EVALUATING A CEFR-ALIGNED ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM THROUGH THE CIPP MODEL: INSIGHTS FROM HIGH-PROFICIENCY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) has introduced an English Language Curriculum aligned with the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to meet the need for standardised language education and evaluation. This initiative aims to improve students' language skills and their competitiveness in the professional field. The curriculum divided the courses into four tracks (Track 1: A2, Track 2: B1, Track 3: B2, Track 4: C1). This study aims to investigate the perceptions of high-proficient students regarding the CEFR-aligned English Language Curriculum provided at UKM. It will examine different aspects of the curriculum's implementation. Using Stufflebeam's CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) curriculum evaluation model, the study adopts a quantitative and descriptive survey research design employing an 18-item survey questionnaire. The survey utilised a 7-point Likert scale with 1= Strongly disagree ... 7= Strongly agree. The survey items underwent content validation through expert consultations, and the reliability of the items was confirmed by conducting a pilot test, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.785. A total of 168 undergraduate students undertaking compulsory English courses at the university participated in the study through a stratified sampling procedure where students with high language proficiency levels from Track 3 were randomly selected. The findings indicated moderate mean scores on the Context and Input aspects and relatively low mean scores on the Process and Product aspects of the curriculum implementation. The results provide valuable insights for reviewing and improving the CEFR-aligned curriculum to enhance student learning outcomes.

Keywords: CEFR; curriculum evaluation; CIPP Model

INTRODUCTION

Standardizing language education across various learning contexts is essential for developing learners' communication skills and ensuring competitiveness in the professional field. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) introduced a CEFR-aligned English Language Curriculum in response. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a global standard for language proficiency, offering clear benchmarks for language learning and teaching. By structuring English courses into four tracks (A2, B1, B2, and C1), the CEFR-aligned curriculum aims to improve language proficiency levels, promoting both academic success and professional development for students.

Implementing a CEFR-aligned curriculum is particularly interesting for high-proficiency students (Track 3 and Track 4), who are expected to achieve higher-level language outcomes. This study focuses on high-proficiency students' perceptions of the curriculum, offering insights into how effectively the curriculum meets its objectives and aligns with their learning needs. Using the CIPP model, which evaluates four key components of educational programs (context, input, process, and product), this study investigates whether the curriculum is adequately designed and delivered from the students' perspectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CEFR in Language Education

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a pivotal framework developed by the Council of Europe to standardize language proficiency across Europe and beyond. Initially published in 2001, the CEFR provides a comprehensive set of descriptors that delineate language proficiency levels from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient) (O'Keeffe & Mark 2022). Its primary aim is to facilitate transparency and comparability in language education, thus promoting effective communication and mutual understanding among speakers of different languages (Mohamed 2021). The CEFR has been widely adopted not only in European countries but also in various non-European contexts, influencing language policies and educational practices globally, including in countries like Malaysia, Thailand, and Canada (Zaki 2021).

The CEFR serves multiple functions in language education, including guiding curriculum design, assessment practices, and teaching methodologies. It is recognised as a valuable tool for educators to align their teaching objectives with internationally accepted standards (Sahib & Stapa 2021; Naser & Ali 2023). For instance, in Malaysia, the Ministry of Education adopted the CEFR as the governing framework for developing English language proficiency programs, mandating alignment of curricula and assessments with CEFR levels (Azman et al. 2021). This alignment is crucial for ensuring that educational outcomes meet international standards and that learners can effectively communicate in a global context. The CEFR provides a common framework for language education, which facilitates curriculum alignment across different educational institutions.

The CIPP Model in Curriculum Evaluation

The Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model, developed by Daniel L. Stufflebeam, serves as a comprehensive framework for evaluating educational programs, including language curricula. This model is particularly relevant in the context of language education, as it allows for a multidimensional analysis that encompasses various aspects of curriculum effectiveness, thereby facilitating informed decision-making and continuous improvement in educational practices. It offers a comprehensive framework by dividing the evaluation into four components: context (the need for the curriculum), input (the resources and strategies used), process (the implementation of the curriculum), and product (the outcomes of the curriculum) (Aziz et al. 2018). The CIPP model has been applied to various educational settings, including language learning programs, to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement (Kim 2022).

