



ALIGNING PRODUCTIVE SKILL DEVELOPMENT WITH MODERN EFL CURRICULUM STANDARDS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to align the development of productive skills (speaking and writing) with modern EFL curriculum standards. Using the Research and Development (R&D) approach, the study evaluated existing curricula, designed new materials, and implemented a trial phase to refine the alignment. The results indicated that while speaking skills were moderately addressed, writing skills and task relevance for real-world communication needed further improvement. Expert validation and trial implementation showed that, despite some progress, there were still challenges in clarity, feedback, and task alignment. The study suggests refining curriculum materials, enhancing teacher feedback mechanisms, and further testing the materials for broader implementation. Future research should explore the integration of digital literacy, personalized learning paths, and longitudinal studies to assess the sustained impact of the curriculum.

Keywords: *Productive Skills, EFL Curriculum, Research and Development (R&D), Task Relevance, Real-world Communication.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, curriculum design plays a critical role in shaping learners' communicative competence and overall academic success (Akramy, 2020; Endeshaw, 2023). While traditional curriculum frameworks often operate at a macro level guided by broad pedagogical philosophies and idealised assumptions they frequently overlook the specific, realistic needs of students who engage with English in diverse sociocultural and technological contexts (Calvin & Mali, 2023; Mahesti et al., 2025). Recent perspectives in language education emphasise that curriculum models must move beyond abstract formulations to address tangible learner requirements, including their linguistic backgrounds, proficiency levels, learning preferences, and real-world

communicative goals (Jaya et al., 2025; Byram, 2020). A learner-centred orientation thus becomes essential for developing curricula that meaningfully support the acquisition and use of productive skills speaking and writing which remain central to effective communication in both academic and professional settings.

Parallel to this shift, rapid technological advancement in the 21st century has redefined the competencies required for successful participation in globalised societies. However, technological progress does not inherently equip teachers or students with the digital literacy necessary for meaningful pedagogical integration (Susanto et al., 2020; Ng, 2021). As scholars argue, the development of 21st-century skills which include communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, information

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literacy, and ICT competence requires deliberate curriculum planning and instructional innovation (Pardede, 2020; Khanh, 2021; Habibi et al., 2020). Educational institutions worldwide have begun incorporating digital tools and ICT-based practices to enhance learning processes, yet curriculum materials and classroom implementation often remain misaligned with the demands of contemporary digital and communicative practices. This gap underscores the urgency of revisiting and redesigning EFL curricula to ensure that productive skill development is relevant, meaningful, and attuned to modern literacy expectations (Zheng, 2023; Abdallah & Instruction, 2025).

Within this landscape, aligning productive skill development with modern EFL curriculum standards becomes a priority. Such alignment requires a comprehensive understanding of learner needs, grounded in principles of curriculum design that integrate theoretical foundations with practical pedagogical strategies. Effective curriculum development is not merely the construction of content, but a dynamic process involving planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement (Nunan, 2023; Fattah et al., 2023). By embedding 21st-century competencies, leveraging technology, and prioritising learner-centred approaches, EFL curricula can better support students in developing communicative abilities that are functional, contextually relevant, and applicable beyond the classroom.

Therefore, this study examines how productive skill development particularly speaking and writing can be aligned with modern EFL curriculum standards that reflect current pedagogical demands and evolving technological expectations. By integrating insights from curriculum theory, needs analysis, and 21st-century skills frameworks, the study aims to propose a curriculum alignment model that enhances the relevance, effectiveness, and future-readiness of EFL

instruction. This approach seeks to ensure that learners are equipped not only with linguistic competence but also with the communicative and digital literacies necessary to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW***2.1 Curriculum Design: Theoretical and Practical Foundations***

Curriculum design is widely conceptualised as both a theoretical framework and a practical process shaping language learning. Scholars such as Nunan and Carter (2001) describe curriculum design as a cyclical activity involving planning, implementation, evaluation, and revision, requiring educators to combine philosophical perspectives with real classroom considerations. Nation and Macalister (2019) emphasises that curriculum design should foster shared understanding among teachers and administrators, offering a flexible structure that supports professional judgment. More recent discussions Jenkins (2014) highlight the need to consider learners' current abilities, teacher competencies, institutional resources, and contextual constraints. Altogether, these studies argue that curriculum design must be context-responsive and grounded in practical realities to effectively support language skill development.

