Implications of the Curriculum Review in Literature in English and English Language in Higher Education

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Abstract: *The dialectic on the implications of the curriculum review for Literature in English and English Language in Higher Education is one of the emerging trends. Research shows that the two disciplines are pedagogically symbiotic, yet some institutions of higher learning separate them, oblivious of their synergetic relationship. Separatist teaching denies students the acquisition of cross-cutting pedagogical benefits, implying a need to review the curriculum for the two disciplines. This study explored the implications of the curriculum review for Literature in English and English Language in higher education. The investigation adopted a qualitative approach of a multiple case study type. Data were collected from face-to-face interviews with lecturers and focus group discussions with year three students purposely sampled from the Language and Social Education and English Language and Linguistics departments. Data were interpreted and analysed thematically. Language in/for/with content theory and Schema theory formed the basis for this study. The findings revealed the implications of the curriculum review, such as disciplined integrated pedagogy, stakeholders' (students, parents, and lecturers) inputs in the curriculum review, and the training of lecturers in integrated pedagogical approaches. The study concluded that the involvement of all stakeholders in the review can improve students' performance. It recommends inclusivity and implementation of integrated pedagogy between the two disciplines in higher education.*

Keywords: *curriculum review, implications, English Language, Higher Education, integrated pedagogy, Literature in English*

1. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum review in Literature in English and English Language in higher education has been discussed for years, consistent with the idea that developing an integrative curriculum has become a globally discussed issue and challenging for all higher education institutions (Khan & Law, 2015). Furthermore, scholars such as Banda and Kakoma (2020) state that it is vital as a country and the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) to revise, contextualise and integrate the curriculum for the two disciplines as that would significantly improve students' results. They further emphasise that English Language and Literature in English are related subjects, so there is a case to argue for their integration. The assertions imply that the intrinsic interface between the two disciplines points to the integrated pedagogy, which is more of a reason to review the curriculum. They also note that the curriculum review should be relevant to the university setting since their vision differs. It should address the institutions' vision, intentions, goals and objectives as that would improve students' performance in the classroom.

Taking the discussion further is Maphosa et al.'s (2014) observation that teaching, learning, assessment and university products all have a bearing on meaningful curriculum development, which is only possible if academic staff members thoroughly understand the curriculum, its design, principles, and processes. It can be inferred that the successful academic performance of a particular university is determined by the quality of the structure of its curriculum and how the lecturers comprehend, interpret, and implement it. In the context of this study, teaching and learning of the two disciplines can improve when the curriculum is revised and enhanced to promote integrated pedagogy in institutions of higher learning. In the study that investigated curriculum development in higher education literature in the USA, the UK, Australia, and Canada in 2021, the findings indicate that curriculum development in institutions of higher learning has received increasing scrutiny and

attention even though there is a notable lack of connectivity among the studies conducted (Posillico et al., 2022). The scholars also state that curriculum is the main marketable product of higher education on which their finances largely depend. By implication, the curriculum is the backbone of any institution of higher learning because its structure determines its existence and financial survival. It is a sought-after product that advertises the institutions' policies, vision, and intentions.

Furthermore, in the study carried out in Sweden on an examination of the academic curricula from all universities and university colleges that offered English studies in Sweden in 2016, the study revealed that curricula are mainly developed based on the intentions of each institution, as well as the financial resources and the competencies available (Dodou, 2020). The scholar also emphasises that curricular development from this perspective involves strategic decisions about what specific knowledge to impart. It can be inferred from the assertions that the curriculum review for every university is determined by its vision, mission statement, financial capacity, available resources, expertise, and the competencies it wants to impart to novice professionals. In the context of this study, the curriculum review for Literature in English and English Language could also be implemented based on the attributes mentioned earlier. Moreover, the curriculum is also considered the backbone of the well-being and effectiveness of all educational institutions, including universities (Khan & Law, 2015). The scholars further state that developing curriculum is culturally and nationally bound, though different nations have different policies, programs, and institutions that guide and supervise curriculum development. The assertions demonstrate the significance of the review of the curriculum of any institution. Studies in this area concentrated on the curriculum, its importance, relevance in institutions of higher learning, its contextualisation, relevance, stakeholders and their expertise, and the university's intentions when the curriculum is developed. There is, however, still a shortage of the implications of the curriculum review for Literature in English and English Language in Higher Education. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the implications and benefits of reviewing the curriculum for Literature in English and English Language in higher education.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Curriculum review seems to be given little attention in some institutions of higher learning, especially concerning the implementation of the integrated pedagogy of literature in English and the English language. The observation is consistent with Hyun's (2009) statement that little attention has been given to the evolution of curriculum, its review and transformation in higher education institutions. The statement implies that the review of the curriculum and its implementation is not adequately considered a key aspect in institutions of higher learning. Higher learning institutions depend on a well-structured, inclusive, and flexible curriculum. Moreover, Literature in English and English Language are not treated as pedagogically closely related disciplines, which is in line with Sun's (2023) observation that English Language and Literature in English are taught separately in many institutions of higher learning. The separation has proved problematic as no teachers are solely qualified in Literature in English. Still, in the Zambian scenario, the teachers qualified in the English language are required to teach it as it is part of their training at the tertiary level (Banda & Kakoma, 2020).

