

Students' Perspectives on the Curricula of English Departments of KRI Universities in the Framework of the Bologna Process

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Abstract

This study arises out of the initiative of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to implement the Bologna Process to enhance the quality of the university programmes and take another step forward to internationalise its universities. There are certain principles in the Bologna Process that must be well considered in the processes of design, development, and delivery of programmes. This study addressed the effectiveness of the newly implemented curricula of the departments of English in the views of their students after the implementation of the Process. This study is carried out by doing quantitative research with undergraduate students studying at colleges of basic education at the University of Sulaimani, the University of Duhok, and Soran University. A closed-ended questionnaire is utilised to collect data. The findings are noteworthy; students agreed to a moderate extent with the curricula of their undergraduate study since the principles are employed to a certain degree. In particular, the principles that students showed great agreement with were the principles of alignment and employability. The students, however, demonstrated less agreement in terms of the principle of student-centred learning in the curriculum, and the students barely found transparency. This highlights that relevant stakeholders in these programmes must reconsider the application of the curriculum principles of the Bologna Process to achieve its objectives better.

Keyword: Bologna Process, curriculum design, curriculum principles, implementation, undergraduate students

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1. Introduction

In 2015, the MoHESR of KRI decided to implement the Bologna Process to enhance the quality of the university programmes and to take another step forward to internationalise its universities (Marchionne & Zipoli, 2021). The MoHESR's decision encouraged higher education institutions in the region to implement the Bologna Process in their study programmes. Two newly established universities, the University of Charmo and the University of Zakho, started the implementation as pilot universities in the academic year 2017-2018. The other universities gradually embarked on the Process in the following academic years at the level of their faculties.

The Bologna Process is a comprehensive higher education reform initiated in Europe to harmonise and strengthen the higher education systems of European countries and make Europe's system outstanding and more competitive globally (European Commission/ EACEA/Eurydice, 2018). Initially, 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999. These core missions of the 29 Bologna Declaration signatory countries attracted other European countries and encouraged them to join the Bologna Process. Consequently, these reforms reached 49 countries, including Belarus and Russia (European Commission, n.d.). Moreover, among the aspects of the reform were degree structure, ECTS for credit collection and transfer, and quality assurance (*cf.* ECTS Users' Guide,

2015). Reform in these areas has led to reform in curriculum design, delivery, and implementation (Sacilotto-Vasylenko, 2015). Accordingly, the European Commission has issued guides for curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation over time, including the ECTS Users' Guide (2015).

One of the primary goals of the Bologna Process is to advance the quality of study programmes across Europe. To this end, like any other programmes, the teacher education programmes, including English language, underwent some reform (Sofu et al., 2018). Degree structure, ECTS for accumulating and transferring credits, learning outcomes, and quality assurance were among the reform areas (Sacilotto-Vasylenko, 2015).

Even though it has been about seven years since the Bologna Process was implemented in the KRI, very few studies have been done in the area in comparison with the period of implementation.

Amin et al. (2021) conducted a study to explore the attitudes of the faculty at the University of Garmian towards the preparations made for the implementation in terms of introducing the Process and effectiveness of the newly introduced pedagogy course. This was carried out through a survey, and the results show the applicability of the Process due to having resources, including staff and infrastructure. Ade (2021) investigated the challenges and problems three KRI universities had faced while implementing the Process. A questionnaire was distributed among the staff of the universities. The findings demonstrate that Soran University offered more information regarding the Bologna Process than Cihan University and Erbil Polytechnic University. Moreover, Qadir's (2022) study focused on the influence of financial aspects on the KRI higher education system. İşleyen et al. (2024) studied the impact of the Process on enhancing students' academic level at Soran University using a questionnaire distributed among 204 students. The results revealed that the newly implemented system

resulted in outstanding outcomes in terms of levelling up students. A master's thesis was conducted by Sharif (2022) on the applicability of the Bologna Process in departments of English at four KRI universities to investigate the challenges students, teachers, and academic staff encountered during the implementation stage and identify the effectiveness of the Process, adopting both qualitative and quantitative methods. Results show that administrators, teaching staff, and students faced several challenges, such as large classes, inadequacies in university infrastructure, problems with implementing student-centred learning, a burdensome workload on teaching staff, staff shortage, financial problems, and lack of support.

