Applicability of CEFR to National Curriculum and Assessment of English

Byeong Cheon Lee
(Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation)

Lee, Byeong Cheon. 2020. Applicability of CEFR to national curriculum and assessment of English. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 20, 496−516. CEFR has widely been recognized as a framework for defining levels of language proficiency for testing and curriculum developing purposes. There is little doubt that widespread global interest and enthusiasm have been growing for adapting and implementing the CEFR. Given the worldwide interest, the issue of whether and how the CEFR can be employed to language curriculum and assessment becomes of paramount importance. Within the Korean context, there has also been growing interest in adopting, adapting, and implementing the CEFR in national curriculum of English as a foreign language, which can be found through academic research. This study was intended to be exploratory, focusing on the positive aspects of CEFR in its applicability to national curriculum and assessment. The previous studies were collected through on−line journal in Korean EFL context and analyzed based on theme−based categorization. The themes were analyzed focusing on the areas and rationale of CEFR which can be adapted to Korean national curriculum of English, not necessarily being limited to the current 2015 national curriculum. The findings showed some areas and rationales for employing CEFR such as Global Scale as common reference, illustrative descriptors, content system, leaners' independence, and procedures of developing assessment scale by combining intuitive, qualitative, and quantitative methods based on scientific approach.

Keywords: CEFR, common European framework of references, national curriculum and assessment, foreign language curriculum and assessment

1. Introduction

Reportedly, CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) provided common basis on developing syllabus, teaching material, examinations, and curriculum guidelines for language education (Council of Europe 2001, p. 1). Researchers and educators in the field of foreign or second language education pointed several advantages of

CEFR when it was employed to EFL (English as a Foreign Language) or ESL countries (e.g., Jeon and Kim 2018, Lee and Kim 2009). The researchers maintained that CEFR prompted countries in Europe with different social and historical background to employ CEFR as a common reference for languages because CEFR provided global scale and can-do descriptor to language teachers and learners. These scale and descriptor presented them to clearly recognize what they can do with target language on the basis of each level.

CEFR has been recognized as language curriculum and standard setting tool with high validity, which guided EFL countries to widely implement CEFR. In the field of language testing, the level of language proficiency has been aligned to CEFR in many countries (Hwang, 2016). Japan, for example, has already developed CEFR-J focusing on Japan context and its learners' language levels. China and Taiwan also already started to explore the applicability of CEFR to their context (Hwang 2016).

Not many studies on CEFR were conducted in Korean context. However, when national curriculum was revised in the English curriculum, the necessity or rationale of employing CEFR in Korean context was discussed. For example, 2007 revised national curriculum was on the table, Lee and Kim (2009) contended that achievement standards in English curriculum needed to be compared with CEFR descriptor. 2009 revised national curriculum was also researched in terms of the relevance of JF standard and CEFR (Jeong 2014). Among CEFR research, Jeon and Kim (2020) presented the rationale of employing CEFR based on the research results by analyzing curriculum content such as communication activities and strategies both in 2015 revised national curriculum and in CEFR. However, the previous studies were limited to specific theme in curriculum areas such as communication activities, strategies, vocabulary, achievement standard, or level of descriptors.

In recent years, the current national English curriculum has been taken into consideration to be revised along with the general guidelines. It is the time for language policy makers and educators to deliberate the rationale of CEFR employment by analyzing previous studies on CEFR and national English curriculum in a comprehensive way with focus on main curriculum domains such as content system and achievement standard, rather than specific theme. Generally, questions may be raised of whether the CEFR can be applied to Korea national curriculum of English. If yes, what domains in the curriculum and how can it be applied, if possible. Along with trying to find out the answers through the analysis of previous studies on the CEFR connecting with national curriculum, I will explore the positive aspects of adopting CEFR in Korean context.