On the contrary, Teachers attest that integration would balance the performance of both subjects, meaning that they would complement each other (Banda & Kakoma, 2020). In the case of NUL, student-teachers in the faculties of Education and Humanities who major in English Language are not compelled to major in Literature in English or vice versa. As a result, they cannot competently teach the other disciplines they have not majored in. However, the adopted integrated curriculum in Lesotho expects a teacher of English or Literature to be able to teach both disciplines at Lesotho Junior Certificate (LJC) and Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE). The challenges student teachers faceconcerning the separatist study of the two disciplines point to a need to review the curriculum for implementing integrated pedagogy. Khan and Law (2015) take the discussion further and argue that designing an appropriate curriculum is considered the basis for high-quality programs and services, regardless of the type of educational programs and institution.

Similarly, developing a curriculum in higher education institutions should be a prime concern for all stakeholders, especially educators, policymakers, government, parents, and society (Alberta Education, 2012). There is, therefore, a growing need for higher education institutions to respond to

the changing environment in a positive and learner-centred manner through quality curriculum; for example, the competence-based curriculum produces graduates better prepared for their future management tasks. The curriculum should be in line with the current trends in education; therefore, it should respond to the demands of society and produce professionals who would be able to respond, cope and adapt to the challenges within the working force. Therefore, the study aims to explore the implications and benefits of the review/ development of the curriculum for Literature in English and English Language in higher education.

1.3. Research Questions

- What are the implications of a review of the curriculum for Literature in English and English Language in institutions of higher learning?

- What are the benefits of the curriculum review in higher education?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Constructivist Paradigm

The constructivist paradigm was used to guide this study. The paradigm is premised on the axiom that reality/knowledge is socially constructed; therefore, there is a multiplicity of socially constructed realities (Mertens, 2005). In line with reality construction is the comprehension that truth is a social construction dependent on the meanings people ascribe to and their own experiences and interactions with others (Cilliers et al., 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The scholars' assertions imply that knowledge/ truth is authentic and believable when shared by those who experience the situation because they can describe it better. In this article, students and lecturers from the faculties of Education and Humanities were the co-researchers affected by the curriculum review between the two disciplines. The constructivist paradigm is used in this study because of its premise that multiple truths are socially constructed by those knowledgeable about the situation. Language supports the study in/for/with content theory and Schema theory.

Language in/for/ Language in/for/with content theory advocates for teaching English Language through stimulating content. According to Lazar (1993), literature should be seen as an irreplaceable resource for motivating material. It also encourages language acquisition and expands students' language awareness and interpretation abilities. It is therefore highly recommended that Literature in English and the English Language be integrated because the former uses raw materials from the English Language (Ogle & Blachowicz, 2008). The above statements imply that literature is the best tool for language teaching and vice versa. It helps and motivates students to acquire and learn the language effectively because the content of literature, in most cases, is familiar to students and, therefore, fascinating. Literature also represents culture, as does language, so learning a language in a close-to-home environment (literature and culture) enhances language acquisition. Thuketana and Makhabo (2022) attest that language concurrently replicates the culture and is influenced and shaped by it; language and culture are interdependent. Students concentrate more when the subject matter is familiar and stimulating. Linguistic and communicative competencies are also requisites in teaching the two disciplines. Therefore, the theory is relevant in this study because of the motivating aspect that Literature in English provides in teaching and learning English, which aligns with Ahmed's (2014) claim that literature offers stirring material for English Language and thus improves proficiency in the target language. Based on the pedagogical interface, integrated pedagogical curriculum review is necessary for higher education. Such a curriculum is believed to enhance learning and teaching, thus, students' performance in the two disciplines.

2.2. Language in/for/with

Language in/for/with content learning theory also formed the basis for this study. The theory advocates for the teaching of the English Language through stimulating content. Sharing the same viewpoint is Lazar's(1993) assertion that literature should be seen as an irreplaceable resource of motivating material. It also encourages language acquisition and expands students' language awareness and interpretation abilities. It is therefore highly recommended that Literature in English and English Language be integrated because Literature in English uses raw materials from the English Language (Ogle & Blachowicz, 2008). The above statements imply that literature is the best tool for

language teaching and vice versa. It helps and motivates students to acquire and learn the language effectively because the content of literature, in most cases, is familiar to students and, therefore, fascinating. Also, literature represents culture, as does language; learning a language in a close-to-home environment (literature and culture) is ideal. Hence, Thuketana and Makhabo(2022) attest that language concurrently replicates culture and is influenced and shaped by it. Language and culture are interdependent. Students concentrate more when the subject matter is familiar and stimulating. Linguistic and communicative competencies are also requisites in teaching the two disciplines. This process points to the inherent relationship between the two disciplines. Therefore, the theory is relevant in this study because of the motivating aspect that Literature in English provides in teaching and learning English, which aligns with Ahmed's (2014) claim that literature offers stirring material for English Language and thus improves proficiency in the target language. Language in/for/with content theory is relevant in this article because of its emphasis on language acquisition in a stimulating environment that literature provides, thus pointing to the simultaneous acquisition of language and content. Based on the pedagogical interface, integrated pedagogical curriculum reform is necessary in higher education. Such a curriculum is believed to enhance students' performance in the two disciplines.

