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# Teaching and learning English in Jordan

people, policy and practice

Prepared by Queen Rania Teacher Academy  
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# List of abbreviations

- Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions
- Civil Service Bureau
- Department of Statistics
- English for Specific Purposes
- Focus group discussions
- Jordan Strategy Forum
- Information, communication and technology
- International Catholic Migration Commission
- International Labour Organization
- Human Resource Development Strategy
- King Abdulla II Fund for Development
- Key informant interviews
- Middle East and North Africa
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
- Ministry of Labour
- National Center for Curriculum Development
- Program for International Student Assessment
- National Qualification Framework
- Queen Rania Teacher Academy
- Small- and medium-sized enterprises
- Technical and vocational education and training
- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

**AQACHEI**

**CSB**

**DOS**

**ESP**

**FGDs**

**JSF**

**ICT**

**ICMC**

**ILO**

**HRD**

**KAFD**

**KIIs**

**MENA**

**MOE**

**MOHE**

**MOL**

**NCCD**

**PISA**

**NQF**

**QRTA**

**SMEs**

**TVET**

**TIMSS**

# Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the research the British Council supported to understand how current English language teaching and learning policies and practices in Jordanian schools, and higher education institutions, contribute to increased work opportunities for young people in Jordan. These findings seek to deepen understanding of how the education system learning outcomes satisfy the English language-related demands of the labour market and hence establish appropriate English language education recommendations

## Methodology

Guided by the three main domains of interest identified by the British Council – people, policy and practice – this research studied English teaching and learning in Jordan between February and May 2021. It investigated:

**people:** perceptions of relevant stakeholders about English teaching and learning, potentially contributing to educational reform efforts for the English language

**policy:** overarching policies and the status of English language provisions of curricula, assessment, materials and resources to enable alignment between education system learning outcomes and labour market needs

**practice:** gaps and potential solutions regarding English language teaching and learning, including pedagogies, resources and students' behaviour, as well as the perceived role of English practices in the school classroom, in higher education institutions and in the workplace.

Additionally, due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected all aspects of life, the research examined educators' overall perceptions of the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning English.

The research deeply explored one main question which guided the study:

To what extent do the current policies and practices of teaching and learning English at schools and higher education institutions contribute to increased work opportunities for young people in Jordan?





Moreover, the research identified three sub-research questions.

- 1 What strategies do English language teachers and university professors report using in teaching and assessing English at schools and universities?
- 2 How motivated are students to learn English, according to school teachers and university professors?
- 3 How important is English for students' future careers, according to employers?

The research study used a mixed-methods approach to answer the research questions by deploying quantitative and qualitative research techniques for data collection, sampling and analysis. The research collected quantitative data using a questionnaire from a random sample of 558 K-12 English language teachers at the Ministry of Education (MOE). Qualitative data was collected using key informant interviews and focus group discussions by using purposive sampling of six English language education supervisors from the MOE, 15 university professors, 25 bachelor's degree students from various majors, including the English language, and 16 representatives from private sector organisations that show high employment rates in the labour market and may need the English language as part of the job requirements. In addition, the research team interviewed nine officials from the MOE, two from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHE), two from the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions (AQACHEI), seven from the Ministry of Labour (MOL), and three from the Civil Service Bureau (CSB). The research reports all results disaggregated according to the three main domains of people, policy and practice.

## Overall results

Generally, the research shows that most key stakeholders who participated in this research, including the MOE, MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL, CSB and representatives from private sector organisations, have reported mixed perceptions of Jordan's English teaching and learning practices. All research participants have acknowledged the efforts education institutions and decision makers have taken to align English language teaching and learning outcomes with labour market requirements throughout the past years. Nonetheless, research participants also recognised that there are still opportunities to strengthen English teaching and learning.

The majority of research participants indicated that English language overarching policies, national curriculum, assessment methods, educational pedagogies and practices among educators and students still do not fully satisfy today's labour market needs.

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a. This study only considers public sector schools. Private sector schools and teachers are not included and could be considered for future research.

Thus, most research participants indicated that more collaboration efforts and policy considerations among key stakeholders are still necessary to adapt teaching the English language to labour market needs. Additionally, most participants stated that addressing the challenges English teaching and learning currently face in Jordan must primarily start at the school education level, which is the starting point for education, and subsequently continue at higher education, leading to the labour market afterwards.