2.2 Learner-Centred Approaches and Needs Analysis

Learner-centred curriculum design has become increasingly influential, with needs analysis recognised as an essential foundation for relevant EFL programmes. Through tools such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, and diagnostic tests, educators can identify learners' goals, motivations, weaknesses, and sociocultural backgrounds (Nikoopur & Farsani, 2011; Nurpratiwi, 2024). A learner-centred curriculum uses this information to determine appropriate content, task sequences, and instructional strategies

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that address real communicative needs. While such approaches enhance motivation and relevance, several scholars note the challenge of balancing individual needs with standardised expectations. This tension highlights the importance of integrating needs analysis in a structured way that maintains coherence across a curriculum.

2.3 Productive Skills Development in EFL (Speaking and Writing)

Speaking and writing, as productive skills, require intentional curriculum planning to ensure meaningful development in EFL contexts. Research emphasises the importance of authentic communicative tasks, opportunities for interaction, and cyclical processes such as drafting, revising, and feedback (Smith et al., 2024; Jaja, 2024). Speaking development relies on activities that promote fluency, interaction, and real-time negotiation of meaning, while writing development requires explicit instruction in genre, organisation, and language use (Sujiati et al., 2023). Studies consistently argue that productive skills are most effectively learned when tasks mirror real-world contexts, such as academic writing, professional presentations, or collaborative digital communication. Therefore, curriculum standards should clearly articulate performance indicators and task requirements for both skills.

2.4 21st-Century Skills and Digital Literacy in Language Education

The emergence of 21st-century skills frameworks has broadened expectations for learners, integrating competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information literacy, and ICT skills (Pardede, 2020; Kademi, 2021). These skills are crucial in preparing learners for academic and professional environments shaped by digital transformation. Research indicates that these skills should be embedded within EFL curricula through tasks requiring problem-solving, evaluation of

digital sources, and participation in multimodal communication. However, many studies report that teachers often lack sufficient technological literacy or support, limiting effective implementation. Consequently, integrating 21st-century skills requires not only curriculum revision but also improved teacher training and institutional support.

2.5 Technology Integration in EFL Teaching and Materials

Development Technology integration in EFL teaching has been shown to enhance learner engagement, autonomy, and opportunities for authentic communication. ICT tools such as multimedia platforms, digital writing applications, and speech analysis software can support the development of productive skills (Hsu et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2025; Sabgini & Triastama Wiraatmaja, 2022). Komis et al. (2013) note that technology enriches interaction and feedback, while Prayudha (2023) emphasises the need to update coursebooks to align with digital communication genres. Despite these benefits, research warns that technology alone does not guarantee improved learning outcomes. The effectiveness of digital tools depends heavily on teachers' technological competence and pedagogical design (Wahyuni et al., 2019). Thus, curriculum development must explicitly integrate both digital resources and teacher preparation.

2.6 Curriculum Standards, Alignment, and Assessment

Curriculum standards serve as benchmarks linking learning objectives, instructional materials, and assessment practices. Alignment ensures that what learners are expected to achieve is directly connected to what teachers deliver and how outcomes are evaluated (Zhou & He, 2025). In productive skills, alignment requires clear performance descriptors, appropriate task formats, and authentic assessment rubrics that reflect real-world communicative

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demands. However, multiple studies highlight persistent misalignment between high-level curriculum standards and classroom practices, often due to vague descriptors, inadequate teacher training, and insufficiently updated materials. Moreover, existing standards frequently overlook digital literacy and multimodal communication skills that are increasingly essential in modern contexts. These gaps underscore the need for improved alignment models that integrate productive skills, learner needs, and contemporary competencies.

2.7 Synthesis and Research Gaps

The literature collectively reveals strong theoretical support for learner-centred curriculum design, authentic productive skill development, technology integration, and 21st-century competencies. However, significant gaps remain in converting these principles into coherent curriculum standards, materials, and classroom practices. Many institutions adopt modern frameworks without operationalising them into specific tasks, assessments, or teacher training systems. As a result, productive skill development is often fragmented, misaligned, or outdated relative to contemporary communication demands. This gap highlights the need for research that proposes practical alignment models linking learner needs, curriculum components, productive skill tasks, and digital literacies. The present study aims to address these gaps by offering an integrated approach to aligning productive skill development with modern EFL curriculum standards.

3. METHODS

The research design for this study follows the Research and Development (R&D) model described by Borg and Gall (1989, in Creswell & Poth, 2018), which is widely used in educational research to develop and improve curriculum, instructional materials,

and programs. This study specifically applies the R&D framework to align productive skill development (speaking and writing) with modern EFL curriculum standards.

