Analysis of the English Language Needs of Grade 12 Learners in Lebanon

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Abstract

This research investigates the language needs of Grade 12 English Second Language Learners (ESL) in Lebanese public schools, aiming to identify gaps between the curriculum and student requirements. Employing a qualitative case study approach, using document analysis, interviews, and questionnaires, the study reveals critical shortcomings within the Lebanese English curriculum. Findings indicate widespread dissatisfaction among both teachers and students with the curriculum, highlighting significant gaps and inconsistencies between ministry objectives and practical implementation. The curriculum fails to resonate with students' real-life experiences, resulting in disinterest and boredom. Outdated teaching methodologies, a disparity between public and private schools, and an emphasis on exam-oriented learning limit students' exposure to effective learning techniques. Recommendations include increasing English lesson frequency, assessing students' reading levels, incorporating diverse reading strategies, providing more reading materials, and integrating technology into teaching. Suggestions also advocate for authentic materials exposure to enhance language skills. Both teachers and students emphasize the urgent need for an updated curriculum emphasizing real-world application, critical thinking, and interactive learning. Addressing these concerns is crucial to delivering a more effective English language education aligning with students' contemporary needs and preparing them for future academic and practical endeavors.

Key Words

Curriculum • ESL • Needs assessment • Needs analysis • Lebanon

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Introduction

After the philosophy of education in a country is decided, educators need to start the process of curriculum development, nevertheless, the bedrock of this process is getting to know not only the society's and country's needs, but primarily the students' needs should be determined since all life conditions around them are changing. In Lebanon, teachers cannot continue to teach students using a curriculum that was designed 23 years ago and has not changed yet. Hence, there is a need to start from the very basis of the curriculum development process and analyze the students' specific needs on several levels and in different subjects. By determining the English language needs of grade 12 learners in Lebanon, this first-to-be-done research can serve as a reference for further curriculum development studies and it can be a roadmap for planning not only a new English language curriculum but for the entire curriculum to guarantee a curriculum that suits the student's abilities, augment their skills, cater to the society's needs and secure Lebanese students a better future.

According to Shabaan (2013), curriculum committees aim to create an 'ideal curriculum,' placing significant emphasis on contextualizing it within the classroom setting, which stands as the linchpin of the entire curriculum development process. Shabaan underscores that the implementation of the curriculum uncovers system discrepancies needing attention. As a result, curriculum developers inherently consider curriculum development and evaluation as integral processes within any educational framework. This highlights the crucial aspects of achieving instructional goals, implementing necessary corrections, and consistently evaluating the curriculum.

After this initial foundation for curriculum development is laid, as emphasized by Oral and Yazar (2017), conducting a needs analysis becomes essential for fine-tuning the curriculum design based on identified requirements. Demirel (2020) further emphasizes that needs assessment studies ascertain the alignment of curriculum objectives with actual societal, individual, and subject-specific needs. It is through this comprehensive understanding of these dimensions that effective decision-making is facilitated.

Kılıç et al. (2019) stress the transformative power of needs assessment in driving change and decision-making by identifying missing needs and envisioning a better future. Yet, they underline the distinction between needs assessment and needs analysis. Matsuky (2018) elaborates on needs assessment's role in identifying gaps between present and future states, aiding in their prioritization within an institutional framework. Conversely, 'root cause analysis' or 'needs analysis,' as described by Matsuky, delves deeper into analyzing identified gaps. This delineation between needs assessment and needs analysis signifies that needs assessment precedes the more detailed needs analysis. While needs assessment aims to identify gaps, needs analysis prioritizes understanding and addressing their root causes.

Related Studies

Shabaan and Ghaith (1997) authored a pivotal article discussing the creation of the 1997 EFL curriculum in Lebanon. As coordinators in the NCERD curriculum committee, they delineate their approach in designing the curriculum, opting for a thematic content-based model. They aimed for integrated instruction around meaningful themes to achieve communicative, social, and academic goals. Their objectives encompassed listening, reading, writing, speaking, critical thinking, study skills, and cultural awareness. Despite acknowledging management challenges, they proposed an interdisciplinary approach, using parallel scheduling and thematic units. The article

also delves into the pedagogical implications of language skills and their perspective on testing formats in foreign language education.

Frayha (2009) portrays Lebanon's educational system as a victim of historical sectarianism, civil strife, and societal divisions. The system's failure to mitigate these divides and inequalities, partly due to political and religious opposition, has perpetuated parallel and diverse curricula in private and religiously affiliated schools. Efforts to centralize the system post-independence were hindered by the civil war, stalling public education development and causing upheaval in private institutions. Frayha emphasizes the persistent influence of sects on education and disparities between public and private schools and regions, advocating for educational reform as a means to foster tolerance and improve social cohesion in Lebanon.

In Nahas (2009), the adequacy, efficiency, and equity of higher education in Lebanon are evaluated both on a public and a private level. He highlights challenges specific to Lebanon in his research. To conclude, the paper discusses various approaches and strategies to remedy the challenges facing Lebanon's higher education system. An influential review of the curriculum in Lebanon was written by Shabaan (2013), a member of the curriculum committee. According to Shabaan, there is a discrepancy between guidelines, principles, methodology, organization, and textbooks that are discussed in the curriculum, and how they are put into practice in the classroom, along with numerous factors that impeded its implementation. Following (Shabaan 2013), the curriculum was designed in parallel with the ESL/EFL 1997 standards. He states that the English curriculum in Lebanon has clear goals, objectives, and performance indicators and an intact perspective on instruction, material selection, and evaluation guidelines. The processes of translating curricula, principles, and guidelines into classroom contexts reveal a curriculum's weaknesses, strengths, and pitfalls, according to Shabaan. As government efforts in that area remain inadequate, Shabaan offers a content analysis and an individual evaluation. He mentions the issues and problems that have arisen during the implementation process. He also used special reports, journal articles, and theses on the subject to produce his content analysis and evaluation.

In her study, Shuayb (2016), discusses the two educational reforms conducted in 1994 and 2010. She states that despite the improvement in the quality of education in public schools, dropout rates continued to soar, especially amongst the most disadvantaged groups. As education inequality increased, a new education reform strategy was launched in 2010. She discusses both reforms through social cohesion

In her paper, Esseili (2014), describes Lebanon's situation regarding EFL/ESL education stating that foreign language teaching has been flourishing with English being the forerunner. She states that the 1997 curriculum mandates students to be proficient in two foreign languages at school since foreign language has become of great importance in Lebanon. Per Esseili, this issue leads to another area of concern; teachers' qualifications or professional preparation to teach a foreign language or use a foreign language as a medium of instruction. Esseili's study aimed to explore the working conditions and challenges that are faced by public and private school teachers in Lebanon when teaching a foreign language.

All in all, each study brings unique insights into Lebanon's educational landscape, addressing issues related to curriculum development, historical education, language teaching, equity, and challenges faced within the education system.

Rationale and Purpose of the Study

Emerging from the previous findings in the literature, conducting a comprehensive needs analysis for the Grade 12 English Language curriculum in Lebanon can serve as a vital tool to bridge the gap between educational objectives and their practical implementation. It can aid in addressing disparities, enhancing teaching methodologies, and preparing students holistically for their future endeavors in higher education and society at large. Also, it can identify gaps in the curriculum that might contribute to these disparities, helping create an inclusive and equitable learning environment, shed light on the specific hurdles teachers encounter while teaching English in Grade 12, and inform professional development initiatives and resource allocation to address these challenges. Further, a needs assessment for Grade 12 English Language could consider the alignment of the curriculum with the requirements of higher education, ensuring students are adequately prepared for further studies.

Since a coherent, sound, and effective curriculum should be based on the analysis of the learners' needs, this research aims to determine the language needs of English Second Language Learners (ESL) in grade 12 in Lebanese public schools and to identify the gaps between the current curriculum and the student's language needs. Hence, this research aims to answer the following questions:

What are the English language needs of Grade 12 ESL learners in Lebanon?

The sub-problems determined in line with the aims of the research are as follows:

1- What are the needs of the 12th-grade ESL students in Lebanon regarding the four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in English?

2- What are the differences between the 12th-grade curriculum and students' English language learning needs, goals, and objectives?

3- What are the differences between the curriculum in action and students' English language learning needs?

4- What are the differences between the 12th-grade curriculum and the students' English language learning needs and instruction?

5- What are the differences between 12th-grade English language assessment and the students' learning needs?

6- What are the teachers' opinions and suggestions about the 1997 curriculum?

7- What are the students' opinions and suggestions about the 1997 curriculum?

By determining the English language needs and performing the needs analysis for grade 12 students, curriculum designers can move downwards by classes or levels to reach the primary or even the kindergarten level. Further, determining the students' needs will have a positive effect on the future objectives and content for any curriculum development effort, therefore improving the teaching-learning process as a whole. Finally, this research can help reduce the shortcomings and offset the gaps in the current curriculum and pave the way for planning and designing a better enhanced, and developed curriculum.

Method

In this section, the research model, study group, data collection tools, data collection, and data analysis were discussed.

Research Design

Qualitative case study research was chosen because it allows for in-depth analysis and provides a contextual understanding of a particular phenomenon (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2013). The case study research method is a qualitative research approach that aims to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon, individual, group, or situation. Case study research can also provide a deeper understanding of the English language teaching needs of 12th-grade students in their studies and as they enter higher education.

Participants

English teachers and grade 12 students from four majors—Life Sciences (LS), General Sciences (GS), Humanities and Literature (HL), and Sociology and Economics (SE)—participated in this research. The total participants comprised 275 students and 12 teachers, encompassing 8 from private schools, 2 teaching across private and public institutions, and 2 solely from public schools. The study was carried out in private schools located in Saida and Kuturmaya Commentaries in Lebanon from 2022 to 2023. This time frame coincided with the closure of public schools in Lebanon, which lasted from January to May 2023. The closure was a result of a strike among public school teachers due to the country's worsening economic situation. On average, the participating teachers had 29.3 years of experience. While some teachers exclusively taught in private schools, others had roles in both public and private institutions.