None of the above studies touched on the curriculum aspect at all. In fact, very few studies have been conducted on the curriculum of English departments, including English teacher education departments, in the region. Hassan's (2014) study is about the effectiveness of the printed materials utilised to learn English at tertiary education in the region. Ismail (2016) studied the assessment procedures and alternative assessments used by KRI English language university teachers. This is, however, only focused on the assessment element, not the other curriculum components. Furthermore, Azeez (2019) carried out a comprehensive study on the objectives and content of the curricula of English language departments at colleges of languages or Arts at two KRI universities. He took the perspectives of learners, teachers, and decision-makers regarding the purposes and content of the programme. However, the data collected in the study were collected before the implementation of the Bologna Process in the region, since the curricula of universities were restructured after the introduction of the Process. Moreover, Omer's (2023) study explores the planning, designing, and developing of the curricula of English departments at colleges of basic education (i.e., English teacher education department) at three KRI universities. As part of her

study, she took students' perceptions of the curricula; however, she did not base her study on the Bologna principles for curriculum design and development, as those departments implement the process in their study programmes.

The present study on students' perspectives on the curricula of English departments is different from the above-mentioned studies in some ways. First, it puts focus on the curricula of such departments in line with the Bologna Process. Second, it examines the Bologna curriculum principles of the Bologna Process. Third, it takes students' viewpoints on the new curricula, in which student involvement in the process of curriculum development and receiving their feedback after implementation is found essential in the Bologna Process (*cf.* ECTS Users' Guide, 2015).

Upon the implementation of the Bologna Process in the KRI institutions, study programmes redesigned or developed their curricula to accommodate the Bologna curriculum standards. Hence, it is significant to take students' viewpoints regarding their new curriculum. Such an endeavour uncovers the degree to which the programme developers in the department. To this end, the study strives to answer the following question: How do the students perceive the effectiveness of the KRI English departments' curricula in the context of the Bologna Process?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Curriculum Principles in the Bologna Process

In the context of the Bologna Process, curriculum is considered a group of aligned modules established on learning outcomes that are validated for awarding a particular qualification through credit accumulation and promoting certain competences (Lokhoff et al., 2010). This study uses the terms curriculum and programme interchangeably to give this meaning.

There are certain general principles in the Bologna Process that direct and shape the curriculum and articulate the whole Bologna Process philosophy. These curriculum principles are as follows: student-oriented learning, employability, stakeholder involvement, transparency, consistency, and flexibility (*cf.* ECTS Users' Guide, 2015; González & Wagenaar, 2008).

2.1.1 Transparency

Another principle of the Bologna Process is transparency – transparency across a higher education system and within the programmes of a specific university or department. In other words, the whole framework is built upon transparency. To this end, ECTS is used as a transparent tool that facilitates the accumulation and transfer of credits to make the processes of learning, teaching, and assessment transparent, and it is highly valuable in optimising student time for accomplishing learning outcomes (*cf.* ECTS Users' Guide, 2015). González and Wagenaar (2008) believe that when the programmes are designed based on learning outcomes, everything will be more transparent and coherent.

Moreover, it is also asserted in the European Commission Guide that the *Course Catalogue* is a crucial document which must be available and accessible online on the university's website to students before joining and throughout their programme of study; this brings more transparent programmes of a university (ECTS Users' Guide, 2015). The Course Catalogue is an official document of a university which involves “user-friendly and up-to-date information on the *institution's* learning environment”, its degree programmes and individual programme components (e.g. learning outcomes, teaching and assessment procedures, etc.) to be accessible by students and other pertinent stakeholders (ECTS Users' Guide, 2015, p. 54). In addition, Lokhoff et al. (2010) believe that the programme profile is a transparent document to all relevant stakeholders about the programme and what students would attain upon successful completion.

The fundamental entry that increases programme transparency within the programme profile is the “careful and accurate definition of Programme Competences and Learning Outcomes” (Lokhoff et al., 2010, p. 21).

Furthermore, there must be a *transparent progression* in how credits and modules are structured and sequenced throughout the programme (González & Wagenaar, 2008). They also point out that this also includes the constant development of subject-specific and generic competences that need to be achieved with regard to "knowledge, understanding and skills" (p. 143). Transparency in the alignments amongst learning outcomes, ECTS, workload, curriculum content, and teaching, learning, and assessment procedures is also a must to make programmes comparable and compatible (González Ferreras & Yarosh, 2018).

2.1.2 Involvement of Stakeholders

The Bologna Process encourages interactive dialogues and engagement among all internal and external stakeholders in the process of curriculum design and delivery (ECTS Users' Guide, 2015). It is also indicated that student involvement among the stakeholders is crucial to identify their needs and ambitions, which parallels the student-centred learning system. For instance, it is found essential to take students' views regarding the allocation of study hours (workload), as well as receive their feedback to see to what degree the workload is appropriate and realistic (ECTS Users' Guide, 2015; González & Wagenaar, 2008).