The context evaluation component of the CIPP model focuses on understanding the environment in which the curriculum operates. This includes assessing the needs, assets, and opportunities that influence the curriculum's design and delivery. For instance, Khairi (2023) emphasizes the importance of context in evaluating the MBKM curriculum, noting that it reveals the cultural values and educational regulations that shape the educational landscape. Similarly, the context evaluation in language curricula helps identify the specific linguistic and cultural needs of learners, ensuring that the curriculum is relevant and responsive to its environment (Sopha & Nanni 2019).

Input evaluation examines the resources and strategies employed in the curriculum, including materials, teacher qualifications, and instructional methods. Research indicates that a well-structured input evaluation can significantly enhance the effectiveness of language programs. For example, Uğur et al. (2016) highlight that the CIPP model's input evaluation allows for a detailed analysis of the resources allocated to language preparatory classes, which is crucial for understanding their effectiveness. Furthermore, the input evaluation can guide educators in selecting appropriate teaching methodologies and materials that align with the curriculum's objectives (Ali & Celik 2020).

Process evaluation is critical in assessing the implementation of the curriculum. It involves monitoring the actual teaching and learning activities to ensure they align with the planned curriculum. Studies have shown that effective process evaluation can lead to improvements in teaching practices and student outcomes. For instance, Kaya and Ok (2016) utilized the process component of the CIPP model to evaluate the congruence between planned and actual classroom activities in English language instruction, demonstrating its utility in identifying discrepancies that may hinder learning. . Additionally, Bodur et al. (2022) employed the CIPP model to evaluate science curricula, finding that ongoing process evaluations helped refine instructional strategies and enhance student engagement.

Finally, product evaluation assesses the outcomes of the curriculum, including student performance and overall program effectiveness. This component is essential for determining whether the curriculum meets its intended goals. For example, Muji et al. (2021) noted that product evaluation provides feedback that can inform future curriculum revisions and improvements, ensuring that educational programs remain effective and relevant. Moreover, the CIPP model's holistic approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how various factors contribute to student learning outcomes in language education (Sagin et al., 2023).

Importance of Student Perceptions

Evaluating student perceptions provides direct insights into the curriculum's effectiveness. Students' experiences and feedback offer valuable information that can guide curriculum developers in making data-driven decisions to improve teaching strategies, resources, and assessments. Incorporating students' voices in curriculum evaluation ensures that the educational program is relevant and responsive to their learning needs (Umam & Saripah 2018). CIPP model emphasizes the importance of gathering feedback from various stakeholders, including students, to inform curriculum development and improvement.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive survey research design to evaluate high-proficiency students' perceptions of the CEFR-aligned English Language Curriculum at

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). The evaluation followed Stufflebeam's CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model of curriculum evaluation, focusing on various aspects of the curriculum's implementation.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved a total of 168 undergraduate students from UKM who were undertaking compulsory English courses. The participants were selected through a stratified sampling procedure, ensuring that only high-proficiency students from Track 3 (B2) of the CEFR-aligned curriculum were included. These students represent the target group for assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum in advancing advanced language skills as they have completed two English courses and are in the middle of completing the last required English course.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics to compute mean scores for each of the four components of the CIPP model. The analysis aimed to identify students' general perceptions of the curriculum's effectiveness, particularly in the areas of course content, teaching methodology, learning resources, and overall outcomes. The mean scores were interpreted to highlight areas of strength and those needing improvement within the curriculum.

Data Collection

The survey was administered to the 168 students during their regular class hours. Students were informed of the purpose of the study and provided consent before participating. The survey items were grouped according to the CIPP model components: Context, Input, Process, and Product, allowing for a focused evaluation of different aspects of curriculum implementation.

Research Instrument

Data was collected using an 18-item survey questionnaire, designed to measure students' perceptions across the four components of the CIPP model. The survey utilised a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "Strongly Disagree" and 7 indicated "Strongly Agree." The survey underwent content validation through consultations with experts to ensure that the items were aligned with the CIPP evaluation framework. Additionally, the reliability of the instrument was confirmed through a pilot test involving a sample of students, yielding a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.785, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

RESULTS

The data analysis revealed differing levels of perceived curriculum effectiveness. The table below presents the respondents' perceptions of the curriculum's effectiveness as gathered in the study.

