

Teachers' and students' appraisal of the ITEC English curriculum: A comparative study

Hoa Minh Truong*, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh 70000, Vietnam
Van Thuy Vuong Pham, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh 70000,
Vietnam

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Abstract

With the holistic purpose of improving the language teaching and learning quality at the International Training and Education Centre (ITEC) of University of Science (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam), this article focused on the students' and teachers' appraisal towards the current ITEC English curriculum. The survey study was conducted at the ITEC of University of Science (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam) with the participation of 82 students and 20 teachers. The instruments included questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 20.0, while the qualitative data obtained from the interviews were thematically analysed. The findings show that both the students and the teachers concurrently showed their positive affection and cognition towards the clear objectives, reasonable assessment modes, effective instructional materials and helpful extensive practice. In addition, the content of the ITEC English curriculum was emotionally and cognitively approved by both the teachers and the students; however, some students thought that the content lacked an emphasis of cultural elements and updated realistic situations. Furthermore, while the teachers seemed to prefer the time allotment of the courses of the curriculum, many students did not express their favour or approval. Besides, a big proportion of the target students liked its instructional methods and believed in the usefulness of the instructional methods and delivery techniques, especially in developing and sharpening their language skills and test-taking skills as well. Nonetheless, some of the teachers did not feel these instructional methods impressive and were not compatible with their preferential styles.

Keywords: Appraisal, English curriculum, ITEC, comparative study, Vietnam.

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Hoa Minh Truong, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh 70000, Vietnam. E-mail address: hongthao.kute79@gmail.com

1. Introduction

English, nowadays, is no longer a possession of native English speakers but it is also widely utilised by non-native speakers as a foreign or second language (Padwick, 2018). It becomes a commonly used language for various fields such as technology, science, commerce or administration. In Vietnam, English has become a compulsory subject in most educational settings at different levels from primary to tertiary schooling systems. More specifically, most Vietnamese universities and colleges set English as a compulsory credit-based course and students need to submit an international English proficiency test, such as TOEFL, TOEIC and IELTS, as a graduation pre-requisite. Being aware of the paramount significance of English to the world development, many parents, especially in big cities in Vietnam, like Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Da Nang and Nha Trang, expect to send their children to study abroad or follow international programmes at the tertiary level to seek for a foreign diploma which is considered to provide their children with better opportunities for their career path and higher education.

Regarding to the social needs, international joint programmes have steadily increased and become a favourable choice for Vietnamese students who wish to achieve an international bachelor's degree without living apart from their families. Not only being a stipulation for entrance, but English is also a compulsory requirement for tertiary graduation. The International Training and Education Centre (ITEC), which belongs to Ho Chi Minh City University of Science (HCMCUS), is purposely included; specifically, students following this ITEC English curriculum need to submit the IELTS band 6.0 or equivalent to earn a bachelor degree of the international joint programme. Specifically, the ITEC English curriculum is established to test and train postsecondary students' English abilities so as to ensure that they can afford their academic programmes fully delivered in English. This curriculum is expected to help them get the target IELTS certificate before their graduation. As a result, taking up English courses at the ITEC is the demand when the students choose to study their bachelor programmes at HCMCUS. The English programme and the academic programmes are concurrently executed, and students need to participate in both programmes simultaneously until they achieve a satisfactory IELTS certificate. However, there is a challenge which ITEC has been facing more recently, that is, the number of students who either enrol or participate in this language curriculum is dramatically decreasing, while the demand from the community of the international education is still very high.

In fact, problems arising from curriculum implementation are recognised as inevitable, and there by the implementation is inherently more intrigue than what people can anticipate (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). This complexity can be appraised from several aspects, with different stakeholders interpreting the curriculum policies differently than as originally conceived. Indeed, the implementation of any curriculum may also be affected by the resistance of the primary stakeholders, such as the teachers and the students. In a similar vein, Fraser and Bosanquet (2006) regard that teachers and students need to involve their common curriculum understandings, attitudes and reflect critically on curriculum policies, implementation and evaluation matters in order to help them to change teaching and learning restrictions in the existing contexts. It is believed that teachers are the key people who are interpreting the curriculum and giving life to it in the language classroom by means of their instructional and evaluation strategies. The role of English teachers in the ELT curriculum is a critical matter in language curriculum implementation and development, and in transmitting knowledge from the curriculum to the learners (Freeman, 2002). Especially, it is also a fact that the audience of any curriculum is the students who are directly influenced and shaped by the curriculum.

What is embraced in the term 'curriculum'? The response to the question is hardly conclusive and seems subjective. There are some variations in defining this concept under diverse perspectives from numerous authors in varied contexts. The indecisive nature of the term is due to distinguishing perceptions of stakeholders such as students, educators, researchers, administrators and evaluators with their own agenda of emphasis in educational discourse. To give a clear illustration, curriculum 'is a complex, multifaceted and dynamic concept, and covers a broad range of stakeholders,

perspectives, processes and manifestations' (Adamson & Morris, 2007, p. 281). However, as itemised by Beauchamp (1977), Wood and Davis (1978), Barrow and Milburn (1990), Marsh (1997) and Su (2012), a curriculum may commonly embrace seven dimensions: objectives, content, time allotment, instructional materials, instructional methods, assessment ways and extensive practice.