## Conclusions

Overall, the research results show that proficiency in the four English language skills, especially speaking and technical writing, is highly needed to create a wide range of employment opportunities for young Jordanians. The research results also show that employers expect education institutions, especially schools, to develop these skills among students to meet labour market needs. Additionally, the results show that work has been carried out by the different key stakeholders to develop and improve English language teaching and learning policies and practices during the past years. However, further efforts need to focus on the following areas:

### **People :**

There is evidence that the different key stakeholders, including the MOE, MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL, CSB and many private sector organisations, have made individual and collaborative efforts, such as the national reviews of the English language curriculum, and the offering of practical training opportunities for students to improve English teaching and learning competencies. Nevertheless, these efforts still do not provide the labour market with the English language competencies it needs. In general, there is a perception among different stakeholders that most students who complete secondary school education do not possess adequate competency levels in the four English language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. This lack of English proficiency is being transferred to higher education and afterward to the labour market. For this reason, employers seem to have developed a preference for hiring graduates from universities, or even schools in some cases, which focus on English language skills in their degree paths and thus produce relatively acceptable levels of English language competencies.

Additionally, the study revealed that students showed low to moderate motivation to learn English language, whether at schools or universities. The challenging learning environment in both schools and universities (such as limited infrastructure, limited access to up-to-date English language teaching resources, the large number of students in classes, etc.), and conventional teaching practices most educators continue to use are compelling reasons for why students lose interest as they advance in their education. Yet, despite the MOE's continued efforts to update English language learning outcomes, these outcomes still do not meet labour market needs. Furthermore, although the MOE continues to invest in teachers' professional development, English language teachers still need further programmes that introduce them to modern, communicative and student-centred pedagogies to improve English language teaching and learning in the four skills.



Also, further rigorous follow-up efforts from parents to advance their children's English language learning are needed as inadequate awareness of the role of English language in future employment opportunities, and the lack of adequate English language skills among all parents to academically support their children's learning progression have adverse consequences.

**Policy :**

Although policies and standards for English language teaching and learning at schools and higher education institutions are available at the MOE and the MOHE, effective implementation of these policies and standards needs to be activated on the ground. Most teachers at public schools are not completely familiar with the MOE's specialised standards of foreign language teaching for the English language. In addition, despite all the MOE review efforts to update the English language curriculum, the curriculum continues to misalign with labour market needs. Although some different assessment methods, such as presentations and project-based assignments, are encouraged and somewhat used among educators in schools and universities, traditional assessment methods, particularly tests, continue to be primarily used for assessment of English language learning. Using internationally recognised English language proficiency assessments such as TOEFL, IELTS or other equivalent assessments is not common in most education institutions, neither for students' admission to academic programmes nor for teachers' and university professors' employment. Both the MOE and the MOHE have developed a number of national assessments to assess English competencies. Yet, these assessments do not seem to support improved English language teaching and learning standards effectively. In addition, the required necessary materials and resources for effective English language teaching and learning are still not adequately available at public schools in particular, or at many public universities. Also, clear policy standards for English language competencies that effectively align with the expectations of the labour market are absent from the labour market regulations at MOL. Moreover, it is not clear to what extent the current English language tests, which CSB uses for public sector hiring, align with labour market expectations or internationally recognised English language proficiency tests such as IELTS. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which the Jordanian government recently endorsed to identify and regulate qualification levels, does not specifically tackle any English language-related competencies. This dearth of English language-specific national policies and guidelines seems to be attributed to inadequate identification of needed qualifications in this regard. Moreover, it is not clear to what extent the current policies and guidelines at the MOE, MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL and CSB support conducting systematic tracer studies that track students' employability and identify up-to-date labour market needs pertaining to English language competencies to support decision making regarding curriculum reviews, teaching pedagogies or English for Specific Purposes (ESP) study programmes at education institutions.

### Practice :

Although most employers identify the labour market needs for relevant English language competencies, especially in speaking and writing, the current MOE English language teaching and learning outcomes do not seem to effectively align with these needs. Most K-12 English teachers and university professors do not seem to frequently use modern and interactive English teaching pedagogies that mirror future work opportunities for the students. There is a consensus among key stakeholders from the MOE, MOHE and the labour market that attempts to improve English language teaching and learning should target school education as a starting point. There is also agreement among key stakeholders that one of the most effective ways to strengthen English language teaching and learning is to invest in professional development programmes for K-12 English language teachers to introduce them to modern and best practices in English language teaching pedagogies with a focus on communicative skills, speaking and writing.

Furthermore, there is a need to revitalise teaching pedagogies at the higher education level to better represent real-life job opportunities that move students from theory to practice and better prepare them for the labour market. Additionally, proper and innovative English language teaching and learning resources, and integration of high-quality, up-to-date technology which aligns with best practices in education, such as audio and video equipment, are still not widely available in the majority of schools and universities. If made available, these will substantially increase students' exposure to authentic English language practices. Furthermore, although degree paths at some universities include internships, these opportunities do not fully support students to build adequate life skills as the focus is mainly on specialism-bound technical skills, which eclipses the focus on English language competencies.