2.3. Schema Theory

Schema theory is also used in this study because of its relevance to the constructivist theory about knowledge construction. Axelrod (1973) opines on schema theory, which is about how a person observes and makes sense of a complex environment. Axelrod indicates that schema describes a person's perceptual and cognitive processes. Pankin (2013) also states that schema is based on experience and is accessed to guide the current understanding or action. That is, acquiring new knowledge depends on the old one. In totality, the scholars mentioned above' postulations on schema theory mean that schemata are experiences and knowledge of life that individual human beings possess that guide new knowledge. The experience students already have helps them to interpret, understand, and critically analyse the new knowledge. The cognitive structure helps students learn new information easily because schemata work is the stepping stone to learning new concepts (Pankin, 2013). In this study, when students study Literature in English, the linguistic schemata such as communicative and linguistic competences they already have become handy in interpreting, understanding, and learning new literary concepts.

Similarly, in English language classes, literary knowledge in the form of vocabulary, reading approaches, and requisite skills helps students learn and grasp new linguistic concepts. The postulation aligns with Sun's (2014) and Zhao and Lei's (2012) assertion that schema theory clarifies that one must combine background knowledge with the new information in a text to comprehend a text. In this inquiry, schema theory was adopted to argue that students' schemata can be handy at the university level to acquire and learn new concepts. It, therefore, made academic sense to reason that, in their learning of the English Language for a specialisation, university students would be able to draw from their previous exposure to literature to follow rules of grammar, such as subject-verb agreement, tense, punctuation marks and spelling which they have already learned in their English Language classes at primary and high school levels. Such pre-existing knowledge is hoped to facilitate their acquisition of and engagement with the requisite new and argumentative knowledge in the subjects of English Language and Literature in English in higher education.

Similarly, Literature in English students requires a certain degree of linguistic competence, which they have acquired from basic education to internalise the new literary knowledge. The theory advocates for interdependency and pedagogical juxtaposition of the two disciplines without necessarily presuming their synonymy (Babaee & Yahya, 2014). The reason is literature is the art of language, and when one studies literature, one can learn language and linguistics; the three are interrelated (Ajoke & Aspalila, 2017; Zhen, 2012), pointing to a need for the review of the curriculum of the two disciplines to integrate knowledge and experience (context) of both disciplines and all related aspects such as content and inclusivity of all relevant stakeholders in the two departments.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative research method. It is used by researchers interested in how people understand their life experiences, construct knowledge, and attribute meaning to their experiences

(Merriam, 2009). The research design is of a case study type adopted because it relies on the constructivist paradigm, which does not seek to generalise but attempts to thoroughly understand the phenomenon from the researcher's point of view (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Rajasekar et al., 2013). Furthermore, from a constructivist perspective, the typical characteristic of case studies is that they strive towards a comprehensive (holistic) understanding of how participants relate, how they interact with each other in a specific situation, how and why they make meaning of a phenomenon under study (Maree, 2012). That is, the connection among the co-researchers facilitates the in-depth scrutiny and discussion of the topic because they are familiar with each other, so they openly share ideas (Creswell& Poth, 2018; Rajasekar et al., 2013). The researcher wanted to find the in-depth knowledge lecturers and students had concerning the implications of the curriculum review between the two disciplines. Data Collection Strategies Data were collected from lecturers and students from LASED and DELL. The participants were purposefully selected because they were knowledgeable about the relationship between the two disciplines and even the implications of the symbiotic relationship between Literature in English and English Language for curriculum review at NUL. The selection of the participants was in line with the understanding that qualitative research is purposeful and should best inform the research questions by enhancing an understanding of the research phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Sargeant, 2012). Data collection techniques employed were focus group discussions (FGDs) with year three and four students and face-to-face open-ended interviews with lecturers (FFOIs). In the focus group discussion, students discussed ideas before reaching a consensus. Consistent with the open discussion and consensus reaching is Mertens' (2005) clarification that the reliance on the interaction between participants is meant to get more from the participant's point of view that the researcher would guide before a consensus is reached. The role of the researcher was to guide the discussion so that participants could discuss the demands of the question. In the face-to-face open-ended interviews, the interviewer asked the lecturers questions and even probed them for clarification where necessary.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1. Curriculum and Curriculum Development/Curriculum Review

Scholars define the concepts, curriculum, curriculum development, and curriculum review. A curriculum is an educational plan that provides guidelines and guidance on the type, scope, and sequence of content and the educational process (Abidin et al., 2023; Dodou, 2020). It is also a policy statement that spells out goals and objectives to be achieved, topics to be covered, methods to be used for learning, teaching, and evaluation and how it is going to be realised (Bintz & Dillard, 2007; Dodou, 2020; Maphosa et al., 2014; Marzooghi, 2016; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2016; Posillico et al., 2022). Furthermore, Bilbao et al. (2008) also defined the curriculum as learning experiences at school and as all learning experiences in society. In essence, the curriculum in the context of this study refers to a plan of work that includes goals and objectives, content, teaching methods, learning activities at an academic institution and even in society, lecturers' expertise, resources as well as assessment strategies for English Language and Literature in English. Curriculum development is also defined as an improvement, change or modification of already existing educational programmes (Mary & Sam, 2022). It can be deduced that curriculum development is about changing and improving what already exists: amending the content, teaching methods and assessment strategies for Literature in English and English Language in institutions of higher learning. Taking the discussion further, we can see that developing a curriculum in higher education should be a prime concern for all stakeholders, especially educators, policymakers, government, parents, and society (Alberta Education, 2012). That is, it should be inclusive in nature.