Reliability and Validity

In qualitative research, validity concerns the accuracy and credibility of the findings, ensuring that they truly reflect the phenomenon being studied. While qualitative research may not aim for numerical precision as in quantitative studies, validity is upheld by demonstrating the depth, authenticity, and trustworthiness of the data collected (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2013). In this study, several steps were taken to ensure validity. The research methods, data collection techniques, and analysis procedures were meticulously described to enhance transparency and credibility. Additionally, cross-validation was performed by seeking expert opinions from a different university, ensuring diverse perspectives and confirming the robustness of the findings. The document analysis was considered during the discussion with a faculty member from Karamanoğlu Mehmet Bey University, specifically from the Faculty of Education within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Furthermore, the questionnaire underwent an assessment of internal validity through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a high value of 0.94, indicating strong internal consistency among its items. This process confirmed the questionnaire's acceptance as a valid instrument for measuring the intended constructs.

Research Instruments and Processes

(I) Document analysis (curriculum analysis):

Document analysis is a widely used research method in qualitative research and aims to examine and interpret written, visual or audio materials as a data source. This method involves the systematic examination of

various types of documents, such as texts, reports, letters, photographs, videos, and recordings. Document analysis enables researchers to uncover hidden meanings, understand social and cultural contexts, and explore individual or collective experiences. By critically analyzing documents, researchers can identify patterns, themes, and contradictions within the data, providing valuable insight into the research topic. This method offers researchers access to historical, archived, or publicly available documents and is a valuable tool for studying phenomena in different time periods and contexts. Document analysis complements other qualitative methods and offers a rich and detailed understanding of the social world (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2013).

A document analysis was conducted to provide supplemental research data and comprehensive background information on the Grade 12 ESL curriculum. This analysis is based on (1) these branches (Humanities and Literature, Life Sciences, General sciences, and Sociology and Economics), (2) the scope and ranking of high school education, (3) the aims, principles, and characteristics of the General English teaching aims, and (4) the curriculum's methodology and evaluation guidelines. The principles of the Lebanese English curriculum were reviewed and compared against the TESOL principles. In addition, the objectives of the four 12th-grade branches were analyzed according to Bloom's Taxonomy.

(II) Interviews:

Interviews are a widely used method in qualitative research and aim to gain in-depth understanding of the research. This method includes structured or semi-structured interviews with participants. Interviews offer researchers the opportunity to explore participants' experiences, thoughts, and perspectives. Data is collected and recorded through a natural and flexible communication process with individuals or groups. By analyzing information from the interviews, researchers identify emerging themes, attitudes, and meanings. Interviews are a powerful research method for hearing participants' voices, gaining in-depth understanding and providing detailed information on the research topic. Researchers must take a rigorous and systematic approach to the interview process to ensure reliability and validity (Gay et al., 2011).

To ensure comprehensive and credible data collection, a deliberate approach was adopted in conducting interviews with 12th-grade English teachers, either in person at schools or via telephone. Before the interviews, the researcher obtained necessary entry access from each school's administration, securing a conducive environment for the discussions. Each interview was conducted individually, allowing for a personalized and detailed exploration of perspectives. Validity was upheld by meticulously crafting interview questions with consideration given to an expert's opinion. The questions were designed to align with the research's topic, aim, and methodology, ensuring relevance and depth in the information sought from each teacher. Before the interviews, the purpose and methodology of the research were transparently communicated to each teacher, and their explicit consent, signified by their signature, was obtained, reinforcing the ethical aspects of the study. To ensure reliability, rigorous measures were taken in recording and organizing the responses. Each interview was meticulously transcribed, ensuring an accurate representation of the teachers' statements. These transcriptions were then systematically organized and combined for subsequent analysis, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the gathered data. Additionally, any potential biases in the interpretation of responses were mitigated through consistent application of the research protocol and methods across all interviews. This rigorous process, encompassing both validity and reliability considerations, contributed to the robustness and trustworthiness of

the qualitative data obtained from the interviews, ensuring the findings' credibility and depth in addressing the research objectives

(III) Questionnaires:

Questionnaires are a widely used method in scientific research and are a collection of standard questions used in the data collection process. This method is used to measure participants' views, experiences or attitudes about certain topics (Gay et al., 2011).

To collect quantitative information, a questionnaire was applied to 275 students studying in different private schools in Saida and Kuturmaya provinces. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. In the first part, general information was collected from the participants. The second part consists of two open-ended questions, and the third part consists of a Likert scale consisting of grading various sub-skills under each macro skill of English. Participants were asked to give two answers for each item: their current level and the level they want to reach. When a student answers the questionnaire, they will first need to rate how much this skill is needed in high school education and then how necessary they think this skill is in university education. The questionnaires were applied in 5 schools in Saida city and 1 school in Al-Shouf region in Lebanon. Questionnaires were administered by the researcher in three of the 6 schools. Since the students in the other three schools took midterm exams, the questionnaires were administered by the administration. Three hundred questionnaires were distributed and only 275 questionnaires (n=275) were fully answered by the students and were therefore deemed appropriate for the study. The survey was taken from a study conducted to identify the specific English language skills students need for their higher education and future employment as IT students (Briana et al., 2019). The questionnaire was used by taking expert opinions in the field of educational sciences and quantitative research. Students were asked to give two answers for each item. The questionnaire aimed to determine the language teaching needs of the students in each language skill such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

Data Collection

In order to reflect the current education reality in Lebanon, this research was planned to be conducted in public schools. However, the context for this research had to change, as reality in Lebanon changes daily due to a collapsing economy. Initially granted access to public schools in Saida, the researcher received formal permission from the Lebanese Ministry of Education, Directorate of Primary Education, and South Lebanon Educational Region in September 2022. However, strikes among state employees delayed permission until December 7, 2022. In early 2023, a teachers' strike further disrupted access, affecting nearly a million students due to economic and political issues.

Document Analysis: First of all, the elements of the English language curriculum of the LS, GS, HL, and SE branches were collect from the CRDP's national website, examined and data collection started with collective qualitative information. The researcher examined the principles, characteristics, general objectives, general and specific objectives of the curriculum, how the instruction was designed, its content, and evaluation.

Interviews: Each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes (Appendix-2). Interviews were conducted with twelve English teachers working in four branches of the 12th grade. Based on the document analysis and previous research, twelve open-ended questions were prepared to conduct the interview. The questions focused on the teacher's perspective on the currently used English curriculum. The purpose of this research and these

questions were explained by the researcher and their consent was obtained. Interviews were recorded for accuracy with signed consent from the interviewees. The interviews were analyzed and summarized for analysis and review. Transcripts were carefully read and data were named and grouped into themes. A transcript is a written record or document that represents the spoken words and conversation exchanged during an interview or any spoken interaction.

The Questionnaire: Within the scope of two weeks, a Likert-type questionnaire, was applied in six schools. The questionnaire defines the level the student is in and the level he/she wants to reach (Appendix-1). The student questionnaire also included two open-ended questions about students' suggestions and needs. The application of the questionnaire in classes lasted for almost 15 minutes.

Data Analysis

Document analysis: Descriptive content analysis was conducted for the public records of the English language curriculum, and when needed, it was compared with TESOL proficiency standards and reported under various themes. In addition, according to Sönmez (2001), the specific objectives of the English curriculum among four branches of the 12th grade were analyzed.

Interviews: Thematic analysis was conducted based on interviews with 12th-grade English teachers. In addition, the answers given by the students when asked open-ended in the questionnaire were analyzed too. Gathered data were thoroughly examined, interpreted, defined, classified, and coded. Data was divided into categories and classifications were made and transformed into numerical data. Thematic analysis was carried out in the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews. Then, the determined themes were compared with each other and thought in a way that there would be no conflict. If there are conflicts, these themes are combined to represent a single theme.

The questionnaire: SPSS v.25 was used to analyze the results obtained from the questionnaires. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for the reliability of the questionnaire. The descriptive survey model was used to determine the language teaching needs of the students and the arithmetic mean value of the skills and their sub-skills was calculated. Likewise, each item under each sub-skill is ranked according to the average to determine which skills are most needed. After analyzing the data from the questionnaire, the average of each response was calculated. In addition, since 4 items were used, the following formula was used to calculate the data range. Range = (number of items – 1) divided by item quantity. To get an overview of macro skills, the average of each macro skill was calculated twice, once for current objectives and once for intended purposes. The values in Table 2 were used to interpret the response averages. In addition, each item under each macro skill was ranked according to the mean to determine which skills were most important. Table 2 Distribution of students according to the schools visited during the data collection process.

Table 2

ParticipantsDistribution of Students according to the Schools Visited during the Data Collection Process

Schools	Number of students	Region(s)
School 1	42	Saida
School 2	11	Kuturmaya
School 3	82	Saida
School 4	11	Saida
School 5	32	Saida
School 6	97	Saida
Total	275	

Table 3

Participants Distribution of Students according to 12th-Grade Branches

Branch	Student Number	Percentage
Life Sciences (LS)	146	53%
General Sciences (GS)	44	16%
Sociology and Economics (SE)	80	29%
Humanities and Literature (HL)	5	1.8%
Total	275	

Document Analysis of the Lebanese English Curriculum: An Overview

Jansen and Reddy (2020) explain the difference between curriculum development and curriculum analysis. Curriculum development involves creating the curriculum to deliver a coherent plan, while the latter involves breaking the curriculum apart to understand that plan. Curriculum analysis breaks down the curriculum into its components, evaluates how the pieces fit together for focus and coherence, checks for underlying beliefs and assumptions, and seeks justification for curriculum choices and assumptions to improve them. It aims to identify blind spots, biases, perspectives, strengths, and weaknesses, as well as identify real and potential problems and suggest possible solutions. Bowen (2009) explains that analyzing a curriculum with all its elements aims to provide complementary and broad data and background coverage, thus helping to relate research within its field. In this part, the researcher analyzed the elements of the 12th grade English curriculum in Lebanon in 4 branches (sociology and economics, humanities and literature, general sciences and life sciences); principles underlying the curriculum structure, its competencies, features and objectives were examined and analyzed, including educational background, teaching materials, and assessment.

Despite performing well in reading literacy in PISA 2018, Lebanon's 15-year-olds scored 353 compared to the average of 487 in OECD countries (OECD, 2018), however, Lebanon's education sector still faces several challenges (AlJaafil & Beyhan 2021). Until that research was realized, Lebanon's public sector had not updated, evaluated or improved its curriculum since 1997.

