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A Comparative Analysis of the Philippine and Indonesian English Curricula at the Elementary Education Level

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum plays an important role in education because it provides a structured framework for learning. Understanding how English curricula in different countries are constructed can be beneficial for improving educational quality. This study, therefore, aimed to analyze and compare the Indonesian and Philippine English curricula, focusing on their construction, particularly at the elementary education level. The study employed document analysis through three stages. First, the data were coded using themes adapted from Tyler's Rationale (objectives, design, scope and sequence, evaluation). Then, a comparative analysis was conducted to identify similarities and differences between the two curricula. Finally, the findings were interpreted by considering contextual and philosophical factors influencing each curriculum. Findings reveal significant differences: the Philippine curriculum introduces English from Kindergarten, highlighting its role as a second language that is vital for national development and global integration. It employs a structured approach emphasizing early exposure, higher-order thinking, and standardized assessments. By contrast, Indonesia introduces English in Grade 3, prioritizing foundational skills in the Indonesian language first; and emphasizing flexibility, formative assessments, and greater teacher autonomy, allowing contextualized adaptation to diverse student needs. Despite these differences, both curricula aim to foster communicative competence, critical thinking, and intercultural awareness, essential skills for 21st-century learners. The results bring to light the importance of context-sensitive curriculum development that balances international educational trends with local linguistic realities, contributing theoretically by clarifying how national contexts influence curriculum choices in ESL and EFL environments. Practically, it provides actionable insights for policymakers and curriculum designers aiming to develop adaptable, inclusive, and culturally relevant English programs in multilingual contexts.

Keywords: Indonesian Emancipated Curriculum; Philippine Matatag Curriculum; Philosophical Foundations of Language Education; Tyler's Rationale.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum lies at the heart of education, functioning not only as a plan of learning but also as a practical expression of educational philosophy. Pinar et al. (2008) describes curriculum as a realm of action, while Emilia (2021) explains its etymological roots in curro, meaning racecourse. Grumet (1975) further reflect on currere, emphasizing the personal journey of learning. These views suggest that the curriculum is not just about content but also about experience. Over time,

the term has evolved to encompass all planned learning experiences (Prideaux, 2003). As such, curriculum guides how educational goals are realized in practice. It reflects both academic structure and broader educational direction.

Curriculum also serves as a vital connector between educational policy and classroom practice. Fotheringham et al. (2012) refer to this function as "curriculum as vehicle," meaning that curriculum transmits policy intentions into real student experiences. This current study, therefore, focuses on how the curriculum is created and structured to fulfill that role, delivering objectives, designing learning experiences, determining scope and sequence, and guiding evaluation. For this, Tyler's Rationale is employed as the analytical lens. Tyler's framework is foundational in curriculum theory (Antonelli, 1972; Burns, 2024; Ibeh, 2022; Stone, 1985; Wraga, 2017). His work provides a practical structure to evaluate how education systems translate goals into curriculum design. This study uses that structure to compare two national English curricula.

Tyler outlines four guiding questions: (1) What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?; (2) What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?; (3) How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?; (4) How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (Antonelli, 1972; Pinarmet al., 2008; Stone, 1985; Taba, 1962; Tyler, 2013; Wraga, 2017). These questions shape curriculum components: objectives, experiences, organization, and evaluation. The first question has to do with the objectives or aims of the curriculum as Tyler says that all education should be goal-oriented. The second question refers to the learning experience, the interaction between students, and the external conditions in the environment to which they can react. The third question emphasizes the organization in which the material or instruction needs to be amplified, rearranged, and organized (Pinar et al., 2008). Organization is considered important as it greatly influences the efficiency of instruction and the degree to which major educational changes are brought about in the students (Tyler, 2013). The final question has to do with the evaluation to measure the success of objectives as they relate to the total effectiveness of the curriculum process.

The current study draws on these four questions to analyze English curricula from Indonesia and the Philippines. The Indonesian Emancipated Curriculum represents an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, while the Philippine Matatag Curriculum represents an English as a Second Language (ESL) context. Drawing on Kachru's (1992) three concentric circles model, Indonesia falls within the Expanding Circle, where English plays a limited role in daily communication. Meanwhile, the Philippines, in the Outer Circle, positions English as a widely used institutional language. These differing roles affect how English is taught and how the curriculum is designed. Thus, curriculum comparison must consider the broader linguistic environment.

