

ANALYZING THE CURRICULUM OF ENGLISH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ON THE LIGHT OF SUSTAINABILITY AT OMANI PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This study aimed at analyzing the English curriculum for 21st Century for GFP (General Foundation Program) on the light of sustainability according to Omani vision 2040. In order to fulfil the purpose of this investigation, the three sustainable dimensions were appointed. The study instrument was analyzing curriculum content form and the study methodology was descriptive analysis. The sampling was the English curriculum of The 21st Century conducted for GFP learners at Omani private universities, level 3 . The study showed that there was a relation between the content that has been taught and the sustainability, but even yet, there was still a disparity in a few of the sustainable social, economic and environmental dimensions; the aspect of economy received the greatest score which was, 13.62. The other dimensions of social and environmental aspects scored 0.88 and 0.13 respectively. The study provided some suggested points to improve the sustainability that is linked to curriculum of English for The 21st Century.

Key words: Sustainability, content form, English for the 21st Century

Introduction

To improve everyone's quality of life, development is a multidisciplinary endeavor. Sustainable development comprises three interrelated and collaborating components: financial growth, social growth, and environmental protection.(Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010)

The significance of sustainability in the modern era is a very developed idea which the resources of health and human beings have been achieved the wellbeing and the positive ideas (O'Mahony, 2022). Sustainability is the comprehension that includes the present and future and the sample of thinking through the environmental, economic and social considerations in a qualitative and developed framework (Ovais, 2023). On the other side, it was stated that sustainability is the meaning of ethical and specific form of inclusive development towards human and environmental resources in order to achieve the welfare and long-term capacity for inclusive national growth for future generations (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010) and according to Mensah (2019), the suitability means the improving of generations values and ethics and human various recourses related to environment and wellbeing.

According to (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019), it was suggested that the conceptual framework be built using a system thinking is consisting of three approaches which are :

1. Creating a participative vision of the sustainable state through visioning.
2. Back-casting, which identifies the prerequisites for the sustainable state, the abilities that individuals must acquire to achieve that condition and the instructional tactics that ought to be used to support those abilities.
3. Keeping an eye on and assessing metrics that offer information about the system's current state and its path towards sustainability.

According to Al Siyabi & Ahakro (2020) and Stadtländer,(2023) the definition of the sustainability stated that the idea of sustainability is a component of the following points:

1. Fulfill the basic needs of individuals.
2. Achieve the justice in terms of distributing the input and output.
3. Protecting the environment through the environmental factor.
4. The sustainability is not only a scientific framework but it is an ethical form of shaping new learning.

Learning and sustainability has a very strong relationship and the community cannot reach the best learning without this relation in which all the elements of curriculum have to be integrated into one form and shape to enhance the learning. The issues of sustainability must be generalized and consider the curriculum in its themes and content and the English subject is one of these curriculums (Purvis, Mao, & Robinson, 2019).

Professional educational environments include schools of all levels, educator preparations organizations, and higher education institutions. These conditions' learning and training environments align with the sustainability vision, and institutional modifications are being implemented to facilitate the sustainability shift. (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019), An institutional-wide strategy that addresses operations, research, teaching, administration, and community relations will benefit from the framework's implementation. Due to the strength and persistence of established attitudes about how educational institutions should operate, how teaching and learning should be done, and what kinds of connections they should work to build with the larger community, these organizations sometimes suffer from inertia and a shortage in its sustainable elements (Shariah & Jawarneh, 2023; Sterling & Witham, 2008).

The English curriculum has to be linked to suitability in all the issues related to contents of economy, society and environment especially nowadays in this modern and technical era of the modern curriculums (Al-Mahrooqi, Denman, & Al-Maamari, 2016 ;B(Buchanan, Crawford, & Practice, 2015).

