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## **Investigating Principles and Models of Curriculum Development in some Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Universities through Teachers' Point of view**

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### **Abstract**

This study is an extracted paper from a PhD dissertation that relates to curriculum which is considered as one of the major components of a successful program specifically in the field of English language teaching. Concerning teaching the most important information for learners in their arena. Curriculum as a whole procedure consists of development stage of programs and how it should be designed. It works as a prepared plan based on standards that guides the class instructions and how it should be assessed. Furthermore, Curriculum development is a systematic process that tries to organize and answer the questions of what, who and how something will be taught for learners and curriculum organization relates to arrangements and patterns of the components of curriculum which are organized into topics, lessons, units, subjects and courses for the purpose of helping learners to understand the materials more and achieve the academic goals. This quantitative research design paper provides the most necessary and significant information about the models and principles of curriculum and curriculum development in the scope of ELT in KRG. The universities of Sulaimani, Salahaddin, and Duhok is taken into consideration as samples of the study. For this purpose, the data has been collected from 33 university teachers at universities of Sulaimani, Salahaddin, and Duhok. The questionnaire has reliability of 0.83 Cronbach Alpha.

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Findings of the study based on the teachers' point of view show that the students are aimed at to become teachers and they are aware about the goals and objectives of courses and they do use English most of the time. They also declare that the student-centered approach is used and there are not enough resources to implement the program as it is required to. The teachers' also reveal that the courses arranged from simple to complex but they are not aware enough which approach is followed to have the current program.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, models, approaches, English Language Teaching, higher education

## التحقيق في مبادئ ونماذج تطوير المناهج في بعض جامعات إقليم كردستان العراق من وجهة نظر المعلمين

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**المخلص:** هذه الدراسة عبارة عن مقالة مستقلة من أطروحة دكتوراه تتعلق بالمنهج الدراسي الذي يعتبر أحد المكونات الرئيسية لبرنامج ناجح على وجه التحديد في مجال تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. بشأن تدريس أهم المعلومات للمتعلمين في مجالهم. يتكون المنهج الدراسي ككل من مرحلة تطوير البرامج وكيفية تصميمها. إنها تعمل كخطة معدة بناءً على المعايير التي توجه تعليمات الفصل وكيف ينبغي تقييمها. علاوة على ذلك ، يعد تطوير المناهج عملية منهجية تحاول تنظيم والإجابة على أسئلة ماذا ومن وكيف سيتم تدريس شيء ما للمتعلمين وتتعلق منظمة المناهج بترتيبات وأنماط مكونات المناهج الدراسية التي يتم تنظيمها في موضوعات ودروس ووحدات والموضوعات والدورات بغرض مساعدة المتعلمين على فهم المواد بشكل أكبر وتحقيق الأهداف الأكاديمية. توفر ورقة تصميم البحث الكمي هذه المعلومات الضرورية والأكثر أهمية حول نماذج ومبادئ تطوير المناهج والمناهج في نطاق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. تؤخذ جامعات السليمانية وصلاحيات الدين ودهوك بعين الاعتبار كنماذج من الدراسة. لهذا الغرض ، تم جمع البيانات من 33 مدرساً جامعياً في جامعات السليمانية وصلاحيات الدين ودهوك. الاستبيان لديه موثوقية 0.83 كرونباخ ألفا. تظهر نتائج الدراسة المستندة إلى وجهة نظر المعلمين أن الطلبة اهدافهم إلى أن

يصبحوا معلمين وأنهم على دراية بأهداف الدورات وأهدافها ويستخدمون اللغة الإنجليزية في معظم الأوقات. يعلنون أيضًا أن النهج الذي يركز على الطالب مستخدم ولا توجد موارد كافية لتنفيذ البرنامج كما هو مطلوب. يكشف المعلمون أيضًا عن أن الدورات التدريبية مرتبة من بسيطة إلى معقدة لكنهم ليسوا على دراية كافية بالطريقة التي يتم اتباعها للحصول على البرنامج الحالي.

**الكلمات الدالة:** المناهج، النماذج، تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، التعليم العالي.

## **1. Introduction**

Rapid changes have been observed since 2000 in higher education regarding the modes of conveying messages and its mission and vision, Biggs and Tang (2011). In other words, new methods of teaching are practiced to improve the quality of higher education programs. From 1999 to 2000 the Bologna process have been introduced in European countries in the Higher Education (HE) since then there are some attempts to bring it into universities in developing and developed countries, (Livingstone 2014). Because of those dramatic changes in the field, so many researches have been conducted to find out the most effective method to be practiced to teach and practice student-centered instead of teacher-centered. Due to the large classes, huge number of students, and having different institutes and universities in a specific place that they do practice various learning abilities.

Here, the curriculum enters because it determines which strategy should be followed, which methods of teaching is better to be practiced. For this reason, curriculum has an effective effect of practicing the whole pedagogical process. It tries to select the expected desires of student learning. It is an educative and instructional program that serves learners to achieve their goals and puts a practical consideration of overall program in an educational institution. In short, as Prevedel (2003) mentions a suitable guide to be used in the process of learning and teaching with gaining the desirable needs of students is curriculum. In addition, if learners have vital educational involvements in order to increase learning achievements, then a suitably developed, designed and planned curriculum would be reply to gain all. Below, a discussion takes place concerning the curriculum in terms of developing, designing and planning in learning and teaching context.

For the sake of our purpose, this study tries to answer two main questions in relation to teachers' point of view regarding following the current curriculum which are:

- 1-To which extent are teachers aware about the students' needs?
- 2- Are they knowledgeable enough about the current program?

The answer of the mentioned questions has its significance role in the Kurdish context because it tries to figure out about the students' needs and to know if their needs fulfils by applying the current curriculum or not. Because teachers are more aware about what students actually need than students by themselves. More importantly, the opinion of teachers and their point of view about the current curriculum that they do apply inside classes are significance. Their scientific background has a heading role to be more aware about which program meets the learners' needs because they are the new generation that going to teach inside schools in educational sectors in KRG.

