

# Evaluating the Effectiveness of Curriculum Reform Project for English Language Programmes in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Mohammed H. Ahmed<sup>1</sup>, Sameerah T. Saeed<sup>1</sup>, Abas M. Salih<sup>2</sup>, Kazhaw J. Abdullah<sup>2</sup>, Lureen I. Nasir<sup>3</sup>, Saeed A. Atiya<sup>3</sup>, Tazhan K. Omer<sup>4</sup>, Kozhin O. Ismael<sup>4</sup>, Fatimah R. Hasan Al Bajalani<sup>5</sup>, and Hawkar R. Arab<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Apparatus of Supervision and Quality Assurance, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

<sup>2</sup> English Language Department, College of Education, University of Garmian, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

<sup>3</sup> English Language Department, College of Education, University of Duhok, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

<sup>4</sup> English Language Department, College of Basic Education, University of Sulaimani, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

<sup>5</sup> English Language Department, College of Languages, University of Salahaddin University-Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

## ABSTRACT

The quality of English education in schools is directly influenced by the competence of teachers trained in English language undergraduate programmes at universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The current curricula in these departments do not adequately prepare graduates in terms of the needed pedagogical skills, professional qualities, and English language proficiency. The KRI Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research's Apparatus of Supervision and Quality Assurance, jointly with the British Council, launched a curriculum review project to address these issues. The project aimed to update the current English language programmes' structure and content to meet the target standards for English graduate teachers. This paper aims to assess the efficacy of the curriculum review project that was conducted as a pilot project at the Universities of Sulaimani, Duhok, and Garmian during 2024–2025. Two online surveys and semi-structured interviews were used to gather the data, which were then subjected to inductive thematic analysis, frequency distributions, and descriptive statistics. The results show that although staff and students agree that curriculum reform is necessary, it is restricted by a lack of funding and training, and an imbalance between theory and practice. Although the introduction of admission test was supported by staff and students, they favor improved administration.

**KEY WORDS:** English Language Programmes, Teacher Training, Admission Test, Curriculum Reform Project, Pilot Project

## 1. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, English is used as a foreign language and taught at all levels of primary and secondary schools. It is also a dominant language in higher education institutions.

While Kurdish and Arabic are the main languages of instruction in most of the public institutions, English is often used in scientific fields and is a core subject in secondary and tertiary education (Omer, 2023). Over the

past decade, there has been a significant change in policy and practice regarding the expansion of English language teaching in universities, due to globalization, academic collaboration and job market requirements of the modern world (Kirkpatrick, 2011; Crystal, 2003). Despite its increasing importance, education in English language in the region has suffered from very serious shortcomings. Traditional teaching methods, which are dominated by grammar translation and routine memorization, have often not led to the development of students' communicative competence or critical thinking skills.

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Corresponding author's e-mail: [samira.saeed@mhe-krq.org](mailto:samira.saeed@mhe-krq.org)

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Furthermore, outdated materials and limited teacher training have impeded achievement of students (Omer, 2023). Consequently, a curriculum reform project was initiated by the educational authorities with the objective to modernize the English language programmes including the introduction of learner-centered approaches, the improvement of assessment systems, and the alignment of the curricula with international standards (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

By the end of 2022, a curriculum reform was initiated by the KRI Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research's Apparatus of Supervision and Quality Assurance, in collaboration with the British Council. The efficiency of the initiative has not been evaluated in a systematic manner. Although the reform sounds appealing in theory, its implementation raised challenges and concerns in terms of, for example, teachers' pedagogy skills, students' language capacity, and alignment of the new curriculum with the mission and objectives of the English programme.

Furthermore, the introduction of an admission English test, which is supposedly to evaluate the linguistic competence of students at the time of entry, has been a subject of some scrutiny on issues related to its validity, reliability and cultural appropriateness in the local educational system of Kurdistan Region. In the absence of empirical evaluation, it is still difficult to determine whether the reform causes real improvement or simply new barriers (Fullan, 2016; Omer, 2023).

This study aims to examine the efficiency of the curriculum reform initiated as a review project and implemented as a pilot project at three KRI universities (Sulaimani, Duhok, and Garmian) during 2024-2025. More specifically, the study objectives include an investigation of the alignment between the revised curriculum and the requirements of students and teachers, as well the quality of its implementation; and the perceived value of the admission test as an integral part of the reform. In addition, the investigation intends to explain the views of faculties and students in order to gain a deeper understanding of the pragmatic implications of the reform. The following research questions are the guidelines to achieve the given objectives:

1. To what extent has the pilot implementation achieved its intended outcomes?
2. How well does the admission test measure the English proficiency of students according to the revised curriculum?
3. What major issues have been faced by the staff and students during the pilot project?

The significance of this research lies in presenting insights about the new proposed curriculum for undergraduate English language programmes. These insights are aimed to fill out the gaps that exist in the

areas of curriculum development and language programmes in the higher education system in the Kurdistan Region. Moreover, the outcomes and recommendations offered at the end of the research study can be used as a future plan by scholars, decision-makers, and curriculum design specialists. The evaluation featured views obtained from staff and students at three English Language Departments which were piloted during 2024-2025. These are the English Language Department at College of Basic Education at the Universities of Sulaimani and Duhok, and the English Language Department at the College of Education at the University of Garmian.

Two online questionnaires were used to collect data from staff and students. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with relevant staff and students in the English Language Departments at the three selected universities.

The participants consisted of 25 staff and 235 students who filled out the questionnaires and 15 staff (including heads of the three English departments) and 15 students who participated in the interviews. Analysis was through the use of descriptive statistics, frequency distribution and thematic analysis. The findings show that the reform has been successful in bringing the English undergraduate programmes to their mission goal of producing competent English school teachers; however, resource deficits and training requirements remain.

## 2. BACKGROUND

In 2022, the status of English Language Teaching (ELT) in the Iraqi education system was evaluated by two experts at the British Council Iraq. The evaluation targeted the English education system in schools, universities (formal settings), and NGOs and community-based programmes (non-formal settings). An intensive report was developed and shared with relevant decision-makers.

The purpose of the report was to explain the realities of ELT programmes and find ways to make real, substantive reform. Its findings highlighted some of the challenges caused by prolonged political instability, displacement and chronic under-investment.

The report focused on English language curriculum and classroom activities in Central and Southern Iraq (CSI) and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), as well as teacher preparation and professional development, learners' English proficiency and motivation, and the obstacles and support affecting ELT programmes (Borg & Capstick, 2022).

At the university level, the report identified serious weaknesses, including the weak preparation of graduates from English departments that had negatively affected the quality of English instruction in schools.

Consequently, raising standards of ELT graduate education in universities and enhancing teacher training become key factors to improve English education in primary and secondary schools.