With the holistic purpose of refining the language teaching and learning quality of the ITEC English curriculum at HCMCUS, Vietnam, the study predominantly compared the postsecondary students' and English teachers' appraisal of the current ITEC English curriculum in terms of different aspects, including objectives, content, time, instructional materials, instructional methods, assessment and extensive practice. To fulfil this research purpose, the research question was, accordingly, formulated as follows: *Are there any differences between the students' and the teachers' appraisal of the ITEC English curriculum?*

2. Overview of the ITEC English curriculum

Apropos of the objectives and content, the language curriculum consists of eight courses equivalent to eight levels, including *Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate, English for Academic Purposes, IELTS 1, IELTS 2* and *ITP-IELTS Test Preparation*. The courses (i.e., levels) of the ITEC curriculum are to help tertiary students develop their English skills in general and to obtain the target IELTS band in particular. Each level of the curriculum is built up in the ascending order of difficulty degree regarding language skills and knowledge. They have to take an entrance examination to be arranged at an appropriate level. During the holistic ITEC English curriculum, learners are constantly assessed on their language proficiency through their completion of homework, exams and trial tests. They receive their scores, evaluative feedback and comments, which informs their existing strengths and weaknesses. Learners, at all the given levels, must take at least one IELTS test in order to familiarise with actual IELTS format, and it is reckoned as a summative assessment for the whole course. The number of trial tests increases in response to the levels.

For instructional materials and extensive practice, Life Elementary, Life Pre-Intermediate, Life Intermediate, IELTS Introduction, Complete IELTS Bands 4-5, IELTS Introduction, Writing for IELTS 4.5-6.0, Active Reading Skill and Ready for IELTS are exploited as the principal medium of instructional delivery. Furthermore, the book series IELTS Cambridge 1-13, Barron Test Plus, Official Cambridge Guide for IELTS, Cambridge IELTS Plus Test, and Essential IELTS Practice Test provide mock tests for learners to practice. In addition, in each level, English teachers garner tests of Listening and Reading whose own collection is dispensed to learners at the first week and another collection in the 6th week. Learners are asked to complete the mock test every 2weeks (e.g., the 2nd week, the 4th week, the 6th week, the 8th week and the 10th week).

When it comes to the staff, English lecturers of the ITEC English curriculum are made up of 100% native speakers from USA, England and Australia, who have at least one bachelor's degree or earn a master's degree and a pedagogical certificate, such as TESOL, TEFL, and CELTA. They have been experienced teachers for many years in General English, English for Academic Purposes or International English Proficiency exams as IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC, etc. Each level of the ITEC English curriculum is executed for a 10-week period, adhering to a strict agenda. Teachers are required to prepare for classes, teach, design and assign weekly assignments, grade and keep records of achievement. Additionally, teachers have to coordinate with class tutors (e.g., often Vietnamese teachers) to work with students who need or desire additional help. In most cases, teachers can expect to teach the same students for four mornings a week for a full 3hours per class.

For the assessment and evaluation, the ITEC English curriculum consists of several forms, including classwork, mid-term tests, final tests and participation notice. Overall, learners must achieve at least 70% of the total score at a given level so that they are allowed to approach another higher level.

For the time frame and allotment, learners take the ITEC English curriculum from Monday to Thursday every week, from 8:30 to 11:30. On Fridays, learners study with Vietnamese tutors who help

them review vocabulary and grammar points, and assist the weak individuals. Every week, lecturers send the list of the weak learners to these tutors. In specific, Vietnamese tutors possess high IELTS band and good experience. Every year, four levels or courses are commenced, including Course 1 (October–December), Course 2 (January–March), Course 3 (April–June) and Course 4 (July–September).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The sample of this study was 82 university students who were taking part in the ITEC English curriculum and 20 English teachers who were in charge of the courses of this curriculum at HCMCUS. To the students, the age range was scattered from 19 to above 22 years old, with both male (79.3%) and female (20.7%). To the teachers, the age variations disseminated from 22 to 40 years old, with both male (40.0%) and female (60.0%). The teachers came from different countries, such as Australia (45.0%), Vietnam (25.0%), England (20.0%) and the USA (10.0%).

3.2. Research design

Researchers must consider the notion of 'fit for purpose' when deciding on the methodological approach to be taken for the research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Overall, the present study was a survey design, which is 'a procedure in which any researcher administers a survey to a sample [...] to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of the sample' (Creswell, 2012, p. 321). This survey aimed to investigate the teachers' and learners' appraisals of the ITEC English curriculum.

3.3. Research instruments

The researchers decided to use questionnaires since they can be applied to a large number of the participants in a short period (Creswell, 2012). The sample of this study was 102 participants, and the data collection and analysis procedure only lasted 2 months from September to December of 2019. Besides, they can be used to elicit information regarding learners' personal judgements, appraisals, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions (Koshy, 2005). The questionnaires were employed for both the post-secondary students and the teachers, with one English version and one Vietnamese version. These questionnaires consisted of 19 items in total, covering different aspects of curriculum, that is, objectives (Items 1–3), content (Items 4–6), time (Items 7–8), instructional methods (Items 9–11), testing and assessment (Items 12–14), instructional materials (Items 15–17) and extensive practice (Items 18–19). These items were rated on a five-point Likert-scale, including *1=totally disagree*, *2=disagree*, *3=uncertain*, *4=agree* and *5=totally agree*. Afterwards, the interviews were only utilised to explain the differences between the two subjects, that is, the teachers' and the students' appraisals, which were found in the questionnaire results. There were four questions from Q1 to Q4 for interviewing.