Table 1. Overall perceived effectiveness of the CEFR-aligned English language curriculum

Curricular Component	Mean	Standard Deviation
Context	4.8515	0.71201
Input	5.0712	0.84259
Process	4.2597	0.67487
Product	4.3129	0.77811

Table 1 summarizes the overall perceived effectiveness of the curriculum in terms of four main components: **Context**, **Input**, **Process**, and **Product**. The results show that students rated **Input** (Mean = 5.0712, SD = 0.84259) as the most effective, followed by **Context** (Mean = 4.8515, SD = 0.71201). However, lower ratings were observed for **Process** (Mean = 4.2597, SD = 0.67487) and **Product** (Mean = 4.3129, SD = 0.77811). These findings indicate that while students are satisfied with the materials and resources provided (Input), there are concerns regarding the implementation of activities (Process) and the outcomes they achieve (Product). The tables below present the questionnaire results.

Context Effectiveness

Table 2. Context effectiveness of the CEFR-aligned English language curriculum

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
LMCE English courses offered are relevant for my English language learning at UKM	5.77	1.152
I find LMCE English courses offered to be easy for my level of English	4.09	1.431
I enjoyed learning LMCE English courses because they are interesting and fun	5.30	1.334
For me, it is important to improve my level of English and obtain MUET 4.0	4.83	1.493
Completing only 3 LMCE English courses is enough for me to improve and obtain MUET 4.0	4.27	1.238

The data in Table 2 reveal that students generally perceive the **Context** of the CEFR-aligned curriculum as favourable. The highest-rated item is the relevance of the LMCE English courses (Mean = 5.77, SD = 1.152), followed by students' enjoyment of the courses (Mean = 5.30, SD = 1.334). These high ratings suggest that the courses are perceived as meaningful and enjoyable for high-proficient learners.

Interestingly, students rated the item related to the difficulty of the courses lower (Mean = 4.09, SD = 1.431). This suggests that while the curriculum is relevant, some students may feel that it does not fully challenge their proficiency level. Additionally, the moderate rating for the importance of improving English and obtaining MUET 4.0 (Mean = 4.83, SD = 1.493) indicates a mixed perception of the necessity of further improvement at this stage of learning.

Input Effectiveness

Table 3. Input Effectiveness of the CEFR-aligned English Language Curriculum

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
The course materials provided were enough for my English language learning.	5.56	1.150
I find the course materials to be easy for my level of English	4.39	1.371
I enjoyed using the course materials because they were interactive and interesting.	4.34	1.302
I believe the course materials can help me improve my level of English and obtain MUET 4.0	5.26	1.211
The course instructors' effective teaching methods made learning English enjoyable.	5.80	1.180

As shown in Table 3, students rated **Input** highly, particularly the effectiveness of the course instructors' teaching methods (Mean = 5.80, SD = 1.180) and the adequacy of course materials (Mean = 5.56, SD = 1.150). These results suggest that high-proficient students appreciate the interactive and well-designed course materials, and find the instructors' teaching methods highly effective in facilitating enjoyable learning.

The slightly lower rating for the difficulty of the materials (Mean = 4.39, SD = 1.371) implies that some students may find the materials not as challenging as expected. This finding aligns with the overall perception that the courses, while effective, might benefit from increased difficulty to better match the abilities of high-proficient learners.

Process Effectiveness

Table 4. Process effectiveness of the CEFR-aligned English language curriculum

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
I don't need more inside and outside classroom activities to improve my level of English and obtain MUET 4.0	3.23	1.268
The course assignments made me use all my language skills (reading, writing, speaking & listening).	5.77	1.079
I did not feel burdened by the number of course assignments given.	3.78	1.401

The **Process** component (Table 4) reveals more mixed perceptions. While students appreciate the balance of language skills required by course assignments (Mean = 5.77, SD = 1.079), they expressed a need for more in-class and extracurricular activities (Mean = 3.23, SD = 1.268) and felt somewhat burdened by the number of assignments (Mean = 3.78, SD = 1.401).

These findings suggest that students may benefit from a more diversified approach to language practice, particularly through activities that foster spontaneous communication and practical usage of the language. The perception of assignment burden highlights the potential need for curriculum adjustment to better manage students' workload.

