation, reflecting an incompatibility between goals and realities. In other words, the limited presence of CCP in Ugandan classrooms is not due to resistance by teachers or inadequate commitment to the reforms on their part. Lack of human and material resources, capacity shortages and shortcomings in curriculum design seem to provide better explanations for the discrepancy between policy and practice. There is no doubt that authoritarian, chalk-and-talk teaching methods need to be modified and replaced by more progressive teaching and learning pedagogies. For this to happen, not only is the identification of what needs to be changed required but also the identification of the conditions necessary for successful implementation, as well as adequate provision of these conditions. Overlooking such contextual realities and capacities will inevitably result in implementation failure.

However, despite this evidence one still wonders if the professional, material, and social realities can fully explain the inconclusive results achieved by the efforts to popularise CCP in sub-Saharan Africa. Tabulawa (1997; 1998) notes that less-than-desirable implementation outcomes are often rationalised in simplistic, technical terms such as lack of resources or

inadequate teacher training. Yet he believes the real explanations have to do with teachers' assumptions about the nature of knowledge and how it ought to be transmitted, their perceptions of pupils, and what they consider to be the goals of schooling. Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008, p. 9) also acknowledge that 'The existing knowledge and assumptions about schooling and teaching need to be taken into account in creating conditions in which new learning and translation into practice becomes an appealing and viable approach.'

Furthermore, research on CCP and other approaches that fall within the category of open-ended instruction has shown that their effectiveness is not yet established because learning outcomes are mixed or inconclusive. The majority of current programmes have been developed recently and only on a small scale. So far, the attempts to institutionalise such programmes, both in industrialised and developing countries have met with limited success. They seem to be inaccessible to ordinary teachers and they lack operational clarity, hence they are subject to a variety of interpretations (Gauthier & Dembele, 2004). The effectiveness of such programmes with children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds is particularly questioned (Dembele, 2005) as well as their appropriateness for teaching lower-order cognitive skills, especially basic literacy and numeracy skills (Heneveld & Craig, 1996).

These factors are often identified as challenges that need to be overcome for effective implementation (USAID, 2006). In some other cases, however, a number of structural or cultural issues were discussed in a framework to demonstrate that CCP is not the most appropriate pedagogy for sub-Saharan Africa (O'Sullivan, 2004; Serbessa, 2006) and would never be adopted effectively by teachers even if more financial and human resources were poured into such reforms (Guthrie, 1990; Tabulawa, 1998; 2004). Guthrie (1990) suggests that teacher-centred formalistic approaches are more suitable, particularly in the light of limited resources and teacher professional capacity.

Some other researchers suggest that a combination of structured teaching methods, direct instruction, guided practice, and independent learning are more appropriate for African schools (Gauthier & Dembele, 2004; O'Sullivan, 2004; Serbessa, 2006). Moreover, Tabulawa (2003) argues that sub-Saharan African countries need to invent alternative, culturally responsive pedagogies and resist colonising/domesticating pedagogies such as CCP. He believes that since teaching and learning are contextualised activities, there can be no justification for a universal and homogenising pedagogy. By treating CCP as a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and

learning, pedagogies that are based on indigenous knowledge systems are marginalised and the potential of these alternative pedagogies has not been explored. Perhaps, more favourable outcomes could be attained if African policymakers and educationalists consider Tabulawa's suggestion seriously, and attempted to develop indigenous knowledge systems by recognising them as legitimate knowledge and looking at ways in which they and the Western knowledge system complement each other.

PART II

TURKEY

CHAPTER: 5

National context

Turkey is a geographically vast country with an area of 780,580 square kilometres (larger than the United Kingdom and France combined). Dominated by the Turkish element, its population of 72 million (2009) (TURKSTAT) is a combination of groups with different ethnicities, languages and cultural traditions, including Kurds, Laz, Georgians, Jews, Armenians, Zaza and Arabs. Turkish, which is the most widely-spoken language, is the official language. Additionally, between 12 to 16 percent of the population is estimated to have Kurdish as mother tongue (Gündüz-Hosgör & Smits, 2002). Turkey has a predominantly Muslim population (99.8 percent) with major subdivisions with regard to schools of Islam. There are also Christians, Jews and other minorities. The country is the 16th biggest economy in the world, considered a regional power in the Middle East, and constitutes an economic and geopolitical bridge between the West and the East.

1. Political history

The Turks originate from central Asia. They migrated from their ancestral homeland to Anatolia in the 11th century, and established two powerful empires, the Seljuk and the Ottoman Empires. The Ottoman Empire was established in 1299 and lasted for six centuries. At the height of its power, it spanned three continents, controlling much of south-eastern Europe, western Asia and northern Africa. Having lost the First World War, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and parts of mainland Turkey were eventually briefly occupied by the Allies. In 1923, Turkey was founded as a Republic after the independence war against Britain, France, Italy and Greece, which was the first successful war of independence against Western imperial powers.

The primary goal of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, and the ruling elite was to create an independent, modern, democratic and secular country, which would reach the contemporary level of (Western) civilisation. Republicanism, nationalism, statism, secularism, populism and revolutionism-reformism were the main defining and constituting principles by which the Turkish state was supposed to operate to make the new Republic an advanced modern society (Keyman, 2007). Once

independence was restored, Mustafa Kemal swiftly proceeded with the abolishment of the sultanate, the foundation of the republic and the abolishment of the caliphate within a couple of years. Fundamental changes were also initiated in virtually all spheres of Turkish social life, collectively referred to as the Atatürk Revolution. These reforms aimed at changing the basis of the social life from religion and tradition to a positivist and secular understanding, heavily influenced by Western models (Kongar, 1999).

Following Atatürk's death in 1938, his long-time ally Ismet Inonu skilfully kept the country out of the Second World War and ensured transition to a multi-party democracy in 1950. The centre-right Democratic Party (DP) came to power after first elections. The DP presented itself as constituting the true representatives of the nation as opposed to the bureaucrats and appealed to broad sections of the population, including the religious conservatives who had never been able to digest the secular changes of the previous three decades. The DP period coincided with the deteriorating international relations of the early Cold War years. Faced with the hostile intentions of the Soviet Union, Turkey started to align its foreign policy interests with the West, through the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan and NATO membership in 1952. In the second part of the 1950s, the DP failed to meet the expectations of the nation, lost its patience with the opposition of Inonu's Republican People's Party (CHP in Turkish initials) and increasingly assumed an authoritarian stance. It was removed from power by modern Turkey's first coup in 1960, and democratic rule was resumed within a year (see Aksin, 2004; Karpat, 1996).

The 1960s witnessed the rise of one of Turkey's most popular politicians, Suleyman Demirel. Demirel's Justice Party (AP in Turkish) came to power in the 1965 elections. In this period, continuing agricultural and industrial modernisation, the benefits of increasing welfare in Western Europe and the inflow of remittances from Turkish workers who had recently started working in Western Europe led to an improvement in economic conditions. This paralleled the early 1950s when the recovery from the WWII years and the inflow of Marshall Aid had led to a quick improvement of welfare. This resulted in welfare being connected with liberal-conservative governments by the public (Kongar, 1999). DP/AP propaganda of associating anything resembling socialist ideas with outright communism appealed to conservative masses in rural Anatolia. As a result of these factors, social-democratic parties until today have almost never had a chance to govern, except for a few brief periods. This explains the lopsided nature of Turkish

politics in the post-WWII period as well as the continuing weakness of civil society institutions and insufficient pluralist discussion of major social issues.

In the 1960s, in the favourable framework provided by the 1961 constitution and with the influence of global political trends, students and workers became increasingly active in the political life of Turkey. The DP and CHP, representing liberal conservatism and social democracy, had defined the political scene in the previous decade. Now socialists, as well as the nationalist and religious right claimed their place in the political spectrum with their own political parties. Towards the end of the decade, students from all camps became increasingly radicalised. The AP government silently encouraged the right-wing militias and failed to prevent their attacks on leftist students and workers. This contributed to the further radicalisation of some leftist students who formed Marxist-Leninist groups favouring armed conflict with the right. The armed forces responded with a memorandum in 1971, known as the second military intervention of the modern Turkish republic. As a result, Demirel and the AP fell from power (see Albayrak, 2004; Yerasimos, 1977; Zurcher, 2004).

After the resumption of elections in 1973, the AP and CHP took turns in forming governments, sometimes in coalitions. But the pressure on the social-democratic and socialist groups never abated, CHP did not have the chance of implementing its programmes and Turkish democracy ended up down another dead-end street. Ideological violence started to claim lives on a daily basis and the military once again intervened, this time with a full-scale coup in September 1980, the third military intervention in the history of the Republic. The coup was met with widespread relief as rampant violence immediately came to an end. However the most liberal and pluralist period in Turkish democratic history also came to an end. The military regime was short-lived but its programmes and actions left a long-lasting and damaging legacy in the country's political and social life (Aksin, 2004). The society was depoliticised, the political left was all but wiped out, and a whole generation grew up with no ideal other than to become rich in one way or another.

Similar to the earlier interventions of the army, the officers behind the 1980 coup did not intend to stay in power for an extended period of time. A new constitution was prepared and elections were held in 1983. Since all political parties and politicians who were active before 1980 were banned from political activities (the ban was lifted in 1986), new parties and politicians competed. Turgut Özal, a former World Bank executive who had been brought in to oversee the economy after the 1980 coup, won the election with his Motherland Party (ANAP in Turkish). ANAP was a centre-right

party, and could be considered a continuation of the DP/AP tradition. In alignment with the Reaganite and Thatcherite trends of the 1980s, Özal led a widespread liberalisation of the Turkish economy and implementation of neoliberal policies. Exports were encouraged, foreign exchange controls were lifted, the import regime was liberalised, and the Istanbul Stock Exchange was established. These measures provided the basis for the Turkish economy's strong growth and integration within the global economy in subsequent years. Communication and energy infrastructure was also modernised. However, ANAP continued the populist tradition of its predecessors; inflation and budget deficits spun out of control, state economic institutions ran enormous deficits and income distribution rapidly deteriorated. These trends led to numerous economic crises in subsequent years. The ANAP period came to an end in 1991 and a decade of unstable coalitions followed in the ensuing period (see Tanor, 2000).

In February 2001, Turkey experienced a major setback because of a financial crisis (whereby the Turkish lira lost more than half of its value in a single day), resulting in a major output collapse and dramatic increases in unemployment, affecting all sections of the society to varying degrees (Onis & Bakir, 2007; Keyman & Koyuncu, 2005). Following the devastating crisis, Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP in Turkish) won the 2002 elections. Erdogan was previously a member of the religious Welfare Party and had made statements indicating his preference for a social order partially based on religious principles. After coming to power, on numerous occasions he denied that he had a hidden agenda aiming at the Islamisation of Turkish society. However, various actions of his governments since 2002 appeared to justify the fears of the majority of the population which strongly reject any change in the secular foundations of the society. Many proposals of the AKP government, such as the lifting of the headscarf ban in universities and for public employees, criminalisation of adultery and the inclusion of technical secondary schools that educate imams in the mainstream education system have met strong public resistance and some were overturned by the Constitutional Court (Grigoriadis, 2009). The very recent years of AKP rule have been marked by an increasing impatience toward any form of opposition, as evidenced by the tensions between AKP and the universities, high courts, trade unions, press, left-leaning intellectuals, and last but not the least, the armed forces.

After this brief introduction to the contemporary Turkish history, some major issues/themes that appear to define Turkish modernity will be further elaborated below. These include, the tension between the 'statist-

elitist' and 'traditional movements', Europeanization, the Kurdish question, and the Islamisation of the public sphere.

1.1. The tension between 'the statist-elitist' and 'traditional-liberal' movements

The age-old division between the 'statist-elitist' and 'traditional-liberal' movements in Turkey is rather crucial in understanding the Turkish political and economic developments in the past decades. The 'statist-elitist' movement originated in the nineteenth century around the idea of 'Westernisation'. In the absence of powerful economic classes that could pioneer change in the social, economic, cultural and political spheres, bureaucrats believed in the necessity of state intervention to realise such change. Unrivalled by any other group, bureaucrats did not require support from the wider population and considered themselves revolutionaries. The 'traditional-liberal' group emerged as a reaction to the former. They were liberal in the sense that they opposed the idea of heavy state influence on political and economic life. Traditionalism was counterforce to the top-down Westernisation as imposed by the bureaucrats. They have made heavy use of and have misused religion in their opposition and portrayed themselves as the guardians of Islam and the Ottoman tradition, constantly chipping away at the fundamental principles of the republic, one of the most important of which is secularism.

All mainstream political parties, including the Republican Party (CHP), made compromises, as it is considered rather difficult to be successful politically with a party being regarded as an enemy of religious values. Another factor that contributed to this regressive movement was the staunchly anti-communist atmosphere, especially in the early years of the Cold War. As one of the two NATO members bordering the former USSR directly, Turkey proved very unfertile ground for any political movement that remotely resembled anything left-wing. Combined with the failure of the main left-of-centre political party CHP to abolish its statist-elitist credentials, this has led to a lopsided democratic experience in Turkey up until the present day, with the right-wing parties, with varying degrees of traditionalist elements, almost always having the upper hand in parliamentary elections (Kongar, 1999).

The Turkish political/economic scene since the initiation of the multiparty democracy in 1950 is characterised by the tension between these two movements. In the 1930s and 1940s, the state encouraged and granted protection to private capital in order to kick-start industrialisation after the

Great Depression. Such protection was swiftly turned by Menderes' DP into political patronage, a tradition maintained by its successor parties – Demirel's DP and DYP and Özal's ANAP (Heper & Keyman, 1998). As the 'political elite' replaced 'state elite' as the centre of public decision-making after 1950, political parties came to represent the economic interests of their members (İnan, 1995). Key elements of a healthy democratic exchange such as consultations with and responsiveness to organised interests and careful preparation, deliberation and debating of party programmes were lacking. Such patronage occasionally led to serious tension between the state elite – intellectuals, civil/military bureaucracy, senior academic and judicial figures – and the political elite. However, such tensions did not per se lead to breaks in the democratic process. These breaks came in the form of the coups d'état and memoranda following serious polarisation in the society along these ideological lines. Here, it is evident that the state elite could tolerate the political patronage, but not the polarisation which it perceived as a clear threat to the unity of the country or the principle of secularism. The quick returns to democratic rule indicate the elite's – including the armed forces' – commitment to democracy (Heper & Keyman, 1998). The tension between the state and political elites, on the other hand, remains a fact of Turkish social and political life to this very day.

1.2. Europeanisation

Europe has had a strong impact on Turkey for many centuries, and Turkey has responded and adapted to changes in Europe. Factors that conditioned the European influence on Turkey included geographical proximity, historical sensitivity, and legal and institutional ties (Ulusoy, 2009). In Turkish intellectual life, Europeanisation or 'Westernisation' can be traced back to 1699, when the Ottoman army besieging Vienna was defeated by Western powers. This was the first serious defeat suffered by Ottomans and marked the beginning of the period when Turks would be pushed back eastwards. In the ensuing centuries, Westernisation was regarded as a means to go back to the former glorious days of the empire or to catch up with the Western powers. It was first motivated by the desire to gain back the military superiority against the West; however, in due time the sultans aimed at modernising the whole Ottoman legal, administrative, financial and education systems.

While these efforts have led to partial successes in terms of the setting up of modern institutions, the decline of the Ottoman Empire could

not be reversed and its eventual collapse after the WWI could not be prevented. Nevertheless the accumulation of modernist ideas and the formation of a revolutionary class of young army officers and bureaucrats at the beginning of the twentieth century helped the founding of the new Turkish Republic in 1923 (Kongar, 1999). Westernisation was strong in the early republican years as well, since Atatürk carried out a sweeping set of reforms in every aspect of Turkish social and economic life after the founding of the new Turkish state. For instance, the tax system was overhauled, Arabic script was replaced by the Latin alphabet, and the metric system and Western calendar were introduced.

Throughout modern Turkish history, Europeanisation has remained a major goal for the elite in Turkey (Onis, 2004). The Europeanisation process was institutionally manifested in the Ankara Agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1963 which made Turkey an associate member, and the customs union agreement in 1995. Later, in 1999, Turkey was accepted as a formal candidate at the Helsinki Summit, and full membership negotiations started in 2005. Since the Helsinki Summit, the EU's influence has increased considerably as it has become an important catalyst for change in the political and economic realms. For instance, following the Summit, political reforms for meeting the 1993 Copenhagen criteria for accession gained momentum (Ulusoy, 2007).

Such momentum cannot be only explained by EU conditionality, since the role of domestic actors and their ability to engineer political change have also been significant (Ulusoy, 2007; 2009). In the past decade, the key political and economic actors have faced powerful incentives for change and for implementing a series of deep-seated institutional reforms (Onis & Bakir, 2007). The February 2001 financial crisis has also helped to break down resistance to reform and the key external actors, including the IMF, the World Bank and the EU, have been able to intensify the momentum for structural reforms (Onis & Bakir, 2007). In the post-1999 period, Turkey introduced a series of reforms involving the abolition of the death penalty and extension of cultural rights for ethnic and religious groups (Onis, 2004). The reform process has provided new opportunities for non-Turkish and non-Muslim groups to make democratic demands (Cayir, 2009a).

The prospect of Turkey's full membership to the EU generates scepticism among its members due to Turkey's large population (second largest after Germany), its distinct cultural and religious character, the size of its agricultural sector, fears of mass labour migration to the EU, and concerns related to its political system (e.g. the involvement of military in politics) and

human rights violations. Furthermore, support for Turkey's membership among the public has remained low in the EU countries, at around 30 percent in the last decade – the lowest approval rating for all candidate countries. Therefore, Turkey's possible membership generated popular scepticism and strong divisions among the member states (Schimmelfennig, 2009).

Likewise, the EU membership process generated controversies within Turkey and led to the emergence of pro-EU and anti-EU coalitions. Business interests have clearly favoured closer integration with Europe, and the big business has emerged as a key element of the pro-EU coalition through its major interest association – Turkish Industrialists' and Businessman' Association (TÜSİAD). In addition, a range of civil society organisations, which joined forces under an umbrella organisation 'The Movement for Europe 2002', has become a decisive element of the pro-reform coalition in Turkey. The ruling part AKP has assumed an explicitly pro-EU stance, because the Islamists believe that the EU membership would help to consolidate their position in Turkish politics and extend religious freedoms. Other political parties have also been broadly supportive of integration with the EU; however, they have expressed deep reservations concerning the specific conditions that needed to be satisfied for full membership. In this respect, CHP (the leftist party) has increasingly become critical of the EU, and their uneven mix of conditions and incentives.

Key elements of the military-security establishment are the main actors within the anti-EU coalition. They are suspicious of EU demands for democratisation and reform because of concerns that such reforms might undermine the unitary and secular character of the Turkish state. It is important to clarify that the groups that are part of anti-EU coalition are not against EU membership but oppose the kind of membership conditions that are likely to undermine their power and status in society (Onis, 2004; Ulusoy, 2009). Public support for EU membership has also declined in the past decade in Turkey, although it recovered slightly in recent years. According to the latest report of Eurobarometer, 48 percent of Turkish people support EU membership, and 57 percent believe that Turkey would benefit from EU membership (Eurobarometer, 2009).

Turkey's full membership in the EU appears to be a distant possibility at the moment. Analysts suggest that the disappointments with the EU membership negotiations and lack of commitment and enthusiasm on the part of the EU members might result in Turkey's rapprochement with Russia and Arabic countries. Indeed, Turkey has increasingly turned its face from the West in recent years towards the East, and has assumed new economic and

political roles in the Middle East. For instance, Turkey has recently signed economic and trade agreements with Syria, Lebanon and Jordan aiming at long-term strategic development and economic integration (Bila, 2010). Such developments suggest new policy orientations in the coming years, and appear to defy century old 'Westernisation' goals.

1.3. The Kurdish question

The Kurdish question is arguably the most important internal problem of modern Turkey (see Cemal, 2008; Ergil, 2000; Heper, 2007). The Turks and Kurds living together for hundreds of years and their common effort in the establishment of the republic have led to an important difference between the Kurdish issue in Turkey and other ethnic conflicts elsewhere in the world. The Kurds have been an integral part of the Turkish society, and have played a very important role in the country's social and economic life (Cornell, 2001).

Estimates as to the percentage of ethnic Kurds in Turkey vary. A recent estimate, based on a representative survey in 2006, suggested that some 10 percent of the population in Turkey defined themselves as ethnically Kurd (Somer, 2009), yet other sources indicate that one fifth of Turkey's population speaks Kurdish as their mother tongue (Ergil, 2000). About half of the Kurdish population of Turkey is still concentrated in the Kurdish ancestral region in the southeast, the rest live in other parts of the country (Ergil, 2000). Being Muslim, Kurds enjoyed the same status with Turks under the Ottoman Empire and fought alongside Turkish nationalists against the occupation by the Allies after the First World War. The abolishment of the Sultanate and the Caliphate in the early 1920s meant the end of these important symbols of unity between the Turks and the Kurds (Cornell, 2001). Furthermore, the separation of the former Mosul province of the Ottoman Empire from the rest of Turkey and its inclusion in Iraq, in line with British demands, led to a significant Kurdish population in Iraq which would be a source of irredentism. The emphasis on Turkishness in the early years of the Republic as well as the secular reforms created resentment among the Kurds (Somer, 2009).

A series of rebellions in the 1920s and 1930s were suppressed with harsh military measures. Signs of Kurdish identity were met with increasing suspicion by the state, and pressure on the Kurdish language and culture increased in the following decades (Somer, 2009). Another important factor in the development of the problem has been the tribal nature of Kurdish

society. There is a fundamental incompatibility between the modern nation state and the tribal hierarchy and this leads to the tribal chiefs' perceiving the central government to be a threat. This has prevented the rapid modernisation of south-eastern Turkey, since such development would contribute to the erosion of the power exercised by tribal leaders, and the region still lags behind other parts of Turkey in terms of development (Cornell, 2001).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Kurdish nationalism developed, influenced by Marxism-Leninism, and in 1984 the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK in Kurdish) started its attacks on the Turkish state and on moderate Kurds that did not support its separatist agenda. The conflict between the PKK (which is recognised as a terrorist organisation by the governments of Turkey, the US and the European Union) and the Turkish army has led to over 30,000 deaths (Ergil, 2000). In addition to the soldiers and police officers, the victims include civilians living in the villages in the region, public employees (teachers, doctors) and victims of suicide attacks in major cities. Violence has led to massive migration (both voluntary and forced migration) from the region to the western parts of Turkey. In 1999, the leader of PKK was captured and imprisoned. Throughout the years, PKK has gradually curbed back its ultimate aim of independence and now strives towards a –poorly defined − autonomy in the region and constitutional recognition (Somer, 2009). The attacks on the government security forces in the eastern part of Turkey have continued until today.

1.4. Islamization of the public sphere

A very delicate and conflict-ridden balance between politics and religion has been one of the defining characteristics of Turkish modern history. Since Turkey is a predominantly Muslim society and a strictly secular nation-state, its modernisation and democratisation processes have continuously encountered the problem of establishing a balance between politics and religion. The political elite used secularism in order to control religion. However, increasing recourse to secularism for such purposes has rendered the state less pluralistic and democratic in governing Turkish society. Since the 1990s, the interconnections between religion and politics have become much more complex and delicate because of the rise of Islam politically, economically and culturally (Haynes, 2010; Keyman, 2007).

Indeed, the formation of Turkish modernity has radically changed as the Islamic identity claims became more politicised, economically grounded and culturally loaded in the past two decades. Such claims have become more

pronounced with the AKP's coming to power in 2002. The party has Islamic roots as the founders have an Islamic background and the party incorporates some extremist factions. Turkey has also witnessed the rise of what is called 'Islamic capital' in the 1990s as a powerful economic actor. Islam began to operate as an economic code open to free market ideology and created its own economic organisation. Consequently, Islam started to function as a powerful network based upon trust relations among small and medium-size economic enterprises. These enterprises established the Independent Business and Industrialist Organization, which has become a powerful economic actor. The organisation aims to promote a morally loaded economic modernisation, and seeks to combine free market principles with traditional religious values (Keyman & Koyuncu, 2005). Moreover, in the cultural realm, recognition demands have increased as in the case of the 'headscarf affair' and religious sects (Keyman, 2007).

1.5. Identity claims

Another important development that has characterised Turkish modernity in the past decade was the emergence of recognition demands and identity claims by a variety of groups, including those who spoke a language other than Turkish and those who adhere to a religion other than Islam or to the Sunni school of Islam. In other words, non-Turkish, non-Muslim and non-Sunni ethnic and religious minorities, which were submerged during the nation-building process initiated during the Republican years, have started to gain public visibility and claim their right to recognition. Due their increasing wealth in recent years, some religious, conservative groups have achieved upward mobility and attained new public and political roles with their Islamic identities. Moreover, approximately 2 million ethnic Kurds have migrated (both voluntary and forced migration) from south-east Turkey to the major cities in the western part of the country since the 1990s due to terrorist activities and insecurity in the region. These developments have created new visibility and possibilities for more intense inter-group contact between secular and conservative segments of the society as well as between ethnically Turkish and ethnically Kurdish citizens. Furthermore, as explained above, Turkey has started accession negotiations with the EU in 2005. All these developments have initiated a process of defining the borders of 'us' and facing the past with an aim to devise a new social and political framework that would include newly emerging diverse groups and interests (Cayir, 2009b).

2. Economic and demographic background

Turkey is classified as an upper middle-income country by the World Bank (World Bank, 2009), and listed under the countries 'high human development' by UNDP (rated as 79th) (UNDP, 2009). Its GDP was USD 794 billion in 2008, and the average annual growth between 2000 and 2008 was recorded as 5.9 percent (World Bank, 2010). Helped by the extremely favourable global economic conditions, the Turkish economy showed strong growth particularly between 2003 and 2007. Due to the improved financial and banking system in the aftermath of the 2001 crisis, the Turkish economy has suffered to a smaller extent from the global economic downturn since 2007 than many developed and emerging economies (FitchRatings, 2009).

Turkey is characterised by large income differences, as the share of income of poorest ten percent was 1.9 percent, whereas the share of income of richest ten percent was 33.2 percent in 2007 (UNDP, 2009). Furthermore, the share of disposable income held by the richest 20 percent quantile was approximately 9.5 times more than that received by the poorest 20 percent quantile in 2002. It declined to 8.1 in 2003 and to 7.7 in 2004. The same ratio for the EU-25 average was approximately 4.6 in 2003 (Republic of Turkey, 2006). The ratio of population below the poverty line (including food expenditures) to total population was 1.35 percent in 2002, and it declined slightly to 1.29 percent in 2004. The food and non-food poverty rate, which is also defined as the poverty rate, was 26.9 percent in 2002 and decreased to 25.6 percent in 2004 (Republic of Turkey, 2006).

According to international poverty benchmarks, population below USD 1.25 a day was 2 percent in 2002 and 2.7 percent in 2005. Population below USD 2 a day was 9.6 percent in 2002 and 9 percent in 2005 (World Bank, 2010). Moreover, there are significant regional disparities in the country: the most economically developed regions are Marmara, Aegean, Central Anatolia and Mediterranean, while the economically most underdeveloped regions are South-East and East Anatolia. The underdeveloped regions are characterised by low GDP per capita, a higher share of the agricultural sector, high unemployment and out-migration rates (Republic of Turkey, 2006).

Turkey has a young population, as 28.1 percent of the population is aged between 0 and 14, 66 percent was aged between 15 and 64, and only 6 percent was above 65 years old in 2004 (Republic of Turkey, 2005). The rate of population growth slowed down from 2.5 percent in the 1980s to 1.5 percent in the 1990s. It is expected to decline further in the coming years, as

estimates suggest an average of 1.1 percent until 2020. The projections on the major population changes in the next decade estimate a decrease in the relative share of population in the younger age group, an increase in the working-age population and continuing urbanisation (Republic of Turkey, 2001). According to these projections, the demand for primary education will decrease, will remain stable at secondary level, and will significantly increase at tertiary level.

As a result of the accelerated migration movements, the share of urban population increased from 28.8 percent in 1955 to 70.5 percent in 2007 (State Institute of Statistics). People migrate from the poorest agricultural Anatolian regions in the east to the richest manufacturing regions in the west, such as the Marmara, the Aegean and the Mediterranean, in search of livelihoods, better living conditions, as well as better educational opportunities for their children. In addition to trends of high rural-to-urban migration, a considerable number of Turkish citizens have also migrated to various European countries since the 1960s. The largest number of Turkish immigrants lives and works in Germany, followed by the Benelux countries, France, Austria and Switzerland. Recent estimates of the number of Turkish immigrants in Europe put this at approximately four million (Crul & Vermeulen, 2003).

3. Education system

3.1. Historical overview

During the Ottoman period, schools were organised into three separate groups, each operating independently. The first and most widespread type comprised the district schools and madrasas which were based on teaching of the Koran and Islamic traditions. The second group included reformed schools and high schools, while the third group included colleges and schools teaching in foreign languages. According to the founders of the Turkish Republic, these three different types of schools were raising individuals with very different views, lifestyles, values and visions, as well as with little commitment to Atatürk's aim of making a modern Turkish nation (OECD, 2007). Consequently, in 1924, the Law on the Unity of Education was introduced, stipulating the abolishment of the madrasas and the district schools, and placing all education, teaching and scientific institutions (including colleges, foreign language schools and private schools) under the control of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry also assumed

responsibility for and control of religious education. The Law determined the general organisation and administration of the education system, and laid the basis for a highly centralised national education system (Eurydice, 2009). This centralised governance structure continues to define the contemporary Turkish education system. A firm commitment to secularism has been also central to the education system since the early years of the Republic (OECD, 2007).

The role of education in modernisation, development, and nation building was deemed critical in those years (Simsek & Yildirim, 2004). In his various speeches, Atatürk referred to education as one of the most important factors in national independence and development. According to him, failure to provide good quality education to all citizens would eventually result in poverty and subordination to other nations. In that period, the 'nation schools' were founded and literacy campaigns were initiated. These campaigns particularly targeted rural population, which comprised the majority of general population. The main objective was to improve the level of literacy and modernise the countryside (Eurydice, 2009). Teachers were assigned a crucial role in developing modern values among the new generation of Turkish citizens. They were perceived as 'intellectuals' who would disseminate the knowledge and values to masses with the goal of promoting modernisation. After the 1980s, however, with the advance of globalisation and neoliberal tendencies in Turkey, the teacher's role and image has been transformed, as teachers have been largely redefined as professionals or technicians who are tasked with contributing to economic development by raising competent and able individuals in accordance with market demands (Unal, 2005). The role of education has also been redefined with increasing emphasis on economic development, competitiveness and integration into global economy.

Since Turkey's educational policy was strongly shaped by nation-building concerns and efforts to sustain a homogeneous national identity around Turkish culture, it largely excludes cultures, languages and identities of other ethnic groups (Timmerman, 1999). Except in specially-licensed institutions, Turkish is the only language of instruction. The uniform curriculum for primary schools emphasizes Turkish language and culture. Some argue that by ignoring the historical existence of subcultures, their norms, values, and ways of life, the formal education system functions as a powerful tool of assimilation for ethnically diverse groups (Sahin & Gulmez, 2000).

3.2. Structure of the education system

Education is provided at pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Pre-primary education is not compulsory and it is provided by public and private institutions to children between three and six years old. Primary education, on the other hand, is compulsory for all children (ages six to 14, grades one to eight) and is 'free' in state schools. Secondary education includes all general, vocational and technical education institutions offering a minimum four-year education for students aged 14 and 17. The institutions offering secondary education have names indicating the branch of education, such as high school, technical school and vocational school. There are also theology high schools aimed at educating staff commissioned with functions concerned with fulfilling religious services, such as in the imamate, preaching, and as instructor in Koran courses. However, some graduates from such schools also attend higher education institutions and specialise in other fields. Tertiary education is provided at public and foundation (non-profit) tertiary education institutions, offering two-year and four-year degree programmes (see Eurydice, 2009).

Transitions between primary and secondary education, and between secondary and tertiary education, are governed through centralised nationwide exams. All primary school graduates are entitled to benefit from secondary education. Admission to general high schools and vocational high schools does not require passing any examinations, and, in principle, students must apply to the high schools located in their vicinity. However, admission to the Anatolian high schools, social science high schools, science high schools, and Anatolian teacher high schools is governed through centralised examinations. Competition is intense for these schools because of their reputation for offering high quality education. The quality of education at secondary level is considered critical since these schools prepare students for higher education, which are viewed as crucial for securing access to decent jobs, well-being and social status.