Although the Lebanese educational philosophy is not specified in government documents issued by the Ministry of Education. After the Lebanese Civil War ended on October 13, 1990, the government continued to use the curriculum produced in 1968 for seven years until it developed a new curriculum in 1997. An article published by one of the curriculum committee members explains that the curriculum designers wanted the new curriculum to bring people together, unite and rebuild the fragmented Lebanese society (Shabaan, 2013). From this point of view, it can be said indirectly that Lebanon prefers social restructuring as its philosophy of education, but when the aims, content or methods of the curriculum were examined, no trace of the mentioned features can be seen. Referred to by government officials, teachers and educators, the "New Curriculum" aimed to bring together different segments of society and was seen as an effort to reconcile Lebanese parties and related sects (Shabaan, 2013). However, due to political, security and economic turbulences, difficulties, and setbacks, education has been among the priorities of the Lebanese government. The civil war ended in 1990, but in 1994 the "Education Reform Plan" was drawn up and then in 1997 the new curriculum was designed.

The first step of the post-war education reform was taken in 1995 with the document "New Framework for Education in Lebanon" (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 1997). In addition, the new curricula and textbooks of that time were published in 1997 and made available for use. As it is seen, the production and development of a new curriculum took seven years in Lebanon, with the 1968 curriculum lacking an evaluation document.

The Lebanese Curriculum

As mentioned before, "The Plan for Education Reform 1994" and "The New Framework for Education in Lebanon 1995" established the principles and served as a guideline for the new curriculum (Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports, 1997). The emphasis on foreign language education in Lebanon aims to create a citizen who is proficient in at least one foreign language aiming to promote openness to and interaction with other cultures. Also, the principles of teaching two foreign languages in Lebanon were established. The first foreign language (English or French) starts at the beginning of schooling (pre-school) and the second foreign language (either English or French) starts in the seventh grade (Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports, 1997). According to the practical implications of the Lebanese curriculum, cooperation between all stakeholders and EFL subject matter teachers is a necessity. The curriculum should include familiarization with theoretical models and methodological orientations. Also, content area teachers should improve their knowledge and communicative skills in English and provide a good model for English language speakers.

Principles Underlying the English Language Curriculum

According to the Center of Educational Research and Development, (Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports, 1997) the Lebanese curriculum is governed by the following principles:

1- Language learning is learning to communicate: students need to express themselves, interact with others, gain academic information, and learn about the world around them.

2- Language varies: Learners must be aware of the need to vary language use according to the context of communication and interaction. Language varies with variations in topics, participants, setting, purpose, and medium (verbal or written). Language varies with variation according to academic domains and content areas.

3- Learning a new language is becoming familiar with a new culture: Learners become aware of new values, norms, thought patterns, and beliefs of a new culture. Also, learners will have a chance to be exposed to different cultures and they will be able to analyze the similarities and differences between their native culture and the culture they are exposed to.

4- Language learning is most effective when it takes place through meaningful and interactive tasks: Language learners learn most when they are engaged in meaningful and purposeful activities.

5- Language skills are interdependent: Speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills are interdependent where one skill often activates not only other skills but paralinguistic skills as well for the achievement of effective communication.

It can be noticed that the principles that govern the Lebanese curriculum are seen to revolve around the language learning theory in general without any focus on the classroom context, more specifically the ESL context. However, if the principles of teaching English as a second or foreign language are to be considered, then attention should be directed to TESOL, the International Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. According to their principles, TESOL International Association (2006), (1) teachers must acquire enough information about their learners, (2) teachers must create conditions for language learning, (3) teachers must design high-quality lessons for language development, (4) adapt lessons as needed, (5) monitor and assess students' language development, and (6) teachers must engage and collaborate with others to provide the best support for their learners (TESOL International Association, 2006).

As can be seen, TESOL's principles are more focused, classroom-oriented, practical, and structured in terms of ESL classroom context, while the principles that underlie the Lebanese curriculum are more theoretical, academic, and abstract, hence it can be said that the principles that govern the Lebanese English curriculum do not reflect the TESOL' principles.

General Objectives for teaching English in Lebanon

According to the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports (1997), the general objectives of the English language curriculum for grade 12 in Lebanon are the following:

1- enable students to communicate effectively in different situations and settings with native and non-native speakers alike using authentic, appropriate, and correct linguistics.

2- equip students with the requisite linguistic skills for pursuing university education in their fields of specialization.

3- enable students to communicate effectively in subject matter areas in general mathematics and sciences in particular.

4- develop students' critical thinking skills

5- develop intercultural understanding and appreciation

6- promote students' positive attitudes toward the target language and culture

7- enhance students' abilities to work with others

8- the curriculum aims to develop 3 levels of English language proficiency:

a- English for social interaction

b- English for academic purposes

c- English for socio-cultural development

As can be seen, the general objectives of the Lebanese English curriculum focus on communication, both in social and academic contexts, aims to equip the students for university education, and intends to improve the students' thinking skills, abilities, and attitudes. Similarly, if the TESOL's language proficiency standards were to be examined, it can be noticed that they also aim to improve the learners' communication in terms of social, intercultural, and instructional purposes. Also, the standards aim to create learners who communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the areas of language arts, social studies, science, and math (TESOL International Association, 2006). Therefore, it can be said that the Lebanese English language curriculum aligns with the ESL standards.

The English Language Curriculum features

Social interaction, academic achievement, and cultural enrichment are the purposes of the curriculum of English as a first foreign language. The Lebanese curriculum of English as a first foreign language is a thematic, integrated, and content-based approach. It is spiral in nature. The same concepts and skills are taught at various times across the grades but with increasing levels of complexity as they move up. Students will learn content-related information while acquiring English language skills. The emphasis on teaching English for academic purposes entails the development of thinking skills. Further, the curriculum aims to develop native-like proficiency in English language. It stresses both fluency and accuracy. Learning traditional grammar will be delayed till fourth grade (the students have developed basic competence in the language) and accuracy would develop naturally as a result of exposure to proper models of English language. The curriculum has set realistic, achievable objectives that the average teacher/material writer can relate to. Furthermore, these objectives have been illustrated with samples of clear, measurable performance tasks that can be easily implemented in the classroom. Language learning will start with universal themes, the particular characteristics of the culture of English-speaking people will be introduced gradually and where appropriate. The purpose of this is to develop cross-cultural openness, tolerance, and understanding. In addition, the curriculum highlights the role of group work in the development of communicative language skills. It emphasizes the development of the proper study skills which will help students develop into independent learners. In summary, the curriculum moves from a system of language education based on rote learning, linguistic correctness, and cramming of information to a system that promotes autonomous learning, thinking skills, and communicative competence (Shabaan 1997).

According to Shabaan (2013), one of the curriculum planners, there is a discrepancy between the curriculum elements in the thematic, content-based English language which was adopted by the Lebanese government in 1997. According to him, classroom realities along with other factors have handicapped the proper implementation of the curriculum. He also expresses the fact that the English language curriculum in Lebanon is aligned with the EFL/ESL standards and includes all curriculum elements and guidelines. However, as a part of the analysis for this research, a document analysis template according to (Gibson & Bown, 2009) was also used with some adjustments.

Competencies and Objectives

In Lebanon, in grade 12, French, geography, history, philosophy, math, English, Arabic, civil education, physics, chemistry, and biology are all taught in all branches but and different weekly periods according to the branch learners choose. Grade 12 has four branches i.e. general sciences (which mainly focuses on physics and math), life sciences (which mainly focuses on biology and chemistry), sociology and economics (which mainly focuses on these two subjects), and literature and humanities (which focuses on both Arabic and English literature and linguistics in addition to philosophy).

Based on document revision, in general, there are several competencies and several objectives for every skill. Curriculum designers also included "study skills", "thinking skills" and "cultural awareness skills" along with the four main language skills. However, it can be seen that not all of it focuses on Bloom's higher-level thinking skills. Also, it can be seen that the competencies are not arranged in hierarchical order. In addition, within the Lebanese English curriculum, all language macro-skills are taught, in addition to thinking skills and cultural awareness skills as mentioned earlier, however, only grammar as a micro-skill is taught separately. Spelling, vocabulary, and pronunciation, other micro-skills were not specified under certain or independent titles, maybe it is taught within the classroom context. Further, it should be noted that LS and GS classes take English 2 times a week, SE students take English 4 times a week and HL students study English 6 times a week.

Content

The selections included in the Grade 12 English Language curriculum in Lebanon are primarily sourced from EFL texts, content textbooks, journals, magazines, and newspapers. The authors of these materials believe that such content mirrors authentic language use, captures students' interests, and effectively explores various language domains (Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports, 1997). These selections cover a wide spectrum of subjects, encompassing citizenship, career opportunities, media, resolutions, economic issues, Lebanese literary figures, hospitality, and technological themes like computers. They represent a diverse array of topics integrated into the English Language curriculum, catering to the holistic development of Grade 12 students in Lebanon.

Methodology, Instructional Materials and Activities

It was developed around the principle of integrative language and content in English as EFL. Also, it calls for organizing instruction around meaningful and developmentally appropriate themes. The methodology also emphasizes the role of cooperative learning: Curriculum authors believe that the most appropriate framework of classroom interaction will address the above conditions and achieve the desired levels of proficiency. It constitutes a series of pro-social methods and structures (ex: think – pair – share, mixer review, information gaps, jigsaw, group investigation, and round table).

Content-based approach to teaching English as a foreign language is because students are given instructional materials which are at or above their language proficiency level, therefore their test anxiety is to be reduced.

Evaluation

Context-adaptive model for developing language tests was adopted since it fits the principles and characteristics of theme-based language instruction. Curriculum designers viewed evaluation as a continuous

operation that uses different formal and informal tools of assessment to obtain information about students' proficiency levels. Continuous evaluation incorporated the latest trends in testing at that time such as oral and written assessments, group tests, peer evaluation, portfolios, observations, interviews, and conferences. According to the curriculum authors (Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports, 1997), tests should reflect the questioning, answering schemes, and strategies that the curriculum had recommended. Table 4 depicts the document analysis of the methodology, instruction, materials, and evaluation documents.