## **2. Curriculum**

This term has been defined differently by various education researchers in different settings (Lowton, 1983). To start with, Matthews (1989) mentioned that definitions have specific importance since they identify the major key words of something without explaining their main characteristics. More than 120 definitions of curriculum have been pointed out in the literature by Marsh and Willis (1995). The variation of their definitions refer to various educational policy, academic contexts, educational institutions that researchers and educators are contributed in. Also, depending on the implications, modern or traditional view, descriptive and prescriptive based on what will happen in a given program as Ellis (2004) stated in an intended program the form of a plan, somehow expert's opinion is important, and in a real classroom how things are going to happen.

Five basic definitions of curriculum can be classified based on various philosophical approaches. Tylor 's rational-linear approach is the first type among the definitions which clarifies that curriculum includes the effectiveness of learning experience, the selection of goals, organization and their evaluation, (Wraga, 2017). The second one, according to the philosophy of education curriculum is highly related to experience Dewey 's (1902, as cited in Glatthorn et al., 2016). The third type relates to a system approach that emphasizes on observing the system of schools and how they are related to each other. From a theoretical perspective which is the fourth type curriculum is a field of study with its own research principles, foundations, specialists and knowledge domain, (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). The last one deals with the content containing concepts and facts of a particular areas of any related field, (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). As far as curriculum is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon it is hard to announce a general and comprehensive definition.

From a different point of view, Harmeyer (2003) pointed out that the process of curriculum is important as the quality of curriculum itself based on self-renewing capability of the individual in a giving context. Similarly, Lovat and Smith (2003) mentioned that learner's achievement can be gained only when the goal of required pedagogy is in the same line with implementation and precision of objectivity, with assessment of the results that should be parallel with the whole process. For this reason, Glatthorn, Boschee and Whitehead (2006:73) mentioned that it "is essential to develop a fundamental understanding of curriculum theory by the providing the tools necessary when analyzing curriculum proposals, illuminating practice, and guiding reform." Also, Lovat and Smith (2003) mentioned that the quality of curriculum would be good if the three elements of theory, development and planning be gathered and worked together, but it will damage the process if one element would be taken into consideration and the rest be against it. So, academicians should be careful and take this point into consideration.

For this purpose, Posner (2004) pointed out that the reflective eclecticism is considered as the heart of curriculum process as far as there is no cure in education context. Likewise, Doll Jr (2002) said that now a days curriculum understood to convey the meaning of method between ourselves to text or students or it is the relation between all the three aspects.

To sum up, regarding the notion of curriculum I believe curriculum is a practical guide to policy and decision makers parallel to university authorities with teachers that should be artistically creative as it has been explained by theory. In order to provide the most beneficial and desirable materials to students with available resources as Lovat and Smith (2003) mentioned that at the national level curriculum is just intention but its implementation goes to the actual classes which deals with teachers and learners.

### **3. Classifications of curriculum**

There are five diverse methods of curriculum planning, to start with: the formal curriculum is the one which has been accepted policy makers and decision makers at national level; the perceived curriculum deals with what it would be as observed by students, teachers, and parents; experiential curriculum is what students has actually learnt in a learning context; the operational curriculum deals what is going on in a learning and teaching context; and finally ideological curriculum refers to how it has been interpreted by professionals, Goodlad, Frances and Tye (1979 as cited in Glatthorn et al., 2016).

From another perspective, curriculum has been divided into two major types by Glatthorn et al (2016) which are: hidden and intentional curriculum. Each one of them will be divided into some other subsections. Intentional curriculum which is the first one includes the written, the tested, the recommended, the taught and the supported curricula. While the latter includes hidden and learned curriculum. Here, a brief explanation will be done for each one of them.

### **3.1 The recommended Curriculum**

This type of curriculum is similar to ideological one. It will usually state at general level. By its name it can be predict that it is recommended by some expert associations, reform instructions and professionals. Here, the needs of policymakers will be taken into consideration, Goodlad's (1984 cited in Glatthorn et al., 2016)

### **3.2 The Written Curriculum**

The formal or written curriculum is broader or more explicit than the previous one in terms of its specific and general objectives, rationale, learning activities as well as series of objectives. It is to certify that the educational objectives have been achieved. Its major role is to facilitate between the actual realities inside classes with the highest principles of recommended curriculum, (Azeez, 2019). This type also plays an important role to centralize and standardize the curriculum. Furthermore, Glatthorn et al. (2016) recommends that this type of curriculum should include the materials that should be used, a list of the objectives that should be achieved in a course, relevant research studies in the field as well as a scope-and- sequence chart.

### **3.3 The supported Curriculum**

According to Glatthorn et al. (2016) this category related to integrating the properties that is needed to maintenance a successful curriculum in terms of personnel, materials, time that is specified to complete any module in an academic year.

### **3.4 The Taught Curriculum**

This is a type of curriculum that can be noticed in real learning and teaching context, it is also called the conveyed curriculum, (Glatthorn et al., 2016).

### **3.5 Tested Curriculum**

This type refers to the time when learners are tested. Occasionally, it has influence to the whole curriculum implementation because tests are tools that can be used to measure students in a given context, (Azeez, 2020). Then, through testing curriculum the institute' accomplishment can be measured whether it is a school or university. So, Glatthorn et al. (2016) mentioned that the objectives and goals of the test will become more significant than the overall standards of a curriculum.

### **3.6 The Hidden Curriculum**

In a given educational context, learners face some difficulties within an institute which are related to outside of a class. For this reason, learners can learn from other sources, as well. This procedure my negatively or positively affect the development of learners, (Hatch, 2009).