3.4. Data collection and analysis

On the chosen dates, the questionnaire copies which had been translated into Vietnamese beforehand were delivered to 102 participants. On the receipt of questionnaires from the respondents, the researcher found that all 102 copies (100%) were valid and accepted. Finally, the researchers employed Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 20.0 to analyse the descriptive statistics of the questionnaires in terms of mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*). Besides, Chi-square tests were used inferential statistics to test the relationship between two categorical variables. It can be concluded that there is not a significant difference between the two groups' variances if the sig. (*p*) value is greater than the alpha level of 0.050 (Pallant, 2005).

After finishing the questionnaire treatment, the researchers invited 14 members from the target sample to participate in the interviews, including 4 teachers (one Vietnamese, one Australian, one English and one American teachers) and 10 students. The teacher interviewees were labelled from T1 to T4, while the learner interviewees were coded from S1 to S10. Each of the interview sessions lasted for around 20 minutes. The interviews were conducted in the English language using a set of semi-structured questions to ask and a tape recorder to record the interviewees' answers. Afterwards, the researchers transcribed – ‘converting audio-tape recordings into text data’ (Creswell, 2012, p. 239), and translated the interview transcripts for analysis. Finally, the researchers presented the interview results where the differences between the teachers' and the learners' appraisal were sought in the questionnaire results.

3.5. Conceptual framework

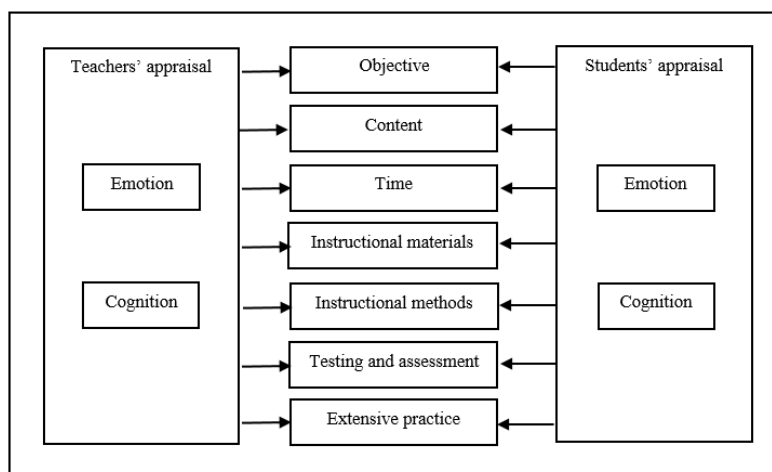


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

4. Findings and discussion

The statistically significant differences between teachers' and students' appraisal of the ITEC English curriculum were made through Chi-square tests on the questionnaire data. These results were presented in seven aforementioned constructs of the ITEC English curriculum, that is, objectives, content, time allotment, instructional methods, testing and assessment, instructional materials, extensive practice and classification as well.

Table 1. Objectives

Item: statement	Descriptive statistics		Inferential statistics		
	Teacher: <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Student: <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	χ^2	df	<i>p</i>
I1: I like the objectives of the ITEC English curriculum.	4.33(0.72)	3.84(1.19)	7.872 ^a	4	0.096
I2: I think that the ITEC English curriculum establishes its clear objectives.	4.67(0.45)	4.52(0.86)	4.424 ^a	4	0.355
I3: I believe that the objectives of the ITEC English curriculum are achievable.	3.53(0.74)	3.61(1.11)	4.145 ^a	4	0.389

Emotionally, the big proportion of the student sample liked the objectives of the ITEC English curriculum (Item 1, *M* = 3.84, *SD* = 1.19). Similarly, most of the teachers favoured the target curriculum regarding its objectives (Item 1, *M* = 4.33, *SD* = 0.72). The result of a Chi-square analysis for Item 1 implies no significant difference between the teachers and students in term of being in favour

of the objectives ($\chi^2 = 7.872$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.096 > 0.050$). It means that both the teachers and the students liked the objectives of the ITEC English curriculum.

Cognitively, the majority of student informants thought that the ITEC English curriculum established its clear objectives (Item 2, $M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.86$), and many of them also believed that these objectives were achievable (Item 3, $M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.11$). Likewise, all the teacher participants postulated that the ITEC English curriculum established its plain objectives (Item 2, $M = 4.67$, $SD = 0.45$) and some of them believed in the possible attainment of the objectives of this curriculum (Item 3, $M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.74$). The result of the Chi-square analysis for Item 2 shows that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of the teachers and students when they approved of the clarity of the objectives ($\chi^2 = 4.424$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.355 > 0.050$). Furthermore, as it can be seen from Item 3, there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers' and the students' appraisal of achievability of the objectives: the observed value of χ^2 was 4.145 with a significance of 0.389, which was greater than the alpha value of 0.050 set at the beginning of the research ($df = 4$).

