

Evaluating the Quality of an ELT Program in Higher Education

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Abstract

This is a mixed-methods case study that explores a higher education institution's ELT bachelor's degree program curriculum in terms of compliance with the accreditation standards and to what extent it leads to improved student learning outcomes. For both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the sample size targeted 120 students, 10 faculty members, and 5 external stakeholders. Data on perceived effectiveness of the curriculum and levels of satisfaction were measured by a structured questionnaire, while semi-structured interviews aimed at eliciting qualitative information about strengths and identified areas for curriculum improvement. Indeed, 85% of the students felt sufficiently qualified to teach the subject of English, while 90% of the educators believed the program conformed appropriately to the standards for accreditation. However, there was consensus from both groups on areas of improvement, which included better integration of technology and more practical exposure to teaching. Interview data from thematic analysis indicated the commitment of faculty and continuous curriculum review. These findings inform recommendations for integration of technology in the curriculum, as well as strengthening collaboration with local schools and a scheduled process for reviewing curriculum.

Keywords:

curriculum evaluation, English language teaching, mixed methods, accreditation, educational standards.

1. Introduction

English as a second language teaching requires a sound framework due to rapid development in world communications. The standards of accreditation would provide the benchmark of effectiveness and quality assurance in higher education. This study researches the curriculum of an ELT bachelor degree program in

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alignment with the standards of accreditation for the overall positive impact on student learning outcomes.

Regarding that, the face of education has altered so much within the past couple of decades, and so it has been in the field of teaching English as a foreign or second language. There has been an increasing demand for professionally trained English teachers who can prepare students adequately in various contexts of communication, and the reason is obvious: English is becoming the lingua franca in a majority of areas including business, science, technology, and international relations. This has consequently placed a growing pressure on higher education institutions offering the ELT program to ensure that their curricula meet the academic standards and practical needs of both students and employers alike.

Evaluation of the curriculum is a significant process that helps any educational institution judge the effectiveness, relevance, and quality of the academic programs offered. This includes systematic reviewing of curriculum content, instructional methods, assessment strategies, and learning outcomes. Effective curriculum evaluation will serve quite a number of purposes: it ensures that the program meets the requirements for accreditation, fosters continuous improvement, and enhances student learning (Stufflebeam, 2003). The curriculum evaluation is particularly important for teaching English, since this formulates the potential capability of the graduates to excel in the competitive job market.

Over the last couple of decades, the faces of technology have changed, pedagogical theories have evolved, and the needs of society have shifted-all radically changing the landscape of ELT. Indeed, it has thus fallen upon all ELT programs to continually reappraise and revise their curricula regarding relevance and effectiveness. In this regard, the work of accreditation bodies providing a threshold level that programs must meet becomes very important to ensure quality and accountability. Alignment to these standards facilitates not only the work of accreditation but also helps an institution create confidence with its stakeholders: students, employers, and the wider community.

Accreditation is the means of quality assurance in higher education and systematizes assessment and improvement with respect to its educational programs. The standards stipulated by credentialing

agencies, if satisfied, reflect the commitment of the programs to quality education and further changes. In the context of ELT, such standards may include but are not limited to criteria relating to curriculum design, faculty qualifications, student learning outcomes, and institutional resources.

The process of accreditation would typically take an intensive course of self-study on the part of the institution itself, followed by a review from the outside by a panel of experts. The added advantages of such a process are that it helps in identifying strengths and weaknesses within the institution but at the same time fosters accountability and transparency among its members (Ewell, 2009). For instance, the same set of requirements and standards that grant a school its accreditation may imply that, for ELT programs, their graduates are suitably equipped with knowledge and skills to function as teachers in all types of educational establishments.

Any education would want to meet the needs of its students and help them in their learning and development. In ELT, for example, this means equipping the students with knowledge in skills and competencies that will make them good language teachers. Knowing students' needs is an important aspect in the process of designing a curriculum both relevant and interesting.

The students within an ELT program will often require workable experiences, opportunities for collaboration, and the development of pedagogic competencies. Students may be coming from diverse sets of backgrounds and learning styles, and that will really demand a flexible and adaptable curriculum to meet such needs.

Curriculum evaluation thus forms an important means through which one can have insight into how these needs are met through the program and if such a program serves to offer better preparedness for the student in their career as educators.

More importantly, a learning outcomes focus would be relevant in devising a curriculum which not only advances institutional goals but also meets preset standards for the course accreditation. To this end, clear articulation of expected learning outcomes helps identify student performance and determine areas where improvements can be sought. This outcomes orientation serves not just to enhance accountability but also provokes cultures of

continuous improvement that allow the regular adjustment of curricula in response to changed educational landscapes.

In conducting a thorough curriculum evaluation, researchers often employ a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. This shall enable researchers to consider the numerical data and at the same time reach a better understanding from different stakeholders on how best the curriculum is serving its purpose.

Quantitative methods can also be represented in questionnaires and surveys that concern both students' and educators' points of view on the curriculum. The measures of performance and achievement by students are also able to be included in this way. In such a way, it would be possible to grasp the general view of the perception of the curriculum and the influence of the latter on the students' learning. Additionally, qualitative methods allow a richer focus on experiences and views through interviews and focus groups. These methods ensure broad advantages in demonstrating subtle strengths and weaknesses of a curriculum, with suggestions for its improvement. The integration of qualitative and quantitative information helps researchers to achieve comprehensive levels of understanding in regard to the effectiveness of a curriculum in meeting the standards for accreditation.

This study aims to evaluate the curriculum of an English Language Teaching bachelor's degree program using a mixed-methods approach. The major objectives of this research work are to take stock of the usability of the aforementioned curriculum, meeting the requirements for its accreditation, as well as perceptions of the students and educators of the concerned program at large, and to suggest areas that need amendment.