The term hidden curriculum denotes to the lessons that are informally and not deliberately communicated in the properties of a school. It is also said to be a negative

side of education process where some values which are related to the lessons are not discussed openly. The values may refer to gender, politics, social norms, stereotypes and beliefs that are provided as examples to the learners about the things that are in their living context (Giroux & Penna, 1979). These values are not learnt as an integrated part in the intentional curriculum that is why learners learn about them from other sources including friends or any other meetings with other people outside of their classes.

From a different point of view, Glatthorn et al. (2016) mentioned that the term of hidden curriculum is used as a critique to previous notions of curriculum itself as it has been mentioned above that a culture can transfer to students, but the outside materials that are unforeseen elements of a planned curriculum may cause difficulty of how students may respond afterwards.

Furthermore, social curriculum is one aspect of hidden curriculum which is indirectly taught in many institutes, (Azeez, 2020). In addition, Hurni (2001) mentioned that within rest times in secondary schools learners develop their intrinsic values by enrolling in various physical activities, playing in groups, and exercises which are important for their personal development. From a different point of view, the new notion of “citizenship education” tries to build some ‘hidden’ aspects of curriculum that may have opportunity to have some open discussion regarding how their rest time provide them any additional citizenship and social skills (Glatthorn et al., 2016).

### **3.7 The learned Curriculum**

This includes all modifications and variations in learner’s perceptions, behavior and values that occur because of being exposed to the hidden and intentional curriculum (Glatthorn et al., 2016)

## **4. Curriculum Approaches**

Following any specific approach reflects the way of its development and progress. To have an understandable development in the field of curriculum as a whole and designing specifically an\some approaches are going to be followed, (Bradshaw, 1989). Marsh and Willis (1999) mentioned that different approaches in curriculum is a way to have various points of view regarding curriculum as a notion and is a link of relating thought to practice. They also believe that various ideas and beliefs about a given approach will make a specific curriculum to be more explicit or continuing implicitly. Different researchers mention different approaches but Allen and Murrell (1978) mentioned some to the well-known approaches in the field which will be discussed below.

### **4.1 The Behavioral- Objectives Approach**

This approach is considered as the oldest one but it still has some reference to curriculum. Standridge (2002) mentioned that behaviourism is related to measurable and observable aspects of the behaviors of human beings. It is also considered as a significant step in the process of curriculum development. Tyler (1949) is one of the most famous researcher in the field and mentioned four principles related to developing a curriculum. Those principles works as the establishment of the frameworks for curriculum. The educational points to be achieved comes first, organizing, selecting of the learning experiences to attain those effective, teaching, objective and evaluation as a whole experience. In student-centered system the objectives in behavioural approach is used by emphasizing on students’ behavior rather than teachers’ behavior.

Furthermore, Oliver and Endersby (1994) argued that having an easier plan for lessons, experiences, clear guidelines, examinations, effectiveness of skills in training process, different courses, better time management, better chance to compare and contrast learners’ achievements, measurable results and approval by learners are seen as advantageous of this approach.

This approach is not far away from criticism. Wells (1987) mentioned that the criticism against this model started from the late of 1960s. In 1971 a campaign in America has been held against this approach and declared that there are so many incompatibilities are in here. For this reason, Davis (1987) mentioned that the objective-behavioral approach ignored a lot of educational achievements because it focuses too much on learner's behavior which are considered as the easiest to be expressed in terms of objectives. Furthermore, this researcher argues that there are divergence between learner's needs with objectives and between stated objectives that may happen with the topics raised by learners. Also, there are difficulty in pointing out the importance of objectives concerning the learning experiences. For this purpose, Lawton (1983) mentioned that this model can't be applied with the whole curriculum rather for some skills only. Also, it is not possible for what is called "democratic" system which an open-ended curriculum will be required by the students. It is only suitable for closed systems.

Furthermore, he points out that this approach reduces the authority of a whole curriculum to very objective ones which is known as the right answers. Which is highly far away from the modern notion of "tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty" (P.15).

#### **4.2 The Process Model of Curriculum**

The shortcomings of one approach leads to coming up another one. This approach emphasizes on criteria, procedures, and concepts rather than the content and objectives. Stenhouse (1975) mentioned that behavioral-objective approach works as a filter that doesn't let the knowledge go through. It focuses on the experience by itself and the value of learning process. So, the content can be designed based on its own importance not based on achieving certain objectives. Despite of advantages of this approach, there are some disadvantages as well as Oliver and Endersby (1994) mentioned there is possibility of losing control by the teacher, time consuming, difficulty in achieving national discipline and standards, also it may seem uncommon and uneconomic for some students.

#### **4.3 The Cultural-Analysis Model**

By taking advantage of the shortcomings of the objective-behavioral approach, the cultural-analysis model has been developed by Lowton (1983). He states that each community face difficulty in transmitting its own way and style of culture and life to their next generation. The aim of education is to give them the importance of culture by setting out the principles, the whole process is called cultural analysis. He also points out that culture is more than a specified measurable of features and this cultural analysis is much more complicated than human power planning since lots of cultural analysis is at the description level.

The aim of this model is to figure out the issues of the content of curriculum that has been implemented through logical analysis. Nonetheless, it is really hard to explore the cultural themes as far as the whole markers and elements of culture is going through a constant change. Furthermore, the implementation of this approach is done by teachers and intellectuals without the involvement of those who take role in this process. This is seen as a side effect of this approach as far as the teachers and intellectuals may be biased in analyzing the elements and aspects of culture, (Magendzo, 1988)

#### **4.4 Curriculum as Praxis**

The standpoints of this approach is based on postmodernist which sees knowledge not as something that completely based on human mind rather as an outcome of discourse, (Yek & Penney, 2006). So, knowledge changes by passing time based on the situation and environment, and it is subjective. From a different point of view, Grundy (1987) sheds light on the reality that curriculum is not implementing a set of plans, rather it

consists of an active plan which holds acting, evaluating, planning is all related to it as an integrated part in this process. Also, he mentioned that through critical pedagogy this integrated process can be achieved, where teachers and students work together to solve the real issues together. They are also encouraged to reflect and think critically and work on their skills to be developed further and to let them have a better understanding about their responsibilities and personalities, as well. Here, both students and teachers should have their own practice and reflect on it. Also, to work on theories and concepts, making sense of them, find connection between meanings to their application in real world knowledge in their academic career.