Students are placed centrally into secondary education institutions according to their secondary education placement grade. It is calculated by considering the nationwide exam score (conducted at the end of 6^{th}, 7^{th} and 8^{th} grades), behaviour score and class score. The Ministry, however, recently announced that they are planning to dismiss the centralised exams at grades 6 and 7 and will only retain the exam at grade 8. This decision was taken after the public debate and reaction to the three-tier exam system of recent years. The Ministry has acknowledged that such an exam structure has increased the

demand for private tutoring and the cost of education, has undermined the centrality and the credibility of mainstream schools, and has generated an inordinate amount of stress and anxiety among students, negatively affecting their socio-psychological development (Habertürk, 2010).

Tertiary education institutions also admit students by means of a centralised examination system. The placement in tertiary education programmes is done in accordance with candidates' secondary education achievement grades, the performance in the university entrance examination, and preferences of the candidates. Admission to such programmes is even more competitive than admission to secondary education. For instance, in 2008, around 1.6 million students registered for the university entrance exam, and only about 265,000 of them were placed at higher education institutions that offered bachelor degree programmes (OSYM, 2008). Because of the highly competitive nature of the education system, Turkish students experience some of the world's worst exam anxiety (Simsek & Yildirim, 2004).

Since transition to higher levels of education is governed through highly competitive, centralised examinations, private tutoring has flourished in Turkey, echoing similar experiences and trends in several East Asian countries (Bray, 2007; Dang & Rogers, 2008). Private tutoring takes mainly three forms: the first type is one-to-one instruction by a teacher either at the teacher's house or at the student's house. The second type is provided at primary schools by teachers after standard lesson hours. The third type of private tutoring is undertaken by profit-oriented, school-like organisations, where teachers with professional teacher training teach students in classroom settings. This type of private tutoring is known as 'dersane', and it is the most widespread form of private tutoring in Turkey. Students attend these centres outside formal education hours. Class sizes in these centres are much smaller (up to 20 students), and depending on the quality of the centres, they are often equipped with better educational materials (Tansel & Bircan, 2006). According to the statistics of the Private Tutoring Centres Association, there were 4,222 private tutoring centres in May 2009. The number of students attending these centres was 1.2 million, and the number of teachers working in these centres was around 51,000 in the same year (OZDEBIR, 2009).

The majority of education services are provided by public sector institutions and financial resources of these institutions are also mainly funded from public funds. At pre-primary and primary levels, School-Parents Associations exist at every school, and they contribute to expenditures related to some of the current operation and to supportive educational activities. Due

to the centralised structure of the education system, the schools affiliated with the Ministry have limited autonomy with respect to financing (Eurydice, 2009). Turkey also funds its education system through a number of loans from the World Bank and grants from the European Union. However, the share of such external funding within the Ministry budget is marginal. At the same time, Turkey is a donor itself. In 2008, total net ODA disbursement was USD 735 million, and aid to education totalled USD 188 million (OECD STAT).

3.3. Patterns of participation

According to the recent official statistics, the total net enrolment rate was 98.1 percent at primary level in 2009/10 academic year and there were 10 million pupils enrolled at primary schools, only 251,000 of them being enrolled at private schools. In the same year, the net enrolment ratio was 64.9 percent at secondary level, and 4.7 million students were studying at this level (State Institute of Statistics, 2009). There were no significant gender differences at primary level; however, the gender gap increases at secondary level (67.5 percent for boys and 62.2 for girls). The number of teachers was 485,677 at primary level and 240,831 at secondary level in the same academic year. At tertiary level, the participation level was 27.6 percent (29.4 for boys and 25.9 for girls) in the 2008/09 academic year (MONE, 2010).

Educational inequality has been a persistent concern in Turkey, as there are significant disparities in educational opportunity between socio-economic groups and between regions (OECD, 2007). A combination of factors, mainly gender, poverty, language and culture, leads to educational marginalisation. Some gender differences, even at primary level, continue to exist in less developed regions of Turkey (namely the Black Sea region, East Anatolia and South-East Anatolia) and in rural areas. A study conducted by Aytac & Rankin (2004) revealed that girls who have less-educated parents and girls with working mothers and younger siblings have less chance to study. Additionally, education of girls is contested by fathers who maintain fundamentalist Muslim beliefs and favour traditional gender roles. In addition, in rural areas the availability of schools and trained personnel is restricted.

Since 1997, to improve access to education, the government has been offering free transportation to children who have no school in their home town. Boarding schools were also opened. To keep girls longer at school, compulsory education was extended from five to eight years. Nevertheless, in

the eastern parts of the country, there are still restrictions for girls because of the social norms regarding the 'purity' of women and the 'honour' of the family. Furthermore, language poses an important challenge for children from households in which Turkish is not spoken. For instance, 43 percent of Kurdish-speaking girls from the poorest households have fewer than two years of education, while the national average is 6 percent (UNESCO, 2010). Some other studies have shown that internal migrant girls are among the most disadvantaged and at-risk population of children, as not only the migration experience places them at risk of educational underachievement, but also the low socio-economic position of their parents, and gender bias (Altinyelken, 2009a; Altinyelken, 2009b).

3.4. Major issues at primary level

Turkey has a highly centralised education system. Therefore, the majority of reforms and change proposals originate at the national level. The decisions of policymakers have often been influenced by global trends, particularly by the developments in Western societies. Since the 1980s, neoliberal policies have been increasingly embraced in the Turkish education system, transforming the system in important ways. The outcomes of the neoliberal trend, such as privatisation and increases in parental contributions, have been subject to heightened debates and substantial criticism. The neoliberal trend has been supported by global institutions such as the World Bank and the European Council, and has been further enhanced by Turkey's EU membership process. The EU policies appear to support commercialisation of public education and encouragement of private enterprise (Sayılan, 2006).

An important aspect of this neoliberal trend is the 'monetisation' of education by an increasing amount of spending by parents. Although public primary education is 'free' in Turkey, parents are asked to pay registration fees and make 'voluntary' donations to schools under the name of 'parental contributions' (Simsek, 2006). These contributions are requested for financing more than 40 different items, such as report cards, learning materials, heating, cleaning and maintenance of school buildings (Egitim Sen, 2005). Parental contributions amount to substantial sums. For instance, in 2003, such parental contributions in primary and secondary education amounted to TRL 17,200 trillion, compared with a government education budget of TRL 7,000 trillion (Keskin & Demir, 2003). Moreover, the AKP government aims to increase the share of private schools in the primary education system from 1.9 percent to 10 percent. For this purpose, they have

proposed a number of measures to promote the establishment of private schools with the help of public funds. Such support by public resources seems contradictory when many public schools report serious financial difficulties (Aydogan, 2008). The commercialisation trends have been observed in higher education as well; the government supports private enterprise through tax breaks and land grants (Sayılan, 2006).

The declining public resources and lower quality education at public schools have led to an explosive increase in the numbers of private tutoring institutions, as indicated above. This trend has intensified the educational gaps between students coming from different socio-economic levels of the society (Aydoğan, 2008). This whole process of commercialisation threatens to reverse previous gains in terms of providing free education to all (Sayılan, 2006). According to critics, inequalities in education have increased and the advantage has shifted towards the more affluent parts of the population, further limiting the chances of social mobility for students from the lower socio-economic strata. Besides, differences among individual schools have also increased since financing of schooling is left largely to parents through parental contributions (Karapehlivan, 2010; Sayılan, 2006).

Another concern is that learning, rather than education, has been gaining prominence, and the emphasis has shifted to providing the basic competencies required by the market economy. According to some critics, instead of educating conscious citizens with humanist values, the schools are aiming at producing conservative entrepreneurs (Sayılan, 2006). Public education has increasingly become to be seen as an old and outdated concept in the past decades in Turkey, and the notion that education is a service which should be bought by the consumers has become prevalent. Moreover, technology was has been perceived to be an important pedagogical tool, and education quality has been increasingly associated with the availability and use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in learning settings. Education has been marketised gradually and has become an ordinary commercial activity. The neoliberal policies in the 1980s have also affected teachers; their income has decreased and their status has also suffered (Unal, 2005).

Furthermore, the growing influence of religion within the education system during the AKP governments since 2002 has been a serious cause for concern (Ince & Kaymak, 2009). The issue has generated forceful debates among the public which has been increasingly polarised along the secular versus conservative/religious lines. Although the government fervently refutes such claims, several official policies and practices are brought as

evidence by the critics. These include: replacing staff working at the Ministry with persons with a religious worldview; appointment of more than 7,000 religious education teachers, while far fewer teachers are deployed for chemistry (231), biology (993) or physics (230) in schools that were in need of them; sanctioning a number of teachers who taught the evolution theory in biology courses; distribution of religious books for free to students; an increasing number of appointments of teachers with a religious education background to school management positions; and increasing presence of religion in textbooks (Okcabol, 2009; Ozmen, 2009). Media news headlines reported such practices, generating many reactions from the segments of society which favour secularism. They also appear to contribute to the Constitutional Court's decision in 2008 that 'AKP has become the focal point of activities opposing secularism' (Okcabol, 2009).

Furthermore, the Koranic schools, which are part of non-formal education, have been subject to intense discussion, particularly since the AKP's coming to power. These schools are established by the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA) and mosques. Although forbidden by law, many others are opened illegally by a number of organisations and persons. The number of Koranic schools affiliated with PRA has increased by 75 percent during the AKP period, exceeding 7.000 schools across the country. Additionally, summer courses offered by mosques increased to 58,000 in the same period (Okcabol, 2009). Such expansion in Koranic schools is viewed with growing concern since they are seen as part of the strategy to promote the Islamisation of Turkish political, social and cultural life.

At the turn of the century, the need for reforming the education system was widely acknowledged by scholars, politicians and the general public in Turkey. Reforms are deemed particularly urgent in a number of areas, such as equity, resource distribution, access to higher and vocational education, bureaucratic structure, and curriculum (including pedagogy and student assessment) (Simsek & Yildirim, 2004). Since the 1990s, various reform packages have been in place in teacher training, primary and secondary education, and international actors such as the World Bank and the EU have been influential in these processes. The World Bank financed the restructuring of the teacher education programme, while the EU has been influential in reforming primary education. Currently, reforms are continuing in secondary education and lifelong learning with the strong involvement of the EU. Some consider such outside involvement as a serious cause for concern (Okcabol, 2009).

4. Concluding remarks

As this chapter attempts to illustrate, the last two decades have brought fundamental changes in Turkish modernity, including the simultaneous development of the increasing dominance of economic liberalisation (which has been to a great extent dictated by economic globalisation and the EU integration) and the emergence of the politics of identity/recognition that has taken a number of forms (such as the resurgence of Islam, the Kurdish question, and liberal claims to rights and freedoms). Therefore, since the 1980s, the formation of Turkish modernity has been increasingly marked by the co-existence of economic liberalisation and the resurgence of traditionalism (Keyman & Koyuncu, 2005). Turkey's attempt to integrate itself into the EU as a full member has particularly created a new political divide in the country between pro and anti-European integration forces, and has given rise to both nationalism and liberalism as political ideologies in Turkish politics. Moreover, 'political Islam' (Guven, 2005) has made its mark on Turkish modernity with the victory of the AKP in the 2002 elections. Turkey has also witnessed the rise of 'economic Islam' in the past decade, as 'Islamic capital' has become a powerful economic actor (Keyman & Koyuncu, 2005). These developments have influenced educational policies and the recent educational reform proposals. The following three chapters will analyse the primary school curriculum reform – particularly the introduction of SCP − and examine how the reform has changed schools, and how the schools have changed the reform.

CHAPTER: 6

Bridging the gap between intended and taught curriculum: Insights from the implementation of Curriculum 2004 in Turkey

ABSTRACT[4]

This chapter seeks to examine the implementation of the new primary school curriculum in Turkey. The implementation process is analysed using an analytical framework developed by Rogan and Grayson (2003) focusing on three major constructs; support from outside agencies, capacity to support innovation, and profile of implementation. Using a case study approach, the study focuses on teachers' experiences and perspectives. The chapter draws on the data collected in eight public schools that piloted the new curriculum in Ankara. Data collection methods included interviews with school management (14) and teachers (50), and classroom observations (59) at primary one and two. The chapter reveals that teachers mediated and in some instances rejected curriculum change, creating a mosaic of different implementation profiles at school and classroom level. The chapter underscores the divergences between policy and practice, and from the perspectives of teachers, attempts to explain the causes of such differences. The findings underscore the importance of paying due attention to the implementation stage, providing sufficient support to schools, and adequately considering school capacity to support innovation. The chapter also points out the critical role of teachers and the significance of involving them in the curriculum development process.

1. Introduction

The tension between what is planned for and what is practised has been one of the most enduring tensions within curriculum studies since there has always been an inevitable gap between proposal and practice, aspiration and action (Westbury, 2008). Different perspectives on curriculum implementation seem to agree that the written curriculum is implemented through a process that involves application and distortion of what is formally proposed (Lopes & DeMacedo, 2009) Hence, there can be significant gaps between intended and taught curriculum, and between what is taught and

[4] The chapter is based on:

Altinyelken, H.K. (forthcoming). Bridging the gap between intended and taught curriculum: insights from the implementation of Curriculum 2004 in Turkey. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*.

what is learned (Cuban, 1992). These differences may be conscious or unconscious; teachers may deliberately implement the curriculum in ways different than suggested by policymakers, or classroom realities may not be conducive to realise the intentions and expectations of curriculum designers (Kelly, 2009).

Although a certain degree of divergence between intention and reality can be inevitable, several country examples indicate that the gap has often been disappointingly large. For instance, in developing countries, numerous educational reform initiatives were rarely effectively implemented and have often failed to achieve their objectives (O'Sullivan, 2002; Ward et al., 2003), leading to considerable waste of time, effort and resources (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). An important explanation for this failure is the tendency of policymakers to pay more attention to policy formulation at the expense of planning for the implementation stage (Haddad, 1995). In other words, the attention and energies of policymakers are too often focused on the 'what' of desired educational change whilst neglecting the 'how' (Rogan, 2007). In the past decade, there has been a growing acknowledgement that policymakers need to adequately plan for the implementation stage, and understand all stages of the reform process as interdependent, rather than as distinct from each other (O'Sullivan, 2002).

Turkey revised its curriculum for primary education in 2004 to address some of the pervasive problems identified in the education system and to respond to the new trends and demands that had emerged in the global environment. Additionally, as a candidate country for EU membership, adopting the EU standards and educational perspective has been an important political motive and reference base (MONE, 2005b). Reflecting similar reform efforts in countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the revised curriculum for primary education focuses on development of select competencies and skills, and adopts student-centred pedagogy, and continuous assessment (MONE, 2005a). The new curriculum was piloted in the 2004/2005 academic year in 120 primary schools in nine provinces across Turkey, and in the following year, nationwide implementation started at the first five grades at the same time (Bikmaz, 2006).

The authorities introduced the new curriculum as a 'revolutionary move in education' (İnal, 2008), and the initial years of curriculum implementation witnessed widespread discussions in the media (Guven & Iscan, 2006). Based on broader research that explored curriculum implementation and pedagogical reforms in Turkey, this chapter seeks to analyse how the Curriculum 2004 was implemented at primary one and two

in selected schools that piloted the new curriculum in Ankara. By using an analytical framework developed by Rogan and Grayson (2003), the chapter examines to what extent and how teachers have been implementing Curriculum 2004. It highlights the apparent discrepancy between policy and practice, and explains from the perspective of teachers the underlying causes of such divergences.

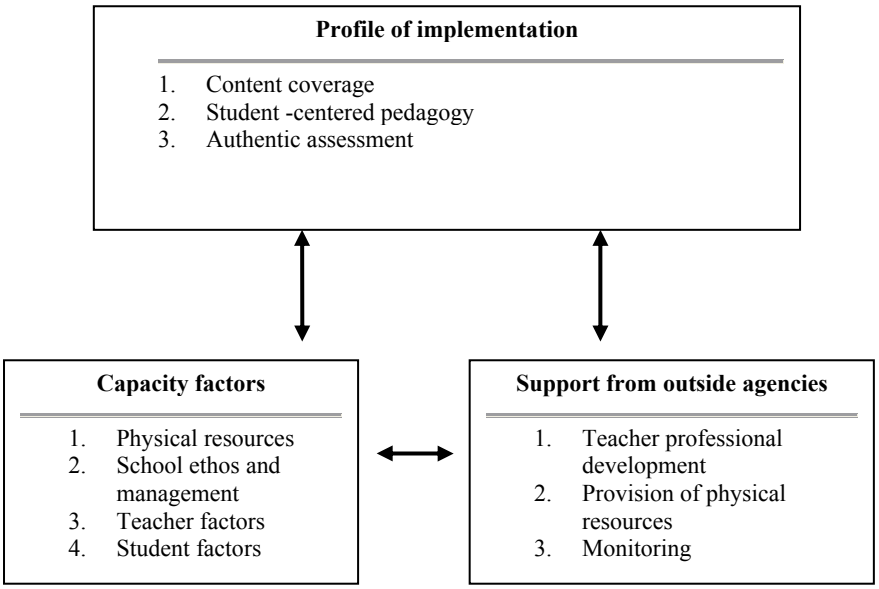
2. Theoretical framework

Implementation of Curriculum 2004 will be analysed in this chapter by using an analytical framework developed by Rogan and Grayson (2003). While drawing on the literature of school development, educational change and science education literature, the authors try to overcome some of the weaknesses of the earlier frameworks developed by Beeby (1966), and Verspoor and Wu (1990). The frameworks developed by these academics categorised schools and education systems into four developmental stages, and assumed that schools progressed from lower to higher stages. In Beeby's framework, these were Dame School, Formalism, Transition and Meaning, while in the model suggested by Verspoor and Wu, the model included Unskilled, Mechanical, Routine and Professional schools. Beeby's model underestimated the complexity of an education system by focusing only on teachers and neglecting other aspects of school context. Verspoor and Wu (1990) had a broader focus as they incorporated a number of other factors related to teachers, curriculum and school. However, their model also failed to include students. Since both models implied a linear view of curriculum change, from one stage to the next higher stage, they tended to obscure the complex and idiosyncratic nature of the process (Rogan & Grayson, 2003; Rogan, 2007).

Rogan and Grayson (2003) base their theory of curriculum implementation on three major constructs: support from outside agencies, capacity to support innovation and profile of implementation (see figure 4). The 'support from outside agencies' describes the kinds of actions undertaken by outside organisations, such as departments of education, aid agencies, or teacher unions, to influence practices, either by support or sanction. In order to facilitate innovation, outside agencies might provide material or non-material support. Material support may include provision of physical resources such as construction of additional classrooms, provision of books and learning materials or direct support to students (e.g. school-lunch programmes). Non-material support is often provided in the form of teacher

professional development, which is one of the most visible and recognisable ways through which outside agencies attempt to influence change processes in schools. Teacher professional development can also be promoted through facilitating cooperation and support among teachers (Karsten et al., 2000). In addition to providing material and non-material support, outside agencies also use some monitoring and supervision mechanisms to put pressure on teachers and school management. The ability of outside agencies to apply such pressure is closely linked to their authority and credibility. For instance, Ministry departments can attempt to impose changes by decree, whereas an NGO can only resort to persuasion and inspiration.

Fig. 4. The analytical framework (Adopted from Rogan & Grayson, 2003).



The second construct, 'capacity to support innovation', is concerned with school factors that are likely to support or obstruct the implementation of innovative curricular proposals. Four main indicators are identified within this construct: physical resources, school ethos and management, teacher factors, and student factors (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). Physical resources are important since poor conditions and resource scarcity can impose serious limitations on how teachers teach and students learn. The school ethos and the quality of management are also very important: If a school is in disarray and

not functioning well, innovation cannot or will not be implemented. Research has also shown that the leadership role of the principal is crucial in the implementation of education reforms (Fullan, 2007). Moreover, teachers are critical towards reform processes since they do not merely assimilate the institutionalised curriculum texts, but incorporate them into their knowledge, beliefs and pre-existing teaching practices (Fullan, 2008; Lopes & DeMacedo, 2009). Factors, such as their training, subject matter knowledge (Gess-Newsome, 1999), motivation, identity (Vulliamy et al., 1997), skills, beliefs (Levin & Nevo, 2009; Lumpe et al., 2000; Van Driel et al., 2001), and expectations (Buckley, 2010), influence their capacity and willingness to implement change. Likewise, the background of students, and the kind of strengths and constraints they bring to school are important. A range of issues influences student attitudes to learning and their responses to change. These include the home environment (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002), parental commitment to education, health and nutrition (Bloom, 2005), and proficiency level in the language of instruction (Spolsky, 1986). The quality of infrastructure or the characteristics of teachers and students differ from one school to another; hence, there can be significant differences in terms of schools' capacity to implement reforms. Besides, the contribution of these four sub-constructs to the capacity of a school to support innovation is likely to be dynamic and changing over time.

The last construct, 'profile of implementation', is developed in order to assist in understanding, analysing and expressing the extent to which the objectives of the reform programme are put into practice. The profile provides a 'map' of the learning area; therefore, it enables curriculum planners to conceptualise levels of curriculum implementation (Rogan & Aldous, 2005) and to identify strengths and weaknesses in the implementation process. The construct recognizes the fact that there can be multiple ways of putting a curriculum into action. However, it assumes that some broad commonalities of what constitutes 'excellence' or 'good practice' will emerge. In addition, the profile recognizes that curriculum implementation is not an all-or-nothing proposition as there can be different levels at which implementation might be said to occur (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). As opposed to the earlier models, the profile does not entail 'progression' from one level to another, because the higher levels are thought to include the lower ones as well. Therefore, the levels do not prescribe what should be done at any given point in time, but suggests the mastery and use of an increasing array of teaching and learning strategies (Rogan, 2007). By considering the major changes introduced by the revised curriculum in Turkey, three sub-constructs

were developed for this study: content coverage, student-centred pedagogy and authentic assessment.

3. Data and informants

The chapter is informed by fieldwork conducted in Turkey in the spring of 2009. The case study approach (Yin, 2009) was applied in this research as the processes of interpretation and sense-making as well as the context particularities were central. The study uses a multiple case study design to generate more compelling and robust findings, and to strengthen analytical conclusions. Purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) was used and public schools which piloted the new curriculum were selected as research sites since they were viewed as information-rich cases. Within the province of Ankara, 25 public schools piloted the revised curriculum. Eight of these schools were randomly chosen, each from a different district. The pilot schools were located in middle to low-income neighbourhoods in urban centres. According to teacher accounts, these schools were considered to be among the 'best' schools in their vicinity. The schools were relatively big, as the majority of them enrolled more than 1,000 pupils. Except for three of them, all the schools offered double-shift education. School management, teachers and some key informants working at Ministry departments, education institutions, academics, and members of three teacher unions comprised the sample of this study. Fourteen head teachers and deputy head teachers (13 male and one female) and 50 teachers (41 female and nine male) took part in this research. Teachers' ages ranged between 30 and 64, while the average was 40.

Two forms of data collection were used: interviews and classroom observation. Interviews were conducted with teachers, school management, and with key informants within the field of education. In total, 50 interviews were conducted with teachers; 26 at primary one and 24 at primary two. Teacher interviews were often held in classrooms after classroom observations. During a lesson hour, teacher gave individual tasks to pupils, such as reading, painting or writing assignments. While children were occupied with the activities, interviews were held with teachers throughout the lesson, which lasted 40 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured: a list of general topics was prepared to make interviewing systematic and comprehensive. Yet, multiple other subtopics were probed and explored. During teacher interviews, their views and experiences were sought on a range of issues including curriculum content, pedagogical approach, assessment methods, perceived outcomes, challenges, and responses received

from students and parents. The interview data were recorded in written notes as teachers have shown a preference for this type of data recording. In addition to teachers, 14 interviews were conducted with school management in their offices. The goal of such interviews was to understand how they evaluated the new curriculum and what kind of responses they received from teachers in their schools. Furthermore, interviews were held with a select number of officials in the Ministry, with teacher unions and academics. The majority of these interviews were also recorded in written notes, while some were taped.

In addition, 59 lessons were observed in primary one (31) and two (28). At primary one and two, classroom observations were carried out in three lessons: Turkish (23), Life Knowledge (15), and Mathematics (21). The lessons were observed at different times of the day and during all working days, and between two to five working days were spent at each school. The duration of lesson observation was 40 minutes. Since the schools had high number of pupils, they had a minimum of three streams at lower grades, in some of them there were even 12 streams. In such cases, the classrooms were selected randomly. During observations, I first introduced myself to the children, and answered their questions about my own background and about the research itself. Afterwards, I maintained a passive presence by sitting in the back, and not interacting with the pupils. During observations, I took descriptive notes on a number of items, including classroom organisation, teacher and student activities, student talk, teacher feedback, classroom management, and atmosphere.

The fieldwork data were first organised by methods (interviews and observations), and interviews were further classified as interviews with key actors, school management, and teachers. The texts were read for a general understanding and for delineating emerging themes. The main codes and some of the sub-codes were developed in accordance with the analytical framework used in the study, and some other sub-codes were developed while analysing the texts. Cross-sectional code and retrieve methods were used where a common system of codes was applied with a computer program (ATLAS.ti) across the whole data set and used as a means of searching for and retrieving chunks of labelled data (Spencer, et al. 2003). The main codes included content, pedagogy, assessment, teacher training, monitoring, textbooks, and materials. Then, by using the constant comparison method of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), data were analysed, emerging themes were highlighted, and notes were taken on patterns, connections,

similarities or contrastive points. While doing so, tentative interpretations and explanations were developed.

4. Curriculum change in Turkey

All primary schools in Turkey use a centrally planned curriculum, organised by subjects. Before the recent curriculum change, primary schools were using a curriculum which had been in place since 1968. The content of the textbooks and some other curriculum materials have been modified in the past decades (e.g. in 1983, 1989, 1993, and 1998); however, a comprehensive review and revision of the primary school curriculum was not initiated before 2004 (Onal & Kaya, 2006; Bulbul, 2005). Similar to several of its predecessors, when the AKP came to power in 2002, it highlighted the importance of education in their party programme and made strong claims that they would initiate comprehensive reforms in the education system (İnal, 2009). In the following years, the ruling party labelled several of their revisions and change proposals in the education system as 'reforms' and some of them even as 'revolution' (İnal, 2008). Revision of the primary education curriculum has been one of the 'revolutionary reform packages' announced by the government.

4.1. The rationale for change

In its various reports and publications, the Ministry explains the rationale of curriculum review by referring to changes in science and technology, national needs, globalisation, and harmonisation with the EU. Accordingly, change was imperative in educational approaches and practices because of the recent developments in science and technology. Such developments have influenced the content and processes of education, rendering the traditional educational approaches obsolete, and giving emphasis to multiple intelligences and constructivism. In contemporary knowledge economies, the future of individuals and societies is dependent on abilities to access, use and produce information. The development of such abilities and their continuous, life-long application requires an education system that helps produce knowledge (MONE, 2009b; MONE, 2005a). The more specific reasons for change highlighted in the official documents included making education more responsive to social and economic needs of the Turkish society, improving quality and equity in education, improving student motivation and achievement levels, and equipping students with select abilities, skills and

competencies that are critical to life and work in the contemporary world (MONE, 2005a). In addition, curriculum review was required because primary and middle schools were combined in 1997, although the curriculum was not modified accordingly. Therefore, the new curriculum also aimed at eliminating content overlap by harmonising the subjects.

The reports also make references to some of the international tests that Turkish students have participated in with disappointing results. For instance, in TIMSS-1999, Turkey was ranked 31 in Mathematics (Olkun & Aydogdu, 2003) and 33 in Science (Bagci-Kilic, 2003), out of 38 participating countries, well behind all European countries. Likewise, in PIRLS-2001, Turkey was ranked 28 out of 35 in reading literarcy (PIRLS, 2001), and in PISA-2003, it was ranked 34 out of 41 in Mathematics and reading (OECD, 2004). The modest performance of Turkish students in such international tests has been influential in the education policy debate (Aksit, 2007; Gultekin, 2007). Similar to some other countries in the world (such as France, Germany and Australia), international test results were employed as a point of reference by policymakers to advocate and legitimatise curricular reforms (see Figazzola, 2009).

The need for reforming the education system is also underscored by the highly influential business association Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TÜSİAD) in its various reports and publications since the 1990s. Some of these reports aimed at analysing the problems and structural issues in the education system in general, and some were specific to higher education, vocational education or early-childhood education. Their report, entitled 'Education in Turkey: Proposals for structural adaptation to problems and changes', was released in 1990 and 'generated acrimonious debates over how best to prepare Turkish children for faith, market, and the nation' (Kaplan, 2006, p. 38). The 1990 report and the following publications criticised the education system for being traditional, obsolete, and inflexible, and pointed to the inadequacy of the system for equipping students with skills, competencies and knowledge required in labour markets. The 1990 report particularly criticised the curriculum for emphasizing rote learning and failing to stimulate the development of critical skills and competencies. It suggested that the education system should focus on the development of the following competencies: learning to learn, understanding the economic environment, entrepreneurship, communication, team-work, problem-solving, and foreign languages (TÜSİAD, 1990). As explained below, many of these competencies were indeed emphasized in Curriculum 2004.

Furthermore, harmonisation with EU policies and education standards has been an important motive (MONE, 2005b; Tarman, 2008). Turkey was granted 'candidate' status in 1999, and accession negotiations were opened in 2005. Education, training and youth are considered to be the responsibilities of the member states; however, the Community contributes to the development of education quality in EU countries (Commission of the European Communities, 2006). The Union's 2002 annual progress report considered the principles of the Turkish education system to be generally consistent with those of the EU. However, the report pointed to review of curricula and teaching methods as 'major issues to be addressed to increase the efficiency of the education system' (Commission of the European Communities, 2002, p. 104). The annual progress reports also highlighted the importance of developing a demand-driven education system by improving the relevance of education to labour market demands, particularly at vocational and higher education levels (Commission of the European Communities, 2004). The EU provided financial support for the revision of the curriculum through 'Support to Basic Education Programme'. The programme was initiated in 2002 and phased out in 2007. The aim of the programme was to enhance the quality of formal and non-formal education and to increase access to education in Turkey. The programme had a budget of EUR 100 million, and included a wide range of activities including teacher training, management and organisation, communication and quality of education. The curriculum review and piloting was financed under the component of 'quality of education' (MONE, 2008).

Although TÜSİAD nor the EU were directly involved in the curriculum review process in 2004, their various reports and publications appear to have influenced the curriculum development process as they have consistently pointed to the need for reform, and accommodation of the education system to a market economy. Some of the respondents who participated in this study argued that TÜSİAD's influence was not limited to the review of the primary school curriculum because TÜSİAD's recommendations have often served as reference point in several other recent educational restructuring reforms in Turkey.

TÜSİAD's demands clearly overlapped with the demands of the EU, as well as with the demands of powerful multinational corporations with business interests in Turkey. This was not surprising since they were supporters of a neoliberal market economy and were in favour of accommodation of the education system to the needs of the market. Akkaymak (2010) confirms such arguments by stating that Curriculum 2004

aimed at reorganising education in accordance with market demands and implies an integration of neoliberal discourse into the curriculum. One might argue that the government was responsive to these demands as it was under pressure (like other countries in emerging markets) to attract foreign capital and provide a ready supply of labour (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002) equipped with competencies and skills demanded by employers – both national and international.

4.2. Curriculum development process

The new curriculum documents were developed by the Board of Training and Education (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı – TTK) which is authorised to determine the organisation of the national educational system, the curricula, textbooks, timetables, budget and some other pedagogical agendas. Its decisions are binding for all schools, including public and private schools, minority schools, and vocational and technical schools (Eurydice, 2009; Kaplan, 2006). The educational programmes for five subjects were revised within the context of curriculum change, and new textbooks and student workbooks were developed. These subjects included Turkish (grade 1-5), Life Knowledge (grade 1-3), Science and Technology (grade 4-5), and Social Studies (grade 4-5). The new curriculum was piloted in 2004/05 academic year in select public schools across the country, in 120 schools in nine provinces, including Ankara (the capital city), Bolu, Diyarbakır, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir, Kocaeli, Samsun, and Van. The nationwide implementation started in the following academic year, in the fall of 2005, in the first five grades at the same time. A gradual implementation was planned for upper grades, as the educational programmes for grades 6, 7, and 8 were introduced in the subsequent three years.