Furthermore, according to the University of Calgary (2015, p.3), curriculum review is defined as: "An academic, staff-led critical examination of each undergraduate and course-based master's program to optimise the learning outcomes of that program". The assertion implies that the review is about scrutinising what is already in place and intending to change, improve, or even maintain what is already there. Curriculum review and curriculum development connote the same idea of examining the programme and critiquing it to maximise its worth pedagogically. For this reason, the two terms are used interchangeably in this study to mean change and improvement of the current curriculum for Literature in English and English Language.

4.2. Benefits of the Curriculum Review/Development

The curriculum review/ development process plays a significant part in higher education. The main benefit of curriculum review, according to Dyjur and Kalu (2018), is to improve the student learning experience by articulating the strengths of a program, identifying specific actions to address gaps within an academic program, increasing discussion and collaboration between instructors and others who play a role in the program, improve teaching and learning practices, provide an opportunity for critical reflection on the program's curriculum, provide evidence to guide decision-making within the program and to understand the relationship among courses within a program. The scholars imply that curriculum review is about enhancing teaching and learning through criticising the programme, looking at the strengths and weaknesses, creating dialogue amongst all stakeholders, and providing research-based decisions.

Furthermore, curriculum development is a critical, innovative process for educational institutions and, when applied to fostering enterprising qualities among students, can aid the economy (Rosni, 2017). In essence, the assertion implies that curriculum development/review is the backbone of education in institutions of higher learning. The knowledge, skills, and competencies universities offer the students will determine their success and the country's economic future. Universities should produce professionals who will fit well in the marketplace, address societal issues, and develop the country. However, if the curriculum is poorly planned and does not address societal needs, the country's economy will be negatively affected.

Taking the discussion further is the understanding that curriculum has a strategic and fundamental position in supporting the progress of a country's education (Abidin et al., 2023). That is, a country's educational development depends on its structured curriculum. Moreover, the curriculum is also considered a guideline for teaching and learning activities (Martin & Simanjorang, 2022). In the context of this study, the assertions imply introducing the integrated pedagogy between literature in English and the English language; therefore, there is a need to review/ develop the currently separated pedagogy of the two disciplines.

4.3. Considerations for Curriculum Review/ Development

There are factors to consider when a curriculum is developed/reviewed. According to Dodou (2020), curricula are mainly developed based on each institution's intentions and the financial resources and competencies available. It can be inferred that when the curriculum is developed, the developers should consider the countries' needs, the Ministry of Education policy, the university policy framework, the financial muscle they have, the expertise and the quality of manpower (lecturers) and their resources.

Moreover, the process of curriculum development consists of four stages, namely: the identification of needs, the design of a course of study, the delivery of the learning programme and the evaluation of the outcomes concerning the initial objectives (Mary & Sam, 2022). That is, it should consider and include the needs of the society, the course content (knowledge) to be offered, teaching methods and the assessment strategies. All should be based on the country's needs, the institutions' policies, and the local and international marketplace. The courses should train professionals who will fit well in the workforce; therefore, the curriculum should be developed and reviewed considering the changing world. The analogy is consistent with the observation that higher education curricula must be directed towards meeting societal needs and aspirations in every case in the sense that the vision of a country is expressed through the curriculum offered mainly through the HEIs (Mary & Sam, 2022).

Taking the discussion further is the understanding that the curriculum should be redesigned by compiling more literature and adding student-centred teaching methods (Ashrafuzzaman et al.,2021) though many universities and academics have been slow to recognise the need for change to ensure that the lived realities of all students are acknowledged; that all students deserve to feel included and to thrive academically and as human beings (Carnell & Fung, 2017; Quinn& Vorster, 2023). To this end, curriculum development is not a layman's work but specialised professional work rooted in a deep understanding of what curriculum is. Consistent with including teachers is the understanding that they should have the appropriate skills and knowledge to contribute to curriculum development

(Maphosa et al., 2014). Furthermore, programmes must have quality assured by the relevant bodies, and they should be open for scrutiny before they are implemented. This view is consistent with Oliva and Gordon's (2013, p.3) view that "curriculum…is built, planned, designed and evaluated."

4.4. Implications of the Curriculum Review/Development

The review of the curriculum for Literature in English and English Language has pedagogical implications. When the curriculum is reviewed, Richard (2014) argues that it is automatically implied that Literature and English Language teachers should be made to have a common goal of promoting efficiency in the use of English and terms of content and teaching methods in their professional assignment. The scholar emphasises that to achieve this goal, their professional training should be designed to be competent in both Literature and English Language. The Literature teacher should possess all the basic skills necessary for teaching language, while the English Language teacher should also be competent enough to teach Literature. It also implies that their professional training should encompass integrated pedagogical methods. The reason is that the two disciplines are inherently interrelated. In fact, one forms the basis for the other (Ramolula, 2021), which is consistent with the Linguists' understanding that language and literature have an intimate relationship (Violetta-Irene, 2015). It is, therefore, primarily up to the English departments to decide the subject knowledge to be mediated about English studies, generally, and about literary studies, specifically (Dodou, 2020). For instance, in the English departments in Sweden, literary studies are regarded as one of the two sub-disciplines of English, and in several institutions over the past decade or so, they have been allotted an increasing space in the curriculum (Dodou, 2020). This statement justifies the interface between the two disciplines and, therefore, the need for a review/development of the curriculum in other institutions of higher learning where the two are pedagogically separated.