Previous studies have examined Indonesian and Philippine curriculum comparisons, highlighting shared features such as the use of technology, emphasis on student responsibility, authentic assessment of attitudes, and a shift from relying solely on grades for academic success (Nasir et al., 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2021). However, it was found that the Indonesian curriculum faces challenges related to consistent implementation and skill development, while the Philippine curriculum struggles with limited teaching materials and technology-assisted resources (Cahya et al., 2024; Po, 2025). Although both countries aim to improve educational quality through curriculum reform, Indonesia emphasizes character development and flexibility, yet often struggles with practical implementation, whereas the Philippines focuses on cognitive skills but is hindered by resource limitations, particularly in terms of digital infrastructure and teaching media.

Despite those findings, earlier studies did not clearly outline the framework used for curriculum comparison, which limited their ability to systematically assess how curricular components are structured and implemented. Without guiding model, such analyses often remained descriptive rather than analytical, providing surface-level observations without deeper structural understanding. This study addresses that gap by applying Tyler's Rationale, a well-established framework in curriculum theory, to guide the comparison. Through this lens, the study not only examines what is present in each curriculum, but also how and why it is constructed that way. By using Tyler's four guiding questions, the research aims to evaluate the internal coherence of each curriculum and how well it serves its educational intentions. This structured approach allows for a more critical and meaningful comparison, especially in understanding how curriculum functions as both a policy tool and pedagogical plan.

Additionally, as the study analyzes language curricula, the philosophical foundations of language education are worth considering. Richard & Rodgers (2001) emphasize that language education draws from three core theories: theories of learning, theories of language, and theories of language learning. Through this combined approach, this study aims to further investigate the alignment of the four highlighted elements within the curricula with foundational theories to enhance the understanding of language education in both EFL and ESL contexts, specifically in the context of elementary education. The guiding research question is: How do the Matatag and Emancipated curricula reflect Tyler's Rationale and embody philosophical foundations of language education within their English curriculum?

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts comparative document analysis as an analytical research method, involving a systematic and critical investigation rather than mere descriptions. This qualitative approach identifies and interprets emerging trends within the data (Cohen et al., 2007). The selection of this particular method supports the objective of this study, that is, to examine the nature of two curricula, of which the forms they take are legal documents. This, however, does not necessarily mean that comparative document analysis is without its drawbacks. This method requires specific frameworks (oftentimes requiring combining several frameworks) to scrutinize the recurring themes/patterns in documents depending on the discipline. This could be profoundly time-consuming and could also decontextualize the data from their authentic environment (Morgan, 2022).

The study focuses on analyzing and comparing the Philippine and Indonesian English cur The study focuses on analyzing and comparing the Philippine and Indonesian English curricula documents, which were collected from official sources and examined using coding systems aligned with specific frameworks. Specifically, this study seeks to investigate how both curricula differ at the primary education level (their objectives, design, scopes and sequences, and evaluation). The Philippine curriculum is the Matagag curriculum, which was implemented in 2024, and the Indonesian curriculum is known as Kurikulum Merdeka or Emancipated Curriculum, which was introduced in 2020.

Tyler's rationale serves as the primary framework, guiding the analysis of curriculum elements, namely: objectives, design, scope and sequence, and evaluation. By examining these elements, the study traces the construction of each curriculum. This structured approach facilitates the identification of similarities and differences between the two curricula (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Following the comparative analysis, the study explores theoretical

perspectives to reveal how the curricula reflect the philosophical foundations of language education. This process not only highlights points of comparison but also deepens the understanding of how the curricula align with the foundational theories, enhancing insights into language education in both EFL and ESL contexts.

2.2 Data Collection

This study employs document analysis to examine and compare the Indonesian Emancipated Curriculum and the Philippine Matatag Curriculum of English, using a qualitative comparative method. Data collection prioritized official sources, with curriculum documents freely obtained from government websites. The analysis focuses on curriculum development through Tyler's Rationale and the philosophical foundations of language education. The primary reason for analyzing and comparing the Indonesian Emancipated Curriculum and the Philippine Matatag Curriculum rests on the status of English in both countries. In other words, this study aimed to capture how the Emancipated Curriculum and Matatag Curriculum are performed within EFL and ESL contexts, respectively. In addition, the accessibility of these curricula through official government platforms allows for a thorough examination of their elements. This accessibility played an important role, as these documents were among the most easily accessible documents. The descriptions below highlight some points regarding both curricula.