The curriculum development process is criticised from a variety of perspectives, including the short − only one year − duration of the process, for not considering previous experiences with regard to the development of educational programmes, and for copying education models from abroad without adopting them to the cultural and structural realities of Turkey. Such criticisms were particularly voiced and analytically examined by 13 professors who met in Eskisehir in 2005 to discuss the new educational programmes (Gömleksiz, et al., 2005). Similar criticism was also raised by the respondents of this study. For instance, several teachers and other stakeholders commented that the implementation process was rushed without

adequate preparation, causing scepticism and anxiety among teachers and school management.

Furthermore, some others commented on importing educational ideas from the West. They argued that the development of educational programmes would naturally benefit from comparative studies on the education systems of other countries, but this does not imply that an educational policy or model that appears to work in a foreign country can be imported and implemented as such. Yet, this was precisely what happened during the development of the new educational programmes. One of the respondents argued that in Turkey one couldn't talk about an authentic curriculum development structure, since curriculum was often imported from other countries in the West and implemented with some modifications. The reasons for this were explained as such:

> In countries like ours, we look to the West. We consider their practices as 'good' since we tend to believe that they are advanced because of those practices. So, why should one bother with developing new things? We can copy and adopt their policies and practices. Then we can be like them, catch up with them and even surpass them in civilisation level. Many Turkish scientists and educationalists think along these lines. This is an internalised version of cultural imperialism and implies an inferiority complex.

The academics and education experts who studied in higher education institutions in the US and Europe were believed to be more afflicted by such an 'inferiority complex' and 'absolute trust' in Western ways of doing things. They commented that even some common rules and practices in academia reflect such a 'complex', for instance the pressure to publish in English, high credits associated with citation by a foreigner, or employment conditions linked to a doctorate or postdoc accomplished abroad. These accounts remind of Ball's argument that the movement of graduates from Western countries helps to perpetuate cultural and political dependency in some contexts, and leads to devaluation or denial of 'local' solutions to education problems (Ball, 1998). Some of the respondents indeed commented that this is exactly what happens in Turkey.

The development of educational programmes was coordinated by academics from universities in Ankara. Another criticism in this respect was related to the issue of who was invited to participate in the curriculum development process and why. It appears that the invitation letters from the TTK were sent to a select number of academics in a few universities in Ankara. These academics were considered to support the current government

and their policies. Furthermore, the Ministry prides itself in the participatory nature of and broad collaboration of education stakeholders in the curriculum review process, with the business world, NGOs, unions, universities, schools, teachers, students, and parents taking part. However, some respondents argued that there was no real participation in the curriculum development process and that such meetings were primarily window-dressing.

4.3. Curriculum 2004

The new educational programmes for primary education are based on constructivism, a multiple intelligence approach, student-centred pedagogy, sensitivity to individual learning differences, a thematic approach, and emphasis on the development of competencies. The new curriculum proposed changes in curriculum content and organisation, teaching and learning methods, and student assessment. The main principles that underpin the new educational programmes included the following (MONE, 2009a; MONE, 2009b; MONE, 2009c; MONE, 2009d):

1. The programmes should reflect children's perspectives as they are child-centred instead of being teacher or subject-centred.
2. Instead of memorising information presented to them or trying to learn in a passive manner, students should be actively involved in learning and teaching processes. They should be able to interpret and give meaning to the information that is presented to them, and should be encouraged to construct their own knowledge.
3. The basic knowledge and competencies that are included in the new educational programmes should reflect children's need in their real life. It is not necessary to consider the type of knowledge which changes rapidly and becomes obsolete.
4. The programmes should focus on basic competencies that would help to improve students' quality of life. Instead of depositing knowledge, the programmes should focus on the development of children's personalities and intellectual capacities.
5. The lessons should be organised in a way that they maximise children's enjoyment and satisfaction in learning processes.
6. The themes and topics should be presented in an integrated and thematic way.

In line with these principles, the content load was reduced and a thematic approach was adopted while preparing the new educational programmes. Unlike the previous curriculum which frequently referred to goals, objectives and targeted attitudes, Curriculum 2004 focuses on competencies. One of the main curriculum objectives is the development of eight core competencies in the five newly developed educational programmes (Life Knowledge, Mathematics, Social Studies, Turkish, and Science and Technology). These competencies include critical thinking, creativity, communication, problem solving, research, using information technologies, entrepreneurship, and language skills in Turkish (MONE, 2005a).

In addition, the revised curriculum adopts a student-centred approach. It encourages the use of various teaching and learning methodologies, student activity, hands-on-learning, integration of learning activities in and outside the school, cooperative learning, research, project-based learning, and increased use of learning materials. The curriculum documents recommend that the majority of lesson time should be spent on classroom activities that are often initiated by students. Instead of imparting knowledge, teachers should 'only' guide student activities. Engagement in such activities is believed to improve students' communication skills, creativity, cooperation, problem solving, and entrepreneurship. In such a model, students' and teachers' roles in the classroom are modified drastically. The newly defined roles of students include active participation (both intellectually and physically) in learning processes, taking responsibility for their own learning, talking in classrooms, raising questions, being inquisitive and cooperative, and integrating their knowledge and applying their skills. The teacher's role, on the other hand, involved guiding and motivating students, developing classroom activities, encouraging students to think, raising questions and debating issues, and engaging in professional development activities (MONE, 2009a; MONE, 2009b; MONE, 2009c; MONE, 2009d).

Moreover, authentic assessment is adopted as an approach for student evaluation. The curriculum suggests alternative assessment methods such as self-evaluation, evaluation of classmates, project and performance assignments, observation forms, and student portfolios. Teachers are expected to make use of these alternative methods selectively, in addition to the traditional methods such as oral and written tests, and quizzes. The aim of the authentic assessment is to assess the learning process, rather than assessing only the outcome. During the course of lessons, teachers are required to evaluate the development of their students' skills and competencies. Such an

assessment approach would provide valuable information to teachers, as they can identify student needs and learning difficulties, and provide adequate feedback and support (MONE, 2005a).

5. Findings

In accordance with the analytical framework described above, the findings of the research will be presented in three parts: support from outside agencies, capacity to support innovation and profile of implementation.

5.1. Support from outside agencies

5.1.1. Teacher professional development

Teachers who were teaching at the selected pilot schools were informed about the curriculum change in August 2004, and were invited to participate in an in-service training in the following month, just before the start of the new academic year. Academics from a number of universities in Ankara introduced the new curriculum in a two-week training programme. In one school, which was particularly established as a model school to pilot the new curriculum, teachers received intensive training for two months.

There was a subtle acknowledgement on the part of official authorities that there were limits to what they could achieve in a two-week training programme. However, they believed that it provided a good and sound foundation for the piloting process. Nevertheless, teachers appeared to be highly critical of the training. Very few teachers recognized the benefits of the in-service training; it was viewed as a general introduction to the new curriculum and some sessions were found particularly helpful. However, the majority believed that it was severely inadequate in preparing teachers for the implementation process. Teachers claimed that the duration of the training was too short, and that the quality was low as it was too theoretical and lacked practical guidance. Teachers also alleged that some of the lecturers were reading from their notes or PowerPoint presentations, and they did not seem to have a good understanding of the new curriculum. Moreover, during the lessons there were often heated discussions on the change proposals. Therefore, a significant amount of time was spent on discussions between teachers and academics about whether such changes were indeed necessary or would be beneficial to the Turkish education system, with some indeed protesting their necessity and beneficiality. Hence, there was less time left for

actually comprehending and understanding the proposed changes, and for learning how they should be effectively implemented in classroom settings.

Teachers unanimously believed that once academic year 2004/05 started, they felt ill-equipped to implement the new curriculum as the training left them with several unanswered questions, confusion, and uncertainties. Many also noted feelings of panic and inadequacy (also see Altun & Sahin, 2009). These teachers still considered themselves in a better position compared to teachers in non-pilot schools since the latter received an even shorter training. In general, the duration and quality of training was perceived to be a false start in curriculum implementation. In retrospect, teachers suggested that perhaps one of the most important shortcomings of the training was failure to explain adequately the rationale and philosophy of the revised curriculum. They believed that this inadequacy has resulted in less-than-desired implementation outcomes and in some cases strong resistance to change.

5.1.2. Provision of physical resources

When the piloting phase started, there were no textbooks or teacher guides in schools as they were still in preparation. Teachers received ongoing guidelines from the Ministry through written communications and postings on the Ministry website. When nationwide implementation started in academic year 2005/06, textbooks and accompanying student workbooks for all subjects as well as teacher guides were provided to schools by the Ministry for free. Teacher guides were particularly appreciated by teachers, as they were considered detailed, informative, and explanatory. It also decreased teacher workload by releasing them from the requirement to prepare lesson plans. However, some teachers appeared to be critical of the new practice since they believed that teacher guides were too prescriptive, and tended to limit teacher imagination, creativity and spontaneity.

The textbooks provided by the Ministry were one of the most negatively received aspects of the revised curriculum. More than seventy percent of the teachers believed that the quality of textbooks was very low. According to them, the textbooks provided insufficient information on subject matters, the themes were listed, but there was little related content, or they were treated superficially. While explaining their views on the textbooks, teachers often used statements such as ‘books are empty’, ‘they are not even serious’, or ‘the books are a joke’. Teachers also noted insufficient connection between textbooks and workbooks, spelling mistakes, incorrect information,

and omissions in topics. Therefore, teachers believed that the textbooks required urgent and serious review.

5.1.3. Monitoring

During the pilot phase, intensive contact with the Ministry was reported, as officials frequently visited the schools. The pilot schools were also requested to report their opinions on the textbooks and on different aspects of the new curriculum. Teachers maintained that when their comments on and evaluation of the curriculum materials and pedagogy were requested, they had taken it very seriously and had studied the textbooks in great detail, had conducted discussions with fellow teachers and had compiled their remarks in neatly organized reports. They were also invited to fill in a number of questionnaires that explored their experiences with the new curriculum. Nevertheless, teachers believed that their feedback was not adequately taken into consideration by the authorities. They have noticed over the years that changes have been made to the curriculum materials, yet they felt disappointed to see that their comments were hardly reflected in such modifications. This created a feeling that things remained the same in essence, and that their input had little impact on the reform process.

These impressions were also shared by some academics who suggested that the new educational programmes were implemented nationwide without carefully considering the feedback received from pilot schools (Gomleksiz et al., 2005; Güven & Iscan, 2006). Consequently, many teachers have lost their enthusiasm and drive to contribute to curriculum development. Several teachers explicitly said that they started to respond to the questionnaires by giving socially desirable answers and by portraying a rosy picture in which all things seemed right and everything worked efficiently, as planned by policymakers. ‘Why bother?’ said one teacher, ‘The policymakers do what they believe is best with such little regard for teacher feedback. So when they ask, we tell them that everything is great, simply brilliant.’

The curriculum is also monitored by regular inspection mechanisms. Teachers stated a number of inadequacies in the monitoring of curriculum implementation by inspectors. First of all, there was a general belief that inspectors were not well-informed about the new curriculum and the changes introduced by the reform. For instance, teachers who received a short training from inspectors noted that the inspectors often presented the new curriculum from their PowerPoint presentations superficially, and responded to the

teacher enquiries inadequately. The inspectors were also perceived to be traditional and conventional educators; hence, they were viewed as less amicable to innovation and reform. Consequently, when teachers were observed by inspectors in classrooms settings, varying and sometimes inconsistent approaches of inspectors were experienced. One of the disappointments in this regard had to do with student assessment: Although the curriculum repeatedly emphasized competencies and skills, inspectors continued to ask questions which intended to assess students' knowledge acquisition.

5.2. Capacity factors

5.2.1. Physical resources

Teachers felt an increasing need to use learning aids to create more opportunities for hands-on learning and for undertaking activities described in student workbooks. The authorities provided various aids to pilot schools, hence teachers considered their schools better equipped compared to other schools. Nevertheless, they still complained about materials scarcity. Since the school budget was insufficient, teachers requested materials from students or collected money. Some other studies have also shown that materials shortage was considered to be one of the biggest challenges, especially in rural areas and in less advantaged regions of the country (Çınar et al., 2006; Doğanay & Sarı, 2008).

Use of ICT was an important aspect of discussions with regard to materials. Teachers displayed an eagerness to use computers and projectors in their classrooms. They seemed convinced that the use of ICT would significantly improve education quality. All the visited classrooms had either a TV or computer, or both. Teachers reported infrequent use of TV due to the lack of adequate educational materials. Nevertheless, computers and projectors were present in more schools. Except for one school, all the other schools had computers either in all observed classrooms or in some of them. One school had direct access to internet in classrooms as well. Although in a few cases, computers and projectors were provided by schools or teachers, in most cases parents provided the financial means. Teachers obtained educational programmes from sources on the internet or they were directly marketed to teachers by commercial providers. Teachers suggested that the Ministry should take the lead in providing digital resources.

Parental provision of educational materials has become a trend in recent years, as they were increasingly 'encouraged' to provide for all sorts of material needs, including desks, seats, curtains and ICT hardware (Karapehlivan, 2010). Parents expressed concern with regard to the financial burden on their family budget. Besides, this practice is contradictory to the official policy on free public education and creates inequalities between regions, schools or even among classrooms within a school. During school visits, it was possible to see a well-equipped and well-decorated classroom next to a classroom without elegant decorations, TV or computer. Consequently, classroom equipment and furnishing have become strong indicators of student socio-economic background and parental commitment to education. This phenomenon seems to lead to increased educational stratification and intensification of 'hidden privatisation' (Ball & Youdell, 2008) in the public education system.

5.2.2. School ethos and management

All the visited schools were functioning well; the schools were conducting learning activities according to the time schedule and head teachers were regularly attending the schools. The majority of head teachers welcomed change proposals, as they believed immediate action was necessary to improve education quality. However, opinions differed with regard to what kind of change was needed and whether Curriculum 2004 was adequately addressing those needs. Although reductions in some content areas and increased student participation were viewed positively, they had reservations regarding various other aspects of the curriculum. For instance, many were puzzled with what appeared to be policy contradictions. They suggested that the Ministry enacted a number of education policies which made it more difficult to implement the new curriculum. One head teacher described this situation as follows: 'The government is not at peace with itself. It wants to do something and then does something else that would make it difficult or impossible to do the first one.' The most important contradiction voiced by head teachers was the examination system. Head teachers noted that the curriculum puts emphasis on competencies and development of some desired attitudes and skills, yet the nationwide entrance examination to secondary schools continues to assess knowledge acquisition. Hence, if they focused on what the new curriculum was advising them to do, then they would be inadequately preparing pupils for the exams. Their school would also be viewed as less successful since success was often defined by the number of

graduates who were eligible to attend good quality secondary schools (e.g. The Anatolian high schools or Science high schools).

Despite these reservations, head teachers have tried to make sure that the revised curriculum was implemented effectively. For this purpose, during the piloting phase and the following first years, some head teachers organised weekly meetings in their rooms, so that teachers from different grade levels and streams could join together and discuss their experiences. These meetings also served as an important venue for teachers to share classroom activities and other practices that had the potential of improving education quality. During the pilot year, head teachers also attended monthly meetings which were held at provincial level, in which they had the opportunity to meet school management from other pilot schools in Ankara. These meetings provided a forum for addressing some of the implementation-related concerns.

5.2.3. Teacher factors

Teachers who participated in this study were experienced (17 years in the field on average) and were well-educated: three had Master's degrees, 46 were university graduates, and only one had graduated from a teacher training institute. A variety of components that are proposed in Curriculum 2004, such as student-centred learning and authentic assessment, were integrated in teacher education programmes in recent years, particularly with the Pre-service teacher education component of the World Bank-funded National Education Development Project (1994-1999) (Grossman et al., 2007). However, since the minimum number of years of experience was ten among the teachers who participated in this study, few were familiar with the concepts and approaches adopted by the new curriculum. Furthermore, as explained earlier, in general, teachers were not pleased with the in-service training, as they viewed it to be severely inadequate. They remarked that they learned about the new curriculum by practicing it, communicating, and cooperating with fellow teachers in their schools. Teacher guides were also considered helpful.

In terms of general teacher morale and commitment to the teaching profession, few negative comments were made. Some teachers made references to the need for improving teacher salaries, but, in general, teachers who participated in this study seemed to be doing fine. Indeed, the majority of teachers appeared to enjoy their profession and viewed interaction with children as one of the most positive aspects of their profession. However, it is

important to note that Turkish teachers in general have also suffered from the negative consequences of neoliberal policies in education as their employment conditions have deteriorated. The teaching profession also no longer enjoys the high status it had in previous decades (Büyükdüvenci, 1995).

5.2.4. Student factors

Class size was cited by many teachers as one of the biggest obstacles to effective implementation of the new curriculum. In visited classrooms, maximum class size was 49; however, the average size was 35. Teachers believed that the new curriculum required smaller classrooms because student activities and assessment methods made further demands on time and teacher attention. Large class size limited opportunities for student participation, classroom activities and sitting arrangements, making it very difficult to arrange group work. Large classes also posed challenges in terms of classroom management. Teachers commented that the ideal class size should be between 20 and 25 in order to implement the new curriculum effectively.

The schools were situated in low to middle-income neighbourhoods which had received considerable numbers of internal migrants in the past twenty years. Internal migration is a significant phenomenon in Turkey (DeSantis, 2003) given that large numbers of people have moved from the rural eastern, southern and northern parts of the country to the central and western regions. Ankara has been one of the cities that received high numbers of internal migrants (State Institute of Statistics). According to teachers' accounts, several families that moved from rural to urban areas still encounter problems and dilemmas related to adapting to city life, and feel caught up between two different cultures and lifestyles. Financial hardship and irregular and insecure jobs are common among these families.

Furthermore, teachers noted that some other social and psychological problems also merit attention, such as domestic violence and divorce. Teachers who taught in the poorest of these schools suggested that children were happier at school and some appeared to be amazed by children's resilience and perseverance in the face of severe hardship. Furthermore, almost all pupils were living in flats and had few opportunities to spend time outside due to few available playgrounds and parental concern about safety. Hence, children had limited opportunities for play and for interacting with their peers in their neighbourhoods. Therefore, when children came to school they did not want to sit quietly in the classrooms, and kept running around

during breaks. There was a consensus among teachers that the new generation of pupils was harder to manage. They were viewed as being more active, difficult to contain and having a limited concentration span.

Parental interest in education differed significantly. In some schools, it was very high, but in some others, particularly in schools which were situated in very low-income neighbourhoods, it was reported to be low. Parents in several schools contributed to purchase of learning and teaching aids as they viewed education to be important. Several parents were also highly involved with research and project assignments of their children, to the extent that they were doing the assignments themselves. In every school, there were parents who were very committed to education and those who were not. But more disinterested and uninvolved parents were reported in very poor neighbourhoods, among those parents who struggled with financial uncertainties, those who had very limited education, and those who were undergoing severe marital problems and family disruptions.

5.3. Profile of implementation

5.3.1. Content coverage

A large majority of teachers acknowledged that the content load in Mathematics, Turkish and Life Knowledge for primary one and two have been reduced significantly in the revised curriculum. Only a few complained about the number of topics that needed to be covered, while some criticised the high number of competencies defined for each course. According to these teachers, while the new curriculum was 'lighter' in terms of knowledge, it was overloaded with competencies and skills.

Although the curriculum materials for Turkish (the textbook, teacher guide and student workbook) were criticised by the majority of teachers, teachers were divided almost equally in their views regarding curriculum materials for Mathematics and Life Knowledge. Turkish was regarded as one of the most important subjects since language skills were viewed critical for learning in other subjects as well. However, teachers seemed to be disappointed by the quality of the textbook and omissions in teaching of Turkish grammar. The texts in the textbook were considered inadequate for young children as in some instances they were as long as four pages. Teachers remarked that pupils sometimes did not understand the texts, losing their interest and concentration. Besides, teachers believed that the texts should be meaningful, informative stories, yet the texts in the new Turkish

textbook lacked these qualities. Additionally, teachers noted their frustration over the numerous spelling and grammatical mistakes in the textbook and student workbook. More importantly, teachers criticised the lack of adequate attention to grammar. The curriculum puts emphasis on oral and written expression, and pupils are expected to learn the Turkish grammar gradually. However, teachers had strong objections to this policy. They believed that pupils should learn the grammar at early stages of their education. They remarked that children made too many grammatical mistakes and they had difficulties in correcting their grammar at higher grades as well.

In Mathematics, reduction in content load was most obvious and welcomed by many teachers. Some argued that children loved Mathematics in the new curriculum, as they no longer felt overwhelmed and scared by the amount and difficulty of the material they needed to learn. Hence, the success rate was seemingly higher in Mathematics. Nevertheless, several teachers complained about the inadequacy and low quality of exercises in the student workbook, and they argued that the exercises were too repetitive. In Life Knowledge, on the other hand, some teachers welcomed the efforts to link themes with the daily life of students and the focus on student activities. However, the other half criticised the superficiality, lack of interconnections among topics, and repetition of the same themes in the first three grades.

In all three subjects, teachers appeared to supplement the curriculum with additional resources. This tendency was the highest in Turkish in order to compensate for the omission of grammar, and in Mathematics teachers looked for additional exercises to improve student comprehension. Teachers mainly used internet sources − both national and foreign websites. In several cases, teachers shared their extra-curricular materials with their fellow teachers as well, and copied some of the materials for their pupils. Because of increased use of photocopy machine, some critics called the new curriculum ‘photocopy-centred education’.

5.3.2. Student-centred pedagogy

Teachers generally had positive views on the new pedagogical approach and they have attempted to realize various aspects of it in their classrooms. They maintained that they were now using more learning and teaching aids in classrooms, giving increased voice to pupils by letting them to express their opinions, and engaging children in classroom activities. During lessons, most of the time seemed to be spent on activities described in the workbooks. Teachers also commented that activities made classroom management more

challenging, as children walked around, asked questions, and conversed with their classmates simultaneously. Teachers needed to be more patient with children and more capable of handling multiple demands on them. Yet, some argued that once they got used to this system, they found the previous system increasingly boring. The new approach was more demanding but also more fun. Teachers also seemed to benefit from use of computers and TV during lessons. They used educational CDs while teaching Turkish or Mathematics. For instance, several teachers noted that they used programmes to teach sounds to pupils, and it worked very well as children enjoyed learning very much and their learning had also improved.

The image of a classroom changed dramatically with the new curriculum. Previously, a quiet classroom was viewed positively; it was a sign that a teacher was successfully managing order, instructing children, with pupils dutifully listening to their teachers. However, now a noisy classroom was closer to the ideal. Noise indicated that pupils were busy with classroom activities, which often involved talking or handling materials. Teachers indicated that they were now using different teaching and learning methods. Previously, children read the texts at home, then a few pupils were asked to explain the topic in classroom, teachers complemented student explanations, and finally teachers asked a few questions to assess student comprehension. After the implementation of the new curriculum, they were doing different things, however, such as drama, games, and demonstrations, which entertained the children and made learning more enjoyable and fun.

Furthermore, teachers believed that the new pedagogical approach provided more opportunities to get pupils involved in their learning process. Hence, they assumed more roles and responsibilities by way of conducting research, doing project and performance assignments, sharing their opinions in class, and doing a variety of classroom activities. However, teachers also noted that, in practice, a number of policy intentions have never been materialised, or were adopted in a formalistic manner. For instance, large class size (classes with more than 30 pupils were considered large) limited student involvement, as not all children received the opportunity to participate actively in class. Likewise, group activities were not organized because of large class size and space limitations. Besides, the new curriculum aims to develop select competencies through performance and projects assignments which were designed to be done at home. However, in reality, these assignments were completed by parents with little contribution from their children, especially in the first years of curriculum implementation. Parents did the assignments since some believed the assignments were above

children's ability levels, or they wanted their children to get higher marks. In a highly competitive education system (Tansel & Bircan, 2006), parents were overly conscious and concerned about grades. Parental involvement in project and performance assignments became such a widespread phenomenon that many referred to the new pedagogical approach as 'parent-centred pedagogy' rather than 'student-centred pedagogy'.

After increasing concerns and criticisms of teachers and parents, in 2009 the Ministry advised schools to give such assignments only to complete in class, and no longer intend them to be done at home. However, although a few teachers were indeed giving simple assignments in class, the majority of teachers were still requiring their pupils to complete them at home. The main reason for this was time. Teachers believed that if they were to do the assignments at school, they would need a few lesson hours to do so. Otherwise, the assignments would eat into other subjects, putting teachers under further stress to complete the curriculum in due time. Besides, classroom space was also viewed to be inadequate. Teachers tried to inform parents about the rationale behind project and performance assignments in an attempt to convince them that the assignments should be done by children, not by parents. They tried to explain that as long as parents did the assignments, children's competencies would not develop. These statements were convincing for some, yet for many parents who were painfully aware of competitive nature of the education system, they were not persuasive enough. A few teachers also admitted that they were heavily involved in homework assignments of their own children, nieces and nephews.

5.3.3. Authentic assessment

In line with similar studies on curriculum implementation in Turkey (Doganay & Sari, 2008), assessment emerged as one of the most problematic aspects of the new curriculum. In general, teachers believed that the assessment methods suggested by the new curriculum were too many, complex, and not adequate to classroom realities in which teachers worked. The class size (an average of 35) was considered too large for practicing the assessment methods suggested by the new curriculum. Teachers also maintained that since they were interacting with their pupils in all of the lessons and for consecutive years, until grade five, they got to know their pupils very well. They argued that there could be merits in recording observations if there was more than one teacher teaching in the same class. In such cases, teachers could benefit from each other's observations and

remarks. However, in the early grades there was only one teacher assigned per classroom; therefore, teachers argued that there was little point in periodically documenting their observations in written forms. Such requirements were viewed as unrealistic, tiresome, formalistic, and unnecessary, making their jobs heavier and not contributing to improvements in student assessment. A teacher, for instance, remarked:

> We are asked to record our observations on multiple forms, and then we need to file and store them […] It is all a waste of time, effort, and materials. We can better use our time on more meaningful and productive activities.

Furthermore, teachers commented that they filled in some observation forms but these were formalistic and aimed at fulfilling requirements. This was particularly done before scheduled school visits by inspectors.

Almost all teachers appeared to continue with their old ways of doing, and assessed their pupils with the methods that they were used to. Observation and student participation in classroom activities were the main methods teachers employed in assessing their pupils at lower grades. They often took observation notes in their notebooks, in which a page was assigned per student. Teachers also considered performance and project assignments as the curriculum suggested. However, because of over-involvement of parents in such assignments, teachers were not sure whom they were grading. Moreover, although written exams were not advised until grade three, some teachers still provided multiple-choice tests in Mathematics and organised competitions in reading and dictation. Some teachers occasionally made use of self-evaluation and competency evaluation forms that were provided in the textbooks.

6. Conclusion

The findings of the research have revealed that teachers mediated and in some instances rejected curriculum change proposals, creating a mosaic of different implementation profiles at school and classroom level. Hence, Curriculum 2004 appears to have changed its shape and focus in the course of its implementation, echoing similar experiences in other countries (Altinyelken, 2010a; Bantwini, 2010; Cornbleth, 2008; Dello-Iacovo, 2009; Fernandez et al., 2008). This might be considered to be a surprising finding since teachers in Turkey are viewed as being deeply committed to the principle of centralised education policymaking (Karakaya, 2004). Nevertheless, teachers'

accounts and classroom observations have clearly showed that teachers mediated the curriculum in accordance with their beliefs, interpretations and classroom realities within which they worked. As Resh and Benavot (2009) suggest, schools have increasingly become critical mediators between official curricular policies and the knowledge to which students are exposed in classrooms. One of the important factors that underline this mediation process is the fact that teachers tend to perceive the official curriculum as a suggestion, and do not regard it as a compulsory curriculum frame narrative. Indeed, teachers develop their own curriculum narratives that conform to their pedagogical and content approach, and reflect their individual curriculum ideology, orientation, or platform. Although teachers are influenced by the ideas suggested in the curriculum documents, their practices are ultimately an outcome of their own teaching and school experiences, knowledge, beliefs and ideologies (Shkedi, 2009).

There was a consensus among teachers who participated in this study that the previous curriculum was overloaded with too many facts and subject matters, however, the new curriculum was also criticised for being 'too light'. Although some of the reductions in content load were positively received, such as in Mathematics, some others were opposed, as in the case of Turkish grammar. Teachers seemed to supplement the curriculum with additional information, introducing concepts or topics that they considered important. For this reason, teachers conducted research, primarily on the internet, and shared their resources with fellow teachers and with their pupils. The change proposals in the pedagogical approach were generally positively received. Some aspects of the new pedagogical approach were easily embraced, while some others were left out. For instance, increasing student talk, use of a variety of learning and teaching methods and materials, and incorporating ICT were adopted by the majority of teachers, yet opportunities for cooperative learning and group work were rarely exploited. In none of the classrooms, were pupils seated in groups, and teachers admitted that they rarely organised group work or created opportunities for children to interact with each other. Lastly, assessment emerged as one of the most problematic aspects of the new curriculum as the majority of teachers continued to use traditional assessment methods and made modest use of alternative methods introduced by Curriculum 2004 (see also Gelbal & Kelecioglu, 2007; Yapıcı & Demirdelen, 2007).

The divergences between the intended curriculum and the profile of implementation observed in the schools can be explained by looking at various components of support from outside agencies and schools' capacity to

support innovation. In terms of support mechanisms provided by outside agencies, in this case Ministry departments, the research identified critical weaknesses in all the three sub-constructs. First of all, teachers had strong criticism of in-service training, confirming some other studies which highlighted the inadequacy of in-service training prior to the implementation of Curriculum 2004 (Bikmaz, 2006; Educational Reform Initiative, 2005; Gomleksiz, 2007). Its quality, both in terms of content and presentation, was found weak, and the lack of demonstrations and practical work were disappointing. Therefore, teachers felt ill-prepared to implement the new curriculum, particularly in applying the new pedagogical approach and using alternative assessment methods. This has resulted in misconceptions, wide divergences in interpretations of curriculum materials, and as suggested by some teachers, even in resistance to change proposals.

With regard to provision of physical resources, although the schools appreciated their special status as pilot schools and the preferential resource provision, they still complained about lack of adequate teaching and learning materials and their increasing reliance on parents for material supply. More importantly, there were serious concerns with regard to the quality of textbooks provided by the Ministry. Lack of adequate information in the textbooks and omission of certain topics motivated a large number of teachers to use the textbooks selectively and look for supplementary educational resources. Lastly, with regard to monitoring, teachers appreciated ongoing contact with the Ministry officials during piloting and their requests for feedback. However, teachers appeared to be disappointed by the poor use of teacher feedback and felt that surveys and school reports were primarily formalistic.

In terms of school capacity, teacher and student factors have been most influential. Although teachers were well-educated, experienced and committed to teaching, their knowledge and experience of the new pedagogical approach and assessment system were inadequate. Besides, teachers were not always convinced of the benefits of change proposals, therefore they seemed to adopt changes when they matched their beliefs, but modified or discarded them when they did not (Blake, 2002). For instance, they have increasingly involved pupils in teaching and learning processes, yet they preferred to supplement the curriculum with additional information and employ primarily the traditional assessment methods. Moreover, in line with recent research (Gelbal & Kelecioglu, 2007; Korkmaz, 2006; Yapici & Leblebicier, 2007), class size was often cited by teachers as one of the biggest challenges in implementation of the new curriculum. Large class size limited

student participation, group work, and use of alternative assessment methods, and made classroom management more challenging. The new pedagogical approach was considered time-consuming; therefore, in large classrooms there was additional pressure and stress for teachers to cover the curriculum materials within specified time periods. These findings suggest that school capacity to support innovation has been inadequately considered by policymakers. Schools in other parts of the country, especially in the east, would encounter bigger challenges in implementing the new curriculum, as their capacity to support change proposals would be modest (see also Yapici & Leblebicier, 2007).

The findings highlight the importance of paying adequate attention to the implementation stage: if the implementation stage has not been well planned and structured, it may result in resistance to policy messages and in unexpected outcomes. Consequently, the reform policy may be diluted by ad hoc adjustments and short-term strategies for coping (Dyer, 1999) as in the case of project and performance assignments or assessment methods. As Jansen maintains, if policy can learn, it should learn from experiences at lower levels in the system, where it is creolised and re-creolised in response to local realities and contextual factors (Jansen, 1997). The research also points out the critical role of teachers in curriculum implementation and confirms that reform efforts that are not internalised and embraced by teachers would hardly succeed in initiating sustainable change. As Fullan (2007) suggests, this requires on-going participation of teachers in the curriculum development process, both in policy formulation, and in re-assessing and modifying the curriculum during the implementation stage. Providing teachers with opportunities to study the curriculum materials together with their colleagues is also important, since such avenues can generate self-reflection and growth (Sherin & Drake, 2009).