Oman is one of the significant countries that sheds light on the necessity of applying the sustainability to curriculums according to Oman vision 2040 that includes 17 aims and sustainability is one of them (Ministry of Education,2020; (Al-Alawi & Jawarneh, 2023). The long-term economic success and prosperity of Oman depend on sustainable development (Said, Al Jabri, & Matriano, 2023). The oil and gas sector continues to be Oman's main source of income, so more funding for renewable energy and other sectors of the economy is required to diversify it.

These sectors also need to be covered in English Omani curricula to support students' needs and prepare them for training and employment in line with national requirements. (Safinia, Al-Hinai, Yahia, & Abushammala, 2017). According to the data study and its finding of the investigation was that most jobs in the non-oil and gas industry are held by the public sector. This indicates that additional jobs in the private sector are required. (Al-Alawi & Jawarneh, 2023; Hassen, 2020).

Oman is looking for developing its English curriculums according to this sustainable vision to increase the innovations and creativity and as well as the visions and values and abilities towards achieving the elements of sustainability "economic, social and environmental aspects (K Al'Abri et al., 2021).

This trend is clear form ,the care that has been given to the issues of Omani sustainability and this can be proved form the national initiatives that reflects that elements of that vision in which it is considered as a map of this sustainable plan to improve Omani English Curriculum.(K. M. Al'Abri, Ambusaidi, & Alhadi, 2022; Asaad & Ali, 2021).

Problem Statement

Although the sustainability is a very necessary part that all countries are following, there is still a gap in as this sustainability is still not included in the Omani English curriculums at Omani private universities for GFP. the perspectives of professionals and specialized professors all agreed that still there is no relation between the curriculums and the elements of sustainability and it recommended to include theses elements in the curriculums to get the newest trends. A study of (Lily & Alhazmi, 2020) showed the same result of this gap and agreed with the study of (Fredriksson, N. Kusanagi, Gougoulakis, Matsuda, & Kitamura, 2020). Even though, there is a gap, Omani English curriculum at Omani private universities has achieved some improvements in its content and inclusive changes in terms of linking the sustainability to Omani English curriculum (Al-Amrani, 2021).

Study Questions.

The following constitute the research inquiries:

1. To what extend the sustainable dimensions are included in the curriculum of English for The 21st Century in the General Foundation Programs at Omani private universities ?
2. What is the suggested perspective to improve the English Omani Curriculum of English 21st Century for the General Foundation Programs at Omani private universities in the light of sustainability?

Study Aim

This study aims at the follows:

1. Getting to know how the sustainable dimensions of Omani English curriculum of English for The 21st Century are available in the General Foundation Programs at Omani private universities.
2. Providing a suggested perspective to improve the content of Omani English curriculum of English for The 21st Century in the General Foundation Programs at Omani private universities.

Study Significance

The study has its significance as follows:

1. It is very important to shed light on analyzing English curriculum of English for The 21st Century in the General Foundation Programs at Omani private universities, level 3.
2. It is very important to appoint the sustainable dimensions of English for The 21st Century in the General Foundation Programs at Omani private universities, level 3.

Study Limitation

This study's limitation is as follows:

- The sustainable dimensions that are included according to Omani vision 2040 in the content of English curriculum for The 21st Century in General Foundation Programs at Omani private universities.
- Analyzing the content of Omani English curriculum of English for The 21st Century in General Foundation Programs at Omani private universities.

Study Terminologies.

- Sustainable dimensions according to Omani vision 2040, it is including three themes of economy, society and environment (O'Mahony, 2022).
- Sustainable development means a process in which it is enhancing the development to be more inclusive and include all the aspects of social economic and cultural activities (Dariah, Salleh, Yahaia, & Mafruhah, 2019).
- Analyzing content and it is defined by Alkalifa and it is including the facts, knowledge, theories and concepts in which it contains many knowledgeable aspects in the learning framework. (Al Khalifa, 2019).
- English for The 21st Century : It is a textbook that has been designed in line with current educational trends and research in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) around the world and now it is applied in Oman and GCC (Kaf & Al-Issa, 2022).