Therefore, this study aims at exploring the rationale of adapting CEFR into Korean

national curriculum of English by analyzing previous studies on CEFR in Korean context. The result of this study is expected to provide English language policy makers, curriculum developers and educators with implications in the field of English curriculum, teaching material, and language testing.
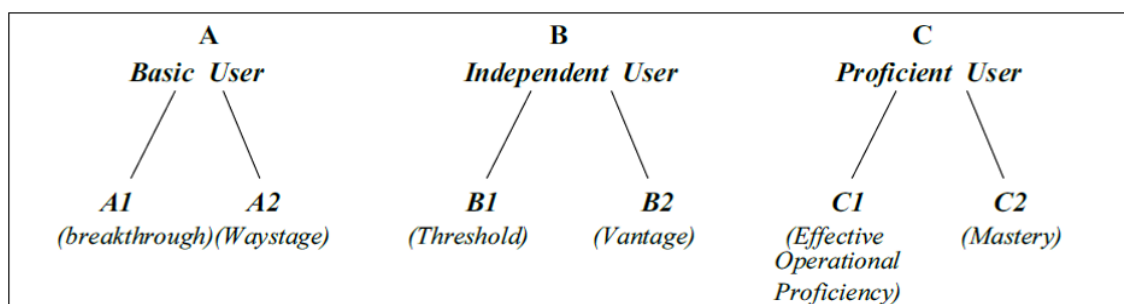
2. CEFR

Based on the research and language studies conducted from nineteen eighties to nineteen nineties, Council of Europe published 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment' in the year of 2001 (Lee and Kim 2001). CEFR provides language learners with levels of proficiency and comprehensive descriptions, and has a wide range of impact on curriculum design (Council of Europe 2001, Jeon and Kim 2020). In particular, CEFR defines goals, content, methods, and levels in language learning, and sets objective standard in the field of foreign language education, allowing countries with different language background gain mutual acknowledgement and authentication (Jeong 2014). Pursuant to applicability of CEFR to national curriculum of English in Korea, the holistic areas in CEFR such as content areas, organization of learning content, global scale with common reference levels, descriptors as can-do statement, and branching system will be discussed, including very brief history of CEFR in this section. More specific previous studies in relation to these areas will be also discussed in the section 4.

In regard to world trend in language education, NPL (National Policy on Language) was announced in Australia in 1987, and ACTEF (America Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) published Standards for Foreign Language in the 21st Century in 1999. Thus, CEFR research and development is recognized as the same line with the two-language development policy trend (Jeong 2014). Most noticeable in CEFR is standard setting for all levels of language learners. Each level contains level descriptor and range of language use. These concepts are illustrated in the frame of six broad language levels, global scale, can-do statement, and illustrative descriptors.

The global scale with common reference levels is summarized from a bank of 'illustrative descriptors' developed in CEF research project (Council of Europe 2001, p. 25). The illustrative descriptors are represented as can-do statement. The descriptors are provided for three main categories such as communicative activities, communication strategies, and

communicative language competencies. The subcategories can be shown in the descriptors in the framework in CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, pp. 221−222). The first one, communicative activities has three sub−categories such as reception, interaction, and production; the second one, communication strategies has four sub−categories such as strategies for reception, interaction, production, and text. The third one, communicative language competencies has three sub−categories such as linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence. (Council of Europe 2001, pp. 221−222)

Global scale presents the 'Common Reference Levels' (Council of Europe 2001, p. 24), which can be adapted to different context with different purpose. The global scale outlined in the Council of Europe (2001) is shown in Figure 1.

(Council of Europe, 2001, p. 23)

FIGURE 1. Global Scale

Global scale in Figure 1 includes descriptors in each common references levels in a single holistic paragraphs as in Table 1. The six language levels from A1 to C2 can be divided into more sub−levels according to language learner's proficiency in each different context, such as A1.2. or A2.2. etc. This flexibility can provide language teachers with reconstruction formation of the descriptors based on the common reference level.

TABLE 1. Descriptors as Common References for Each Level

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

(Council of Europe 2001, p. 24)

3. Method

3.1. Scope of Selected Articles

The articles selected in this study are limited to the previous academic studies which provide research-based suggestions on exploring applicability to national curriculum of English. School levels are also limited to the levels of elementary school, middle school, and high school, except university level. The subject is limited to English as a foreign or second language, excluding other language subject such as Japanese or Korean as a Foreign Language (KFL), with some of which being introduced partially in some parts of this study when needed in support of rationales.