2. Literature Review

Research has established that the quality of curriculum bears significantly on the learning outcomes of students. Recent calls by various accrediting commissions have been in the same vein, stressing alignment of curriculum to professional standards to ensure that graduates will be ready to perform requirements expected by the profession. This study extends former studies by combining both qualitative and quantitative methods in a comprehensive investigation of the ELT program.

Evaluation of ELT programs is an essential element in the pursuit of quality and effectiveness in education, as well as in providing better preparation for future language teachers. Literature pertaining to curriculum evaluation, standards of accreditation, and integrating technology in language teaching can supply valid bases upon which such complexity may be founded. This literature review synthesizes relevant research, focusing on these four key areas: the importance of curriculum evaluation in higher education, the role of accreditation standards, integration of technology in ELT programs, and the impact of curriculum on student learning outcomes.

Curriculum Evaluation in Higher Education is a systematic process that is aimed at measuring the quality and effectiveness of educational programs through the collection of data relative to curriculum content, instructional methods, assessment strategies, and student learning outcomes. The importance of curriculum evaluation in higher education cannot be overemphasized in as much as it fulfils a host of purposes: for the improvement of the quality of the program, accountability, and preparation for any form of accreditation standards that may be needed.

In this respect, one of the major purposes of curriculum evaluation is the improvement of its quality. A systematic approach to evaluating the curriculum allows an institution to identify what works and what does not and focus on an improved approach. Gordon and Wilcox state that through the process of regular evaluation, the faculty develops new ways of improving teaching and increasing student involvement in learning. According to Boud and Falchikov, regular evaluation aids in enhancing teaching effectiveness and student participation in learning. For example, through evaluation, institutions are able to revise course content, adapt new teaching approaches, and develop strategies on assessment that must align more closely with the intended learning outcomes.

Curriculum evaluation also contributes to accountability and transparency in educational institutions. Students, faculty, and organizations demand that the institution prove their seriousness about quality education. Institutions with a vision for regular curriculum evaluation can therefore assure such stakeholders of their efforts toward educational quality, thus increasing trust and confidence among all members.

The other vital aspects are the curriculum alignment with the requirements for accreditation. An accrediting body sets standards through which the programs demonstrate their commitment to education quality. With systematic evaluation of their curriculum, it aids in ensuring that institutions meet these standards, thereby facilitating the process of seeking their accreditation and increasing prestige of the program.

Accreditation, as a means of assurance for quality in higher education, provides an overall framework to evaluate educational programs. Standards for it are thus set up by agencies beyond the institution itself, which ensure that the institutions satisfy certain specified criteria concerning program quality, faculty qualifications, and students' outcomes. Bourner et al. (2016) indeed consider such standards to be the core of quality assurance mechanisms at this level of training. In ELT, such standards become significant in relevance to the sustenance of effectiveness in language teaching programs.

Most of these accrediting agencies have their own accreditation standards, which are a compilation of criteria about curriculum design, faculty qualifications, student learning outcomes, and institutional resources. For example, NCATE places much emphasis on program alignment, whereby the curricula utilized must align with what is called for in knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become an effective teacher. By keeping these standards in place, ELT programs ensure they can provide the quality education that will make graduates prepared for success in the classroom.

Accreditation standards allow for continuous improvement within educational programs. The process of accreditation requires periodic reviews and assessments, hence giving the institutions an opportunity for performance evaluation, to make necessary adjustments. It is this continuous evaluation that keeps institutions abreast of the developments in the field of ELT, including the changing technology in education and innovative teaching methods that promote student learning.

Meeting the standards for accreditation enhances credibility and, therefore, the trustworthiness of educational programs. To Bourner et al. (2016), it is a seal of quality that communicates both to students and employers and at large to the community that the program meets predetermined standards of excellence. This is

important in the field of ELT, where there is felt the need for employers wanting the graduates who can impart the required skills and knowledge needed to teach English as a second language.

The development of various technological tools and resources has been spawned by an attempt to support language learning given the emergence of technology in language education. Online platforms and other digital resources offer students opportunities for authentic linguistic input and also opportunities to communicate and collaborate, relating to what Chik (2014) has documented. These developments in technology may, therefore, have made a number of educators start questioning traditional teaching methods and have had to think about new pedagogies that can allow technology to support language learning.

This integration, therefore, has important pedagogical implications for the ELT programs. Furthermore, there is a need to consider how technology can be integrated into the teaching practices while keeping it at par with the pedagogical principles and learning objectives. For instance, technology can provide personalized learning that will allow students to learn at their own speed and based on interests and needs. As Thomas and Reinders (2010) postulate, such flexibility lets them use the content to meet their interest and needs. However, for this to take effect, it requires educators to be trained on integrating technology appropriately to yield probable benefits.

While technology integration has its advantages, there are challenges which educators and institutions equally have to meet. Such challenges include needs for appropriate resources, faculty training, and infrastructural capacity to underpin appropriate use of technology for teaching. Kern, (2014), explains that educators should critically assess their use of technology to ensure that it enhances, rather than detracts from, the learning process

It is rather influential in determining student learning outcomes, thereby shaping the knowledge of the students, their skills, and competencies. In this regard, an example of an ELT program would require the curriculum to be an intrinsic ingredient in setting up future educators to cope with the complex demands placed on them in teaching the English language as a second language.

For that reason, curriculum alignment with defined learning outcomes is crucial in guaranteeing that students get sufficient

knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching. Clearly defined learning outcomes, on one end, have been shown to enhance student performance and engagement. In an ELT program, this means a crystallization of clear expectations of what the graduate should know and be able to do at the completion of the program.

Practical teaching experience is of vital significance for the students to develop their competence as language teachers. According to relevant research, practical experiences such as teaching internships and observations enhance the student's confidence and preparedness for teaching in the classroom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). By infusing practical experiences into the curriculum, ELT programs can ensure that graduates are prepared and ready to conduct successful classes in a multitude of educational settings.

