RESEARCH ARTICLE

INVESTIGATING THE STUDENTS' AND INSTRUCTORS' VIEWPOINTS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM OF THE PREPARATORY YEAR PROGRAM AT THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING, UNIVERSITY OF ADEN

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the students' and instructors' viewpoints on the English Language curriculum of the preparatory year program at the faculty of engineering, University of Aden. A descriptive mixed-method design was employed for this study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The former type of data was gathered via questionnaires administrated to (n=90) preparatory year students, and the latter was collected through individual interviews conducted with five EFL instructors. Both quantitative and qualitative data were subject to descriptive statistical analysis and content analysis respectively. The findings revealed that revision of the English language curriculum is necessarily needed (M= 3.03- 2.66) in terms of its content, teaching methods, course books, and assessment. The only dimension that was found to require significant improvements was the classroom environment (M=2.55). The findings also revealed that among the challenges EFL instructors encountered during the implementation of the ELC were the absence of facilities such as language labs, smart screens, and data shows. Moreover, the huge number of students in each class and the variety in students' levels were critical problems that instructors faced.

Introduction

Due to the constant advance in all aspects of life in the 21st century English- has increasingly become the international language for business and commerce, science and technology, and international relations and diplomacy. It is the language most widely used as a lingua franca among non-native speakers. In addition, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001, as cited in Tunç, 2010, p. 1) state that "English has established itself as the world language of research and publication and it is being used by a multitude of universities and institutes of learning all around the world as the language of instruction". Similarly, Kirkpatrick (2011) considers English as the medium of instruction in today's universities. As a result of the importance of the English language, and the internalization in higher education, most universities worldwide now offer one-year intensive English language program (ELP) - within preparatory year program- to equip their students with the language skills required to succeed in higher education and meet their foreseen language needs. Preparatory programmes are administered at many universities and are generally intended to improve the students' ability to access and complete a college education. These programs cover many subjects besides the English language.

Concerning the importance of preparatory programmes at the college education, the university of Aden has recently started to provide a one-year preparatory program for students to prepare them for university study. The program was initiated at the academic year 2018-2019. It is a prerequisite to admission into the

undergraduate programmes at many faculties, namely; The faculty of medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, engineering, administrative sciences and languages and translation. The period of study is one academic year. The study plan is divided into two semesters. The students study in the two semesters English and Arabic language, as well as other subjects depending on the specialization. Students are, towards the end of the program, admitted in the various faculties and departments at the university in accordance with their scores and the number of students that can be accepted into each faculty or department.

In order for an academic program to succeed, however, there are several fundamental components to be considered; and definitely one of them is evaluation. According to Finney (2002) there are two reasons why evaluation must be included in all phases of program planning and implementation. Firstly, because evaluation makes it possible to see whether the goals of the curriculum have been met or not. In this case an assessment of the participants within the program is necessary. Secondly, evaluation provides an opportunity to determine the effectiveness of the program itself. In this case, it is likely to focus on the teachers, the methodology, the materials and so on. These two reasons combine the purpose of this research study.

Statement of the problem

The preparatory year program at Aden university aims to help students to pursue their undergraduate studies without having difficulty. Since English is fully -or partially- the medium of instruction in all departments at the Faculty of Engineering/Aden University, it is vital to make sure that the students have acquired a certain level of proficiency in English. Therefore, the English preparatory curriculum at the faculty of engineering has very crucial importance in terms of preparing the students with essential academic language skills needed in their departmental courses. The preparatory year program at the faculty of engineering has not been subjected to sufficient evaluation. Henceforth, the effectiveness of the current practices of the English language curriculum has not been evaluated yet. Therefore, many questions seem to be unanswered, such as to what extent instructors and students are satisfied with the English language curriculum; which components of the curriculum are strong and which need improvement. These combine to form the main reasons for this study.

Research objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the curriculum components from the students' and instructors' perspectives.
2. To investigate-difficulties that EFL instructors face while implementing the curriculum.
3. To provide some suggestions to improve the English Language curriculum of the preparatory year program.

Research questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions.

1. What are the students' perspectives about the English language curriculum implemented in the preparatory year program at the Faculty of Engineering?
2. What are the EFL instructors' perspectives about the English language curriculum implemented in the preparatory year program at the Faculty of Engineering?
3. What are the difficulties that EFL instructors face while implementing the curriculum?