The discussion further emphasises that the lack of training for lecturers is not restricted to teaching only but also to an important task underpinning teaching, such as curriculum planning (Maphosa et al., 2014). The scholars argue that lack of training is not only in pedagogy but also in curriculum planning. It can, therefore, be understood that it is vital that the integrated pedagogical training of teachers/ lecturers should also include issues related to curriculum design/planning, review/development because without training, the requisite knowledge and skills, university lecturers will not be able to undertake the crucial tasks such as effective teaching and curriculum review effectively bearing in mind the societal needs and current academic demands such as the implementation of integrated pedagogy.

It has also been acknowledged in some case studies that even lecturers show an awareness of the need to ensure that all students feel included and validated by their courses because many black students have reported feeling alienated and disconnected from the physical and cultural space of learning at the university (Quinn& Vorster, 2023). On the contrary, Carnell and Fung (2017) state that universities and academics have been slow to recognise the need for change to ensure that the lived realities of all students are acknowledged because all students deserve to feel included and to thrive academically and as human beings. It can be inferred that a review of the curriculum, including students, is needed. Taking the discussion further, the suggestion is that the curriculum should be redesigned by compiling more literature and adding student-centred teaching methods (Ashrafuzzaman et al., 2021; Banda & Kakoma, 2020). The assertion implies that literature cannot be separated from the language in language acquisition and that student-centred methods cannot be left out of the review; this is in line with the viewpoint those lecturers must be aware of what a student-based curriculum entails to plan curricula that are student-centered as reflected by appropriate outcomes (Maphosa et al., 2014). Hong Kong provides a suitable platform for research into literature in FLE because of how literary texts are incorporated into the curriculum (Tsang et al., 2023). Moreover, even previous studies suggest that learners are optimistic about gains in general language proficiency from studying literature such as vocabulary (Bloemert et al., 2019) and reading skills (Duncan & Paran, 2017). Literature is a catalyst for teaching the English Language, hence the need for a review.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

This study adopted a Thematic Data Analysis strategy. The researcher analysed data collected from students and lecturers following Castleberry and Nolen's (2018) five steps of the Thematic Analysis

strategy. These steps included compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and coming to a conclusion. A diary was kept recording the researcher's ideas, notes, and reflections during the periods of both data collection and data analysis (Matthews& Ross, 2010). The researcher also recorded the conversations and then later transcribed them. The focus group discussions (FGDs) and face-to-face (FFIs) were recorded and transcribed verbatim to make all data feasible and accessible. It was then disassembled and rearranged into meaningful themes related to the implications of the curriculum review between Literature in English and English Language in Higher Education. The themes were then interpreted, and conclusions were made. The study revealed the following benefits and implications of the curriculum review: Discipline integration, joint-faculty content planning, provision for stakeholders' inputs, and training of lecturers in interdisciplinary pedagogical approaches.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study explored the implications and benefits of the curriculum review for integrated pedagogy in higher education. The researcher analysed the data from students' focus group discussions, lecturers' face-to-face interviews, and related literature on the phenomenon. The themes that emerged are the benefits of the curriculum review, considerations for the review of the curriculum, the training of lecturers in integrated pedagogy, and the implications of the curriculum review/development.

6.1. Implications of the Curriculum Review

The literature-related findings on the implications of the review/development of the curriculum for Literature in English and English Language revealed that the government, the curriculum designers, the school as well as the lecturers of Literature in English and English Language should work together to ensure that the teaching of Literature and English Language in schools and colleges is effective (Richard, 2014). The scholar further argues that literature and English language teachers should have a common goal of promoting efficiency in the use of English in their professional assignments. He emphasises that their professional training should encompass integrated pedagogical approaches to be competent in teaching the two disciplines to achieve this goal. The assertions point to the collaboration and inclusiveness of all relevant stakeholders when the curriculum is developed (Ashrafuzzaman et al., 2021). Scholars suggest that lecturers in literature and language should have a shared vision since the two disciplines are about language. Lecturers should work together, plan the course outline and share the content and strategies to promote effective teaching of the two disciplines. In support of the above assertions, one of the students' participants opines that students' participation in the curriculum review is essential because they are beneficiaries. The excerpt below captures the student's opinion:

> *We should be involved because this is our curriculum, and our feelings should matter; at the end of the day, we should be comfortable with what we are doing. We should contribute to our learning.*

The excerpt implies the inclusivity of the students in the curriculum reform because they deserve to contribute to what they want to study and how they want to be taught. The finding is supported by Florentino's (2014, p.1344) insight that:

> *Curriculum development stipulates that curriculum shall be learner-centred, inclusive and developmentally appropriate, relevant, responsive and research-based, culture-sensitive, contextualised and global, and applies principles of known to unknown.*

Surfacing this quotation is the importance of involving students in the curriculum review. Furthermore, it can be denoted that the curriculum excludes students, parents, curriculum designers, and lecturers' contributions, which is incomplete. The idea is consistent with Coleman, Michael, and David's (2003) proclamation that curriculum development is a conceptualised participatory process built on developing partnerships between authorities, parents, and the community. In addition, students deserve to feel included and to thrive academically and as human beings (Carnell & Fung, 2017; Quinn& Vorster, 2023). The scholars affirm that curriculum review is a joint and inclusive exercise. Konings et al. (2010) even argue that if students cannot communicate their perceptions and guide instructional change, their achievement will suffer through disruptive practice. Students'

inclusiveness in the curriculum reform helps avoid their disorderly behaviour and poor performance. The finding points to a need for students' participation in reviewing the curriculum for the two disciplines.