Continuous feedback and evaluation are necessary features for any good curriculum. Studies have shown that frequent monitoring or assessment of students' learning performance can lead to changes being made in the curriculum and even improve teaching (Bennett, 2015). Information gathered regarding the learning outcomes of students may be used by an institution to find the most effective means of designing and delivering a curriculum.

Evaluation of curriculum in higher education is, therefore, informed by a number of theoretical frameworks that form a foundation upon which the complexities of assessing programs are based. Such frameworks should guide researchers and educators as they work to assess the effectiveness of curricula and point to areas where there is a need for improvement.

The CIPP model by Stufflebeam, 2003, is among the most common program evaluation designs for educational programs. This model focuses on four aspects of a program, to wit: (a) Context: It describes the setting where the program operates; hence the needs of students and stakeholders, (b) Input: Resources, strategies, and curricula used, (c) Process: The implementation of the program, the instruction, (d) Product: The outcomes and impacts of the program with respect to student learning and development. The use of the CIPP model, therefore, provides the evaluator with an overall comprehensive insight into the program's effectiveness, identifying areas that require adjustment.

The Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model provides yet another framework within which educational programs may be evaluated, particularly in the realm of training and professional development (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). The four levels of evaluation include; (a) Reaction: The assessment of participants' satisfaction and engagement about the program, (b) Learning: The measurement of knowledge and skills acquired by participants, (c) Behavior: The evaluation of the change in behavior and application of acquired skills in practice, (d) Results: An analysis of the overall impact of the program on organizational goals and outcomes. This model, therefore, focuses on the need to evaluate not just the immediate reactions of participants but also the longer-term effects of the program on professional practice.

Underlying this research is the constructivist framework focuses on the learners' active participation in the learning processes and collaboration. In other words, within an ELT program, it encourages the educator to develop a curriculum that allows students to learn through active participation and critical thinking. By infusing collaborative activities, authentic materials, and realistic contexts into the process, educators are able to achieve deep learning and better equip students for the required complexities in language teaching.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research study adopted a mixed-methods research design that combines quantitative and qualitative methods in assessing the curriculum of the ELT bachelor's degree program. It allows for an overall examination of the program through integrating numerical data obtained from questionnaires with rich, descriptive data obtained through interviews and focus groups.

3.2. Participants

Quantitative data were gathered from 120 university students majoring in the field of English language teaching. Their demographic information is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Results of demographic information

Evaluating the Quality of an ELT Program in Higher Education
Melissa Özlem Grab

		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	10	12
	Female	105	87.5
	Other	5	4
	Total	120	100
Year of study	1 st Year	40	33
	2 nd Year	30	25
	3 rd Year	25	20.8
	4 th Year	25	20.8
	Total	120	100

3.3. Data Collection

3.3.1. Quantitative Data

The study's quantitative component utilized structured surveys and standardized assessments to measure student well-being, learning outcomes, and program effectiveness.

(1) Survey: The survey consisted of various sections targeting a range of topics in the curriculum including:

Demographic Information: Participants were asked to provide demographic information including: age, gender, school year, and language learning experience.

Satisfaction with the Curriculum: This included measures using a Likert-type scale to measure students' satisfaction with curricular components around course content, teaching styles, assessment practices, and curricular materials.

Learning Outcomes: This included survey items measuring students socio-cognitive learning outcomes; specifically, items that solicited students self-report in the proficiency, knowledge, and experiences they gained.

Open-Ended Questions: To enhance the qualitative component, open-ended questions provided respondents the opportunity to reflect and articulate their perspectives of strengths and weaknesses in curricular components.

(2) Standardized Assessments: Along with the survey, standardized assessments were administered to assess students' language proficiency and teaching competencies. Those included; (a) Language Proficiency Assessments: Language proficiency assessments aligned to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) domains assessing reading, writing, listening,

and speaking, (b) Teaching Competency Assessments: Teaching competency assessments using a rubric assessing students' teaching competency in practicum related to lesson planning, lesson delivery, and classroom management.

3.3.2. Qualitative Data

The qualitative dimension of this study consisted of semi-structured interviews and group discussions with students, faculty, and alumni to garner qualitative knowledge and gain a rich understanding of their experiences relative to the curriculum.

g(1) Interview Protocols

Semi-structured interviews occurred with the faculty and alumni in an effort to gain their educator lens regarding their experiences related to the curriculum. The semi-structured interview protocols incorporated a few of the following components:

- Opening Questions: The opening questions were designed for creating rapport and providing participants a comfort zone to provide a rich sharing of their experiences in the ELT program.
- Curriculum Effectiveness: The following questions provided inquiry related to the participants' experiences with strengths, weaknesses, and the curriculum relevance to their current role in education.
- Challenges, Strengths, and Improvements: Participants were invited to think and reflect on any minimum challenges they may have experienced while being in the Learning Experience Design program. They also provided strengths of the curriculum and suggestions of improvement.
- Closing Questions: Participants were invited to provide additional thoughts or comments to summarize/log their experiences in the program.

(2) Focus Group Protocols

The focus group format included 5-7 student participants and was semi-structured. The focus group protocols were organized by:

- Icebreaker Questions: To create a comfortable setting, students introduced themselves and provided their experience in the program.
- Discussion Prompts: From that introduction we had key discussions prompts which guided our conversation followed by a conclusion:

What was most beneficial about the curriculum?

What parts of the curriculum need improvement (if any)?

To what extent did the curriculum prepare you for your future career in the field of language teaching?

Conclusion: Students were encouraged to sum up/log their thoughts and end with any final comments or even a conversation.