Significance of the study

This study is significant since it is the first evaluation study that assesses the English language curriculum at the Faculty of Engineering. No other studies have been carried out to evaluate this curriculum since the

establishment of the preparatory year program at Aden University. This study will provide a better understanding of the various components of the curriculum along with identifying its strengths and weaknesses. This study also will provide the decision-makers and curriculum designers with valuable information to make relevant changes, additions, and deletions to improve the English language curriculum.

The limitations of the study

1. The study focused on evaluating the English language preparatory program curriculum at the Faculty of Engineering, Aden University, Therefore, generalization of the findings to other contexts may not be applicable.

2. The study participants were limited to the preparatory year students and English language instructors.

3. The data collection instruments were constrained to the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Different data collection instruments such as observation could have added more in-depth information. This study relied upon the opinions of the study sample at the time of data collection.

Review of literature

Evaluation has been defined in many different ways, mainly because there have been different approaches to evaluation over the years. The various definitions of evaluation as Patton (2008) suggests, reveal important differences in what various educators emphasize in their work. The American Psychology Association (2012) regards evaluation as a valuable tool for organizations that aim to upgrade the quality of an existing program. Evaluation is important because it provides detailed feedback on how a particular curriculum is perceived by all stakeholders involved in a program. Through evaluation, we can discover whether the program is producing or can produce the desired results. The strengths and the weaknesses of the program and the effectiveness of its implementation can also be highlighted with the help of evaluation (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). Moreover, evaluation will not only provide feedback on the effectiveness of a program but will also help to determine whether the program is appropriate for the target population, whether there are any problems with its implementation, and whether there are any ongoing concerns that need to be resolved as the program is implemented. In this respect, Murphy (2000) states that evaluation is carried out to determine the extent to which a program or intervention is worthwhile, and to aid decision-making. In the same way, as stated by Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) evaluation can be defined as the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decisions alternatives (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 43). Likewise, evaluation has been defined as the act or process of determining the merit, worth, or significance of something (Davidson, 2005; Scriven, 1991).

In spite of all the varied definitions of evaluation, Guerra (2007) points out that evaluation at its core is a simple concept that: (a) compares results with expectations (b) finds drivers and barriers to expected performance (c) produces action plans for improving the programs.

The procedure of curriculum evaluation

It is important for language education programs to have a structured evaluation system that aids to improve the quality of instruction (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005; Peacock, 2009). The curriculum is "all of the experiences that individual learners have in a program of education whose purpose is to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives, which is planned in terms of a framework of theory and research or past and present professional practice" (Hass,1980, p. 5 as cited in Cosaner, 2013). Similarly, Nunan (1988, p. 8) states that curriculum is basically concerned with the process of planning, implementation, and evaluation of a language program. In this respect, Nunan emphasizes what he calls an 'integrated approach'; i.e., that, all elements be integrated so that decisions made at one level are not in conflict with those at another. Based on this integrated approach, the curriculum is viewed as a cyclical process of development, revision, maintenance,

and renewal which need to continue throughout the life of the curriculum (Thomas, 2005). Consequently, evaluation can be seen as an integral and ongoing part of the curriculum development process that aims to improve the teaching and learning process in all aspects. In this respect. When evaluating a curriculum, it is important to specify the purpose of the evaluation, the time or duration, the focus/ type of evaluation as well as the factors to be included in the evaluation. In order to determine these, Nation & Macalister (2010, pp. 126-127) suggest that the following should be taken into consideration:

1) formative or summative

2) short-term or long term

3) process-oriented or product-oriented

4) cognitive, affective, or recourse factors

Formative evaluation is an ongoing process that provides feedback for improvement. This is emphasized by Nation and Macalister (2010) who suggest that in a formative evaluation, the aim is to form or shape the course in order to improve it. According to Boulmetis & Dutwin (2011), Formative evaluation has the following characteristics:

- It concentrates on examining and changing processes as they occur.

- It provides timely feedback about the curriculum.

- It allows making program adjustments to help achieve curriculum/program goals.