### **5. Curriculum Principles**

Maftoon and Sarem (2012) classifies the principles of curriculum into some principles: Nation and Macalister (2010) to start with; Nation and Macalister (2010) mentioned that principles are important in the process of teaching and learning because it works as a systematic guide in the process, also it is useful in course designs. Furthermore, they discussed based on theory and research the principles should be created. They should be general to let them implied in classes in terms of flexibility and variety. Another point which is important to focus on is the pedagogical point of view that principles should be based on, by focusing on the teacher training and curriculum design. From a philosophical point of view, focusing on the nature of learning, nature of language, and the role of culture is important here.

For this purpose, Nation and Macalister (2010) focused on twenty principles that all of them are based on theory and research in the fields of foreign or second language learning, all in all educational theory and research with the first language learning. All of them are applicable in the field of teaching and learning and none of them is unique. They divided the twenty principles into three groups. The first one deals with sequencing and content. It emphasizes on what comes into language courses and how they are ordered in the course. The goal of these principles are students get benefit from language courses that they take. Sometimes it in a course poor return happens which means due to not consisting new items to be learnt and have little value will be a step backward not forward, although the same course may be interesting and full of activities. So, the problem will be in outcome of learners.

The second group deals with presentation and formatting. This one deals with what is going on inside classes in the process of learning and teaching. Specifically, the type of course materials that learners go through in the process and type of activities that they used inside classes. Here, the teachers have their greatest impact in the course. However, the last group deals with assessment, evaluation and monitoring. Based on their importance these principles have been ranked.

From a different point of view, Johnson (1989) declared another principle for language curriculum design which consists of three sections in titled of; different approaches integration, permanent change and innovation, and coherence. One of the major sections is coherence. Here the curriculum is seen to be coherent enough in order to find out to which extent does the learners' achievement and the aim of curriculum have been attained. When there is a relationship between the planned process and its development with the state objectives the aim will be achieved. Maftoon and Sarem (2012) provides an example for incoherent case, in this concern they say when there is a language-centered curriculum as a framework and teachers want to apply communicative language teaching. It will be incoherent curriculum here. The other section in this principle is permanent change and innovation. Based on Maftoon and Sarem (2012) there is no perfect curriculum in the world and always there is opportunity for improvement, and some changes in order to meet the learner's needs. Also, they



mention the change of one part in the curriculum have impact on the others parts. The last section in this principle is related to the notion of process (task-based or procedures) and product (skills-based) approaches integration are significant of designing language programs. This one is related to the coherent one because having a logical connection between the developed curriculum and the identified objectives in the classes are going to be presented as two integrated part of procedural curriculum and skill-based one.

Furthermore, Tomlinson (2010) has another classification for principles that suggests some principles in the language acquisition that is better to be taken into consideration for material development. The principles can be summarized as; in order to help learners to use the target language it is better to integrate both cognitive and affective language experience, the ones who have attain positive impact in the process of language learning are the ones who achieve communicative competence, also they need some chances to use the language communicatively. Furthermore, Tomlinson (2010) adds some other principles for language teaching that can be summarized as; the methodology and content in the teaching process should be flexible enough and suitable with objectives of the course and it should meet the wants and needs of learners. Language teaching should include development in their level not only acquiring it, it also should encourage learners to be much more mature and criticize, creative, capable, confident and more collaborative at the end of the course. Also, the teachers should adopt and adapt the materials based on the wants and needs of the learners and the learning style of each learner.

From the same point of view, Tomlinson (2010) is in parallel with Hall's (1995) principles which identifies the major principles that are important in writing materials with planning them. The principles are: The need to authenticity, student-centeredness, long-term goals and communication.

By focusing on the major principles that are mentioned previously, we can point out that; all in all they emphasize on showing the major features and guidelines that re important to be taken into consideration by material developers in presenting and sequencing the content of their subjects and teachers in their courses but rarely they point out the learner autonomy and the real effects of their principles.

Last but not least, Cotterall (2000) has a different classification for principles and learner autonomy Since language teaching pedagogy goes toward student-center approach, learner autonomy becomes an important and integrated section in the field as far as it puts the responsibility to students. Hence, Cotterall (2000) mentioned that those language courses which their goal is to help learners becomes autonomous in their classes in terms of transmitting responsibilities from the teacher to the students in the process of language learning like selecting the strategies that are helpful in their learning process with the development in the evaluation procedure and setting goals, as well. For this reason, Cotterall(2000) suggests some general principles for designing a language course which are; the aim of the students, the process of language learning, tasks and activities, strategies of the students and their reflection of the process. All the mentioned principles of Coterall (2000) is to help students to take responsibility and transmit the responsibility from the teacher to the students. So, raising awareness of student is important for any course design that its aim is to make learners to be autonomous specifically for putting goals as it is the first principle according to him because anything that goes on during the whole course is highly related to the aim.

Furthermore, Coterall (2000) explained that the tasks of any given course is related simplified version of the process of language learning. Students can be autonomous if they will be aware about different learning options and their understanding about it with taking responsibility of any consequence that they are going to take in choosing any of

the options. So, this principle is highly related with reflection on learning. Dam and Legenhausen (1999) the ability to reflect critically of the process of learning by students can be counted as a measurement of the effectivity of a given course peripheral.

All in all, there are so many principles that can be applied in syllabus design and curriculum but the major and most known ones are mentioned above. The significance for all this discussion and research are to give testable, logical and theoretical base for curriculum and syllabus construction and it makes the processes of learning and teaching be effective and helps teacher and professional development, too.