In Iraq, there is a serious gap between the intended communicative curriculum and how it is enacted in the classroom. Despite the introduction of communicative English textbooks, such as “English for Iraq” and “Sunrise”, the education system is mainly teacher-oriented with less focus on students’ engagement in English learning practices (Borg & Capstick, 2022). Another dominant issue is that school English teachers tend to default to lecturing activities, which is facilitated by the mother tongue. This is mainly due to teachers’ lack of English language and pedagogical preparation. In both KRI and CSI, learners rarely use English in lessons, where activities focus more on grammar drills and reading aloud than on communicative activities. Moreover, the pre-service teacher education programmes in Colleges of Education have languished unupdated for years that make these challenges worse (ibid). These programmes admit students without language proficiency screening, provide minimal spoken English training, and emphasize theoretical subjects over practical teaching skills. Infrastructural constraints are another critical reason that include overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching aids and technology. Furthermore, under-resourced schools contribute to the erosion of teacher morale and hinder the implementation of learner-centered instruction. As a result, students typically finish 12 years of English instruction without sufficient communication competence, particularly in productive skills like speaking and writing (Borg and Capstick, 2022).

A set of interrelated recommendations is provided by Borg and Capstick (2022) to address these systemic issues. First, reform initiatives must begin with an honest appraisal of the current ineffectiveness of ELT programmes and should be grounded in empirical understanding of why past reforms have failed to achieve their objectives. Second, improving pre-service teacher education is paramount and entails a full-scale review of curriculum content, entry and graduation criteria, teaching methods, and assessment practices in Colleges of Education and Colleges of Basic Education, with the aim of producing graduates who possess both the linguistic competence (at least B2 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)) and pedagogical skills necessary for communicative language teaching. Thirds, instead of short-term, cascade-based training, in-service teacher development should switch to continuous, collaborative, and school-based professional learning models. Forth, explicit training is necessary for teachers to manage large classes and deliver instruction in low-resource contexts. According to Borg & Capstick (2022), the Ministry of

Education (MOE) needs to realign its assessment frameworks at the policy level to support communicative teaching, and this means including oral components in national exams to promote balanced language skills. Moreover, officials of the Ministry of Education responsible for curriculum, assessment and teacher training need to build capacity through targeted Continuing Professional Development (CPD), in relation to international standards, including the British Council's CPD framework. In short, the report by Borg and Capstick (2022) calls for a systemic and cohesive plan to enhance the sustainable development of ELT programmes in Iraq. This requires upgrading teacher education, initiating curriculum reforms, improving assessment practices, and providing institutional support, among others.

As a response to the report of the British Council, the Apparatus of Supervision and Quality Assurance at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) in the Kurdistan Region, in collaboration with the British Council, has initiated a curriculum review project to enhance English language proficiency in the English language undergraduate programmes. The project consisted of two main parts: Part 1 involved planning of the development phase of the project and Part 2 involved planning of the delivery phase. In Part 1, the development phase, several meetings, seminars and workshops have been organized to introduce the details of the project and develop an action plan and a roadmap to facilitate the delivery phase. Several working groups have been established during November 2022 and September 2024. The working groups included faculty members of a variety of English language related specializations, such as linguistics, applied linguistics, literature, and curriculum design, from the Colleges of Education and Colleges of Basic Education of public universities in the Kurdistan Region (University of Sulaimani, Salahaddin University-Erbil, University of Duhok, University of Garmian, Soran University, Raparin University, Koya University, Halabja University, and Zakho University). As a result, the mission statements, the objectives and the Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) of the English language undergraduate programmes have been revised to focus more on preparing proficient graduates in the field of teaching English language at intermediate and secondary schools. Moreover, the curriculum has been revised to encompass pedagogical courses mainly, ensuring graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of the profession.

In the delivery phase, a pilot project was implemented at the English Language departments of three selected universities during the academic year 2024-2025. The universities participating in the pilot project included University of Sulaimani, University of Duhok, and University of Garmian. These universities implemented a

new content and organization of the programme that involved a new curriculum, implemented at the first year only.

Additionally, an admission test was proposed as part of the pilot project to evaluate the students' English Proficiency. For this purpose, EnglishScore admission test, conducted by British Council, was offered in October 2024 to students who were accepted in the relevant English Language Departments. The test includes two main sections: the Core Skills Test and the Speaking Test. The Core Skills section focuses on testing student's knowledge in Grammar, vocabulary, reading, and listening, while the Speaking Skills section evaluates the student's oral communication skills. The accepted score agreed by KRG Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research was achieving B1 (i.e. 317 points). The EnglishScore test is in line with CEFR guidelines. The test was run through two weeks in October 2024. The students were provided with unique usernames and passwords provided by the British Council. They were instructed to take the test within the planned two weeks on their own in a quiet place. To guarantee a valid and fair result, the test requests face scanning through mobile camera throughout the test randomly.

The test results became available online on the same day, making it possible to give immediate feedback and decision-making. Nevertheless, because of the lack of a formal admissions policy, all students were enrolled to the English language departments at the three piloted universities in the academic year 2024-2025. Admission test scores were used to divide students into groups with students scoring B1 or above representing one group and students at A2 or below representing another. This pilot represents a major advance towards implementing more content in English degree programmes in the Kurdistan Region. The MHESR seeks to ensure that students have the language proficiency required to excel in their academic endeavors by employing a standardized and globally accepted assessment instrument.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 Global Trends in English Language Curriculum Reforms

The worldwide reform of English language education curriculum advanced substantially during the recent years. Educational curriculum reforms appear as a result of the need to teach essential communication skills compatible with current international settings (Hu, 2005; Hu & McKay, 2012). More effective communication learning approaches have now replaced traditional rote learning methods and basic grammar instruction.

There is a strong emphasis on communicative competence. Modern English language curricula value

authentic language speech above remarkably correct grammar execution. The addition of cultural competence training in language education is a necessary adaptation because English stands as the central international communication language. Curriculum changes integrate actual materials together with multicultural exchange activities to teach students different variants of the English language. The ELT policy in Europe together with Australian and Canadian regions follows Byram's (1997) intercultural communicative competence model to link language competence with cultural comprehension.

Curriculum development for ELT programmes also experienced transformation because of technological integration (Kim, 2011). Modern students get individualized language education by using three digital resources that include both apps, interactive online software and AI-based instructional systems. Modern digital learning systems enhance collaborative studies while also boosting language mastery according to the research conducted by Hampel and Stickler (2015). Stronger academic outcomes along with improved student motivation exist within educational standards that integrate technology in developed countries such as Singapore and Finland. Educational transformations also urge the necessity for permanent professional development for teachers to cover new pedagogical needs and contemporary technological developments (Richards & Farrell 2005).

The educational approach known as Task-based language learning (TBL) has also proven itself to be an effective teaching method (Viriya, 2018). The modern style of education requires students to perform real-world assignments which include solving problems and creating projects because it teaches meaningful language use (Ellis, 2003). TBL serves as an ideal approach because it enables students to gain autonomy and enhances their critical thinking skills (ibid). The education systems of Japan together with Spain, for instance, use TBL methodologies to replace the traditional method based on textbooks. There is also a wide range of assessment reform. Alternative evaluation methods replaced standardized testing through the implementation of portfolio assessments as their main evaluation method while requiring students to perform tasks that count as part of their assessment process. According to Bachman and Palmer (2010), the new generation of language assessments needs to measure authentic language abilities rather than evaluating grammatical items separately.