The criteria of selecting articles were primarily based on the rationale for introducing CEFR to Korean national curriculum of English, and on the areas in national curriculum such as content system, achievement standards, design or format, curriculum development methodology, and the areas of employing global scale in CEFR. Therefore, proceedings or discussion papers presented in academic conferences were excluded for the purpose of this study. The other detailed data- selecting method in this study is referred to the Lee's (2019) procedures.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

Articles selected in this study were collected through the key words search through online journals such as SCHOLAR (Kyobo & Hakjisa Bookstore), KISS (Korean-studies Information Service Information), DBpia, NCIS (National Curriculum Information Center), and RISS (Research Information Sharing Service). The key words include CEFR, CER, Common European Framework, foreign language curriculum, 2015 national curriculum, 2015 English curriculum, English education and CEFR, improvement of English national curriculum, and so on. Twenty-four articles were reviewed. Among them, fifteen articles were selected which provided implications and suggestions in connection with CEFR and national curriculum of English within the scope of this research.

Data are categorized into several areas which are extracted from the selected articles such as the rationale for introducing CEFR to Korean national curriculum of English, content system of English curriculum, and achievement standards. The achievement standards were subcategorized into several areas such as the employment of global scale in

CEFR, the principles of achievement standards, research process of establishing achievement standards, and setting reference level.
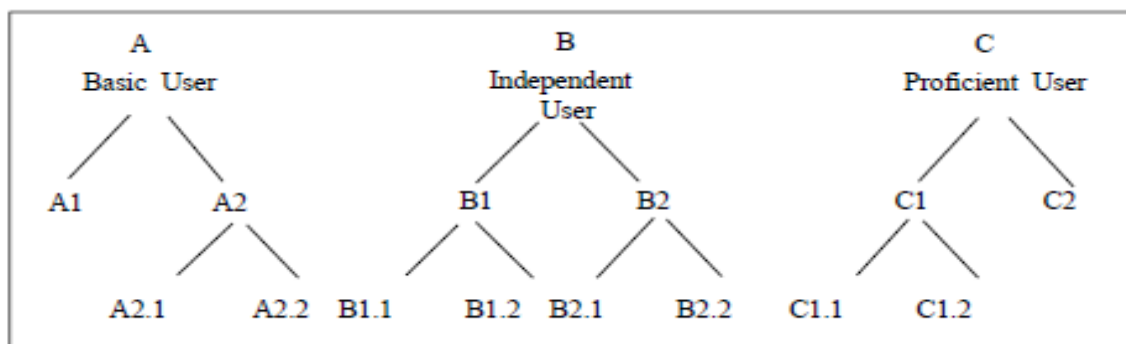
Data analysis was conducted by theme-based selection procedure as shown in Lee (2019). While some studies focused on one theme, others researched with one main themes plus several other themes. Thus, data were classified based on the applicability of the themes or subthemes into national curriculum. The themes as data were selected provided they were based on the result of the studies or evidence-based suggestions. Detailed procedure of data analysis can be referred to Lee (2019).

4. Results

Themes were analyzed and categorized into four areas including branching approach, global scale as common reference, ways of improving language learner's independence as part of descriptors, and scientific approach for scaling. These main four areas were suggested by previous studies both dealing with CEFR and national curriculum of English in Korean context.

4.1. Branching Approach

Most of all illustrative descriptors in CEFR are included in six levels of proficiency from A1 to C2 and sub-levels. One of the advantages of CEFR is that it is designed for language users to be able to divide the six main levels into sub-levels suitable to learners' proficiency level, teachers' needs, or a wide range of various factors in particular context. This flexibility of branching system can be shown in Figure 2. For example, language teachers can modify and specify the illustrative descriptors in A2 and B1, creating A2.2 or B1.1., and adapting the descriptors in those levels so as to build the bridge between the two levels for those who have difficulties in entering B1 or upper level. This branching approach can play a role of scaffolding learners' language abilities, which can be adapted to any domains such as communicative activities, strategies, and linguistic competence, including their subcategories in all CEFR scales.