3.3.3. Data Validation Process

In order to enhance the validity and reliability of the study findings, several data validation processes were implemented:

(1) Pilot Study

A small-scale pilot study with students was carried out to test the survey and interview protocols. Responses to determine how clear and relevant the questions would be collected. The result of this small pilot study was used for refinement in terms of questionnaires, hence improving the quality of data collection tools.

(2) Triangulation

Triangulation of data is attained by integrating quantitative and qualitative findings. These could then be cross-validated with one another in view to enhancing the credibility of the results or conclusion obtained from the study.

(3) Member Checking

The member validation of qualitative findings was done. Immediately after interview and focus group discussions were transcribed, participants were given an opportunity to check the accuracy of their transcripts and give feedback regarding the interpretation of their responses. This will help to make sure that participants' standpoints are represented.

(4) Researcher Reflexivity

The research team took reflexive practices into consideration their own biases and points of view. Regular discussions on how those biases might impact data gathering and analysis were done to enable the researchers to carry out more objective analysis.

3.4. Data Analysis

3.4.1. Document Analysis

(1) Data Selection and Document Sampling

The initial step in data analysis is by selecting and sampling pertinent documents for analysis. Pertinent documents to be identified and

sampled for this study included: (a) An official curriculum for the ELT bachelor's degree program, (b) Nationwide and internationally set accreditation standards for programs of language teaching, (c) Self-evaluation reports by the faculty of the program, (d) Student course evaluations and feedback forms, (e) Reports from the body of accreditation.

(2) Data Familiarization

After document selection, the researcher became familiar with the general content, purpose, and structure of the materials under analysis. The details entailed going through each document closely to identify major themes, concepts, and patterns that were to lead or guide further analysis.

(3) Coding and Categorization

The next step, therefore, was to develop the coding framework based on the research questions and the content of the documents. Open coding identified key themes that included curriculum alignment with standards, teaching methods, student outcomes, and areas needing improvement. In reviewing the documents, codes for relevant sections of text were assigned and codes were organized into broader categories.

Key categories included:

- Course Curriculum and Structure: how the curriculum is organized, what courses are taught and the way of instruction and assessment applied.
- Accreditation Requirements: the extent to which it meets the criteria set by accrediting bodies in areas like student outcomes, faculty qualifications, and instructional quality.
- Student Outcomes: success measures in students, including language proficiency, academic achievement, and career readiness.
- Feedback / Improvement: areas those related to students and faculty giving feedback on the areas of strength and weakness of the program.

(4) Interpretation

Coded and categorized data were then interpreted in an effort to draw out findings. This involved an identification of the development of patterns and relationships between different codes and categories, a comparison between what the program curriculum and evaluation practices actually have been against standards for accreditation.

Discrepancies or gaps between the stated goals of the curriculum and the outcomes reported in the documents were of particular concern.

4. Findings

The results of this study were categorized into two parts: (1) the quantitative findings from questionnaires and standardized tests, and (2) the qualitative results derived from interviews and discussions in focus groups. A dual presentation of results on both aspects provides an all-rounded view in this curriculum evaluation.

4.1. Quantitative Findings

Satisfaction with Curriculum

Students' satisfaction with various aspects of the curriculum was measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Table 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for different components of the curriculum.

Table 2. Descriptive findings about curriculum satisfaction

Curriculum Component	M	SD
Course Content	4.2	0.8
Teaching Methods	4	0.9
Assessment Strategies	3.8	1
Learning Resources	4.1	0.7
Overall Satisfaction	4	0.9

The results indicate that students expressed high satisfaction with the course content ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 0.8$) and learning resources ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 0.7$). However, satisfaction with assessment strategies was lower ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.0$), suggesting a potential area for improvement.

Perceived Learning Outcomes

Students rated their perceived learning outcomes in key areas of the curriculum, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive findings about perceived learning outcomes

Learning Outcome	M	SD
Language Skills	4.3	0.6
Pedagogical Knowledge	4.1	0.7
Practical Teaching Experience	4	0.8

The findings reveal that students felt they made significant progress in their language skills ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.6$) and pedagogical knowledge ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 0.7$), indicating that the curriculum effectively supports their learning in these areas.

Standardized Assessment Results

Standardized assessments were administered to evaluate students' language proficiency. The results indicate that a high percentage of students achieved proficiency at the B2 level or higher across all areas (reading (85%), writing (80%), speaking (78%)), particularly in listening skills (90%).

4.2. Qualitative Findings

(1) Faculty Perspectives

The interviews with faculty members revealed several key themes regarding the curriculum:

- **Strengths of the Curriculum:** The curriculum was found to be very consistent with current pedagogical theories, with a strong emphasis on an extended practical teaching experience. Further, the integration of technology in the classroom was singled out as being particularly helpful for student learning.
- **Course Delivery Challenges:** The faculties felt that the increase in class sizes was affecting their efforts to work one on one with the students. They also mentioned that maintaining current course materials relating to changing trends in language teaching was a challenge.
- **Improvement:** The faculty recommended that the collaboration between faculty members must be enhanced in order to share best practices and undertake the development of a cohesive curriculum. It was also recommended that there are many opportunities for professional development in order to support faculty adaptation to new teaching methods.

(2) Student Experiences

The focus group discussions with students gave insight into their experiences related to the curriculum.

- **Positive Aspects:** Students enjoyed a variety of class content, but what they would have liked most were classes which had to do

more directly with teaching strategies and the theory of language acquisition. They also were excited by the practical opportunity in school placements.

- **Areas for Improvement:** Many of the students indeed showed that there was definitely a need for more diversity and reflection of their learning experiences in the assessment methods. They wanted to have more formative assessments instead of just heavy final exams.
- **Support Services:** Students expressed the need for academic support services like tutoring and writing centers. They wished awareness and accessibility to these facilities more.