English educational programmes today establish classrooms devoted to multicultural acceptance in their present curriculum through embracing diverse and inclusive content (Galloway & Rose, 2021; Selvi et al., 2023). The educational sector operates to develop educational policies to integrate various cultural groups

and individuals of different economic levels and genders in their language materials. National curricula adopt multicultural viewpoints as essential components for English teaching education according to Canagarajah (1999).

The current global education reforms in ELT programmes create practical educational designs which unite students through technology-based tools with a focus to incorporate skills required for genuine cultural understanding between student groups in modern global communication. Global English learning reform will reach its next stage by expanding current developments to boost worldwide English acquisition results.

### **3.2 Previous studies on curriculum reforms in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region**

Curriculum reform in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region has evolved as policymakers and scholars have worked to modernize ELT programmes in higher education. To start with, Hassan (2009) conducted a study that aimed at providing a comprehensible project to improve English curriculum at KRG universities. A qualitative study was designed to collect the data by using class observation at Appalachian State University (USA), and interviews with consultants, staff, and many academic committees. The main findings of this study was the necessity of applying student-centered approach in the programmes and including training of soft skills, and granting more autonomy to departments. In another study, Sharif (2013) examined the teachers' perspectives on the new English curriculum (Sunrise programme) at school level. The findings of the research declared that teachers' attitude were affected by gender and age. These two variables significantly impact both the implementation and facilitation of curriculum innovations. In addition, Sharif (2013) mentioned that teachers' engagement and motivation in designing or introducing curricula are important, and their points of view should be considered. However, the main gap of this study is the lack of comprehensive understanding about the impact of teachers' demographic on their attitude to the implementation of the new curricula.

Later, Hassan and Ghafor (2014) evaluated the suitability of the new English curriculum (Sunrise) English programme of the seventh grade Kurdish learners in Erbil by identifying its strengths and weaknesses. The main findings referred to the well-designing and appropriateness of the Sunrise programme for language learning. However, its effectiveness is limited due to overcrowded classrooms, lack of resources, and insufficient teacher training (Hassan and Ghafor, 2014).

A comprehensive study led by Borg (2016) examined the English Medium Instruction (EMI) in 13 public universities in KRG. He conducted a survey and got

replies from more than 400 members in different faculties. The findings of his study showed that the implementation of EMI is fragmented and divided into two joined insufficiencies: a deficiency of possessing faculties in both language expertise with disciplinary and inadequate clarity, and a practice-oriented framework of pedagogy. The analysis of Borg underscored the critical need for systematic policy and structure, consistent with professional development, to support EMI within a deep agenda reform of curriculum.

Amin (2017) further argued that for revising any curricula in ELT in Iraq, three key factors must be considered: a cooperative framework, the realities of a specific context, and the inevitable impact of the political aspect. Also, he declared that successful, long-lasting case examples can be obtained when researchers systematically work with theoretical expertise regarding knowledgeable information related to classroom teachers. If both researchers and stakeholders or educators are involved directly from the very beginning phase of designing curricula, it would be strong enough and suitable for almost all Iraqi students who live in that context.

Moreover, Komar University of Science and Technology (2019) conducted a study and documented a case study by pointing out the fundamentals of the problems faced while implementing the Bologna process. This has followed the implementation of the Bologna process in the KRG universities. The Bologna process's agenda included applying the student-centered approach, credit standardization, and mobility agreements. Komar's (2019) study highlights the key challenges related to this process implementation, which are related to the complexities of contextualizing the Bologna process with insufficient training of faculty members.

The most recent study on curriculum reforms is Omer (2023a) who investigated two related studies in 2023. The application of Nation and Macalister's (2010) curriculum design was her first study to evaluate how ELT curricula have been developed, designed, and planned in several KRI universities including the University of Sulaimani, Salahaddin University-Erbil, and the University of Duhok. The results of her study revealed that the current curriculum suffers from irrelevant content, inadequate assessment tools, and ineffective sequencing while it promotes teacher training and basic language acquisition.

To sum up, these studies show several crucial attempts in apprehension of curriculum reform in the Kurdistan Region. They focus on teachers' attitudes and recent findings related to inclusive, evidence-based, and structured reforms. The investigations further demanded for collaborative work involving different stakeholders such as, educators, policy makers, students, and academic researchers. The current study examines the

effectiveness of a pilot curriculum reform that has been carried out in several public universities such as University of Sulaimani, Duhok, and Garmian. Multiple data collection tools were used including questionnaires and interviews of students, teachers, and heads of departments.

### 3.3 Challenges in implementing educational reforms in conflict-affected or transitional regions

A uniquely challenged context for education reform is in transitional regions or conflict-affected ones due to political factors and socioeconomic instability. These circumstances mainly arise due to regime change, war, long-term development or occupation. Also, the reform of education becomes both a zone of systemic failure and a site of hope.

One of the important barriers is political instability and changes in the government system. Reforms are mainly suggested from international participants or a part of post-conflict stability frameworks in the transitional contexts; however, it faces difficulty due to corruption, changes in leaderships, or other political factors (Novelli, 2011). This shifting happens in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where educational changes are introduced such as Bologna process as a tool for modernization. Moreover, wars and conflicts destroy the facilities of education, leaves classrooms under-resourced or overcrowded. These shortcomings have impact on implementing the innovations in curriculum, especially the ones that depend on active learning or technology (UNESCO, 2019).

Another main obstacle in many conflict-affected places is educators. They are either insufficiently trained or displaced to apply the reformed model. In the Kurdistan Region context, Omer (2023a) found that although curriculum reform efforts in English language teaching have focused on redesigning content and course structures, its implementation suffers from insufficient teacher preparation and a lack of awareness of curriculum design models. The findings of her study declares that the instructors and administrators lacked training in assessment, sequencing, and contextual integration although they were familiarized with the need for updated programmes. She further argued that these factors are essential to maintain reform (Omer, 2023a).

Furthermore, in Omer's (2017) study, which evaluated the undergraduate ELT programme at the University of Sulaimani, the author identified important gaps between the actual learning experiences of students and the programme's stated outcomes. Underdeveloped strategies regarding assessment tools, a top-down policy approach, and mismatching the course content, which possibly excluded the students' and teachers' input, are among her main findings (Omer, 2017). These results

show how centralized control and specific participatory design have an impact on the relevance and quality of educational reform.