#### **6. Kurdistan Universities and Scientific Research Reform Process in Kurdistan Region**

The process of education and making decisions in Higher Education (HE) in the Kurdistan Region (KRG) is centralized that makes the teachers and learners have minimal role in this process and they have to follow the instructions and guidelines of the ministry of HE, (Azeez, 2019). For this reason, stakeholders decided to make a reform in 2009. So, 2009-2010 academic year was considered as the period of review. That reform includes the scopes of continuous academic development programme, curriculum development, quality assurance, accreditation system, revitalizing researches, students' admission system, and investing human resources, (MoHESR, 2011). Regarding Curriculum Development (CD), it tried to help students to become thinkers, classes become more student-centered, familiarizing them with Information Technology (IT), getting proficiency with second language learning and developing research skills. Furthermore, the main purpose was to decrease the degree of memorizing materials with in-depth information and help students to be critical thinkers and have ability to make debate, (MoHESR, 2011).

Furthermore, a study has been done by Quantrell and Khidir (2011) who they focused on indicating some shortcomings from the academic angel in the HR in KRG. One of the main findings in their study was there is no access to electronic communication in terms of network inside the sectors of HR. As far as all academic staff has their own e-mail, all departments have their webpage but it is not considered to fulfil the requirements of teaching and learning in HR. Moreover, the free access of education was another result that researchers approached which leads to a massive number of students be enrolled in universities. As a result, the materials and resources become poor in quality in the universities and sectors of HR in KRG because the academic staffs will be overloaded in teaching in both private and public sectors. Sometimes, the teachers had to teach in both the morning and evening classes in the same departments in public universities.

This procedure takes too much time and does not help academicians to conduct more activities regarding their major. Moreover, they expressed that most managers and leaders in HR are not expert enough to manage the tasks as it should be, rather, they follow the documents which are available or they follow the same procedure as it has done before. Though, it may be outdated. Last but not least, the curricula that is taught in KRG universities do not fulfil the needs of the market. Quantrell and Khidir (2011) further explained that the taught curricula in the KRG universities are in poor situation, outdated or badly copied or adapted. For this purpose, some curricula need to be developed, updated or re-designed. They further explained that it is a professional task to discover and make a connection between changing, updating, designing a sort of curricula that fits the current markets' need in the region. They also declare that the HR still suffers from lack of professionals and experts in academic fields to develop curricula. Regarding developing curricula, the regulations play important role as far as the teachers are allowed to only change %20 of their content, (Ali, 2015).

The mentioned investigation has been done after the rapid reform in the ministry of Higher Education in 2009 which its aim was to make the quality better and apply the international principles in the sectors of HR. Moreover, in 2011 one of the major aspects of reform in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research was to improve the quality of teaching regarding developing the research, academic programmes, academic collaborations through quality assurance system. This was done as a result of outdated and poor quality of materials that were used in the universities and institutes. Curricula reform was considered as one of the main aspects in HR due to the rapid economic changes in the region. There are so many non-governmental organizations in the region (NGO)s that they do require knowledgeable employs in their major. For this reason, studying English language in all departments was a must and students should pass. The first year students should enhance 70 percent of developing skills and only 30 percent should emphasize on their specialty. Also, students should be introduced to information and technology and how it should be used in their major, (Ali, 2015). The reform was clarified different points of view, but here only the ones that related to curriculum was explained. For this purpose, studying the models and principles of curriculum development is significant as an attempt to decrease all the shortcomings that comes across in the field.

Regarding English language departments in the KRG, in 1985 at Salahhadin University for the first time in the faculty of Arts the English language department was established. Now, more than 10 public state universities in the region have English language departments including English language and literature, Education Departments and Basic Education departments. Salahhadin University in Erbil and Duhok Univeristy in Duhok have English Department for College of Languages, Education, and Basic Education. Slemani University in Slaemani has English Department in College of Humanities, Basic Education and Translation. Furthermore, Raparin, Halabja, and Charmo Univeristies have only English departments in College of Education. Koya and Zakho Universities in College of Humanities has English Department. Also, Soran Univeristy in College of Arts has English Department. Last but not least, Garmian University has English Department in the Social Science and Education schools.

All departments have mission, vison, objectives, content of curriculum and assessment procedures. Anyone who wants to teach should participate in a teacher development course that prepares the professional ones to become effective teachers regardless of their major for a specific period of time and that duration differs based on the Ministry of HEs' instructions. Regarding developing the courses in the English Language Departments (ELD) is a focal point in relation to changing, adding, removing or shifting one module to something else from one stage to another, (Azeez, 2019). The assessment procedure is different from one university to another but the main focus is on written examination. The universities which remains the same as academic years; divide the whole 100 points into 40% for monthly exams and quizzes or any continuous assessment and the rest will be on the final examinations. In contrast, the ones which apply Bologna process the main points about 75% goes to the continuous assessment and only 35% goes to the final examination. In 2022, "70 percent of universities in the KRG are following Bologna process, 20 percent are practicing academic semesters and only 10 percent are doing yearly academic plans just for this academic year", (the President of quality insurance in the ministry of Higher Education).

## **7. Method**

This paper is a quantitative research design that deals with a questionnaire in relation to the teachers' point of view about current curriculum that is applied in Basic Education colleges in English departments in the KRG. The questionnaire consists of

29 close-ended items. This questionnaire has been adapted from Nation and Macalister (2010), Rodgers (1984), and Hutchinson and Waters (1978). Also, it has reliability of 0.83 Cronbach alpha.