CHAPTER: 7

Student-centred pedagogy in Turkey: Conceptualisations, interpretations and practices

ABSTRACT[5]

The purpose of this chapter is to explore recent curricular reforms aimed at advocating SCP in primary schools in Turkey. By using a case study approach, the chapter examines teacher views on SCP, classroom practices, and perceived challenges in implementation process. The study highlights some of the unintended consequences of SCP in Turkey (such as parental over-involvement in performance and research assignments), and discusses a number of issues that seemed to interfere with teachers' efforts to implement SCP. In line with similar studies in other parts of the world, teachers in Turkey appeared to be concerned with poor teacher training, large classes, materials scarcity, the examination system, parental opposition, and inadequate student responsiveness. The chapter suggests that instead of focusing on the 'problematisation' of implementation process and, in particular, focusing on teachers, efforts should be made to develop and apply more structured alternative approaches. While considering promising pedagogical approaches elsewhere, such efforts should also draw more inspiration from Turkish educationalists and scholars in order to develop a more culturally responsive pedagogy, which better suits the social, economic and political realities of Turkish society.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the primary school curriculum in Turkey has been increasingly viewed as obsolete, and inadequate in preparing children with the competencies, abilities, skills and knowledge for the 21st century. The 'old' curriculum has been attacked for its perceived lack of relevance to current Turkish society, for fostering rote learning, and failing to support life-long learning. In a globalised, knowledge-based economy, in which knowledge is produced and modified with increasing speed, the future of individuals and societies is believed to depend on competencies to access, use and produce knowledge. Therefore, a new curricular and pedagogical approach based on constructivism was considered essential to improve the

[5] The chapter is based on:

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relevance of education to economy, democracy, and technology, and to educate modern, productive, and self-confident citizens. Such a paradigm shift was also viewed as a prerequisite for sustainable development and for improving the country's competitiveness (MONE, 2005a). Furthermore, as a candidate country for EU membership, adopting EU norms, standards, and educational perspectives has also been an important political motive (MONE, 2005b). Moreover, critics emphasized the influence of neoliberal policies on education (İnal, 2009), and argued that SCP is aimed at educating individuals for a liberal, capitalist economic system.

A new curriculum for primary schools was developed in 2004, piloted in 120 selected schools across Turkey and the nationwide implementation started in academic year 2005/06 (Educational Reform Initiative, 2005). Drawing on a broader study aimed at analysing recent curricular reforms in Turkey, this chapter seeks to examine the implementation of SCP in primary schools. The chapter first describes the basic tenets of SCP and overviews its diffusion around the world in the past decades. It then focuses on the case of Turkey, by outlining the rationale for SCP and by describing how the new pedagogical approach is conceptualised in the new curriculum. This leads into a presentation of the analysis of the data by focusing on teachers' views on the reform-oriented pedagogical approach, classroom practices and perceived challenges in implementing SCP.

2. Student-centred pedagogy: its origins and global diffusion

The so-called traditional teaching, which is distinguished by its expository form and narrative character, has been the most pervasive pedagogical model around the world. Critique of this model has been developed at different historical moments, and socio-economic and geographical contexts, with different political aims in mind, by various actors, such as critical pedagogues from developing countries (e.g. Freire), educationalists in the Western world (e.g. Rousseau, Dewey and Vygotsky) and international organisations involved in education (e.g. UNESCO and UNICEF). Traditional teaching has been criticised for relegating education to an act of depositing whereby teachers make deposits and students receive, memorise and repeat to the best of their efforts and capacities (Freire, 1996). Such practices have also been criticised for being ineffective and leading to the acquisition of skills of a lower taxonomic level (Gauthier & Dembele, 2004), for undermining

spontaneity and initiative among students (O'Sullivan, 2004), and for inhibiting creativity and critical thinking (Freire, 1996).

Early progressive movements proposing alternatives to the traditional teaching originated in the second half of the 1800s (Windschitl, 2002). In the following period, several other alternatives have been proposed, yet the current academic discourse is dominated by two competing approaches. These are structured teaching approaches and discovery-based approaches that are based on constructivism. Both approaches agree that knowledge acquisition is a constructive process; however, the former advocate structure and some directivity in supporting the learning process effectively in school environments. Although discovery-based approaches are typically contrasted with the traditional model, structured teaching is situated between traditional teaching and discovery-based instruction (Gauthier & Dembele, 2004).

The majority of pedagogical reforms in developing countries in the past decades (particularly since the 1990s) (Tabulawa, 2003) have been based on the rhetoric of constructivism, which is generally labelled as student-centred, child-centred, learner-centred approaches, or active learning. Constructivism is characterised by an underlying premise that learning is an active process in which learners are active sense makers who seek to build coherent and organised knowledge upon the foundation of previous learning together with others (Mayer, 2004). Constructivism is heavily grounded in psychology and social science research. It has developed over many years; however, its origins are based on the works of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and John Dewey. Since the 1960s, research on constructivism has expanded substantially in the Western world, incorporating work on students' alternative conceptions, thinking and problem solving in various disciplinary domains, metacognition, and social and cultural influences on knowledge construction (Windschitl, 2002).

Constructivism is difficult to characterise since it is conceptualised differently by various groups of theorists depending on whether emphasis is on individual cognitive processes or the socio-construction of knowledge. The Piagetian perspective emphasises individual cognitive processes, and argues that individuals construct a personal reality based on their previous knowledge and new experiences. In this view, knowledge is viewed as an interaction between the environment and the individual (Piaget, 1971). Vygotsky, however, emphasizes social processes and views learning as an interactive and constructive activity in which both society and individuals play essential roles. According to this perspective, knowledge is constructed as a result of social interactions and then internalised by individuals

(Windschitl, 2002). Both perspectives highlight the importance of peer interaction and cooperation in stimulating children's learning (Dockett & Perry, 1996). However, cognitive constructivists emphasize how individuals create more sophisticated mental representations and problem-solving abilities by using tools, information resources, and input from other individuals, whereas social constructivists perceive learning as increasing one's ability to participate with others in meaningful activities (Wilson, 1996). Dewey, on the other hand, highlighted the importance of education as a powerful agent of social transformation. For him, the purpose of education was the intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development of the individual within a democratic society. He viewed learning as experiencing, arguing that all genuine education comes about through experience. His education model emphasizes individualised learning based on active engagement, discovery, inquiry, and empirical problem solving (Dewey, 1998).

The principles suggested by Piaget, Vygotsky and Dewey provided a theoretical foundation for SCP. However, since there is no prescribed design for education practices, there are various interpretations and applications of SCP (Mayer, 2004; Gauthier & Dembele, 2004). Compared to the traditional model, SCP assumes changes in four areas: the nature of knowledge, the roles of students and teachers in learning processes, and classroom organisation. In the traditional model, the subject matter of education consists of bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past (Dewey, 1998). Knowledge is viewed as static and defined by curriculum designers, experts, and teachers. Students still have a role in knowledge construction, since all mental activity is constructive. However, in traditional teaching there are weak acts of construction, which are more arbitrary, and only loosely connecting new information with existing ideas. SCP, on the other hand, aims to promote strong acts of construction through which students connect new information with existing ideas to form meaningful knowledge and integrate information across topics (Windschitl, 2002).

In this model, the most productive learning experiences are considered to take place when learning is relevant and meaningful to students. Hence, students' deeper engagement with their learning and assuming greater responsibilities within the process are deemed critical. At the same time, in SCP, students are given opportunities to draw on their own experiences and interpretations of the learning process. The teacher's role is redefined as that of motivating, facilitating and structuring students' own discovery and search for knowledge. Teachers are expected to know their students well and

identify their potentials so that they can provide supportive learning opportunities that are appropriate and challenging for their existing capacities. In the SCP model, learning environments are considered to be more participatory and democratic. Moreover, the physical arrangement of the classroom is organised in a way that allows for working together (Cuban, 1983; Schuh, 2004).

By the late twentieth century, SCP had been diffused across many developing countries; reforms couched in the rhetoric of SCP, student participation, or democracy in the classroom have become widespread (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). Currently, many curricular reforms in developing countries strive to advocate SCP in schools, including Tibet (Carney, 2008a), China (Ouyang, 2003), Taiwan (Yang et al., 2008), South Africa (Nykiel-Herbert, 2004), Botswana (Tabulawa, 2003), Namibia (O'Sullivan, 2004), Ethiopia (Serbessa, 2006), Tanzania (Barrett, 2007; Vavrus, 2009), Uganda (Altinyelken, 2010a; 2010b) Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador (de Baessa, 2002). Moreover, such pedagogical reforms have often been accompanied by a competency-based curriculum and continuous assessment (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Ryan, 1998).

The widespread adherence to SCP is explained from a variety of perspectives. Some authors argue that SCP has spread throughout the world because it was perceived as modern, progressive, and effective in improving learning achievements (Anderson-Levitt, 2008). It is also viewed as superior in preparing children and youth for the world of work. In current globalised knowledge economies, the business community places a premium on employees who think creatively, adapt flexibly to new work demands, identify and solve problems, and create complex products in cooperation with colleagues (Windschitl, 2002). These characteristics are assumed to be benefits of constructivist learning environments; consequently, the receptivity of SCP has increased in developing countries. Some others suggest that SCP has become increasingly preferred in developing countries which are making transition to democracy. SCP is appealing for these countries since it carries the promise of intellectual liberation and emancipation from traditional approaches that are considered oppressive (Nykiel-Herbert, 2004). Moreover, SCP is positively viewed in countries in sub-Saharan Africa because 'they were not entirely new ideas and were ambiguous enough to be seen as key vehicles for achieving not so much educational, as economic, social and political goals' (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008, p. 2).

A rather different view is proposed by Tabulawa (2003) who points to the power asymmetries among nations and argues that if pedagogical

practices are converging around the world (at least in the official curriculum), it is because a certain pedagogical approach is in the interests of powerful states or international organisations. Tabulawa (2003) highlights the role of international aid agencies in the diffusion of SCP in sub-Saharan Africa and in other low-income countries, as many have advocated for SCP as a prescription through educational projects and consultancies that were funded by them. Although aid agencies express their interest and preference for SCP in terms of its perceived effectiveness in improving learning outcomes, in essence, its efficacy lies in its political and ideological nature. In other words, SCP is promoted by international donor agencies for ideological purposes rather than for realising educational or pedagogical objectives. Tabulawa maintains that aid agencies have viewed pedagogy in technicist terms and displayed an apparent lack of interest for pedagogical issues until the early 1990s. However, they have become explicitly concerned with pedagogy since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and displayed an extraordinary interest in SCP due to its democratic tendencies and its perceived role in stimulating democratic social relations. According to the author, political democratisation has been viewed as a prerequisite for economic development, and education assumed a central role in the democratisation project. Therefore, Tabulawa argues that 'the pedagogy is an ideological outlook; a worldview intended to develop a preferred kind of society and people. It is in this sense that it should be seen as representing a process of Westernization disguised as quality and effective teaching' (Tabulawa, 2003, p. 7).

Likewise, Guthrie (1990) suggests that SCP reflects the norms of a liberal Western subculture and represents a process of Westernisation with its political and economic connotations. Yet, aid agencies disguise it as 'better' teaching. Additionally, Carney (2008a) agrees that SCP is part of an international agenda which aims to improve educational systems in ways that might support the spread of advanced capitalism and global democracy. As such, SCP might be viewed as a form of cultural imperialism.

3. SCP in Turkey

Although SCP became part of the official primary school curriculum in 2004, its origins go back to the early years of the Turkish Republic. In 1923, the Turkish Republic was proclaimed and the authorities initiated a series of comprehensive reforms to modernise the country, including the abolishment of the Caliphate, the establishment of the principle of secularism and the introduction of the Latin alphabet. Atatürk, the leader of the young Republic,

emphasized education in shaping a modern nation, and transforming its social, political, and economic structure. Schools were viewed as castles of the modern republic (Büyükdüvenci, 1995), and teachers as 'the agents of change' responsible for educating the new generations who were going to defend and protect the new republic (Sönmez, 2007). Therefore, teacher training was emphasized to train teachers who would embrace and follow the principles of the Atatürk Revolution (Uygun, 2008).

3.1. The Village Institutes

During the restructuring process, John Dewey, one of the most influential educationalists who contributed to the development of SCP, was invited to Turkey to examine the education system and make recommendations for its improvement. Dewey's report pointed to low teacher status and low quality teacher education as the main problems of the Turkish education system. He provided extensive recommendations to improve teacher salaries and status, and to introduce 'progressive' pedagogical approaches. Dewey suggested that pedagogy courses should be given priority in teacher training institutes and a more life-oriented and democratic education system should be promoted (Uygun, 2008; Yılmaz, 2009). According to some experts, since the Turkish government wanted to establish a modern, secular national state, they wanted to use the 'progressive' education of Dewey to realise this aim (Biesta & Miedema, 1996). Others also confirm that Dewey was the first foreign scholar to be invited to the Turkish Republic since he was considered a pioneer of democratic and progressive education. His philosophy of education was thought to fit in with the democratic aims of the Turkish educational reform movement (Uygun, 2008). These accounts suggest that in addition to some other educational goals, 'progressive pedagogy' was also tried in Turkey in those years to advance democracy and Westernisation.

Inspired by Dewey's educational ideas, the Village Institutes (Köy Enstituleri) were established in the 1940s to transform the Turkish countryside, ameliorate poverty and ignorance among peasants, improve quality of life, and to help spread the nationalist ideology (Akyuz, 2009; Arayici, 1999). In these institutes, 'education for work' and 'education for production' were main motivations, and 'learning by doing' was one of the most highly emphasized principles. However, the Village Institutes soon became the major focus of political and ideological debate in Turkey. Most leftist oriented Kemalists perceived the institutes as the embodiment of Kemalist populism at its highest point, whereas several right-wing politicians

and intellectuals criticised them and made scapegoats for their political ambitions and anti-communist hysteria. Eventually, this progressive and unique experiment was abandoned in 1950 (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998). Sixty years since their closure, the controversy around the Village Institutes continues to be passionately debated in Turkey. The graduates have expressed a strong sense of belonging to the institutes and many have actively taken part in the intellectual life of the country, establishing associations, unions and publishing houses (Uygun, 2008).

3.2. The 'progressive pedagogy' in Curriculum 2004

The 'progressive' pedagogy became part of the official curriculum for primary schools in 2004, two years after the AKP came to power. The AKP emphasized education in the party programme and its leaders attempted to restructure the education system (İnal, 2009). The curriculum for primary schools was revised and changes were introduced to the content of the curriculum, the pedagogical approach and the assessment system (MONE, 2005a). The previous curriculum, which had not been substantially modified since 1968 (Güven & İscan, 2006), has been rigorously attacked for fostering rote learning and for overloading students with information that related poorly to their daily lives. In order to overcome such shortcomings, the content load has been reduced and thematically organised, and more emphasis has been put on the development and reinforcement of select competencies. Eight competencies are highlighted throughout the new educational programmes, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, problem solving, research, using information technologies, entrepreneurship, and language skills in Turkish (MONE, 2005a).

The revised curriculum adopts SCP as the pedagogical approach and recommends that the centre of all learning activities should be students. The new curriculum advocates increased student activity, diversity in teaching and learning methodologies, hands-on-learning, integration of learning activities in and outside school, cooperative learning, research, project-based learning and increased use of learning materials. In addition, the integration of ICT within classrooms is promoted. The new approach is based on the principles that each child can learn, yet with different styles and pace; knowledge, concepts, values and competencies should prioritise 'learning to learn'; students should be encouraged to think, pose questions and exchange ideas; interaction among students facilitates learning; and teachers should provide opportunities for students to benefit from their experiences and to relate to

their immediate environment (MONE, 2005a; MONE, 2007a; MONE, 2009a; MONE, 2009b; MONE, 2009c).

The new approach redefines the roles of students and teachers, and assigns new responsibilities to parents. Students are expected to assume responsibility for their own learning, and to think critically, ask questions, solve problems, benefit from learning opportunities outside of school, and to work cooperatively in group settings. Teachers' main roles include supervision of teaching and the learning process, organisation of learning environments, and planning of student evaluation. Teachers are also expected to stimulate students' motivation in learning, and to promote inquisitive and critical dispositions. The new curriculum also aims to intensify parental involvement in education through assigning parents new roles and responsibilities in home assignments and out-of-school learning activities (MONE, 2005a).

The student assessment system has also been modified by incorporating new assessment mechanisms, such as self-evaluation, peer evaluation, project and performance assignments, observation forms, and student portfolios. The new approach, which is described as 'authentic assessment', aims to take the learning processes of students into account (MONE, 2005a). Teachers are expected to make use of such alternative methods selectively in addition to the traditional assessment methods. The new curriculum was first piloted in the 2004/05 academic year in 120 public primary schools in nine provinces across Turkey, and in the following year nationwide implementation started at the first five grades simultaneously (Educational Reform Initiative, 2005).

4. The present study

The analysis presented in this chapter is based on fieldwork carried out in Turkey between February and May 2009, for which research permission was given by the Ministry in the summer of 2008. The eight schools that participated in this study were sampled from public schools that piloted the new curriculum in the province of Ankara. These schools were considered information-rich cases since they had longer experience with the new curriculum, more prolonged contact with the institutions involved in curriculum implementation, and the teachers had longer in-service training. By choosing schools where teachers had longer experience with the new curricula, and were better trained and better equipped with resources, the

research aimed at going beyond stating the obvious, and exploring teacher views and practices in the best possible circumstances.

The schools were located in different districts, in middle to low-income neighbourhoods in urban centres. These schools are viewed by educational authorities and parents as offering good quality education, particularly in comparison to other schools in their locality. Student numbers ranged widely between 662 and 3,339; however, the six of them had more than 1,000 students. Except for three, all the schools offered double-shift education, with the number of streams ranging between 44 and 108. The average number of teachers in these schools was 65. School management, teachers and some key informants working at Ministry departments, education institutions, teacher unions and academics comprised the sample of this study. Fourteen head teachers and deputy head teachers (13 male and one female) and 69 teachers (57 female and 12 male) took part in this research. Teachers' ages ranged between 30 and 64, while the average age was 40. In terms of education level, five had Master's degrees, 62 were university graduates, and only two teachers were graduates of teacher training institutes. The minimum number of years of experience was nine years and the maximum was 43 years, while the average was 16. The majority of teachers had work experience in various parts of the country, both in urban and rural settings.

Two forms of data collection were used: interviews and classroom observation. The analysis presented in this chapter is based on interviews with teachers and school management. However, interviews with a number of key informants within the field of education were also conducted in order to contextualise the cases and reflect broader discussions. For teacher interviews, those teaching at grades one, two and five were selected. Grade five was added in the case of Turkey since it was expected to offer some new perspectives and generate new insights. The particularities of grade five were related to pupils and teachers: these children were the only pupils in Turkey who had been educated according to the new pedagogical approaches since the start of their schooling. In addition, grade five classroom teachers had been teaching grade one five years earlier when they were first asked to implement the new curriculum. Therefore, they had the unique opportunity of observing the development of their students as they were educated according to the new pedagogical understandings. Due to the high number of students per school, there were several streams at any grade level, up to 12 of them. When the number of streams was more than three for a grade level, the classrooms were randomly selected.

In total, 69 interviews were conducted with teachers (26 teaching at grade one, 24 at grade two, and 19 at grade five), and 14 interviews with school management. Teacher interviews were often held in classrooms while pupils were occupied with individual tasks, such as reading, painting or writing. The interviews were semi-structured: a list of general topics was prepared to make interviewing systematic and comprehensive. Yet, multiple other subtopics were probed and explored. During interviews, teachers' views and experiences were sought on a range of issues relating to revised curriculum, including content, assessment and pedagogical approach. The questions on pedagogy focused on teacher views on the new pedagogical approach, its strengths and weaknesses, differences with the traditional approach, perceived outcomes, implementation challenges, and reactions received from students and parents.

The interview data were recorded in written notes as teachers have shown a preference for this type of data recording. In addition to teachers, 14 interviews were conducted with school management in their offices. The goal of such interviews was to understand how they viewed the new curriculum and the pedagogical approach, and what kind of responses they got from teachers in their schools. Furthermore, interviews were held with a select number of Ministry officials, teacher unions and academics. The majority of these interviews were also recorded in written notes, while some were taped. The informed consent of those who took part in the study both in school contexts and outside was sought. For this purpose, before the interviews and observations, the participants were told about the nature, scope, and purpose of the study. The participants had the right to refuse to take part in the research or to withdraw afterwards. Furthermore, to ensure confidentiality, school names were not mentioned throughout the chapter and identities of the participants were not revealed.

In addition, 76 lessons were observed in primary one (31), primary two (28) and primary five (17). At primary one and two, classroom observations were carried out in three lessons, Turkish, Life Knowledge and Mathematics, whereas at primary five, only Social Studies lessons were observed. The lessons were observed at different times of the day and on all working days, while between two to five working days were spent in each school. The duration of lesson observation was 40 minutes. During observations, I first introduced myself to the children, and answered their questions about my own background and about the research itself. Afterwards, I maintained a passive presence by sitting in the back, and not interacting with the pupils. During observations, I took descriptive notes on a

number of items, including classroom organisation, teacher and student activities, student talk, teacher feedback, classroom management, and atmosphere. The observations were aimed at documenting the presence or absence of learning activities proposed in the curriculum and at comparing teacher accounts with their actual practices.

The fieldwork data were first organised by methods and participants, and then the texts were read for a general understanding and for delineating emerging themes. A thematic analysis was conducted, and cross-sectional code and retrieve methods were used where a common system of codes was applied with a computer program (ATLAS.ti) across the whole data set and used as a means of searching for and retrieving chunks of labelled data (Spencer et al., 2003). The main codes related to pedagogical approach included: student talk, teacher feedback, performance and project assignments, research, classroom activities, use of teaching aids, examination, teacher training, and parental response. Later, by using the constant comparison method of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) data were analysed, emerging themes were highlighted, and notes were taken on patterns, connections, similarities, or contrasting points.

Having laid out some of the important discussions on constructivism and introducing the context of the study, the next part will present the analysis of the case of Turkey. It is mainly based on teachers' views and experiences; however, the accounts of other stakeholders are also used to complement or contrast teachers' views. The analysis is organized into three sections: views on SCP, classroom practices and perceived obstacles.

5. Views on SCP

From the perspective of teachers, the pedagogical approach appeared to be the most defining aspect of the new curriculum. Teachers generally associated SCP with student participation, use of learning and teaching materials, hands-on learning and research assignments. According to teachers, SCP shifted emphasis from lecturing to student activities. The role of students and teachers were redefined, as students were expected to play a more active role within classroom and in learning activities in general. On the other hand, teachers were expected to facilitate student learning and guide them in their learning process. Very often teachers remarked that they were no longer required to provide information to their pupils. Instead, their role was to teach children how to attain information from various other sources, and help them to improve their research skills. For instance, a teacher noted: 'You can find

knowledge everywhere. Knowledge is abundant in our age; we are flooded with knowledge. What is critical is to have the skills to attain knowledge that one desires to know.'

The majority of teachers argued that there were significant differences between the previous and the current approach: they were now using more learning and teaching aids, giving increased voice to students by letting them to express their opinions, and engaging students in activities that were suggested in the student workbooks and teacher guides. Some other teachers, however, believed that teaching and learning were not significantly different in the new system. These teachers already created opportunities for student participation and whenever possible experimented with learning aids. According to them, 'good' teachers, who were committed to education and to the well-being of children, were already practising elements of SCP. Indeed, among these teachers, resentment towards the choice of words in describing the old and the new pedagogical approach was evident. According to them, the term 'teacher-centred pedagogy' mistakenly suggested that the old system was centred on the teacher, that students and their learning was not the focus of educational institutions.

Teachers also discussed a number of outcomes they observed in their classrooms. They believed that children became more self-confident due to increased opportunities for self-expression. Positive remarks were also made with regard to pupils' communication skills, oral and written expression, and creative thinking. Children enjoyed learning more since they particularly liked drawing, drama, brainstorming and imitation. The new approach also enabled children to discover their artistic talents in writing, singing, drawing, or acting. In addition to these positive remarks, teachers also noted that classrooms became too noisy, and classroom management had become even more challenging especially at lower grades. Opinions differed significantly with regard to the impact of SCP on learning achievement. Around 40 percent of teachers believed that children learned better since the content load was reduced and pupils were exposed to different learning methods that required their active participation. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers (60 percent) remarked that children learned less since the content load had been reduced too much and lesson time was spent on time-consuming classroom activities. According to them, regrettably, the curriculum put more emphasis on the development of competencies at the expense of knowledge.

Teachers also discussed some unintended consequences of the new approach on education equality. They believed that the new approach was intensifying existing divisions and creating new sources of inequalities. For

instance, the new approach suggests that pupils should seek information by consulting educational resources, such as internet or encyclopaedias. But such an approach is in direct contradiction with the realities of Turkish society, since the majority of the households in the countryside or in the eastern part of the country do not have these educational resources. The following statement of a teacher is illustrative in this sense:

> Students are supposed to conduct research and do some preparatory work at home. But we encounter real problems with this. Such an approach emphasizes the use of computer technologies or availability of written resources at home. However, computers or internet do not exist in every household, not even books do. Consequently, only some students can do the assignments and come to class prepared. This widens the gap between students who do the research assignments and who do not, between those who have resources at home and who have none, and again between those whose parents are educated and whose are not. The new approach indeed creates some new sources of inequalities.

When teachers were asked about the future prospects − whether the new approach will be commonly embraced by teachers or not − opinions differed once again. The majority believed that SCP signified the modern, reformist, progressive approach to pedagogy. Some even suggested that 'no one could be against it as no one can openly oppose development and improvement.' Student-centred pedagogy was perceived as the only alternative to the traditional approach which was attacked by almost everyone for being ineffective and boring. These statements confirm some of the earlier studies which identified overwhelmingly affirmative opinions and attitudes among teachers towards SCP (Çınar et al., 2006; Işıkoğlu & Baştürk, 2007).

Only very few teachers suggested that the pedagogical approach should not be centrally dictated, and teachers should not be forced to use one approach. These teachers argued that there were different ways of conducting teaching and learning activities in classrooms, and teachers could employ whatever approach they believed would suit to the background of their students and learning areas. Likewise, very few could suggest openly that lecturing as a teaching method also had its merits. During interviews with school management, policymakers, and some other informants, SCP emerged as the only alternative to traditional teaching. It was considered to be the most effective, scientifically proven, pedagogical approach that could improve learning and help to develop select competencies. During an interview, a policymaker even directly asked, 'What else could we have adopted? Is there

any other alternative?' For many, just as democracy signified the best political system, SCP signified the 'best' pedagogical approach.

6. Classroom practices

The interviews with teachers and classroom observations point to the following aspects as the highlights of SCP in Turkey: variety in teaching and learning methods, the use of ICT, classroom activities, student talk, group work, research assignments, and project and performance assignments.

Teachers acknowledged and welcomed increased variety in teaching and learning methods. They drew on drama, singing, brainstorming, and other activities that would entertain pupils and would make learning more enjoyable and enduring. More teachers also seemed to benefit from the use of computers and TV during lessons. They used educational programmes while teaching Turkish or Mathematics. Some teachers also played documentaries and movies relevant to the theme of the lessons and discussed them with their pupils. Some others (at higher grades) took their students to museums, factories or institutions that were relevant to the topic. Teachers believed that with the new curriculum, the school had been opened to the outside world and interaction between school and its immediate environment had improved.

In line with the recommendations of the new curriculum (MONE, 2005a), most of the lesson time was spent on activities listed in the workbooks and teacher guides. Two immediate consequences were observed as a result. First, classroom management became even more challenging as children walked around, asked questions, handled materials, and conversed with their classmates, all at the same time. This has increased coordination and management demands on teachers. Second, the image of a classroom changed radically. Previously, a quiet classroom was indicative of good quality learning since it implied that teachers were successfully managing their classes and imparting knowledge to their well-behaved pupils. However, now a noisy classroom reflected the 'ideal' more, since it was a sign that children were vigorously engaged in some activity.

Almost in all cases, creating room for student participation seemed to be an important concern. Teachers encouraged student talk by asking questions. They attempted to persuade free expression by refraining from judgmental comments on student responses. They tried to create a positive classroom atmosphere in which students felt free to have and express diverse opinions. During interviews, teachers particularly remarked how they tried to convince their students that there were no false or erroneous answers, and that

students could just stand up and share their opinions. At higher grades, teachers often expected students to do some preparatory work at home, such as reading the text, looking up new words or doing research on the themes to be studied. Such preparatory work was considered essential for increasing student participation in the classroom. Nevertheless, teachers often complained that few students invested time in preparatory work; hence, the lessons were less animated than expected by teachers.

Although the new curriculum encourages group work and cooperative learning, seating in groups and group work was not a common practice in the visited classrooms. Pupils were often seated in pairs in rows facing the blackboard and teacher's desk. Seating in groups was not done because of space limitations as well as due to concerns regarding the effectiveness of such seating arrangements. Some teachers suggested that when pupils were seated in groups, they conversed a lot with each other and concentrated less on the lesson. Therefore, classroom management became even more challenging for teachers. Teachers commented that they occasionally grouped pupils when they did research assignments or when they had a project assignment. Once the assignments were completed, children also presented their work as a group. However, due the relatively large class sizes, time was an important concern. Teachers complained that due to time limitations, they could not give opportunities to each group to present their work. Furthermore, some teachers noted that group work created chaos and was not very productive (see also Altinyelken, 2010c).

There were two classes that were exceptions (both at grade five) to these general remarks. In these two classrooms, pupils were seated in groups and the teachers seemed to have strong trust in the benefits of group work. They argued that the development of the majority of the competencies and skills defined in the curriculum required interaction among pupils, cooperative learning and increased communication. Group work, therefore, was viewed as an important tool for achieving these objectives. In these classrooms, groups were assigned for each learning area; group members did joint research and presented their work in classroom by using PowerPoint presentations or posters. Both the members of the presenting group and others in the classroom could direct questions at one another. The teacher's role was to manage and guide the discussions. Group work was not only limited to classrooms, as pupils also met in homes in turn. In such cases, the parents also took up some responsibilities in organising the group work, responding to pupils' needs and managing their work. Teachers noted that parent cooperation was crucial for organising group work outside school premises.

Research assignments were a critical element of the new pedagogical approach and considered an important tool for developing self-regulated learning. Teachers acknowledged the possible benefits of increased attention on research, such as improvement of research skills and contribution to life-long learning. Some also argued that when students sought information themselves, they learned more in comparison to when they were lectured. Despite such general conviction in potential gains of research assignments, the actual practices raised various reservations among teachers. Although some could appreciate positive outcomes in terms of increased research skills, many were disillusioned and discouraged. First, it soon appeared that children delegated research assignments to their parents or some other family member. In some other cases, children consulted stationery shops, which provided a printout of Google search results. To the dismay of teachers, pupils often did not even read the printouts. Consequently, the potential benefits of research assignments were far from being materialised. Furthermore, teachers underlined that many children did not have computers, internet or encyclopaedias at home. In several cases, parents limited visits to internet cafés due to financial reasons or concerns with security. Even when internet was available, pupils were not necessarily interested in doing research so frequently. Indeed, teachers heard pupils as well as parents complaining about the number of research assignments. Consequently, several teachers reduced the number of assignments, encouraged use of school libraries (which are reported to be limited in number), and tried to give research assignments that did not require internet.

The case of performance and project assignments demonstrated a very similar and distressing practice. These assignments were often designed to be done at home, and intended to improve student capacity on a range of abilities and competencies. They were also intended as important assessment tools in the new curriculum. However, in reality, most of these assignments were completed by parents with little contribution from their children. Parents did the assignments since some believed they were above their children's ability levels, and often parents wanted their children to get higher marks. In a highly competitive education system, in which student marks also contribute to the final score which determines admission to high schools, parents are overly conscious and concerned about grades. Some shops were involved in doing performance and project assignments as well. One teacher, for instance, mentioned an advertisement in the window of an electricity shop, reading 'We prepare electrical circuits for students'. The teacher also witnessed

students collecting their assignments from such shops. The accounts of the following teachers further illustrate such concerns:

> Parents are too protective. They want to do everything for their children, including their homework. They come and complain to us that we give too many performance or research assignments. Then, we have to remind the parents that the assignments are not given to them but to their kids.