In terms of the first aspect of the ITEC English curriculum, i.e., objectives, both the teachers and the students exhibited their favourable feelings towards this aspect. Additionally, both these subjects considered that the objectives were crystal clear and achievable. In principle, instructional objectives of a course of a curriculum are as 'specific statements that describe the particular knowledge, behaviours, and/or skills that the learner will be expected to know or perform at the end of a course or programme' (Brown, 1995, p. 73). In fact, the ITEC English curriculum was established to test and train students' English abilities in order to ensure they could afford their academic programmes which were holistically taught in English as well as help them get the IELTS certificate before graduating. As a result, studying English at ITEC was the obliged requirement when students choose to study their bachelor degrees here. The English programme and the academic programmes were run at the same time and students needed to study both programmes simultaneously until they achieved the required IELTS certificate. In addition, the curriculum consisted of eight courses equivalent to eight levels, including Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate, English for Academic Purposes, IELTS 1, IELTS 2 and ITP-IELTS Test Preparation. And each course had its own specific objectives; for example, '*this is the beginning level of the ITEC English curriculum, designed to develop English basis and to help learners acquire and practice English. This level concentrates on developing grammar points, and four skills. Besides, pronunciation is also emphasised through pronunciation exercises of vowels, consonants, syllables, stress, intonation, linking sounds*' (Elementary level). Luckily, both the teachers and the students felt and recognised these pre-determined objectives. Until they capture the objectives, they can plan and control their teaching–learning process effectively. They will know what and why to do, and they probably make endeavour to accomplish these objectives.

Table 2. Content

Item: Statement	Descriptive statistics		Inferential statistics		
	Teacher: $M(SD)$	Student: $M(SD)$	χ^2	df	p
I4: I find the content of the ITEC English curriculum interesting.	3.80(0.78)	2.77(1.15)	11.250 ^a	4	0.008
I5: I consider that the content of the ITEC English curriculum is suitable to students' level in terms of its language and topics.	4.00(0.76)	3.86(1.16)	7.978 ^a	4	0.072
I6: I believe that the content of the ITEC English curriculum is effective in developing students' language skills and areas.	4.20(0.51)	3.98(1.08)	8.235 ^a	4	0.069

As it can be observed from Table 2, while the majority of the teachers found the content of the ITEC English curriculum interesting (Item 4, $M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.78$), only some of the participating students felt it fascinating (Item 4, $M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.15$). The result of the Chi-square analysis in Table 2 proves that there was a statistically significant difference between the teachers' and the students' feelings of

the curriculum content ($\chi^2 = 11.250$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.008 < 0.050$). The first question (Q1) of the interview was used to account for this disparity. Indeed, when the researchers asked '*Is its content interesting and motivating?*' (Q1), only half of the interviewed students, including S1, S2, S4, S5 and S10, replied 'Yes'. However, the other half with the five students of S3, S6, S7, S8 and S9 were sceptical of the attractiveness of the content embracing the ITEC English curriculum. They confessed that the content was only useful and constructive but not interesting. To elaborate, S6 and S8 admitted that:

I do not think so. The content is only useful to my language development. By contrast, some parts of the courses of the ITEC English curriculum are quite boring. (S6-Q1)

It seems that the content of the curriculum is mostly to help me build up language skills and areas such as grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing and so on. I want further; for instance, cultures and realistic living situations and updated information. (S8-Q1)

On the contrary, through the interview results, there were three out of four teachers, including T1, T3 and T4, agreed that they found pleasure in the content of the ITEC English curriculum.

In another point, it seemed true that the big number of the teachers and the students shared the same judgement on the suitability and the effectiveness of the content of the target curriculum. To be more specific, a lot of the teachers considered that the content of the ITEC English curriculum was suitable to their learners' level in terms of its language and topics (Item 5, $M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.76$). A large number of the students also unveiled this appraisal (Item 5, $M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.16$). The result of the Chi-square test analysis for Item 5 indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers' and the students' cognitive appraisal when both the subjects agreed on the suitability of the content and the students themselves: the observed value of χ^2 was 7.978 with a significance of 0.072, which was greater than the alpha value of 0.050 set at the beginning of the research ($df = 4$).

What is more, many student participants believed that the content of the ITEC English curriculum was effective in developing their language skills and areas (Item 6, $M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.08$). Congruently, a big proportion of the teacher sample recognised this effectiveness (Item 6, $M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.51$). The result of the Chi-square test analysis for Item 6 indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers' and the students' cognitive appraisal when both the subjects agreed on the effectiveness of the content and the students' achievement: the observed value of χ^2 was 8.235 with a significance of 0.069, which was greater than the alpha value of 0.050 set at the beginning of the research ($df = 4$).

Regarding the second aspect of the ITEC English curriculum, i.e., content, while only some students displayed their favour related to the attractiveness of the content as they reckoned that the content lacked the introduction of updated information and sociocultural aspects, many students believed in the suitability and the usefulness of the content as it helped them develop language skills and knowledge gradually and especially introduced test-taking skills to approach the IELTS target score. By contrast, the large number of the teachers positively disclosed both their affective and cognitive appraisals of the attractiveness, the suitability and the usefulness, respectively. Indeed, as described in the ITEC English curriculum the content areas included vocabulary, grammar, phonology, listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are inherently the most important elements of any language, and they are foundations for the students to take the IELTS exams successfully, and for them to communicate in real life. However, the only drawback regarding the content areas of the target curriculum lay on the lack of sociocultural focus when the researchers took a glance at the description of the courses of the curriculum. Theoretically, in language learning, culture plays a critical role since the language makes communication possible, allowing members of a society to engage in social and interactive activities that help them be as active participants within the academic society (Pourkalhor & Esfandiari, 2017). When cultural elements are integrated in the instructional curriculum, the university students' language learning becomes more stimulating and meaningful although the core mission of the curriculum still was to build up and sharpen the students' language knowledge and skills for the IELTS target band. Cultural elements play a pivotal role of formulating their topical

knowledge and sociocultural understandings, helping them perform writing and speaking sections of IELTS examination convincingly and impressively. For instance, to the Speaking section, when the students are taught the sociocultural knowledge, they will succeed in making inferences about the social meanings or values of utterances (Canale, 1983). Moreover, the integration and emphasis of cultural values in the curriculum can provoke the students' motivation and engagement. Generally speaking, there should be equal emphasis on language skills, language knowledge and cultural awareness.