FIGURE 2. Example of CEFR Branching Approach

The sub-levels containing the differentiated descriptors can meet the needs of language teachers' developing language curriculum and assessment in unique language learning context which can be applied to any target language domains including reception, production, interaction, and cultural areas.
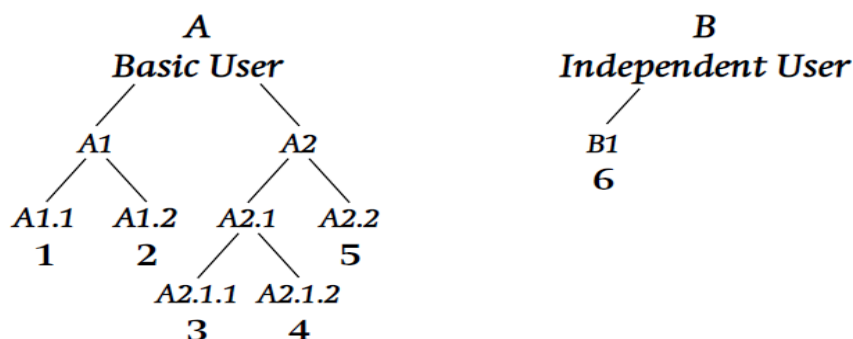
Examples of the sub-division approach are shown in Table 2 in Council of Europe (2001), which are also clearly stated by Lee and Kim (2009) on what and how to apply to national curriculum.

TABLE 2. Example of CEFR Branching Approach (Descriptors)

A2	A2.1	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.
	A2.2 (A2+)	Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.

In the same vein with Lee and Kim (2009), the advantages of using the system were realistically stated by Council of Europe (2001) in which "The advantage of a branching approach is that a common set of levels and/or descriptors can be 'cut' into practical local levels at different points by different users to suit local needs and yet still relate back to a common system. The numbering allows further subdivisions to be made without losing the reference to the main objective being referred to" (Council of Europe 2001, p. 32).

FIGURE 3. Example of CEFR Branching Approach in Basic User Level

This branching approach has an array of advantages for language teachers and learners such as a role of scaffolding learner's achievement, recognition of learner's visible progress, and contribution to teachers' professional development. First, in view of the language proficiency in EFL context, the beginners of learning target language have low content background of target language with low world knowledge, and basic skills. The learners in this context, in some cases, may have low level of accomplishment due to the fact that they feel the next level is too far to reach (Lee and Kim 2009, p. 117). Language teachers in this context can use the finer-differentiation descriptor based on the sub-divided level by creating and adapting any components of any descriptors. In general, the three components can be found in CEFR descriptors, such as theme (or situation), skill (action), and condition. Following the rule of branching design, teachers can create more specific level of scale with appropriate descriptors by modifying or tuning the specific components in target learning domains.

Second, this advantage of branching system also lead language teachers to recognize learners' current stage in the line with the whole context of learning process. It is due to the fact that this sub-divided scale and modified descriptor can provide language learners with more visible progress. (Lee and Kim 2009, p. 118). Lee and Kim made conspicuous advantage of CEFR branching system in that the subdivision enable language teachers and learners to recognize their current position within the CEFR scale (Lee and Kim 2009).

Third, teacher's professional development will also be impacted in a positive way. In line with impact of the CEFR branching system, Choi (2010) pointed that CEFR branching practice provides language teachers with opportunities and capabilities to design teaching-learning-evaluation meeting their language learners' needs and proficiency levels by taking considerations components in the illustrative descriptors such as themes, situations, skills,

and knowledge. The language teachers have little choice without taking specific language context and complex language learning factors into consideration (p. 363).

In case of subdividing the levels, the can-do statements need to meet basic prerequisite condition in order for the revised descriptors not to go off the whole rails, in such a way that the descriptors should be written with concrete and detailed knowledge and skills including topic/situation, activities, and conditions suitable to the context to be applied (Oh 2016, p. 292). The high level of field-applicability of adapting sub-dividing approach is explicitly stated in Byun's (2012, p. 30) study in which "its flexible concept underlies its proficiency levels, from which more specific options can branch off. It makes expedient applications to different field of language instruction in terms of real user needs" (Byun 2012, p. 30). More specifically in the same vein with Byun's study (2012), classroom context is exemplified where a learner needs to concentrate on one area such as linguistic competence or communicative activities. In some context, language learners may have fluent knowledge in target language but has little abilities to use the competence in a specific context (Oh 2016, pp. 292-293). In this case, Oh puts stress on teacher's knowledge and capabilities of designing learner's activities, which can be achieved with deep insight on CEFR scale and levels. It should be noted that, on the condition of the teachers' knowledge on CEFR being fully practiced in classroom, the adapted or modified descriptors can meet the learners' needs so as to use it in a wide range of differentiated language teaching and learning context.