The Indonesian Emancipated Curriculum emphasizes flexibility, allowing schools and teachers to design the curriculum tailored to student needs, fostering creativity, innovation, and improved learning outcomes (Rohmah et al., 2024). Granting teachers more responsibility enhances their professionalism and benefits student performance. Conversely, the Philippine Matatag Curriculum extends preparation time, equipping students for post-school challenges, higher education, or employment (Kilag et al., 2024). While Indonesia's curriculum prioritizes life skills and workforce readiness (Tavares et al., 2023), the Philippines emphasizes academic skills to ensure competitiveness in the modern job market (Cahya et al., 2024). Indonesia's curriculum aligns with national goals by promoting school empowerment and character education, creating inclusive and adaptive learning environments. In contrast, the Philippine curriculum focuses on developing technical, interpersonal, and critical thinking skills to enhance future student success (Kilag et al., 2024).

Additionally, the study limits its scope to elementary education, focusing specifically on this level to capture foundational differences in early English education. This purposive selection enables a clearer comparison of the relationship between different linguistic backgrounds, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) in the Philippines and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia and how they influence the positioning of English in early education, reflecting broader national educational goals and priorities.

2.3 Data Analysis

Analyses made through document analysis are advantageous in terms of time, convenience, and cost-effectiveness; therefore, it enables researchers to classify and gain all the works in the related area according to certain qualities (Cohen et al., 2007). Additionally, it can help the orientations, different viewpoints, and opinions related to the subject become clearer. Thus, the qualities that are not directly visible to users/readers can be observed and analyzed. The process of data analysis is known as thematic-comparative analysis. This particular analysis rests on the idea of scrutinizing similar and different patterns emerging within the data sets. However, this analysis still requires a viable guideline in looking for such recurring patterns. To address this,

this study adapted Tyler's Rationale (2013), proposing four vital recurring elements in curricula. The themes were objectives, design, scope and sequence, and evaluation. Four questions revolving around these themes guided this process. Below is the table showing the themes and questions. This process was divided into three stages: coding, theme comparative analysis, and discussing the reasons behind recurring differences in both curricula, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes used in document analysis adapted from Tyler's (2013)

No	Themes	Questions
1	Objectives	What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
	Design	What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3	Scope and Sequence	How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4	Evaluation	How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

After the data were coded using the aforementioned themes as the guideline, each theme was analyzed comparatively, focusing on similarities and differences in both curricula. The study sought to uncover at least a small number of differences due to the fact that both curricula came from two different linguistic backgrounds (ESL and EFL). The same condition was also expected to occur in terms of the alignment of philosophical foundations behind the two curricula, as distinctions found within the four themes mean that the theories (language, learning, and language learning) supporting them might also be different. The figure below exemplifies the stage at which the coded data was comparatively analyzed, as shown in Figure 1.

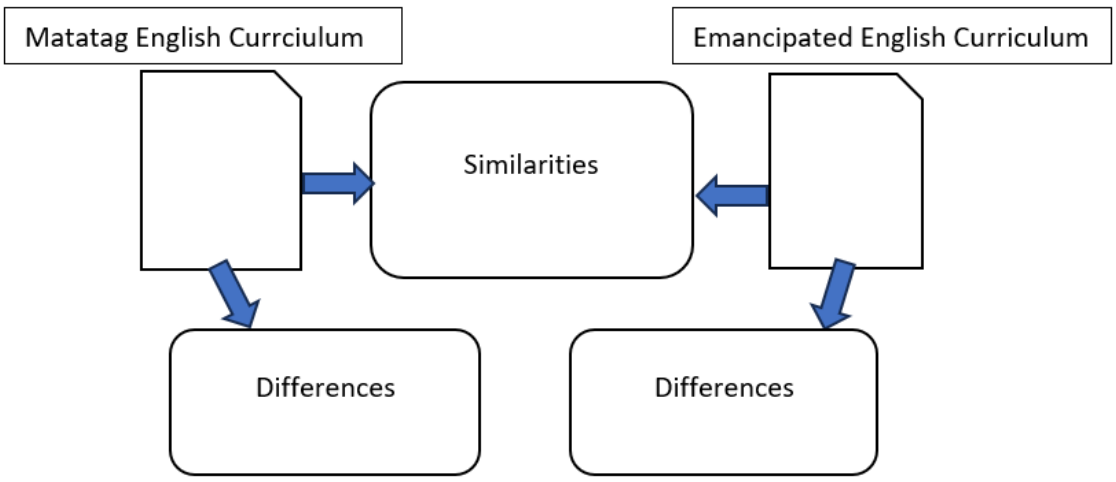


Figure 1. The comparison process of curriculum development adopted from Ren et al. (2017)