2.1.3 Student-Centred Learning

Lokhoff et al. (2010, p. 57) define student-centred learning in the light of the Bologna Process as an approach that enhances the learning process, highlights the students' accomplishments, and meets “different learners' priorities and [is] consistent with reasonable students' workload” (i.e. workload that is applicable

and possible based on the time provided in the learning programme). They also state that it can greatly involve students in selecting content, mode of learning (i.e., online and in-class), pace, and place of learning. Students can develop various competences based on the student-centred programmes, which are important for academic, professional, and occupational aspects. In the Leuven Communiqué, it is confirmed that student-centred learning should facilitate learner autonomy, modern methodologies for teaching and learning, and establishing efficient support systems (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009, p. 3). Moreover, it seeks to enhance learning via meaningful interaction with teachers and learners, valuing learners as engaged contributors in their own learning process while also cultivating skills that can be practised in other situations (ESU, 2010, cited in ECTS Users' Guide, 2015).

There are certain teaching, learning, and assessment activities that support student-centred learning and active learning approaches. To this end, González and Wagenaar (2008) list a large group of teaching and learning activities and assessment methods.

Examples of teaching activities are lectures, seminars (small group teaching), tutorials, exercise classes, workshops (classroom-based practical sessions), problem-solving sessions, demonstration classes, teaching internships, distance learning, and e-learning (p. 157-8).

Some relevant examples of learning activities for university students could be these (p. 95-6): attending lectures, reading books and journals, doing searches for in-person and online relevant materials, carrying out research (even if small scale), identifying and solving problems set by the teacher, demonstrating teaching skills, writing reports and papers, produce projects with peers, preparing and giving individual or team presentations, providing constructive feedback on work and

make good use of the criticism, asking questions and share results with others using media means, conducting self-evaluation.

Some **modes of assessment** are collected by González and Wagenaar (2008, p. 97) and Lokhoff et al. (2010, p. 36), such as examinations (oral and written), tests of knowledge or skill, oral presentations, project work, forms of continuous assessment, self- or peer reflection, textbook or material analysis, observing skills performance, teaching placement reports or journals, portfolios, and written essays or reports.

It is worth mentioning that learning, teaching, and assessment should be varied to accommodate students' learning styles and preferences.

2.1.4 Flexibility

The Bologna Process strongly recommends a programme structure with flexibility for its students in different forms (ECTS Users' Guide, 2015). In tertiary education, flexibility entails various ways that enable students to pursue educational routes that map their needs (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2012). To meet different learning styles, needs, and preferences, it is recommended that there should be chances to enhance individual learning ways (e.g., autonomous learning, in-class, e-learning), elective activities, and more flexibility in the course schedule (p. 26). It also includes a variety of teachers' delivery styles to map the different learning styles of students. It is also necessary to have different forms of assessment and offer different assessment choices. Last but not least, study programmes need to be structured to give elective modules in which students choose the ones that meet their needs or interests (González & Wagenaar, 2008).

2.1.5 Alignment

The Bologna Process has established the principle of coherence or alignment between the intended programme learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and methods of assessment. This constructive alignment is fundamental for study programmes (Biggs, 2003). This helps students to obtain the intended knowledge, skills, and competences by the end of the programme.

2.1.6 Employability

Employability was one of the initial objectives of the Bologna Process. Programmes need to be designed and developed to secure students' potential employability. To this end, students must acquire certain knowledge and cultivate skills and capabilities in their subject area that equip them for the potential job market and promote good citizenship (González & Wagenaar, 2008). Hence, this should also be reflected in the teaching, learning, and assessment procedures of the programme to ensure its effectiveness and productivity.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design that aims to gather students' perceptions of the present curriculum of the English language. This reveals, to a certain degree, the alignment of the curricula with the Bologna Process principles from the students' perceptions. To achieve the aim, the study strives to answer the following question: How do the students perceive the effectiveness of the KRI English departments' curricula in the context of the Bologna Process?

3.1 Scope and Participants of the Study

The data for this study were collected from the morning-shift students at the departments of English language at colleges of basic education from three universities, namely the University of Sulaimani, University of Duhok, and Soran University, for the academic year 2022-2023. The students from the University of Sulaimani were in grade three, while those from the other universities were in

grade four. This rationale for grade selection was that it was preferred to select students with the longest experience in the newly implemented Bologna Curriculum, which was grade three for the former and grade four for the latter universities. Such students have a better understanding of the curriculum. From these three universities, 147 students (38 males and 109 females), as the sample of the study, voluntarily participated (convenience sampling). The age range of the students was 20 to 23 years old, and 50, 47, and 50 students from the University of Sulaimani, Soran University, and the University of Duhok, respectively, participated in the study.