In transitional regions, linguistic and cultural diversity leads to irritating challenges in the field. Introducing identity politics specifically in multiethnic or multilingual societies often relates to educational reform. Deciding on religious content, the history of the curriculum, and the language of instruction may weaken and influence the balance of post-conflicts (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). While EMI has been working on internationalizing higher education in the case of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Borg (2016) claimed that the lack of a pedagogical support system and low proficiency level among instructors create some gaps in the implementation procedure and lead to inequalities. Finally, the psycho-social legacy of conflicts has an impact on both learners and educators. UNESCO (2019) revealed that students mainly suffer from insecurity and trauma and face displacement, while teachers go through burnout and psychological stress. These situations in transitional contexts need a support system because it integrates with the best-designed curriculum samples (INEE, 2010). All in all, in transitional regions or conflict-affected areas, the challenges in implementing the stage regarding the educational reforms being multi-layered, interdependent, and systematic can be clearly seen. The findings of the researchers relate to the Kurdistan Region (Omer, 2017, 2023), Borg (2016), and Sharif (2013) and illustrate how reforms are affected when they are imported regardless of local adaptation, teacher preparation, and institutional commitment. For the reform to be effective in these contexts, it must be context-responsive, participatory, and sustainably designed to rebuild the trust for a resilience and recovery pillar such as education.

### 3.4 The role of language policies and sociopolitical context in shaping reforms

The perceptions of intentional change in the curriculum change are based on different countries in specific contexts (Jippes et al., 2013). This in combination with language policy, i.e., the official rules and regulations about language use in societies (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) both play a crucial role in designing any changes in education curricula (Spolsky, 2024). Curricula are considered as determinants of what knowledge and skills are most useful and worth teaching to a country's people and should also change in alignment with societies' changing needs (Stabback, 2016; Freeman, 2020).

The education system is the area where language policies and politics meet (Gal, 2002). Thus, besides being a means of instruction, language is a strong ideological instrument that mirrors and strengthens political ethics,

social integration and national identity (ibid). Therefore, the factors of culture, history and politics are seen to be actively involved in shaping the content of language policies and curricular in a way that in education systems, language policies frequently act as procedures for inclusion or marginalization (Tollefson, 1991). For instance, curriculum reforms in postcolonial settings normally involve a move away from colonial languages toward national or native languages, which reflects wider sociopolitical endeavors to show sovereignty and reclaim cultural identity (ibid).

Due to the changes and growing importance of English worldwide in the fields such as technology, internet, medicine and education, English curricula need to change accordingly. For example, in China, knowing English allows people to prosper economically and be an effective participant in the modern world (Chen & Hsieh, 2011). In Japan, despite being deemed important to communicate with the wider world, it is suggested that learning English be compulsory if people want good prosperity (Yano, 2001). Hence, making sure that students have the qualities appropriate for this era, as well as achieving the intended effects of implementing a particular curriculum on their learning outcomes, have been the driving force behind curricular reforms.

Curriculum reforms, as Fullan (2016) explains, entail changes in some areas that might conflict with entrenched personal and organizational ideas and existing realities as well as expecting teachers to change what they do concerning language teaching and learning and change their attitudes towards their work and beliefs. Fullan (2016) recognizes three aspects related to curriculum reforms which include the use of updated or new resources, the potential use of new instructional methods and the possible change of beliefs.

Building equal and successful English language programmes that inspire rather than isolate learners require integrating language planning with community needs, teacher capacity, and educational objectives. The adoption of English as a medium of instruction in universities of Kurdistan is part of a wider move towards integration with global systems. Although the goals of these reforms are to promote student mobility and standardize curricula, their implementation has been faced with difficulties. The effective teaching of the English curriculum is undermined by the fact that many faculty instructors lack sufficient training in learner-centered pedagogy and English competence (Borg, 2016). Therefore, the success of ELT curriculum reforms requires that language policies be inclusive, adaptable to context, and based on sociopolitical realities as well as pedagogical studies.

This study contributes to the body of literature by addressing a major gap in the assessment of curriculum reforms implemented in English language programmes

in the Kurdistan Region. While earlier research has mostly concentrated on identifying flaws or proposing reforms (Hassan, 2009; Omer, 2023), this study systematically examines the effectiveness of an actual pilot reform that includes curriculum reorganization and the implementation of the admission test. The study extends previous theoretical and policy-driven analyses with applied, context-specific insights by integrating perspectives from staff and students across three universities, offering empirical evidence on how reforms function in practice.

#### 4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this study, a mixed-method approach has been used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum reform project in the English language undergraduate programmes offered at the three KRI piloted universities, University of Sulaimani, University of Duhok, and University of Garmian. The study uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, including built questionnaires and interviews. Studies show that combining both questionnaires and interviews lead to more comprehensive and reliable findings (see e.g., Wang et al., 2024; Carlsson & Beckley, 2012; Aksu, 2009).

Faculty members, heads of departments, and first-year students from the English language departments of the piloted universities make up the study's participants. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select faculty members and students.

The questionnaires were built based on the research questions and conducted through a Google doc shared by the heads of departments of the relevant departments with relevant staff who taught the courses in the first and second semesters of the first year and students who are enrolled in the first year (see Appendixes A and B for details). Responses were collected over a period of three weeks during April 2025. For the interviews, conducted in May 2025, the number of participants included three heads of departments, twelve faculty members (four staff per university), and 15 students (five per university). All interviews were done face-to-face, responses were written down and transcribed verbatim (see Appendixes C and D for the interview questions). Diversity and relevance to the study were the most important considerations when selecting faculty. Participants were both male and female, with a master's or doctorate, and a good amount of experience teaching and having lecturer-level or similar academic titles. Moreover, the faculty members selected had different specializations, including pure linguistics, applied linguistics, curriculum design and literature, and were part of the pilot project.

The first data collection tool was structured questionnaire which were addressed to the faculty and

the students. The faculty questionnaire focused on the alignment of the new curriculum with student needs, the effectiveness of teaching methods, the value of the admission test, and challenges encountered while implementing the new curriculum. The student questionnaire assessed the perceived effect of the revised curriculum on language skill development, the preparation for teaching and the effectiveness of the EnglishScore admission test. Quantitative data were collected using Likert scale questions for statistical data analysis, while open-ended questions were used to provide qualitative enrichments.

More specifically, the teachers' questionnaire consists of three sections. Section one focused on their background information, including the name of the university, college and department, scientific title, years of teaching experience, and area of specialization. Section two includes questions that focus on aspects of curriculum reform implementation, including the teachers' beliefs on the alignment between the new curriculum and students' needs, the effectiveness of the teaching methods introduced in the curriculum, satisfaction with the professional development workshops provided as part of the reform, the faculty members' insight into the challenges they have encountered in implementing the new curriculum as well as their suggestions for improving the current reform. Section three is about the teachers' assessment of the admission test. It includes questions whether the test used measures the students' English proficiency effectively and whether it should be a mandatory requirement for students' enrollment in English language programmes.

The students' questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section covers the students' general information, such as the name of the university, college, and department. Section two is related to curriculum reform implementation and comprises questions related to the impact of the new curriculum in general, and the courses in particular, on improving students' English capacities, as well as their knowledge and skills in teaching English in the future. Another question enquires the challenges faced by students with the new given curriculum. Section three is about the students' evaluation of the admission test in terms of its difficulty, validity, and their suggestions for improving the admission process.

