

Unpacking The Challenges In EAP Curriculum Implementation: A Case Study (University Of Technology- Suhar- Oman)

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0. Abstract:

The implementation of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curricula at the tertiary level at UTAS- Suhar is typically confronted with numerous structural, pedagogical, and administrative challenges. This study critically examines the intricate obstacles to EAP program effectiveness, such as centralized leadership structures, no input from teachers, limited communication channels, and institutional resistance to change. It also examines issues related to curriculum development, mismatch between learner needs and program goals, low academic performance, and diminishing learner motivation. Drawing on qualitative data from EAP teachers and program coordinators, the research aims to unearth systemic shortcomings and make informed recommendations for creating responsive, inclusive, and contextually relevant EAP curricula. The findings will inform how teaching practice and student experience in academic English programmes are influenced by top-down decision-making.

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1. Introduction

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) plays a crucial role in getting tertiary-level students equipped with linguistic and academic abilities to succeed in their areas of study. As higher education institutions receive increasing globalization and English-medium instruction, there has been increasing demand for robust, learner-centered EAP curricula. However, despite this growing demand, the implementation of EAP programs is generally hindered by deeply rooted and complex issues that undermine their efficiency. These are not merely technical but deeply entrenched within the structural, administrative, and pedagogical frameworks that inform educational institutions.

The most critical issue is the centralized leadership approach prevalent in most EAP programs. Curriculum content, instructional methods, and assessment methodologies are frequently established by higher-level administrators with little significant input from those who actually work most directly with the learners—the teachers. This top-down structure robs teachers of agency and fosters disconnection between curriculum and real learner needs. Added to this is the lack of open channels of communication among key stakeholders, which hinders collaborative problem-solving and adaptive curriculum planning.

Besides, resistance to change at institutional and individual levels also makes efforts to innovate and improve EAP programs more challenging. Curriculum planning procedures rarely reflect a proper assessment of students' academic language requirements, and thus there is a mismatch between stated program objectives and actual learning outcomes. This conflict is further compounded by student low English proficiency and low motivation observed, both of which contribute significantly to influencing engagement as well as performance in EAP courses.

This research aims to explore these concerns through the perspectives of the program coordinators as well as the EAP teachers, where there is a focus on identifying systemic weaknesses in terms of leadership, communication, curriculum planning, and learner engagement. Analyzing the gap between institutional setup and realities of classroom life, the research seeks to offer practical recommendations on crafting more inclusive, needs-based, and context-aware EAP curricula. Thus, it contributes to a growing conversation that invites participatory and responsive academic language education in the context of higher education.

2. Research Problem

Despite its core role in supporting the academic success of students, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curriculum implementation within the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) – Suhar is hampered by persistent institutional factors. Top-down leadership as the prevalent style inhibits the involvement of teachers in curriculum building, thereby preventing the merging of lesson planning and

classroom dynamics. Inefficiencies of communication among stakeholders and institutionalized resistance towards change further hamper effective reform. Furthermore, today's curricula have a tendency to overlook actual academic language requirements of students, especially with low English proficiency and motivation levels. These issues solidify the need to reconsider implementation of EAP according to instructors' lived realities in order to introduce more responsive, inclusive, and context-appropriate practices.

3. Research Objectives:

1. To examine the impact of top-down leadership on EAP curriculum change and implementation.
2. To survey EAP instructors' participation level in curriculum decisions.
3. To establish EAP stakeholders' barriers to communication.
4. To investigate institutional and individual resistance to curriculum change in EAP programs.
5. To evaluate how current curriculum planning addresses or overlooks learners' academic language needs.
6. To assess the influence of students' level of proficiency and motivation on curriculum effectiveness.
7. To contrast the expressed program goals and EAP students' real learning needs and outcomes.

4. Research Questions:

1. In what way does centralized leadership style affect EAP curriculum development and teachers' autonomy?
2. In what ways and to what degree are teachers' voices included or silenced in EAP curriculum planning and implementation?
3. What are the key communication issues among stakeholders in EAP programs, and how do they impact curriculum coherence?
4. What are the kinds of resistance to change in EAP institutions, and what are their underlying causes?
5. How far are learners' needs examined and factored into EAP curriculum design?
6. How do student proficiency levels and motivation impact the effectiveness of EAP teaching?
7. To what extent are the goals and objectives of EAP programs attuned to students' actual linguistic and academic needs?

5. Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative case study approach to explore the experiences and attitudes of teachers working on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curriculum implementation in the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) – Suhar. Case study design was utilized because it can provide detailed information regarding complex institutional phenomena within a tangible, real-world context.

6. Research Design

The qualitative case study methodology offers a rich insight into how teacher and EAP program coordinators perceive and negotiate difficulties in the existing curriculum structure. Being an interpretative approach, it focuses on voice and voice choices of the participants, contextual factors, and meaning-making, thereby eminently suited for addressing concerns of teacher agency, institutional communication, and curriculum relatedness.

EAP Curriculum Challenges

This section attempts to provide answers for the first research question to further investigate the nature of curriculum challenges encountered by EAP teachers at the various colleges. The quantitative and the qualitative analysis of the data has shown that the curriculum challenges referred to by the participants can be classified into three main challenges each of which includes a number of categories and sub-categories. This section will focus on the analysis of EAP curriculum challenges which have been categorized as; challenges related to the centralized leadership approach, curriculum planning related challenges as well as challenges related to the working conditions of EAP teachers at CAS colleges.

The following section will be devoted to the discussion of various curriculum challenges encountered by EAP teachers at CAS colleges by merging the results retrieved from the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews.

Challenges related to the Centralized Leadership Approach

The analysis of the questionnaire items showed that there are a number of challenges that exist in the EAP programme at CAS. This was clearly indicated in the analysis of item (1) in the questionnaire to which a significant number of about 66.6% teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that some elements of the EAP curriculum provided at CAS are considered to be challenging. The analysis of the research data revealed that the centralized leadership approach is the prevalent administrative system in the Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman. The analysis of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews indicated that the existing top-down

leadership approach at CAS colleges is the main challenge to which most of the curriculum related issues are attributed. Item (7) of the questionnaire shows that a significant percentage about 67.9% of EAP teachers at CAS indicated that they are not involved in the revision and evaluation of existing course outlines. A similar finding in item (10) of the questionnaire related to the existence of a centralized leadership approach which indicated that 60% of participants either strongly disagreed or disagreed that EAP teachers at CAS are involved in writing exams. This finding was complemented by the analysis of the open-ended questions in the last section of the questionnaire. In responding to the first item of the open-ended questions to which the identities of the participants were anonymous, a participant indicated that the current leadership approach is based on *“centralization of the system and the absence of well-maintained channels of communication between the different levels of the hierarchy”*.

With regards to the analysis of the semi-structured interviews it was evident that the existence of a centralized leadership approach which was viewed as a dominant challenge by all the participants does influence EAP curriculum development at CAS colleges.

When asked about his views of the leadership approach which is currently in place at CAS colleges Amjad (Male, Syrian, 3 years at CAS) explained:

“It is definitely top-down. Of course it will affect. The system in the ministry is rigid and bureaucratic and the problem with rigid systems is that life develops faster than they can. They need more time. For the ministry to decide to change the book, it will take ten years”

From the analysis, there is an agreement on part of the participants as shown from the semi-structured interviews that the existing centralized system has a negative impact on developing the curriculum of EAP courses. Ameer (Male, Omani, 4 years at CAS) stated that:

“I think it is definitely top-down situation, the people in the top have got little insight on what happens inside our colleges or our classes so they might instruct us to do things based on the book or by the book but the situation demands another solution. So, whatever suggestions we give them, it goes like nobody hears us or nobody listens so it is definitely a top-down model. It affects curriculum development negatively”

The existence of a centralized system was also indicated by another participant who suggested that the system has to allow for top-down and bottom-up practices to coexist rather than having one dominant leadership approach. Yasir (Male, Omani, 5 years at CAS) who said that:

“I think it is top-down as I mentioned before, everything is centralized, everything is coming from the headquarters in Muscat in the Ministry and we apply it. I think it should be two-way. Top-down, no problem, but there should be some bottom up feedback going to them.....we do send some feedback but this is not enough”

Essentially, all the participants agree that the current centralized system at CAS colleges does not support initiating a process of curriculum development in EAP courses. The belief is that this leadership approach has given rise to some other issues such as; lack of teachers' voice, lack of communication channels, and the resistance to change on the part of both administrators and teachers.