3.2 Study Tool and Procedure

To gather information for this study, a written questionnaire was utilised as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed based on the Tuning Approach for curriculum design, development, and evaluation. It encompasses 16 items using a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree) to measure students' perspectives of the newly implemented curriculum. The items target the principles of curriculum design and development in the context of the Bologna Process. The questionnaire entails five main sections or principles: transparency, stakeholder involvement, student-centred learning (or learning environment), flexibility, consistency (or alignment), and employability. The questionnaire was built on these principles. It was directed to the EFL students at colleges of basic education at the universities of Sulaimani, Duhok, and Soran (see appendix). They were asked to choose one answer for each statement. Questionnaires are defined by Taylor et al. (2006) as a set of questions requiring respondents to answer in a predetermined sequence. One rationale behind utilising a questionnaire is practicality. It can be accomplished in the absence of the researcher. Data can be simply and punctually gathered within a short timeframe from a substantial sample (Bell, 2005).

3.3 Reliability and Validity of the Tool

The questionnaire has criterion-referenced validity as it was structured based on the predetermined standard that students must be involved in the process of workload allocation and teaching, learning, and assessment activities. Also, it was designed based on the curriculum design and development principles suggested in the framework of the Bologna Process (ECTS Users' Guide, 2015; González & Wagenaar, 2008).

The original questionnaire had been piloted, and as a result, three items were removed. To analyse the closed-ended items of the questionnaire, the SPSS 27th version is utilised. The internal reliability of the questionnaire was determined by Cronbach's Alpha. The internal consistency among the items is valued at 0.74, showing that there is internal reliability among the items.

4. Results and Discussion

147 students in the sample manifest a moderate coherence between the curricula of the departments of English and the principles of curriculum design and development in the Bologna Process. The analysis and discussion of the results are presented below.

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Transparency in the Curriculum

Table 1 below illustrates the viewpoint of respondents regarding the degree of transparency in the programme. The result shows that the programmes lack openness due to the reason that departments or institutions did not provide any handbook regarding the content of their study programme. Participants, to a great extent, disagreed (about 65%), and about 15% were unsure that their faculties released any guidebook. This low alignment is affirmed by a weighted mean of 2.35 and a standard deviation of 1.045.

Table 1: Degree of Transparency in the Curriculum

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Transparency	32	21.8 %	63	42.9 %	21	14.3 %	1.045	21.1 %	0	0.0 %	2.35	1.045

4.1.2 Student Involvement in the Curriculum Development

According to the results in Table 2 below, participants somewhat agreed with their engagement in the programme development in the relevant areas; however, they showed their strong agreement with the last aspect (item 3).

58.5% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “My needs and interests in learning are well considered by the department and teachers” (item 1). The mean score for this item is 3.44 (= standard deviation of 1.067). This demonstrates that their needs and preferences were not largely taken into account.

Table 2: Student Involvement in the Curriculum Development

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
St. involvement (needs and preferences)	7	4.8 %	26	17.7 %	28	19.0 %	68	46.3 %	18	12.2 %	3.44	1.067
St. involvement (workload allocation)	2	1.4 %	27	18.4 %	39	26.5 %	69	46.9 %	10	6.8 %	3.39	0.911
St. involvement (feedback on workload)	36	24.5 %	68	46.3 %	26	17.7 %	16	10.9 %	1	0.7 %	2.17	0.946

Similarly, in item 2, about 54% of the respondents found the module workload reasonable and doable, with a weighted mean of 2.17 and a standard deviation of 0.946. This shows that students agree with the established study hours per module.

On the other hand, more than 70% of the participants disagreed that their feedback was received regarding the appropriacy of the level of working hours of students allocated for each module (see item 3 in Table 2 above). The mean and

standard deviation for item 3 are 2.17 and 0.946. It is noticeable from the results that students believe that they had not been listened to in the process of workload allocation for the programme by the department.

It can be concluded from the results in Table 2 that students were, to a moderate extent, engaged during the development stage of the curricula of the English departments. Still, they should have been listened to more and their needs and interests better considered.

4.1.3 Student-Centred Learning Environment

As can be seen from Table 3 below, which demonstrates the learning atmosphere of the EFL classes at those three universities, limited student-oriented learning was reported. This shows that the classroom activities were a mix of teacher- and student-oriented ones.

In the first item, students, to some degree, agreed that there were limited opportunities in the EFL classrooms to learn collaboratively and reflect on their own learning and autonomous learning. About half of the participants (55.7%) agreed that there were such opportunities in their classes, with a mean of 3.29 and a standard deviation of 1.093. However, in the following item, 43.5% of the participants reported that they normally do all the inside and outside-class activities independently. The mean response for item 2 is 3.10, with a standard deviation of 1.131. This implies that such a curriculum principle was not well planned during the curriculum development of the departments of English once they implemented the Bologna Process.