It is worth mentioning that prior to the administration of the questionnaires and interviews, and to ensure the validity and reliability of the study's quantitative and qualitative tools, they were sent via email with their description to five jury members. The members are all professors of linguistics and applied linguistics with lengthy experiences for the purpose of their validation.

For the questionnaire, responses from 25 faculty members and 235 students were obtained. The

questionnaire targeting faculty members was administered to only those teaching the first-year students who were part of the pilot project in the academic year 2024-2025. They included 25 teaching staff from the three selected universities. 12 from University of Sulaimani, 6 from University of Duhok, and 7 from University of Garmian. The staff respondents represented a broad range of academic ranks, with Assistant Lecturers comprising the largest group at 36%, followed by Assistant Professors at 32%, Lecturers at 28%, and Professors at only 4%.

The academic experience of the 25 faculty respondents ranged from five to sixteen years (mean, =13 years), suggesting that the questionnaire reflected the views of an experienced cohort. Student respondents included 73 from the University of Duhok, 61 from the University of Garmian, and 101 from the University of Sulaimani. Sulaimani's representation was higher because of its two classes' pilot implementation (morning and evening classes). Complementary to the questionnaires, semi structured interviews offered greater insight.

The interview questions addressed to staff comprised 7 questions. They focused on their views and experience with the curriculum changes proposed, students' engagement, effectiveness of assessment approaches in the new curriculum, resources available, challenges encountered, the efficiency of the provided professional development workshops, and assessment of the admission test. Student interviews were conducted and focused on perceived advantages and obstacles of the new curriculum, the balance of theory and practice of the curriculum and an overall assessment of the EnglishScore admission test, with a total of six questions.

Methodologically, the study was a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. Faculty and student questionnaires and interview information were organized around the research questions. The questionnaire was Likert-based and the responses were statistically analyzed to identify key perceptions and outcomes. The responses of the interviews as well as the open-ended questions in the questionnaires were thematically analyzed. Recurring themes and patterns were identified and compared to the questionnaires results. The combination of quantitative and qualitative tools offers a comprehensive evaluation and supports producing evidence-based recommendations.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the analysis of the responses that were collected from staff and students in structured questionnaires and semi structured interviews. These responses show the perspectives of the participants from the three selected universities (Sulaimani, Duhok, and Garmian). Participants were asked to assess the newly

implemented English language curriculum and the EnglishScore admission test that was introduced in the first year of the English language undergraduate programmes during 2024-2025. Descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and inductive thematic analysis

were used for interpretation afterwards. Table 1 summarises the response of the 25 faculty members to a number of propositions, in both quantitative terms (as percentages) and salient qualitative terms:

Table 1  
Summary of Responses Obtained from Faculty Members on the New English Language Curriculum and the Admission Test

Question	Response Categories	Percentages of Respondents	Key Insights
<b>1. Alignment of the curriculum with students' academic and communicative needs</b>	Strongly aligned	20%	68% believe it is at least moderately aligned; 32% see issues needing attention
	Moderately aligned	48%	
	Somewhat aligned	20%	
	Minimally aligned	4%	
	Not aligned	8%	
<b>2. Effectiveness of teaching methods</b>	Very effective	4%	64% view methods positively; concerns suggest the need for enhanced teacher training
	Effective	60%	
	Neutral	28%	
	Very ineffective	4%	
	Ineffective due to non-specialized teachers	4%	
<b>3. Satisfaction with professional development sessions</b>	Very satisfied	8%	48% satisfied overall; 16% dissatisfied; 28% neutral; some unaware or not yet involved
	Satisfied	40%	
	Neutral	28%	
	Dissatisfied	8%	
	Very dissatisfied	8%	
<b>4. Challenges in implementing the curriculum</b>	Unaware of sessions	4%	Major obstacles include time and training, pointing to implementation support needs.
	Time constraints	58%	
	Insufficient training	30%	
	Poor instructions	8%	
<b>5. Suggestions for improving the curriculum reform</b>	Lack of resources	4%	Content, teaching methods, and assessment improvements are top suggestions.
	Revise curriculum content	40%	
	Improve teaching methods	22%	
	Enhance assessment methods	18%	
	Provide better resources	8%	
	Use TESOL specialists	4%	
	Address abrupt changes	4%	
	Add more literary courses	4%	
<b>6. Belief in admission test's effectiveness</b>	Yes	36%	The majority were uncertain (limited confidence or knowledge about the test)
	No	12%	
	Unsure	52%	
<b>7. Support for making the admission test mandatory</b>	Strongly agree	56%	76% indicates a strong support for endorsing an admission test; a minority were uncertain or opposed
	Agree	20%	
	Uncertain	16%	
	Strongly disagree	8%	

The answers given by the 25 faculty members indicate a generally positive but thoughtfully critical attitude towards the new English language curriculum and the admission test that was put in place during 2024-2025 at the selected universities. While 68% think that the curriculum moderately or strongly addresses the academic and communicative needs of students, 32% express concerns, suggesting the need for further improvement. This result answers the first research question from the staff perspectives. Teaching methods were viewed positively by 64% of the respondents, but

some raised some issues relating to non-specialized instructors. The most important implementation challenges were time restraints and lack of training, suggesting a need for structural and logistical support. This answers the third research question, according to the staff. As to the admission test, the faculty members expressed high support (76%) to make it mandatory, although they support a standardized assessment to avoid gaps in understanding and confidence. This percentage answers the second research question from the staff points of view. Besides, the questionnaire had a

question asking for suggestions on how to better implement the curriculum reform. The staff interviewed recommended revision of the course content and distribution, introducing modern methods of teaching and assessment tools, and continuation of the admission test. In general, the staff's responses were a mix of positive views, constructive criticism, call for more

capacity building trainings, and the need for consistent institutional support.

Table 2 presents a summary of the perspectives of the students about the effectiveness of the whole of English programme offered as a pilot project in 2024-2025. The first seven questions are summarized, along with notable percentages from the questionnaire, and key insights.