Lack of Teachers' Voice

The lack of teachers' voice in curriculum has been viewed as a major challenge to EAP curriculum development at CAS colleges. An analysis of items (7 and 10) which was stated in the previous section alludes to the lack of teachers' contribution in the existing curriculum at CAS. In their response to item (12) of the questionnaire, 71% of participants reported that the main task for EAP teachers at the colleges is the implementation of the curriculum. 11.1% of the sample disagreed whereas 16% neither agreed nor disagreed with the item. The issue of lack of teachers' voice in curriculum was also evident in the analysis of item (13) to which 43.2% of the participants either strongly disagreed or disagreed, 37% neither agreed nor disagreed and 18.5 either strongly agreed or agreed that teachers' views about improving EAP courses are considered. The existing curriculum in the colleges has been designed by a group of coordinators who are involved in making curricular decisions regarding EAP courses. EAP textbooks are supplied to the colleges by publishing companies whereas other curriculum elements have been designed by the Programme Director with the help of level coordinators all working as a team. This particular view on EAP curriculum design was referred to by Dina (Female, British, 8 years at CAS) who clarified further in the following excerpt:

“Ok, it kinds starts, we have the Programme Director in Muscat who works for the Ministry of Higher Education. The teachers have this strange illusion of Muscat. They always talk about Muscat and that there is like this big team of people that work there whereas realistically it is the Programme Director is located there. All of the work to do with curriculum and development or anything like that is done within the colleges generally by the coordinators, working as a team but working over a distance reporting to the PD”

Based on my own experience as an EAP teacher and level coordinator at the English Department at CAS Sohar, there is very limited contribution from teachers towards the EAP curriculum. Course objectives are designed by the Programme Director at higher levels in the Ministry. With respect to assessment policies, these

are designed by assessment coordinators and later get approved by the Programme Director. All existing curriculum elements including textbooks, course objectives as well as assessment policies have been in place for a number of years and they have not been changed nor modified to cater for the emerging needs of students. The role played by EAP teachers in courses at CAS colleges is very limited and does not go beyond the implementation of the curriculum. The lack of teachers' voice in curriculum is attributed to the absence of a feedback system to allow teachers to share their concerns, ideas and suggestions. When asked about her views on the role played by EAP teachers in the EAP curriculum Klara (Female, American, 1 year at CAS) commented:

"But if we are given a voice and if we have the freedom to speak about our ideas, maybe we can make small changes. I talked with one of my Omani colleagues and she said that she has been trying to make changes but she can only make small changes within individual courses because so much is coming down from the ministry that even she does not have much freedom to make changes that she thinks will be beneficial"

The Teachers' sense of frustration on this issue was apparent especially that some teachers indicated that they constantly attempt to send their feedback on various curriculum related issues but there is rarely any follow-up to their feedback. Ameer (Male, Omani, 4 Years at CAS) commented on this issue:

"Yes, I actually have written a couple of proposals, and sent them directly to the Programme Director, but I haven't received a feedback even if it says this doesn't work, it would have been a negative feedback but at least a feedback, but I haven't received anything"

The previous excerpt shows disregarding teachers' constructive feedback can be demotivating for them. The following quote provided by Hamed (Male, Omani, more than 10 years at CAS) indicates that this issue can discourage teachers and hinder their creativity. When asked about the reaction of decision makers to the teachers' proposed feedback regarding curriculum issues he responded:

"Yes I did. And the feedback was very neutral. Neither yes or No. That is our policy so you don't know whether they agree with you or disagree with you. And because of that I don't feel I want to discuss it further with them"

The comments represented in the previous excerpt highlight that EAP teachers have a very limited role in the current EAP curriculum which has formulated an obstacle to the efforts intended to improve or develop the curriculum. EAP curriculum development at CAS colleges can only be achieved by focusing on the students' needs and allowing EAP teachers to make an effective contribution in the curriculum. Disregarding the views of teachers can influence their motivation and consequently hinder curriculum development.

Lack of Communication Channels

The centralized leadership approach dominating the leadership system at CAS colleges has led to the lack of efficient communication channels and has been revealed as one of the obstacles to EAP curriculum development. The issue of communication was apparent, particularly as there was no input from EAP teachers on the implemented curriculum elements. In their answer to item (29) of the questionnaire, participants showed that the lack of communication channels was an important issue. A significant number of the participants of 88.8% either strongly agreed or agreed that the English departments at CAS colleges should openly discuss curriculum issues with EAP teachers. This finding was further supported by a comment provided by one of the participants relating to this issue in the open-ended questions in the questionnaire.