Table 4

Summary of the Document and Curriculum Analysis

Curriculum Elements	Philosophy	Needs Analysis	Competencies and Objectives	Content	Methods (Teaching-Learning Process)	Evaluation	Curriculum Evaluation
Observations and Conclusions	Upon analyzing the curriculum's general aims, principles, features, content, and specific objectives, it can be concluded that no evidence was found to support Shabaan (2013) claim of having a social reconstructionism philosophy. On the contrary, it seems that Lebanon's English language curriculum bears the characteristics of Perennialism depending on the analysis of its curriculum elements.	No evidence of a performed needs analysis was documented. Therefore comes the importance of this research.	It mainly focuses lower-level thinking skills and is full of discrepancies. It also does not encompass Bloom's affective domain.	Thematic Content-based Spiral Authentic materials were used to cover the content area	Cooperative learning, think–pair–share, mixer review, information gaps, jigsaw, group investigation, and round table. However, since public schools are closed, the researcher could not confirm or deny these claims.	A continuous operation that uses different formal and informal tools of assessment. It focuses on the lower level thinking skills.	No evidence of any evaluation document or report issued by the Lebanese government.

Results

Findings of the first subquestion

What are the needs of Grade 12 ESL students in Lebanon regarding the four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) in English?

Based on the survey results, the average of the student's current language skills was calculated together with the average of the level that the students wanted/need to achieve in order to be proficient in English and continue their higher education. The table in Table 5 shows the difference between the current situation and the desired state that students should achieve in reading.

Table 5

Mean Interpretation

Scale	Average Range	Interpretation
4	3.25 – 4	Very good
3	2.5 – 3.25	Good
2	1.7 – 3.25	Not good
1	1 – 1.75	Not sure

Reading Skills

Table 6

Needs Assessment of Grade 12 Reading Skills

Reading Skills	Students' current language level	The level students should achieve
1- Understanding the main idea of the text	3.00	3.98
2- Skimming a text to form general ideas	2.89	3.99
3- Slowly read a text to understand its details	3.16	3.98
4- Skimming a text to find specific information	3.03	3.99
5- Determining the meaning of unknown words in a text	2.64	3.98
6- Understanding text organization	2.89	3.98
7- Understanding certain glossaries or vocabulary in a text	2.67	3.98
8- Understanding the author's attitude and point of view	2.88	3.98
9- Summarizing important information	2.89	3.98
10- Understanding literature or scientific aspects in articles or texts you read	2.83	3.98
11- Reading critically	2.80	3.97
12- Being able to explain what you have read	2.86	3.98
13- Interpreting charts, graphics, pictures…etc	3.02	3.98

It should be noted that the mean of the current state in reading is 2.89 while the mean of the level that is ought to be achieved is 3.98. The discrepancy between these two means indicates a gap or difference between the current state of reading proficiency and the intended or expected level. This difference of approximately 1.09 suggests that, on average, individuals' current reading levels are lower than the desired or targeted proficiency level.

Listening Skills

Table 7

Needs Assessment Results of Grade 12 Listening Skills

Listening Skills	Students' current language level	The level students should achieve
1- Listening to small group discussions	3.10	3.98
2- Listening to the lectures/lessons	2.8	3.97
3- Listening to large group discussions	2.78	3.97
4- Taking notes while listening	2.58	3.97
5- Understanding long verbal explanations	2.70	3.97
6- Understanding verbal instructions	2.95	3.98
7- Understanding the language of daily life dialogues	3.22	3.99
8- Understanding academic language in your field of study	3.0	3.99
9- Extracting the main and sub-ideas in a dialogue	2.76	3.98
10- Retelling the main parts of a dialogue, speech, or lesson	2.81	3.96

It should be noted that the mean of the current state in listening is 2.88 while the mean of the level that ought to be achieved is 3.9. The difference between these two means, approximately 1.02, suggests a gap or difference between the current state of listening proficiency and the desired or targeted level. On average, individuals' current listening abilities appear to be lower than the intended proficiency level of 3.9.

Speaking Skills

Table 8

Needs Assessment Results of Grade 12 Speaking Skills

Speaking Skills	Students' current language level	The level students should achieve
1- Making an oral presentation	2.74	3.99
2- Pronouncing words correctly	3.05	3.98
3- Asking for an explanation	3.05	3.98
4- Speaking fluently	2.83	3.98
5- Participating in discussions effectively	2.96	3.98
6- Communicating effectively with peers in small group discussions, joint projects, or out-of-class study groups	3.12	3.99
7- Explaining objects or procedures	2.88	3.98
8- Creating consistent arguments	2.82	3.98
9- Pronouncing words, phrases, and sentences with correct intonation and stress patterns	2.94	3.98
10- Participating in discussions	2.93	3.99
11- Communicating effectively with your superiors	2.94	3.98
12- Attending meetings	2.91	3.98
13- Speaking in public	2.91	3.98
14- Communicating effectively with peers in small group discussions and collaborative projects	3.09	3.98
15- Participating in interviews (eg job interviews, scholarships, etc.)	2.53	3.99

It should be noted that the mean of the current state in speaking is 2.9 while the mean of the level that ought to be achieved is 3.98. The difference between these two means, approximately 1.08, highlights a gap or disparity between the current state of speaking proficiency and the targeted or desired level. On average, individuals' current speaking abilities seem to be lower than the intended proficiency level of 3.98.

Writing Skills

Table 9

Needs Assessment Results of Grade 12 Writing Skills

Writing Skills	Students' current language level	The level students should achieve
1- Using correct punctuation and spelling	2.79	3.98
2- Editing paragraphs	2.63	3.98
3- Expressing ideas correctly	2.87	3.98
4- Developing ideas	2.89	3.99
5- Expressing what you want to say clearly	2.70	3.98
6- Adopting the appropriate style	2.73	3.98
7- Evaluating and reviewing your essays	2.57	3.98
8- Interpreting texts	2.70	3.98
9- Taking notes	2.82	3.97
10- Writing lengthy essays	2.70	3.99
11- Writing creatively	2.70	3.97
12- Writing critically (analysis and evaluation information)	2.54	3.98
13- Explaining objects or procedures	2.79	3.98
14- Writing the introduction and results	2.91	3.96
15- Creating consistent arguments	2.60	3.98
16- Summarizing factual information	2.71	3.97
17- Using a variety of grammatical structures and extensive vocabulary	2.57	3.99

It should be noted that the mean of the current state in writing is 2.7 while the mean of the level that ought to be achieved is 3.98. The difference between these two means, approximately 1.28, indicates a notable gap or difference between the current state of writing proficiency and the targeted or desired level. On average, individuals' current writing abilities appear to be lower than the intended proficiency level of 3.98.

To sum the results up, table 10 depicts the total mean of each macro skill.

Table 10

Grade 12 English Language Needs Assessment

Language Skills	Student's current level	The level that ought to be achieved
Reading	2.89	3.98
Listening	2.88	3.98
Speaking	2.9	3.98
Writing	2.7	3.99

Findings of the second subquestion

What are the differences between the classroom curriculum and students' English language teaching needs in terms of goals and objectives?

Feedback from teachers and students suggests students possess communication skills in English but lack language proficiency in their field of study, hindering some in academic areas. Despite global cultural influences, not all curriculum objectives are met, with gaps in preparing students for real-life skills, university entrance, and societal needs. Identified deficiencies include a lack of higher-order thinking, research skills, effective communication, critical thinking, and sociocultural awareness. There's a perception that the curriculum prioritizes question-solving over language acquisition in grade 12. However, students maintain a positive attitude towards English, recognizing its significance in academic, career, and social contexts.

An in-depth analysis reveals significant errors and inconsistencies in the 12th-grade objectives, particularly in unevenly emphasizing different levels of cognitive skills in Bloom's taxonomy. There's a disparity where certain objectives prioritize lower-order thinking over higher-order thinking. Both teachers and students highlight oral communication, research and writing, and critical thinking skills as crucial for students.

Findings of the third subquestion

What are the differences in content between the 12th-grade curriculum in Lebanon and the English language teaching needs of students?

According to the answers received from the teachers, the textbook given by the state is no longer valid and is no longer used. Instead, alternative textbooks from various publishers are used, covering the subjects required by the national exams and old government textbooks. Teachers described the government-published book as "old" and "outdated". To make up for the lack of adequate resources, teachers use a variety of materials and resources. It is important to note that at the beginning of each academic year, coordinators and teachers are given a list of topics, themes or questions that need to be highlighted and discussed in class. It is worth noting that the fact that some of the newly proposed content was not included in the original curriculum compelled teachers to develop their own resources to keep up with the national examination committee.

Findings of the fourth subquestion

12 in Lebanon. What are the differences between the classroom curriculum and the English language teaching needs of the students in terms of educational status?

Feedback collected from teachers shows that private and public schools differ significantly in terms of teaching. Private schools have the opportunity to give students more space in various activities, competitions and activities that are not very common in public schools. However, teachers and students agree on additional English teaching, especially in the sciences. Teachers who have difficulties in keeping up with the curriculum cannot spare enough time for extracurricular activities. In addition, it has been reported that the lack of materials is a major obstacle to obtaining better results. In addition, many teachers and students expressed their dissatisfaction with the repetitive nature of the themes they encountered in their studies. Both groups reported that they were disappointed with the national exam question types that were thought to limit and restrict their thinking. It seems that the education in the 12th grade is more geared towards preparing for the national exam rather than improving the language skills of the students.

Findings of the fifth subquestion

What are the differences between students' English language teaching needs in terms of grade 12 testing situations in Lebanon?

Evaluation based on teachers' responses is geared towards national exams, especially due to their limited time. It provides support to students on how to answer a few questions and what kind of questions they will face in national exams. They reported their dissatisfaction with the test style, arguing that it was limited, one-sided, rote and repetitive. Private school teachers, in particular, reported that they fell short of using alternative forms of assessment, given the limited time and too much information they had to impart to their students.

Findings of the sixth subquestion

What are the teachers' opinions and suggestions about the 1997 education curriculum?