Table 3. Time

Item: Statement	Descriptive statistics		Inferential statistics		
	Teacher: <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Student: <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	χ^2	df	<i>p</i>
I7: I like the time allotment of the ITEC English curriculum.	3.47(0.99)	2.76(1.20)	21.211 ^a	4	0.001
I8: I think that the time allotment of courses in the ITEC English curriculum is logical and practical.	4.07(0.80)	2.68(1.04)	22.255 ^a	4	0.000

As Table 3 illustrates, only some students preferred the time allotment of the ITEC English curriculum (Item 7, $M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.20$), whereas many teachers were in favour of this facet (Item 7, $M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.99$). The result of the Chi-square test analysis for Item 7 confirms that there was a statistically significant difference between the participating teachers and the students in their preference of time frame and allotment ($\chi^2 = 21.211$, $df = 4$; $p = 0.001 < 0.050$). Based on the qualitative data arisen from the interview, only three out of the ten student interviewees (S1, S5 and S8) positively responded to the second question 'Do you like the time frame and allotment of the ITEC English curriculum?' (Q2). Meanwhile, the other students (S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, S9, and S10) seemed to dislike the time frame of the target curriculum as it was insufficient for them to accomplish the given courses successfully. Contrariwise, all the four teacher interviewees (T1, T2, T3 and T4) avowed their positive responses.

While the majority of the teachers thought that the time allotment of courses in the ITEC English curriculum was logical and practical (Item 8, $M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.80$), the minority of the students approved of the logic and the practicality of the time allotment (Item 8, $M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.04$). The result of the Chi-square analysis for Item 8 shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups of the teachers and students when they appraised the logic and practicality of temporal aspect of the ITEC English curriculum ($\chi^2 = 22.255$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.000 < 0.050$). Qualitatively, the third interview question 'Do you think the time of the ITEC English curriculum is allotted logically and practically? Why?'(Q3) was raised, but only six student interviewees including S1, S2, S4, S5, S8 and S10 responded to it positively. Putting it differently, they agreed that the time of the ITEC English curriculum was allotted logically and practically. On the other hand, the other four students with S3, S6, S7 and S9 refused this logic and practicality of time. On the whole, they united that the time of each course of the ITEC English curriculum seemed to be insufficient for them to fulfil the objectives; at the same time, they thought that the time schedule was inconvenient and available for them to attend the class. By way of illustration, S7 confessed:

Each course only lasts 10 weeks. I reckon that it is insufficient. I could hardly complete the requirements of this course and catch up with the lessons. This shortage of time can hamper my progress as much as possible. (S7-Q3)

Contradictorily, all the four teacher interviewees (T1, T2, T3 and T4) accepted the logic and practicality of time of the target curriculum. They posited that the time allotment had been designed carefully. For example, T4 stated that:

I found that time frame of this given curriculum is proportionate for each course, which has been studied carefully. Each has the length of 10weeks in total. I believe that it is actually sensible to most of the students. (T4-Q3)

Unlike the two aspects as earlier, apropos of the third aspects of the ITEC English curriculum, i.e., time frame and allotment, many students did not divulge their strong favour on it. Likewise, only a small number of students considered that the time was logical and practical. Nonetheless, most of the teachers expressed their favour and their beliefs in the practicality and feasibility of time allotment. It is possible that to many less able students, they consciously thought that the length of 10weeks for each course was inadequate. Consequently, the curriculum administrators can further think of how to expand the time for the students to catch up with the course in their own pace. To give an example, it will be better if the students are granted more chances to collaborate with their teachers and assistants online so that they can ask these facilitators about whatever they have still not understood. As a matter of fact, if the time is not convenient and feasible, the ratio of the students who tend to withdraw and are absent from the course will increase.

Table 4. Instructional methods

Item: statement	Descriptive statistics		Inferential statistics		
	Teacher: <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Student: <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	χ^2	df	p
I9: I like the instructional methods of the ITEC English curriculum.	2.80(1.08)	3.97(1.26)	20.416 ^a	4	0.006
I10: The instructional methods of the ITEC English curriculum can enable students to develop language skills and areas.	4.40(0.51)	4.16(1.15)	2.452 ^a	4	0.486
I11: The instructional methods of the ITEC English curriculum are appropriate to students' existing level.	4.07(0.79)	3.90(1.25)	8.037 ^a	4	0.091