Study Methodology

- This study is following the descriptive analysis methodology to provide the list of sustainable dimensions that have to be included in the content and as well as to explore the availability of these sustainable dimensions in the content to improve Omani English Curriculum of English for The 21st Century in General Foundation Programs of Omani private universities.

Measuring ratios and final percentages to explore the availability of the sustainable dimensions in the content of English for The 21st Century according to Omani vision 2024. Also, the cooper equation is applied to measure the reliability of the form.

The Sampling

The study sample consists of English Curriculum of English for The 21th Century and the following table clear the units' details.

Table 1.1

The course	Semester	Number of Units	Number of Lessons	Number of Pages
General Foundation Programs at Omani private universities, level 3	Two (2023-2024)	All units	All lessons (12 units)	193

The Study Instruments.

The study includes the sustainable dimensions and that have to be used to analyze the content of English for The 21st Century and the analyzing form of content is used as follows:

- 1- Analyzing the sustainable dimensions through the specialists who are teaching the content, and the form of content analyzing is judged by them and the final version of sustainable dimensions are:
 1. Social theme: it includes various points of healthcare, wellbeing, safety good level of living and quality.
 2. Economic theme: it includes various investment, labour-markets, creativity and innovations, digitalization and entrepreneurship and energy sources.
 3. Environmental theme: it includes climate changes, environment protection and renewable energy and resources.
2. Analyzing The form of content analysis
 - The form of the content is used to measure the number of ratios that are related to sustainable dimensions included in English for 21st Century for General Foundation Programs of Omani private universities and according to sustainability and the following procedures have been taken:
 - Appointing the main goal of this form of analyzing content of English for The 21st Century General Foundation Programs of Omani private universities.
 - Appointing the sampling of the study which is English for The 21st Century General Foundation Programs at Omani private universities.
 - 1. The reliability of the analyzing the form of content that are judged in its content from the judges' perspectives. The researcher gets co-researcher to check the validity of the form though comparing the two analyses forms through the **cooper equation** and its rate reached 0.85 and it is a very strong indicator to the reliability.
 - 2. The validity the researcher checks the validity through some specialists and agreed that it is valid for according to all the perspectives.

The Steps of Analyzing the Content

1. Reading Omani English curriculum and analyzing its vocabulary, sentences, ideas and activities in which to look for the availability of the sustainability.
2. Measuring the ratios of each sustainable dimensions that are included in Omani English curriculum, English for The 21st Century.
3. Measuring the final percentages of sustainable dimensions included in the content.

Literature Review

(Diaz Gonçalves & Saporiti Machado, 2023) pointed that, sustainability definition started in 1981 from the international committee of development and environment and then it was spread all over the countries in its new form of sustainable development. The growth of resources and the economy in order to meet the demands of future generations is called sustainability. The points that correspond with each of the three sustainable dimensions are as follows: (Moore, Mascarenhas, Bain, & Straus, 2017).

- Social dimension: it includes various points of healthcare, wellbeing, safety good level of living and quality.
- Economic dimension: it includes various investment, labour-markets, creativity and innovations, digitalization and entrepreneurship and energy sources.
- Environmental dimension: it includes climate changes, environment protection and renewable energy and resources.

However, curricula must be profitable, meeting current demands without sacrificing the capacity of future generations to reach their own standards. This is consistent with the vision's objective in making the future better than the present. Education will be even more fundamental to Omani Vision 2040, and the scope of education is challenged to raise the level of capabilities with students enabled to have a sense of self-actualization in learning, life skills, general competency, higher-order thinking, and literacy. Teachers will be required to possess higher qualifications and the ability to provide a conducive learning environment and culture with an emphasis on wellness and attracting the best talent. Moving to the curriculum to be analyzed, one can see that even the title indicates the needs of the government to enhance the sustainability with its relation to Omani vision 2040 (Bala & Rani, 2023).