Finally, after the comparative analyses had taken place, the last stage sought to discuss the reason behind such differences by incorporating other elements such as the historical development of the curricula, the status of the English language in both countries, etc. The last stage also referred to the alignment of the four highlighted elements within the curricula with philosophical foundations to enhance the understanding of language education in both EFL and ESL contexts.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings covered the coding of the data and the comparative analyses. As some differences were expected to arise, this section is aimed at thoroughly pinpointing them. Besides differences, some similarities were also found, both in Tyler's rationale of the curriculum elements and the theoretical foundations of language education within the curricula. The findings specifically focus on the English curriculum at the elementary level: the Matatag curriculum, which covers Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grades 4 to 6, and the Emancipated curriculum, which covers Grades 3 to 6, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Indonesia and the Philippines' Curricula

Themes	Matatag Curriculum	Emancipated Curriculum
Objectives	• develop basic literacy skills and fluency in L1, Filipino, and English (oral and written) • understand and express familiar, grade-level-appropriate texts (70% narrative, 30% informational) • use conversational language skills in daily activities and academic language in specific content areas • develop applied and critical literacy skills to achieve communicative goals in a socially appropriate manner • enhance skills to synthesize, analyze, interpret, evaluate, and respond to texts	• understand and respond to various types of simple spoken, written, and visual texts in English with and without the aid of visual tools and nonverbal communication. • interact with others using simple English in everyday social situations and classroom contexts. • respond to instructions, simple questions in English, and/or share information using basic vocabulary. • use simple English to communicate in familiar, routine situations. • understand the relationship between letter sounds in simple English vocabulary. • comprehend and produce simple spoken, written, and visual texts in English with the help of examples.
Design	The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model in English language learning involves four key stages: • Explicit or Focused Instruction: The teacher takes most responsibility, establishes the lesson's purpose, and models their thinking, with a focus on expected learning outcomes. • Guided Instruction: The teacher and students share responsibility. The teacher provides scaffolds, such as questions and prompts, to help students understand the content. • Collaborative Learning or Productive Group Work: Students work in groups under the teacher's guidance to consolidate their understanding before applying it independently. • Independent Learning: students apply what they've learned, with independent tasks used as formative assessments to check for understanding and identify reteaching needs. These stages can be used in any order, but each lesson should include all four	The design used in English language learning is the genre-based approach (GBA), which focuses on texts in various modes, including oral, written, visual, audio, and multimodal, as follows: • Building Knowledge of the Field (BKoF): The teacher builds students' knowledge or background knowledge on the topic to be written or discussed. In this phase, the teacher also establishes the cultural context of the texts being taught. • Modeling of the Text (MoT): The teacher provides a model/example of a text as a reference for students to produce their own work, either orally or in writing. • Joint Construction of the Text (JCoT): The teacher guides students and collaboratively produces a text together. • Independent Construction of the Text (ICoT): Students independently produce oral and written texts. Communication occurs at the level of the text, not just the sentence. This means that meaning is not only conveyed by words but must also be supported by context. Therefore, in learning and producing various types of texts, students

Themes	Matatag Curriculum	Emancipated Curriculum
	components. Teachers should design lessons to encourage collaborative work, helping students engage in interactive learning to deepen their understanding of the language.	need to pay attention to the social function, organizational structure, and appropriate language elements according to the goals and target audience/viewers.
Scope and Sequence	(Kindergarten to Grade 3) Focus on literacy: Students learn reading, writing, listening, and speaking through literacy using a gradual process. The gradual process is applied to the level of vocabulary they learn in every meeting, increasing as they move on to the next stage of learning. Grammar awareness and grammatical structures are also the focus of literacy. Additionally, they are also exposed to various texts and genres. By valuing students' linguistic backgrounds, this pedagogy fosters a rich learning experience that emphasizes continuous skill-building throughout the journey. (Grade 4 to Grade 6) Focus on language: Students actively participate in communicative tasks that reflect real-life situations through the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. This method focuses on using language for meaningful communication. Students engage in group discussions, give presentations, and write emails that facilitate collaboration and interaction with their peers.	Phase B (Grades 3 and 4) Listening-Speaking: Students use English to interact in a range of predictable social and classroom situations using certain patterns of sentences. They change/substitute some sentence elements to participate in classroom routines and learning activities. They comprehend key points of information in visually supported oral presentations containing familiar vocabulary. Using visual cues, they follow a series of simple instructions related to classroom procedures and learning activities. Reading-Viewing: Students understand everyday vocabulary with support from pictures/illustrations. They read/view and respond to a range of short, simple, familiar texts in the form of print or digital texts, including visual, multimodal or interactive texts orally and using nonverbal communication. Writing-Presenting: Students communicate their ideas and experiences through drawings and copied writing. With teachers' support, they produce simple text using simple words/phrases and pictures. They write simple vocabulary related to their class and home environments using invented spelling. Phase C (Grades 5 and 6) Listening-Speaking: Students use English to interact in a range of predictable social and classroom situations using certain patterns of sentences. They change/substitute some elements of sentences to participate in learning activities. They identify key information from oral texts in various contexts using some strategies (asking a speaker to repeat, to speak slowly and/or asking what a word means). They follow a series of simple instructions related to classroom procedures and learning activities.) Reading-Viewing: Students understand familiar and new vocabulary with support from visual cues or context clues. They read/view and respond to a wide range of short, simple, familiar texts in the