As shown in Table 4, while the majority of the students preferred the instructional methods prescribed by the ITEC English curriculum (Item 9, $M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.26$), only some of the participating teachers were fond of the instructional methods of this curriculum (Item 9, $M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.08$). The result of the Chi-square analysis in Table 4 proves that there was a statistically significant difference between the teachers' and the students' feelings of the curriculum's pre-determined methods ($\chi^2 = 20.416$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.006 < 0.050$). The fourth question of the interview was used to account for this disparity. As the qualitative data found in the interview through the fourth question 'Do you find the teaching methods of this curriculum interesting?' (Q4), six out of the interviewed students found that the instructional methods of this curriculum were interesting, excluding S1, S5, S6 and S10. To the opposing group, they felt that these instructional methods were normal and not new. To the supporting group, the students felt that the instructional methods executed by the lecturers and assistants were impressive and attractive due to their way of providing impressive and comprehensible examples, and their way of setting up work arrangement. Meanwhile, through the interview results, there were up to three out of four interviewed teachers, including T1, T3 and T4, who did not find their pleasure in the instructional methods of the ITEC English curriculum. The most common reason was that these instructional methods were only suitable to the course objectives in lieu of their preferential classroom practice. For example, T1 stated that:

No, I do not like the teaching methods much because these methods are not really stimulating and attracting to me. They are not actually compatible with my favourable styles. I reckon they are conducive to benefiting my students. (T1-Q4)

Cognitively, it seemed obvious that the big number of the teachers and the students shared the same judgement on the appropriateness and the effectiveness of the instructional methods of the target curriculum. In specific, a lot of the teachers considered that the instructional methods of the ITEC English curriculum could enable their students to develop language skills and areas (Item 10,

$M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.51$). A large number of students also unveiled this positive appraisal (Item 10, $M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.15$). The result of the Chi-square test analysis for Item 10 implies that there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers' and the students' cognitive appraisal when both the subjects agreed on the helpfulness of the instructional methods and the students themselves: the observed value of χ^2 was 2.452 with a significance of 0.486, which was greater than the alpha value of 0.050 set at the beginning of the research ($df = 4$).

In addition, many student participants believed that the instructional methods of the ITEC English curriculum were appropriate to their students' existing level (Item 11, $M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.25$). Congruently, a big proportion of the teacher sample recognised this appropriateness (Item 11, $M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.79$). The result of the Chi-square test analysis for Item 11 indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers' and the students' cognitive appraisal when both the subjects agreed on the relevance of the instructional methods and the students' level ($\chi^2 = 8.037$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.091 > 0.050$).

To the realm of instructional methods of the ITEC English curriculum, there was significant difference between the teachers' and the students' appraisal. In specific, the big proportion of the students showed their positive affection and cognition on the instructional methods: impression, usefulness and appropriateness, respectively. Although most of the teachers believed in the usefulness and appropriateness of the instructional methods on their students' language learning (e.g., cognitive appraisal), some of them did not find these instructional methods impressive (e.g., affective appraisal). According to them, these instructional methods of this curriculum could be advantageous to the students' language development and they were harmonious with the students' potential cognition and language capacities. Yet, based on their emotions, these instructional methods were not new, quite rigid and unsuitable to the teachers' preferential teaching styles. That could be the reason why many teachers were reluctant to follow the given courses when they mentioned it. Simply, the instructional methods and delivery ways in the target curriculum followed 'the instructional materials very closely, ensuring that the students performed well in the tests and preparing them for the obliged examinations' (Shaw, 2006, p. 47). Thus, the teachers discovered that while the teaching methods and delivery ways were beneficial for the students to attain the pre-set objectives and to meet the requirements, their rigidity seemed to not attract the teachers' interest and not be relevant to the teachers' preferential styles. Therefore, a negotiation between the teachers and the curriculum administrators should have taken place so that all the students can be more engaged with the lessons, and the teachers can become more motivated and interested in their curriculum implementation.

Table 5. Testing and assessment

Item: statement	Descriptive statistics		Inferential statistics		
	Teacher: $M(SD)$	Student: $M(SD)$	χ^2	df	p
I12: I favour the assessment modes of the ITEC English curriculum.	3.87(0.74)	3.59(1.17)	8.947 ^a	4	0.069
I13: The assessment modes of the ITEC English curriculum are reasonable.	4.47(0.74)	4.10(1.06)	5.454 ^a	4	0.125
I14: The assessment modes of the ITEC English curriculum are useful as learner participation and language achievement are emphasised concurrently.	4.53(0.64)	4.10(1.21)	8.504 ^a	4	0.078

Based on the data of Item 12, a big proportion of the student sample possessed their positive affective attitudes towards the assessment modes of the ITEC English curriculum ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.17$). Compatibly, a large number of the teacher participants also emotionally favoured the assessment modes of the ITEC English curriculum ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.74$). As Table 5 displays, there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers' and the students' preference of the

assessment modes of the ITEC English curriculum. This is confirmed by the observed Chi-square value of 8.947 with the probability of 0.069 greater than the alpha value of 0.050.

Cognitively, the overwhelming majority of the student community reckoned that the assessment modes attached to the language curriculum were reasonable (Item 13, $M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.06$). Consonantly, most teachers reckoned that the assessment modes of the ITEC English curriculum were reasonable (Item 13, $M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.74$). As it can be revealed from the result of the Chi-square test in Table 5, there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers and the students for Item 13. Inferentially, the teachers and students had the same point of view on the reasonability of testing and assessment modes. This was confirmed by the observed Chi-square value of 5.454 with the probability of 0.125 which was greater than the alpha value of 0.050 for 4 degrees of freedom.