This branching system does not have only branching-off way of using the scale, but also have a way of combining two or three levels. Instead of branching off CEFR scale and level, Kim (2011) insisted ways of integrating the levels in CEFR scale, suggesting that the best ways of utilizing CEFR scale is on the integrating-branching approach (p. 269) in such a way that, in some cases, the learners' level of target language proficiency can be more or less over the already-established level in CEFR. In particular, learners in a certain country have more high level in linguistic background on the target language, or those in other countries may have more fluent skill in reception or production areas based on similarities and differences with the target language. In these cases, when needed, language teachers are required to combine the levels in CEFR, following language learners' language skill or domains such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, Moreover, the target object or goal of learning the target language should be set by each country's education policy or language teaching-learning context, which should be on top priority when using CEFR common reference system (Kim 2011).

4.2. Global Scale as Common Reference Level

Based on the world trend of introducing CEFR to many countries for language curriculum and assessment, Choi (2010) expected more countries to employ the framework in that CEFR has been recognized as a tool with transparency and consistency in the areas of curriculum organization, implementation, and language assessment. The six main levels as global scale in CEFR, enable language educators to recognize and expect what their language learners can do after completing any language course. This expectation includes knowledge and skills in language four domains integrated, and overall abilities in each separated domains. With reference to the achievement standards and content system in national curriculum of English in Korea, Choi (2010) suggested we need renovation of content system and assessment in national curriculum by adopting and adapting CEFR scale so as to be able to attain global authorization.

More specifically, Lee (2015) analyzed and presented the outline of Korean national levels of English (p. 47) shown in the Table 3.

TABLE 3. Levels and Descriptors in Korean National Curriculum

School level	Four skill achievement standards				Sequence of learning content and level	
	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing		
High school	· communication activities · linguistic components				high level of difficulties	high level of complexity
Middle school (1, 2, 3)	· communication activities · linguistic components				↑	↑
Primary school (5, 6)	· communication activities · linguistic components · learning activities				↑	↑
Primary school (3, 4)	· communication activities · linguistic components · learning activities				↑ low level of difficulties	↑ low level of complexity

(Lee 2016, p. 47)

Lee (2015) pointed a drawback of national curriculum of English because it does not provide teachers and learners with the level of comprehensive language proficiency when they complete each grade or grade cluster. The achievement standards in each separate domain (e.g., listening domain) are presented as mutually independent skill, so that interrelationship among the language four skills cannot be shown in the curriculum. In this

respect, Lee (2015) presented optimistic view on employing CEFR global scale by modifying content system in Korean national curriculum of English shown in the Table 4 in such a way that the target reach level can be described in the modified scale.

TABLE 4. New Design of Scale and Levels in Korean National Curriculum

Level of Achievement Standards					School and grade Level
Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing		
Advanced				⇨	Senior high school 3 (listening & reading)
Intermediated high				⇨	Senior high school 1, 2, Junior high school 3 (listening & reading)
Intermediated				⇨	Junior high school 1, 2, 3
Beginning				⇨	Primary school 3, 4, 5, 6

(Lee 2015, p. 48)

With reference to the condition of adapting CEFR global scale, Lee (2020) offered that common reference level of each four skill domains (e.g., listening) should be developed on a preferential basis, which can be integrated into global scale. The overall descriptors of four skill domain can be combined into skill–integrated form based on theme, condition, and situation in each level scale. The domain–based scale is shown in Table 5 as an example of listening skill.

TABLE 5. Comprehensive Descriptors in Listening Skill for Each Grade Cluster (sample)

Domain	Grade 3–4 [A level]	Grade 5–6 [B level]	Grade 7–10 [C level]
Listening	Can understand the meaning of basic words, phrases, sentences and identify the differences of sounds, accent, rhythm, and stresses. Can identify detailed information on familiar topics in daily life (e.g. very basic personal information or routine matters) in a simple speech or dialogue.	Can identify and understand detailed information and main ideas such as storyline, purpose, and chronological sequence on daily life topic in easy and simple sentences.	Can identify connected or truncated speech sounds in phrases or sentences. Can understand discourse or dialogue familiar to learner's daily life, and follow storyline, detailed information, main ideas, and infer speaker's feeling and attitude.