Themes	Matatag Curriculum	Emancipated Curriculum
		form of print or digital texts, including visual, multimodal, or interactive texts. They find basic information in a sentence and explain a topic in a text read or viewed. Writing-Presenting: Students communicate their ideas and experience through copied writing and their own basic writing, showing evidence of a developing understanding of the writing process. They demonstrate an early awareness that written texts in English are presented through conventions, which change according to context and purpose. With teachers' support, they produce a range of simple texts, using certain patterns of sentences and modeled examples at word and simple sentence levels. They demonstrate knowledge of some English letter-sound relationships and the spelling of high-frequency words. In their writing, they use vocabulary related to their class and home environments, using basic strategies (copying words or phrases from books or word lists, using images and/or asking how to write a word.
Evaluation	The Matatag Curriculum relies heavily on national standardized tests as the main tool for assessing student mastery of subject matter. These assessments are typically final exams designed to evaluate students' overall understanding of the content. The implementation of these assessments generally adheres to nationally established test formats.	The Emancipated Curriculum emphasizes continuous formative assessment, incorporating student portfolios, projects, teacher observations, and performance-based evaluations. It encourages the use of technology in assessment, such as apps or online platforms, to facilitate tracking of student progress. Additionally, it allows flexibility for teachers to develop diverse assessment methods that align with students' needs.

3.1 Sub Title Curricular Elements through Tyler's Rationale

a. Objectives

The two sets of descriptions share several similarities in their goals. Both emphasize the development of communicative competence in English through a variety of multimodal texts, which include oral, written, visual, and audiovisual forms. Additionally, both countries prioritize critical and creative thinking skills, aiming to foster intellectual growth and problem-solving abilities. Another shared element is the focus on intercultural competence, where both countries aim to help students understand and appreciate the perspectives, practices, and products of diverse cultures to promote respect for diversity and global awareness.

However, the descriptions also highlight distinct aspects of language learning and individual development. The Matatag Curriculum places more emphasis on the nature of language, culture, and communication processes, aiming to deepen students' understanding of how language and culture shape their perspectives and identity. In contrast, the Emancipated Curriculum focuses more on building self-confidence and the ability to express oneself as an independent and responsible individual. Moreover, while

the former mentions enhancing intellectual and analytic capacity, the latter highlights the role of language in fostering self-expression and personal growth. Thus, while both countries target comprehensive development in language and culture, they differ in the specific aspects of identity, personal expression, and intellectual skills they emphasize.

b. Design

The Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) Model in the Matatag Curriculum and the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in the Emancipated Curriculum share common educational goals but differ in their approaches to instruction. Both models aim to foster student engagement and independence in learning, guiding students toward mastery. They emphasize a student-centered approach, where the teacher initially provides support and gradually transfers responsibility to the students, helping them become more self-reliant in their learning processes. Both models also encourage the development of essential skills such as communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

However, there are distinct differences in how these models are implemented. The GRR Model follows a structured progression of teaching where the teacher first models the content, then guides students through joint activities and expects students to independently demonstrate their understanding. This approach is particularly focused on the transition from teacher-led instruction to student-centered learning, ensuring that students gradually take on more responsibility in their educational journey. In contrast, the GBA emphasizes language learning through specific text types, integrating cultural context and focusing on the social functions and structures of these texts. GBA involves stages like Building Knowledge of the Field, Modelling of the Text, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction, and is designed to improve students' ability to use language across various modes: oral, written, visual, and audiovisual. In essence, while both approaches aim to foster independent learning, the GRR Model centers on the gradual shift of responsibility from teacher to student in a more general sense, whereas the GBA focuses specifically on language acquisition through text-based learning and intercultural understanding.