In another point, almost all the teachers postulated that the assessment modes of the ITEC English curriculum were useful as learner participation and language achievement were emphasised concurrently (Item 14, $M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.64$). Comparably, more than three-quarters of the surveyed students reckoned that the assessment modes of the ITEC English curriculum were useful as learner participation and language achievement was emphasised concurrently (Item 14, $M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.21$). The result of a Chi-square analysis for Item 14 shows that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of the teachers and students when they appraised the usefulness of testing and assessment of the ITEC English curriculum ($\chi^2 = 8.504$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.078 > 0.050$).

When it comes to the fifth domain of the ITEC English curriculum, that is, testing and assessment, both the teachers and the students shared the same voice, such as favourable emotions and positive perceptions towards it. Indeed, most of the teachers and the students were in favour of the assessment modes (e.g., affective appraisal) and they thought that the assessment of this language curriculum was reasonable and useful (e.g., cognitive appraisal). According to their opinions, the usefulness of the testing and assessment lied on the concurrent involvement of class participation and language achievement. To be evident, the ITEC English curriculum consisted of several evaluative forms, including classwork (30%), mid-term tests (20%), final tests (40%) and participation notice (10%). Thus, it could be persuasive that if the students did not attend and participate in in-class learning activities, they could make a loss of 40% of total score; as a consequence of this, they would fail to move the higher level. On the other hand, when the teachers were present at their class, they had to work and observed carefully and attentively. Their active roles were reflected on how they arranged learning activities among the students and evaluated exactly how the students engaged in the given activities. Generally speaking, the assessment modes of the ITEC English curriculum were effective and reasonable to encourage the students' frequent attendance and active engagement, alongside their language performance. This was considered as a good side of the language curriculum.

Table 6. Instructional materials

Item: statement	Descriptive statistics		Inferential statistics		
	Teacher: $M(SD)$	Student: $M(SD)$	χ^2	df	p
I15: The instructional materials used in the ITEC English curriculum are appealing.	4.47(0.74)	4.07(1.09)	5.222 ^a	4	0.118
I16: The instructional materials of the ITEC English curriculum stimulate students' interest in English learning.	4.40(0.74)	4.45(0.90)	1.600 ^a	4	0.582
I17: The instructional materials of the ITEC English curriculum are useful to students.	4.33(0.73)	4.02(1.15)	7.206 ^a	4	0.071

Emotionally, most of the participating teachers felt that the instructional materials used in the ITEC English curriculum were appealing (Item 15, $M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.74$). From Table 6, many teachers thought that these instructional materials stimulated their university students' motivation in English language learning (Item 16, $M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.74$). Likewise, the overwhelming majority of the students felt that the materials used in the ITEC English curriculum were appealing (Item 15, $M = 4.07$,

SD = 1.09). Consequently, the materials of the ITEC English curriculum stimulated their interest in English learning, as acquiesced by nearly all of them (Item 16, $M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.90$). The result of the Chi-square analysis for Item 15 shows that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of the teachers and students when they talked about the attractiveness of the instructional materials of the ITEC English curriculum ($\chi^2 = 5.222$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.118 > 0.050$). Moreover, the result of the Chi-square analysis for Item 16 implies that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of the teachers and students when they considered the stimulation of the instructional materials of the ITEC English curriculum on the students' engagement ($\chi^2 = 1.600$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.582 > 0.050$).

Cognitively, most of the language teachers viewed that the materials attached to the ITEC English curriculum were useful to their students' language acquisition (Item 17, $M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.73$). In a similar vein, a large number of the students believed that the instructional materials of the ITEC English curriculum were useful to them (Item 17, $M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.15$). From Table 6, the result of the Chi-square analysis implies that there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers' and the students' judgement on the usefulness of the instructional materials of the ITEC English curriculum ($\chi^2 = 7.206$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.071 > 0.050$).

With regard to the sixth aspect of the ITEC English curriculum, i.e., instructional materials, both the teachers and the students displayed shared the same view on the materials adhered to the courses, including highly positive affective and cognitive appraisals. In specific, they felt that these instructional materials were appealing and had strong gravity to motivate the students' language learning. Additionally, they considered that these materials were useful to their teaching–learning process. In principle, instructional materials refer to a wide array of instructional resources that are used in language classrooms, such as textbooks, software, computers, projects, visual aids and homework sheets, which plays a paramount role and represents the framework within which both teachers and learners proceed in language classrooms (Ur, 1999). Instructional materials are regarded as an essential mainstay in the teaching and learning process, one that is as effective as teachers themselves because they provide teachers with a working plan that outlines the most appropriate approaches to teaching and learning various tasks (Akbari, 2008). For learners, textbooks represent a primary source of input and contact with the language, particularly in EFL contexts where the target language is not heard outside the confines of the classroom (Richards, 2001). In this curriculum, the materials consisted of *Life Elementary*, *Life Pre- Intermediate*, *Life Intermediate*, *IELTS Introduction*, *Complete IELTS Bands 4-5*, *Writing for IELTS 4.5-6.0*, *Active Reading Skills*, *Ready for IELTS*, *Supplementary for Reading and Listening sections*, *Supplementary for Reading and Listening sections* and *Self-designed materials by teachers*. These materials were reported to provide useful lessons for formulating and sharpening language skills and knowledge which were ingredients of IELTS examinations. According to Tomlinson (2012), materials should encompass five traits: (1) informative (informing the learner about the target language), (2) instructional (guiding the learner in practicing the language), (3) experiential (providing the learner with experience of the language in use), (4) eliciting (encouraging the learner to use the language) and (5) exploratory (helping the learner to make discoveries about the language). Interestingly, these materials complied with these five qualities, in which the students were exposed to a variety of tasks and exercises in both recognition and production levels. It is believed that these materials can help the university students to approach the IELTS target band score as effectively as possible. Undoubtedly, both the teachers and the students appraised the attractiveness and value of the used materials positively.