"Administration and coordinators should be much more open with the teachers. I feel like many important things are being kept secret from us, and then we get in trouble for not knowing the expectations that the department and coordinators have of us"

This finding was also supported by the participants' responses in the semi-structured interviews. Klara (Female, American, 1 year) commented:

"I don't feel there is a lot of communication from administration, mostly I will just ask other teachers what they were doing but we didn't seem to get much guidance from administration as far as what we should be doing or what we should not be doing. We found out some things the hard way no body communicated ahead of time"

The findings revealed that the lack of communication was evident not only among teachers but also between teachers and the programme administrators. A number of teachers felt it was not safe to express their ideas on curriculum because they did not know if it would be accepted. Klara commented further on this issue:

"I feel we are all operating, working in isolation. I feel like there is no trust. It is not safe to express your ideas about anything, let alone curriculum development"

The sense of isolation indicated in the previous comment was also apparent across the six colleges. The lack of follow up to the kind of issues confronted by teachers in their classes was similar to the lack of feedback on how each college was dealing with curriculum related challenges. Lack of proper communication has led to individualized teaching practices by EAP teachers in various colleges which eventually influence the quality of teaching and learning in the EAP programme. Berla (Female, British, 8 years) referred to this

particular issue in the following response:

"You need to develop the teachers to be all on the same page. We are teaching EAP and we need a benchmark for whatever the students are to achieve in the EAP because some people will write a report like this and some people will write a report like this. Some use APA and some use something else. So, everybody needs to be on the same page basically before we could even think about professional development"

The findings indicate that the lack of proper communication channels between EAP teachers and the programme administrators at CAS constitutes a barrier to curriculum development. Numerous curriculum challenges in the EAP programme have not been resolved because nothing was done on the part of the programme administration to maintain communication channels with the teachers to allow curricular issues to be openly discussed. Maintaining communication channels with the EAP practitioners is the first strategy which should be applied to identify curriculum challenges encountered by teachers and to determine a curriculum development plan to deal with existing issues.

Resistance to Change

One of the challenging aspects related to the existence of a centralized top-down approach at CAS colleges is that change is very difficult to implement if not impossible, particularly due to the standardization of the EAP programme across the CAS colleges. EAP teachers alluded to a number of challenges and dealing with these curriculum challenges will certainly demand some changes. However, under the dominant centralized leadership practiced at CAS colleges, change is hard to achieve because the colleges do not appear to agree on a specific mechanism to deal with the current challenges. Abdul Aziz (Male, local, 5 years at CAS) commented:

"We have sensed and we have lived that changes are almost hard to make and there is always that idea, yeah they are six campuses and over the course of years whatever suggestions that you gave, it would clash with other colleges"

Under a centralized system similar to the one dominating the EAP curriculum at our colleges, changes which are aimed at developing the curriculum must first be approved by the Programme Director and upper authorities at the Ministry of Higher Education. With different academic specializations in each college, deciding on a particular strategy to develop the EAP curriculum is not being encouraged or supported by the decision makers. This very complex situation was communicated by Mansour (Male, Omani, 4 years at CAS) in the following excerpt:

"There is always this hesitation to take a proposal as it is simply because we have to keep the six colleges working at the same pace and achieving the same objectives. It will be very impossible for me for example to propose something which I think suits IT students and Engineering students and then say OK this is the right recipe. You can never come up with a recipe. I think this is why they are hesitant to take these suggestions because they might simply not work in other colleges. So, there is always this hesitation"

The discussion presented in the previous comment indicates that the centralized top-down approach at CAS colleges stand in the way of any successful initiative towards curriculum development. This has led some colleges to deal with EAP curriculum challenges in their own way without waiting for the approval of decision makers or even communicating openly their suggested approach to the other CAS colleges. This was pointed out by Abdul Aziz who elaborated on this issue in the following comment:

"So yeah communicating changes was harder and the top-down resentment from like the PD because they say hey we can't really change unless all the colleges change. Some colleges attempted change but never told anyone about it so it was just within college because they have sensed that something was wrong and we need to work on it not necessarily to be communicated with others but yeah let's just do it here at least"

The emergence of various curriculum challenges in EAP courses at CAS requires introducing changes to the programme. The current situation under which each college is dealing separately with curriculum challenges is not healthy, particularly because students in all the six colleges will be subjected to the same assessment policies and will sit for a final examination which is centralized across the board. Noting that the continuous assessment and summative assessment of EAP courses are standardized, more communication should be encouraged to resolve any curricular arising issues. Therefore, this requires exerting more efforts to maintain channels of communication at all the levels; teachers, administrators and CAS colleges.