> We give research assignments but they are interpreted as research on the internet and often done by parents. As a result, the research skills we want to develop in students do not improve.

> The new programme has good intentions but does not work in reality. We give project and research assignments but students go and look for persons who can do the assignments for them [...] Parents compete among themselves for better performance; some even do not hesitate to directly ask the teacher 'what grade did I get for this assignment?'

Parental involvement in research, project and performance assignments became such a phenomenon that many referred to the new pedagogical approach as 'parent-centred pedagogy' rather than 'student-centred pedagogy'. After increasing concerns and criticisms of teachers and parents, last year the Ministry advised schools to give performance assignments only in class, with them no longer intended to be done at home. However, although a few teachers were indeed giving simple assignments in class, the majority of teachers were still requiring their pupils to complete them at home. The main motive for this preference was the time involved. Teachers believed that conducting such assignments in class would take up considerable time, putting teachers under further stress to complete the curriculum in due time. Besides, classroom space was also viewed as inadequate. These teachers tried to convince parents by explaining that as long as parents did the assignments, their children's competencies would not develop. These statements were convincing for some parents, yet for many who were painfully aware of the competitive nature of the system they were not persuasive enough. A few teachers also candidly reported that they were heavily involved in the assignments of their own children, nieces and nephews.

In general, teachers suggested that the new pedagogical approach provided increased opportunities to get students involved in their learning process. Hence, they assumed more roles and responsibilities in their learning, through conducting research, doing project and performance assignments, sharing their opinions in the classroom, and doing a variety of

classroom activities. However, as explained above, a number of policy intentions were never materialised, or they were adopted in a formalistic manner.

7. Perceived obstacles in implementing reformed pedagogies

Despite their favourable opinions on SCP, teachers in general believed that the new approach was difficult to implement in classrooms. Some argued that it would take a minimum of ten years for schools across the country to adopt the new pedagogical approaches, and some others believed that it would never be embraced entirely. A number of issues were discussed as implementation challenges, including the inadequacy of in-service training, large class size, lack of adequate learning and teaching materials, problems with regard to student and parental responsiveness, and the examination system. These issues will be further elaborated below.

7.1. Teacher training

Teachers received a two-week in-service training prior to the piloting from academics teaching at universities in Ankara. Only in one school did teachers receive training for two months. Although some teachers acknowledged the benefits of the training programme in terms of introducing them to the main concepts, approaches and subject areas, the majority appeared bitterly critical of it. Teachers remarked that not only was the duration of the training short, but its quality was also disappointingly low. The training was considered too theoretical and abstract, lacking practical guidance. It was particularly frustrating for them to be introduced to a new pedagogical approach through dry presentations, read from PowerPoints or written notes. Furthermore, during training, a significant amount of time was spent on heated discussions between the trainers and teachers with regard to the merits of the new curriculum, and on whether it should be implemented or disregarded. Consequently, there was less time left to understand the principles, epistemological assumptions, and teaching and learning methods advocated by the new pedagogical approach.

When the implementation of the new curriculum started in pilot schools in the fall of 2004, teachers felt ill-prepared to apply the new approach. These teachers still viewed themselves in a better position compared to the teachers in non-pilot schools, because the latter received an even shorter and more formalistic training in 2005. Teachers maintained that

SCP was not easy to comprehend, that one needed to be knowledgable about it in order to adequately practise it in classroom settings. Some teachers attempted to inform themselves by doing research on the topic, reading and conversing with their fellow teachers. The majority came to an understanding on SCP by reading the curriculum materials, experimenting with suggested strategies and activities, and by sharing their experiences with their colleagues. Nevertheless, the lack of a sound and thorough basis regarding the pedagogical approach seems to have resulted in wide variations in interpretation and practice. The inadequacy of in-service training has been highlighted in other studies as well (Gömleksiz et al., 2005; Yapıcı & Demirdelen, 2007; Yilmaz, 2009).

7.2. Class size

Large classes were discussed by many teachers as one of the biggest obstacles to the implementation of SCP. In visited classrooms, the maximum class size was 49, while the average was 36. Teachers considered classes that had more than 30 pupils to be large, so the majority complained about student numbers. They maintained that SCP could only be effectively implemented in smaller classes because student participation, activities, and hands-on learning were time consuming and increased demands on teacher attention. In order to stimulate the development of defined competencies and skills, teachers needed to encourage student talk. However, in a classroom that had more than 30 pupils, it was difficult as everyone wanted to talk and they shouted impatiently: 'Teacher, teacher!' Large classes also constrained classroom space, limited opportunities for sitting arrangements and made it difficult to arrange group work. They suggested that the ideal class size should be between 20 and 25. In some other studies, class size also emerged as a big challenge in implementing SCP, particularly in coordinating learning activities (Yapıcı & Demirdelen, 2007; Gelbal & Kelecioglu, 2007; Korkmaz, 2006).

7.3. Materials

The demand for teaching and learning materials increased, as they were needed to undertake activities described in student workbooks and create more opportunities for hands-on learning. Pilot schools had been privileged since the authorities provided various materials during piloting. Indeed, teachers also considered their schools fortunate in comparison to other public

schools in the province of Ankara or in other parts of the country. Nevertheless, teachers remarked that they still needed more materials and the school budget was insufficient to finance increasing material demands. Consequently, teachers provided some of the materials themselves, and collected money from students. Studies have revealed that in other parts of the country, especially in rural areas, material scarcity was considered as one of the biggest challenges (Çınar et al., 2006; Doğanay & Sarı, 2008).

ICTs were an important part of the discussion on materials in pilot schools. Teachers appeared very enthusiastic to use computers and projectors as they were convinced that the use of ICT would improve education quality considerably. All the eight schools that took part in this study had a TV, a computer, or both, in visited classrooms. In one school, classrooms even had access to internet. Parents provided the financial means for these resources except for a few cases where computers and projectors were provided by schools or classroom teachers. Having a TV or computer in classrooms was not enough, as teachers needed adequate educational materials. They could obtain such educational programmes from sources on the internet or they were directly marketed to teachers by commercial providers. Teachers also reported that the websites that supply good quality educational materials required paid membership and that the quality of other sources was often poor. Obtaining resources to be used on TV was even more difficult, so teachers reported infrequent use of TV. Therefore, teachers suggested that they needed educational software and argued that the Ministry should also provide such materials.

Parental provision of educational materials had some serious implications. First of all, teachers often reported that parents were increasingly annoyed by such requests and were concerned with its financial implications for family budgets. Second, this trend contradicts the official policy on free public education. Indeed, despite the official policy and discourse on free primary education, parents were increasingly 'encouraged' to provide for all sorts of material needs, including desks, seats, curtains, and ICT hardware (see also Karapehlivan, 2010). This has created inequalities between schools or even between classrooms in a single school. For instance, during school visits, it was possible to see a classroom nicely decorated with colourful, good quality curtains and desk covers, a projector and a computer, and to see the next classroom without any TV or computer, or without such elegant decorations. Hence, classroom equipment and furnishing have become strong indicators of student background and parental commitment to education. This trend seems to lead to increased educational stratification and

intensification of 'hidden privatisation' (Ball & Youdell, 2008) in the public education system. As many critics pointed out, such practices appear to have produced an education system in which public schools operate like private schools.

7.4. Examination system

As explained previously, the Turkish education system is an exceedingly exam-oriented system: entrance to secondary schools and higher education institutions is governed by nationwide exams (Tansel & Bircan, 2006). These entrance exams have traditionally evaluated students on the basis of their knowledge acquisition. Hence, teachers believed that since students received less information in the new system, mainstream schools failed to prepare them adequately for entrance exams. Such concerns were also reported by head teachers with even greater emphasis. Several parents voiced similar concerns and were alarmed by what 'little knowledge' their children were attaining at school. Depending on their economic circumstances, some parents reacted by sending their children to private tutoring institutions to strengthen their chances of success in the exams. This attitude appears to have increased the demand for private tutoring, which was already a widespread phenomenon in Turkey (Tansel & Bircan, 2006). The Ministry modified the exam structure and the type of questions in 2008 by introducing the Level Determination Examination, known as SBS. Accordingly, the number of exams was increased from one to three; students were now required to take SBS at grades six, seven and eight (MONE, 2007b). According to teachers, this policy change has increased the demand for private tutoring. Indeed, all teachers and head teachers in visited schools reported increasing numbers of students at upper grades attending private tutoring institutions.

Teachers explicitly noted that they would stick to the curriculum once they were convinced that the entrance exams were no longer assessing knowledge acquisition. They acknowledged improvements in the first SBS exam in 2008, but they needed to see how the type of questions would evolve through the years. They stressed the importance of aligning the exam questions with the philosophy and objectives of the new curriculum and the pedagogical approach. The examination system is discussed as an obstacle to the implementation of SCP in some other studies as well (Yılmaz, 2009), and some argue that when policy changes in pedagogy are not supported by adequate changes in examinations, then there will be little practical impact in classrooms (Orafi & Borg, 2009).

7.5. Student responsiveness

According to teachers, the new pedagogical approach gave more responsibilities to students and expected them to be more actively involved in their learning. However, some teachers believed that students were not prepared or were not willing to take on those responsibilities. Many pupils delegated their responsibilities to parents, as in the case of project, performance and research assignments. In this context, teachers also complained about their lack of influence on students' promotion. Teachers reported that students were promoted to higher grades irrespective of their performance. According to the regulations, students could only be asked to repeat a grade if they achieved very poorly, where supplementary actions on the part of the teacher would not improve student achievement, and when students also failed their make-up exams. According to teachers, the educational policies implicitly encouraged smooth grade progression since repetition was viewed as costly for the education system. Even if all the precautionary measures failed, poorly achieving students might still be promoted to upper grades and be allowed to graduate as a way of discharging 'problem students'. Consequently, teachers remarked that they felt powerless in terms of providing external stimuli and pressure on students to achieve better and to take more initiative in their learning.

Student responsiveness is identified as one of the biggest obstacles to SCP in a study by Yılmaz (2009). The study points out that SCP necessitates a change in power relations between teachers and students. It is difficult for teachers who are used to teaching in an authoritative manner to transfer some of their authority and responsibilities to students. Likewise, it is even more difficult for students to claim and exercise such authority. Indeed, within the patriarchal Turkish society, it is not common for children to participate in discussions at home or to challenge parental decisions. Furthermore, the study suggests that students may not be ready or may not be willing to be at the centre of instruction; they may have difficulty in becoming active learners, or may prefer passive teaching methods which reduce their workload. Besides, SCP is perceived as less effective in preparation for nationwide entrance exams, therefore, students may not find such pedagogical practices meaningful or useful.

7.6. Parental attitudes towards the new pedagogy

The new curriculum highlights the importance of parental involvement in education and strives to improve their participation by assigning some key responsibilities to them, especially in out-of-school learning activities (MONE, 2009a; MONE, 2005a). Therefore, as is underscored by the Ministry as well, providing adequate information to parents has been crucial for the effective implementation of the curriculum. Nevertheless, teachers reported inadequacies in that area: although some schools arranged extensive meetings with parents at school or classroom level, in some other schools, such activities were limited. According to teachers, insufficient information generated misconceptions, confusion and even reactionary attitudes among parents. For instance, many repeatedly complained about the amount of performance and project assignments, suggesting that they were tired of 'helping out' their children.

Several parents also appeared to be concerned with the education quality: they were critical of the new curriculum for over-emphasizing competencies, and paying inadequate attention to knowledge acquisition. Parents believed that children did not learn much in the new system, especially when compared to their children who were educated in the previous system. In their opinion, too much classroom time was spent on classroom activities that were apparently enjoyable for children, yet were not so valuable in improving their knowledge. Some parents openly challenged the teachers, arguing that 'Children are empty, they do not learn', and they tried to put pressure on teachers to supplement the curriculum with additional information and to spend more time on lecturing instead of on student activities. This kind of pressure particularly came from parents who perceived education as an important social mobility mechanism, and who seemed to be concerned about the mismatches between the mainstream schooling and secondary school entrance exams.

Indeed, similar concerns motivated a parent to apply to the Danıştay (the Supreme Administrative Court in Turkey) for the abolishment of the new educational programmes in 2006. During court deliberations, she expressed her deep concerns about education quality by criticising the lack of learning and children's occupation with classroom activities (Sol, 2009). Consequently, in March 2009, Danıştay decided to abolish the education programmes for Life Knowledge (for grades one, two and three). The education programmes for Turkish at grades one and two were 'not recommended' and for grades four and five were 'recommended' on the

condition that necessary amendments were made (www.öğretmenlersitesi.com). In the history of the Republic, this was the first time that Danıştay abolished an entire educational programme. Nevertheless, the educational programmes and textbooks were instated with minor changes in the following academic year without addressing the main curricular and pedagogical concerns (see TTK, 2009a; 2009b).

It is interesting to note that the new educational programme for Life Knowledge (revised in 2009) includes a part in which the curriculum designers directly address parents. They try to convince parents that although academic success is important, their children's 'success' in 'life' is also very important. The document states that success should not be only measured by children's achievement levels in exams, and asks parents not to pressure teachers by claiming that 'We think our children are not learning much'. If parents put such pressure, the document asserts, then teachers might be inclined to focus on knowledge acquisition, and ignore the development of children's essential life skills (MONE, 2009a, p. 8). Including such a direct message to parents in the main curriculum documents implies recognition of parents as important actors to reckon with in curriculum implementation. It is of course hard to ignore them, particularly in situations where they can apply to the court and manage to abolish the educational programmes. It is remarkable that instead of carefully considering parents' concerns and revising the content and pedagogical approach in order to meet their demands, the curriculum designers chose to underline their own approach and attempt to convince parents of its merits.

7.7. Teacher resistance

Teachers also discussed 'resistance' as an important challenge in adopting the new pedagogical approach. According to them, teachers who were relatively senior in age and who had long years of experience (more than 20 years), had been resisting change by refusing to follow the textbooks or do the activities suggested in workbooks, or by continuing to lecture for the most part of the lesson time. Some schools even reported teachers retiring because of heated discussions and splits in opinions over the new curriculum, a phenomenon that was reported in some other studies as well, as a reaction to education reform (Troman, 1996). The factors underlying such resistance was often explained as perceiving change tiring and demanding, being used to old ways of doing things, and having difficulty to change old teaching styles. These teachers were also 'problematised' during interviews with policymakers,

reducing their resistance to some sort of conservative attempt to obstruct reform initiatives. The policymakers even suggested that once the more senior teachers will have left the system through retirement, the new pedagogical approach will be more widely embraced across the country.

However, the study has also revealed that resistance to certain aspects of curricular change proposals was also common among younger teachers with less than 20 years experience. For instance, they did not agree with the substantial reduction in curriculum content, as they were concerned with students' academic success, nationwide examinations, increasing demand for private tutoring and deepening educational inequalities. They expressed their resistance by supplementing the curriculum with additional resources and continuing to impart knowledge to their students at a level that they considered appropriate. Although teachers who show signs of resistance to a reform proposal are often characterised as traditional, conventional, stubborn, not having students' best interest at heart, or lacking professional knowledge (Van Veen et al., 2005), the resistance of the second group of teachers explained above illustrates the 'good sense' resistance may entail (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995), and highlights the positive rationale for it from teachers' perspectives (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). This issue will be further discussed in the next chapter.

8. Conclusion

The introduction of SCP to the official curriculum of primary schools in Turkey was accompanied by high aspirations; it was announced as a 'revolutionary move' which would transform the Turkish education system and would help to educate individuals to think creatively and solve problems, approach issues critically and challenge established authorities when needed (Güven & Iscan, 2006). Student-centred pedagogy seems to also be popular among teachers who took part in this study, as well as among other education stakeholders that were interviewed. It was perceived as the antidote to several shortcomings of the previous system, such as a high reliance on memorisation, low educational outcomes, alarmingly low student motivation, and disengagement from schooling. High hopes were raised for the potential of SCP to improve education quality and to promote intrinsic learning among students.

Nevertheless, five years into its nationwide implementation, SCP appears to be problematic in practice. Some reform-oriented practices were difficult to bring into practice (e.g. group work, discussions among students),

and some others have resulted in unintended and unforeseen practices (parental over-involvement in project, performance, and research assignments, or involvement of profit-oriented actors). Teachers discussed a wide range of issues that seemed to have interfered with their efforts to use SCP. These included poor teacher preparation, large classes, materials scarcity, the examination system, parental opposition and inadequate student responsiveness, all resonating similar challenges encountered in some other countries that have attempted to introduce SCP in primary schools (Altinyelken, 2010b; Barrett, 2007; Serbessa, 2006; Nykiel-Herbert, 2004; Yang et al., 2008). Consequently, it was possible to observe adherence as well as scepticism to SCP among teachers, selective enactment of reform oriented practices, partial resistance, and some loyalty to traditional ways.

Despite the imperfections that have arisen during implementation, teachers have reported some positive outcomes in students' affective skills, primarily in self-esteem, confidence, self-expression, and creative thinking. Some also argued that compared to previous generations, these children have become more critical, raising important questions to their teachers and parents. Nevertheless, these claims need to be substantiated in the coming years through empirical studies. Besides, it remains to be seen if teachers, headmasters, parents, governors, commanders or ministers would tolerate critical individuals. As suggested by some, for primary schools to encourage democratic values and critical thinking, one might have to start with the education of those who exert power over children (Dündar, 2004). In this respect, the Village Institutes experience also merits attention. One of the factors that contributed to their closure was the type of students that the institutes appeared to create. The graduates were increasingly viewed as too disobedient and self-confident, and too eager to object to any kind of injustice. This was perceived by the authorities as a potential threat to the traditional conservatism of the ruling elite (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998). Therefore, caution is advised if critical thinking is more than rhetoric in the revised curriculum, especially at a time when serious limitations to freedom of speech continue to persist in Turkey.

An important consequence of SCP in Turkish primary schools relates to social inequalities. The study suggests that SCP aggravates social and economic inequalities among students, schools, and regions because of unequal access to learning aids, educational resources and ICT (see also Simsek, 2006) Besides, SCP favours children whose parents are more involved and concerned with the education of their children, who are more educated, and have more cultural capital. Consequently, the reform-oriented

pedagogical practices appear to lead to the consequence of reproducing and even exacerbating the existing social and economic inequalities, rather than helping to ameliorate them. Similar implications were highlighted in other studies in different contexts (see Norquay, 1999; Kherroubi & Plaisance, 2000; Wood, 2007).

During interviews, SCP was generally viewed as a pedagogical approach on which the West uniformly agreed and which it had successfully employed. As a consequence, the informants seemed to be unaware of increasing scrutiny and critique of SCP in the West (Windschitl, 2002; Wood, 2007), and enduring debates among educationalists whether students learn better with guided forms of instruction or with minimal guidance as in the case of constructivist instructional techniques. Indeed, pedagogical approaches based on constructivism have come under increasing criticism, and several empirical studies have demonstrated that direct teaching and a guided approach to learning is more effective (Gauthier & Dembele, 2004; Kirschner et al., 2006). Mayer (2004), for instance, provides an extensive overview of such studies conducted between 1950 and the late 1980s, and suggests that in each decade, when empirical studies provided solid evidence that unguided approach did not actually work, similar approaches popped up under different names. The advocates of the new unguided approaches seemed to be unaware or uninterested in previous evidence. Consequently, this pattern has produced discovery learning, experiential learning, problem-based learning, and constructivist instructional techniques.

Another significant misconception about SCP was the widespread belief among informants that SCP is an established pedagogical approach and the norm in primary schools in European countries and in North America. Indeed, the rationale for the new pedagogical approach has been often explained by the officials and the teachers by referring to the need for harmonising the Turkish education system with the EU. On the contrary, SCP has been in retreat in parts of North America (Hatch & Honing, 2003; Norquay, 1999). In addition, it no longer enjoys its former high popularity and is no longer endorsed as the official pedagogic discourse in several the EU countries as it was in the 1960s and 1970s (see Alexander, 2008; Hartley, 2009). For instance, by the late 1990s, 'back to basics' and 'interactive whole class teaching' was adopted in schools across the UK as panacea for effective primary education, a highly trained workforce and competitive economy. The 'progressive pedagogy' was blamed for the UK's mixed showing in the international league tables of educational performance and the policymakers looked to some European countries as well as Pacific Rim countries (e.g.

Korea and Taiwan) which have been successful in international tests (Alexander, 2008). On the other hand, after much frustration with the poor achievement results of Turkish students in the same international tests (Gultekin, 2007), Turkey looked to the West, as it has done for the past three centuries, to modernise and improve its system.

Studies on SCP and other pedagogical approaches that fall within the category of discovery-based instruction have revealed that the effectiveness of such approaches has not been well established. Besides, attempts to institutionalise such programs have met with considerable challenges both in developing and industrialised nations, and the consequences of child-centred 'theory' were little realised in practice, mainly in infant schools (Hartley, 2009). The 'progressive pedagogies' appear to be inaccessible to ordinary teachers, lack operational clarity and are subject to a variety of interpretations (Gauthier & Dembele, 2004). Besides, the appropriateness of such approaches for teaching lower-order cognitive skills (e.g. basic literacy and numeracy) is contested (Heneveld & Craig, 1996) as well as their effectiveness with children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Dembele, 2005).

Therefore, instead of focusing on the 'problematisation' of the implementation process and in particular on teachers, efforts should be made to develop and apply more structured alternative approaches. While considering promising pedagogical approaches elsewhere, such efforts should also draw more inspiration from Turkish educationalists and scholars in order to develop a more culturally responsive pedagogy, which better suits the social, economic and political realities of Turkish society. As Carson (2009, p. 154) suggests:

> Agendas for educational improvement, which converge under the auspices of globalization, may offer seductive "solutions" in the form of student-centred instruction, cooperative learning, democratic classrooms and so forth. But sufficient attention cannot be given to the actual conditions of life in this shared world when we are too busy trying to implement reforms that are designed by others.

CHAPTER: 8

Teachers' principled resistance to curriculum change: A compelling case from Turkey

ABSTRACT[6]

Turkey revised its curriculum for primary schools in 2004 to overcome some of the system-wide problems and to harmonise its education system with the EU countries. In line with international trends, Turkey adopted a competency-based curriculum, student-centred pedagogy, and authentic assessment. Based on a broader study that examined recent curricular reforms in Turkey, this chapter seeks to explore teachers' views and responses to change proposals regarding curriculum content. The findings reveal that more than half of the teachers did not approve of the substantial reduction in content, as they were concerned with students' academic success, nationwide examinations, increasing demand for private tutoring, and deepening educational inequalities. The teachers argued that they supplemented the curriculum with additional resources and continued to impart knowledge to their students. The study confirms that teachers resist change proposals when they contradict with teachers' perceptions on the benefits and drawbacks of change. The chapter suggests that teacher resistance should be given due attention and the possible good sense in it should be carefully studied, instead of merely stereotyping and problematising such responses.

1. Introduction

Curriculum change is a complex process, as several factors influence how and to what extent change proposals are embraced by local actors and implemented effectively in classroom contexts (Fullan & Miles, 1992). The failure of numerous curriculum change efforts in the last four decades reminds that the teacher's role is central to the effectiveness of any attempt to reform curriculum (Kelly, 2009). Teachers do not merely assimilate the institutionalised curriculum texts, but incorporate them into their knowledge, beliefs and pre-existing teaching practices (Fullan, 2007; Lopes & DeMacedo, 2009). Based on their understanding and interpretation of imposed curriculum change, teachers respond by embracing the change,

[6] The chapter is based on:

Altinyelken, H.K. (under review). Teachers' principled resistance to curriculum change: a compelling case from Turkey.

modifying the change, ignoring, or resisting the change (Jenkins, 2000). Although several research studies have documented that teachers have rejected policy directives, and have demonstrated passive or active resistance to change proposals, teacher resistance has not gained substantial attention from researchers (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). Besides, the school change researchers often view teacher resistance as a problem, and reduce it to some sort of conservative attempt to obstruct reform initiatives. In doing so, they overlook the good sense embedded in teachers' resistant actions. Such deficit conceptualisation of teacher authority discounts teachers' understanding of what is good for students (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995) and for society in general. Furthermore, some researchers suggest that: 'not only can teacher resistance to innovation make good sense, but also, under certain conditions rarely supported by standardized reform, it can evoke a resilient, even activist, self-renewing response to change otherwise perceived to be disruptive or harmful' (Giles, 2006, p. 179).

According to Achinstein and Ogawa (2006), teachers' resistance can play a crucial role in reform initiatives, although it works against the implementation of the reform in the short run. They highlight the dearth of studies that offer instances of resistance informed by professional principles and call for additional research on how, why, and which principles may inform teacher resistance to change. Drawing on a broader study that examined curriculum implementation and pedagogical reforms in Turkey, this chapter seeks to examine to what extent teachers welcome or resist changes in curriculum content load, and how they mediate the new curriculum in their classrooms. In doing so, the chapter seeks to contribute to the growing literature on teacher agency (Lopes-Cardozo, 2010) and resistance, and to respond to Steiner-Khamsi's suggestion that we 'must direct our attention to agencies resisting, inverting, or indigenizing educational imports' (2000, p. 158). The chapter highlights the positive rationale for resisting the change proposals in relation to curriculum content and discusses teachers' motivation for implementing the curriculum in different ways other than intended by policymakers. In doing so, the chapter challenges the stereotypical and unfair characterisation of teachers who resist change proposals.

2. Teacher resistance to curriculum change

Within the literature, teacher resistance is typically defined as a desire and intention to maintain existing practices in the face of changes that they consider to be undesirable and threatening (Giles, 2006). Research shows that

resistance might occur when teachers do not understand and appreciate the need for change. In such cases, they will be more interested in maintaining the status quo. Habits also play a role, since it might be easier to continue teaching in the same ways rather than working to develop new skills and strategies. Besides, many people get a sense of security from doing things in familiar ways. Hence, teachers might fear the loss of what is familiar and comfortable, and might feel uneasy about the unknown when their well-established professional and instructional patterns are disrupted (Greenberg & Baron, 2000). Teacher resistance might also stem from a reduced inclination to commit to change in the later years of life and career (Huberman, 1989), and from motives to protect teacher status and self-interest when change proposals are perceived threatening (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996).

Furthermore, teachers or other school-level staff might demonstrate obstructionism or outright resistance when they view the change proposals as being imposed by outside actors, such as international aid organisations. In such cases, teachers may believe that reform proposals are poorly relevant to the needs, priorities and concerns of the school community (Sultana, 2008), and may be even interpreted as a form of cultural imperialism. Resistance can also take the form of collective action, as in the case of organized teacher union response (Grindle, 2004). Depending on its form and intensity, teacher resistance can generate various reactions, such as vocal opposition, outright hostility, efforts to discredit the change agents (Giles, 2006) and refusal to implement reforms.

The classical literature on educational change considers teacher resistance as a significant factor in education reform failure (Zimmerman, 2006), and reduces it to a psychological deficit in the 'resistor' or to an unwillingness to change (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). Teachers who show signs of resistance to a particular innovation or reform proposal are often characterised as traditional, conventional, stubborn, not having students' best interest at heart, passive or lacking professional knowledge (Van Veen et al., 2005). From these perspectives, teachers are viewed as actors who stand in the way of change. Their resistance is judged as conservative and considered a problem to be overcome (Rosenholtz, 1989) without considering the possibility that such actions might offer some insights to the reform initiatives (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995). Such research studies implicitly lean towards overcoming teacher resistance with short-term solutions so that external mandates can be institutionalised more effectively in schools (Giles, 2006). Suggestions for overcoming teacher resistance include involving teachers in shared decision-making, collaboration, professional development, principles

modelling, and preparedness for limiting forces of resistance (Zimmerman, 2006).

Nevertheless, some new studies point to a different perspective, where resistance is characterised as 'good sense' (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995), and highlight the positive rationale for resistance from teachers' perspectives (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Giles, 2006; Van Veen et al., 2005). Such studies provide instances of principled resistance, which involves overt or covert acts that reject instructional policies, programmes, or other efforts that contradict teachers' professional principles. These case studies challenge the dominant portrayal of teacher resistance as a conservative act, and illustrate that resistance also arises from deep commitment to one's profession rather than from psychological deficits or a basic reluctance to change (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). Likewise, declining enthusiasm of teachers for an innovation might also stem from their different perceptions of what constitutes good education and teaching, or might simply reflect different concerns and interests than highlighted in official change proposals (Van Veen, Sleegers & Van de Ven, 2005). As McLaughlin (2006, p. 215) notes:

> Implementation is not about mindless compliance to a mandate or policy directive, and that implementation pitfalls are not just cases of individual resistance, incompetence or capability. Rather, implementation involves a process of sense making that implicates an implementer's knowledge base, prior understanding, and beliefs about the best course of action.

Cuban (1992) also confirms that teachers often see their profession as a reflection of their beliefs; therefore, their beliefs directly influence how and to what extent they implement curriculum reform. Substantial research on teachers has confirmed that teachers are creative, intelligent decision-makers and have well-established beliefs about the needs of their students and their own roles in the context of education (Wildy & Wallace, 1995). Therefore, when a curriculum reform proposal contradicts teachers' beliefs on what their students need, then it is likely that the reform will be ignored or significantly modified by teachers. Studies have demonstrated that teachers chose not to implement curriculum materials that conflicted with their ideas about content and how this content should be taught (Gess-Newsome, 1999).

3. Contextual background

3.1. The rationale for curriculum change

Curriculum change was perceived to be imperative in Turkey in recent years to address concerns relating to education quality and equity, and to make the education system more responsive to the social and economic needs, such as sustaining a democratic society. Moreover, there were concerns with low student motivation for going to school or for reading and learning in general (MONE, 2005a). Furthermore, the achievement level of Turkish students in various international tests (such as TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA) was found unsatisfactory, as they performed well below international averages in these tests (Aksit, 2007). According to the Ministry, a new educational approach has also become imperative due to the new trends and demands that emerged in the global environment. The most critical dimensions of change include globalisation, the evolution of the knowledge-based economy, and the information and communication revolution. Knowledge accumulation and its application have become important determinants of national economic development and competitiveness in international markets. These major changes have influenced the content and the processes of education, and have made it necessary to reform educational thinking and practices (MONE, 2005a). Consequently, curriculum reform was considered crucial, as it was regarded as a prerequisite for sustainable development and for protecting and improving the country's competitiveness in the globalizing world. The Ministry also acknowledges that educational reforms in a variety of East Asian, North American and the EU countries have been influential. Particularly the role of the EU was prominent. As a candidate for EU membership, Turkey has been adopting related legislation and undertaking reforms for harmonisation (Aksit, 2007). In this framework, adopting a competency-based curriculum and SCP was regarded as an important step in harmonising the Turkish education system with that of the EU countries.

3.2. Curriculum 2004

The new curriculum introduced changes in content load and its organisation, pedagogical approach and assessment methods. With the new curriculum, the authorities aimed to reduce the amount of content and the number of concepts taught. Furthermore, in the new programmes a thematic approach was adopted. Although in the previous curriculum terms such as 'goal',

'objective', and 'targeted attitudes' were frequently used, in the new one reference to 'competencies' is often made (Educational Reform Initiative, 2005). The new curriculum puts special emphasis on development and reinforcement of eight core competencies, which are further defined and operationalised in each subject. Between the first and fifth grade, the development of the following eight competencies has been prioritised: critical thinking, creativity, communication, problem solving, research, using information technologies, entrepreneurship, and language skills in Turkish (MONE, 2005a).

In terms of pedagogical approach, the new curriculum adopts SCP and suggests new ways of learning and teaching. The aim is to move away from a teacher-centred or subject-centred approach to a student-centred model. The new educational programmes recommend that the majority of the lesson time should be spent on classroom activities. The role of teachers has been modified in the sense that rather than directly providing information, they are expected to facilitate, guide and supervise students' learning processes. Students' roles and responsibilities are also redefined as they are expected to assume more responsibility for their own learning, and participate in learning and teaching activities by raising questions, handling materials, developing projects, doing research, and cooperating and discussing with their classmates and teachers. The new curriculum also advocates increased use of learning and teaching materials and aims to stimulate the use of ICT. Furthermore, assessment methods have been modified and a range of alternative methods has been suggested. The new approach, called 'authentic assessment', aims to assess the learning processes of students. In addition to traditional assessment methods such as oral and written tests and quizzes, a number of alternative methods are suggested, including self-evaluation, evaluation of classmates, project and performance assignments, observation forms and student portfolios (MONE, 2009a; MONE, 2009b; MONE, 2009c; MONE, 2009d; MONE, 2005a).