### RECOMMENDATION

Guided by the detailed results<sup>b</sup> and conclusions of this research, as well as the suggestions<sup>c</sup> which research participants provided, this research proposes a set of recommendations for strengthening English language teaching and learning provision in Jordan. This research also provides a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating (Appendix 1) for the recommendations illustrating the relative importance of their implementation, the impact their implementation will have on bridging the gap between English learning outcomes and labour market requirements for English language, as well as the expected implementation difficulty in terms of effort, time, resources, etc. Proposed recommendations across the three main domains of people, policy and practice are below.

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b . Detailed analysis of research results and evidence that support the proposed recommendations are provided for each domain as follows: people – pages 27–32, policy – pages 32–39 and practice – pages 39–44.

c . Detailed descriptions of the suggestions that research participants provided for improving English teaching and learning and bridging the gap between English learning outcomes and labour market English needs are illustrated on pages 47–48.

**People :**

- The AQACHEI and MOL: consider integrating labour market-oriented qualification standards for English language skills on a national level. One feasible option would be the recently endorsed NQF.
- The MOL, MOE and MOHE: consider establishing sector skills councils, or activating existing ones, with representation from key relevant stakeholders from different work sectors to assign these councils the responsibility for identifying actual labour market needs, including English language, and co-ordinating efforts with education institutions to bridge the gap between education learning outcomes and employment requirements.
- The MOE: consider reducing the education supervisors-to-teachers ratio. This will allow more time and resources for the education supervisors to provide ongoing support to teachers to adapt student-centred teaching and assessment pedagogies which ultimately improve education quality by moving away from traditional teaching.

**Policy :**

- The MOE: consider using online platforms accessible to all English language teachers to share the MOE's specialised standards of foreign language teaching for English language. Moreover, conduct training workshops to promote teachers' awareness and implementation of these standards.
- The MOE, MOHE and AQACHEI: mandate English language extracurricular activities at school and university levels such as English language reading clubs, library programmes, and public speech and debate activities.
- The MOE: consider initiating a national dialogue among key stakeholders, including the MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL, CSB, NCCD, private sector representatives and syndicates, to identify practical steps aimed at bridging the gap between the education system learning outcomes and the labour market needs for English language skills. Periodic reviews and updates of the English language curriculum must be held to continuously align with the labour market's dynamics.
- The MOHE, AQACHEI and universities: consider a review and evaluation of assessment methods to adapt new authentic<sup>d</sup> ones that assess students' progression in the four English language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The focus needs to be more on using project-based learning assessment methods which simulate future work requirements in the labor market.
- The MOE, MOHE and AQACHEI: consider developing a national policy as a roadmap for effective collaboration between schools, universities, syndicates and sector councils to design and offer life skills English language programmes to students. An example of a potential partner could be King Abdulla II Fund for Development (KAFD), which has offices at universities and works with students on activities such as capacity building, employability, entrepreneurship and others.

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d . Authentic assessments are forms of assessment in which learners are requested to perform real-world tasks that reflect meaningful application of core competencies (knowledge and skills) that they have mastered during their studies.

- The MOHE and AQACHEI: consider a review and update for degree paths and English language-related admission requirements at higher education institutions to include more compulsory English courses, other than current foundational 101 and 102 courses, for the different majors which closely align with the labour market needs for English skills.
- Universities: consider investing in systematic labour market evaluation and students' employment tracer studies to make evidence-based decisions for developing or modifying study courses. Such studies could be part of students' coursework and research activities, which may also develop students' research and analytical skills, which are crucial for the labour market.
- The MOE, MOHE and AQACHEI: consider incentivising English language competency tests for educators (K-12 teachers, education supervisors and university professors) as an employment requirement or privilege to maintain an adequate caliber of English language for educators.

**Practice :**

- The MOE and MOHE: consider providing broader professional development programmes for English language educators (K-12 teachers, education supervisors and university professors) on using high-impact English language teaching practices and assessment strategies that provide students with communicative skills and better support educators to monitor learning attainment.
- The MOE: consider establishing effective professional learning communities for English language teachers to share knowledge and expertise that support improving English language teaching and learning practices.
- The MOE and MOHE: consider developing clear guidelines for students and educators to replace the traditional teaching and learning culture with one that encourages students to be responsible for their learning.
- The MOE, MOHE and AQACHEI: consider further investment in providing appropriate English language teaching and learning resources and upgrading existing language centres with the modern technology and educational resources required to advance English teaching and learning at both schools and universities.
- The MOE, MOHE, AQACHEI and MOL: consider upgrading current practicum components in higher education degree paths to include effective internship opportunities for students that enable them to develop English language and other life skills needed in the labour market.