(Lee 2020, p. 34)

The listening domain level–based scale in Table 5 was established by synthesizing each achievement standards in each grade cluster on the basis of content standard and

performance standard provided by 2015 revised national curriculum of English.

Along with four language skills, it is pointed out that the correspondence of the skill-based categorization in the curriculum content system with language learning goal should be reviewed. The categories of language content system in global scale of CEFR consist of communicative activities, strategies, and communicative linguistic competences. The first one, communicative activities contains language four skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing which is categorized two domains, reception and production. Furthermore, the communicative activities include interaction along with reception and production (Council of Europe 2001, Lee and Kim 2009, pp. 120-121).

TABLE 6. Language Content System in CEFR

Communicative activities	Strategies	Communicative linguistic competence
Reception/ Spoken Reception/ Written Reception/ Audio-visual	Strategies/ Reception	Language competence/ Linguistic
Production/ Spoken Production/ Written	Strategies/ Production	Language competence/ Pragmatic
Interaction/ Spoken Interaction/ Written	Strategies/ Interaction	Language competence/ Sociolinguistic

(Lee and Kim 2009, p. 121)

By the way, Korean national curriculum of English has only language four skills separately, except strategies and linguistic competences. Interaction in the communicative activities is not clearly specified in Korean national curriculum, rather it is only implied in some parts of achievement standards. Achievement standard in national curriculum and illustrative descriptors or can-do statement in CEFR play equivalent role in each system in such as a way that both the descriptors and standards state language abilities to be measured (Lee and Kim 2009, p. 111). The illustrative descriptors in CEFR can be named in a different way such as can-do statement or can-do list (Kim 2019, p. 81).

Language competences can be facilitated by interaction between two or more people, which is also prompted by communicative activities, using strategies as a hinge or bridge for efficient interaction. As a role of communicative activity, communicative functions and example sentences are presented in the national curriculum. In the curriculum of English in Korea, communicative function and example sentences are laid out in the Appendix in curriculum document. As commented by Chang (2001), the communicative functions and

example sentences are categorized based on situation and function. However, those functions and achievement standards are out of alignment. In line with this alignment issue, Jeon and Kim (2020) also pointed out that communicative function categorized in the curriculum focuses on interlocutors' abstract behavior and intend.

Therefore, to solve this problem, Lee and Kim (2009) offered that the communicative activities including interaction should be taken into consideration when designing national curriculum of English. Along with the communicative activities, strategies and communicative competences in CEFR also need be introduced and modified to national curriculum. The applicability of employing CEFR such categories to Korean context is expected to be high due to the fact that the goal and content system in national curriculum are focused on learners' communicative competences, as in the CEFR. For the purpose of realizing the goal and content system, communicative functions are recommended to be incorporated into strategies, and communicative activities (Jeon and Kim 2020, p. 122).

While communicative functions in national curriculum had an array of domains (areas of action or concern), they need to have main domains in such a way that can be found in CEFR. CEFR has four areas of activities such as personal, public, occupational, and educational domain. As specified in Council of Europe (2001), "The choice of the domains in which learners are being prepared to operate has far-reaching implications for the selection of situations, purposes, tasks, themes and texts for teaching and testing materials and activities" (p. 45). Therefore, CEFR has a wide range of activities such as those on family and friends, and engages in individual practices such as reading for pleasure, keeping a personal diary, pursuing a special interest or hobby, for example, in personal domain.

This diversity is embodied in can-do statement which can be compared to communicative functions in Korea national curriculum of English such as reporting, asking questions, and modifying (Jeon and Kim 2020, p. 113). These activities in CEFR are also described more widely in each skill domain (e.g., reading) such as reading for various purposes, reading for information (e.g., using reference works), reading and following instructions, and reading for general orientation. In summary, it is recommended that content system in national curriculum of English is required to have communicative activities including interaction section. Strategies and linguistic competence also should be taken into consideration as main categories rather than only language four skills. It is also recommended that communicative functions are designed to have wider range of categories in order to incorporate activities, strategies, and linguistic areas.