Many teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the English language curriculum and criticized it for being outdated, full of deficiencies, and not preparing students for life skills or academic success. Teachers also stated that they need more English time or lesson hours to cover the curriculum and that additional materials should be provided to support the curriculum's deficiencies. On the other hand, students stated that the curriculum should be updated and renewed in order to improve their interaction skills, increase their English language time, and add more real-life lessons and reading materials. In general, students believe that the curriculum should focus on teaching language skills that can help them every day in their lives and encourage more thinking and less memorization. Students' opinions reveal that there is a need to revise the English language curriculum in Lebanon to meet their current needs and desires. The answers of the teachers were reported under four themes, each theme includes related sub-themes. Throughout the research, the number of teachers who answered the interview questions and the answers of the teachers will be indicated with "T".

Table 11

General Information about the Teachers' Gender, Experience, and the Establishment They Teach at.

Teachers	Gender	Years of	Establishment	Notes
T1	Female	29	Private	
T2	Female	12	Private	
T3	Female	29	Private	
T4	Female	14	Private	
T5	Female	18	Public and Private	
T6	Male	16	Public and Private	Coordinator and teacherteacher
T7	Female	28	Private	
T8	Female	25	Public	
T9	Female	17	Private	
T10	Female	20	Public	
T11	Female	16	Private	Coordinator
T12	Female	20	Private	

Theme A: Teachers' Perceptions of the principles underlying the English Curriculum

A1 – Students' use of English language

Table 12

A1- Frequency Table of Students' Use of English Language

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
Students' use of English language	Students can use English effectively to communicate, express themselves and interact with others.	4	33.33%
	Students cannot use English effectively to communicate, express themselves and interact with others.	1	8.3%
	Inconclusive	7	58%
	Total	12	100%

When teachers were asked whether grade 12 students use English language effectively to communicate, express themselves and interact with native and/or non-native English speakers their answers came as follows*:*

T3: Most of the students can express themselves easily but still some students face some problems. Sometimes they try to speak in Arabic but I guide them to speak in English and I only accept answers in English. T4: In our school, our students are forced to speak in English. We stress on English language as a means of communication. T5 (public and private school teacher): Most of the students abide by our instructions to speak

English but some of them feel shy or intimidated so I try to encourage them. I do not want them to feel shy or reluctant. Maybe more than 50%. Weak students are not able to express themselves fully in English.

A2 – Students' use of English language in their field of study

Table 13

A2-Students' Use of English Language in their Field Frequency Table

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
Use of English language in their field	Students can use English adequately in their field of study	7	58%
	Students cannot use English adequately in their field of study	1	8.3%
	Individual differences play a role	4	33.33%
	Total	12	100%

Teachers were asked whether grade 12 students are able to use English adequately in their field of study (HL, LS, GS, and SE). Their answers came as follows: *Teacher4, 7, 8 (public school teacher) and 9: Yes, most of the students can use English adequately however, weak students might find it challenging somehow. T5 (public and private school teacher): Some students find it difficult to comprehend what a math or biology problem is about and sometimes they blame the teacher. T6 (public and private school teacher): In public schools, I can say that students sometimes struggle with new words or phrases. So, I can say that they fairly use English adequately. T11: Yes, they can and the proof is that they score good grades. T12: No, not all the time, sometimes they can struggle a bit.*

A3- Grade 12 Students and Other Cultures

Table 14

A3-Grade 12 Students and other Cultures Frequency Table

Theme	Sub-theme	F	%
Grade 12 students and other cultures	Students are familiar with other cultures	12	100%
	Total	12	100%

When teachers were asked whether grade 12 students are familiar with new cultures as the curriculum states, their answers came as follows: *T1 and T4: "Yes, our students are familiar with other cultures". T2: "Yes, of course, since our textbooks are related to new cultures and the students are assigned projects related to new cultures. Also, now the generation is open to learning about other cultures because they are applying for scholarships to study abroad." T3: "Of course, not only thanks to the curriculum but also since we conduct several extracurricular activities." T5, T6 (public and private school teacher), T8, and T10 (public school teachers): "Yes, of course, these topics (cultures) are highlighted in the textbook".*

Theme B: Instruction, Evaluation, and Textbooks

B1 – Instruction in the classroom

Table 15

B1- Teachers' Instruction Frequency Table

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
Instruction	Student-based	7	58%
	Traditional	4	33.33%
	It depends on the teacher	1	8.3%
	Total	12	100%

When asked about the methods of instruction they use in the classroom, the teachers' responses came as follows: *T2: "The objectives are too old and too complicated. It is not interesting enough for the new generation. As for the methods, we use brainstorming, group work, projects, research, videoes, and picture analysis. T6 (both public and private school teacher): In transitional classes, i.e 10 and 11, we can vary our instruction as we want, but we cannot do that with grades 9 and 12 since the students will sit the national exam. We have to finish the curriculum at hand and we do not have the luxury to try something different with the students. We have to prepare the students for the national exams and get them familiar with the testing, grading, and correction systems. I cannot do projects with them as there are several restrictions. For example, the old government textbook is useless so we need to find several materials and resources. We suffer from the lack of resources. T11: "Unfortunately we teach the students the skills that need to pass the national exams. We do not have time to do anything but that!".*

B2 – Evaluation

Table 16

B2- Teachers' Evaluation Frequency Table

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
Evaluation	National exams oriented	11	91.6%
	Performance assessment	1	8.33%
	Both	0	0%
	Total	12	100%

Upon asking the teachers about the evaluation techniques they use, their answers came as follows*: T1: "As for the evaluation, we use essay writing, oral presentations, and written exams. Of course, the exams are aligned with the national official exams." T4: "I have to focus on the type of questions the students are going to face in the national exams." T5, T6, T10 and T12: "As for evaluation, we have to follow the same evaluation techniques as the national exams so our evaluation is oriented towards the state-exams. This matter makes me feel that we are boxing the students' thinking and limiting it.". T10: "Evaluation in grade 12 is oriented towards the national exams and teachers have no time for any intervention and no time to cater to students' individual differences. Unfortunately, we focus on teaching the students how to answer the questions and make them memorize how to respond to certain questions.*

B3 – Content

Table 17

B3- Content's Frequency Table

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
Content	Needs updating	12	100%
	Total	12	100%

Upon asking the teachers about their opinion of grade 12 English content, the teachers' responses came as such*: "T2, T3, T4, T7, T8, T9, T11, and T12: "We use the government curriculum but different textbooks that cover the same themes but with news texts. The themes are aligned with the national curriculum and national exams. However, I use different resources from magazines, newspapers, and online articles, adapt them to the students' level and use them in the classroom. T5, T6, T10, T11, and T12: "The government's textbook is outdated and old fashioned, we use different textbooks but it is in line with the national curriculum and national exams. We use past-issued exams as practice templates for evaluation in the classroom."*

Theme C: General and Specific Objectives of the English Language Curriculum in Lebanon

C1 – The objectives and the student's academic life and future career

Table 18

C1- Teachers' Opinions Regarding the General And Specific Objectives Frequency Table

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
Teachers' opinions regarding the general and specific objectives	The general and specific objectives of the curriculum equip students with the necessary skills.	1	58%
	The general and specific objectives of the curriculum do not equip students with the necessary skills.	7	33.33%
	Inconclusive	4	8.3%
	Total	12	100%

Upon asking the teachers whether the English language curriculum objectives support the student's academic life and future careers, their answers came as such*: T4: "No, it is limited. There is no focus on higher-order level thinking skills, no research skills, and no communication or critical thinking skills. Creativity is also not promoted. It is up to the teachers in the classrooms to promote and emphasize these skills. The main focus of grade 12 is on the official exams. We have to teach certain concepts that are aligned with the national exams to ensure the students' success in them. The curriculum fails to focus on higher-order level thinking skills. The curriculum should be more oriented towards TOFEL or IELTS exams for instance because the students need it to pass the university entrance exams or to meet the admission requirements."*

C2 – The Curriculum's Aim

Table 19

C2- Teachers' Opinions Regarding the Curriculum's Aim Frequency Table

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
Curriculum's Aim	The Lebanese English language curriculum is achieving its .	1	8.33%
	The Lebanese English language curriculum is not achieving its .	9	75%
	Inconclusive	2	16.6%
	Total	12	100%

When the teachers were asked whether the curriculum is meeting the aim it was designed to, their answers came as follows: *T2, T3 and T4: "No, because the national textbooks do not equip the students with the skills that are necessary for them in their real life. There is a gap between the textbooks and the national exams. It does not promote sociocultural awareness quite enough and when it comes to social interaction, the activities and resources are not enough. T6 (public school teacher): No, no, and no! In public schools it is difficult. It depends on the teacher to make sure the students are learning or acquiring these skills." T8: "Sometimes I feel the curriculum does not teach language in grade 12, it teaches a pattern of how to solve questions. It is limited." T10: "No, none especially in speaking. We do not have enough time to do all that we have to do. The number of English periods is really low." T12: "No, it is so limited. Students are only being trained on how to solve and respond. We are limiting their thinking."*

C3 – Students' Attitude towards English language

Table 20

C3- Students' Attitude Frequency Table

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
Students' Attitude	Students have a positive attitude toward English language	9	75%
	Students do not have a negative attitude toward English language	1	8.33%
	It depends on the teacher	1	8.33%
	It depends on the students	1	8.33%
	Total	12	100%

Upon asking the teachers about the student's attitudes towards English language, the teachers' responses came as such: *T1, T3, and T4: "Yes, students have a positive attitude towards English. They love it. However, weak students need extra support." T2, T6, T7, and T11: "They like English. They realize its importance in life when it comes to applying to universities, jobs, immigration or simply to feel connected to the society and the world around them." T5: "It depends on the teacher. If they have a positive impact on the students, yes, they will love English. If not, they try to distance themselves away from both, the language and the teacher."*

Theme D: Teachers' Perceptions towards the Lebanese English Curriculum

D1 – Most important skills needed by students

Table 21

D1- Frequency Table of The Most Important Skills Needed by Students

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
Most important skills needed by students	Writing and critical thinking skills	6	50%
	Oral Communication skills	6	50%
	Total	12	100%