Summative evaluations, on the other hand, are typically conducted after the completion of the curriculum/program and aim to reflect on adequacy and effectiveness (Bachman, 1989). This type of evaluation is often based on tests of all sorts, students' reactions to the instruction, teachers' views concerning the effectiveness of instruction, parents' actions, and ratings of graduates (Saylor, Alexander & Lewis, 1981 as cited in Gerede, 2005). The relationship between formative and summative evaluation cannot be neglected. Both evaluations are needed in the different stages of program development. According to Stufflebeam & Coryn (2014), formative and summative evaluations provide different kinds of decisions. Formative evaluation leads to decisions about curriculum development including modification, revision, and the like. summative evaluation leads to decisions concerning program continuation, termination adoption, and so on.

The second point is to decide whether the evaluation will be conducted in the short term or the long term. Short-term evaluations seem to be practical, time-saving, and economical, but they are less likely to be valid. Hence, the duration of the evaluation studies are suggested to be long-term (Beretta, 1986).

Another important point to decide is whether the evaluation will focus on the process of learning and teaching or on the product/result of the process. The purpose of the product-oriented evaluation is to determine the extent to which the goals and objectives are achieved. This type of evaluation is introduced by Ralph Tyler in the fifties. Basically, product-oriented evaluation measures students' achievements by testing and grading. However, it lacks the criterion to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness in identifying the particular needs of the learners which is the main concern of the process-oriented evaluation.

The last distinction to be made is to decide on the factors to be included in the evaluation. According to Nation and Macalister (2010, p.127), there are three factors which are cognitive, affective, and resource.

Each factor answers several questions. Example questions of the cognitive factor are;(1) How much has been taught? (2) Has the course improved learners' work or study performance? The effective factor can answer such questions: (1) Are the learners pleased with the course? (2) Do the teachers feel the course is effective? Similarly, the resource factor answers such questions: (1) Are the classrooms large enough? (2) Is the library adequate for the needs of the learners?

In the field of foreign language teaching, Mackay (1994) states that evaluation may focus on many different aspects of a language program such as curriculum design, classroom processes, the teacher, and the students.

It is widely accepted that all kinds of evaluations eventually require information in order to answer the questions that are relevant to the evaluation. Hence, there are several data-gathering tools such as questionnaires, interviews, observations and checklists that can be used and which provide much more detailed data (Nation and Macalister, 2010). However, this research used questionnaires and interviews to collect data bout the English language curriculum of the preparatory year program at the Faculty of Engineering.

Research studies on evaluation of language preparatory program

As stated by Brown (2007) no curriculum should be considered complete without some form of evaluation. This section briefly discusses several evaluation studies recently carried out in a variety of university preparatory programs in line with the purposes of the current study. These studies are analyzed in terms of their methodologies and results in order to set a research background framework.

To begin with, Akpur (2017) conducted a study to evaluate the English preparatory program at Yıldız Teknik University based on the views of the students only. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires. Findings of the study indicated that student's motivation to learn English was low and that the curriculum did not provide students with enough input in terms of listening and speaking skills. In addition, the duration of the program was not enough to learn English efficiently. Findings also revealed that the assessment procedures, the content as well as the contribution of the curriculum to improve reading and writing skills were considered to be effective.

In another study, Efeoglu, Ilerten and Basal (2018) conducted a study to investigate the preparatory school program in the English language departments at a state university in Turkey. The evaluation focused particularly on reading, grammar and listening courses and was based on Patton's Utilization Focused Evaluation Model. Data were collected via open-ended questionnaire, and individual interviews in two subsequent years. The number of the participants were 38 in total (first year, n=19; second year, n=19). The results of the first evaluation were disseminated to all parties involved (i.e., the students, instructors, policy-makers, and the head of the department). Thus, the second evaluation served for assessment of the first one as well as providing detailed analysis of the new program. Results indicated that all changes were all well-accepted by almost all of the participants, particularly by the new-comers, highlighting the effectiveness of re-evaluation of the previous program.

In a similar study, Çelik-Yazıcı & Kahyalar (2018) researched how first -year students enrolled in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences perceived the EPP at Çukurova University in terms of its content, teaching-learning process, and assessment procedures. Data were gathered through questionnaires. Findings revealed that the students thought the program was effective. However, they suggested that program integration of more academic content and speaking lessons is needed as well as designing activities that will promote student participation.