4.3. Supporting Learner's Independence

Language learner's independence is emphasized by Lee and Kim (2009) which is clearly presented in illustrative descriptors in CEFR. A way of reinforcing the independence is to provide supplementary condition (e.g., when it is conducted slowly and clearly) to descriptors. The provision of added condition is playing a role of scaffolding for language learners with low level of language proficiency to reach a target level. When one's interlocutor speaks slowly and clearly, it provides assistance or support to language learner with helping the learner to understand or speak something described in can-do statement. The ways of facilitating learner's independence are shown in many illustrative descriptors in CEFR, one of which is shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7. Examples of Supplement Condition for Leaner's Independence in CEFR

	UNDERSTANDING CONVERSATION BETWEEN NATIVE SPEAKERS
A2	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, <u>provided speech is clearly articulated</u> in standard dialect.
A1	Can generally identify the topic of discussion around him/her, <u>when it is conducted slowly and clearly</u>.

(Council of Europe 2001, p. 66)

Though the provision of support as scaffolding condition elongates illustrative descriptors, but it does not have negative affect on clarity of the descriptors. In general, descriptors in CEFR have three components such as theme, skill, and situation. When the condition for scaffolding language learner is added, the form of statement is presented as 'learners can a certain activity about a certain theme in a condition of a certain support' (Lee and Kim 2009, p. 123).

As stated in this section, illustrative descriptor has mainly three components (theme, skill, and situation) as a principle of developing the descriptor. When the component 'condition' is added and employed to national curriculum of English, we will have four components in achievement standards as a principle. In any grade level of language proficiency, the support may be required for a certain-level language learner. In particular, as Lee (2018) pointed out that the impact of achievement standards in national curriculum document on language textbooks is paramount in Korean context, the four components employed from CEFR would guide textbook developers to design a variety of activities using the scaffolding condition. Furthermore, teaching-learning methodology will also be impacted by the principle employment in such as a way that language learners with low

proficiency level should be taken into consideration when needed.

4.4. Scientific Approach to Scale Development Methods

The development process of CEFR criteria and scale development methodology is stated in Council of Europe (2011, p. 207). The scale and criteria were developed using three main methodology, such as intuitive, qualitative, and quantitative methods. In the process of scaling, descriptors are placed in different levels in such a way that 'certain things can be placed at one level rather than another and that descriptions of a particular degree of skill belong to one level rather than another' (Council of Europe 2011, p. 207). Intuitive method is based on professional's intuition which requires principled interpretation of experience and consultation from expert, or committee for building consensus by sharing understandings of the scale with levels. The scale developer at the first stage may consult existing scales, relevant documents, previous studies, or other source material. Quantitative method includes qualitative data collection and analysis rather than statistical interpretation such as working with descriptors placed in a right order on the basis of work with informants or small group experts. Quantitative method involves collection, analysis and interpretation of considerable amount of quantitative data.

In regard to the scale development process of CEFR, Finch (2009) made a strong point of the CEFR scaling process in that, comparing to some other testing tools in the world which are developed on the basis of only intuitive or qualitative data, the scale developing process of CEFR is based on robust feature of using quantitative method. In the process of CEFR scale and criteria, the first step was made by developing Common Reference Levels and descriptors in each level. The process of next step involves analysis, edit, formulation, and discussion of the descriptors with experts and informants who will use the scale in sites (e.g., school). Then the last step by using quantitative method, includes discriminant analysis, multidimensional scaling, analysis on the basis of item response theory using Rasch model (Finch 2009, pp, 79−80).

In contrast to the process of developing scale and criteria, Korea national curriculum of English lacks the process of quantitative method (Lee and Kim 2009). In fact, development process of national curriculum is presented in KICE (Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation) research report in Table 8.

TABLE 8. Developmental Stages for Achievement Standards of National Curriculum

First stage	Second stage	Third stage	Fourth stage	Fifth stage	Sixth stage
AS developing direction	Analysis of subject curriculum	AS development plan	AS Development	Review of site suitability	AS finalization
⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	

(Hong et al. 2012, p. 17)

Out of the six stages of development process, the stages of both AS development and review of site suitability can be equivalent to quantitative method in CEFR. However, both does not involve a wide range of quantitative data collection and analysis. At the stage of review of site suitability, teachers' opinion was collected and analyzed from 16 elementary schools, 17 junior middle schools, and 16 high schools. The teachers were asked to present their opinions about the ways of improving already developed descriptors.