When teachers were asked about the most important skills grade 12 needed, their responses came as follows: *T1: "Students have to be monitored and trained to become confident and independent learners equipped for receiving higher education," T2, T5, T6, T8, T9, and T12: "They need to acquire more writing skills, develop their oral communication and critical thinking." T3 and T7: "The students need to develop their speaking communication skills like debating and arguing their ideas and opinions. We do not have time to do such activities a lot in the classroom because we have to finish the syllabus which comes at the expense of doing extra activities in the class."*

D2 – Teachers' opinion regarding the Lebanese English Language Curriculum

Table 22

D2- Teachers' Opinion Regarding the Curriculum's Frequency Table

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
Teachers' opinion regarding the curriculum	Suitable and Comprehensive	1	8.33%
	Poor, old, outdated, and full of gaps	11	91.6%
	Total	12	100%

Upon asking the teachers about their opinion regarding the Lebanese English curriculum, their responses came as such: *T2: "Not all skills help the students achieve academic success. It is very old and painful to use. It gives the teachers hard time when using it." T3: "No. It is full of gaps. Even when the government is trying to solve these issues, they do not solve them efficiently. There is always something the curriculum lacks. We need more English periods. It lacks crucial life skills and if present, there are no activities or resources to promote them." T6: "The curriculum is restricted, limited and old. It needs to be developed. Some units are repeated from grades 7 to 12. Textbook selections and questions need to be modified as soon as possible. Selections are outdated and students find it boring or hard sometimes. Some reading selections are not suitable to the grade level."*

D3 – Teachers' suggestions

Table 23

D3- Teachers' Suggestions' Frequency Table

Themes	Sub-themes	F	%
	Include higher-order-level thinking skills	3	25%
	Change the entire curriculum	5	41.66%
Teachers'	More speaking and oral communication	2	16.66%
suggestions	Provide more resources and materials	1	8.33%
	Nothing	1	8.33%
	Total	12	100%

Upon asking the teachers about their suggestions on how to improve the Lebanese English language curriculum, their answers came as such: *T1: "Nothing." T2: "The entire curriculum has to be changed." T3: "To include more activities where students can interact with each other and people outside the school walls. To have more speaking debates to highlight the important skills." T4: "The curriculum needs a lot of modification." T5: "I would like to change everything that makes the students memorize information. We need more analytical skills and more opinion-related questions."*

Findings of the seventh subquestion

What are the students' opinions and suggestions about the 1997 curriculum?

Teachers suggested that the curriculum should be updated, developed and modified to meet students' needs. Teachers believe that students should be more involved in their own learning. Overall, the responses suggest that the Lebanese English curriculum needs significant improvements to be more effective in teaching English language skills. Students expressed a desire for more speaking practice, tests, debates, public speaking practice, and improving their accents. Students also wish that the curriculum could be changed to allow for more projects, learn more vocabulary and enjoy learning English. They feel that the curriculum is outdated, repetitive and does not fit their aspirations for 21st century or university education.

Students' Current Educational Needs

When the students were asked about their current educational needs in general, their responses were recorded and grouped. Some of the students' direct responses are shared below as quotations, in addition to their most common responses.

Student 1 stated*: "I need to live in peace without stress from life hardships in Lebanon, academic pressure, or stress from the official exams."* S2 stated: *"I think my current education needs are to participate in activities that help me build my self-confidence since I believe that I have good skills but I lack practice."* S3 stated*: "As a student in grade 12 who will embark on higher education, I want to be able to write university-level essays, research articles, and lab reports to explain my ideas thoroughly and display arguments on theories. As a*

student in the science department, I somehow lack the appropriate writing skills that are needed for my tertiary education". S4: *"My current educational need in general is for the government to improve the curriculum we use."* S5: "*We need to change the curriculum to make it meet the student's needs and their preferences and be useful in our daily life".*

Further, several students reported that the lessons they take must be related to their real life. Several dozens of students reported their need to learn presentation and interview skills for jobs, scholarships, or university admissions. A respective number of students reported their need to learn how to write CVs, cover letters, and professional emails. They also reported their need to focus more on communication skills like public speaking, debates, and making presentations. They want to participate more in international conferences, contests, and events like MUN for instance. Several students expressed their need to give importance to mental health issues they suffer from and not only focus on academic success. "*School must shed more light on mental health",* student 13. A handful of students expressed their need for awareness sessions and their desire to take courses about mental health, emotional intelligence, communication, time and stress management, and how to use social media in a beneficial and healthy way. Multiple students reported their need to have extra activities, more sports sessions, and more community service. Numerous students explained their need to prepare for IELTS or TOEFL tests. Some students explained that they need intensive English courses to be ready for college.

Students' Opinions and Suggestions on how to develop the Lebanese English language curriculum

"Our curriculum must be renewed. It must increase the students' interaction skills", a student explained. A quite number of students expressed their wish to have more English periods, especially in the scientific branches. They reported their need to have more speaking practice and tests, debates, public speaking practice, and to enhance their accents. As mentioned before, they addressed their need to have lessons and reading selections that are related to their real and current life. One student commented: "*I wish to omit to have a specific way to answer certain questions in an English test, let us answer the way we want to!"* Several students just wish for the English language curriculum to be changed and have more discussion and speaking time in class. "*We want more speaking time, more debates, more discussion, to do more presentations".* Another student responded: *"We want to enjoy learning English."* "*We want to enjoy the texts and topics we are reading"* another student expressed. *"Please change the textbooks. We should read texts that go well with the evolution of the society".* "*We are taking the same topics across the grade levels. We are bored of repetition", students explained..* A handful of students expressed their need to do some internships to be familiar with the job market. That is how they believe they can decide on the major they will pursue in the future. Further, several students explained their need to learn more sophisticated vocabulary to be more articulate while speaking. Last but not least, another student stated: "*I want to practice English, not only at school, but outside as well. Learning must be related to our lives."* Finally, a student stated: "*I wish they can include oral evaluation in the national exams or at school which will improve the student's speaking skills and overall English language communication and skills."*

Table 24

A needs assessment of the current curriculum and the current state within the grade 12 English language curriculum

Curriculum Elements	1997 Curriculum (based on the document analysis)	2023 Current Status (based on the interviews and questionnaires)	Identified Gaps or the results that need to be achieved
General and Specific Objectives	1-Students should be able to use English to communicate effectively, express themselves, and interact with others. 2- Students should be able to use English language adequately in their field of study. 3- ESL students should be familiar with new cultures. 4-The curriculum aims to develop students' critical thinking. 5- It aims the students with requisite linguistic skills to pursue a university education in the fields of specialization. 6- It aims to promote students' attitudes toward learning a foreign language.	1-According to the research findings, students are able to use English language effectively to achieve the previously stated principle. 2- According to the research findings, not all students are capable of using English adequately in their domain. 3- According to research findings, students are familiar with other cultures, but mainly thanks to globalization and social media. 4-According to research findings, the specific objectives do not focus on higher-level thinking skills. It fails to develop critical thinking. 5- Not 100%. Some students need tutoring and others need to take intensive English classes at the university. 6- According to the research results, students have a positive attitude toward English language.	1-**No gaps were identified** since the majority of the teachers' responses matched what is stated in the ministry documents. However, more extensive research should be conducted in public schools. 2- **A gap was identified.** There is a need for effective employment of English language in the student's field of study. 3- **A minor gap can be identified.** There is a need for the curriculum to play an important role in the students' exposure to other cultures. 4- **A gap can be determined.** There is a dire need to improve and enhance the specific objectives and to focus on higher-level thinking skills. 5- **A gap was identified.** There is a need to improve the general level of English language education in both public and private schools. 6- **No gap was determined.** However, this level should be maintained in the future.

Methods and Instruction	1-It aims to emphasize the role of cooperative work, implement pro-social methods, and opt for a content-based approach.	1-According to the research, students are becoming bored in the classroom since they learn the same concepts across the grade levels. - Instruction in grade 12 is oriented toward the national exams and the students expressed their need to have more English classes. -Teachers reported a lack or absence of materials to use in the classroom. -There is a critical discrepancy between methods of instruction between public and private classes, therefore, not all students in Lebanon are receiving the same quality of education.	1-**Several gaps were determined:** -There is a pressing need to opt for a new content design model. -There is a crucial need for improvement in the quality of questions asked in the national exams. -There is a need to provide teachers with diverse materials and resources to support them. -There is a dire need to unify the teachers' instructic both public and private schools.
Content	1-Selections were derived from EFL texts, content textbooks, journals, magazines, and newspapers	1-The 1997 textbooks issued by the CERD, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Education, are not used anymore, neither by public nor private schools since it has become old.	1-**A gap was identified.** -There is a need to design and produce new and up-to-date English language textbooks
Evaluation	1-They adopted an evaluation model that suits the principles and characteristics of theme-based language instruction.	1-There was no example of the model they claimed to have adopted. According to the research results, there is a difference between the textbooks and the objectives on one side and the national exams on the other. The national exams fail to focus on higher-order-level thinking skills.	-**Several gaps were determined**. -There is a need to modify and develop the question types in the national exams. -There is a need for the national exams to focus on and promote higher-level thinking skills.

Discussion, Conclusion & Suggestions

Limitations of the Study

Limited Generalizability: Conducting the study solely in private schools due to the closure of public schools due to a teacher strike might limit the generalizability of findings. The exclusion of public schools may not represent the entire spectrum of Grade 12 learners in Lebanon, potentially skewing the understanding of English language needs among a broader population.

Potential Bias in Data: Relying only on data from private schools due to the circumstances might introduce bias. Differences in resources, teaching methods, or student demographics between private and public schools could impact the findings, leading to an incomplete or skewed understanding of the English language needs of Grade 12 learners in Lebanon.

Difficulty in Representing Public School Needs: Since the research was restricted to private schools, there might be an inadequate representation of the unique needs and challenges faced by Grade 12 learners in public schools. This limitation may restrict the comprehensiveness of the analysis, potentially overlooking critical insights specific to the public-school context.