Table 2

## Summary of the Students' Responses about the New English Language Curriculum

Question	Response Categories	Percentages of Respondents	Key Insights
1. Overall view of the programme	Very positive	16.6%	About 63% expressed satisfaction, but a large neutral group (30.2%) suggests scope for improvement.
	Positive	46.4%	
	Neutral	30.2%	
	Negative	6%	
	Very negative	0%	
2. Effectiveness of the curriculum in improving the students' English language skills?	Very effective	10.2%	The majority (51.5%) view the offered curriculum positively; notable neutral (35.7%) and dissatisfied (12.8%) groups point to room for improvement.
	Effective	41.3%	
	Neutral	35.7%	
	Ineffective	9.8%	
	Very ineffective	3%	
3. Sufficiency of practical activities	Yes	40%	40% confirmed sufficiency of practical activities. However, 50.6% expressed uncertainty – indicating unclear expectations or inconsistent delivery of practical work.
	No	9.4%	
	Uncertain	50.6%	
4. Satisfaction with the evaluation tools & grading	Very satisfied	3.4%	Around 40% satisfied, but 46.4% neutral and nearly 14% dissatisfied show mixed experiences.
	Satisfied	36.1%	
	Neutral	46.4%	
	Dissatisfied	11.1%	
5. Satisfaction with assignments	Very satisfied	7.2%	Nearly half (49.8%) satisfied; 38.3% neutral, 12% dissatisfied suggest need for adjustments.
	Satisfied	42.6%	
	Neutral	38.3%	
	Dissatisfied	11.1%	
	Very dissatisfied	~0.8%	
6. Satisfaction with course workload	Very satisfied	6.8%	80% are neutral/positive overall; ~13% dissatisfaction shows workload is mostly balanced but needs fine-tuning.
	Satisfied	38.3%	
	Neutral	41.7%	
	Dissatisfied	11.5%	
	Very dissatisfied	1.7%	
7. Biggest challenges	Language barriers	44.3%	Key challenges: language support, clearer instructions, and manageable workload.
	Unclear instructions	17.9%	
	Workload	15.7%	
	Other challenges	22.1%	

According to the feedback from 235 students, the English language programme is generally seen favorably; 63% of them hold positive or very positive views, and 51.5% rate it effective or very effective in improving their English skills. This finding answers the first research question from the students' perspectives. However, large neutral groups of students (30.2% for overall impressions and 35.7% for effectiveness) suggest that there are students who are not convinced about the new

curriculum and there are still areas requiring improvement. The highest level of uncertainty (50.6%) was attracted by the practical activities, implying that their integration may not be clear or consistent. Besides, around 40-50% of students expressed their satisfaction with the workload, assignments, and evaluation tools, but the existence of important neutral percentages and the smaller dissatisfied groups indicate mixed experiences. Primary challenges identified were language barriers (44.3%), blurred instructions (17.9%), and

workload (15.7%). These findings suggest the need for better concentration on language assistance, more meaningful practical activities, and clarity of instruction. These findings answer the third research question from the students' perspectives.

In the table that follows, students' reflections on admission test are given. It is worth mentioning that 91% of students who participated in the questionnaire have taken the EnglishScore admission test.

Table 3

## Summary of the Responses of the Students to the Admission Test

Question	Response Categories	Percentages of Respondents	Key Insights
<b>1. Difficulty level</b>	Very easy	1.7%	77.7% rated moderate/difficult, showing appropriate challenge for most.
	Easy	11.6%	
	Moderate	40.8%	
	Difficult	36.9%	
	Very difficult	9%	
<b>2. Main challenges</b>	Time pressure	33.8%	Need to address time limits, question clarity, preparation, and technical aspects.
	Unclear questions	20%	
	Lack of preparation	17.8%	
	Test design concerns	12%	
	Online format difficulties	11.1%	
<b>3. Accuracy in reflecting proficiency</b>	Yes	36.9%	Nearly half uncertain (46.8%) shows lack of confidence in test validity or may relate to previously identified issues such as time pressure, unclear questions, and lack of preparation.
	No	16.3%	
	Uncertain	46.8%	
<b>4. Suggestions for improvement</b>	Timing concerns	22.1%	Priorities: timing, content relevance, format, fairness, and appropriate difficulty.
	Test content	19.6%	
	Test format	19.1%	
	Fairness & accessibility	17.9%	
	Test difficulty	15.3%	

According to the students' questionnaire results, the admission test was challenging for the majority of students (77.7% thought so). Time constraints, unclear questions, and a lack of preparation were the biggest obstacles; test design and online format were minor issues. Only 36.9% of respondents believed the test accurately assessed their level of proficiency, and 46.8% were unsure, indicating a lack of confidence or knowledge regarding the test's reliability. This answers the second research question from the students' points of view. Timeliness, test content, format, accessibility and fairness, and level of difficulty were the main areas of improvement that were suggested. These results show that in order to increase students' confidence in the test, timing and design modifications, improved preparation materials, and more transparent explanations of test objectives and scoring are required.

In addition to the questionnaire results, interviews with 15 staff and 15 students were also conducted to obtain more direct insights from the stakeholders. The staff interviewed included the heads of the three piloted departments and the teaching staff who taught the core courses of the first year. The students selected for the interviews ranged from very good, good and poor English capacity, determined by relevant faculty

members, to obtain different perspectives. The language used in the interviews was mainly English except with 5 students who struggled to express in English and preferred to speak in Kurdish. The qualitative data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis model, involving transcription, coding, and inductive theme generation.

The interview questions addressed to staff focused on their perspectives of the new curriculum proposed in terms of its strengths, weaknesses and suggestions for improvement purposes. The thematic analysis of staff interviews led to four key themes. These are (1) constructive but divergent perceptions of the reform, (2) implementation challenges, (3) EnglishScore admission test, and (4) faculty training needs. The staff are coded as T1-T15, T for teacher.

Theme 1: Constructive but Divergent Perceptions of the Reform

At all three universities, the majority of staff interviewed had positive perspectives. However, there were sometimes opposing views among them. Many viewed the reform as a valuable step toward student needs and department mission and objectives. At University of Garmian, T6 described the reform as "inspiring" and able to produce "more competent

language teachers". T6 emphasized on offering courses related to applied linguistics rather than literature. In contrast, T7 and T9, whose majors are literature, thought that literature courses are unfairly overlooked. Opinions of Duhok staff fluctuated between supporting the new curriculum and doubts about its practicality. Some staff note that several modern methods of teaching were already in use. For instance, T2 stated: "modern teaching methods, such as active participation and student engagement, were already in use prior to the reform". In Sulaimani, staff highlighted discrepancy between curriculum difficulty and complexity and students' English capacity, especially the group who got less than B1 in the EnglishScore test. T13 thought that "some of the new courses offered as part of the new curriculum are inappropriate to several students". This theme addresses the first research question.

#### Theme 2: Implementation Challenges

While the staff were enthusiastic about the reform, they did identify some significant challenges in the implementation of the reform. The most urgent challenges were poor classroom facilities, lack of unified textbooks, lack of teaching resources, and lack of technological infrastructure. Higher speed internet, modernised classrooms and better equipment were emphasised by participants from the three piloted universities. Another issue was time constraint which meant that there was little effective delivery because of extended holidays, student boycotts and shortened semesters due to late class admission. T11 stated, "we studied only 7-8 weeks out of the 16 weeks allocated to the semester," while T12 shared, "there is insufficient class time to implement all planned activities." This theme provides answers to the third research question.