The study has further revealed that students can be involved in curriculum review in a variety of ways, such as the following suggestions: use a survey, interviews or focus groups to gather data on student perceptions of the program, including student representatives on the review team of undergraduates and graduates in different specialisations). Involve the student council or committee, get their feedback at strategic points of the process and input into the action plan (Dyjur & Kalu, 2018). The review opens doors for better performance by students and lecturers.

Parents also came to the surface as a finding related to the implications of the curriculum reform between Literature in English and the English Language. Capturing the idea well is the extract below from one of the lecturers:

> *Parents should be involved in curriculum reform because when students graduate, they go out to society and work in/with it. Sometimes students don't practically have work experience related to what they have trained for. They get guidance from the members of society. Parents can also advise the university about the practical reality of life out there in relation to the demands of the market. This will assist the university to structure its curriculum in relation to the needs of the nation and the global market.*

The quotation depicts parents having a right to discuss educational issues related to their children at the university, which is consistent with the idea that the curriculum should be responsive to the community and thus include parents because it is one of the crucial tools for achieving better results (Kostadinova, 2012). The insert implies that the curriculum cannot be run without the input of parents and students. They are both the beneficiaries of the outcomes of such a curriculum. The parent's involvement in the curriculum reform with other stakeholders strengthens students' performance in language acquisition and content knowledge of the two disciplines. It, therefore, makes social and academic sense for parents to contribute ideas on themes such as new job opportunities concerning the content and training of their children. In addition**,** Taguma et al.,(2017) state that in Finland, for example, university parent associations are more formally invited to participate in the curriculum reform. In the context of this study, the same practice could also apply at NUL. The existing parents' committee at NUL could be involved in the curriculum reform for the two disciplines.

However, the findings also depict that some students argue that parents should not be involved in curriculum development/review. One of the students complained that:

> *Parents should only be involved at high school, not here. Here at NUL, we are adults. We know what we want; for example, I want to be a teacher or a lecturer. I don't see how parents will be of help in designing my curriculum because most of them are not even educated. Only a few of them can have an idea of what to say about the curriculum.*

The excerpt shows that some university students consider themselves responsible for their education, not their parents. They argue that only a few academically enlightened parents can contribute, but most cannot. Regardless of some students' negativity about parents' involvement in curriculum development, the study revealed that students may not be good planners of their lives. They (students) need guidance concerning their future job opportunities. For this reason, curriculum reform/review should involve parents so that together, a comprehensive structure that could mould students could be developed. This aligns with Kostadinova's (2012) argument that parents today, in particular, have more responsibility and new tasks in their education.

Furthermore, data also revealed that lecturers are also responsible for curriculum change. They are the major stakeholders in designing the curriculum in the two disciplines. Capturing this well is the student's excerpt below:

> *Lecturers are the ones dealing with students. They know which content students should cover and why. They know how best it can be delivered to the students. They draw lesson plans, put together the teaching material for the two disciplines and even share effective teaching methods.*

The excerpt implies the importance of lecturers' inclusion in the curriculum reform. The success of the curriculum reform for the two disciplines depends on the lecturers' contribution. Their expertise and teaching methods could contribute positively to the learning and teaching of the two disciplines. The spotlighting of lecturers in curriculum reform is suggested by Jadhav and Patankar (2013), who believe that teachers know the needs of the learners and can understand the learner's psychology and teaching methods and strategies. Carl (2009) takes the discussion further, stating that teachers should have the appropriate skills and knowledge to contribute to curriculum development. When one reflects on the role of the teacher as a curriculum developer, the whole issue of teacher participation and freedom, as well as democracy in the classroom, comes to the fore (Maphosa et al., 2014). A curriculum review/development that includes lecturers is therefore required. Furthermore, the findings also reveal that when the curriculum is reviewed/developed, lecturers/teachers should be trained in integrated pedagogy. The text below captures the idea from one of the students:

> *Well, I think in this situation, our lecturers should be trained to teach us on how to teach the two disciplines in the context of the other. Right now, I am a student teacher who has majored in English Language, but I am expected to teach Literature as well at LJC and LGCSE. Mind you, I have never been introduced to the integrated pedagogical approach. How on Earth am I going to do that? It is impossible.*

Surfacing from this assertion is the understanding that integrated pedagogical training is necessary for interrelated disciplines such as Literature in English and English Language. Teachers' professional training should be designed in such a way that they acquire all the basic skills and become competent in teaching both literature in English and the English language (Rasskazova et al., 2017). The assertion points to a necessity of training in an interdisciplinary or integrated pedagogical approach because student-teachers are expected to teach the two disciplines at the high school level. Yet, some would have trained to teach one major of their choice. The finding, therefore, suggests a need for curriculum reform, which would provide space for teacher training in an integrated or interdisciplinary pedagogical approach. In furtherance to the above, the lack of training for lecturers is not restricted to teaching only but also to an important task underpinning teaching, such as curriculum planning (Maphosa et al., 2014). It can be inferred that teacher/ lecturer training in integrated approach and curriculum planning is requisite for effective learning.