The following discussion will be focused on analyzing the second major challenge which will tackle curriculum planning related challenges.

Curriculum Planning related Challenges

The analysis of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews revealed that there are a number of challenges related to the process of curriculum planning and curriculum design in EAP courses. These challenges are classified in five sub- categories; issues related to assessing the learners' needs, issues related to programme goals and objectives, issues related to deciding the programme content, issues related to deciding an assessment plan to assess the students' performance, and the lack of an evaluation scheme for EAP courses.

Issues related to assessing the learners' needs

There are two main challenges which will be addressed under this category. The first issue relates to the gap between the students' current level and the expected level required by the course objectives. The second challenge relates to the lack of students' motivation which is also seen as a significant challenge and is believed to hinder EAP curriculum development.

Students' Low Proficiency level

The main challenge highlighted by the participants is the current gap between the students' proficiency level and the course objectives. EAP course objectives do not appear to address the learners' needs nor are aligned with their linguistic proficiency. In their answer to item (2) of the questionnaire, 51.8% of the participants either strongly disagreed or disagreed, 30.9% either strongly agreed or agreed and 16% neither agreed nor disagreed on EAP courses at CAS colleges being designed to suit the students' linguistic and academic needs. In spite of the diversity in the participants' views regarding the mismatch between the students' level and the course objectives, a large number of the participants seemed to be aware of the existence of some sort of incompatibility. In their answer to item (3) of the questionnaire a large number of the participants about 71.1% either strongly agreed or agreed that the main purpose of EAP courses at CAS should be satisfying the linguistic demands of major departments. The issue about EAP course objectives is that these are not based on needs analysis but rather designed by decision makers. The significance of needs analysis in the context of the study was evident in the analysis of item (5) of the questionnaire to which a significant number of the participants about 77.9 % either strongly agreed or agreed that EAP courses at CAS should be informed by a needs analysis process. These course objectives have been in place for a number of years and have not been reviewed or revised since then. Course objectives should undergo a routine process of revision and evaluation to ensure these objectives are aligned with the students' current linguistic and academic needs. This alignment can also be effective in satisfying the evolving demands of the students' academic specializations. This issue was denoted to by Mansour (Male, Omani, 4 years' experience in CAS) in the following response:

"If we look at the objectives, these haven't been changed for a number of years, haven't been touched since the beginning and what teachers are trying to do on their own, it is their initiative to supplement what their curriculum can't offer to students based on the teachers' vision of what the students need"

The participants' responses to the open-ended section of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews were quite revealing on this regard. This is because a large number of the participants realized that one of the main challenges in the curriculum is the existing gap between the students' current proficiency level and the level expected of them as stipulated in the EAP course objectives. One of the participants related to this issue in responding to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire:

"There is a mismatch between the level of English proficiency learners assumed to have and the level they actually have. Many students don't have strong enough general English skills to engage effectively with the course"

Another participant also commented on the issue:

"The level of English proficiency is very low in comparison to the materials that are offered to the students and in relation to the assignments they are asked to complete. Mainly, the essay writing project is a problem because it is far above 90% of the students' ability"

Based on the interview results, most teachers believe that the gap between the students' proficiency level and the level expected of them according to the EAP course objectives constitutes a major hindrance in developing the EAP curriculum at the colleges. Bradley (Male, American, 1 year experience in CAS) commented:

"The fit between the students and the curriculum, there is more room for improvement there I guess. I think the curriculum is good for meeting the goals of the programme, but the students are not really able to use those materials effectively. There is a gap between the students' competency level right now and the higher level of the curriculum"

This lack of the students' competency level which was referred to by Bradley could be attributed to the issue of EAP courses originally not being established on a needs analysis and therefore the actual needs of the students aren't being addressed.

Klara argued further:

"So, I would like a curriculum that is more realistic, that understands what level the students are at, and helps them to go from there. It felt like trying to get them to go from Kindergarten to grad school in one semester. And a lot of them were frustrated by it and I was frustrated by it. The curriculum isn't suitable for the students"

The point being stressed in the previous comment is that student progress can be jeopardized if their actual needs are not carefully addressed in EAP course objectives.