Furthermore, three major universities in the KRG has been chosen to collect the data which are Sulaimani university, Salahaddin university, and Duhok university. Moreover, all participants are university teachers who are permanently teaching in English departments in the mentioned universities in the KRG. All of them are MA or PhD holder in their major. Twenty four participants are MA holders and nine of them are PhD holder and this has been explained in the figure (1)

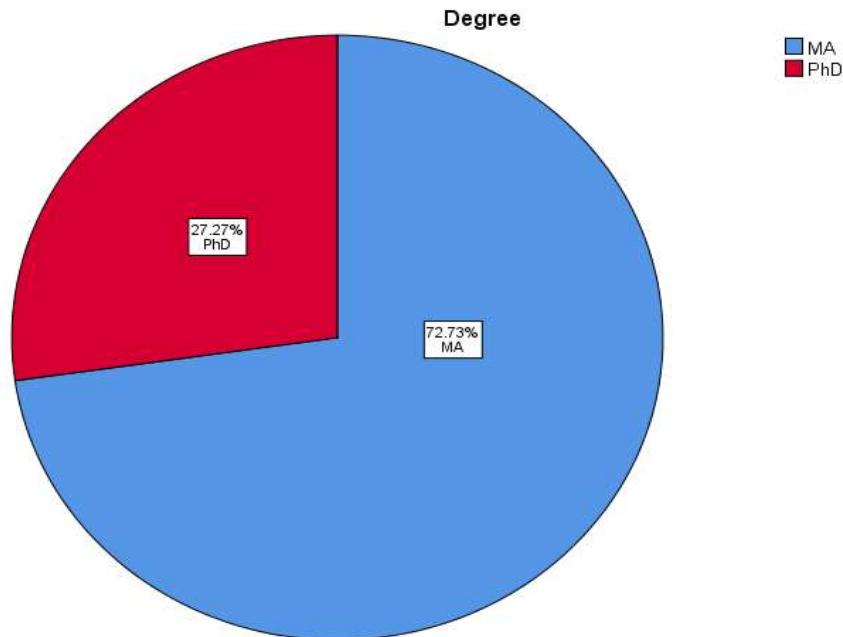


Figure (1) the degree of participants

The age range of participants are varied which starts from 32 years old to 69 year-old teachers. As this has been explained in the second figure.

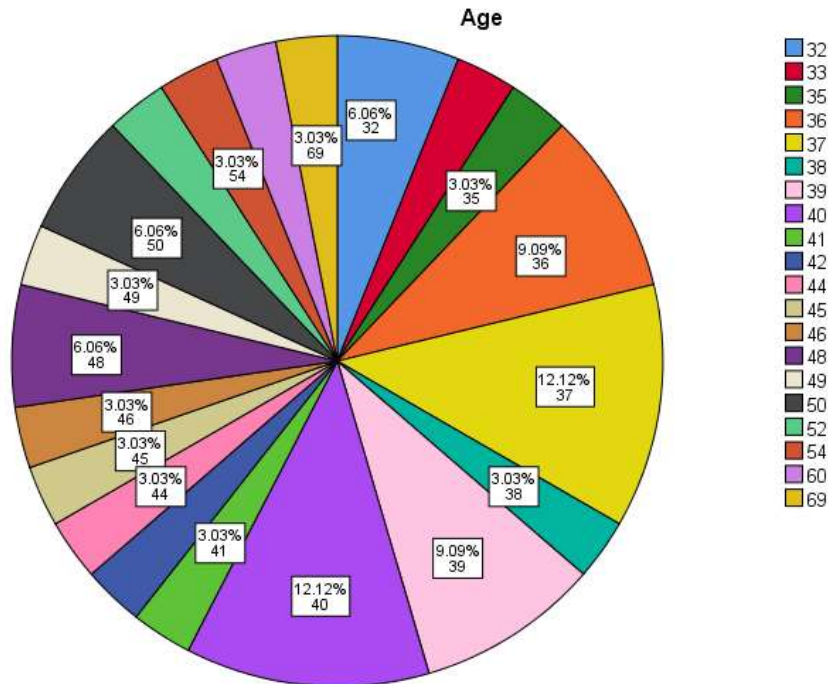


Figure (2) the age range difference among participants

Furthermore, the number of participants are different in those three universities. In each university 11 teachers replied to the current questionnaire which are explained in figure number (3)

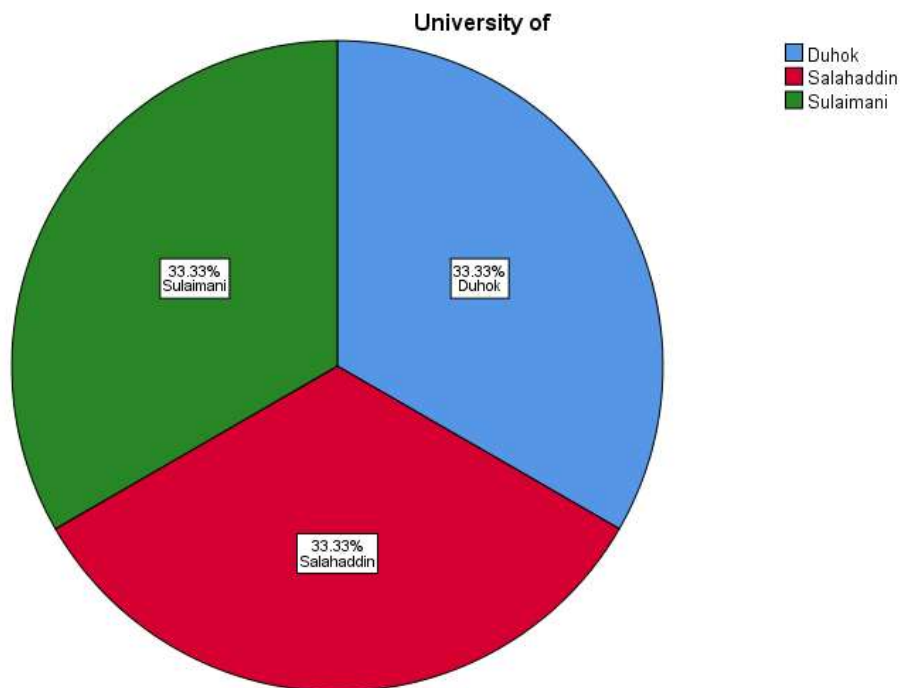


Figure (3) the number of participants among universities in KRG

More interestingly, the number of female participants are much higher than male participants which are 45.45 % while female participants range is 54.55% as it is explained in figure (4)