Additionally, the government of His Majesty the Sultan has been making Parliamentary moments to prepare the Delta document, considering what Omanis wanted for the future. This document came to be known as Vision 2020. Oman's Vision 2020 envisages Oman as an independent and well-developed nation by that year. Education will be the key to the realization of the vision. Without an educated and skilled workforce, Oman cannot hope to participate in the global community and achieve the development and prosperity that is the aim of the vision. The sultanate's education is already focused on fostering a sense of national identity, independence, confidence, and the ability to actively participate in society. English as a tool for communication would still be important now. Now, Vision 2020 has been extended to Vision 2040 and develop

the sustainability with the relation to Omani curriculum and its improvements (Alkaaf & Al-Issa, 2021).

Oman, like many other countries around the globe, has always been on the move to ensure its educational system is up to date and aligned with the current situation locally and globally. Efforts and initiatives have been taken to ensure that the country's educational system is at its best in producing individuals equipped with the right knowledge, skills, and attitude to meet future challenges. A new Learning Management Policy called as "Education Future Vision" was put into effect by the Ministry of Education in 2002.

This policy is a part of ongoing efforts to improve the current education system in Oman. This policy has led to the successful implementation of the Education Development Strategy (2006), which had begun to change the face of education in Oman for the better. The recent move to revise the English Language syllabus is indeed a very important step that should not be overlooked. This is due to the fact that the global importance of the English Language cannot be denied. Hence, utmost attention should be paid to this matter. According to the Ministry of Education School Curriculum, the first curricula to be revised and implemented was the English language from grades 1 to 12 in 2001. This was during the time of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said, who has held a special interest in the English language.

English for the 21st Century is a new coursebook, and applied for students in the Sultanate of Oman. 21st Century literacy skills has gained urges worldwide and is now considered to be a compulsory aspect for individuals to possess in pursuit of success in their future. This textbook has been designed in line with current educational trends and research in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) around the world. The aim is to help students into a brighter future whereby they are able to effectively use the English language in their everyday lives, as well as in their quest for knowledge (Kaf & Al-Issa, 2022).

An Outline of Oman's GCED Programme

Throughout the past 40 years, the Omani educational system has seen tremendous growth. There are two primary periods in Oman's educational history: the pre-1970 era, when the nation had just three formal schools, and the post-1970 educational Renaissance, which separated the later stage of the system's development into two distinct stages according to the objectives of education: the quantitative stage, which prioritized the rapid quantitative advancement of education, and the access to education for all Omani citizens. Raising the standard of education and broadening its scope were the goals of the second stage, or qualitative stage. In 1998, the ten-year Essential Learning program was put into effect. It was divided into two moves: Cycle I covered grades 1 through 4, while Cycle II covered grades 5 to 10 and was one of the key advancements of the educational system (Al-Issa & Al Najar, 2022).

This significant changes to the educational system were justified by a number of factors, including the need to further Omanization, diversify the economy by using natural resources and workforce skills development, equip individuals for the difficulties of globalisation, and establish a democratic society. Apart from furnishing learners with the essential knowledge, abilities, and

data required, basic education additionally attempted to shape their attitudes so they could pursue further education according to their own interests and skill sets. In contrast, Post-Basic Teaching focused on improving students' interpersonal, interaction, problem-solving, mathematical, and information technology skills. Generally speaking, the goals of Basic and Post-Basic Education were to get people ready for the workforce and giving them the 21st century skills that the demands of globalisation demand. Effective evaluation criteria, student-centered learning, skill development, individual talent and ability development, and vocational skill development are the foundations of the new curriculum. Foreign authorities and authors monitored and approved the textbook manufacturing process to ensure excellent quality and compliance with global norms related to sustainability, even though the books were produced by competent Omani curriculum designers (Khalaf Al'Abri, 2016). Now, Oman's educational reforms aim to equip students with practical, business, and technical skills for a globalized world. These reforms focus on developing global citizenship and economic stability (Kaf & Al-Issa, 2022).