#### Theme 3: EnglishScore Admission Test

Many staff members recommended the continuation of the admission test, be it EnglishScore or another similar test, because they believed it to be an effective means of ensuring the admission of students who have adequate language skills. T1 emphasized that the admission test "works as a filter and allows only the students who have a satisfactory level of English". However, there were some issues regarding administration, content and design, grouping practices and fairness. Some of the participants expressed their views against having students in groups, suggesting that breaking students into groups may affect the morale and collaborative learning. T4, T8 and T14 warned that if student groups were not managed properly, demotivation might occur. Moreover, possible cheating incidents during the remote testing and lack of direct monitoring were highlighted by T7 and T13. Although the goal of the test was generally accepted, its methods and results were believed to need improvement. This theme relates directly to the second research question.

#### Theme 4: Faculty Training Needs

Lack of adequate training opportunities was mentioned an important issue. While some faculty members reported no training whatsoever regarding the new proposed curriculum or that they did not know about professional development workshops and trainings, others found them beneficial. For example, T3 expressed gratitude for the training sessions, he said, "they were very useful because they gave me ideas and showed me new techniques to deal with students." Others, such as T5, however, claimed limited training "I did not receive any seminars or training in my programme." I was isolated in terms of continuing support." Participants recommended structured, inclusive and equitable provision of training for all faculty. This theme provides insights into the first and third research questions.

Overall, the results of the staff interviews suggest thoughtful confidence about the curriculum reform, and acknowledgement of its high benefits. Nevertheless, several systemic and pedagogical challenges exist and need to be addressed. These challenges are more related to providing sufficient resources and infrastructure, aligning curriculum with students' English proficiency, applying appropriate assessment tools, and enhancing faculty professional development.

Turning now to students' interview, five recurring themes have been suggested. These are (1) balance between theory and practice, (2) insufficient time allocation, (3) challenges in English language skill, (4) satisfaction with the admission test, and (5) suggestions for programme improvement. The students are coded as S1-S15. S. for student.

#### Theme 1: Balance between Theory and Practice

All 15 students showed a concern about the excessive focus on theoretical content rather than practical use of language, especially speaking skills. Large class size was considered to be a barrier to active participation. As S2 stated, "there is not enough time allocated to practical sessions for speaking in the curriculum." Similarly, S12 commented, "we do not have labs and necessary equipment to practice our English." Students recommended a more integrated curriculum balancing theoretical knowledge with opportunities for communicative practice. This theme responds to the first and third research questions.

#### Theme 2: Insufficient Time Allocation

Students from all universities felt that the allocated time per module and the overall semester duration were inadequate to cover the extensive curriculum. S1 stated, "the lecture time is too short to cover all the topics properly," while S14 observed, "the pace is fast, and 90 minutes per week per module is not enough." They unanimously believe that shortage of allocated time has resulted in rushed instruction and incomplete coverage,

negatively impacting students' comprehension and mastery of the material as well as the overall goal of the programme. This theme is linked to the third research question.

#### Theme 3: Challenges in English Language Skills

The speaking and writing skills were identified by majority of the students as the most challenging language skills; yet, they are insufficiently addressed by the current programme. S6 said, "Developing speaking skills is a significant challenge; more consistent speaking practices are needed." S10 added, "I think I am in need of more time to practice and improve my speaking and writing skills." These findings suggest a critical gap in the development of skills, specifically in the area of oral communication, which students agree increases their overall language proficiency. This theme informs the third research question.

#### Theme 4: Satisfaction with the Admission Test

Students generally favored the admission test as a method of testing entry-level proficiency. S7 described it as effective, but challenging, filtering tool, while S15 commented "the test is a very good one and definitely a must for admission." However, concerns were raised about the type of test that was taken (i.e., the EnglishScore) regarding fairness, security of the test, and the impact of unsupervised test administration. In addition, grouping them by their scores led to discouragement for the learners who scored low, as reported by most of the students. The results of the admission test were suggested to be used as a guide to apply the appropriate instruction and offer preparatory courses to ensure an inclusive and even start for all. This theme is directly relevant to the second research question.

#### Theme 5: Suggestions for Programme Improvement

The interviewed students suggested several ways and potential solutions to improve the new programme. They highly recommend providing more practical sessions, reducing class sizes, adjusting the courses structures, and offering more individual-based feedback. S9 recommended, "more small group work and practice in writing and presentations would greatly help." Moreover, S11 suggested, "there should be foundational English courses before starting academic modules." This theme contributes to answering the first research question.

Overall, the results of the students' interview show that they have a strong desire for the improvements regarding the programme, specifically in terms of skill-based development (mostly speaking), proper pacing (allowing adequate time for each session), and correlation between methods of teaching and the actual proficiency level of the learners.

The research questions were carefully incorporated into the design of questionnaires and interviews. Items that measure the satisfaction of staff and students with

the content of the curriculum, teaching strategies, and the development of skills, and interview themes related to the balance between theory and practice and the adequacy of resources were used to answer the first question of whether the reform achieved its goals. Staff and student assessments of the validity, fairness, and difficulty of the admission test were employed to probe the second question of the accuracy of admission tests, supported by interview data on grouping practices and test administration. Structured questions related to implementation challenges (time, training, resources) and open ends were used to explore the third question relating to key challenges. Interview themes such as workload, lack of professional development and inadequate infrastructure also serve to shed light on this matter. Collectively, the questionnaires and interviews mapped the items raised and offered a logical guideline to answering the study questions.

In sum, the perception of both staff and students of curricular reform is that it is a good initiative towards improving English language undergraduate programmes, yet significant challenges are still outstanding in implementation. Staff concerns focus on lack of resources, insufficient training and lack of time while student concerns focus on the disparity between theory and practice, lack of time and lack of assistance with speaking and writing skills. Both groups support the use of an admission test but emphasize that the test needs to be better administered, balanced in content and design, and it also needs to be accompanied by targeted preparatory courses to address the lack of proficiency among students.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study investigated staff and student perceptions of a recent curriculum reform introduced in the English language education of three Universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Universities of Sulaimani, Duhok, and Garmian). Using data gathered by two questionnaires and several interviews with staff and students, the research examined perceptions of the effectiveness of the reform, difficulties in implementation, and the role of the admission test.

The results bring us to a clear overall finding: the reform is a strategic sound and necessary transformation, but it has probably been limited in its impact by the weaknesses in its implementation rather than in its vision or design. In general, both staff and students viewed the curriculum reform project as an important and constructive step to improve English language teaching in the Kurdistan Region. On one hand, staff highlighted its effectiveness in improving pedagogy skills and enhancing students learning outcomes. On the other hand, students emphasized its contribution to improve

their English proficiency and foster a more successful academic path. Both sides are in favour of the continued use of the admission test, and see it as an important tool for accepting qualified applicants.

Despite these favorable views, a number of challenges have been concluded that are believed to make the reform not effectively functioning. The major concerns raised by the staff included time constraints, lack of adequate training, and lack of resources. The students called for more time allocated for practices on skill development, particularly on speaking and writing, clearer, more interesting methods of assessment and a better balance between theory and real communication in language.