(3) Alumni Insights

Alumni interviews provided a retrospective view of the curriculum's impact on their professional development:

- **Career Readiness:** Graduates reported that at the beginning of their profession, they felt their academic preparation by this curriculum served them well in their roles of language educators. Also, they reported that practical experiences during their studies have been quite useful in their current teaching positions.
- **Continuous Challenges:** Some respondents felt the challenge of adjustment from the academic environment into the classroom-that is, classroom management and adaptation to students' diverse needs.
- **Recommendations for Curriculum Improvement:** More classes on classroom management and culturally responsive teaching would better equip future graduates for what they encounter within the profession.

4.3. Key Findings from Document Analysis

(1) Curriculum Alignment with Accreditation Standards

One of the most salient themes to emerge from the analysis in this study was how the curriculum of the program was consonant with the standards of accreditation. The stated curriculum was well-organized; it articulated clear learning outcomes that were compatible with respective national and international standards for programs in teaching English as a second language bachelor degree. However, areas of concern noted included the program needing to show more clearly the fit with some accreditation criteria, such as greater range assessment strategies and culturally responsive teaching methods.

For example, despite the curriculum emphasis on communicative language teaching and task-based learning, reports accredited the need for incorporating more formative assessments that would measure the continuous progress of students and not just mere reliance on summative assessments.

(2) Methods of Instruction and Pedagogy

The reports showed that the instructional methods that were assumed in the program were, to a large degree, current best practices in language teaching. There is attention to ensuring that faculty take a learner-centered approach, with an inclusion of interactive and technology-enhanced teaching tools. The self-study reports did note the ability for more professional development opportunities for instructors, particularly with respect to integrating AI teaching resources into language instruction.

Besides, culturally responsive teaching practices were also those at which students and reports of accreditation placed more emphasis as needing further improvement. Indeed, the program tried to infuse some culturally responsive knowledge in its curriculum; however much can be done in an effort to include such knowledge that respects the diverse backgrounds which the students come from in promoting inclusiveness in learning.

(3) Outcomes of Students and Feedback

Student feedback was quite substantial, collected through course evaluations and focus groups on the program's strengths and weaknesses. Overall, students expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the curriculum and teaching quality. Many students praised the emphasis the program placed on communicative competence and hands-on practical language learning.

The program was also assessed to establish whether the modes of assessment were similar across the different courses. For instance, even though some instructors relied on project-based assessments and peer review, others remained heavily reliant on traditional exams. This, according to the students, did not in any way help in assessing their ability to use the language. A similar recommendation was found from internal evaluation reports, which advocated for standardized practices in these assessment methods within the program.

(4) Areas for Improvement

Document analysis revealed certain areas for improvement. One main area was the need to develop faculty development further, especially in technology integration and culturally responsive teaching. Similarly, the accreditation reports recommended that the program should further provide more opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning, such as internships or studies abroad, in order to improve their language competencies in natural environments.

Second, though the curriculum of the program was generally congruent with the standards of accreditation, some revisions regarding compatibility with recent developments in the field of language teaching-for example, the use of AI-powered language learning tools and a growing focus on digital literacy skills-had been proposed. The results of this study provide really valuable insight into the effectiveness of the ELT bachelor's degree program. Quantitative findings indeed showed a high level of student satisfaction and achievement, while qualitative insights revealed strengths and challenges with regard to multiple perspectives on the curriculum. These will be used to inform recommendations for the improvement of the curriculum to align with accreditation standards and best practices in teacher education in the English language.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This section presents the discussion of the findings of the curriculum evaluation for the ELT bachelor's degree program through implications from both the quantitative and qualitative data. Overall, the discussion falls around a number of key themes: (a) strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, (b) alignment to the accreditation standards, (c) challenges in implementation, and (d) recommendations for improvement. The findings will also be contextualized within existing research and practice in ELT education.

5.1. Strengths of the Curriculum

Various strengths of the current ELT curriculum received further emphasis in both the quantitative and qualitative data. In fact, high levels of student satisfaction with major curriculum components, such

as course content, teaching methods, and learning resources, would appear to indicate that students view the curriculum positively. For example, the average satisfaction score regarding the contents of courses was 4.2, indicating that students felt the course contents were relevant and interesting. This corresponds to earlier findings that relevance of course content is a significant factor in the engagement and success of students at higher education levels (Tinto, 2012).

In qualitative perspective, the curriculum was directly informed by and aligned with the latest pedagogical theory both the faculty members and the students alike mentioned. This would be indicative that this program has indeed successfully integrated state-of-the-art practices in ELT, such as CLT and TBL. This was also identified as a strength: a focus on practical teaching experience. Students and alumni reported the practicum component as valuable. Practical experience within teacher education is critical because it provides the pre-service teachers with an opportunity to put theory into practice in an authentic setting (Darling-Hammond, 2014).

Additionally, both students and faculty appreciated the curriculum on the inclusion of technology in language teaching. Generally, CALL and language-learning apps used in ELT have been observed to increase the level of engagement and language acquisition by the students. To integrate technology within the curriculum just means that the program is getting its future teachers ready for the implementation of digital tools into their classrooms, which is increasingly important in today's educational landscape.

Notwithstanding these strengths, several areas of improvement also emerged from this evaluation. Some of the more frequent challenges mentioned related to the assessment strategies utilized within the program. Although students reported overall satisfaction with the curriculum, the mean score for assessment strategies was lower than other components at 3.8. In the focus groups, students indicated a need for more diverse and formative assessment(s), suggesting that the current reliance on summative assessments-that is, finally record examinations-cannot be fully representative of student learning experiences. This finding is supported by the broader literature on assessment in higher education, which suggests that it is formative assessments-such as peer reviews, reflective journals, and ongoing feedback-which are more conducive to the processes of deep

learning rather than summative ones (Boud and Molloy, 2013). Formative assessments also give students an opportunity to reflect on their progress and points they need to improve on, a factor that is particularly pertinent in teacher education programs since the development of pedagogical skills constitutes a core part of the curricula. In fact, the inclusion of more formative assessment methods could go a long way toward improving student satisfaction and thereby improving learning outcomes.