Product Effectiveness

Table 5. Product effectiveness of the CEFR-aligned English language curriculum

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
I can give clear presentations in English with supporting details and examples on various topics	5.39	1.015
I find it easy to spontaneously and fluently interact with other people	3.74	1.164
I have a good range of vocabulary and I can express my point of views accurately and easily	4.95	1.175
When speaking, I do not make grammatical mistakes that lead to misunderstanding	3.24	1.285
If I re-take MUET now, I believe I can achieve MUET Band 4.0	4.25	1.228

In terms of **Product** (Table 5), students generally perceive their proficiency outcomes positively but note areas for improvement. They feel confident in their ability to give clear presentations (Mean = 5.39, SD = 1.015) and have a good range of vocabulary (Mean = 4.95, SD = 1.175). However, they expressed lower confidence in their grammatical accuracy (Mean = 3.24, SD = 1.285) and fluency in interactions (Mean = 3.74, SD = 1.164).

These results suggest that while students are developing certain skills, there is a need for more focused instruction on spontaneous speaking and grammatical precision. This is critical, as students feel that improving these aspects will increase their chances of attaining MUET Band 4.0, as indicated by the moderate rating for the related item (Mean = 4.25, SD = 1.228).

Curriculum Decision Making

Table 6. Making data-driven informed curricular decisions

Curriculum Decision-making	Curricular Components
Effective curriculum (Mean: 6.00-7.00)	
Slight curriculum review (Mean: 5.00-5.99)	Course instructor's effectiveness (5.80)
	Course assignments' balance of language skills (5.77)
	Course relevance (5.77)
	Course material adequacy (5.56)
	Students' presentation skills (5.39)
	Course enjoyment (5.30)
	Course materials effectiveness (5.26)
Some curriculum review (Mean: 4.00-4.99)	Student's vocabulary (4.95)
	Students' perceptions on higher CEFR level attainment (4.83)
	Course materials difficulty (4.39)
	Course materials enjoyability (4.34)
	Course adequacy (4.27)
	Students' higher CEFR level attainment (4.25)
	Course difficulty (4.09)
In-depth curriculum review (Mean: 0.00-3.99)	Assignments burden (3.78)
	Student's language fluency (3.74)
	Students' grammatical accuracy(3.24)
	Classroom activities adequacy (3.23)

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Table 6 provides insights into how the results inform curriculum decision-making. Components such as instructor effectiveness and assignment balance were rated highly, suggesting minimal need for changes. However, areas such as student fluency, grammatical accuracy, and the adequacy of classroom activities received lower ratings, highlighting a need for more in-depth curriculum reviews in these areas.

Overall, these findings suggest that while the CEFR-aligned curriculum at UKM is perceived positively by high-proficient students, especially in terms of course relevance and instructor effectiveness, there are opportunities to enhance the curriculum to better address fluency, grammatical accuracy, and language practice activities.

In summary, the data indicates a spectrum of effectiveness across various curricular components, with none achieving the highest effectiveness range. Components fall mainly into the categories needing slight to some curriculum review, highlighting areas for targeted improvements. The most critical areas requiring in-depth review are related to assignment burden, language fluency, grammatical accuracy, and classroom activity adequacy. This analysis suggests a strategic focus on enhancing these key areas to improve overall curriculum effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal mixed perceptions of the CEFR-aligned English curriculum. The moderate scores for context and input suggest that while the curriculum is relevant and well-resourced, it may need adjustments to better match the proficiency levels of the students. The lower scores for process and product highlight areas for improvement, particularly in the design of classroom activities and assignments, which students found insufficient or overly burdensome.

Curriculum Relevance

The high mean score for the context component indicates that students generally find the courses relevant to their academic and professional needs. However, the relatively low mean for course difficulty suggests that adjustments are needed to ensure that the curriculum is appropriately challenging for high-proficiency students.

Teaching and Learning Materials

The input component received a positive evaluation, reflecting the adequacy of the teaching methods and materials. However, it is implied that the students wanted more engaging and varied materials that could further enhance their learning experience.

Curriculum Process and Product

The lower scores for process and product suggest that the curriculum needs more engaging and interactive activities to improve language fluency and accuracy. Addressing these gaps could lead to better language outcomes for high-proficiency students.

CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable insights into students' perceptions of the CEFR-aligned English curriculum at UKM. While the curriculum is viewed as relevant and well-supported by materials and instructors, there are clear areas for improvement, particularly in terms of assignments, classroom activities, and language outcomes. Future studies should incorporate qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, to gather deeper insights into the curriculum's strengths and weaknesses. Long-term studies could also evaluate the sustained impact of the curriculum on students' language proficiency and career success.

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