c. Scope and Sequence

Both the Matatag and Emancipated curricula aim to develop students' literacy skills, with a focus on communication and text comprehension. In both approaches, students engage with texts to enhance their literacy and critical thinking skills, emphasizing the ability to respond to and interact with texts in meaningful ways. In Matatag, the focus is on applying basic literacy skills through both applied and critical literacy, where students not only use reading and writing for communication but also analyze and evaluate texts to form judgments. In contrast, the Emancipated curriculum is more focused on understanding and responding to simple texts, with a greater emphasis on visual aids and non-verbal communication, especially in the earlier stages (Phase B or grades 3-4). Additionally, Phase C (grades 5-6) gradually introduces more complex literacy tasks, such as identifying key information in texts and using strategies for writing, which is a more developmental approach compared to the more structured literacy focus in the Matatag Curriculum. The most striking difference, however, is the fact that the Matatag Curriculum teaches English from Kindergarten to Grade 6, whereas the Emancipated curriculum starts from Grades 3 to 6.

d. Evaluation

The Matatag Curriculum primarily relies on national standardized tests as its main evaluation tool. These evaluations are typically final exams designed to measure students' general understanding of the subject matter. They follow a nationally established test format and focus on evaluating students' overall mastery of the material, with less emphasis on ongoing evaluation. As a result, the Matatag curriculum's evaluation method is more structured and uniform, emphasizing summative assessments that provide a snapshot of student learning at a specific point in time.

In contrast, the Emancipated Curriculum takes a more dynamic and holistic approach to evaluation. It emphasizes continuous formative ones, such as student portfolios, projects, teacher observations, and performance-based assessments, to track students' progress over time. This approach allows for a more personalized understanding of student learning, as assessments are designed to be flexible and diverse, catering to individual student needs. Additionally, the use of technology in the Emancipated Curriculum, such as apps or online platforms, enables easier tracking and monitoring of student progress. Teachers are given more autonomy to develop and implement assessment methods that are both relevant and tailored to the students' evolving needs, fostering a more adaptive and comprehensive learning environment. Thus, while the Matatag Curriculum focuses on standardized, summative assessments, the Emancipated Curriculum provides a more diverse, formative, and flexible assessment approach, with greater teacher involvement in shaping assessment practices.

3.2 Philosophical Foundations of English Language Education in the Curricula

The philosophical foundation of a curriculum significantly shapes its components, including objectives, design, scope and sequence, and evaluation strategies. This is evident in Tyler's Rationale (2013), a framework that emphasizes the alignment of educational objectives and the organization of learning experiences in each curriculum (Emilia, 2021). In the Matatag and Emancipated curricula, the philosophical foundations of language education: theories of language, learning, and language learning reflect different approaches to learning and teaching English, which in turn influence how the curricula are constructed.

The theories of learning, particularly those of Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1985), Dewey (1998), and Bloom et al. (1956), can be seen in both the Matatag and Emancipated curricula, though they emphasize different aspects of the learning process. Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory and Bruner's (1985) concept of guided instruction are evident in both curricula's emphasis on scaffolding, in the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model in the Matatag curriculum, where teachers initially provide support and gradually transfer responsibility to students. This mirrors those theories of learning, which state that learning occurs through social interactions and guided support (Puntambekar, 2022; Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2024; Saracho, 2023). The Emancipated Curriculum also embraces this concept through the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) (MoECRT, 2024), where teachers initially model the learning process, engage students in collaborative activities, and gradually transition them to independent work. Additionally, Dewey's experiential learning (1998) is evident in both curricula, though more so in the Emancipated Curriculum, where real-world applications and projects foster a learning environment where learning happens best through doing. Finally, Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) is also seen in the cognitive progression within both curricula, with Matatag encouraging higher-order thinking

skills like evaluation and analysis, and the Emancipated Curriculum supporting developmental progression from basic comprehension to more complex tasks, such as analysis and creation.