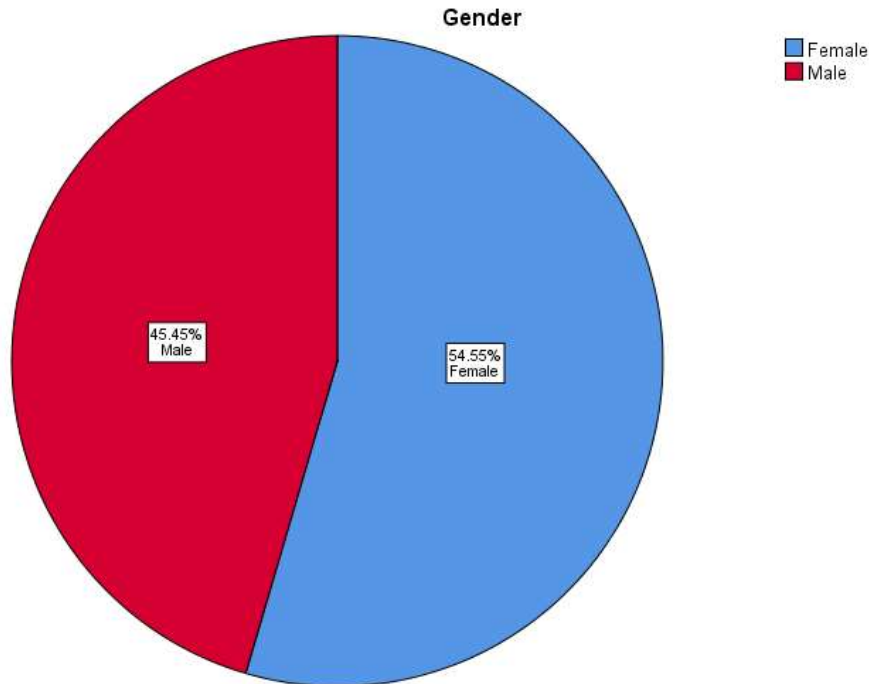


Figure (4) the number of male and female participants in the study

Last but not least their teaching experience is divers. It starts from 3 years of teaching to 25 years of teaching at university level as it is explained in figure number (5)

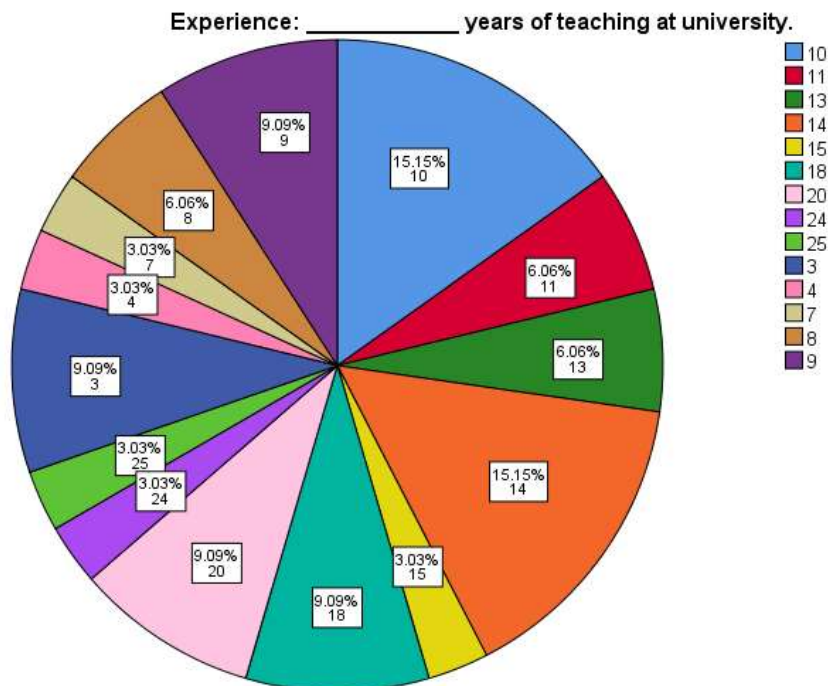


Figure (5) the participants' experience in teaching at university level

### 8. Results of the Study

For analysis of the questionnaire, SPSS 25<sup>th</sup> version is used in form of a Likert-scale in five options. That starts with strongly agree, agree, neutral, strongly disagree with disagree. To help readers understand more the options of strongly agree with agree is combined, this procedure is done for strongly disagree with disagree options, as well. The questionnaire items are explained in form of tables by percentage.

Table (1) Aim of the students in the English Language Departments\Colleges of Basic Education

No.	Items	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	1- This basic education language teacher program will be used to prepare English Language teachers.	81%	15%	3%
2	The learners of this program should be competent to accomplish it.	84%	12%	3%
3	The learners are taking this program for employment opportunities	84%	12%	3%
4	Learners will be able to control of the English Language skills at the end	54%	36%	9.1%

Based on the results of the questionnaire, their points of view are different. The majority of the teachers believed that the current English language teacher education program in colleges of basic education in English departments in the Kurdistan region of Iraq are aimed at preparing students to become English language teachers and the majority of them 84% think that the learners are competent enough to achieve the program While 36% of them are not sure about the real capacity and skills to accomplish the current program, however, they do emphasize that in general the students are seeking to get a higher chance to work in different settings after their graduation.