In a recent study, Bayram and Canaran (2019) conducted a study to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the English Preparatory Program (EPP) offered at the Department of Foreign Languages (DFL) at an English-medium foundation university in Turkey. Participants of the study were 241 students and 26 teachers. The data were collected by using focus group meetings with students and teachers and a "Program Evaluation Survey" designed by the researchers. The results revealed that the strengths of the EPP included homework assignments, exams and the program while the extracurricular activities and online programs were found to be the main weaknesses of the EPP. It was also found that student and teacher perceptions of the EPP showed statistically significant difference.

Method

The study was designed as descriptive mixed-method research, using both quantitative and qualitative data. The mixed-methods design was chosen in order to provide an accurate picture of a given state of affairs as fully and carefully as possible (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p.15). The study employed a convergent strategy of mixed methods in collecting and analyzing data. In such strategy quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed separately during a similar timeframe, but then the two forms of collected data are merged together and the results are compared (Creswell & Plano, 2017; Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). Qualitative data was collected by using semi structured interviews and Quantitative data was collected by using closed questions (in questionnaires and interviews).

Participants

The participants included in this study can be categorized into two groups: the students and EFL instructors. For the questionnaire, a total of ninety students studying in the preparatory year program participated in the study. The interviews were conducted with five EFL instructors lecturing at the preparatory year program of the faculty of engineering. Participants were informed that the study aims to investigate their opinions of the quality of the English language curriculum and that participation was not obligatory.

Data collection instruments

Questionnaire

After reviewing the related literature, and examining studies carried out in the field, the researcher determined the content and items to be included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to gather data on students' perceptions about the quality of the English language curriculum at the preparatory year program/Faculty of Engineering. The questionnaire consisted of six sections: course content; materials; teaching-learning strategies and instructors' performance; assessment of students' learning and classroom environment. The questionnaire included a five-point scale. The scores on each item ranged from 1 to 5, where 5 stood for the highest degree of participant's response. the scale started with "strongly agree" which rated 5 and ended with "strongly disagree" which rated 1. The initial form of the questionnaire was submitted for experts' opinions regarding its face and content validity and changes were made accordingly. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .89. Such a value can be considered an acceptable concordance (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Interviews

Interviews provide useful and in-depth information because they allow interviewees to openly express their points of view. As a result, semi-structured interviews were planned and implemented with five EFL instructors. The interview questions addressed topics such as objectives, content, teaching methods, student assessment, and problems encountered during curriculum implementation. The initial version of the interview questions was submitted for expert comments on content validity, and any required changes. The instructors' interview consisted of 18 open-ended questions. The interviews were scheduled in accordance with the interviewees' convenience, and each session lasted around 30 minutes

Data analysis

The quantitative data gathered through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive analysis. (means and standard deviations). The Qualitative data gathered through interviews with instructors were analyzed using codes and themes. The researcher used the following weighted scale to indicate participants' responses according to Likert five-point scale:

Likert scale	weighted Mean	Description
Strongly Disagree	1 – 1.80	The curriculum needs significant improvement
Disagree	1.81 – 2.60	
Slightly (Somewhat Agree)	2.61 – 3.40	Curriculum improvement /revision is necessary
Agree	3.41 – 4.20	Minor improvements are recommended.
Strongly Agree	4.21 – 5	No recommendations for improvement.

Results and discussion

In this part, findings obtained from the students' questionnaires and interviews with instructors are presented respectively in relation to the research questions. In order to answer the first research question, the first part offers the students' questionnaire responses and the results of the instructors' comments are also provided in order to address the second and third research questions.

Results of the first research question

What are the students' perspectives about the English language curriculum implemented in the preparatory year program at the Faculty of Engineering?

To answer this question, the weighted mean and standard deviation of the participant's responses were calculated to examine students' perceptions of each dimension of the English language curriculum, namely, course content, materials, exams, midterm assessments, teaching methods and instructors' performance and classroom environment. First, the overall mean scores for each dimension of the ELC are illustrated in Table 1. While the students' perceptions of each dimension are illustrated in the following tables.