# Introduction

Education in Jordan plays a leading role in preparing students for the needs of the labour market by equipping them with the sought-after competencies to engage with the everchanging life opportunities. However, the rapid expansion in economic growth in Jordan has not been sufficiently accompanied by development of the lifelong learning skills, English language in particular, that empower youth to join the local job market smoothly. This stimulates the need to investigate English teaching and learning practices in Jordan and their connection to the labour market to canvass a holistic labour market-oriented education framework. To achieve this, this research will investigate the people, policies and practices involved in the education and employment arenas by exploring the MOE, MOHE and MOL policies and practices that play a substantive role in shaping the relationship between English language and employability. The research methodology includes a desk review, as well as quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches that use questionnaires, key informant interviews and focus group discussion protocols with representatives from education and higher education systems, as well as the labour market, to dig deep into the research scope. The research culminates with recommendations distilled from the desk review and data collection analysis to guide decision- and policymakers to contribute to the desired strengthening of English language teaching and learning in Jordan.

# Context

## English language in school education

According to MOE statistics,<sup>1</sup> 7,434 schools currently embrace 1,846,963 students. The MOE in Jordan has shaped the educational system into three stages that begin with the non-compulsory stage of pre-school (Kindergarten), which lasts for a maximum of two years. The compulsory basic stage lasts for ten years and is followed by the secondary education stage (two years) in which students are classified according to their abilities and interests into an academic, humanities and science stream or a vocational stream. Both streams end with the General Secondary Education Examination (Tawjihi). While the academic stream prepares students for university, the vocational stream aims to prepare skilled and qualified students (human power) for the labour market.<sup>1</sup>

As part of job seekers' competencies development, a significant goal of the National Strategy for Human Resource Development (HRD) 2016–25 has been to develop a NQF. This framework aims to monitor and control the alignment between qualifications, quality of education and the needed professional development. Although this NQF sets the qualification requirements for each level of education, it does not stipulate the English language proficiency required for progression at any of its levels.

The study “Innovative second and foreign language education in the Middle East and North Africa” which investigated English language status in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)<sup>2</sup> – namely in Jordan, Tunisia and Turkey – reported the significant change in policy that took place in 2000 when the Jordan government mandated teaching English as a compulsory school subject from the beginning of the primary school stage, as well as the introduction of the new English language curriculum. This change extended the period of studying English at the school level from eight to 12 years. Among the problems facing foreign and second languages in the MENA region, the study listed inadequate national education policies, limited financial resources, and recruiting and keeping competent teachers.

To better evaluate English language learning in Jordan, the quality of the education system outcomes needs to be benchmarked against the performance of students according to national and international assessment standards. Jordan participates in both the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) at the international level, and continues to work towards improving the results of Jordanian students in these tests.<sup>3</sup> Yet, PISA and TIMSS do not measure English proficiency, which necessitates finding another internationally recognised benchmark to assess English proficiency within the Jordanian education system, such as IELTS or TOEFL. To compensate for that, Jordan adopts one summative exam acting as a national evaluation strategy for all school subjects, including English, at the end of the secondary stage, Tawjihi. However, the English language assessment in Tawjihi mirrors the required skills for neither higher education nor the labour market.





## Teachers' readiness and preparation

A USAID report of 2008 shows that although teachers had been trained and supported with the necessary tools to make a 'paradigm shift' in the teaching model, teachers continued to rely on the teacher-centred approach that predicated on traditional teaching strategies. Similarly, students, parents and even school administrations in several cases resisted new teaching pedagogies and favoured the use of conventional teaching methods.<sup>4</sup> Hence, teachers needed to redefine the view of their roles as knowledge gatekeepers and turn into facilitators of students' learning.

In 2011, the MOE expanded and adopted the general framework for teachers addressing recruitment and training policies and career paths. In addition, the MOE's strategic plan 2018–22 emphasised human resources development by implementing successive plans and strategies through in-service teacher development programmes that focus on teaching methods, assessment strategies and educational technology programmes. Moreover, the ministry launched the School and Directorate Development Programme in 2007 to promote and institutionalise professional development and create partnerships with several partners to invest in teachers' training.