The other area of concern includes accessibility and awareness of academic support services. While students valued such services as tutoring and writing centers as available resources, the clear desire of many was that there should be more awareness about them and access to them. This suggests a responsibility of the program to better publicize these resources and afford all students an opportunity to become aware of the support available. Research supports the view that accessibility of academic support services contributes to the persistence and outcomes of a student, particularly when that particular student is not doing well academically.

5.2.Alignment with Accreditation Standards

This curriculum evaluation was also meant to establish if the program was appropriate, as it pertained to the need for its accreditation. Accrediting agencies as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, earlier called the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, have high standards for teacher education programs, in which ELT programs feature. These standards typically call for programs to show that candidates are being prepared to meet the professional, pedagogical, and content standards for certification.

Quantitative data from this evaluation suggest that largely, indeed, these standards are being met. The large student satisfactions with both the content of the curriculum and teaching methods suggest that the program equips students with knowledge and skills that would make them teach languages effectively. The alumni data, on one hand, suggest that indeed, the program prepares the graduate wade through successful careers in the field, since a good number reported feeling well prepared for their teaching roles.

However, some challenges were also noted in the qualitative data regarding aligning the curriculum to meet the standards for accreditation. The faculty commented on the difficulty of updating course materials to reflect constant revisions to these evolving accreditation requirements and the trendy directions taken in ELT. This is rather a common challenge in teacher education programs, as often even the accreditation standards themselves are under revision to take into consideration new research and practices within the profession. To some extent, this could also mean the program might have invested in continuous curriculum development and provided additional support and resources to the faculty to help them stay current with the evolving accreditation requirements.

Another area that could likely be improved is in coursework that would focus specifically on classroom management and culturally responsive teaching. While generally feeling prepared for the role, many of the alumni responded with struggles concerning classroom management and meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Such comments suggest that more course work and practical experiences within programs have to be developed to better serve these needs. Most importantly, culturally responsive teaching is a key component of teacher education; hence, it prepares the teachers to accommodate equal and inclusive learning for all students. According to Gay (2018), inclusion of even more material on CRT will make the program follow standards for accreditation in preparing teachers for diverse educational settings.

5.3. Challenges in Implementation

The implementation of the curriculum also presents a number of challenges that have to be addressed. One of the most significant challenges noted by the faculty staff is the rising number of students within the program. Class sizes that are far larger hinder the instructor from providing personalized support to the student, something that is significantly essential in teacher education programs as students need constant feedback on actual teaching (Shulman, 1987). Other faculty members also commented that large class sizes decrease the quality of

instruction, as students would have less opportunity to learn actively and participate more in the process.

This situation is not peculiar in the ELT program, for many institutions of higher learning are going through this same stress due to financial constraint and rapidly increasing enrollments. While large class size indeed has a negative consequence on effective learning, the program should work out the best strategies to avoid negative impacts on students' learning process. The increasing integration of technology through online discussion forums and peer assessment tools can further support active student participation and make more time for feedback in the classroom, even if the class size is large (Garrison and Anderson, 2003). Also, the program might want to consider hiring teaching assistants and/or adjunct faculty in order to provide more support to the students.

Another challenge that came out in the qualitative data was the need to update course materials in terms of current trends in ELT and also accreditation standards. The faculty commented that revising the curriculum could be burdensome for those responsible and take a lot of time and resources, especially adding in the newest research and best practice. The program should, therefore, consider the development of a more formalized process for review and development of curriculum and systematically offer opportunities to the faculties for working on course material updates. This will be possible with the formation of a curriculum committee that will meet on a regular basis for reviewing the content of the courses and ensuring alignment with current trends and standards.

5.4. Recommendations for Improvement

Several recommendations could be made based on the results of this evaluation, regarding ways to further enhance the ELT bachelor's degree program:

Increasing the Use of Formative Assessments: In addressing the concerns of the students with respect to current assessment strategies, therefore, the program should infusion more formative assessments into the curriculum. This may include peer assessment, reflective journals, and continuous instructor feedback. Formative assessment

allows students frequent opportunities to reflect on the learning progress to make further improvements during the course for better learning and satisfaction.

Increase Awareness of Academic Support Services: The program should go out of its way to increase awareness of academic support services like tutoring and writing centers. This would involve more aggressive implication and advertising of these services through course syllabi, orientation sessions, and online platforms. In this way, more students will be in a position to avail themselves of these services and thus get what they need to succeed.

More Coursework on Classroom Management and CRT: These two areas are the challenges that the alumni confronted. Therefore, there is a need for an addition of courses about classroom management and CRT, with field experiences to go with them, in order to prepare the student to enter any type of educational environment and meet the needs of all learners

Address Large Class Size Challenges: The program would want to begin using technology to engage students during classes and to provide them with feedback. This problem might also be minimized by hiring teaching assistants or part-time faculty.

Establish a Systematic Curriculum Review Process: The program should have in place a mechanism for the periodic review of its curriculum so that it keeps up with the standards of accreditation and current trends in ELT. This could be well accomplished by forming a curriculum committee which would meet regularly to review courses' contents against relevant requirements.

The results obtained within this research are supported by other studies related to English language teaching bachelor degree programs and endorsed some of the strengths and challenges widely reported in literature about curriculum design, assessment strategies, and instructional practices.