Lack of Students' Motivation

One reason why students feel they are not motivated in their classes is when the content of what is being taught or what is being asked of them is too challenging. In their answers to item (4) in the questionnaire, the majority of the participants of about 80% indicated that a learner-centered approach should be the guiding principle for EAP courses at CAS colleges. Though the learner-centered approach should be the underlying principle of the EAP programme, there are still some existing issues which need to be dealt with to ensure this approach is successfully implemented. Based on the analysis of the open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews, lack of student motivation in EAP courses is caused because the content of these courses is irrelevant to their academic needs which contradicts the objectives of the learner-centered approach. One of the participants provided an interesting response in the open-ended section of the questionnaire commenting:

"My EAP class uses three textbooks from the UK that are irrelevant to our Omani students' lives. The students find these boring. I would like to spend class time doing more relevant student-centered activities"

This finding about the irrelevance of EAP teaching materials to the students is also supported by the participants' responses in the semi-structured interviews. Muna (Female, Omani, 4 years in CAS) commented:

"They are all talking how these courses are becoming really boring for the students, not really addressing what they need, talking about other materials which can be useful to them"

Another factor contributing to the issue of lack of students' motivation is that students are not involved in the curriculum. We expect them to receive the curriculum and we never consider asking them for their feedback on their needs, their preferences and their suggestions. This point was clearly indicated by Dina (Female, British, 8 years in CAS) in the following quote:

"Surely there are end users of our product. We should be asking them. We don't have feedback from them. We don't get feedback from students who passed the course or have done these kinds of things. So, I think our feedback process isn't the one that should be"

Consideration of student feedback on their needs in EAP courses can be seen as a way to get students more engaged within the courses and ultimately enhance their motivation in EAP classes. Mansour (Male, Omani, 4 years in CAS) explained:

"So, I think teachers should play a major role in curriculum development then comes the students who can to some degree speak about their specific needs in the classrooms. As an English teacher I will never be able to tell or totally tell the students' needs in an engineering classroom. That is maybe something I should be somehow preparing my students for. So, my only contact point here is I sit with the students and listen to what they need"

The point implied by Mansour is that students should be more involved in curriculum through listening to what they need and considering their feedback.

Muna (Female, Omani, 4 years in CAS) alluded to another significant factor which she sees as contributing to the issue of lack of students' motivation in EAP courses. She stated:

"Teachers could even sense that students are not interested in their classes. It should not be this way really, having replicated syllabus and assessment for various EAP courses which are meant to be different to develop the students' academic and linguistic skills from one course to another. This is why students get bored"

Although more discussion will be provided under the category specified for tackling assessment issues, having replicated assessment in EAP courses has influenced students' motivation in EAP courses. The findings indicate there is a need to review assessment procedures to assure the existence of a clear progress plan that can be measured for every course. Teachers can develop an awareness of the students' needs and preferred learning styles through their frequent contact with the students. Therefore, they can either use differentiated instructional methods or supplementary materials to maximize students' motivation.

Issues related to programme goals and objectives

In the previous discussion, we discussed that according to the participants' views the current EAP course objectives do not appear to address the actual needs of the learners. This section will provide a deeper investigation on issues related to the existing EAP course objectives as revealed from the findings. The current EAP course objectives were designed a number of years ago by a former programme director. According to the previous policy which was implemented during his service in the Ministry, he was responsible for designing course objectives, assessment procedures, and then discussing them with a panel of Heads of English Departments and level coordinators. Whatever issues related to the EAP courses objectives will only be discussed at the level of decision makers who in this case were the programme director, HODs of English departments and level coordinators. They attend meetings at the Ministry and can be updated on issues concerning course objectives. After the former PD left, another PD took over and she is actually used a different

policy. Since she held the position, no change has been made to the course objectives as well as the other curriculum elements.

The qualitative analysis of the interviews showed that there is awareness among EAP teachers that one of the main curriculum challenges in the EAP courses, lies in the lack of a systematic process to review the currently implemented course objectives which according to the teachers need to be modified. Abdul Aziz (Male, Omani, 5 years in CAS) provided a clear explanation on the issue commenting:

"If we have a culture of collaboration, a culture of providing constant update aligning the goals, the goals are a little outdated, a little unrealizable and unachievable. Let's have something in this place, something better, something that will be much more useful not only to bringing a change to the course but even beyond that to the lives of the students"

The previous excerpt reveals there is an issue within the current EAP course objectives which need to be modified to cater for the students' actual needs and the emerging needs of the other academic specializations which our EAP programme is supposed to prepare the students for. According to the analysis of the findings, issues related to the EAP programme goals and objectives were classified into three main categories which are EAP or ESP, Textbook driven course objectives, knowledge base orientation of curriculum.

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