Table 3 Degree of Student-Centred Learning (Environment)

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Learning environment (learn in a team, reflect on learning, learn independent)	7	4.8 %	38	25.9 %	20	13.6 %	69	46.9 %	13	8.8 %	3.29	1.093
Learning environment (do activities individually)	7	4.8 %	51	34.7 %	25	17.0 %	49	33.3 %	15	10.2 %	3.10	1.131

4.1.4 Flexibility in the Curriculum

In relation to the flexibility principle, as indicated in Table 4 below, students agreed to some extent with the level of flexibility in their undergraduate programme. However, the level of flexibility varies from one aspect to another.

Respondents showed strong agreement in terms of the optional modules of the programme (item 1). The majority of the students (about 70%) reported the range of elective courses offered in the programme, which assists them in choosing based on their needs.

Concerning the curriculum flexibility in learning, participants had different views (items 2 and 3). Around 57% disagreed with item 2: "There are extracurricular activities to enhance my academic skills like language club, debate competition, student newspapers, etc," with a mean of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.121. On the contrary, more than half (51%) of respondents approved that there are choices among a variety of learning ways in each module that they can learn through, like "role-playing, discussions, learning from pictures and videos, reading texts)" (item 3), and around 37% disagreed with that, with the means of 2.73 and 3.22 and standard deviations of 1.285 and 1.097 respectively.

Table 4: Flexibility in the Curriculum

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Flexibility in programme (list of optional modules to choose)	3	2.0 %	36	24.5 %	8	5.4 %	71	48.3 %	29	19.7 %	3.59	1.121
Flexibility in learning (extracurricular activities)	24	16.3 %	60	40.8 %	9	6.1 %	40	27.2 %	14	9.5 %	2.73	1.285
Flexibility in learning (choice of learning)	5	3.4 %	46	31.3 %	21	14.3 %	61	41.5 %	14	9.5 %	3.22	1.097
Flexibility in teaching (teachers prefer to lecturing & do most of class work)	15	10.2 %	42	28.6 %	15	10.2 %	51	34.7 %	24	16.3 %	3.18	1.293
Flexibility in teaching (use different forms of teaching: group activities, discussion, lecturing)	10	6.8 %	48	32.7 %	19	12.9 %	55	37.4 %	15	10.2 %	3.12	1.173
Flexibility in assessment (alternative assessment is common)	7	4.8 %	27	18.4 %	34	23.1 %	65	44.2 %	14	9.5 %	3.35	1.039
Flexibility in assessment (Tests mainly used)	8	5.4 %	24	16.3 %	24	16.3 %	64	43.5 %	27	18.4 %	3.53	1.131

Regarding flexibility in teaching, the results do not show that the students strongly agree with the degree of learning options they have in the programme. In item 4 above, 51% of the respondents show approval that teachers favour lecturing and dominating the classroom time. The mean and standard deviation for this item are 3.18 and 1.293. If this is the case, it reveals that there is not much flexibility in teaching in the programme. This is further confirmed in item 5, in which merely 47.6% of them (70 out of 147) agreed that teachers adopt a variety of teaching styles to engage them in the sessions, with a mean score of 3.12 (standard deviation 1.173).

With regard to assessment, just like flexibility in learning and teaching, there is, to a moderate extent, flexibility, even though there are some who did not decide. As shown in item 6, about 54% agreed that delivering seminars, teaching demonstrations, portfolios, and report/essay writing is used to meet students' preferences, with a weighted mean of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 1.039. In contrast, more than 60% of them indicated that "tests are mainly used to assess students' learning" (item 7). This is well-regarded, with a weighted mean of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 1.131. This implies that despite the reality that tests are primarily used to assess students in the departments of English, other assessment forms are *frequently utilised for particular purposes* to accommodate students' interests in the three universities under this study.

In general, Table 4 discovers that some aspects of flexibility in the curriculum are, to some extent, taken into consideration, such as providing a good list of optional modules and different choices of learning and assessment to meet their learning styles and personal preferences. In contrast, students reported less flexibility in forms of teaching in the programme.

4.1.5 Consistency in the Curriculum

Table 5 below illustrates that respondents assume a strong alignment between components of their curricula (i.e., objectives, teaching activities, and assessment forms). Unlike the above-mentioned principles, most of the students showed agreement with their curricula in terms of alignment. Approximately three-quarters of the participants agreed that the aims, classroom activities, and assessment forms of each module are completely consistent. This is also confirmed by a weighted mean of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 1.070.