Table (2) The methodology applied in EFL classes in Kurdish University contexts in KRG

No.	Items	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
5	The learners want to improve their English Language.	81.8%	18.2%	0%
6	The language will be used for communication, only	15.1%	21.2%	63%
7	The learners' ultimate goal is to learn the language and become teachers.	57%	15.2%	27.2%
8	The methodology that appeal to learners is teacher-centered.	30.3%	21.2%	48%
9	The Student-center approach is more alienating for the learners.	48.5%	18.2%	30.3%

Furthermore, regarding the methodology that is applying inside Kurdish EFL classes in English language departments in colleges of Basic Education is student-centered approach as it is explained in items 8 and 9 that 48% of teachers believe that the teacher-centered is not practiced while 21% and 18% in both items that relates to methodology are considered themselves as not being aware enough what is applied. In relation to the usage of language 57% of the teachers are sure about they aim of the learners who want

to be future teachers and 81% of them sure that they do try to improve themselves while 63% of them stats that the English language is not used for communication purpose only.

Table (3) Role of English as medium of instruction in English Departments in Colleges of Basic Education

No.	Item	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
10	The content areas in this program are linguistics, literature and teaching courses.	63%	27%	9%
11	Technological aid resources are available in applying this basic education language teacher program.	36%	36%	27%
12	They read constantly to have knowledge about their subjects	36%	24%	39%
13	All learners' interest is to become teachers	21%	33%	45%
14	The Facilitator teaching style is used in both teaching and in the department	51%	39%	9%
15	The language be used only inside classes	12%	36%	45%
16	Participating in lectures is a communicative activity that the learners take part in	69%	18%	12%

The majority of participants 67% believe that the courses that students are studying now is divided into linguistics, literature and pedagogical courses while having enough sources and technological sources is not available while 36% of them mentioned they do not know about it and 27% of them emphasized on that. In case of trying by themselves (the learners) the teachers 39% think that the learners do not read continuously about the topics that they are studying and 45% of the teachers insure us the learners are not interested to become teachers in the departments while the aim of the departments are to prepare teachers. In addition, the teachers make any sort of facility for the purpose of teaching process in their departments while the teachers focused on using the English language outside of classes which is 45% and it is parallel to the following item that states the majority of the students participate in the classes which is considered as a communicative activity by 69%.

Table (4) Levels of learners' awareness in the courses they study

No.	Items	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
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17	The learners use language only with their teachers and their classmates	54%	21%	24%
18	The learners are working with the content of the subjects.	66%	27%	6%
19	The learners are already familiar with using language for communication	36.3%	33.3%	30.3%
20	The learners use the language with their schemata (the connection between old information and new information that you learn)	42%	45%	12%
21	The teachers get the learners involved and excited about language learning.	66%	27%	6%
22	The learners need to use English inside classes	87.8%	12.1%	0%

The teachers encourage students to use English language inside classes as it is shown in items 17,19, 21and 22 as it gets the highest approved ideas while the majority of the teachers are not sure if the students can connect the information that they learn with the ones which they learnt before! About 45%. At the same time teachers insist on the reality that students are working with the content of courses most of the time which reaches at 66%.

Table (5) The teachers' knowledge about the courses and current program in ELT Departments in KRG

No.	Items	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
23	Each learner gets a large amount of meaningful contact in English	63.7%	21%	15%
24	The teachers monitor the learners' understanding and providing	78%	18%	3%
25	The learners are aware of the goals of the lectures	57%	33%	9%
26	The knowledge context is organized from simple to complex	78%	15%	6%
27	The instructional design (creation of instructional materials, like presentations, etc)and curricula are inadequately researched	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%

28	The renewal of the program is made in in nation-wide.	18%	51%	30%
29	The instructional design of the current curriculum (creation of instructional materials, like presentations, etc) is well arranged from simple to complex	63.6%	27.3%	9.1%

The results of the questionnaire show that most of the teachers 63% believe that students get enough contact amount in English and 57% of them think that learners are knowledgeable about the aims of the courses that they study while 33% of them are not sure. The teachers also declare that they are as teachers have role as monitors in students' progress. Most importantly, they announce that the content of the courses is arranged from simple to complex by 78% but they are not sure and disagree about the instructional design have researched before to put into practice or not by 33% for each scales in the questionnaire. At the same time, most of the teachers are not knowledgeable enough about the current curriculum that are applying in English departments as 51% showed neutral idea about the item no.28 while they do believe that the arrangement of the materials is done it well because 63% showed their agreement about it as it is parallel with item no.26.

### **Conclusion**

In classical times, curriculum meant syllabus only but after that the notion of curriculum becomes wider and more than syllabus. That's why it is important for learners, teachers, policy makers to be aware about its classification and how it should be organized in educational settings systematically. Due to its importance in different situations in academic contexts as it changes and requires a specific type to be followed and applied. For this purpose, the educators believe that there are three dimensions of curriculum including learners, subject and environment. For studying all those dimensions, studying approaches have significance role. From the oldest one to the most applicable one which is Nation and Macalister's approach in the field. Furthermore, Tomlinson (2010) argues that there are some principles which are important to be studied in material development that highly effects the curriculum development. To conclude, the overview of the current paper indicates that curriculum is more than a skill, it includes the local goals, external standards, designing and its implementation with evaluation at the end, that must be systematically be done. So, there are various shortcomings in the process of HR in KRG as an EFL context in relation to the curriculum which is decentralized. In other words, the decisions are localized and regulations of ministry have huge role for the content of curricula that has been taught to the students. Each Department that have been mentioned before in this paper are responsible for making any change regarding deleting, adding or changing one course to another or even transferring it to another stage by head of the departments and scientific committees. The role of the students and teachers are quite limited, in other words, they do not have any role. For this reason, being aware about the models and principles of the curriculum development and following one model is important to overcome the lacks that the system is suffering from. Last but not least, the results of the teachers' questionnaire reveal that the students want to become English language teacher and they apply to Basic Education colleges to get better jobs after graduation, In English Departments learners communicate in English, the learners want to improve themselves, they focus on content of courses. At the same time, teachers are not sure if the students can use their schemata and if they are aware about the goals of courses. Most of the teachers by

themselves believe that the content of courses are arranged from simple to complex but they are not much aware about what the current curriculum is based on and which approach is followed to have the current one.

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