The study concludes with an emphasis on addressing the challenges to ensure achieving the desired results of the reform. Examples include providing sufficient faculty training, balancing the theoretical and practical aspects of the courses offered, implementing effective assessment techniques, and offering preparatory courses to improve students' English proficiency. Additionally, the key for a long-term success of the reform, policymakers should address the poor infrastructure, limited pedagogical training, balancing course content, and aligning institutional instruction with students' needs. Finally, the following recommendations are put forward: (i) provide more and consistent capacity building trainings to all English language staff on, for example, the new curriculum, modern pedagogy skills, and effective assessment techniques; (ii) maintain a balance between theoretical and practical hours offered per course, especially those related to speaking and writing skills; (iii) improve the infrastructure, including the teaching aids, the textbooks, and use of technology; (iv) develop the policy and guidelines of the admission test to ensure providing a more reliable and secure administration of the test, and (v) organize English preparatory programmes to support low-level students.

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## APPENDIXES

**Appendix A: Questionnaire for Heads of Departments and Faculty Members**

Please answer all the questions on the basis of your own experience with the new English language curriculum and the admission test. Your responses will be used for academic research purposes only and will remain confidential. There are no right or wrong answers - your honest opinion is important. For multiple choice questions, choose that which represents your experience in the best way. For the open-ended questions, you can be as detailed as you would like. The completion of this questionnaire should take about 10-15 minutes.

**General Information**

University Name

College Name

Department Name

Scientific title:

Lecturer

Assistant Professor

Associate Professor

Professor

Other (please specify)

Years of Teaching Experience:

0-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16+ years

Area of Specialization:

Linguistics

Applied Linguistics

Literature

Translation

Curriculum Design

Other (please specify)

**Curriculum Reform Implementation**

To what extent do you think the new English language curriculum meets the academic and communicative needs of students?

Strongly Aligned

Moderately Aligned

Somewhat Aligned

Minimally Aligned

Not Aligned

How effective do you find the teaching methods used in the curriculum?

Very Effective

Effective

Neutral

Ineffective

Very Ineffective

How satisfied are you with the professional development sessions/workshops provided as part of the reform?

Very Satisfied

Satisfied

Neutral

Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

What specific challenges have you encountered in implementing the new curriculum (e.g., resources, training, time constraints, others)? (Open-ended)

What improvements would you suggest for the current curriculum reform (e.g., content, delivery methods, resources, assessment)? (Open-ended)

Admission Test Evaluation	
How familiar are you with the EnglishScore admission test?	Very Familiar Somewhat Familiar Not Familiar
Do you believe the admission test effectively measures students' English proficiency?	Yes No Not Sure
To what extent do you agree that the admission test be a mandatory requirement for enrollment in English language programs?	Strongly agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly disagree

### Appendix B: Questionnaire for Students

Please answer all the questions on the basis of your own experience with the new English language curriculum and the admission test. Your responses will be used for academic research purposes only and will remain confidential. There are no right or wrong answers - your honest opinion is important. For multiple choice questions, choose that which represents your experience in the best way. For the open-ended questions, you can be as detailed as you would like. The completion of this questionnaire should take about 10-15 minutes.

General Information	
University Name	
College Name	
Department Name	
Curriculum Reform Implementation	
How effective do you find the curriculum in improving your English language skills?	Very Effective Effective Neutral Ineffective Very Ineffective
Which course has helped you improve the most? (mention them)	
Do you feel more prepared to teach English after studying under this curriculum?	Yes Not sure No
Were you given sufficient practical activities (less theoretical lecturing)?	Yes Not sure No
To what extent were you satisfied about the evaluation tools and grading system throughout the course?	Very Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
To what extent were you satisfied about the assignments?	Very Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
To what extent were you satisfied about the workload of each course?	Very Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied

	Very Dissatisfied
What are the biggest challenges you face with the new curriculum? (Open-ended)	
Admission Test Evaluation	
Have you taken the EnglishScore admission test?	Yes No
How would you rate the difficulty level of the EnglishScore admission test?	Very Difficult Difficult Moderate Easy Very Easy
Do you think the test accurately reflected your English proficiency?	Yes Not Sure No
What suggestions do you have to improve the test or the admission process? (Open-ended)	
Please select the areas you feel need improvement:	Test Content (e.g., topics, skills assessed)  Test Format (e.g., types of questions, test length)  Test Difficulty (e.g., the level of challenge)  Timing (e.g., time allocation for the test)  Fairness and Accessibility (e.g., equal opportunities for all students)  Other (please specify):

### Appendix C: Interview Questions for Heads of Departments and Faculty Members

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to explore your views and experiences regarding the new English language curriculum reform and the admission test. Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. There are no right or wrong answers—please speak freely and honestly. You may decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time. The interview will take approximately 20–30 minutes.

#### The questions:

1. What are your overall impressions of the curriculum reform project in terms of content, delivery, your method of teaching, and incorporation of technology? Has the new curriculum changed your approach to teaching? How do you measure these changes (e.g., through grades, class participation activities)?

2. What has been the impact of the reform on student engagement and learning outcomes? Do you feel that their motivation to learn has increased, their collaboration with classmates has improved, and their level of English has developed during the project?

3. Do you find the assessment methods in the new curriculum to be effective in measuring student learning and progress? Do the assessments (such as quizzes, assignments, or exams) reflect what they learn in class and help them improve their English skills?

4. Do you think the EnglishScore admission test should be continued beyond the pilot phase? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the EnglishScore admission test in terms of applying it continuously for admitting students?

5. How useful were the faculty training sessions and workshops? What specific aspects of the training were most helpful or need improvement?

6. What are the biggest challenges in implementing the new curriculum?

7. Do you feel you have adequate resources (e.g., textbooks, online platforms, classroom materials) to effectively implement the new curriculum? What recommendations and additional support (e.g., materials, time, peer collaboration) do you need to effectively implement the reform?

#### **Appendix D: Interview Questions for Students**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to explore your views and experiences regarding the new English language curriculum reform and the admission test. Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. There are no right or wrong answers—please speak freely and honestly. You may decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time. The interview will take approximately 20–30 minutes.

##### **The questions:**

1. What is your overall opinion of the English language program? Are there any specific aspects you find particularly helpful or challenging?

2. How do you feel about the balance between theory and practice in the presented curriculum? Do you feel you have enough opportunities for practical language use?

In what ways has the curriculum helped you improve your English skills?

3. How do you feel about the pace of the presented curriculum? Do you think the content is covered in an appropriate amount of time?

4. Are there any English language skills you still find challenging that are not covered enough in the courses (e.g., speaking, writing, listening, reading, critical thinking, presentation, etc.)? What specific improvements

would you suggest for the English language program, and which ones do you feel would have the greatest impact on your learning (e.g., more speaking and writing practices, more feedback, smaller classes, etc.)?

5. How did you prepare for the EnglishScore admission test? Do you think the EnglishScore admission test accurately assessed your English skills? What aspects of the test did you find fair or unfair?

6. Would you recommend keeping the test as part of the admission process?