Table 5: Consistency (Alignment) in the Curriculum

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Alignment (aims, teaching and assessment)	6	4.1 %	20	13.7 %	14	9.6 %	76	52.1 %	30	20.5 %	3.71	1.070

4.1.6 Employability in the Curriculum

According to Table 6 below, the curricula of English language departments well prepare their students for an English language teaching career because the employability potential is highly considered in the programme. Concerning item 1, students demonstrated their agreement towards the relevance of the department modules to their future potential teaching career. More than 60% agreed that there is a strong connection between the content of the curriculum and their future career, while only about 14% showed their disagreement. This high alignment is confirmed with a weighted mean of 3.61, a standard deviation of 0.975, and 72.24% agreement.

Table 6: Degree of Considering Employability in the Curriculum

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Future career (programme modules relevant to future career)	5	3.4 %	16	10.5 %	31	21.1 %	74	50.3 %	21	14.3 %	3.61	0.975
Future career (have key knowledge and skills to teach effectively)	1	0.7 %	14	9.5 %	27	18.4 %	68	46.3 %	37	25.2 %	3.86	0.929

In addition, respondents fairly agreed with item 2 above: “I have key knowledge and skills that I need to have to teach in educational settings efficiently.” The majority of the participants, precisely 105 out of 147, presume they have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach in schools. This is a key

area of strong alignment, with a weighted mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 0.929, indicating robust support for career readiness.

Generally, it can be concluded from Table 6 that the principle of employability in the curricula of departments of the English language is considered from the students' perspective.

4.2 Discussion

The overall findings of the study indicate that, on the whole, the students support the curricula to some degree as the principles are partially implemented. In other words, principles of alignment, employability, and student-centred learning are given more consideration than student involvement and flexibility, and transparency is given the least amount of consideration in the viewpoints of students.

Regarding the transparency in the curriculum, results demonstrated a lack of openness as the EDs have not produced a programme specification handbook for students. The European Commission insists on the significance of making programmes transparent by providing a course catalogue so that students have enough information about their programme in terms of objectives, content, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, ways to develop throughout the way, and so on (ECTS Users' Guide, 2015). This shows that the institutions ought to issue their own course catalogues and, in parallel, the departments of English language produce relevant handbooks to make their study programmes transparent and more welcoming to students and other stakeholders.

Results also showed that students were engaged in the process of curriculum development of their departments to a moderate extent. Student engagement favourably influences the success of curriculum design and development (Brooman et al., 2014). Additionally, Bovill et al. (2009) state that student

involvement in the curriculum design requires staff to address student learning needs effectively and link the curriculum with the path preferred by students. Besides, González and Wagenaar (2008) affirm that students must be listened to while allocating workloads for the programme modules. Kember (2004) identifies the significance of receiving student feedback to determine whether student perspectives accommodate the curriculum designers' intentions. Moreover, Scully and Kerr (2014) consider it essential to take students' views of workload to address student concerns. Therefore, this requires the engagement of students in the process more actively in relation to curriculum design or development, workload allocation, and gathering student feedback.

Concerning the practice of student-centred learning in the EDs in the view of their students, results indicated that it is implemented with limits. The significance of shifting to student-centred learning in higher education is insisted on by Stefani et al. (2000) in order to empower learners and promote their ability to learn and work autonomously. Collaborative learning is also encouraged in student-oriented learning, which enhances student motivation and engagement in the classroom (Zairul, 2018). Additionally, collaborative learning offers students chances to assess and reflect on their progress. Thus, this suggests that student-oriented learning must be further considered by teachers and other relevant stakeholders in the departments.

When asked about the degree of flexibility in the programme, students mentioned that flexibility exists to a moderate degree. Having a range of flexible elective courses in the curriculum to cater to students' needs has been highlighted by many educational experts and researchers (e.g., Kristiansen et al., 2011; Movchan & Zarishniak, 2017). Additionally, the European Commission has regularly repeated the importance of flexibility in its reports over the past years on implementing the Bologna Process (e.g., European Commission/EACEA/

Eurydice, 2012, 2015, 2018). Flexibility in teaching, learning, and assessment is pointed out in the ECTS Users' Guide for flexible study programmes (2015). Accordingly, the EDs should reconsider the flexibility principle, especially in teaching, learning, and assessment, to be more aligned with the Bologna standards.

Concerning alignment in the EDs' programme, students assumed a strong alignment amongst outcomes, teaching, and assessment procedures. Biggs (1996, 2003) and Biggs and Tang (2010, 2014) insist on the significance of constructive alignment between the curriculum components. This demonstrates that the principle of consistency or alignment is greatly considered by curriculum developers in the departments.