The site suitability was conducted to collect teachers' opinions on four review criteria, such as direction, degree of quality and quantity, clarity of description, and practicality of application of the AS. It was suggested by the researchers in KICE in the report that the improvement plan of methods and procedure of AS criteria development should be designed more systematically (Hong et al. 2012).

In line with scientific method of developing scale and levels, Byun (2012) stated one of robust point of this quantitative method in that "the scale of CEFR is developing descriptors and scales based on large samples; it is validated statistically" (p. 30). In fact, it is clearly stated in Council of Europe (2001) in which "quantitative methods should quantify qualitatively pre-tested material, and will require intuitive interpretation of results" (Council of Europe 2001, p. 207) as conducted by Council of Europe. Therefore, it is recommended, as commented by the researchers of previous studies and Council of Europe, scientific quantitative method should be used with qualitative approach for developing scale and levels, and descriptors.

In the same vein with the rationale of employing quantitative method to the process of developing national curriculum of English, Lee and Kim (2009) pointed out the drawbacks of only adopting intuitive and qualitative methods, because scale developers tend to place descriptors based on the subjective view. This is due to the fact that teachers, educators, or researchers may have different views on what their learners are required to achieve and what they can do in realistic nature (Lee and Kim 2009, p. 119).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

There have been several issues stemming from Korean national curriculum of English. For example, as Lee and Kim (2009) pointed out, Korean national curriculum of English does not have global scale, leading to difficulties for language teachers and learners to recognize the extent to which they need to achieve in integrated four language skills. Furthermore, lack of scientific quantitative methods at the time of developing the curriculum causes low-level reliability on whether achievement standards(AS) are placed in the right order based on the level of language learners' proficiency.

As a way of improving the national curriculum, employment of strong points of CEFR has been suggested by researchers in the field of English education as foreign language. Review of the research shows that several strong points of CEFR are suggested to be applied to several areas, but the main suggestion of the research is limited to a certain area such as achievement standards. This study aimed to analyze previous studies so as to draw applicable points of what areas can be introduced to Koran national curriculum and how they can be modified suitable to Korean context in a comprehensive way, by analyzing and synthesizing the areas and themes in the studies.

The results of this study present four main areas which can be applied to the curriculum, involving the way of branching levels and sub-levels, introduction of global scale, the way of supporting learner's language independence, and benchmarking scientific approach for scale and levels.

Based on the results of this study, several discussions can be made. First of all, the applicable implications drawing from the analysis of this study should not be confined to curriculum area, but they should be applied to language assessment area, because language learning content and assessment are aligned each other in the same national curriculum. Also the alignment should be maintained with teaching-learning methodology due to the fact that, for example, branching off levels requires language teachers to practice dividing sub-levels and chopping up components in the descriptors, which lead to realize the practice in classroom context. The alignment of curriculum development with language assessment can be achieved through practicing language assessment tools. Therefore, language curriculum, assessment, and teaching-learning methodology can be viewed as triangulated schematic combination.

Second, it should be recognized by language teachers that the strong points of CEFR can be adapted to Korean context. However, it is illogical to adopt it as it is without any

modification. For example, descriptors in A1 and B2 can be combined and modified so as to be applied to one single level in primary or secondary school suitable to Korean language learner's level of proficiency. It should be taken into considerations that CEFR is just a reference, meaning it is not absolute means of curriculum development or assessment. However, curriculum developers in the field of language education should discuss whether only four skill-based learning content system in Korean national curriculum of English is to meet the language learners's needs, in comparison with three main domains such as communicative activities, strategies, and communicative linguistic competence.

Third, CEFR adaptation to Korean context is expected to have a wide range of impact such as setting up language learning goals, content system, achievement standard setting, syllabus, assessment methodology, and textbook development, etc. It should be noted here that stake holders of English language education should take medium and long-term plan for adapting CEFR to Korean context, because the systematic process of qualitative and quantitative approach requires a wide range of research. Two Korean proverbs may remind us on this issue. Easier said than done; if you eat in a hurry, it is very hard to digest.
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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Level: Elementary, Secondary, and Tertiary

Lee, Byeong Cheon, Research Fellow
Division of Curriculum and Textbook
Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation
8, Gyohak-ro, Deoksan-myeon, Jincheon-gun,
Chungcheongbuk-do, Korea
Tel: 043)931-0522
Email: bclee@kice.re.kr