3.3. Turkey's exam-oriented education system

Understanding the implementation of a competency-based curriculum in Turkey requires a closer look at how examinations are embedded in the Turkish education system. Indeed, the Turkish education system is defined as a highly exam-oriented system (İnal, 2006). Students are assessed at primary six, seven and eight through a nationwide exam. The cumulative average of these exams determines to which type of secondary school a student can be

admitted. All students completing primary education are entitled to attend secondary schools which offer four years of education (MONE, 2005b); however, competition is intense for Anatolian high schools and Science high schools due to their reputation for offering high quality education and for providing education in foreign languages, mainly in English. Likewise, admission to higher education programmes is also governed by a highly competitive nationwide exam. For instance, in 2008, around 1.6 million students registered for the university entrance exam, and only around 265,000 of them were placed at higher education institutions that offered Bachelor's degree programmes (OSYM, 2008).

Due to its exam-oriented education system, private tutoring is a widespread phenomenon in Turkey. It takes mainly three forms: the first type is one-to-one instruction by a teacher either at the teacher's or at the student's house. The second type is provided at primary schools by teachers after standard lesson hours. The third type is undertaken by profit-oriented, school-like organisations, where teachers with professional teacher training teach students in classroom settings. This type of private tutoring is the most widespread form of private tutoring in Turkey. Students attend these centres outside formal education hours. Classes are much smaller (up to 20 students), and depending on the quality of the centres, they are often equipped with better educational materials (Tansel & Bircan, 2006). The content of learning materials in these institutions is entirely determined by the content of examinations, and teaching is geared to achieving high scores in the nationwide exams. According to the statistics of the Private Tutoring Centres Association, there were 4,222 private tutoring centres in May 2009. The number of students attending these centres was 1.2 million, and the number of teachers working in these centres was around 51,000 in the same year (OZDEBIR, 2009).

4. Methods

The chapter is based on fieldwork conducted in Turkey, between February and May 2009. Pilot schools were selected as the focus of this study since teachers in these schools received more extensive in-service training, and had more prolonged contacts with the institutions involved in curriculum implementation. Therefore, it is assumed that these teachers would be more informed about and experienced with the revised curriculum. There were 25 schools that piloted the new curriculum in the 2004/05 academic year in the province of Ankara. Eight schools were randomly selected from them, while

making sure that each school was from a different district. The pilot schools were situated in middle to low-income neighbourhoods in urban centres, yet the majority appeared to be the 'best' schools offering comparatively higher quality education in their vicinity. The number of pupils registered in these schools ranged between 662 and 3,339, and except for three, all the schools offered double-shift education.

Fourteen head teachers and deputy head teachers and 69 teachers took part in this study. Except for one, all head teachers and deputy head teachers were male, yet the majority of teachers were female (57 female and 12 male). Teachers' age ranged between 30 and 64, and the average was 40. In terms of education level, five had Master's degrees, 62 were university graduates, and only two teachers were graduates of teacher training institutes. The minimum number of years of experience was nine years and the maximum was 43 years, while the average was 16. The majority of teachers had work experience in various parts of the country, both in urban and rural settings.

Two forms of data collection were used in this study: interviews and classroom observation. The analysis presented in this chapter is based on interviews with teachers and school management. In total, 69 interviews were conducted with teachers (26 at primary one, 24 at primary two, and 19 at primary five), and 14 interviews with school management. Teacher interviews were often held in classrooms after lesson observations. During a lesson hour, teachers gave individual tasks to pupils, such as reading, painting or exercises relating to the previous lesson. While they were busy, interviews were held with the teachers for the duration of the lesson, which was 40 minutes. During teacher interviews, their views and experiences were sought on a range of issues including curriculum content, pedagogical approach, textbooks, responses received from pupils and parents, and their classroom practices. Interviews were also conducted with head teachers and deputy head teachers to understand how they evaluated the new curriculum and what kind of responses they received from teachers.

In addition, 76 lessons were observed in primary one (31), primary two (28) and primary five (17). At primary one and two, classroom observations were carried out in three lessons, Turkish, Life Knowledge and Mathematics, whereas at primary five only in Social Studies. The lessons were observed at different times of the day and on all working days. In each school, between two to five working days were spent. The duration of a lesson observation was 40 minutes. Since the schools had high number of students, they had a minimum of three streams at lower grades, and in some

as many as 12 streams. In such cases, the classrooms were selected randomly. During observations, the researcher first introduced herself to the children, and answered their questions about her own background and about the research itself. Afterwards, the researcher was seated in the back and was not involved with lesson conduct. During observations, descriptive notes were taken on a number of items including classroom organisation, teacher and student activities, student participation, teacher feedback, classroom management and atmosphere.

5. Teacher views on changes in curriculum content load

Teachers unanimously believed that the previous curriculum was overloaded with information, which was sometimes outdated and redundant. High content coverage requirements resulted in rote learning, stress and overloading of students. Likewise, teachers felt pressured to complete a loaded curriculum in a prescribed period. Hence, there was a general acknowledgement among teachers that change was urgently needed. Nevertheless, teachers had different views on what kind of change was needed and whether the changes introduced by the new curriculum were indeed helping to overcome previous inadequacies or were producing new ones.

Except for two, they all agreed that content load in the revised curriculum was reduced substantially. Yet, their opinions differed on the appropriateness of these reductions. The first group (around 15 percent) approved of some of the reductions and disagreed with others. For instance, they criticised omissions in the teaching of Turkish grammar or Turkish history and culture in Social Studies lessons. The second group (around 25 percent) thought that the new curriculum was adequate for this age group, while the third group (60 percent of the sample) appeared to be very critical of the new curriculum, believing that content load was reduced too much and the development of competencies was emphasized at the expense of knowledge acquisition. The opinions of the last two groups are further elaborated below.

5.1. Welcoming change

The teachers who approved reductions in content load believed that children up to grade five did not need to acquire much information. They emphasized the role of education in behavioural and attitudinal development; therefore, an

increased focus on select competencies and skills, such as communication, oral and written expression, and confidence building was appropriate for this age group. Besides, they noted that content load is reduced at lower grades (up to grade five) since some subjects were moved to upper grades (between six and eight). Indeed, primary and middle schools were combined in 1997, and the compulsory education was increased from five to eight years (Eurydice, 2009). However, the curriculum was not revised accordingly. Therefore, there were a number of overlaps and discontinuities between lower and upper grades which the new curriculum attempted to eliminate.

These teachers suggested that lessons are now easier and more enjoyable. They believed that since students were required to learn less at a given grade, they learned better and they retained more of what they had learned. Besides, teachers maintained that the success rate had increased since the majority of pupils were able to accomplish competencies defined for their grade level. For instance, in the previous system, only a few pupils could master required competencies in Mathematics at grade one or two, and the rest struggled to follow the high-achieving children. Yet, in the revised curriculum, the number of those competencies was reduced, hence, an increased number of pupils were 'successful'. The teachers also highlighted the futility of drowning children with too much information: 'We used to teach them about countless wars in the Ottoman period or wars before that time; the number of dead, the number of wounded soldiers […] Nobody remembers those, it is not even noteworthy to remember them.'

These teachers emphasized that during in-service training, they were reminded often by their trainers that the new curriculum has dramatically altered the role of the student and the role of the teacher in classroom settings. Their role as a teacher was no longer imparting knowledge, but teaching children about the ways to seek and attain knowledge. The following statements of the teachers are illustrative in this sense.

> Information is not important. When children's intellectual capacities improve, they can and will learn themselves. What is important and essential is to teach them how to find information.

> You can find knowledge everywhere. Knowledge is abundant in our age; we are flooded with knowledge. What is critical is to have the skills to attain knowledge that one desires to have.

> If we teach students, it would result in rote learning, yet the new curriculum aims to minimise it. Instead, if we teach students how they can find information and if they do, we believe they would learn better.
>
> The dilemma is whether teachers should give information or students themselves should seek information from other educational sources. This curriculum aims promote the latter.

5.2. Opposing change

In contrast, the majority of teachers believed that with the new curriculum the amount of content load had shifted from one end of the spectrum to the other, like a pendulum swinging. Hence, they were convinced that content load had been reduced too much; it either had been moved too much to upper grades or had been dispensed with altogether. They complained that the lessons were entirely based on student activities. Indeed, the curriculum documents also clearly suggest that most of lesson time should be spent on classroom activities (MONE, 2005a). In this respect, a teacher complained:

> We keep doing all sorts of activities without even knowing what the students are supposed to learn from them. Students are active for the sake of being active. They are active since activity is cool, since it is the 'trendy thing' to do.

Such teachers believed that the quality of textbooks was very low. According to them, the textbooks provided insufficient information on subject matters, the themes were listed, but there was little content on them, or they were treated superficially. Besides, teachers reported lack of cohesion and insufficient integration among themes within the textbooks as well as problems with chronological order (see also Iflazoglu & Caydas, 2005). While explaining their views on the textbooks, teachers often used statements such as 'the books are empty', 'they are not even serious' or 'the books are a joke'. Indeed, such comments were common not only among teachers who criticised reductions in content load but among others as well. Consequently, these teachers believed that the lessons were very boring and superficial. They acknowledged that students got higher grades now, and perhaps they felt more successful and happy. Yet, they asked 'Are they really more successful?' Apparently, many of these teachers did not think so, as they seemed utterly concerned with students' academic success: 'These students are not more successful. At school, they are less challenged intellectually, so their cognitive development is also slower. This is a real pity, since the new generation of children is actually more intelligent.'

The teachers were also highly concerned about what they called 'the exam dilemma'. The nationwide entrance exams have always evaluated students on the basis of their knowledge acquisition. Therefore, teachers believed that since pupils received less information, mainstream schools fail to prepare them adequately for the exams and the demand for private tutoring increased. Such concerns were not only expressed by teachers but also even with greater concern by head teachers. One head teacher, for instance, exclaimed that:

> The government is not at peace with itself. It introduces a curriculum, which emphasizes competencies and skills and yet keeps an examination system that assesses knowledge acquisition. Then how can we implement this curriculum effectively, with the full knowledge that our students want to be admitted to good quality secondary schools, while the education we offer them does not prepare them for that goal?

Indeed, teachers noted that quite a number of parents voiced similar concerns and were alarmed by what 'little knowledge' their children were attaining at school. Depending on their economic situation, some parents reacted by sending their children to private tutoring institutions so that their children would be better prepared for the exams, and change more successfully from primary to secondary schools, and from secondary schools to universities. All teachers and head teachers in visited schools noted that increasing numbers of students at upper grades had started to attend private tutoring institutions. According to estimates provided by the school management, in some classes up to 60 percent of students attended private tutoring centres. The participation levels were lower in schools situated in low-income neighbourhoods.

The expansion of private tutoring raised a number of apprehensions among teachers. They believed that attending both mainstream schools and private tutoring institutions consumed the majority of children's time and left little room for play and interaction with peers. Parents even seemed reluctant to permit their children to participate in sports and cultural activities organised at school, since such activities were regarded as waste of time. Besides, attending both mainstream schools and private tutoring centres placed children under considerable pressure and stress, negatively influencing their social and psychological development. As explained by a teacher: 'The children are studying all the time. They do not play; they keep on reading and answering multiple-choice questions. This is very unhealthy. Their mental health is compromised.' Furthermore, private tutoring interfered with

schooling; it created disparities between children who received private tutoring and those who did not and dramatically increased the rate of absenteeism in months close to the nationwide examinations. Additionally, parents and pupils often believed that the quality of instruction was better at private tutoring centres; hence, their respect for and confidence in mainstream schools were lower.

These teachers were also concerned about the consequences of private tutoring on intensifying educational inequalities within the system. The revised curriculum seemed to aggravate existing inequalities since it increased the demand for private tutoring and reduced the chances of students succeeding in the exams without supplementary private coaching. Private tutoring institutions often charge high admission costs; hence, they are beyond the reach of households with average income. Studies have shown that households with higher incomes and higher parental educational levels invest more resources in private tutoring, and private tutoring expenditures are higher in urban areas in comparison to rural areas (Tansel & Bircan, 2006).

Teachers noted that in the previous system, there was substantial information in the books. Therefore, highly motivated, intelligent, and driven students could still succeed in the entrance exams by mastering the books, even if they did not attend any private tutoring centres. One teacher exclaimed with frustration:

> Now, the books only have titles, they are full of inquisitive questions and activities which assume that students already know the content or they would gather background information from other sources. Yet, the books are the only educational material for students in poor urban neighbourhoods or for the majority of students in rural areas.

Therefore, teachers believed that in the absence of private tutoring, students from underprivileged backgrounds are destined to fail in the exams. The quality of secondary school education has a direct impact on access to universities and employment opportunities in the labour market. Therefore, there was a strong conviction among teachers that the educational gap among income groups, and between urban and rural areas would be further accentuated, leading to an increasingly stratified society.

6. Teaching practices

Teachers responded to the inadequacy of curriculum materials by use of supplementary resources which they gathered from bookstores or from educational websites on the internet. Some also benefited from old textbooks on various subjects. Since teachers and pupils were not permitted to use books other than the new textbooks within classrooms, teachers photocopied these materials to share with pupils or fellow teachers. Thus, some critics called the revised curriculum 'photocopy-centred learning', as opposed to 'student-centred learning', which the new curriculum claims to be. For instance, according to the majority of teachers, the textbook for Turkish dealt with grammar inadequately. They argued that the omission of grammar was a major shortcoming as children were not learning their mother tongue properly and were making numerous spelling and grammatical mistakes. Hence, the majority of teachers were required to teach grammar as well.

Another example concerns topics related to the life and contributions of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkish Republic. Some teachers explicitly mentioned that the new curriculum intentionally omitted topics relating to him for ideological reasons. Therefore, they tried to add new content materials relating to Atatürk in order to counterbalance the omissions in the curriculum. Similarly, teachers were very critical of the new Social Studies textbook, as they believed that the book lacked cohesion and omitted significant information on Turkey's geography and history. Teachers responded to these perceived inadequacies by providing direct information through short presentations and in some cases requiring students to take notes. These efforts increased teacher workload and intensified demands on lesson time.

Some teachers voiced their concerns to the inspectors visiting their classrooms. However, the inspectors advised them to stick to the curriculum and not to supplement it with additional sources so that the outcomes of the curriculum can be clearly observed. If teachers complemented the curriculum, the inspectors argued, the curriculum might then appear perfect. Yet these teachers were not convinced, in the belief that they must not lose a whole generation of students for the sake of such an experimental learning experience.

When teachers' statements and claims were compared with their practices observed during lesson observations, a slightly different picture emerged. In the presence of a researcher, teachers seemed to be more concerned with demonstrating that they were capable of practising

recommended teaching and learning methods in the new curriculum. Therefore, more than half of the teachers emphasized student talk and activity during lesson observations. This was more discernable at grade five, during Social Studies lessons. Teachers frequently asked questions and gave opportunities to as many pupils as possible. In some other lessons, children had individual or group presentations on a topic that they had been asked to prepare earlier. Therefore, in most of the cases, teachers briefly introduced the topics and explained some of the concepts that came up during question and answer dialogues. Nevertheless, since the vast majority of teachers were observed only once, lesson observations cannot be taken as a good indicator of how and what teachers teach in an entire semester. Besides, presence of a researcher obviously altered classroom dynamics for both teachers and pupils.

Not only teachers who were critical of the changes in the curriculum content, but also teachers who had a positive view on the changes, appeared to supplement the curriculum with additional knowledge for a variety of reasons. Their main motives are outlined below.

7. Teacher motives for supplementing the curriculum

7.1. The 'emptiness' of the books

Several teachers noted that effective implementation of the revised curriculum made it necessary to provide additional information to pupils. For instance, the activities in the student workbook assumed that children had background knowledge on the themes studied. However, the books did not provide that kind of information; they only made reference to the themes and introduced them in a rather superficial and casual way. Hence, teachers felt the need to provide a good introduction to the topics. Otherwise pupils either were not able to carry out the activities at all or they did not learn much.

7.2. The myth of research assignments

The curriculum advises exploratory work and research to be conducted by students so that they would be prepared for lessons and their research skills in general would be enhanced. However, according to many teachers, in reality this did not always work in the ways intended by the policymakers. Very often, when children were given research assignments, they delegated the assignments to their parents or to some other significant person in their life who could do the research and prepare a printout. Another common practice

was to visit stationery shops that had internet; children would shortly explain the topic to shopkeepers who would do a quick Google search and hand printouts of the search results to them. This practice became so common that stationery shops had advertisements in their windows, informing prospective clients that they did research assignments for primary school children. Parents, particularly in low-income neighbourhoods, were increasingly annoyed by the financial implications of such practices. Teachers noted with much frustration that children did not even read these printouts before coming to class. They suggested that only a few pupils did research and read the findings. Consequently, the flawed result of providing research assignments forced several teachers to provide more direct information to their pupils.

7.3. Preparing students for nationwide exams

The majority of teachers were teaching children from low socio-economic backgrounds. Teachers seemed very conscious of their student's educational disadvantages, and as explained above, they believed that the revised curriculum was further exacerbating their disadvantages. Unlike children from middle to upper-income groups, their pupils had fewer opportunities to supplement their knowledge at good quality private tutoring institutions. Therefore, some of the teachers supplemented the curriculum content in order to better equip their students for the exams. They explicitly noted that they would stick to the curriculum once they were convinced that the entrance exams were no longer assessing knowledge acquisition. They acknowledged improvements in the first SBS exam in 2008, but they needed to see how the type of questions would evolve throughout the years. They stressed the importance of aligning the exam questions with the philosophy and objectives of the new curriculum.

Moreover, teacher concerns about entrance exams were not only motivated by personal integrity or accountability to their pupils and parents, but were also closely related to their own performance as a teacher and success of the school. For instance, perceptions of a school's success are very much dependent on the number of its graduates who are admitted to prestigious secondary schools. Therefore, even teachers who believed that reduction in content load was appropriate tended to provide their pupils with extra-curriculum content due to pressures arising from competition among teachers and schools.

7.4. Strengthening national identity

Some believed that in the past children learned a great deal about their country, about its history, geography, and people. Yet now students hear about these topics very superficially and they do not even learn much about regions besides their own. As a result, some teachers believed that the new generation of students tended to have a more diffuse sense of national identity. Efforts to teach more history, particularly the history of the Republic and the life of Atatürk seemed to be motivated by such concerns. It was possible to find similar concerns among parents as well; indeed, one parent applied to the court for the cancellation of new education programmes on the grounds that religious influences were strong in the textbooks. In March 2009, Danistay, the supreme administrative court in Turkey, decided that the education programmes for Life Knowledge (for grades one, two and three) were poor in terms of stimulating a democratic culture and love for one's nation; therefore, the programmes were abolished. Likewise, the education programmes for Turkish at grades one and two were considered to be 'not recommended', and for grades four and five, they were 'recommended' on the condition that necessary amendments would be made (www.öğretmenlersitesi.com).

7.5. Old habits

Some teachers also mentioned that teachers who were relatively senior in age and who had many years of experience (more than 20 years) continued with extensive lecturing because they perceived change as tiring and demanding, they were used to old ways of doing, and had difficulty to change their traditional teaching styles. These teachers were also 'problematised' during interviews with policymakers, suggesting that once they have left the system through retirement, the new curriculum will be more broadly embraced by teachers. Indeed, some of the more experienced teachers explicitly noted that they continued to transmit information out of old habit. That was what they had been doing for many years and they believed that was real teaching. Otherwise, they thought they were not doing their job properly, betraying their own personal principles and the standards of their profession.

8. Conclusion

The findings revealed that the teachers who participated in this study implemented the new curriculum for primary schools in accordance with their beliefs on the benefits and costs of change. The majority of teachers did not approve of the substantial reductions in content load due to concerns with regard to students' academic success (also identified in Korkmaz, 2008), nationwide examinations, increasing demand for private tutoring, deepening educational inequalities, and development of a diffuse sense of national identity among new generations. Therefore, these teachers tended to supplement the curriculum with additional information gathered from other educational resources and they continued to impart knowledge at a level that they believed was adequate.

Moreover, the study has shown that when teachers agreed with the reduction in content load, some of them still chose to impart more knowledge than recommended by the curriculum due to competing beliefs and pressures. In this case, concerns about achievement levels of students at nationwide exams, and success and status of teachers and schools were significant. Therefore, the study challenges the stereotypical and unfair characterisation of teachers who resist change proposals, and argues that teachers demonstrate principled resistance when they perceive curriculum change proposals as detrimental to their students and to the society in general (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Gitlin & Margonis, 1995). In addition, the study suggests that teacher resistance should not be viewed as a problem since it provides opportunities for policymakers to reflect on the reform proposals and to learn from teacher responses. As Fullan (2007) suggests, change is not necessarily progress; therefore, resistance to change may be the most appropriate response when there is disagreement about an innovation.

A number of other conclusions can be drawn from the study. First, the study suggests that some of the assumptions made in the revised curriculum are not in line with student background and the realities of the Turkish education system. For instance, the curriculum states that in the contemporary world, the future of individuals and societies is dependent on competencies to access, use, and produce knowledge (MONE, 2009c; MONE, 2005a). Research assignments were designed as an important tool to improve students' competencies to access and retrieve relevant information, and to encourage self-directed learning. However, in reality it did not work according to the expectations, as students delegated their responsibility to others. Besides, research assignments assume that children have access to

internet at home or in their neighbourhoods, or have access to written educational resources. These assumptions are in contradiction with the realities of many households that do not have computers, an adequate amount of reference books, or financial resources for frequent visits to internet cafés. Besides, research assignments require parental involvement, yet parents do not always have time, nor the educational background and commitment to help their children.

Second, some of the principles of the curriculum are in contradiction with the highly exam-oriented education system in Turkey. The curriculum puts emphasis on development of skills and competencies, yet the education system retains a highly competitive exam structure. Substantial reduction in textbook content seems to lessen schools' capacity to prepare their students adequately for the exams. As a result, parental confidence and respect for mainstream public schools appears to suffer. In addition, the demand for private tutoring has increased and this has led to a de facto privatisation of the education system as some critics argue. Consequently, private tutoring in Turkey maintains and exacerbates social inequalities and stratification, just as it does in several other countries where private tutoring continues to be a widespread phenomenon, such as Hong Kong, China, Japan, Singapore and Romania (Bray, 2005).

Third, the study suggests that the revised curriculum might aggravate social inequalities, since children who have better access to cultural, economic, and social resources are placed in an advantageous position. Therefore, the new curriculum appears to have the consequence of reproducing or even aggravating existing social and economic inequalities rather than helping to ameliorate them. Such concerns were also reported in other contexts. For instance, the authorities have attempted to introduce a competency-based curriculum in China. However, these reforms have raised serious equity issues there, as examination-oriented education has long been deeply embedded in Chinese culture and society (Dello-Iacovo, 2009).

Finally, the study points out a number of misconceptions regarding teaching and learning. It seems that some advocates of the new curriculum, as well as some teachers, perceive these two activities almost as dichotomies; then one might ask 'what is teaching if not bringing about learning?' (Alexander, 2008, p.73). In some of the curricular changes in the past decade, 'knowledge' is almost seen as diametrically opposed to 'skills' or 'competencies' (Alexander, 2008). Unfortunately, such a dichotomous understanding seemed to be strong among some of the Turkish teachers who participated in this study. There is no doubt that education has important roles

to play in developing select competencies and skills of students, but such a role should not be assumed to the detriment of education's other important objectives, that of improving students' understanding and knowledge base. Young (2009) also points to the dangers of 'emptying the content' which he identifies as a trend in the educational policies of many countries. He argues that:

> [...] an empty and rhetorical notion of knowledge and the increasing tendency to blur distinctions between the production of knowledge and its acquisition and between knowledge and skills – the latter unlike the former being something measurable and targetable – becomes a way of denying a distinct 'voice' for knowledge in education. Furthermore, excluding such a 'voice' from educational policy most disadvantages those learners (and whole societies, in the case of developing countries), who are already disadvantaged by circumstances beyond the school (Young, 2009, p. 195).

CHAPTER: 9

Conclusion: A converging pedagogy in the developing world?[7]

In this final chapter, the main findings of the research will be recapitulated and comparative analysis between the two countries will be made by focusing on five aspects: the rationale and mechanisms of educational transfer, teachers' views on the new pedagogical approaches, their classroom practices, perceived outcomes, and implementation challenges. While doing so, this section will attempt to respond to the research questions defined in the introductory chapter. Furthermore, the implications of the major findings will be considered with regard to theory and policy on educational reforms, teachers, and pedagogy, and some directions will be suggested for further research on relevant topics.

1. Major findings

1.1. Educational transfer: Why and how are Western pedagogies imported?

In the past two decades, pedagogical reforms based on the rhetoric of constructivism have featured as a recurrent agenda in the global education reform discourse. A range of countries with diverse educational histories, cultures, and structures have initiated reforms to modify classroom practices according to the principles of constructivism. Uganda and Turkey were no exceptions to this trend, as they also adopted 'progressive pedagogies' in the mid-2000s. In both countries, the new pedagogies were imported within the framework of improving education quality, and the pedagogical renewal constituted an integral part of broader curriculum review and change processes. While adopting the 'progressive pedagogies', both countries have also initiated changes in curriculum content and student assessment. In Uganda, the content has been reorganised according to a number of thematic areas, and in Turkey, the content load has been reduced and a thematic

[7] The chapter is based on:

H.K.Altinyelken (forthcoming). A converging pedagogy in the developing world? Insights from Uganda and Turkey. In A. Verger, M. Novelli & H.K. Altinyelken (Eds.), *The global governance of education in low-income countries: agendas, issues and programmes*.

approach has been considered in content organisation. Both curricula have adopted a 'competence-based' approach as opposed to the traditional knowledge-based curriculum approach, and have emphasized the development of select competencies and skills. In terms of student assessment, both countries attempted to move beyond testing, and adopted continuous assessment, which is framed as authentic assessment in Turkey.

Before presenting the main findings on how 'global' policies on curriculum are formulated and re-contextualised in Ugandan and Turkish contexts, I would like to point to Ball's assertion that education policies that emanate from the 'new orthodoxy' are rarely translated into policy texts or practice in direct or pristine form (Ball, 1998). He argues that:

> National policy making is inevitably a process of bricolage: a matter of borrowing and copying bits and pieces of ideas from elsewhere, drawing upon and amending locally tried and tested approaches, cannibalising theories, research, trends and fashions and not infrequently flailing around for anything at all that looks as though it might work. Most policies are ramshackle, compromise, hit and miss affairs, that are reworked, tinkered with, nuanced and inflected through complex processes of influence, text production, dissemination and, ultimately, re-creation in contexts of practice (Ball, 1998, p. 126).

1.1.1. The rationale

The official account (as interpreted from curriculum documents, policy statements and interviews with policymakers) on why the new pedagogies are adopted point to a dissatisfaction with student learning achievements, the inefficiency of the education system, and the urge to re-structure the pedagogical practices in line with the imperatives of the knowledge-based economy in which 'we now live in, or are moving toward' (Robertson, 2007, p. 2). In Uganda, the primary concern is related to the very low achievement levels in literacy and numeracy (UNEB, 2005), and the inefficiencies of the system as indicated by high dropout and repetition rates (Read & Enyutu, 2005). Child-centred pedagogy appears to have been embraced as an antidote to the traditional teaching with the hope that learning achievements and competencies will consequently improve, particularly in literacy and numeracy. A literate and numerate population is viewed as critical to economic growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction. In Turkey, on the other hand, globalisation, the knowledge-based economy, the EU membership process and the harmonisation with the EU education system, the changing social and economic needs of Turkish society, concerns with low

student motivation, and disappointments with the results of Turkish pupils in international tests (particularly PISA) are highlighted as important motives. The new pedagogies that are based on constructivist principles are considered to be 'progressive', 'modern', and 'advanced', and viewed as the only alternative to the traditional teaching practices in both countries.

The Ugandan discourse emphasizes the importance of changing pedagogy to improve learning achievements, thereby reducing poverty and accelerating economic growth. Within the context of South Africa and Namibia, Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008, p. 8) suggest that:

> […] learner-centred education is considered the vehicle to drive societies and economies from mainly agricultural bases into modern and knowledge-based societies with the attendant economic benefits. Advised and supported by multilateral organisations advocating the need for different and better learning outcomes, learner-centred education is accepted as the pedagogical ideal to facilitate this change.

The Ugandan case also reflects such rationales, as well as outside influences. The Turkish discourse, on the other hand, more directly stresses the importance of reforming pedagogical practices to better respond to the labour market (both domestic and international) and to produce the type of human capital demanded by the employers. In this respect, frequent references are made to the knowledge-based economy (and knowledge as a factor of production) and the importance of life-long learning. By changing the pedagogy, policymakers believed that the education system would stimulate economic growth, improve the competitiveness of the Turkish economy, and contribute to better integration with global markets. In this respect, the role of TÜSİAD (which consists of the largest holding companies and the most prominent industrial entrepreneurs), or the role of the 'market' in general, in changing the curriculum and the pedagogy has been strong (see also Akkaymak, 2010).

In both countries, the discourses on the rationale for a new pedagogy reflect the primacy of economic considerations. This does not come as a surprise, since such considerations have come to characterise many of the education policies initiated in different parts of the world. Levin explains that in the past three decades:

> The need for change in education is largely cast in economic terms and particularly in relation to the preparation of a workforce and competition with other countries. Education is described as being a key component of countries' ability to improve or often even to maintain their economic welfare [...] Economic rationales are not, to be sure, the only reasons being advanced today

> for educational reform. Equity goals are still cited and so is individual social mobility, but the balance has clearly changed in the direction of an economic emphasis (Levin, 1998, p. 131-132).

1.1.2. Mechanisms

The educational transfer process appears to involve distinct forces and mechanisms in the case study countries, involving a combination of the global and the local. The interplay of different factors in both cases gives credit to different theories that attempt to explain the relationship between globalisation and educational transfer, yet to different degrees. I personally do not think that the diffusion of pedagogical approaches associated with constructivism can be explained by their 'superiority' in terms of improving learning achievements or facilitating the development of select competencies. The outcomes of such pedagogies are contested, or the results are viewed as inconclusive in many developed countries where these pedagogies had a better chance of being implemented because of resource availability, smaller class sizes, and improved teacher training (Alexander, 2001; Gauthier & Dembele, 2004; Kirschner, Sweller & Clark, 2006; Mayer, 2004; UNESCO, 2005). However, the perceptions and the assumptions linking 'progressive pedagogies' with improved student learning and better preparation of workers for the contemporary labour markets appear to have strongly influenced education policymakers to import CCP to Uganda and SCP to Turkey.

In this sense, the world culture theory partly helps to explain why the 'progressive pedagogies' have been imported in several developing countries. However, this theory fails to recognise the role of particular international actors who have been involved in diffusing such pedagogies in different parts of the world, such as bilateral organisations (e.g DANIDA and USAID), international organisations (e.g. The World Bank and UNICEF), or other agencies (e.g. the Aga Khan Foundation and some international NGOs) which had different motives and agendas in promoting 'progressive pedagogies'. Therefore, the diffusion cannot only be explained by how policymakers perceived the links to be between pedagogy and a range of outcomes desired by them, or by their voluntary actions to import 'progressive pedagogies'. The phenomenon is much more complicated than that. The world system theory, particularly Tabulawa's ideas (Tabulawa, 2003) capture some of the complexities ignored by the world culture theory, as it points to power issues and to the 'hidden' agenda of those actors involved in diffusing 'progressive pedagogies'. Yet, this theory overemphasizes the role of international actors and discounts the agency of

the recipient countries, and overstates imposition and coercion as policy transfer mechanisms.