Table 1: Students' perspectives on the quality of the English language curriculum

No	Items	Mean	
1	course content	3.03	slightly agree
2	midterm assessments	3.01	slightly agree
3	course books and materials	2.91	slightly agree
4	exams	2.66	slightly agree
5	teaching methods and instructors' performance	2.66	slightly agree
6	classroom environment	2.55	disagree
Average Mean		**2.8**	**slightly agree**

As can be shown in table 1, the students' views towards all dimensions of the English language curriculum ranged from slightly agree (M= 3.03) to disagree (M= 2.55). Considering the content, materials, assessment and teaching methods, the results showed that students' views were found at a moderate level. On the other hand, the students had negative views regarding the classroom environment (M=2.55). Furthermore, the overall mean score of the students' perception about the ELC was (M=2.8) 'slightly agree'. This result indicates that it is necessary to revise the English language curriculum used in the preparatory year program. The students' viewpoints of each dimension of the ELC can be shown respectively.

EJUA Electronic Journal of University of Aden for Humanity and Social Sciences
Vol. 4, No. 1, March 2023   **Alaskary**   **Pages 193-207**

https://ejua.net

Students' perspectives on the quality of course content

Table 2 shows how the students responded to course content. Based on the means and standard deviations of each items as well as the entire axis, the items are arranged in descending order.

Table 2: Students' perspectives on the quality of courses content

No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev	
1	The ELC emphasizes the four language skills, grammar, and vocabulary learning.	3.46	1.325	agree
2	The content is accurate, coherent and up-to-date.	3.10	1.246	slightly agree
3	The content has been designed in a way that encourages students to actively participate in lessons.	2.73	1.356	slightly agree
4	The duration of the courses (2hrs a week) is sufficient to cover the whole content. (or to learn English)	2.70	1.472	slightly agree
Average Mean		**3.03**		**slightly agree**

Table 2 shows that the weighted mean value of the students' views on the course content was 3.03. The majority of students 'slightly' agreed on the course content's quality. This result indicates that the content of the English language curriculum should be revised and improved. The emphasis on four language skills, grammar and vocabulary learning was the only item that obtained a mean score of 3.46 'agree'. This result, however, contradicts the results of the instructors' interviews, as will be described later. The mean scores for the next three items were 3.10, 2.73 and 2.70, respectively. These values may imply that the English curriculum does not provide students with enough time for revision and that the content only slightly motivates them to actively engage in the class discussions.

Students' perspectives on the quality of midterm assessments

Table 3 shows how the students responded to midterm assessments. Based on the means and standard deviations of each items as well as the entire axis, the items are arranged in descending order.

Table 3: Students' perspectives on the quality of midterm assessments

No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev	
1	The number of midterms and quizzes is adequate.	3.47	5.691	Agree
2	The midterms and quizzes assess all language skills, grammar and vocabulary	3.29	1.440	slightly agree
3	The instructor provides students with sufficient feedback on their work in tests and assignments.	2.24	1.524	disagree
4	The midterms and quizzes are appropriate to students' level of English	2.63	1.386	slightly agree
5	The marking received is fair.	3.19	1.550	slightly agree
6	The quizzes and assignments help students to learn better.	3.33	1.543	slightly agree
Average Mean		**3.01**		**slightly agree**

According to the findings presented in Table 3, the students thought that the number of quizzes and midterm tests was reasonable (M= 3.47). Despite this, the students were dissatisfied about item 3, which dealt with feedback (M= 2.24). This result indicates that they did not obtain input from their instructors on their projects and homework. Regarding the scoring issue, it was observed that students considered their instructors unfair in how they graded their assignments. Similarly, students felt that the assignments and quizzes were ineffective in helping them learn English since they concentrated solely on assessing grammar and vocabulary while ignoring other language skills, particularly listening and speaking. These results might be attributed to students'

diverse abilities, as well as the large number of students in each class, which affects instructors' ability to provide feedback to each individual student.

Students' perspectives on the quality of course books and materials

Table 3 shows how the students responded to course books and materials. Based on the means and standard deviations of each items as well as the entire axis, the items are arranged in descending order.