Furthermore, results demonstrated that students presumed that their department's study programme prepares them for their future teaching profession. This sounds promising because employability has been a central principle of designing and enhancing study programmes since the declaration of the Bologna Process (*cf.* ECTS Users' Guide, 2015; Lokhoff et al., 2010).

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

In summary, this study provides the opportunity for EFL students in the departments of English at three KRI universities to express their perceptions regarding the curricula of their departments. It gains students' perspectives regarding the recently implemented curricula of their undergraduate study in the era of the Bologna Process to gather their perspectives. This is to identify the degree of coherence of their curricula with the principles of the Bologna Process from their viewpoints. The overall outcome of the study revealed that students, to a moderate degree, agree with the curricula as the principles are somewhat practised. The aspects of the curriculum in which students showed strong agreement are essentially confirmed in the principles of consistency and

employability. The principle of student-centred learning, however, is less considered in the curriculum, and the students barely find transparency. As for the principles of student engagement and flexibility, it is found that they are implemented to a moderate extent.

It is, however, generally and frequently required that these principles must be well taken into account during the processes of design, development, and delivery of the curriculum in the framework of the Bologna Process.

To eliminate the deficiencies in the undergraduate programmes of the departments of English, it is strongly recommended that the key players in the universities review the practice of these principles. It is also advisable to better tune their degree programmes on such principles to enhance quality, equip students with 21st-century skills, and enhance their employability potential. In particular, the findings suggest reconsidering the application of the principles of student-centred learning, transparency, and flexibility in teaching in the curricula of English departments. Furthermore, even though a single-tool study cannot give an inevitable answer since it is extracted from a PhD mixed-method study, it affords a starting point for additional research to look at the issue more closely through analysing relevant documents and listening to key players and a larger scale of students. Additionally, it is essential to conduct a similar study at the other KRI universities, and each principle can be explored in further detail.

6. Appendix

Student Questionnaire

Please choose the right option:

University: Sulaimani () Duhok () Soran ()

Grade: 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 ()

Gender: Male () Female ()

Please sincerely respond to the following statements by ticking one option ONLY.

No.	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	The department has provided a handbook in which there are enough information about the department (e.g. aim, objectives & learning outcomes of the department, name of modules, learning/ teaching activities, topics covered in each module, assessment forms and criteria)					
2.	My needs and interests in learning are well considered by the department and teachers.					
3.	I find each module workload reasonable and doable.					
4.	The department has received our feedback regarding the amount of workload we have in each module.					
5.	There have been opportunities to learn in a team, reflect on our learning experience, and learn on our own, etc.					
6.	I'm usually asked to do in-class and outside class activities and assignments individually.					
7.	There have been different elective/optional modules in each semester which helped me to choose the ones I find most useful.					
8.	There are extracurricular activities to enhance my academic skills like language club, debate competition, student newspapers, etc.					
9.	There are different ways in each module in which I can choose to learn through (e.g. recorded sessions shared online, online sessions, face-to-face)					

No.	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
10.	Teachers prefer lecturing and do most of talking and work in class.					
11.	Teachers use different forms of teaching (e.g. lecturing, discussion sessions, group activities) to help students to engage in learning.					
12.	Alternative assessment forms (not exams) are commonly used (e.g. giving seminars, lesson demos, portfolios, writing reports or essays) to meet my preferences.					
13.	Tests are mainly used to assess students' learning.					
14.	There is a strong connection between module aims, classroom activities and how we are assessed, including exams and others forms.					
15.	I find all core and elective modules relevant to my future career.					
16.	I have key knowledge and skills that I need to have to teach in educational settings efficiently.					

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بۆچۈنى قوتايان لەسەر پروگرامى بەشى ئىنگلىزىي زانكۆكانى ھەرىمى كوردستان لە چوارچىۋەى
بۆلۈنە پروسىسدا