The theories of language proposed by Chomsky and Halliday are also embodied in the Matatag and Emancipated curricula, respectively. Chomsky's (2006) theory of language and mind suggests that humans are born with an innate ability to acquire language. Chomsky mentions that philosophically, grammar is the semantics and syntax produced by the human mind with the coherence of the environment (Matthews, 1994). The Matatag curriculum, while more structured and standardized, facilitates language development by providing a controlled environment in which students acquire grammar and language skills. Meanwhile, Halliday and Matthiessen's systemic functional grammar theory (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), which emphasizes the functional use of language in different social contexts, is reflected in the Emancipated Curriculum's focus on the social functions of texts and intercultural communication. The Emancipated Curriculum gives students exposure to various text types and their respective purposes. Students not only learn a language but also understand how it is used in different social settings. Thus, it aligns with Halliday's emphasis on the relationship between language and its social context.

Theories by Vygotsky (1978), Rothery (1994), and Derewianka (2003) provide additional insights into how both the Matatag and Emancipated Curricula approach language learning. Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory is embodied in both curricula, emphasizing the importance of collaborative environments where students engage in meaningful social interactions. In the Matatag Curriculum, this is reflected in communicative tasks such as group discussions that foster collaboration and peer interaction. Similarly, the Emancipated Curriculum highlights interactions with texts, where the gradual shift from teacher-led activities to independent student tasks mirrors Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). For instance, students transition from teacher-led reading to joint reading and eventually to independent retelling (Damayanti, 2021).

Rothery's (1994) scaffolded language teaching-learning cycle is evident in the Emancipated Curriculum's Genre-Based Approach (GBA), where students engage with language through its social functions. This approach aligns with Derewianka's (2003). work on genre-based literacy pedagogy, which emphasizes the teaching of specific text types and their applications in real-world contexts. The structured progression from building knowledge of a field to the independent construction of texts reflects the scaffolding process that gradually develops students' literacy skills. Both curricula integrate these theoretical foundations to create supportive learning environments, ensuring that students acquire language skills through interaction, modeling, and guided practice before progressing to independent application.

3.3 The Matatag vs Emancipated Curriculum Based on Their Philosophical Foundations and Tyler's Rationale

Theoretically speaking, both curricula have strived to meet the three philosophical foundations regarding curriculum designing: language, learning, and language learning. The fact that both curricula are in line with those theories, albeit the small differences, means that, in theory, the curricula are suitable to meet the respective countries' needs. One could argue, however, that such differences are called for when looking for other elements affecting how the curricula were constructed in the first place.

Historically, the Emancipated Curriculum was developed as a rapid response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia (Amanda et al., 2023). Formerly known as *Kurikulum Prototipe*

(Prototype Curriculum), it was designed partly to address the learning issues faced by schools across the country during the outbreak such as the issue of accessibility, schools' infrastructures, students' adaptability, etc (Amanda et al., 2023). To address such issues, the government developed the Emancipated Curriculum with a greater emphasis on basic understanding and structured students' growth. In contrast, the Philippine curriculum aims to develop technical, interpersonal, and critical thinking skills to enhance students' future success (Kilag et al., 2024). Launched with the mission to strengthen Filipino values, promote nationalism, and prepare citizens for a progressive society, it seeks to equip students with the skills essential for the 21st century. While both curricula are grounded in the philosophical foundations of language education, they also reflect the historical context and conditions in which they were developed, particularly influencing their objectives. This aligns with Tyler's idea that one of the sources of information to set the educational objectives is studies of contemporary life outside the school (Emilia, 2021).

In order to attain the objectives, Tyler proposed that learning experiences or interactions between the students and the external conditions in the environment to which they can react should be designed with the focus of learning taking place through the active behavior of the students (Tyler, 2013). Both design elements of Philippine and Indonesian English curricula emphasize the importance of real-world problems in developing thinking skills as well as critical thinking through problem-solving tasks. While Tyler's concepts of learning experiences are reflected in the design of both curricula, a distinct approach to learning models is evident: The Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model in the Matatag Curriculum and the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in the Emancipated Curriculum. The GRR model emphasizes students' independent learning through structured guidance, reflecting the importance of retaining linguistic and cultural identity in the Philippines, where English is a second language. On the other hand, the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) emphasizes contextualized learning, which was primarily beneficial at the elementary level (Amanda et al., 2023). On another note, collaborative learning is also an important point that Tyler mentioned in the design element. Both curricula support social attitudes that allow students to engage in discussions that promote teamwork and respect for diverse viewpoints. Thus, these design elements in each curriculum reflect Tyler's concepts by prioritizing active student participation and social interaction in the learning experiences.