The lecturer's training on integrated pedagogical approach contributes to the curriculum reform in the DELL and LASED and the theories underpinning this study. One such theory is language in/for/with content theory (LCT), with its tenet that language and content are inseparable (Lee, 2007). Surfacing from this principle is the understanding that acquiring language and content knowledge is a simultaneous process. Training on an integrated approach implies that when one teaches the content of one discipline, one also teaches language (English). Therefore, lecturers should get training on the integrated pedagogical approach for the two disciplines; thus, there is a need for curriculum review.

The curriculum review for the integrated pedagogical approach points to a need for intra- and inter-departmental cooperation, which means that language and literature departments should work together in content planning and sharing of teaching methods, expertise, and resources. In line with the implication is the understanding that English departments themselves could decide the subject knowledge to be mediated about English studies, generally, and about literary studies, specifically (Dodou, 2020). Similarly, the curriculum should be redesigned by compiling more literature and adding student-centred teaching methods (Ashrafuzzaman et al., 2021). Another theory underpinning this study is schema theory, which has the principle that one possesses knowledge, which is the main factor in facilitating the acquisition of new information (Zhao & Lei, 2012). Surfacing from the claim is the understanding that lecturers' schemata (knowledge of content, teaching methods, and related skills) for one discipline are also requisite in the other. Such schemata are also requisite even when reviewing/developing/reforming the new integrated curriculum for the two disciplines.

6.2. Benefits of the Curriculum Review/Development

The literature-related findings revealed numerous benefits to reviewing/developing the curriculum. The study has revealed that the main benefit of curriculum review is improving the student learning experience. That makes it better, accessible, and student-centred, which can be done by assessing a

program's strengths. The intention is to keep what still serves the purpose and eliminate what is no longer relevant to our context, fill the gaps where necessary, initiate discussions and collaboration amongst all stakeholders to instil ownership in all the stakeholders, improve teaching and learning methods, provide an opportunity for critical reflection on the program's curriculum, provide research-based evidence to guide decision-making within the program and to make sense of the relationship between the two disciplines in the course within the program (Dyjur & Kalu, 2018).

Furthermore, according to Mary and Sam (2022), curriculum development is dynamic; it keeps changing for the better because life is dynamic, too. It enables improvement, change or modification of existing educational programmes depending on the new educational trends. It is also a critical, innovative process for educational institutions, and when applied to fostering enterprising qualities among students, it can aid the economy (Rosni, 2017). That is, it determines the country's economy in the sense that the programmes institutions of higher learning decide to offer shapes the kind of professionals the country produces, for they contribute immensely to its economic growth. Moreover, the curriculum itself has a strategic and fundamental position in supporting a country's education (Abidin et al., 2023) because it guides and handles teaching and learning activities (Martin & Simanjorang, 2022). Curriculum development/review also structures what (content) and how (teaching methods) of the university's programmes alongside its intentions within the country's needs. In furtherance to that, Primrose and Alexander (2013) emphasise that curriculum development is a critical educational process that can boost the innovative capacity of a higher education institution and allows an educational course to be designed to meet defined needs. Taking the discussion further, the curriculum is a platform in which shared understandings of 'educational ideas' are created, developed, and fostered in academic communities (Annala & Mäkinen, 2017). It is, therefore, the core heart and soul of the educational process in all educational institutions (Khan & Law, 2015; Thaariq & Wedi, 2020). It can be inferred that the curriculum is a road map of a plan of academic action in educational institutions which involves content methods. When reviewed and developed, it means scrutinising the existing structures with the intention of improving and maintaining what remains Murdoch's (2015) relevant and setting targets based on the universities' vision and mission statement.

This study contributes not only to knowledge production but also to theory. One theory that has formed the basis for this study is Language in/for/with content theory, with its principles that language and content acquisition are simultaneous and that literature offers stirring material for English Language and thus improves proficiency in the target language (Ahmed, 2014; Ogle & Blachowicz, 2008). In the context of the study, the implications of the curriculum review for the integrated pedagogy point to the juxtaposition teaching of the two for literature, which is the raw material for teaching language; that is, it is language in use and considerations for curriculum review/development. The literature-related findings revealed that when the curriculum review/ development process is carried out, certain factors should be considered. According to Mary and Sam (2022), the curriculum development process consists of four stages: the identification of needs, the design of a course of study; delivery of the learning programme, and the evaluation of the outcomes in relation to the initial objectives. The scholars further emphasise that the vision of a country is expressed through the curriculum offered in institutions of higher learning. The scholars imply that the curriculum designers should consider the needs of the country and the intentions (vision, mission statement, aims and objectives) of the institution, meaning there shall be consultations of the relevant stakeholders (Ministry of Education & Training [MoET], Council on Higher Education [CHE]). The analogy is consistent with the understanding that universities should respond to the world and society because it forms the basis for high-quality programs and services, regardless of the type of educational programs and intentions of the institution, resources, and expertise (Dodou, 2020; Soudien, 2015). It can also be understood that the programme should be designed alongside the content, activities, resources, teaching methods and assessment strategies. Furthermore, the programmes must have been quality assured by the relevant bodies and should be open for scrutiny before they are implemented. The view is consistent with Oliva and Gordon's (2013, p.3) view that "curriculum…is built, planned, designed and evaluated." That is, CHE should evaluate the programmes for quality assurance.