1) Needs Analysis

The first stage involved a thorough needs analysis of EFL learners. This process aimed to identify learners' current proficiency levels, existing gaps in speaking and writing skills, and the specific communicative needs relevant to academic, professional, or social contexts. Data were collected through interviews with teachers, analysis of students' prior performance, and review of EFL course syllabi and standards. This stage ensured that the curriculum alignment would be grounded in the actual requirements of learners and the learning environment.

2) Evaluation of Existing

Curriculum and Materials In the second stage, existing EFL curriculum frameworks, course materials, and textbooks were evaluated to assess how well they support productive skill development. The evaluation focused on content relevance, task types, alignment with curriculum standards, and incorporation of real-world communicative tasks. This stage identified strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement, providing a foundation for the design of revised or new curriculum components.

3) Design of Aligned Curriculum and Materials

Based on the needs assessment and evaluation, the new design was developed to explicitly integrate productive skill development with modern EFL standards. This stage involved drafting learning objectives, selecting task types, outlining speaking and writing exercises, and incorporating 21st-century competencies and digital literacy where appropriate. The design also included guidelines for assessment

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methods that measure both skill proficiency and real-world applicability.

4) Expert Validation

Once the draft design was completed, it was submitted to subject matter experts in EFL curriculum and language pedagogy for validation. Experts reviewed the alignment of the proposed materials and tasks with curriculum standards, the clarity and relevance of learning objectives, and the suitability of assessment tools. Feedback from this stage was used to refine and improve the curriculum and instructional materials.

5) Trial Implementation

The revised curriculum and materials were then tested in a real classroom setting. EFL learners participated in activities designed to develop speaking and writing skills, while instructors applied the materials according to the proposed framework. Observations, performance assessments, and feedback from both teachers and learners were collected to evaluate the effectiveness and practicality of the design.

6) Revision and Finalization

Based on the results of the trial implementation, further revisions were made to address any issues or areas for

improvement. The final version of the curriculum and materials was documented, including learning objectives, task designs, instructional guidelines, and assessment procedures. The finalized curriculum ensures that productive skill development is systematically aligned with modern EFL standards and is ready for broader implementation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**4.1 Result**

This study aims to align productive skill development (speaking and writing) with modern EFL curriculum standards, integrating 21st-century competencies such as creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. The research uses the Research and Development (R&D) approach to design, evaluate, and refine instructional materials that address the needs of EFL learners and enhance their speaking and writing skills.

The results of this study are based on data collected through various stages, including needs analysis, curriculum evaluation, expert validation, and trial implementation. The findings aim to ensure that the developed curriculum effectively meets the standards of modern EFL education and supports students' ability to use language in real-world contexts.

Table 1. Need Analysis

Question	1	2	3	4	5
Q1. Understanding Context (%)	25.71%	14.29%	28.57%	20%	11.43%
Q2. Relevance to Needs (%)	28.57%	11.43%	14.29%	31.43%	14.29%
Q3. Confidence in Speaking (%)	20%	25.71%	17.14%	25.71%	11.43%
Q4. Need for Skill Development (%)	14.29%	25.71%	11.43%	31.43%	17.14%
Q5. Communicative Needs (%)	31.43%	14.29%	17.14%	22.86%	14.29%
Q6. Teacher's Observation (%)	20%	11.43%	14.29%	28.57%	25.71%

The Need Analysis table presents the percentage distribution of responses to six

questions related to the needs of EFL learners. For Q1 (Understanding Context), the highest

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percentage (28.57%) of respondents rated it as a 3, indicating moderate understanding of the context. Q2 (Relevance to Needs) shows a relatively balanced distribution, with 31.43% of respondents selecting 4, suggesting that the curriculum needs to better address learner requirements. Q3 (Confidence in Speaking) highlights a 25.71% rating for 2 and 4, reflecting varied levels of confidence among students in speaking. Q4 (Need for Skill Development) demonstrates the highest percentage (31.43%) for a 4, indicating a

strong need for skill development in speaking and writing. Q5 (Communicative Needs) reveals that 31.43% of respondents selected 1, emphasizing a high importance of communicative skills. Finally, Q6 (Teacher's Observation) shows 28.57% selecting 4, suggesting that teachers observed a moderate need for improvement in students' skills. These results provide insights into areas where the curriculum and teaching methods can be enhanced to better support learners' needs.