Discussion

The current Lebanese education curriculum lacks a clear philosophy and does not address societal, subject, or student needs. The spiral curriculum structure is deemed inappropriate, limiting student engagement and not aligning with the curriculum's philosophy. The curriculum's lecture-based approach impedes critical thinking and creates disparities between public and private school students' learning experiences. Private schools expose students to diverse teaching methods, nurturing higher-order thinking skills and personal development. For an ideal reconstructivist philosophy, a problem-centered curriculum design would be apt, focusing on societal needs and student interests (Demirel, 2020; Oral & Yazar, 2017). Such a design fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and social development, aligning with the philosophy. The modular content design suits this approach, emphasizing interconnected learning structures. To bridge the gap between public and private schools, a unified teaching method approach and enhanced supervision are needed. Evaluation methods like project-based assessments and portfolios should replace traditional techniques to ensure curriculum objectives are met. National exams should align with the new education curriculum's vision, standards, and principles.

Discussion of subquestions

Discussion of the first subquestion

What are the needs of Grade 12 ESL students in Lebanon regarding the four skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) in English?

The study highlights how vocabulary comprehension is pivotal in reading, enabling understanding and connection with new information. It emphasizes the importance of identifying unknown words for effective comprehension. As Schmitt (2008) stated, expanding vocabulary knowledge can improve students' general knowledge and understanding of a subject.

Similarly, in listening, understanding main and subordinate ideas fosters active engagement and meaningful discussions. As noted by Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), focusing on the main and subordinate ideas in a speech can help students engage in active listening and gain a deeper understanding of the speaker's message. Hinkel (2006) shows that when students can do this, they understand the message and are able to convey it to others. As a result, mastering the ability to understand long verbal expressions, extract main and sub-ideas is essential for effective listening and communication skills. This ability also helps in asking pertinent questions, enhancing communication skills. Moreover, writing, particularly critical writing, is challenging without higher-order thinking skills. A diverse vocabulary and varied grammatical structures are indispensable for clear expression, especially in academic writing. To address these challenges, the proposed English language curriculum aims to bolster these core skills for effective communication and writing proficiency.

Discussion of the second subquestion

What are the differences between the 12th-grade curriculum and students' English language teaching needs in terms of goals and objectives?

The Lebanese English curriculum exhibits inconsistencies and gaps in fulfilling its intended purposes. Setting goals is insufficient without effective implementation, supervision, and evaluation. Curriculum development should focus on fostering critical thinking, cultural awareness, personal and professional growth, lifelong learning, and communication skills. Education in Lebanon should aim to unite society rather than divide it.

Without support for critical thinking in education, students may struggle with decision-making, problem-solving, and logical, objective evaluation of information. This deficiency can lead to reliance on preconceived notions and prejudices, limiting learning and professional success in settings requiring critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving skills.

Discussion of the third subquestion

What are the differences between the 12th grade curriculum and the English language teaching needs of students in terms of content?

Perhaps the greatest proof that the English curriculum in Lebanon needs to change is that both public and private schools have stopped using government-issued English textbooks. They now use different textbooks published by different authors and publishers (non-governmental) but contain the same themes as the old government book. Twenty-six years have passed since the Ministry of National Education proposed these themes. Another issue emphasized here is the nature and content of the curriculum. These textbooks (Shabaan, 2013) support the claim that these textbooks were put in because they have a spiral structure by nature and the themes or topics that are repeated every year cause students and teachers to lose interest and get bored. It was put together by people who had never been involved in textbook writing, and the argument (Esseile, 2011) that public school teachers saw NCERD books as "completely unsuccessful" and "not sufficient to establish a solid foundation of English".

Discussion of the fourth subquestion

What are the differences between the 12th grade curriculum and the English language teaching needs of students in terms of educational status?

Education in schools varies from one teacher to another and from one school to the next, and the number of students and lack of resources in public schools makes it questionable whether government-recommended teaching methods such as cooperative learning take place. In addition, years have passed and teachers in public schools still use the same method and strategy.

Discussion of the fifth subquestion

What are the differences between students' English language teaching needs in terms of 12th grade test situations?

Because different assessment techniques can measure different skills and abilities such as critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and communication, having different types of assessment techniques is important for many to assess the different skills of students. By using a variety of assessment techniques, teachers can get a more complete picture of students' strengths and weaknesses. Also, teachers can accommodate different learning styles. For example, some students do well in written exams, while others may prefer oral presentations or project-based assessments. Different assessment techniques can help engage and motivate students by providing variety and variety in the assessment process. In addition, using different assessment techniques can increase the validity and reliability of the assessment process. In summary, using different types of assessment techniques is important to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of student learning, accommodate different learning styles and preferences, and increase engagement and motivation.

Discussion of the sixth subquestion

What are the teachers' opinions and suggestions about the 1997 education curriculum?

The English language curriculum in Lebanon is a major concern for teachers and students alike, and both groups highlight their inadequacies. Lack of preparation for real-life skills, gaps in the curriculum, and outdated content are just some of the problems teachers have pointed out. Meanwhile, students express their need for a curriculum that provides them with the necessary language skills to be successful in their daily lives. Their focus is on interaction skills and critical thinking, which they believe the current curriculum is not able to address. The request for an updated curriculum that meets the needs and desires of students highlights the need for a revision of the English curriculum in Lebanon. It is very important to address these concerns and make the necessary changes in order to ensure that students receive a quality education that prepares them for the future. Therefore, a curriculum that nurtures a love of learning and encourages critical thinking is essential to provide students with the tools they need to succeed.

Discussion of the seventh subquestion

What are the students' opinions and suggestions about the 1997 curriculum?

Based on feedback from both teachers and students regarding the Lebanese English curriculum, it is highly recommended that necessary improvements be made to meet the needs and aspirations of students in the 21st century. To achieve this, the curriculum needs to be updated, developed, and modified to provide students with real-life lessons, interaction skills, and opportunities for critical thinking. The curriculum should also include opportunities for more speaking practice, discussion and public speaking to improve students' accents and provide

them with a more enjoyable learning experience. Students also expressed their desire for more projects, vocabulary learning and quizzes to ensure they are equipped with the skills necessary to succeed in college. It is essential to listen to feedback from both teachers and students and work towards implementing the necessary changes to provide a better learning experience and prepare students for their future endeavors.

During the document analysis process, it was concluded that the educational philosophy of the Lebanese English curriclum was not included in the documents published by the Ministry of National Education. However, after determining the features of the curriculum and examining its elements, Permanentism, Idealism and Realism will be discussed in more detail in the discussion section.

Conclusions

Conclusion of the first subquestion

What are the needs of Grade 12 ESL students in Lebanon regarding the four skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) in English?

The assessment of students' current reading needs reveals lower scores in determining unknown words' meanings (2.64) and understanding specific words in a text (2.67). These skills are interlinked, crucial for overall text comprehension, effective communication, and knowledge expansion, notably in academic or technical domains (Schmitt, 2008). Regarding listening needs, challenges lie in understanding lengthy verbal expressions (2.7) and extracting main and subordinate ideas (2.76). These skills are vital for comprehending speech, enhancing active listening, encouraging meaningful discussions, and effective communication (Nation, 2001; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Goh, 2000; Hinkel, 2006). Speaking needs highlight deficiencies in interview participation (2.53), identified as a priority area for curriculum enhancement. Writing stands out as the most challenging skill, particularly in critical writing (2.54), evaluating writings (2.57), constructing coherent arguments (2.60). Critical writing fosters analytical thinking, questioning assumptions, and forming well-reasoned arguments (Bean & Melzer, 2011). Emphasizing higher-order thinking skills is essential for developing critical writing. Additionally, using diverse grammatical structures and a broad vocabulary enhances clarity, sophistication, and effectiveness in written communication, especially in academic contexts (Williams & Bizup, 2014). These aspects are crucial in conveying complex ideas and arguments effectively.

Conclusion of the second sub-problem

What are the differences between the 12th-grade curriculum and students' English language teaching needs in terms of goals and objectives?

The Lebanese English curriculum suffers from several problems. There is widespread dissatisfaction with the curriculum on behalf of both teachers and students. Many gaps and inconsistencies were identified between the general targets set by the Ministry of National Education and the reality. The overall objectives of the curriculum do not appear to meet the intended purpose.

According to the results of the research, it can be said that the targeted objectives of the ministry are below the expected level. The study revealed the existence of several important issues that are not addressed within specific objectives; one of them is the unequal distribution of thinking skills among all branches and the lack of focus on higher-order thinking skills.

Conclusion of the third sub-problem

What are the differences between the 12th-grade curriculum and the English language teaching needs of students in terms of content?

According to the research, the content cannot meet the needs of the students and does not connect with the real life of the students. Teachers and students are fed up with books, especially as they are spiral in nature, so students feel bored and disinterested, and teachers always have to look for, adapt and use different materials and resources.

Conclusion of the fourth sub-problem

What are the differences between the 12th-grade curriculum and the English language teaching needs of students in terms of educational status?

When the curriculum was designed in 1997, the focus of teaching methods was group work. However, considering the time elapsed since the development of the curriculum, many and varied teaching methods have emerged and are being used by teachers. This issue has brought up another issue that cannot be ignored, which is the difference between the education and training methods of private and public schools. However, both seem to have difficulties when it comes to timeframes, completion of the curriculum or lack of material on hand.

Conclusion of the fifth sub-problem

What are the differences between students' English language teaching needs in terms of 12th-grade exam situations?

Students in Year 12 are trained in how to answer questions in national exams as this is what assessment is for. Question types are limited, based on repetition and memorization. Therefore, students are not exposed to many other and more effective assessment techniques.

Conculsion of the sixth subquestion

What are the teachers' opinions and suggestions about the 1997 curriculum?

As a result, the English language curriculum in Lebanon can be criticized by both teachers and students for being outdated and not meeting the needs of the modern world. While teachers highlight the curriculum's shortcomings, such as gaps and lack of life skills preparation, students call for an updated curriculum that focuses on real-life lessons, interaction skills, and critical thinking. The student's perspective emphasizes the importance of reviewing the current English language curriculum in Lebanon to ensure that it meets students' current needs and desires, and is to provide them with the language skills necessary to succeed in their daily lives. It is essential to acknowledge these concerns and make the necessary changes to give students a quality education that prepares them for the future.

Conclusion of the seventh subquestion

What are the students' opinions and suggestions about the 1997 curriculum?