Oman's concept of education is composed of sixteen guiding concepts that are meant to give educational programmers guidance. The first concept promotes overall development to assist students in navigating global trends. The second principle fortifies citizenship and identity, while the sixteenth principle encourages peace education and mutual understanding. The environment is the subject of the eighth principle, which emphasizes natural disasters and sustainable development. The seventh principle places a strong emphasis on social justice, encouraging students to engage with public concerns and supporting diversity of speech while adhering to moral and legal guidelines. (K. M. Al'Abri, Al-Naabi, & Ambusaidi, 2022).

A specific approach was used in order to set certain criteria for teachers' improvements with the goal of advancing professional practice and fostering teachers' potential. Creating the Specialized Institute for Professional Training of Educators and putting in place a teacher-likening system for all Omani schools are two examples (Abdallah & Musah, 2021; Hennessy et al., 2022).

Study Findings

The answers of the first question: “To what extend the sustainable dimension are included in the curriculum of English for The 21st Century in General Foundation Programs for Omani private universities ?” after exploring it and its analyzing, the following table shows the appointed sustainable components that the curriculum includes which are as follows:

Table 1.2

Social dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social health care and sustainable development of human resources • Safety.
Economic dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity and innovations. • Improving jobs as turning points.
Environmental dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the environmental resources.

The findings of the first question: “To what extent the sustainable dimension are included in the curriculum of English for The 21st Century in General Foundation Programs of Omani private universities? The researcher has analyzed the content of units thought the content form related the analyzing procedures include 12 units and the ratios and percentages are measured to explore the availability of the sustainable dimensions in the content and the following table shows the findings:

Table 1.3

Social dimension	The dimension	The ratio	The total
	Healthcare and sustainable development of human resources	5	0.63
	safety.	2	0.25
			Total: 0.88
Economic dimension	Creativity and innovations.	12	1.5
	Improving jobs as turning points.	96	12.12
			Total: 13.62
Environmental dimension	Enhancing the environmental resources.	1	0.13
			Total: 0.13

The pervious table, shows that the economic dimension scored the highest point that is included in the content and reached the total score of 13.62 while the social dimension scored the total of 0.88 which is the second one and the last dimension is environmental dimension which scored 0.13. The above dimensions only have been found in the content of English for 21st Century.

The Suggested Points of Unit Development

To answer the second question and solve the gap in the study related to developing the English curriculum for GFP students and its relation with sustainability, these are some suggested points

- Create a suitable balance between sustainability and its dimensions to be included in the English curriculum for GFP students.
- Create effective teaching instructions and active learning activities to enhance the teachers' sustainable aspects according to Omani sustainability.
- Enhancing the effective relationship between the sustainability and English curriculum for GFP students.

The Recommendations

The study recommendations are as follows:

- Benefit from the sustainable dimensions in order to increase their aims towards developing the content of English for the 21st century.
- Selecting the topics of English content according to sustainable dimensions and their balanced applications in English curriculum.

- Providing the teachers with the guided evidences to clear the content of sustainable dimensions especially in English curriculum.
- Developing the content of English curriculum at Omani private universities in the light of sustainable development and its content.
- Increasing the students' awareness towards including the sustainable dimensions.
- Train the students according to their future needs and make them ready to work and practice their skills by applying the sustainable dimension.

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Appendix

Content analysis form for the Curriculum of Unit five English for 21st Century on the Light of Sustainability

Social dimension	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The content encourages the students to get good awareness of how to solve the problems. 2. The content presents situations that require the students to solve the problems. 3. The content defines the goals of humans as citizens for the students. 4. The content guides the students to justify the decision. 5. The content encourages the students to think carefully before solving the problem and making the decision.
Economic dimension	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The content guides the students to plan for the future jobs. 2. The content encourages students to choose their own suitable majors. 3. The content shows care towards improving the students’ skills

	<p>to prepare them for the future jobs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The content encourages students to practice their learning by doing for the future needs 5. The content encourages the students to invest their knowledge towards innovations and creativity for better future economy.
<p>Environmental dimension</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The content provides the suitable environmental atmosphere for learning. 2. The content includes healthy environment. 3. The content includes the safe environmental materials of activities.