Table 4: Students' perspectives on the quality of course books and materials

No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev	
1	The units (topics) in the course materials/ handouts are interesting.	3.14	3.400	slightly agree
2	The difficulty and pacing of the topics in the course materials/ handout are appropriate to the students' level.	2.49	1.154	disagree
3	The topics and activities in the handouts could be followed easily.	3.18	1.362	slightly agree
4	The tasks and activities are sufficient to consolidate what is learnt.	3.02	1.398	slightly agree
5	The activities are challenging and motivating.	2.74	1.370	slightly agree
	Average Mean	**2.91**		**slightly agree**

Table 4 shows that the students 'slightly' agreed about the course handout's quality (M=2.91). According to the results, the students disagreed with item 2 which dealt with the appropriateness of the topics to their level (M= 2.49). Also, the students felt that the topics and activities were 'somewhat' interesting or motivating. These results might be attributed to the absence of a precise textbook. The students only have a handout that includes materials collected from different sources.

Students' perspectives on the quality of exams questions

Table 5 presents students' responses regarding exams questions. The items are ordered in descending order based on the means and standard deviations of each item as well as the entire axis.

Table 5: Students' perspectives on the quality of exams questions

No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev	
1	The exam questions covered materials from across the curriculum.	2.42	1.382	disagree
2	The exam questions are of varying difficulty.	3.41	1.429	agree
3	The number of questions is appropriate for the time allotted.	2.73	1.467	slightly agree
4	The questions are clearly written, unambiguous, and presented in good English (Grammar and spelling are correct).	2.72	1.446	slightly agree
5	The exam instructions are easy to understand.	2.04	1.297	disagree
	Average Mean	**2.66**		**slightly agree**

Table 5 shows the total mean score of the students' views on the exam questions was 2.66 (slightly agree). The data also indicated that students' views of the appropriateness of exam questions to the time allotted the language of the exam questions were moderate, with mean scores of 2.73 and 2.72, respectively. In terms of item 2 which concerned the complexity of exam questions, the data revealed that the students agreed that the exam questions varied in difficulty. The data, on the other hand, demonstrated that the students had a negative attitude (M= 2.04) about the exam instructions and their coverage to topics across the curriculum. The students could not easily understand the instructions of the exam papers and they thought the exam questions did not cover the majority of the topics studied covered in class. This low score implies that exam

EJUA | Electronic Journal of University of Aden for Humanity and Social Sciences
Vol. 4, No. 1, March 2023 | Alaskary | Pages 193-207

https://ejua.net

questions require significant improvement. This might be due to the fact that the preparation of exam questions is the duty of the preparatory year center, which may not be aware of the specific topics addressed during classes.

Students' perspectives on the quality of teaching methods and instructors' performance

Table 6 presents students' responses regarding teaching methods and instructors' performance. The items are ordered in descending order based on the means and standard deviations of each item as well as the entire axis.

Table 6: Students' perspectives on the quality of teaching methods and instructors' performance

No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev	
1	The instructor is well- prepared for class.	3.23	1.341	slightly agree
2	The instructor is punctuated.	3.26	1.427	slightly agree
3	The instructor's proficiency in English is evident.	3.23	1.366	slightly agree
4	The instructor effectively uses a verity of teaching methods (pair work, group work, individual work).	1.97	1.240	disagree
5	The instructor uses audio/visual assistance.	2.14	1.646	disagree
6	The instructor is an effective communicator (uses eye contact and body movement /enthusiastic and confident).	2.33	1.281	disagree
7	The instructor invites students to ask questions and responds to these in an effective and professional manner.	2.70	1.525	slightly agree
8	The instructor encourages students' participation.	2.76	1.360	slightly agree
9	The instructor treats students impartially and respectfully.	3.12	1.513	slightly agree
10	When needed the instructor is available for guidance and advice.	2.39	1.371	disagree
Average Mean		**2.71**		**slightly agree**

Considering the items related to teaching methods and instructors' performance. Table 6 shows that the weighted mean value of the students' perceptions was 2.71(slightly agree). The results revealed that the students 'slightly' agreed about instructors' punctuality and class preparation. Furthermore, the majority of students felt that their instructors treated them equally and encouraged them to participate in class discussions. On the other hand, the students disagreed about the items dealt with audio/visual assistance and teaching methods. It was understood from the findings that the instructors did not use a variety of techniques and styles to motivate students learning.

The students were also completely dissatisfied with the availability of instructors outside of class time. The students were unable to contact their instructors in case they need help or guidance. This may be attributed to the absence of teaching staff during office hours. Also, the power outage may be a significant barrier to employing audio/visual assistance.