Affectively, the majority of the teacher participants showed their preference to the ITEC English curriculum since it provided extra activities for their learners' extensive practice (Item 18, $M=4.07$, $SD=0.80$). Similarly, many students were also fond of the ITEC English curriculum since it offered extra activities for their extensive practice outside the class (Item 18, $M=4.00$, $SD=1.20$).

Table 7. Extensive practice

Item: Statement	Descriptive statistics		Inferential statistics		
	Teacher: <i>M(S.D.)</i>	Student: <i>M(S.D.)</i>	χ^2	df	<i>p</i>
I18: I am fond of the ITEC English curriculum since it offers students with extensive practice.	4.07(0.80)	4.00(1.20)	2.084 ^a	4	0.369
I19: The ITEC English curriculum is useful since it can expand students' learning experience with extensive practice.	4.47(0.52)	3.97(1.05)	7.442 ^a	4	0.087

Notably, for cognitive appraisal, all the teacher participants acknowledged the usefulness of the ITEC English curriculum by its extra activities which could encourage the students to learn further (Item 19, $M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.52$). Likewise, a large number of the students united that the ITEC English curriculum was inherently useful since it could expand the students' further learning experience with extra activities (Item 19, $M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.05$).

To the domain of extensive practice of the ITEC English curriculum, like the aspect of instructional materials above, both the teachers and the students exhibited their positive emotion and cognition on it. They emotionally approved of and believed in the practicality of the extra activities. The in-class time was insufficient and unsatisfactory to the students themselves. Strikingly, the ITEC English curriculum also supplied the students with extra activities and tasks for them to practice at home. To give evidence, the ITEC English curriculum provided supplementary materials for the students to further learn and practice outside classroom, such as *IELTS Cambridge 1-13*, *Barron Test Plus*, and *Official Cambridge Guide for IELTS*, *Cambridge IELTS Plus Test and Essential IELTS Practice Test*. In reality, each course only lasted 10 weeks, four meetings per week, 3 hours per meeting. Therefore, the motto here was 'the more learners practice, the more proficient they become'. It is clear that these extra materials could provide extra activities (e.g., mock tests) and stimulate their students to practice the mock tests, helping them become more confident of and familiar to what would happen in an actual examination. In short, this aspect could add value to the curriculum.

5. Conclusion

There were some similarities and dissimilarities between the teachers' and the students' appraisals of the ITEC English curriculum in terms of its different aspects.

Considering the objectives of the ITEC English curriculum, both the students and the teachers concurrently showed their positive, affective and cognitive evaluation towards these objectives. Affectively, both the subjects preferred these objectives. Cognitively, they viewed that the pre-determined objectives were clear and achievable.

In terms of the content of the ITEC English curriculum, many students did not feel the content stimulating, while most of the teachers showed their contradictory tendency (i.e., affective appraisal). The students reckoned that the content lacked an emphasis of culture elements and updated realistic situations. To cognitive appraisal, a large number of the students believed in the usefulness of the content wherein it helped them develop language skills and knowledge gradually and especially introduced them test-taking skills to approach the IELTS target score. Similarly, the teachers also exhibited their positive perceptions.

Regarding the time allotment of the ITEC English curriculum, most of the teachers disclosed their positive affection and cognition. Specifically, they liked the time allotment of the target curriculum, believed that time frame and distribution for each course was proportionate. Conversely, many students did not unravel their favour on it which partly hampered their active attendance and participation into the lessons. Based on their cognitive evaluation, only a small number of the students

considered that the time was logical and practical, while the rest supposed that time amount of each course was insufficient (e.g., 10 weeks per course) and inconvenient (e.g., constantly happen).

In respect of the instructional methods of the ITEC English curriculum, while a big proportion of the target students liked its teaching methods, many teachers divulged their negative emotional indications. To elaborate, the teachers did not feel that these teaching methods were impressive and were not in line with their preferential styles. To cognitive evaluation, both the teachers and the students highly believed in the usefulness of the teaching methods and delivery techniques, especially in developing and sharpening their language skills and test-taking skills.

When it comes to the testing and assessment of the ITEC English curriculum, most of the students were favoured of the assessment modes (e.g., affective appraisal) and they thought that the assessment of this language curriculum was reasonable (e.g., cognitive appraisal). According to their opinions, the reasonability of the assessment lied on the concurrent involvement of class participation and language achievement. The teachers also indicated their same tendencies of emotions and perceptions as the students.

With regard to the instructional materials of the ITEC English curriculum, both the teachers and the students showed a positive trend of emotions and perceptions. Affectively, these participants felt that the materials were appealing and motivating. Cognitively, a large number of the university students and the teachers had their positive perceptions of and beliefs in the usefulness of the materials on developing the students' language skills gradually and systematically.

Apropos of the extracurricular activities of the ITEC English curriculum, both the teachers and the students displayed their positive affection and cognition towards it. Affectively, both the subjects were fond of this aspect. Cognitively, both these subjects approved that the extra activities succeeded in offering extensive practice to the students outside classrooms.

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