Table 2. Curriculum Evaluation

Question	1	2	3	4	5
Q1. Relevance for Speaking	22.86%	14.29%	25.71%	17.14%	20%
Q2. Relevance for Writing	17.14%	28.57%	22.86%	22.86%	8.57%
Q3. Real-world Communication	22.86%	22.86%	11.43%	22.86%	20%
Q4. Support for 21st-century Skills	17.14%	22.86%	20%	25.71%	14.29%
Q5. Relevance for Professional Needs	25.71%	14.29%	22.86%	20%	17.14%
Q6. Task Effectiveness	14.29%	31.43%	14.29%	17.14%	22.86%

The Curriculum Evaluation table provides a breakdown of responses regarding the relevance and effectiveness of the EFL curriculum. For Q1 (Relevance for Speaking), the highest percentage (25.71%) of respondents selected 3, indicating that the curriculum is moderately relevant for developing speaking skills. Q2 (Relevance for Writing) shows a significant portion (28.57%) rated it as 2, suggesting that writing skills are somewhat underrepresented in the curriculum. Q3 (Real-world Communication) has a balanced distribution, with 22.86% of responses for both 1 and 4, indicating that real-world communication is somewhat

addressed but needs further emphasis. Q4 (Support for 21st-century Skills) reflects a mixed response, with 25.71% rating it as 4, showing some positive feedback, but still room for improvement. Q5 (Relevance for Professional Needs) indicates that 25.71% of respondents selected 1, emphasizing that the curriculum could be more relevant to professional needs. Lastly, Q6 (Task Effectiveness) shows a higher percentage (31.43%) of respondents rating it as 2, suggesting that the tasks in the curriculum may not be fully effective in supporting students' learning.

Table 3. The Expert Validation

Question	1	2	3	4	5
Q1. Alignment with EFL Standards	14.29%	25.71%	11.43%	28.57%	20%
Q2. Support for Productive Skills	20%	14.29%	22.86%	22.86%	20%

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Q3. Clarity of Learning Objectives	17.14%	20%	25.71%	25.71%	11.43%
Q4. Relevance for Real-world Communication	14.29%	28.57%	22.86%	17.14%	17.14%
Q5. Relevance of Assessment Tools	20%	20%	14.29%	25.71%	20%
Q6. Overall Effectiveness	22.86%	17.14%	31.43%	14.29%	14.29%

The Expert Validation table presents responses about the alignment of the curriculum with EFL standards and its effectiveness in supporting productive skills. Q1 (Alignment with EFL Standards) shows a balanced distribution, with 28.57% selecting 4, indicating good alignment with EFL standards. Q2 (Support for Productive Skills) reveals mixed responses, with 22.86% choosing 3 and 4, suggesting moderate support for productive skills. Q3 (Clarity of Learning Objectives) is fairly distributed, with 25.71% selecting 3 and 4, indicating that

the learning objectives are somewhat clear but could be further refined. Q4 (Relevance for Real-world Communication) shows that 28.57% rated it as 2, indicating that real-world communication could be better addressed. Q5 (Relevance of Assessment Tools) shows a more positive response, with 25.71% selecting 4, suggesting that the assessment tools are fairly relevant. Lastly, Q6 (Overall Effectiveness) has 31.43% selecting 3, indicating that the overall effectiveness of the curriculum is seen as moderate but with room for improvement.

Table 4. The Trial Implementation

Question	1	2	3	4	5
Q1. Engagement with Materials	17.14%	25.71%	20%	17.14%	20%
Q2. Confidence in Using Skills	20%	22.86%	20%	25.71%	11.43%
Q3. Clarity of Instructions	22.86%	22.86%	20%	17.14%	17.14%
Q4. Task Relevance	20%	25.71%	14.29%	17.14%	22.86%
Q5. Teacher's Feedback	14.29%	31.43%	14.29%	22.86%	17.14%
Q6. Student's Progress	22.86%	20%	17.14%	25.71%	14.29%

The Trial Implementation table presents responses regarding students' engagement and progress during the trial phase. Q1 (Engagement with Materials) shows a balanced distribution, with 25.71% selecting 2, indicating moderate engagement with the materials. Q2 (Confidence in Using Skills) reveals a higher percentage (25.71%) selecting 4, suggesting that students feel somewhat confident in applying the skills. Q3 (Clarity of Instructions) indicates a fairly balanced response, with 22.86% selecting 1 and 2, pointing to some confusion or lack of clarity in instructions. Q4 (Task Relevance) shows 25.71% selecting 2, suggesting that tasks may not always be highly relevant to students' needs. Q5 (Teacher's Feedback) reveals that 31.43% selected 2, indicating that students may not have received enough useful feedback. Finally, Q6 (Student's Progress) shows that 25.71% rated it as 4, suggesting that students made progress, but there may be room for improvement.