The findings also revealed that joint-faculties content planning is one of the steps towards curriculum reform in the DELL and LASED. Joint-faculties content planning is a forum where the lecturers for

Literature in English and English Language from the Faculties of Education and Humanities plan the subject content together. As a finding, Joint-faculties content planning implies the combination of the content and expertise related to the two disciplines in an organised and structured manner. Second, is the affirmation of the symbiosis between the two disciplines in which sharing and organisation of the content is made possible. Scholars claim that literature is a product of language, so it cannot exist without language; likewise, access to the literary world, students need linguistic competence (Adejimola & Ojuolape, 2013; Ihejirika, 2014; Mingu, 2013; Seligmann, 2012). Emerging from the scholars' argument is the understanding that the two disciplines are mutually related and, as a result, teaching one outside the context of the other is not ideal. Based on that, it makes academic sense for lecturers to jointly plan the content and the teaching methods for the two disciplines, which is consistent with Vuckovic's (2017, p.37) perception that "thematising activities offer possibilities for a rich contextualisation of learning in the context of well-related themes…" Also, modern teaching should provide a better, more comprehensive, and more meaningful connection between subjects; interdisciplinary teaching is an essential requirement today. Implicit from the assertion is the understanding that integration and collaborative teaching and learning exist in closely connected and related environments of the two disciplines. Taking the discussion further, Bacon's (2018) insight is that a well-integrated curriculum enables access to information. In the integrated curriculum reform, lecturers would combine their content knowledge and teaching experience related to the two disciplines, plan and discuss for a deeper understanding. Topics together would be matched and organised chronologically alongside the appropriate teaching methods. The advantage of this kind of setup is avoiding repetition of topics applicable in the two disciplines, which is affirmed by one of the participants' arguments:

> *Considering the university curriculum, the two faculties should consult each other when designing the curriculum. The Faculties of Humanities and Education can work hand in hand to such an extent that they can even share the content topics of the two disciplines, which will help them avoid repeating some topics. Lecturers should know what other lecturers are doing in their courses.*

The excerpt implies that Literature in English and English Language are innately symbiotic in terms of content. Therefore, joint-faculties content planning is inevitable. The finding points to the integrated curriculum reform in which the two disciplines would be studied as integrated disciplines without repetition of the content. The same viewpoint is that of Bacon (2018), who accounts for a more integrated approach that would eliminate duplication across the subject areas and, more importantly, encourage meaningful connections. It can be inferred from the statement that topics such as figures of speech, grammar, requisite skills, and paragraph development could be taught in English, and their application is visible in Literature in English. Joint-faculty content planning as a finding has space in reviewing the integrated pedagogy curriculum.

The findings on joint-faculties content planning become a research-appraised contribution to the theories benchmarking the teaching of Literature in English and the English Language. One of the theories behind this study is schema theory, which spotlights using one's already acquired knowledge to learn or acquire new information (Merriam et al., 2007). Emerging from this tenet is the understanding that acquiring new knowledge depends on the already acquired experience. The already acquired knowledge could be the content knowledge and expertise from the joint-faculty content planning. The effort of the lecturers' collaborated planning of the content of the two disciplines has implications for integrated curriculum reform that would allow joint-faculty content planning.

7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The Research Ethics Committee, under the leadership of the Registrar at the National University of Lesotho, approved the study in 2019 with reference REG/ADMIN-1.37 LML/hy.

8. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that reviewing the curriculum between Literature in English and English Language in higher education is critical; therefore, it should include all stakeholdersin line with the understanding that in curriculum review, shared understandings of 'educational ideas' are created, developed, and fostered in academic communities, so it is the backbone of higher education (Annala

& Mäkinen, 2017; Thaariq& Wedi, 2020). Inclusivity implies a sense of belonging and ownership and better performance for all. It also concludes that the relationship between parents, students, and lecturers will improve because of the joint effort in the review. The study also concludes that implementing the integrated curriculum in the faculties of Humanities and Education will enhance students' academic performance. Finally, the study concludes that training lecturers in the two departments on integrated pedagogical approaches will enhance teaching and learning.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that students, parents, and lecturers should all be involved in the review of the curriculum. It also recommends that Literature in English and English Language be taught in juxtaposition; that is, they should be considered one central because of the cross-cutting pedagogical benefits that students and lecturers can hone from the integrated setup. It further recommends that student-teachers and lecturers in LASED and DELL be trained on the integrated pedagogical approach for the two disciplines as per the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (SoTL) to use one discipline to teach the other. The study further recommends that universities should have committees of parents, lecturers, and students to take part in curriculum development/review. The study, however, did not cover in-depth how and to what extent parents and students can contribute to curriculum development. Future research is therefore required on how and in what ways parents and students can contribute to the review of the curriculum in Higher Education.

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