Students' perspectives on the quality of classroom environment

Table 7 shows how the students responded to classroom environment. Based on the means and standard deviations of each item and the entire axis, the items are arranged in descending order

Table 7: Students' perspectives on the quality of classroom environment

No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev	
1	The classrooms are air conditioned and well equipped with learning technologies.	2.18	1.277	disagree
2	The appropriateness of classrooms for instructors to use different strategies.	2.32	1.188	disagree
3	The classrooms are appropriate in terms of (lightening, cleanness, .)	2.41	1.373	disagree
4	The number of students in each class is appropriate with the room capacity.	3.29	1.516	slightly agree
	Average Mean	**2.55**		**disagree**

In terms of the students' views of the classroom environment, as shown in table 7, the findings revealed that the students' overall mean score was 2.55 (disagree). The students disagreed over the classroom's suitability in terms of lightening, cleanness, air conditioning, and learning technology. Also, the student found the classroom inappropriate for employing various leaning strategies (M=2.18). These findings indicate that the educational atmosphere needs significant improvement.

Results of the second research question

What are the EFL instructors' perspectives about the English Language curriculum implemented in the preparatory year program at the Faculty of Engineering?

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five EFL instructors from Aden University who had taught in the preparatory year program from its inception at the Faculty of Engineering to answer the second research question. The interview questions were deigned to primarily match to the important subjects in the students' questionnaires. Part one of the questions addressed subjects such as objectives, content, materials, exams and midterm assessments, and teaching methods. Part two sought to solve the third research question.

Instructors' perspectives regarding the objectives

The analysis of the interviews carried out with the instructors at the preparatory year program revealed that they were aware of the main objectives of the English language curriculum in terms of improving students' language skills needed to follow in their undergraduate courses as well as providing them with basic grammar and technical vocabulary. Consequently, not all the instructors considered that the objectives were clear and achieved. Two of them stated that the objectives were clearly identified and communicated while designing the curriculum. Whereas only one instructor claimed that the objectives were not adequately described and not realized by all EFL instructors. Another instructor, on the other hand, noted that the objectives were not clearly stated and not understood by all EFL instructors.

In terms of the objectives' relevance to the students' levels and their compatibility with the content. Three instructors agreed that the objectives were acceptable for the students' levels and compatible with the content. The first instructor explained that because the preparatory year center did not provide specific materials for the English language courses, a few EFL instructors prepared the objectives and selected the content themselves. The third instructor, on the other hand, stated that the content was not aligned with the objectives. Moreover, the fifth instructor stated that because they were not provided any objectives, it was difficult to assess whether the objectives were appropriate for the students' levels or aligned with the content.

To sum up, the instructors had different viewpoints on the presence and clarity of the ELC's objectives. Some stated that there were clearly stated objectives that were appropriate for the students' levels and compatible with the content, while others had a negative view.

Instructors' perspectives on course content and materials:

A descriptive analysis of interview questions indicated that all instructors agreed that the topics motivated the students to some extent. In terms of whether the content considers the four language skills, vocabulary, and grammar, three instructors claimed that the content -to some extent considered and integrated the four skills. But instructor No. 4 stated that the content was largely on grammar not really about skills. This point of view was confirmed by instructor No. 5 who clarified that the curriculum concentrates on grammar and vocabulary to a large extent. As a result, the ELC was deemed to be unhelpful for students in their ESP classes.

Instructors' perspectives on exams and midterm assessments

In terms of the instructors' perspectives regarding exams and midterm assessments, all of them asserted that the questions were appropriate for the students' levels. In addition, they claimed that midterm quizzes and tests included a variety of question types, as opposed to final exam questions which were primarily objective questions (multiple-choice and true or false questions). Regarding class feedback, all instructors stated that the students received feedback on their work in quizzes and tests and this can be done by offering either written or spoken comments and corrections.

Instructors' perspectives on teaching methods

Regarding the instructors' views on the teaching methods, the results revealed that the instructors preferred to use the Grammar- Translation method. All instructors stated that the large number of students in each class, the students' low levels, the power outage, and the lack of audio-visual aids hindered them from allocating time for additional communication activities such as role-play and presentations.

Results of the third research question

What are the difficulties that EFL instructors face while implementing the curriculum?