I believe Steiner-Khamsi's notions of 'politics of education transfer' and 'economics of education transfer' better explain the complexity of education policy transfer as they highlight both the role of international and local actors and the interplay between the two, and point to a multiplicity of transfer mechanisms (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010; 2006; 2002; Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000). If we look at the cases of Uganda and Turkey from these perspectives, we observe that Uganda exemplifies a country where the 'economics of education transfer' has been critical. The Ugandan education system is highly dependent on external assistance, as more than half of the budget is paid for by donors (DGIS, 2003). This in turn creates 'a situation in which "voluntary policy transfer" is enmeshed with "coercive policy transfer"' (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p.6). Donor aid is often accompanied by lending of reform ideas, and even with the wholesale transfer of a comprehensive reform package formulated by the lender (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006). In other words:

> Policy borrowing in poor countries is to the education sector what structural adjustment, poverty alleviation, and good governance are to the public sector at large: a condition for receiving aid. As a requirement for receiving grants or loans at the programmatic level, policy borrowing in developing countries is coercive and unidirectional (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010, p.324).

In Uganda, USAID and the Aga Khan Foundation have been actively involved in diffusing and institutionalising 'progressive pedagogies' in primary schools. For this purpose, they have developed and implemented projects in primary schools and teacher training institutes in different parts of the country. According to some accounts, they have been very influential during the curriculum change process and in endorsing CCP as the official pedagogical approach in the new curriculum.

The case of Turkey is interesting in terms of understanding both the politics and economics of educational transfer. The restructuring of the Turkish economy in line with neoliberalism was initiated in the 1980s, and the influence of such policies was also felt in the education system. However, the accommodation of the content of primary curriculum to the market was achieved with Curriculum 2004. The curriculum change was initiated in the two years after the AKP came to power, so the adoption of SCP coincides with a significant political change in Turkey. The political change is noteworthy in the sense that the AKP is the only party with Islamist roots that

came to power in the history of the Republic. They had their own distinct vision of Turkish society and the education system. Even before coming to power, they announced that they would initiate wide-ranging structural changes to the education system, including changing the curriculum for primary schools (AKP, 2001). Since they were able to form a single party government, they also had the political power to initiate fundamental changes (Akkaymak, 2010).

In addition, accession to the EU has been another strong political motive in Turkey. In this sense, 'harmonisation' as a mechanism of policy transfer (Dale, 1999) appears to have been influential in the adoption of SCP. Furthermore, the role of TÜSİAD deserves attention. TÜSİAD has published a number of reports on education since the 1990s, urging the governments to initiate major changes in the education system. Their reports have often formulated the role of education in economic terms, and suggested that the education system's primary responsibility is to produce an adequate workforce for the labour market. As early as in their 1990 report, SCP was highlighted as the pedagogical model to be adopted, since it was considered to facilitate learning to learn and to develop important skills such as problem solving, team-work, research, and entrepreneurship (TÜSİAD, 1990).

Kaplan (2006) argues that interest groups in Turkey, including religious nationalists, neoliberal industrialists, and the military, compete with each other in promoting their particular worldviews through school curricula. It appears that the neoliberal industrialists (together with the more religiously oriented groups, such as several members of the ruling party) have succeeded in putting their notions of education in Curriculum 2004, since it heavily emphasizes the neoliberal discourse, and focuses on leading students to adapt and develop new skills that the business world desires (Akkaymak, 2010).

The economics of policy transfer is also highly relevant in the Turkish case as well, since the curriculum review was funded by the EU. The funding raised questions among teachers, as they enquired whether the funding was accompanied by lending of educational ideas. Such a possibility was strongly refuted by policymakers, yet considered seriously by some of the teachers, head teachers and other stakeholders who shared their opinions on this topic. Indeed, in both countries, policymakers appeared rather defensive about any implications of 'outside imposition', as they particularly stressed that they voluntarily imported the new pedagogies from the West. In Turkey, the 'enchantment' with the West, the three-hundred year tradition of policy borrowing from Western countries, and the status of the EU countries

as ‘reference societies’ (Schriewer & Martinez, 2004) have also contributed to educational borrowing on pedagogy.

1.1.3. Main features of the new pedagogies

In Uganda, the pedagogical approach is labelled CCP in the new curriculum, as it is in several other sub-Saharan African countries. The Turkish curriculum, however, refers to the imported pedagogical approach as SCP. Unlike in Uganda, the Turkish curriculum also makes frequent references to constructivism as a learning theory, and makes bipolar comparisons between constructivism and behaviourism. Despite their different characterisations, Uganda’s CCP and Turkey’s SCP have several common features. The differences between the two are more pronounced in terms of emphasis given to various aspects of the pedagogical approach.

The Ugandan curriculum interprets CCP as: interaction among children, and between children and their teacher; emphasizing classroom activities that enable children to handle materials and learn by doing; encouraging increased use of learning and teaching materials during lessons; advising organising lessons around the interests, concerns and abilities of children; and giving them the opportunity to influence the direction of the lessons. Students’ active participation in lessons, student talk, and group and pair work are emphasized. Learning by way of exploration, observation, experimenting, and practising are highlighted. In the Turkish curriculum, SCP is also defined in very similar lines as student participation, classroom activities, the use of learning aids, hands-on-learning, and cooperative learning. Curriculum documents in both countries clearly suggest that the majority of lesson time should be spent on classroom activities. The four discernable differences with the Turkish case regard the emphasis in Turkey on research activities, project-based learning (project and performance assignments), the use of ICT in classrooms, and integration of learning activities in and outside school, which anticipates and requires parents’ increased involvement in education.

In both countries, the curriculum focuses on the development of select competencies, and it is believed that the new pedagogies would significantly help to improve them. The Ugandan curriculum focuses on the development of six life skills, which should occur in every theme and sub-theme. They include effective communication, critical thinking, decision-making, creative thinking, problem solving and self-esteem (NCDC, 2006b). The Turkish curriculum, on the other hand, prioritises the development of

eight competencies: critical thinking, creativity, communication, problem solving, research, using information technologies, entrepreneurship, and language skills in Turkish (MONE, 2005a). The commonalities among the selected competencies are striking, as four (out of six) competencies prioritised in the Ugandan curriculum are also prioritised in the new Turkish curriculum, i.e. critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking and effective communication skills. In addition, decision-making and self-esteem, two other competencies targeted by the Ugandan curriculum are also highlighted throughout revised educational programmes in Turkey. In both countries, the 'progressive pedagogies' also aim at stimulating team work, cooperation and dialogue.

These findings appear to support the convergence theory at the level of policy. The similarities in curriculum content (e.g. thematic organisation and the focus on the development of select competencies), student evaluation (e.g. introduction of alternative assessment methods that evaluate learning processes), and pedagogical approach (e.g. emphasis on classroom activities, student participation, cooperation and hands-on-learning) give credit to the world culture theorists (John Meyer and his colleagues at Stanford University) (Ramirez, 2003). Does this evidence then point to a single global curriculum model or pedagogical approach? Indeed, it indicates the prevalence of pedagogical reforms couched in the rhetoric of constructivism and convergence around how education policies are formulated in this area. However, since official curriculum and mediated curriculum tend to differ substantially, it cannot be taken as an evidence of convergence at the level of practice. Furthermore, it is also important to note that there are some counter-currents to these trends, such as 'back to basics' reform movements that emphasize the transmission of a fixed curriculum rather than student inquiry (Anderson-Levitt, 2003).

1.2. Teachers' views: are the new pedagogies desirable?

When asked about the new pedagogical approaches proposed by the new curricula, the Ugandan and the Turkish teachers have expressed opinions that shared a lot of common features. These discussions centred on the redefined roles of teachers and students in learning processes and the main attributes that characterised the proposed pedagogies. In both countries, teachers commented that the new pedagogical approaches are aimed at moving the 'centre' of teaching and learning processes away from teachers and closer to students. The terminology used in curriculum documents or in discourses

have also conveyed this message explicitly: the 'old' was labelled as 'teacher-centred' and the new as 'child-centred' or 'student-centred'.

Teachers, in general, believed that the new pedagogical approaches attempt to re-define their role in education, and have wide-ranging implications for their profession as they are now expected to play 'facilitating' roles within classrooms. Their primary role is no longer conveying knowledge but mediating students' learning processes, and providing adequate guidance and support to these supposedly 'autonomous learners' as they embark on constructing their knowledge. The students' role has become critical to educational processes as they are expected to assume much more responsibility in their learning and to be active in classroom processes. More importantly, it is now students who are required to direct learning (e.g. their interests, needs, learning styles, capacities, motivation and readiness), not teachers. This could be seen as a *quiet revolution* within classrooms, an attempt to change the century-old dynamics between teachers and primary school pupils, and an effort to give the 'seat of power' in classrooms to its 'rightful' owners – the children.

Since the 'old' was critiqued and discredited in an effort to glorify and legitimise the 'new', having teachers at the 'centre' was increasingly communicated as authoritarian, uncaring, inefficient, and morally wrong. Several teachers gave credit to this discourse both in Turkey and Uganda, arguing that education is about children, so they are the legitimate 'centres' of schooling; increased student activism in learning processes would lead to greater learning achievements and better outcomes in competencies and skills; and higher student involvement would improve motivation, concentration and attendance. A pedagogical approach based on the transmission model has been attacked in both countries to the extent that some Turkish teachers appeared uncomfortable during interviews when they disclosed that they occasionally lectured in their classes. It almost sounded as if they were confessing some sort of crime. Yet, as Alexander (2008, p. 79) insists: 'Transmission teaching is ubiquitous [...] because there are undoubtedly circumstances in which the transmission of information and skill is a defensible objective, in any context.'

Nevertheless, some teachers were critical of the dominant discourse. Only one teacher in Uganda expressed resentment with CCP and with the tendency to perceive everything from the perspective of the child. Likewise, some Turkish teachers expressed strong resentment towards the choice of words: by labelling the new approach as student-centred and the previous one as teacher-centred, the policy discourse mistakenly suggests that the previous

system was not focused on the education of children, as if it were more about teachers rather than students. Indeed, a polarised understanding of pedagogy was prevalent in both countries, not only among teachers but also among other key stakeholders who participated in this study. Such an approach appeared to have forced teachers to align with either the 'old' teacher-centred (or subject-centred) approach, or with the 'new' child-/student-centred approach. Only very few dared to suggest that educationalists could instead move beyond such a dichotomous perspective.

Teachers' definitions of the main attributes of the reformed pedagogies had some commonalities as well as divergences. In Uganda, teachers associated CCP with grouping children, more student talk and activity during lessons, and an increased use of learning aids. The Turkish teachers also made reference to student participation (as more talk and a range of other classroom activities) and increased use of learning and teaching materials, but grouping as a seating arrangement did not feature as an attribute of SCP since it was hardly ever done. The Turkish teachers also emphasized hands-on learning, and project, performance, and research assignments as highlights of SCP.

These differences between Ugandan and Turkish teachers appear to emerge from two factors: the ways in which the reformed pedagogies are defined and the aspects that are accentuated in the official curricular documents, and the differences that emerged in the implementation process. For instance, reference to the importance of research is made in both Ugandan and Turkish curricular documents (NCDC 2006b; MONE, 2005a), but in the Turkish case it is emphasized more, and during the implementation phase it also emerged as one of the highlights of SCP. On the other hand, although grouping is also advised in both sets of curricular documents, the emphasis was stronger in the Ugandan case and the teachers also showed a greater interest in grouping in their implementation practices. The majority of Turkish teachers, however, preferred to ignore and dismiss this strategy, and only selectively used it during some assignments. In other words, teachers' conceptualisations and definitions of the new pedagogical approaches were based not only on how the pedagogies are defined in curricular documents but also on the common features that emerged during implementation.

In both countries, although a number of serious concerns were raised with regard to various components of the revised curricula (such as the increased shift to competencies at the expense of knowledge, or the inadequacy of the assessment system), the proposed pedagogical approaches enjoyed a high level of receptiveness. In Uganda, CCP was viewed as the

'modern' and 'progressive' pedagogical approach. Except for one, none of the teachers appeared to be critical of the pedagogical approach and they appeared to shy away from questioning its underlying assumptions and main principles. It was simply perceived as a much more 'superior' pedagogical approach to traditional teaching. The only concern for them was adopting CCP in Ugandan classrooms. Apparently, their classrooms were very different from classrooms where CCP was perceived to originate and widely used in Western societies. Since class sizes and resource availability were seen as central to CCP, the feasibility of effectively implementing this pedagogy in Ugandan classrooms appeared questionable, since these classrooms were characterised by high student numbers and resource scarcity. In short, the Ugandan teachers did not question the desirability or the appropriateness of the new pedagogical approach, and appeared to welcome it as example of Western 'best practice', but were overwhelmed by its implementation.

Likewise, SCP was perceived as the more 'advanced' and 'progressive' pedagogical approach by the majority of Turkish teachers. Some even explicitly noted that 'no one could be against it as no one can openly oppose development and improvement'. Furthermore, like Ugandan teachers, SCP was perceived by many as the only alternative to the traditional teaching methods which were attacked by policymakers, teachers, and parents alike for being ineffective and boring. Some earlier studies have also identified overwhelmingly affirmative opinions and attitudes among Turkish teachers towards constructivism (Çınar et al., 2006; Işıkoğlu & Baştürk, 2007). Such a positive attitude was mainly based on the belief that SCP was the dominant pedagogical approach in schools across Western Europe. The West was viewed as advanced, developed, rich, and successful. Implicit assumptions were made about the link between the development level of Europe and school pedagogy. Although research studies have not established a clear link between economic development and teaching and learning approaches (Alexander, 2008), the teachers as well as policymakers believed that SCP could potentially stimulate economic development and raise the competitiveness of the Turkish economy. Adopting a Western 'best practice' was also considered logical and practical. After all, Turkey has often turned to the West in the past three centuries to modernise and reform its military, legal, economic, political, or educational system (Ulusoy, 2009). Therefore, teachers' accounts in both countries suggest that similar to policymakers, the majority of teachers viewed the West as the 'reference society' (Schriewer &

Martinez, 2004). Hence, the pedagogical approach the Westerners might be using had credibility, legitimacy, and enjoyed a certain reputation.

Nevertheless, Turkish teachers' accounts are not so uniform, as strong criticism was also voiced by them. Indeed, some teachers expressed explicit resentment at and frustration with trying out foreign ideas. These teachers believed that educational ideas might work well in the countries of origin, but might fail when they were transplanted into new contexts. In this respect, teachers also pointed out that Turkish society is very different from Western European societies, with respect to its vast socio-economic differences between the urban and rural citizens, the competitiveness of the education system, the hierarchical nature of relationships that involve an element of authority, the dynamics of parent-child relationships, the status attached to having a university degree, parental involvement in education, and so on.

Some teachers also believed that the new approach was not completely 'voluntarily' embraced by policymakers on the rationale of effective and better learning. They made reference to the EU funding of the project and to the EU harmonisation process which obliges Turkey to adopt some legislation and a number of reforms in various sectors. Hence, these teachers viewed SCP as a soft 'imposition' by the West, and asked:

> I wonder whether they are really using this pedagogical approach in their own schools. I doubt that. The West tends to dump their obsolete systems or technologies on us or whatever they find undesirable in their own countries, such as their cement factories.

A few other teachers even suggested that SCP could be viewed as a powerful tool of imperialism, as it 'effectively' dilutes the education system and undermines the quality of education, creating 'ignorant' masses who are equipped with some competencies in order to work dutifully for manufacturing companies.

Furthermore, some teachers argued that teaching and learning is not significantly different in the new system. They believed that good teachers were already practising elements of SCP, as they were creating opportunities for student participation and were using learning aids. They objected to the efforts to demarcate the 'old' and the 'new' pedagogical approaches and perceive them as complete polar opposites. They asked 'What we did in the past, what we used to do all those years, was it all wrong?' Furthermore, a few teachers argued that a single pedagogical approach should not be imposed on teachers, that they should be free to apply different approaches.

These teachers argued for a combination of direct teaching and SCP, selectively applied according to student needs and the particularities of subjects. In sum, many Turkish teachers also confirmed the desirability of importing a pedagogy from the West, but some also appeared highly critical, clearly stating that it is not desirable, not only because it is imported from a context that is very different from Turkey, but also because the pedagogy itself had certain shortcomings.

1.3. Classroom practices: a case for convergence or divergence?

No other field in educational research than comparative education is more engaged and predisposed to analyse globalisation processes, and tendencies in global convergence or divergence of education policies and practices (Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000). Most comparativists are interested in examining the international convergence of educational systems, and for this purpose they use their studies on education transfer to explain why and how educational systems in diverse contexts are becoming increasingly comparable (Steiner-Khamsi, 2000). Other recent research on education policy transfer, however, has stressed that borrowed ideas or practices are modified, indigenised or resisted as they are implemented in the recipient countries (Schriewer, 2000; Philips & Ochs, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006). In other words, since imported education policies are locally mediated and re-contextualised through multiple processes (Dale, 1999), the consequences of transfer remains unpredictable (Beech, 2006). Dale (1999) refers to an increasing recognition that national differences in educational practices remain, despite the spread of globalisation, questioning the arguments about greater homogeneity of policy or practice in education, or tendencies towards convergence.

When we look at how the new pedagogical approaches imported from the West are re-contextualised and locally adapted in Uganda and Turkey, we observe convergence at a superficial level around new rituals and practices that have emerged or have been reinforced as a result of the new pedagogies, including increased efforts to use learning aids, or to involve and activate children during lessons. However, the findings point more strongly to the persistence of divergences across nations. Divergence was not only manifest when the implementation profiles of the two countries were compared, but was also persistent when schools within a country or even classrooms within a school were compared. In other words, significant differences across schools and classrooms were observed as reform practices

were embraced unevenly, interpreted differently and adaptations to classroom realities and student background have produced distinct implementation practices.

An overview of implementation profiles in Uganda and Turkey reveals distinct elements as well as some commonalities. In Uganda, the three most common indicators of change in classrooms included student talk, use of learning materials, and seating in groups. However, these changes were often formalistic and interpreted in different ways than intended by policymakers. For instance, student participation was praised frequently by teachers, and has become a buzz-word among them. Although teachers reported increased student talk, during classroom observations, pupils were observed as giving answers in chorus to teachers' questions. The lessons were often dominated by teachers' questions which were limited to basic information recall, which required one or two-word answers. However, some teachers also made efforts to engage children more fully in two learning areas (News and Story time), yet time allocated to these has been gradually eaten away because of pressures to finish the curriculum on time.

Likewise, a formalistic adoption of group work was observed in visited classes in Uganda. Studies in other sub-Saharan African countries have shown that changes in seating arrangements were the first − and in many cases the only − sign that teachers were implementing CCP (Nykiel-Herbert, 2004). In the majority of Ugandan classrooms, children were seated in very large groups (up to 30 pupils in one group) and conducting meaningful learning activities proved difficult in such large groups. Grouping was mainly used to group children according to their ability and to allow them to share limited materials. Furthermore, singing was a very common practice in Ugandan classrooms, as in several other sub-Saharan African countries (Croft, 2002). It was often used as a strategy to separate learning areas, to introduce children to new themes, and to improve their motivation and concentration.

In Turkey, similar to in Uganda, student talk and use of aids were common indicators of change. However, unlike Uganda, there was also much emphasis on classroom activities, use of ICT, and project, performance, and research assignments. During lessons, teachers devoted the majority of lesson time to activities listed in student workbooks. The activities were varied, and needed to be done individually, in pairs, or in groups. Teachers suggested that classrooms have become noisier because of such activities, and challenges associated with managing classroom order have increased. Turkish teachers were very enthusiastic about benefiting from ICT. The ICT tools concerned

were used to show documentaries, to practise using educational programmes for teaching language skills or Mathematics, and for teacher and student presentations. Moreover, project and performance assignments were expected to stimulate learning by discovery and hands-on learning. Although some teachers appreciated their value in terms of stimulating creativity and learning, several others complained that pupils delegated such assignments to their parents so the objectives of the assignments were not realised in practice. Parents' over-involvement in project/performance assignments has become such a phenomenon that many referred to the new curriculum as 'parent-centred education'.

Another aspect that was emphasized in Turkey was research. Children were frequently given research assignments to inform themselves about a given subject and to enhance their understanding of how research is conducted. The assignments required interviews with elders or officials, visits to organisations, and frequent use of published resources or internet. However, in practice, similar to project/performance assignments, these were also delegated to significant others in the extended family, and even profit-oriented actors got involved, such as stationery shops which searched for the topic on Google and then delivered a few print-outs to pupils.

Although student talk and the use of aids appear to be common implementation practices in both countries, the way they are interpreted and practised differed significantly. As explained above, in Uganda, student talk often meant asking students questions that required one or two-word responses in chorus. Teachers would start with a sentence and pause in the middle, expecting pupils to guess the missing word. Such practices were often interpreted as student talk and participation. In Turkey as well, teacher questions and short student answers were common, yet pupils were also given more opportunities to tell stories, or to talk about their experiences, such as their background, families, hobbies, and so on. Likewise, the use of learning aids conveyed different meanings and practices in Uganda and Turkey. In Uganda, it often meant making use of printed materials (flash cards, wall charts), demonstrating concrete objects while teaching words in English or literacy lessons, or counting with natural objects (e.g. stones or beans) in Mathematics. In Turkey, on the other hand, it often meant use of stationery materials for frequent classroom activities involving cutting and pasting, drawing and colouring, and the use of TV, computers, or internet.

Such implementation differences inform us a lot about the context (teachers and structural realities), as they are very indicative of local circumstances. Indeed, Steiner-Khamsi and Quist (2000) suggest that

understanding how a transferred education model or policy has been re-contextualised and locally adapted conveys much about the local conditions and realities. For instance, resource availability predetermines what kind of learning materials will be used in classrooms and how. Or, put otherwise: culture, pupil's language proficiency, and class size have substantial influence on the nature, frequency, or duration of student talk and participation. Moreover, teachers' own interpretations and choices lead to differences, as in the case of grouping and group work. For instance, while in Uganda, all teachers organised seating in groups, only two teachers out of a larger sample in Turkey did the same. For Ugandan teachers, group seating was a pragmatic way to divide a large class characterised by significant differences in ability levels of children. In Turkey, even though group seating was not popular, teachers also organised ad hoc groups for specific classroom activities. In addition, group work also involved group activities and cooperation between children outside of lesson hours. In such cases, pupils often met at one of the homes. Parents who were informed by classroom teachers about the activities were in charge of guiding and managing the group.

In short, implementation profiles of the reformed pedagogies reveal observable differences because the new pedagogies are framed differently in curricular documents by accentuating distinct aspects of the pedagogy (e.g. research and ICT in Turkey and group work in Uganda), and, more importantly, because they are practised in different ways by Ugandan and Turkish teachers. Therefore, the new pedagogies took different shapes in the case study countries. This is not surprising as an implementation process always involves application and distortion of what is formally proposed by policymakers and curriculum designers (Lopes & DeMacedo, 2009), and leads to discernable differences, even within the same country.

Carney, for instance, portrays how learner-centred pedagogy is 'heard differently and with very different consequences' by Han Chinese and Tibetan minorities in China (Carney, 2008b, p. 79), while Napier (2003, p. 52) demonstrates how education reforms in South Africa are re-creolised at the school level by teachers, administrators, or other local actors who 'sometimes resist, mediate, and transform the substance of reforms into forms shaped by internal realities and contextual factors'. In their study on curriculum reform in sub-Saharan Africa − specifically focusing on learner-centred pedagogy, outcomes, and competency-based education and the national qualifications framework − Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008, p. 8) have also identified a growing homogenisation of educational discourse. However, they also pointed to continued divergence from the discourse at the

level of practice as 'ideas are re-contextualised and displaced, unable in the majority of instances to meet the social and development goals demanded of them'. Indeed, 'convergence often occurs exclusively at the level of policy talk, in some instances also at the level of policy action, but rarely at the level of implementation' (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006, p.6.), because global policies are mediated, re-contextualised (sometimes beyond recognition), selectively adopted, undermined, or openly resisted by local actors.

1.4. Perceived outcomes: are we better off with the new pedagogies?

Teachers in both contexts reported a number of positive outcomes. The Ugandan teachers highlighted increased student participation, motivation, and improvements in life skills. They believed that pupils were much more involved and assumed more responsibilities in learning processes; hence their motivation and alertness have improved. Lessons have become more enjoyable and interesting for both teachers and children. Teachers also suggested that as pupils had more opportunities to talk, express themselves and interact during the lessons, their life skills have improved − particularly their self-esteem, assertiveness, confidence, and communication skills. Likewise, teachers in Turkey have reported a number of positive outcomes that were similar to the aspects highlighted by Ugandan teachers. They emphasized increased student participation, enjoyable lessons, and improvements in competencies. They believed that as children participated more during the lessons and handled learning materials, they enjoyed learning more. Teachers suggested that children became more self-confident and expressive due to increased opportunities for participation in the new approach. Their communication skills, oral and written expression, and creative thinking have also improved.

In general, teachers' observations in both countries with regard to the outcomes of the new learning underscored how learning has become more engaging, and how it has contributed to a number of competencies, particularly self-expression and confidence. However, these accounts were based on their perceptions, and need to be substantiated with empirical studies. Besides, it is also important to note that these perceived benefits are enjoyed in greater degree by children who were more active, social and expressive in classrooms. Nevertheless, teachers also mentioned that even the quietest pupils had something to benefit from the new approach.

Although the more 'fun' character of the new learning and the emergence of more 'active' and 'talkative' pupils were confirmed by many

teachers, their opinions have differed substantially when perceived outcomes on learning achievements were discussed. In Uganda, teachers often argued that children learned better with the new curriculum: they learned to read and write more quickly, and their numerical skills have also improved. However, it was difficult to attribute such a perceived outcome to CCP. Indeed, improvements in literacy and numeracy were more frequently attributed to the new content organisation within the Thematic Curriculum and increased emphasis on literacy. In Turkey as well, the attribution problem was evident, as learning achievement was closely linked to the curriculum content and its organisation. Some teachers believed that pupils learned better and they would more likely to retain their knowledge because the curriculum load has been reduced – relieving children from painstaking efforts to memorise dull facts, while the more activity-oriented style of SCP reinforced learning.

However, greater numbers of Turkish teachers had concerns with regard to learning achievement, as they believed that the new curriculum has indeed contributed to less learning. They also made reference to the content and the pedagogical approach of the new curriculum in order to support their arguments. They believed that pupils learned less since the new curriculum put more emphasis on the development of a number of select competencies, thereby marginalising knowledge acquisition. In addition, because of the emphasis of SCP on classroom activities, most of the lesson time was spent on such time-consuming activities without a proper conception of how they are supposed to lead to better learning. Furthermore, the emphasis on the assignments to be completed mostly during out-of-school hours (project, performance, and research assignments) was viewed as ill-conceived as the implementation process has produced some undesirable practices (such as over-involvement of parents and profit-oriented actors) and did not yield the expected learning outcomes.

Another issue that raised serious concerns among Turkish teachers was related to the impact of the new pedagogies on social equality. Several teachers believed that the new curriculum and the pedagogical approach it has endorsed inadvertently exacerbated existing inequalities within the education system. The changes introduced in the textbooks by making them less informative and the shift of attention to the development of competencies at the expense of knowledge acquisition were identified as the main reasons for that. Textbooks are highly important in contexts where access to computers or internet is limited or non-existent, where libraries are not common, and home environments are not academically stimulating. Furthermore, the highly competitive nature of education system forces students to take private

tutoring, which focuses on the development of test-taking skills. This practice tends to aggravate the gap between affluent and low-income populations, as well as with those in remote rural areas who have limited access to such supplementary education opportunities (Simsek & Yildirim, 2004). Therefore, the new curriculum appears to have contributed to widening the disparities in educational opportunities along class and urban/rural divides. Similar criticism has been expressed in different contexts as well. For instance, according to some critics, the experiences with active pedagogies in sub-Saharan Africa have ironically resulted in underutilisation of schools' potential for social change. Since the new pedagogy was essentially a middle-class pedagogy, it did not suit the poor and marginalized content knowledge (Bloch, 2009).

1.5. Implementation challenges: are the new pedagogies feasible?

The classroom realities observed in Uganda and Turkey differed significantly in terms of resource availability and class sizes. Although some classrooms had computers and internet in Turkey, in Uganda some were short of even the most basic needs, such as adequate chairs for students. The class sizes in Turkey were also often half of what was observed in Uganda. Nevertheless, the Ugandan and Turkish teachers appeared almost equally puzzled and overwhelmed by the implementation of the new pedagogies. The majority of teachers in both countries considered the new approaches complex, and viewed their implementation in their national contexts as highly problematical. They believed that the implementation process was constrained by a multitude of issues and problems, raising critical questions with regard to their feasibility. However, in both contexts, teachers who had positive views about the new pedagogies suggested that although the result of their implementation will differ from the result in the West, it can still yield benefits over time. The challenges highlighted by teachers are briefly outlined below. These issues are important to consider since they have shaped the indigenised versions of 'progressive pedagogies'.

1.5.1. Inadequate teacher training

Most Ugandan and Turkish teachers received ten days of training prior to the piloting, which enabled them to be only minimally acquainted with the main features of the new curricula. Teachers in both contexts appeared very critical of teacher training because of its short duration and low quality. Teachers

were introduced to different aspects of the new curricula over a relatively short period of time, and training was often done via dry, theoretical presentations. Lack of demonstrations and practical guidance on how the new pedagogies could be applied in classrooms were considered serious shortcomings. In the Turkish case, the training period also appeared to be dominated by heated discussions between the trainers and teachers on the new curriculum. As a result, by the time teachers started with the actual implementation, they felt ill-prepared and inadequate in both countries. The lack of a sound and thorough basis of the new pedagogies led to confusion, frustration, and wide differences in interpretation and teacher practices. Furthermore, teachers also commented that teachers in non-pilot schools received an even shorter and more formalistic training, suggesting that their preparation for the new curriculum was even more problematical.

1.5.2. Large classes

Class size was mentioned as one of the biggest implementation challenges in both countries. In Uganda, the average class size in visited schools was 70, and some classrooms had up to 108 pupils. Teachers described the difficulties of teaching in such overcrowded classes, and suggested that CCP has intensified those challenges, as the recommended teaching methods, such as student participation, learning by doing, and group work were time consuming and difficult to organise. It was also difficult, if not impossible, to pay individual attention to children during a half-hour learning lesson, and to follow student progress and provide adequate feedback. Classroom observations have also confirmed that teachers struggled to maintain order in the classroom. In Turkey, the average class size was 36 in visited schools, and the maximum was 49. Nevertheless, their complaints regarding the class size resonated with their Ugandan colleagues. They strongly believed that SCP required small class sizes since student participation, activities, and hands-on learning were time consuming and increased demands on teacher attention. It was also difficult to let each student speak in the classroom. The expectations of policymakers regarding implementing SCP in large classes were simply viewed as unrealistic.

1.5.3. Materials scarcity

The new pedagogies appeared to increase the demand for learning aids in both countries. The use of learning aids was viewed as helpful to reinforce

learning activities with visual aids, to stimulate the development of select competencies, and to make learning fun. Yet teachers in both contexts were frustrated with lack of adequate materials, even though as pilot schools they were in a more advantageous situation in comparison to other public schools. Material needs were framed differently since Ugandan teachers were more concerned about lack of textbooks, visual aids (e.g. flash cards, sentence cards, and wall charts), and story books, while Turkish teachers made frequent references to computers, internet, TV, digital learning materials, and stationery needs for cutting and pasting types of classroom activities. In Uganda, teachers complained about the high cost of materials, limited supply of printed materials, the inadequacy of school budget allocated for the purchase of learning aids, the inability of students to provide some of the basic materials, and the time and effort teachers spent on developing learning aids.

Teachers in Turkey also commented on the insufficient school budgets for providing learning aids and the implications of resorting to parents to provide for the material needs. Indeed, despite the rhetoric on free public education at primary level, parents have been increasingly required to provide financial means for a range of items, including desks, seats, curtains, story books, and ICT hardware. Such practices not only increased the financial burden of education on family budgets but also created new forms of inequalities within the education system. This has produced highly differentiated school conditions and has created visible differences and inequalities between schools or even between classrooms in a single school, as observed during school visits. Subsequently, classroom equipment and furnishing became indicators of students' socio-economic status and parental commitment to education. This trend appears to contribute to increased educational stratification and intensification of hidden privatisation (Ball & Youdell, 2008), turning public schools into private-like schools and leading to some extreme cases parental contribution to education (Karapehlivan, 2010).

1.5.4. Examination system

Nationwide exams for entrance to post-primary education pose an important challenge to the implementation of constructivist pedagogy in many contexts because of contradictions between the objectives of a constructivist curriculum (e.g. the development of skills and competencies) and what is assessed during exams (knowledge acquisition). Such contradictions and tensions persist in both Uganda and Turkey, signalling a lack of educational

policy alignment. In both countries, success is defined by exam performance. So even if school management, teachers and parents would value development of abilities, skills and competencies, if pupils cannot make the transition to good quality post-primary education institutions, then the intrinsic value of such competencies becomes questionable.