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یوخته

ئەم توۋىزىنەمىيە لە دوای دەستپېشخەرى وەزارەتى خویندىنى بالايى ھۆكۈمەتى ھەرىمى كوردستانەم دەيت بۇ جىيەجىكرەنى پىۋاژوۋى بۆلۈنە پىرۇسىس بەمەبەستى باشكرەنى كوالىتى پىرۇگراممى خویندىنى زانكۆكان و ھەنگولاننىكى تر بۇ بەنىۋەمۆلەتى كىردى زانكۆكانى. لە بۆلۈنە پىرۇسىسدا، كۆمەللى بەمە ھەمىيە كە دەبىت تەۋاۋ لەبەرچاۋ بىگىرىن لە پىرۇسەى دىزىنكرەن و بەرەپىشېردن و گەمەندىنى پىرۇگراممى خویندىنى زانكۆكان. ئەم توۋىزىنەمىيە كار لەسەر كارىگەرى پىرۇگراممى تازەى ئەمەمۇنكرەۋى بەشەكانى زمانى ئىنگلىزى دەكات لەروانگەى قوتابىيانى بەشەكەمە دوای جىيەجىكرەنى بۆلۈنە پىرۇسىس. ئەم توۋىزىنەمىيە توۋىزىنەمىيەكى چەندىتتە لەگەل قوتابىيانى قۇناغى بەكالورىۋوس لە كۆلئىزە پەرەردە بەنەرتىەكانى زانكۆكانى سولېمانى و دەۋك و سۆران. بۇ ئەمەمەبەستە، پىرسىيانامەيەكى جۆرى ۋەلام سەنۇردار بەكار ھاتوۋە بۇ كۆكرەنەۋەى داتاكانى توۋىزىنەمەكە. ئەنجامەكان جىگەى سەرنجىن. قوتابىيەكان بەشئەمەكى مامناۋەند ۋازىن بە پىرۇگراممى خویندىنى بەكالورىۋوسىيان ئەمەش لەبەرئەۋەى بەمەكانى بۆلۈنە بۇ دانان و بەرەپىشېردىنى پىرۇگراممەكان تارادەيەكى دىيارىكرەۋ جىيەجىكرەۋان. بۇ نەمۇنە، ئەمە لايەنەنەى كە تارادەيەكى باش جىگەى ۋەزەمەندىن و بەشئەيەكى باش دوۋپاتكرەۋنەۋە لە لايەن قوتابىيانەۋە بىرىتىن لە بەمەكانى ھاۋتابوۋن و تەۋانەى دامەزراندەنە كە لە پىرۇگراممى بەشدا كارى بۇ كرەۋە. ھەرچى بەمەى فېرېۋون بەشئەۋەى سەنئەربوۋنى قوتابىيە كەمتر لەبەرچاۋگىراۋە لە پىرۇگراممى بەشدا، ھەرۋە ھە بەمەى شەفەفىيەت زۆر بەدەگمەن لە پىرۇگراممى بەشدا لە دىدى قوتابىيانەۋە بەدەمكرىت. ئەمەش ئەمە پىۋىسىتتە دەخاتە پىش كە دەبىت بەشداران و بىرىاردەران لە پىرۇگراممى خویندىنى بەشەكانى ئىنگلىزى دوۋبارە چاۋبەشئەنەۋە بە جىيەجىكرەنى بەمەكانى پىرۇگرامم لە بۆلۈنە پىرۇسىس بەمەبەستى بەجىگەمەندىنى ئامانجەكانى بۆلۈنە.

وشە كىلىپكەن: بۇلۇنا پروسىس، دىزايىنى پروگرام، بىنەماكانى پروگرام، پىادەكردن، قوتابيانى بىكالىرىس

وجهات نظر الطلبة حول مناهج أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعات إقليم كردستان في إطار عملية بولوني

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الملخص

تنشأ الدراسة من مبادرة وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي في إقليم كردستان العراق لتنفيذ عملية بولونيا لتعزيز جودة البرامج الجامعية واتخاذ خطوة أخرى إلى الأمام نحو تدويل جامعاتها. هناك مبادئ معينة في عملية بولونيا يجب مراعاتها جيدًا في عمليات تصميم وتطوير وتقديم البرامج. تناولت هذه الدراسة مدى فعالية المناهج الجديدة التي تم تجربتها في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية في آراء طلابها بعد تطبيق العملية. أجريت هذه الدراسة من خلال إجراء بحث كمي مع طلاب البكالوريوس الذين يدرسون في كليات التربية الأساسية في جامعة السليمانية وجامعة دهوك وجامعة سوران. تم توفير استبيان مغلق لجمع البيانات. النتائج جديرة بالملاحظة الطلاب راضون إلى حد ما عن مناهج دراستهم الجامعية حيث يتم استخدام المبادئ إلى حد ما. على سبيل المثال، تم تأكيد الجوانب المرضية إلى حد ما في المناهج بشكل أساسي في مبادئ التوافق وقابلية التوظيف. ومع ذلك، فإن مبدأ التعلم الذي يركز على الطالب أقل اعتبارًا في المناهج الدراسية، والطلاب بالكاد يجدون الشفافية. وهذا يسلط الضوء على أن اللاعبين الرئيسيين في هذه البرامج يجب أن يعيدوا النظر في تطبيق مبادئ المناهج الدراسية لعملية بولونيا لتحقيق أهدافها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عملية بولونيا، تصميم المنهاج، مبادئ المنهاج، التنفيذ، طلبة المرحلة الجامعية الأولى