High satisfaction of students with the curriculum of the program, which pertains mainly to course content and teaching approaches, is consistent with wider research on the necessity to bring curricula in line with contemporary pedagogical approaches in language teaching. In this regard, CLT, TBL, and technology integration into language teaching practices are generally encouraged by the ELT literature (Richards 2006; Nunan 2015). These teaching methods emphasize the

active learning of the student, his or her engagement, and realistic communication skills, all of which were also pointed out by the students and faculty in the present study.

Qualitative students' feedback also reinforced the relevance and comprehensiveness of the course content, further supporting the arguments by Brown (2016), who regards a well-designed curriculum as addressing students' needs, which are in constant evolution. Equally emphasized were the practical aspects of teaching, including practicum, from which it was clear that, just like Darling-Hammond (2006) has argued, practical experience is valuable in preparation of the teacher candidate for the real life of the classroom.

One of the focuses given for further improvement in this evaluation was that the reliance on summative assessments like final exams at the expense of the formative assessment was main within the program. This agrees with literature critiquing the over-emphasis on traditional assessment in language education programs (Black and William, 2009). Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback and self-assessment possibilities for students during the learning process, creating a bigger excitement on the part of the students to learn and thereby improving the learning results.

An appeal by students to have more diversified assessments in the form of projects, presentations, and reflective journals has its basis on the call now for a broader range of competencies. This is more so in the teaching of languages, whereby the communication skills or practical teaching competence cannot be comprehensive through standardized tests or even a written examination (Fulcher, 2010).

On the positive side, the program seemed to be compatible with the standards of accreditation, especially on aspects dealing with the pedagogical content knowledge and practical teaching experience. Most faculty who responded believed that the curriculum meets the standards laid down by the accrediting bodies like CAEP. This result aligns with the study of Cochran-Smith et al. (2016), which identified that accreditation ensures quality in the program and graduate preparation to meet the demands for the teaching profession.

However, the study also showed some gaps in assessment of student learning regarding diversity of assessment strategies and integration of culturally responsive teaching. This echoes concerns voiced in the literature that the complete embedding of CRT into teacher

preparation programs is problematic and unlikely to be fully realized. Students develop a solid language teaching pedagogy, but further work will be required if the growing expectations for cultural competence in today's diverse classrooms are to be met.

This curriculum evaluation has provided a number of valuable lessons about the strengths and challenges of the ELT bachelor's degree program. While generally well-aligned with the accreditation standards, and provided a solid foundation and language teaching pedagogy for students, yet there is further scope for improvement in areas related to the use of formative assessment, writing skills development, and culturally responsive teaching.

Overall, the findings of this curriculum evaluation thus portend to the fact that, generally speaking, the ELT bachelor's degree program is equipping students quite effectively for a career in language teaching. High levels of student satisfaction and positive alumni feedback suggest that the curriculum indeed serves the needs of its students and meets standards for international accreditation. Nevertheless, there is also much room for improvement regarding assessment strategies, classroom management, and curriculum development. Thus, the program can only go on providing quality education to future ELT professionals if those mentioned above are significantly improved.

The comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the English Language Teaching bachelor's degree program provided copious information concerning its efficiency, areas to be improved, and alignment respecting requirements for accreditation. This section interprets the results within an existing literature framework that discusses implications for practice, policy, and future research directions. The discussion shall follow from both quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, standardized assessments, document analysis and interviews with students and faculty.

These findings have real implications for practice, policy, and future research. The program can continue to grow and do an even better job of preparation of future teachers to succeed in dynamic and diverse classrooms by curtailing these challenges through curriculum development, professional faculty development, and resource allocation. Likewise, future research into these matters will also contribute to the continuous improvement of the ELT program and greater language teacher education as a whole.

5.5. Implications and Limitations of the Study

These results have a number of implications for the practice of teacher education in English. First, the use of English language teacher education identifies areas for continuous curriculum development, enhancing assessment practices present, and faculty's role in promoting student learning.

This leads to perhaps the most important implications of this study for practice: increasing the use of formative assessments within the program. Students and faculty alike identified that the reliance on summative assessments, particularly final exams, did not provide a full reflection of students' learning progress. The program will be responding to these concerns by adopting a wider range of formative assessments, such as reflective journals, peer feedback, and regular low-stakes assessments that give students ongoing feedback.

Formative assessments permit students to reflect on their progress throughout the course and make adjustments. In fact, formative assessments tend to improve student learning according to a study done by Hattie & Timperley in 2007. Therefore, the program will be more supportive for students in their development not only as language learners but also as future educators if more formative assessments are incorporated.

These findings also have practical implications with regard to students' writing skills challenges, such as the need for more feedback and revision opportunities. Writing is a very keen skill that is not only important for language learners but also for teachers themselves. In fact, providing such targeted support will better allow for promoting student success. This could be achieved by building in more peer review opportunities, iterative writing assignments, and detailed feedback on drafts that will assist students in improving their writing over some time.

Additionally, feedback provides the most guaranteed effective way to improve writing skills, particularly among second-language learners. With increasingly more frequent and supportive feedback, the faculties will be empowered to give students the confidence and skills necessary for success in their current academic and future professional careers.

Another critical practice implication was on the sizes of classes, which are reported to be large both by the students and faculty. The larger classes make it impossible for the faculty to provide feedback and support at an individual level, which is particularly crucial for courses requiring teaching experience. One possible solution could involve increasing the employment of teaching assistants or hiring adjunct faculty to decrease the ratio of students to teachers in those courses.

Smaller class sizes have been known to promote pupil participation in classes that need active engagement and practical learning (Blatchford et al., 2011). The program thus can offer students a more personalized learning compared to that of big class sizes which on the other hand may be one way of assuring better results in both coursework and the teaching experiences at schools.