In Uganda, after completing primary education, pupils take the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) to qualify for admission to the secondary schools. The exam causes significant anxiety and stress for schools, children, and parents. As one official explained, the PLE is very high stakes in Uganda: 'People are struggling to get into very few places. Politicians and parents put pressure on head teachers and teachers. They even threaten their jobs,' Such substantial pressure on and expectations of students and schools have implications for the implementation of CCP because teaching and learning strategies that are perceived to have little impact on student achievement in national examinations are unlikely to be fully implemented and sustained.

Exams are also embedded in the Turkish education system since entrance to secondary schools and higher education institutions are governed by nationwide exams (Tansel & Bircan, 2006). All primary school graduates are eligible to study at secondary schools. Despite the availability of a wide variety of choice in general, vocational, and technical schools, competition is intense for distinguished *Anatolian high schools* and *Science high schools* due to their reputation for offering high quality education in foreign languages. These exams have traditionally assessed pupils on the basis of their knowledge acquisition. Therefore, teachers believed that SCP has reduced mainstream schools' capacity to prepare children adequately. The Ministry modified exam questions in 2008 to better align the examination with constructivist education, and although some teachers appreciated these changes, the majority did not appear to be convinced. Teachers reported that several parents were also concerned about the new curriculum, as they believed schools have become less equipped to prepare pupils for the nationwide exams. As a result, some parents enrolled their children at private tutoring institutions after school hours or in the weekends. These school-like institutions teach with an eye to the test and their curriculum closely reflects exam content. The majority of teachers in this study were teaching pupils from a low socio-economic background. Since good private tutoring institutions are costly, these children had a lower chance of receiving private tutoring. Therefore, teachers believed that the revised curriculum was exacerbating their disadvantages.

Examinations are key characteristics of many education systems in the developing world. The selection function of education has a strong effect on the quality of the curriculum and learning, and it remains rather difficult to resist making examinations paramount, since examination success provides access to improved livelihoods and life-chances. In China, for instance, although studies show a positive teacher attitude towards SCP, they also highlight that teachers find it almost impossible to use SCP due to pressure coming from parents and school management to have students perform well in standardised exams. Hence, teachers hardly dare to use innovative teaching methodologies or to depart too much from the prescribed curriculum for the entrance examination (Liu & Dunne, 2009). Increasing numbers of educated youth intensify competition for universities and the political economy of many countries reinforces an exam-oriented education system.

1.5.5. Language proficiency

The medium of instruction was raised as an important concern among Ugandan teachers. Similar to several other African countries, Uganda adopted the colonial language, English, as the official language and the language of instruction at schools. The Thematic Curriculum introduced the use of local languages as the language of instruction at lower grades; however, all schools continued to teach in English in Kampala due to the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the city. Use of English was viewed as an impediment in practicing CCP since several children, particularly those who had migrated from rural areas, were poor in English. Consequently, their participation and interaction with teachers and other pupils were limited. In observed classrooms, some pupils appeared to be fluent in English, while some others had had no prior exposure to English. Children who had been to nursery schools spoke better English, and those who migrated from the North or the East had the most difficulties in comprehending it.

Teachers noted that such pupils were often quiet during lessons and had learning difficulties because of poor language proficiency. Some teachers allowed children to speak in their local languages during News and Story hours, and they observed dramatic differences in student participation. In Turkey, a number of other languages are also spoken in addition to Turkish, the official language, which is spoken widely throughout the country. None of the teachers in visited schools had pupils who were poor in Turkish, yet some reflected on their experiences in rural areas, especially in the East, where it was possible to encounter children with poor language skills in Turkish.

1.5.6. Teacher- related factors

In Uganda, teacher-related issues that impeded implementation of CCP included low teacher motivation and morale, inadequate salaries, low teacher status, and unfavourable living conditions. The Ugandan teachers indicated that the new pedagogical approach made further demands on teachers by asking them to engage children in learning more, and by being more innovative and creative in their teaching. However, teachers suggested that many of them lacked the motivation and energy to engage fully in educational change process. They reported alarmingly low teacher morale as a major factor, which was viewed as an outcome of low teacher salaries, lack of incentives, the low social status of the teaching profession, and inadequate living and working conditions. Teachers maintained that financial difficulties preoccupied them, and interfered with their health and well-being.

In Turkey, few teachers raised such issues as a challenge to curriculum implementation, yet they referred to teacher resistance to change proposals as a critical issue. Resistance to change was typically attributed to teachers who were relatively senior in age and who had many years of experience (more than 20 years). Some teachers argued that instead of organising classroom activities, senior teachers continued to rely on more traditional methods of direct teaching, because they viewed change as tiring and demanding. These teachers were also 'problematised' during interviews with policymakers, who openly suggested that once senior teachers had left the system, constructivism would be more widely endorsed. However, interview accounts have shown that extensive reliance on classroom activities and over-emphasis of competencies were criticised by many teachers. Indeed, the majority of them did not approve of the substantial reductions in content load and tended to supplement it with direct teaching due to concerns with students' academic success, nationwide examinations, the increasing demand for private tutoring, deepening educational inequalities, and the development of a diffuse sense of national identity among new generations. Therefore, these teachers demonstrated *principled resistance* (Achinstein, & Ogawa, 2006), since they perceived curriculum change proposals as detrimental to their students and to society in general.

1.5.7. Parental opposition

In both countries, teachers encountered some parental opposition to the revised curriculum and concerns associated with the progressive pedagogies.

In Uganda, partly because of inadequate public sensitisation prior to the implementation, parents were reported to be confused, ambivalent, or displeased with the new curriculum. Parental complaints involved a number of issues, such as the replacement of subject-based system with learning areas, the overlap with early-childhood education, and the assessment system. They considered the subject-based system superior, as they believed students were provided with more factual knowledge. For these parents, the new curriculum was a simplified version of the previous one; hence, it was viewed as less challenging. Additionally, since the new system encouraged active learning, learning by doing, group activities and play, children were less involved with copying things from the blackboard. Yet for several parents written exercises were primary indicators of teaching and learning. Therefore, some also complained that children were not learning, that they were mostly talking, singing, drawing, or playing. Some of those parents who were displeased with the new system took drastic measures and transferred their children to private schools where implementation of the Thematic Curriculum was delayed. Almost all schools in this study reported student transfers to private schools or the threat of transfers.

In Turkey, teachers also reported some parental dissatisfaction with the new curriculum. Curriculum 2004 highlights the importance of parental involvement in education and strives to improve their participation by assigning some key responsibilities to them, especially in out-of-school learning activities (MONE, 2005a). Therefore, as underscored by the Ministry as well, providing adequate information to parents was crucial. Nevertheless, teachers reported inadequacies in that area: although some schools arranged extensive meetings with parents at school or class level, in some other schools, such activities were limited. According to teachers, insufficient information generated misconceptions, confusion, and even reactionary attitudes among parents. For instance, many repeatedly complained about the number of performance and project assignments, suggesting that they were tired of 'helping out' their children.

Several parents also appeared to be concerned with the education quality: they were critical of the new curriculum for over-emphasizing competencies, and paying inadequate attention to knowledge acquisition. Parents believed that children did not learn much in the new system, as too much classroom time was spent on classroom activities. Some parents openly challenged the teachers, arguing that 'Children are empty, they do not learn', and they tried to put pressure on teachers to supplement the curriculum with additional information and to spend more time on lecturing. This kind of

pressure particularly came from parents who perceived education as an important social mobility mechanism, and who seemed to be concerned about the mismatches between the mainstream schooling and secondary school entrance exams.

2. Implications for educational policy and reform

2.1. Context matters

As Crossley and Watson (2003, p. 142) have suggested:

> Today, the most frequent criticism of organizations like the World Bank, who are actively engaged in transfer, is their continued insensitivity to local context. What is striking about all of this is that despite the paramount importance many in the field place on context in the transfer puzzle, there has been relatively little attempt − notwithstanding a few notable exceptions − to move beyond the commonplace assertion that "context matters".

Furthermore, Steiner-Khamsi (2010, p. 331) argues that very often, reform failures are not due to technicalities, limited funding, or implementation problems. Rather, such failures reflect 'the fundamental contradictions that arise when (policy) solutions are borrowed from educational systems where the problems are entirely different'.

This study has demonstrated that context mediates reform implementation to a large extent. When context is not adequately considered in education policy transfer, it may lead to negative or unintended outcomes. In Turkey, the case of research assignments or the revision in textbooks illustrates the importance of considering context adequately. When learning is increasingly directed towards student research (with the assumed benefits in terms of rendering students autonomous learners and preparing them for life-long learning), in a country where access to information resources is uneven, or very limited in some regions or for certain segments of society, then such a policy threatens children's right to education and undermines their learning opportunities. Likewise, when textbooks are scrapped, so too is essential information on studied topics in a country where they are the primary and often 'the only' reference book for millions of students. Such a policy then also further exacerbates educational inequalities and marginalises students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. As Carnoy and Rhoten confirm:

> Policies prescribed by the same paradigm but applied in different contexts produce different practices – so different in some cases – that it is difficult to imagine that they were the result of the same policy. By ignoring differences in contextual capacity and culture at the national, regional, and local levels, globalization has resulted in some unintended and unexpected consequences for educational practice that in some cases have contributed to the deterioration of quality even when the objective has been improvement (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002, p. 6).

2.2. Policy alignment

The study has shown that when a new education policy (e.g. curriculum emphasis on the development of competencies) contradicts another newly introduced policy or an existing policy (e.g. nationwide exams governing the transition to post-primary education), then the implementation of the new policy will encounter serious setbacks. As Napier (2003) suggests within the context of South Africa, reform implementation becomes particularly complicated if multiple sets of reforms are introduced at the same time, when these reforms may conflict with one another, and when reforms are fast-paced.

Both in Uganda and Turkey, the development of competencies is considered important by teachers, but as long as the highly selective nationwide exams continue to assess students on the basis of knowledge acquisition, the teachers are confronted with a dilemma. As a result, several Turkish teachers who participated in this study preferred to resist the policy and focused on practices that would better aid and prepare students for the exams. Likewise, authentic assessment with its objectives to move beyond testing has certain evident benefits; however, pupils who remain in mainstream schools become disadvantaged as they are less exposed to testing based on multiple choices. Yet, this type of testing is used to select pupils at the end of primary school. In Turkey, increasing numbers of pupils applied to private-tutoring centres to gain test-solving skills. Therefore, alignment of the new policies with existing or other new policies should be carefully examined, and possible conflict between them should be eliminated. The theory on education reform implementation could also consider policy alignment to be one of the factors that determine whether or not a proposed policy is implemented.

2.3. Teacher agency in reform implementation

Implementation of education policies is far from straightforward since teachers play a key role in mediating policies. Therefore, successful policy implementation requires appropriate strategies or models of policy construction that utilise teachers' professional knowledge, skills and values, rather than those that challenge or fail to recognize these crucial aspects. This calls for a move away from pure top-down or bottom-up approaches in policymaking towards a more balanced one, which involves consultation with teachers and provision of resources that would enable them to use their professional skills appropriately (Brain, Reid & Boyes, 2006). As Schweisfurth (2002, p. 22) argues:

> Reform which ignores the complexities and value-laden nature of education, which prescribes innovations to teachers while remaining stubbornly naive of their realities, and which alienates implementers in the process, seems by definition and by historical and comparative evidence to be doomed to failure (or, at best, very limited success).

Therefore, not only teachers but also school management as well as inspectors should be well informed about the philosophy, content, and implementation of the new curriculum, and they should be involved in the curriculum design and adaptation process through on-going consultation.

2.4. Beyond a polarised and one-size-fits all approach to pedagogy

A one-size-fits-all approach to pedagogy fails to recognise that pedagogy is 'both the act of teaching and the discourse in which it is embedded' (Alexander, 2001b, p. 507). Since teaching and learning are contextualised activities, there can be no justification for a universal and homogenising pedagogy (Tabulawa, 2003). Furthermore, positioning the notions of teacher-centred and student-centred learning in opposite locations and making bipolar comparisons between them run the risk of oversimplification (Scheerens & Sleegers, 2010; Edwards & Usher, 2008). As Alexander (2001b) suggests, the pedagogical models should be as far removed as they can be from the crude and normative polarising of 'teacher-centred' (or subject-centred) and 'child-centred teaching'. Therefore, mainstream comparative research should abandon this dichotomy. According to Alexander, 'Perhaps the most damaging residue of this sort of thinking can still be found in the reports of some development education consultants, who happily commend Western

'child-centred' pedagogy to non-Western governments without regard for local cultural and educational circumstances' (Alexander, 2001b, p.512). Based on his *The Culture and Pedagogy* research in five countries, Alexander proposes six pedagogical approaches as alternatives to pedagogical polarities: teaching as transmission, teaching as initiation, teaching as negotiation, teaching as facilitation, teaching as acceleration, and teaching as technology. These six versions of teaching constitute a continuum of tendencies rather than a set of distinct national descriptions (Alexander, 2008).

3. Suggestions for future research

3.1. Rationale of international actors in diffusing a particular pedagogical approach

A variety of actors have been involved in diffusing constructivism in low-income countries, including international organisations, bilateral donors, NGOs and foundations. Their motives and objectives in prescribing pedagogical approaches associated with constructivism have differed substantially. Although the majority of the studies explain the popularity of such approaches by making reference to their actual or perceived effectiveness and better fit with knowledge economies, some others raised important questions with regard to their rapid diffusion after the fall of the Soviet bloc (see Carney, 2008a; Tabulawa, 2003). These latter studies suggested a different rationale by linking CCP with, for instance, the promotion of a weak or thin democratic system and the spread of capitalism. I believe that, instead of dismissing such arguments as 'conspiracy' theory, it would be interesting to study the motives of international actors, particularly those who have been actively involved in diffusing CCP since the 1990s (particularly USAID). Such studies could help to substantiate (or dismiss) arguments relating to the spread of the liberal capitalist order and may also disclose some other hidden, untold motives. As Ball (1998) argues, in relation to patterns of convergence in education policy, it is important to consider 'Whose interests are served?' and, 'In what ways?'.

One of the interesting claims in this respect is that CCP might be linked to reducing the need for qualified teachers and decreasing teaching hours at higher levels of education. One might argue that teachers' subject matter and didactic knowledge may no longer be so important in learning environments in which students are expected to be self-directed, autonomous learners, and teachers are expected to be 'mentors' who supervise learning

processes. Within the context of the Netherlands, Volman for instance refers to the arguments suggesting that the teacher shortages within the country might be solved by replacing teachers with computers or by self-directed learners who can manage with fewer teachers. This might imply the creation of new positions with lower levels of qualifications in order to support teachers (Volman, 2005). Indeed, the introduction of 'new learning' approaches in the Dutch secondary schools has resulted in increases in the employment of teaching assistants in recent years. Likewise, the appetite for CCP might increase at higher education institutions as they are pressured to assign less teaching hours to academic staff because of shrinking budgets. Then, one might ask if − within the context of developing countries − CCP is also considered to be a (partial) solution to chronic teacher shortages and a long-term strategy to alleviate the 'heavy burden' of teacher salaries on Ministry budgets.

3.2. Mechanisms of educational policy transfer

This study did not focus on the mechanisms of educational policy transfer, and made only brief reference to them. Therefore, it would be highly interesting to study the mechanisms that operated in Uganda and Turkey from a comparative perspective. Dale's framework would be highly useful in such a comparative analysis, as it captures the variety of mechanisms (both voluntary and non-voluntary) and highlights the complexity of the process (see Dale 1999). In this sense, I think Verger's application of the framework in his study on the education liberalisation process within the WTO is inspirational (Verger, 2010; 2009).

3.3. Understanding teacher resistance to education reforms

An important element in teacher resistance to reforms in the case of Turkey relates to teachers' political views. This was discussed during interviews but not highlighted throughout this book at the request of teachers. Their political affiliations, concerns for the future of the secular and democratic regime because of 'possible' intentions and actions of the current government, and other criticism directed at the government appear to have influenced some teachers' attitudes towards the new curriculum and their classroom practices. Although this study could not discuss these highly sensitive issues, I find it very important to study the political issues surrounding implementation of a new curriculum in a context such as Turkey. Such a study might examine the

types of resistance (e.g. overt or covert), the outcomes of the resistance, as well as the personal benefits and costs of resistance. Another point of reference in studying teacher resistance could be looking at how teachers in a given school interact and communicate regarding their criticism of a reform proposal, and how collegial relationships influence teachers' attitudes towards reforms. This would be highly interesting to explore in both Uganda and Turkey.

4. Overall concluding remarks: A critique of the new 'progressive' pedagogies

In one of her articles that considers the knowledge-based economy, Susan Robertson asks 'Who can be against knowledge?', and points to the fact that the idea of knowledge 'is able to articulate with progressive left as well as right projects' (Robertson, 2007, p. 6). Following the same line of thinking, I would like to ask: Who can be against student-/child-centred pedagogy? Who can be opposed to a pedagogical approach that claims to stimulate creativity, critical thinking, effective communication, collaboration, learning to learn, and activity? It is particularly difficult to resist such a 'progressive' pedagogy in a 'knowledge-based economic order' which places a high premium on innovation, invention, flexibility, life-long learning and cooperative work. Similar to how the notions of knowledge and decentralisation might do so, 'progressive pedagogies' are indeed able to articulate with the left as well as the right.

Turkey's experiences with 'progressive pedagogies' illustrate this point clearly. When the Village Institutes were established in the 1940s based on the recommendations of John Dewey, they were soon criticised for stimulating leftist ideas and spreading communism. After more than fifty years, a government which has initiated wide-ranging changes in order to advance neoliberal policies in Turkey has adopted SCP as the official pedagogical approach for all primary schools. Yet teachers, intellectuals, and academics who were once educated in the Village Institutes or who praise them appear to be bitterly critical of the new pedagogical approach. Likewise, the leftist teacher union is also opposed to the pedagogical reform, together with many of its teacher members. How can we explain these seemingly paradoxical developments? Have the left and the right subsumed one another in Turkey – or elsewhere − as some commentators and policymakers claim?

In an attempt to respond to this question, I want to first highlight the fact that although the narratives of different experiences with 'progressive

pedagogies' resonate with one another, a closer look reveals a great deal of difference. Therefore, the Village Institutes and the current SCP in Turkey are in fact different in many regards even if they were both inspired by Dewey's educational ideas and incorporated principles such as hands-on-learning, participation, stimulation of critical thinking and creativity, and so on. What is different and possibly very interesting about the current diffusion of pedagogical approaches based on constructivism is the correspondence between the 'progressive pedagogy' and a number of neoliberal policies advanced in the education sector in many parts of the world. In this respect, Allais (2010) suggests that together with the qualifications framework, competency-based education, and outcomes-based curriculum, the 'progressive pedagogy' constitutes part of a 'new educational paradigm'. She identifies a number of problems with this 'new paradigm', such as the lack of empirical research and even less positive evidence, conceptual incoherence, flawed underlying epistemology, and its being based on a notion of labour markets, economies, and employers which is implausible.

As such, Allais (2010) argues that the 'progressivism' (and social constructivism in particular), appears to facilitate economic imperialism. She explains the interplay between the two by referring to three main aspects of 'progressivism': 1) the emphasis on the role of the individual, individual choice and the individual constructing their own knowledge; 2) downplaying and denying structure, such as the structure of knowledge, the structure of educational institutions, and societal structures which make access to education highly unequal; and 3) emptying education of its specificity by abandoning a notion of the acquisition of knowledge as the main purpose of education, and the notion that knowledge needs specific institutional structures for its development and acquisition.

Indeed, the rhetoric of reforms aimed at constructivist education disguises the way in which this philosophy actually reinforces an essentially conservative notion of education. This approach has been criticised by a number of other scholars: for offering more subtle classroom techniques for exercising wide-ranging powers over students (Darling, 1978); for providing a more effective tool for social control and structuring aspirations (Sharp & Green, 1975); for undermining educational advancement of working class children because of its critique of book-based education (Jones, 1983); and for being a means of further repression or accommodation, even if it starts with an assertion of human liberation (Schapiro, 1984). Furthermore, with its egalitarian sentiment and vague talk of valuing the individual, this approach avoids perceiving education as a tool for changing society. As Darling (1986)

explains, psychologists provide increasingly sophisticated accounts of how children actually do develop; however, this is no substitute for the question: 'How do we want them to develop?' One of the symptoms of constructivist education is the great reluctance of teachers to intervene, to direct, or to criticise when they are dealing with children. Nevertheless, furthering the aim of a just and equal society requires teachers who are prepared to challenge some of the observed patterns of children. In this respect, Young (2010b) also suggests that:

> Mass schooling, as a core institution of modernity [...] is a unique opportunity for students at any age – to acquire what I will call 'powerful knowledge' – knowledge that they would not have access to at home or at work and knowledge that takes them beyond their experience.

The current trends in education policies emphasize the extension of access to and widening of participation in education. However, at the same time, they neglect or in some cases actually deny that at the most fundamental level, education involves the transmission of 'powerful knowledge' from one generation to another. This implies that teachers should not only be facilitators or guides in classrooms, but should also be a − to use an unfashionable term − 'transmitter of knowledge' (Young, 2010b; Young, 2008). Because of these considerations, I want to suggest − on a final note − that instead of being preoccupied with the problems and challenges of implementing the new 'progressive pedagogies' in low-income countries and identifying 'best implementation practices' in under-resourced schools, we should raise more questions such as these: How and by whom is the new 'progressive pedagogy' formulated? For whom does it work? Under what circumstances? And with what outcomes? These questions are highly important to consider, since pedagogy is not neutral and should be 'understood in terms of questions of power, politics, and ideology, both within and beyond schools' (Young, 2008, p. 2).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
ANAP	Motherland Party (Turkey)
AP	Justice Party (Turkey)
CCP	Child-centred pedagogy
CCT	Centre coordinating tutors (Uganda)
CHP	Republican People's Party (Turkey)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DP	Democrat Party (Turkey)
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LRA	Lords' Resistance Army (Uganda)
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports (Uganda)
MONE	Ministry of National Education (Turkey)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre (Uganda)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OZDEBİR	Private Tutoring Centres Association (Turkey)
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment
PKK	Kurdish Workers Party (PKK in Kurdish)
PLE	Primary Leaving Examination (Uganda)
PRA	Presidency of Religious Affairs (Turkey)
SBS	Level Determination Exam (Turkey)
SCP	Student-centred pedagogy
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TRL	Turkish lira
TTK	Board of Training and Education (Turkey)
TÜSİAD	Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEB	Ugandan National Examinations Board
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education programme
US (A)	United States (of America)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USE	Universal Secondary Education (Uganda)
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Dit boek vloeit voort uit promotieonderzoek waarin een kritische en empirische analyse is gemaakt van hoe 'globaal' beleid (pedagogische benaderingen gebaseerd op constructivisme) lokaal is aangepast aan de context van twee verschillende landen – Oeganda en Turkije. Dit onderzoek sluit zich aan bij de bestudering van beleidsoverdracht op het gebied van onderwijs, met vooral aandacht voor de implementatiefase. Het doel van dit onderzoek is om te analyseren hoe de lokale context en de actoren daarin een invloed hebben op de overname van onderwijsbeleid dat uit het Westen komt. Er wordt in het bijzonder de agency van lokale actoren bestudeerd. Om deze reden wordt veel aandacht geschonken aan de visies die leraren hebben op het geleende beleid en op hun ervaringen ermee. Hiermee wil het onderzoek bijdragen aan de discussie over globalisering en onderwijs, en reageren op een hedendaagse kwestie die zeer prominent is in het wetenschappelijke debat: 'Vertonen nationale onderwijssystemen in toenemende mate onderlinge overeenkomsten als gevolg van het lenen van beleid?'

1. Groeiende belangstelling voor pedagogiek

In de laatste twee decennia is er een hernieuwde belangstelling voor school pedagogiek geweest. Pedagogiek heeft centraal gestaan bij diverse onderwijshervormingen die ontworpen zijn om de kwaliteit van het onderwijs te verbeteren. Het werd ook steeds meer gekoppeld aan economische groei, het bevorderen van de internationale concurrentiepositie en politieke democratisering. Vooral na de jaren 1990 werd het globale politieke discours over pedagogiek almaar meer gevormd door op constructivisme gebaseerde opvattingen, die deel werden van een discursief repertoire van internationale rechten en van kwaliteitsonderwijs. De internationale donororganisaties hebben een centrale rol gespeeld in het plaatsen van begrippen uit het constructivisme op de internationale hervormingsagenda. In de loop der jaren heeft het constructivisme aanzienlijke invloed gehad op de onderwijshervormingen van lage-inkomenslanden aangezien velen daarvan hervormingsprogramma's hebben aangenomen die rusten op de retoriek van het constructivisme. De constructivistische benadering is in verschillende contexten op diverse manieren aangeduid: als studentgerichte pedagogiek (student-centred pedagogy – SCP), kindgerichte pedagogiek (child-centred

pedagogy – CCP), leerlinggerichte pedagogiek, actief leren of coöperatief leren. Tegen het einde van de twintigste eeuw zijn hervormingen die SCP, leerlingenparticipatie, democratie in de klas, 'hands-on' leren, coöperatieve leergroepjes, projecten en gerichtheid op de interesses van het kind introduceren wereldwijd alomtegenwoordig geworden.

2. Case studies: Oeganda en Turkije

De verspreiding van 'progressieve' pedagogiek heeft het debat over globalisering en het onderwijscurriculum nieuw leven ingeblazen. Wetenschappers hebben zich afgevraagd of de toenemende overeenkomsten tussen het onderwijsdiscours en het nationale onderwijsbeleid in diverse landen ook wereldwijd heeft geleid tot meer op elkaar lijkende educatieve praktijken. In andere woorden, is de eensgezindheid op het niveau van globaal overleg over pedagogisch beleid gepaard gegaan met meer eenvormigheid op het niveau van het leslokaal? En tot op welke hoogte heeft het wereldwijde en het officiële nationale discours over pedagogiek het onderwijs en de praktijk van het lesgeven veranderd? Deze studie wil dergelijke vragen trachten te beantwoorden doormiddel van empirische observatie van de uitwerking van globaal onderwijsbeleid op de praktijk. Er is gekozen om de implementatie van pedagogische hervormingen in twee specifieke landen te bestuderen: in Oeganda en in Turkije.

Beide landen zijn in de laatste jaren begonnen aan een omvangrijke herziening van hun curricula voor basisscholen, met voorstellen voor veranderingen in de inhoud en in de organisatie van de curricula (door een thematische benadering in te voeren en de nadruk te leggen op de ontwikkeling van competenties en vaardigheden), het introduceren van alternatieve beoordelingsmethodes (doorlopende beoordeling in Oeganda en authentieke beoordeling in Turkije), en het invoeren van nieuwe pedagogische benaderingen gebaseerd op de beginselen van het constructivisme (omschreven als kingerichte pedagogiek in Oeganda en als studentgerichte pedagogiek in Turkije). In Oeganda, na een eenjarige pilotfase, werd in februari 2007 het Thematische Curriculum voor basisscholen in het hele land geïmplementeerd. Op vergelijkbare wijze is in Turkije het Curriculum 2004 een jaar lang op een paar daarvoor uitgekozen scholen uitgeprobeerd en vervolgens vanaf september 2005 landelijk ingevoerd. Door het implementatieproces van de hervormingen te analyseren, wil deze studie uitzoeken hoe de nieuwe pedagogieën mede worden bepaald door de specifieke situaties in Oeganda en in Turkije, en hoe deze

onderwijsbenaderingen worden geïnterpreteerd en opnieuw worden gecontextualiseerd door lokale actoren, voornamelijk door schoolleraren. Zodoende onderzoekt deze studie hoe een globaal beleid lokaal wordt geïmplementeerd in twee zeer verschillende contexten. Daarnaast suggereert de studie mogelijke verklaringen voor de recente populariteit van constructivisme.

3. Methodologie

De analyse in dit boek maakt gebruik van data afkomstig uit het veldwerk dat in Oeganda is uitgevoerd in de zomer van 2007 en in Turkije in het voorjaar van 2009. In beide landen namen acht basisscholen deel aan de studie. Deze scholen behoren tot de openbare scholen die in de hoofdsteden – respectievelijk Kampala en Ankara – aan de pilotfase van het nieuwe curriculum hebben deelgenomen. Er is in deze studie gekozen voor het verrichten van casestudies. Daarbij zijn drie onderzoeksmethoden toegepast: documenten verzamelen, interviews en observatie. De interviews werden afgenomen met een brede waaier van actoren in de onderwijssector, inclusief ambtenaren van het ministerie, leden van onderwijsinstellingen, academici, lerarenvakbonden, school adviseurs, en zij die centraal staan in deze studie, namelijk de (hoofd)leraren. Daarnaast werd ongestructureerde observatie uitgevoerd op het schoolterrein (zoals in de lerarenkamer of in de gangen) en semi-gestructureerde observatie in de leslokalen. De observaties waren gericht op feiten (b.v. infrastructuur, beschikbaarheid van middelen, het aantal leerlingen, de inrichting van de klas), gebeurtenissen (b.v. leerling-docent interactie, activiteiten met de hele klas, groepswerk) en op gedragingen (b.v. de wijze waarop leraren hun leerlingen benaderden, de mate van vriendelijkheid of agressief gedrag).

4. Structuur van het boek

Na een inleidend hoofdstuk is het boek in twee delen onderverdeeld, elk deel gericht op één land. Het eerste deel begint met een kort hoofdstuk dat een overzicht geeft van de nationale context van Oeganda: de politieke geschiedenis, de economische en demografische achtergrond en het onderwijssysteem (Hoofdstuk 2). Vervolgens wordt de implementatie van het Thematische Curriculum vanuit het perspectief van de leraren geanalyseerd, gebruik makend van het analytische raamwerk dat ontwikkeld is door Rogan en Grayson (Hoofdstuk 3). Het laatste hoofdstuk van dit deel concentreert

zich op de pedagogische hervormingen en bestudeert de meningen die leraren hebben over kindgerichte pedagogiek, de praktijk in de klas en de obstakels die worden waargenomen in de implementatie (Hoofdstuk 4).

Het tweede deel heeft een vergelijkbare structuur als de eerste. Het begint met een schets van de bredere contextuele kwesties, ditmaal de politieke geschiedenis, de economische en demografische achtergrond en het onderwijssysteem van Turkije (Hoofdstuk 5). De daaropvolgende drie hoofdstukken presenteren de bevindingen uit de Turkse casestudy. Allereerst wordt de implementatie van het Curriculum 2004 geanalyseerd (Hoofdstuk 6). Vervolgens worden de meningen van leraren over de studentgerichte pedagogie, de praktijk in de klas en de waargenomen obstakels in het implementatieproces onder de loep genomen (Hoofdstuk 7). Tot slot worden visies van leraren en hun reacties op voorstellen voor verandering in de inhoud van het curriculum bestudeerd, met daarbij de nadruk op de 'redelijkheid' die ten grondslag ligt aan het verzet van leraren tegen onderwijshervormingen (Hoofdstuk 8).

Het laatste hoofdstuk brengt de belangrijkste bevindingen van de studie bijeen en beantwoord de vragen die in het inleidend hoofdstuk zijn gesteld, daardoor komend tot diverse conclusies (Hoofdstuk 9). Daarbij overweegt het de implicaties van de voornaamste bevindingen voor de theorie en het beleid rondom onderwijshervormingen, leraren en pedagogie, en suggereert richtingen voor verder onderzoek.

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Hülya Koşar Altınyelken studied International Relations at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. After working in the banking sector for five years in Turkey and the Netherlands, she resumed her studies with the MA Programme in International Development Studies at the International School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the University of Amsterdam (UvA). During her studies, she specialised on education and development, and conducted research on the educational challenges and coping mechanisms of internal migrant girls in Turkey. Upon graduating from her MA studies (with cum laude) in 2004, she started working as a policy officer at the Education and Development division of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In September 2006, she started with her doctoral studies within the framework of IS Academie on Education and International Development programme, which is jointly financed by the UvA and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since February 2010, she has been working as a postdoc at the Child Development and Education department (UvA) within an EU-funded project, the Governance of Education Trajectories in Europe (GOETE). The project covers eight EU countries and analyses the role of school in re-conceptualising education in terms of lifelong learning by combining a life course and governance perspective.

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