Tyler (2013) emphasizes that once learning experiences are selected, they must be well-organized to ensure effective learning (Emilia, 2021). At the elementary level, Indonesia's English language curriculum focuses on promoting self-confidence, self-expression, and communicative competence through multimodal texts. On the contrary, the Philippines' English Curriculum places more emphasis on the nature of language, culture, and communication processes, aiming to deepen students' understanding of how these aspects shape their perspectives and identity. This small yet distinct focus is primarily caused by the status of English in respective countries, recognized as a foreign language in Indonesia (Alrajafi, 2021) and as a second language in the Philippines. Consequently, English plays a more significant role in Philippine education than in Indonesia, where linguistic learning prioritizes the national language at the elementary level.

In terms of the scope and sequence of both curricula, one distinct feature in both curricula lies in the introduction of English at early grades. In Indonesia, English begins in grade 3 with the idea that first and second-graders are primarily taught basic arithmetic and the Indonesian language. This reflects the government's prioritization of the national language, aligning with English's foreign language status. Conversely, the Philippines introduces English as early as kindergarten, emphasizing early literacy and reflecting its role as a second language. This early

start provides Filipino students with more extensive linguistic exposure, contributing to stronger English proficiency by the upper primary levels (Santos et al., 2022). The differences in both objectives and implementation highlight the greater emphasis placed on English in the Philippines compared to Indonesia.

With the aforementioned key differences of both curricula, the same thing can also be observed in the context of evaluation. Tyler emphasized that evaluation should not serve as a standardized tool to judge or label individual teachers or students, but rather as a means to assess and enhance the overall effectiveness of the educational program (Emilia, 2021). This perspective aligns with the evaluation element observed in both curricula. The Matatag Curriculum relies heavily on nationally standardized tests to ensure students, particularly at the elementary level, achieve linguistic proficiency and develop a cultural understanding. These evaluations are not solely aimed at measuring individual performance but serve to reflect whether the educational objectives of the curriculum are being met at a national level. In contrast, the Emancipated Curriculum takes a more dynamic and holistic approach to evaluations. This flexible approach allows teachers to personalize assessments based on students' needs and integrate technology to track progress. While the Matatag Curriculum focuses on standardized evaluation to maintain national benchmarks, the Emancipated Curriculum fosters individualized growth, reflecting a broader, more adaptive view of student learning.

4. CONCLUSION

When comparing the Philippine Matatag Curriculum side-by-side with Indonesia's Emancipated Curriculum at the elementary level, it becomes clear that designing an effective curriculum goes far beyond textbook theory or pedagogical trends. At its core, it is deeply influenced by the cultural, linguistic, and practical realities specific to each nation. Both curricula share similar aspirations: to nurture students' English proficiency, critical thinking, and intercultural understanding. Yet, the way each nation approaches these goals is fundamentally distinct, shaped by context-specific priorities.

In the Philippines, introducing English as early as Kindergarten is not simply a curricular choice it is a reflection of broader national aspirations. English here is viewed not merely as a school subject, but as a vital key to global opportunities, national competitiveness, and socioeconomic advancement. Consequently, the Matatag Curriculum follows a structured, standardized framework: early exposure, rigorous benchmarks, and centralized assessments. The goal is to equip students with language skills that carry weight not just locally but also internationally. Indonesia, by contrast, adopts a distinctly different approach. By delaying formal English instruction until Grade 3, the Emancipated Curriculum stresses the belief that solid early literacy in Bahasa Indonesia must precede foreign-language learning. This is not an arbitrary decision; rather, it reflects a delicate understanding of English as a foreign language, demanding flexible, locally responsive instruction. Teachers are given greater autonomy, formative assessments are emphasized, and the entire curriculum structure adapts itself more readily to actual student needs, rather than adhering strictly to standardized checkpoints.

What stands out most clearly from these findings is the significance of context-sensitive curriculum development. Effective English language teaching is not something that can be borrowed wholesale it must carefully reflect local linguistic environments, cultural values, and national priorities. Policymakers, curriculum specialists, and educational leaders should take note: truly impactful curriculum design demands a careful balance between global insights and the real-world complexities students face daily. From a theoretical angle, this research deepens our

understanding of how underlying philosophies of language education intersect with practical curriculum design in both ESL and EFL contexts. More practically, it provides real-world guidance to educators who must navigate the daily realities of diverse, multilingual classrooms.

Ultimately, the study confirms one fundamental truth: meaningful curriculum reform can never rely on ready-made solutions or imported frameworks. Real progress comes from recognizing that each educational context is unique, complex, and deserving of thoughtful, culturally informed consideration. The path forward, therefore, is not found in standardized blueprints it lies in responsiveness, flexibility, and a genuine understanding of how students actually learn in real classrooms.

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