The results revealed that among the challenges EFL instructors encountered during the implementation of the ELC were the absence of facilities such as air conditioning, language labs, smart screens, and data shows. Moreover, the huge number of students in each class and the variety in student's' levels was critical problems that instructors faced.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper investigates the students' and instructors' viewpoints on the English language curriculum (ELC) of the preparatory year program at the Faculty of Engineering in order to explore the curriculum components that need improvement. The findings revealed that the content, teaching methods, materials, and assessment strategies needed necessary revision and improvement (M= 3.03-2.66). The classroom environment was the only dimension that required significant improvement (M=2.55). More specifically, the findings showed that the content did not encourage the students to actively engage in classes and that the time allotted was not sufficient (2hrs per week). Moreover, it was found that the students were not provided with feedback on their homework. The study also found that exam questions needed significant development since they did not cover information from throughout the course and exam directions were difficult to follow. The study findings confirmed that the difficulty of the topics were not entirely appropriate to the students' levels. Considering teaching-learning strategies and instructor performance, it was discovered that this aspect needed necessary revision and improvement.

In terms of instructors' viewpoints on the ELC, the results illustrated that the instructors did not share similar views. Some instructors—those who developed the students' handouts, confirmed the clarity and suitability of the objectives to the students' levels. Yet, the majority of the instructors disagreed. Similarly, some instructors agreed that the curriculum addressed the four language skills, while others observed that the

curriculum focusedmostly on grammar and vocabulary while listening and speaking skills were entirely ignored.

When comparing the viewpoints of the instructors and the students, the results showed that the instructors supported the idea that the complexity and rhythm of the topics as well as the test questions were allocated to students' levels, whereas the students had a negative viewpoint. On the other hand, it was found that both instructors and students were not satisfied about the absence of classroom technology and lack of electricity generator.

Pertaining to the instructors' views on the difficulties they faced, the findings revealed that the huge number of students in each class, the students' low levels, absence of language lab and facilities such as data show, TV, were among the challenges that all instructors encountered during the implementation of the ELC.

Based on the findings, the study offers the following recommendations.

1. Need analysis should be undertaken in the initial stages of the curriculum development process.

2. Speaking and listening skills should be integrated thoroughly in the curriculum.

3. Instructors should provide students with feedback on their work to make them aware of their weakness.

4. Students should be grouped according to their levels.

5. Exam questions should be prepared in parallel with the students' levels in order to enhance their learning not to challenge them.

6. Instructors should adopt new techniques to assess students' performance.

7. The faculty should consider allocating office hours for instructors in case students need help or guidance.

8. Classrooms should be equipped with modern technology such as smart screens, data show and projectors.

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مقالة بحثية

استقصاء اراء الطلبة والمدرسين حول منهج اللغة الإنجليزية في برنامج السنة التحضيرية بكلية الهندسة جامعة عدن

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المُلخّص

تهدف هذ الدراسة الى استقصاء اراء الطلبة والمدرسين حول منهج اللغة الإنجليزية في برنامج السنة التحضيرية بكلية الهندسة جامعة عدن. استخدمت الدراسة الحالية المنهج الوصفي من خلال استخدام الاستبيان والمقابلة كأدوات للبحث. تم توزيع الاستبيان على 90 طالبا وطالبة من طلبة السنة التحضيرية. واجريت المقابلات الشخصية مع 5 من مدرسي اللغة الانجليزية في برنامج السنة التحضيرية. تم استخدام الإحصاء الوصفي وكذلك تحليل المحتوى لتحليل البيانات الكمية والنوعية على التوالي. خلصت الدراسة الى ان هناك ضرورة لمراجعة وتطوير منهج اللغة الإنجليزية من حيث المحتوى وطرق التدريس والكتب الدراسية وأساليب التقييم. كم اظهرت النتائج ان مجال البيئة الصفية يستلزم تطوير وتحسين بدرجة كبيرة جدا. وفيما يتعلّق بالصعوبات التي يواجهها مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية، فقد كشفت الدراسة ان من اهم تلك المشكلات هي عدم توفر التسهيلات الصفية (مثل الشاشات الذكية و أجهزة العرض و مختبر اللغة وغيرها) وكذلك الاعداد الكبيرة للطلبة في القاعات الدراسية واختلاف مستوياتهم في اللغة الانجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: برنامج السنة التحضيرية، اللغة الإنجليزية، التقويم، تقويم المنهج.

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