While the program was commended for integration of technology in language teaching, some students outlined that they did not feel fully prepared to use such tools in their own classrooms. This would appear to indicate a greater need for more hands-on training in educational technology, specifically how to effectively integrate technology into lesson planning and classroom management.

literature on technology integration in language education emphasizes the necessity for teacher candidates to develop both technological and pedagogical skills in order to use technology effectively. In this respect, more practical training in the use of educational technologies would better prepare students to respond effectively to the demands imposed by modern language classrooms. These findings have implications for policy at the level of institutions and government. These are implications for policy on matters regarding accreditation standards, curriculum design, and resource allocation to support teacher education programs.

An overall positive outcome of this program was that it was aligning with the requirements for the teacher education accreditation; however, findings suggested that more focus was required to align fully the call for modern standards of teaching in some aspects such as assessment and culturally responsive teaching. CAEP and TESOL must revisit their standards for emphasis on formative assessments and integration of CRT in a teacher education curriculum.

The present recommendation is hence in line with Cochran-Smith et al. (2016), who claim that the standards of accreditation

should evolve since what is needed from teachers professionally keeps growing and changing too. Such standards will definitely inspire greater dimensions of assessment diversity and cultural competence among teacher education preparation programs to ensure their graduates function smoothly in a variety of classrooms that are equally dynamic.

Results also highlight the need for the faculty's continuous professional development, specifically in designing assessments and integrating technologies in educational processes. The institutions should invest in training programs that help the faculty keep pace with best practices related to language teaching and assessment. These workshops might include online courses or collaborative learning communities in which faculty share their ideas and resources. Professional development is a necessary mechanism to ensure faculty are equipped to meet the ever-evolving needs of their students and the necessity for them to function within an environment constrained by accreditation standards. As more avenues for professional development are opened, institutions can more adequately equip their faculty as they embark on the mission of quality education for their students.

As earlier mentioned, too large a class size hampers the effectiveness of the ELT program. Institutions should consider investing in hiring more faculty or teaching assistants in key courses in order to make the student-to-teacher ratio smaller. In this way, there would be smaller classes, thus giving individualized instruction and closer monitoring of students during the practical teaching of the language.

Hence class size is important in teacher education programs, because classes are smaller can provide more opportunities for closer interactions between faculty and also peer participants. By addressing this issue through resource allocation, thereby institutions would be able improve the program quality and also enhance student outcomes.

Implications for Future Research

The outcomes of this study point to a number of ways in which future research may be undertaken, particularly with regard to curriculum development and assessments and the incorporation of culturally responsive teaching in language education programs.

Among the suggestions of this study was the embedding of more formative assessments in the ELT curriculum. Future research may explore aspects, including the various kinds of formative assessment that bear on student learning outcomes associated with a language teacher education programs. For example, reflective journals, peer feedback assessment, and project-based assessment can be researched for the ways in which each bears on students' development as teachers of languages.

This line of inquiry could also look into the challenges that faculty face in designing and then implementing formative assessments, especially in large classes. Addressing these identified challenges would assist researchers in building strategies that support the faculty in better using formative assessments.

While the program is in a position to meet many of the standards set by the accrediting agency in terms of pedagogical content knowledge, culturally responsive teaching remains an issue. In particular, further consideration should be given to how the programs in ELT better prepare their graduates to teach diverse classrooms regarding the linguistic and cultural needs of their students.

The material could be informed by case studies of innovative teacher education programs incorporating CRT into their curriculum, among other experimental studies attempting to test the efficiency of differing teaching strategies for cultural competence.

Future research might address the place of technology in language teacher education, particularly insofar as it enhances the dual aspects of teaching and learning. While the present study has singled out some challenges faced in integrating technology, further research is needed regarding how teacher candidates can best be prepared for taking up such tools on their own.

Another very valid research direction might be an investigation into the potential of emerging technologies, such as AI and VR, in teacher education. Such new technologies can allow new levels of immersion and personalized feedback. Thus, it is rather important to see how they can contribute to language teacher education programs.

This study sheds light on many useful lessons concerning strengths and challenges of the ELT curriculum; its own limitations are to be duly considered. First, the sample size for both the survey and interviews was relatively small, which might limit the

generalizability of the findings. Another limitation is that the evaluation was conducted in only one institution, and this means the finding might not be generalized to other ELT programs. In the future, these may be overcome by conducting a larger multi-institutional study.

Another limitation, this study is based on self-reporting by students, faculty, and alumni. While such information is very valuable, it may be biased or incorrect. One could minimize this limitation in the evaluation in the future by adding other sources of information, such as classroom observations or analyses of student performance on standardized assessments.

5.6. Ethical Considerations

The study was designed with the following as some of the key ethical principles applicable:

- **Informed Consent:** Each participant had a document that outlined the study's goals, methods, possible risks, and expected benefits. All participants provided both written and verbal consent prior to any approach in which data would be collected to ensure that participants were informed and understood they could withdraw their participation at any time without any consequences.
- **Confidentiality.** Participants' confidentiality was assured through using anonymized data. Any information that might identify participants was automatically deleted from transcripts and reports of results for the purpose of protecting anonymity. In addition, data was securely stored, providing access only for members of the research team.
- **Biases and objectivity:** The researchers set an open mind during the conduct of the analysis by utilizing a systematic coding procedure that would not be affected by preconceived assumptions on what was being studied.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participants voluntarily agreed to be part of the research study, and they were given the option of not answering any questions that made them feel uncomfortable, as they were made to feel completely free from outside pressure while making their own decisions.

- **Ethical Approval:** The entire research protocol had been submitted for review, and it had received ethical approval from the institution's research ethics committee. This ensured the conduct of the study in accordance with ethical code of conduct and regulations when conducting research involving human participants.

Disclosure of interest: The author reports there are no competing interests to declare.

Consent: The author confirms that any participant in any type of qualitative or quantitative research, has given informed consent to participate in the research. The author confirms that she has obtained written informed consent to publish the details from the affected individual.

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