Table 5. The Revision and Finalization

Question	1	2	3	4	5
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Q1. Improved Task Effectiveness	17.14%	22.86%	14.29%	25.71%	20%
Q2. Relevance to Learning Goals	14.29%	28.57%	22.86%	20%	14.29%
Q3. Clarity of Revised Materials	22.86%	20%	17.14%	31.43%	8.57%
Q4. Ease of Use for Students	25.71%	31.43%	14.29%	20%	8.57%
Q5. Overall Improvement	14.29%	22.86%	25.71%	17.14%	20%
Q6. Readiness for Implementation	28.57%	17.14%	14.29%	20%	20%

The Revision and Finalization table presents responses regarding the improvements made after the trial implementation. Q1 (Improved Task Effectiveness) shows that 25.71% of respondents selected 4, indicating that the tasks became more effective after revision. Q2 (Relevance to Learning Goals) has a balanced response, with 28.57% selecting 2, suggesting some areas where the revision could better align with learning goals. Q3 (Clarity of Revised Materials) reveals 31.43% of respondents selecting 4, indicating that the revisions improved clarity, though 22.86% still felt it was unclear. Q4 (Ease of Use for Students) shows that 31.43% rated it as 2, indicating some difficulties in the materials' ease of use, with room for improvement in accessibility. Q5 (Overall Improvement) reflects a fairly balanced response, with 25.71% selecting 3, indicating a moderate overall improvement in the revised materials. Q6 (Readiness for Implementation) shows 28.57% selecting 1, suggesting that, while the materials showed readiness for implementation, further work may still be needed before full deployment.

Discussion

The results of this study highlight several key findings regarding the alignment of productive skill development (speaking and writing) with modern EFL curriculum standards. In the Needs Analysis stage, the data indicates that a substantial portion of students (31.43%) emphasized the need for better communicative skills, pointing out that their ability to communicate effectively in

various contexts is a major concern. This finding is consistent with research by Nunan (2023), who emphasized that language learners' communicative competence is essential for real-world success. Additionally, 31.43% of respondents felt the need for skill development, which further corroborates the study's emphasis on fostering higher-order skills in language education.

The Curriculum Evaluation results reflect mixed perceptions regarding the relevance of the materials to both speaking and writing skills. While 25.71% of respondents felt the materials were relevant to speaking skills, a notable 28.57% rated the relevance of writing skills as low. This finding aligns with the work of (Harmer, 2017), who pointed out that many EFL curricula often prioritize speaking over writing, despite the equal importance of both skills in language learning. Moreover, the evaluation of real-world communication relevance and task effectiveness shows room for improvement, as only 31.43% found the tasks to be highly effective in bridging the gap between classroom learning and practical language use.

The Expert Validation phase revealed that while the proposed curriculum largely aligns with EFL standards, with 28.57% rating its alignment as high, there remains a gap in its effectiveness for real-world communication. Experts suggested that despite improvements in task relevance, clarity of learning objectives and the use of assessment tools still require refinement. This is in line with the findings of (Biggs et al.,

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2022), who argued that clear learning objectives and appropriate assessment tools are crucial for ensuring the effectiveness of any curriculum.

The Trial Implementation phase showed that, although students made progress in using the materials, there was a noticeable gap in task relevance and teacher feedback. These findings are consistent with the views of Brown (2019), who emphasized that continuous feedback and task relevance are key factors in maintaining student motivation and fostering skill development.

Finally, in the Revision and Finalization phase, the results indicate that while the revisions improved task effectiveness and clarity, there were challenges in making the materials easier to use and fully ready for implementation. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), the iterative process of revising and refining materials is crucial for adapting them to the evolving needs of students and educational contexts. The mixed responses regarding readiness for implementation underscore the importance of further testing and refinement to ensure that the curriculum is fully aligned with both pedagogical goals and students' needs.

5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to align productive skill development (speaking and writing) with modern EFL curriculum standards. The findings highlight that while speaking skills are moderately addressed, writing skills require more attention in the curriculum. The evaluation revealed gaps in task relevance and real-world communication, indicating the need for more practical tasks. Expert validation and trial implementation showed that, despite improvements, there are still areas for refinement, particularly in clarity, feedback, and the alignment of tasks with real-world communication needs.

Future studies should focus on integrating digital literacy and personalized learning paths to enhance task relevance and engagement. A longitudinal approach could help assess the long-term effectiveness of the curriculum, while investigating teacher training strategies could provide insights into better supporting students' productive skill development. These areas would contribute to further refining EFL curricula and improving language education outcomes.

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