In conclusion, feedback from both teachers and students indicates that the current Lebanese English curriculum requires significant improvements in order to be effective in teaching English language skills. Teachers recommend updating and changing the curriculum to meet students' needs and increase their participation in their own learning. Students express their desire for more speaking practice, debate, public speaking opportunities, and curriculum changes that allow for more projects, vocabulary learning, and a more enjoyable learning experience, along with accent development. Students' opinions emphasize that the curriculum should be updated to meet their demands for 21st-century and university education. It is essential to listen to their feedback and work towards implementing the necessary changes to provide a better learning experience and prepare students for their future endeavors.

To summarize, the needs analysis, shaped by curriculum review, teacher interviews, and student feedback, aims to pinpoint deficiencies in the English curriculum. It seeks to bridge gaps between current student needs and the 12th-grade speaking skills assessment. By identifying these gaps, the analysis aims to update the curriculum effectively, ensuring it meets students' needs and equips them with essential skills for success. Triangulating various sources aids in aligning the English curriculum with present student requirements.

Suggestions

Based on the research results and the research tools used, the following measures can be taken as suggestions for future research or used as recommendations for curriculum designers:

1- In line with the demands of both teachers and students, the number of English lessons should be increased.

2- The current reading levels of the students should be evaluated.

3- Different reading strategies should be applied.

4- More English reading material should be provided.

5- Technology should be included more in teaching methods.

6- Authentic material such as news broadcasts, podcasts, and TED talks should expose students to a variety of accents, words, and speaking styles. This can help students improve their listening skills and prepare them for real-world situations.

7- Listening strategies should be taught: Students can be taught to be more effective listeners by teaching certain listening strategies such as estimating, summarizing, and explaining. These strategies can help students stay focused and engaged during listening activities.

8- As a suggestion, a new topic can be created under the name of "Life Skills", where students learn to write a CV, cover letter and university entrance letter, improve their English according to TOFEL, IELTS and SAT exams and improve their English. It can be included as an application that develops leadership and research skills. Can hire accent coaches to help students acquire an American accent.

9- In addition, the environment can be prepared for students by voluntarily providing social assistance or some kind of community service in NGOs or the Ministry of Social Affairs.

10- Optional foreign languages can be added to the curriculum as an extracurricular activity.

11- Write prompts should be provided. Students should be provided with writing instructions to encourage them to write about a variety of topics. This can help students improve their writing skills and creativity.

12- After the action framework of the curriculum has been determined, a comprehensive needs analysis should be conducted at the general education and higher education levels.

13- The 1997 curriculum should be re-evaluated since curriculum evaluation is an important part of the curriculum development process.

14- Goals and aims should be reassessed, redefined and updated, curriculum developers should focus on higher order thinking skills and verbal communication because the curriculum should always be in harmony with the changing needs of students and real life.

15- The content should be updated and new textbooks should be designed in accordance with the realities and needs of the students.

16- More literature should be included in the branches of science.

17- The new curriculum should focus on Bloom's higher-order thinking skills rather than memorizing and teaching this bulk of information.

18- Laboratories should be equipped with the latest equipment and courses on robotics, coding or software should be considered.

19- Students should be provided with the opportunity to participate in international conferences and competitions.

20- Government supervision should be enacted and strengthened as soon as possible to try to bridge the gap between private and public schools at several levels.

21- Career orientation seminars or sessions should be held for 12th grade students as they will start their university education after graduation.

22- The national examination system should be improved and education inspectors should ensure that national examinations are always in line with the curriculum and not vice versa.

23- The way of asking questions in national exams should be changed and it should be compatible with the aims of the new curriculum.

24- The curriculum should be updated: Based on the needs analysis, the English education curriculum should be updated to address the deficiencies in the curriculum and to include the real-life skills students need to be successful in their daily lives. The curriculum should also focus on developing interaction skills and critical thinking to prepare students for their future.

25- Professional development of teachers should be ensured: Professional development programs should be offered to support teachers in implementing the updated curriculum. These programs should focus on developing teaching skills, providing resources and support, and keeping teachers up-to-date on the latest teaching methodologies and trends. This will enable teachers to deliver a high-quality education that meets students' needs and desires.

26- Education should relate to students' real-life situations. More practical and hands-on learning experiences should be included in the training program. This can include activities such as field trips, simulations, and project-based learning, where students can apply what they've learned in a real-world context.

27- Teachers can also bring in guest speakers who can share their experience and expertise in a particular field, giving students insight into how the concepts they learn are relevant and applicable to their future careers and daily lives. Additionally, using case studies and problem-solving exercises can help students see the connections between what they are learning and real-life situations. By emphasizing the practical applications of their education, students will be better equipped to overcome the challenges they will encounter in their personal and professional lives.

Note

This article represents a condensed version of an extensive PhD dissertation, meticulously summarized to encapsulate the complete methodology, results, and discussion sections. It serves as a concise overview of the original research work. For more detailed information and an in-depth review of the literature, please refer to the original thesis.

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Appendix 1

Dear students,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine <u>your English language needs</u> before starting your university education. **Determine your current level for each skill and the level you want to achieve in the future.** Please circle the number which applies to you **<u>on both sides</u>**.

Participants in this survey are kept anonymous. **<u>DO NOT LEAVE ANY ITEMS BLANK.</u>** Thank you for participating in our research and being a stakeholder in this scientific study.

Part 1: Participants' background information

Gender: ( ) Female   **Age:** _____   **Gr.12 branch:**( ) Sociology and Economics

        ( ) Male   ( ) Humanities and Literature

                                                        ( ) General Sciences

                                                        ( ) Life Sciences

Part 2: Please answer the following questions.

1- As a student in Gr. 12 in Lebanon, what are your current educational needs in general?

2- What do you wish to add, omit or change in the English language curriculum you are learning?

Part 3: Please choose a number from 1 to 4 that best suits your perception. The table below shows the

Your current language skill				Listening Skills (1) Not sure (2) Not Good (3) Good (4) Very Good	The level you want to achieve			
1	2	3	4	1- Listening to small group discussions	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	2- Listening to the lectures/lessons	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	3- Listening to large group discussions	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	4- Taking notes while listening	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	5- Understanding long verbal explanations	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	6- Understanding verbal instructions	1	2	3	4

meaning of each number: **(1) Not Sure**   **(2) Not Good**   **(3) Good**   **(4) Very Good**

1	2	3	4	7- Understanding the language of daily life dialogues	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	8- Understanding academic language in your field of study	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	9- Extracting the main and sub-ideas in a dialogue	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	10- Retelling the main parts of a dialogue, speech, or lesson	1	2	3	4
Your current language skill				**Reading Skills** **(1) Not sure** **(2) Not Good** **(3) Good** **(4) Very Good**	**The level you want to achieve**			
1	2	3	4	1- Understanding the main idea of the text	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	2- Skimming a text to form general ideas	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	3- Slowly read a text to understand its details	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	4- Skimming a text to find specific information	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	5- Determining the meaning of unknown words in a text	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	6- Understanding text organization	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	7- Understanding certain glossaries or vocabulary in a text	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	8- Understanding the author's attitude and point of view	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	9- Summarizing important information	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	10- Understanding literature or scientific aspects in articles or texts you read	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	11- Reading critically	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	12- Being able to explain what you have read	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	13- Interpreting charts, graphics, pictures…etc	1	2	3	4
Your current language skill				**Writing Skills** **(1) Not sure** **(2) Not Good** **(3) Good** **(4) Very Good**	**The level you want to achieve**			
1	2	3	4	1- Using correct punctuation and spelling	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	2- Editing paragraphs	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	3- Expressing ideas correctly	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	4- Developing ideas	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	5- Expressing what you want to say clearly	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	6- Adopting the appropriate style	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	7- Evaluating and reviewing your essays	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	8- Interpreting texts	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	9- Taking notes	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	10- Writing lengthy essays	1	2	3	4

1	2	3	4	11- Writing creatively	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	12- Writing critically (analysis and evaluation information)	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	13- Explaining objects or procedures	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	14- Writing the introduction and results	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	15- Creating consistent arguments	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	16- Summarizing factual information	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	17- Using a variety of grammatical structures and extensive vocabulary	1	2	3	4
Your current language skill				**Speaking Skills** **(1) Not sure (2) Not Good (3) Good (4) Very Good**	**The level you want to achieve**			
1	2	3	4	1- Making an oral presentation	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	2- Pronouncing words correctly	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	3- Asking for an explanation	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	4- Speaking fluently	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	5- Participating in discussions effectively	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	6- Communicating effectively with peers in small group discussions, joint projects, or out-of-class study groups	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	7- Explaining objects or procedures	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	8- Creating consistent arguments	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	9- Pronouncing words, phrases, and sentences with correct intonation and stress patterns	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	10- Participating in discussions	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	11- Communicating effectively with your superiors	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	12- Attending meetings	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	13- Speaking in public	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	14- Communicating effectively with peers in small group discussions and collaborative projects	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	15- Participating in interviews (eg job interviews, scholarships, etc.)	1	2	3	4

Appendix 2

Gender: ( ) Female ( ) Male	**Which grade 12 branch do you teach**? ( ) Life Sciences ( ) General Sciences ( ) Sociology and Economics ( ) Humanities and Literature	**Number of years of experience:** _____

A- The principles that form the basis of the English curriculum

1-Do grade 12 students use English effectively to communicate, express themselves, and interact with others?

2- Can 12th grade students use the English language adequately in their branches?

3- Do students get to know new and other cultures better?

B- Educational Status, Content and Challenges

1- How do you apply certain language acquisitions in the classroom? what methods do you use? And how do you evaluate it?

2- How would you describe the evaluation methods you use?

3- How would you describe the content you use?

C- General and Specific Objectives of the English Curriculum in Lebanon

1- Do you think that the achievements of the current curriculum are suitable for the academic life and career of the students?

2- The 12th grade curriculum aims to develop 3 levels of English proficiency (English for social interaction, English for academic purposes and socio-cultural development). To what extent do you agree with this claim?

3- Do 12th grade students have a positive attitude towards English?

D- Teachers' Perceptions of Lebanese English Curriculum

1- What are the most important skills your students need? Does the current curriculum provide you and your students with these skills?

2- If you could describe/criticize the English curriculum you use, how would you describe it?

3- If you had the chance to improve your learning skills/achievements in the English language curriculum, what would you include or exclude?