## English language curriculum effectiveness

Since 2005, the MOE has made attempts to update the learning objectives for the English language curriculum. These updates included elements such as the integration of technology and promoting English as a medium to enhance mutual understanding among different countries. According to the MOE strategic plan, the curriculum and testing framework must be reformatted for schools to move away from rote learning and improve higher order thinking skills.<sup>5</sup> Yet, according to a recent review of the updated primary-stage curriculum and textbooks, minimal hands-on and group-based education activities have been included. The content does not promote critical thinking skills, as the subject material is often significantly outdated because textbook examples no longer relate to real-world practices.<sup>6</sup> Since the HRD strategy addresses curriculum reform, the National Centre for Curriculum and Assessment was established by the government in 2017 to develop the MOE curriculum. As part of this process, local experts collaborated to establish performance indicators to measure learning outcomes for each stage of education and align students' assessments with these indicators.

## English language in higher education

New generations of Jordanian students join the higher education system every year upon completion of their school education. The higher education system in Jordan acts as a catalyst in growing 'the human capital's social and intellectual faculties of the economy'.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, teaching and learning processes in higher education differ from those of school education. In higher education, educators prepare adult students to become autonomous qualified candidates for the next phase of their life, the labour market.

However, several studies investigating the higher education system in Jordan indicated its misalignment with labour market needs. For example, in a 2015 study, around 50 per cent of a sample of 25,662 students from the University of Jordan reported that the university's curriculum uses spoon-feeding teaching methods. Students deemed this approach responsible for the inadequacy of the higher education system to prepare students for the world outside the university campus.<sup>8</sup> Skills such as critical thinking, verbal and written English communication skills, problem solving, and project-based learning are still not appropriately addressed at the university education level. This continues to put higher education policies, practices and educators on the spot for criticism by the public.<sup>9</sup>

According to MOHE<sup>10</sup> and AQACHEI<sup>11</sup> websites, there are 31 public and private universities in Jordan, in addition to 51 community colleges that embrace around 309,000 students. The Jordanian higher education sector's needs have been under constant review by AQACHEI, according to the commission's strategic plan for 2016–25. These reviews spotted the misalignment between the learning outputs and the job market as graduates lack many vital skills that prepare them for the job market, such as soft skills and English language communicative skills. The HRD identified this misalignment and consequently outlined a strategy to address external and internal challenges in the Jordanian education sector regarding access, quality, accountability, innovation, and mindset. The strategy identifies ICT skills as a critical factor for employability and a key performance indicator for higher education system reform.

Yet, the HRD has not explicitly mentioned the importance of developing English proficiency for higher education graduates. English proficiency is not even outlined as a key performance indicator in the strategy, although it stresses the need for a demand-driven approach towards education for employability. This highlights the importance for university education to take a different approach in teaching to address discipline-specific skills, e.g. cognitive competencies and life skills such as English language, to meet the soaring demand for such skills locally and globally.<sup>12</sup> Thus, building up university teaching qualities that match the job market demands for competent English users and legislating this demand in local policies such as HRD could be a real boon for developing tertiary education policies and practices.

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e . The focus of this research is on the public education system; therefore, international programmes such as IB and others are not investigated in this study.



## English language teaching and learning policies in tertiary education

The university admission policy in Jordan depends mainly on students' grades in the General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (Tawjihi)<sup>e</sup>. This exam is currently the sole yardstick for students' transition from school to higher education. The MOHE in Jordan acknowledges that the university language of instruction is English at scientific, engineering and medical colleges.

Yet, there are no overarching English language requirements stipulated at other colleges such as colleges of arts and humanities – except for English language specialisms. Additionally, most universities that use English as a compulsory medium of instruction are private universities or semi-private. For example, the German Jordan University's and Princess Sumaya University for Technology's websites highlight how much weight is being given to English in their degree paths.

In addition, employment regulations for university faculty members<sup>13</sup> in Jordan lean towards graduates from Western higher education systems and regard them as technical experts in their fields. Yet, these regulations do not stipulate the English language as a requirement for employment, as other foreign languages such as French, Russian or Turkish are also recognised. Furthermore, since not all university-level majors are taught in English, such as religious studies and history, faculty employment policies only stipulate passing the Arabic language proficiency test. The regulations state that faculty members are expected to further enhance their skills by attending professional development programmes. However, the effectiveness of such programmes has been investigated by Jordanian scholars, namely Olwan<sup>14</sup> and the Head of the Department of Educational Sciences in Petra University Jordan, Fakhri Khader,<sup>9</sup> who proposed a strategy and roadmap for assuring quality in higher education in Jordan by providing training for faculty members.

## English language practices and people in tertiary education

The quality of teaching and learning is a core component of each university ranking system. It accounts for 30 per cent of *Times Higher Education*, 20 per cent of QS, and ten per cent of Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities. According to the HRD strategy, a survey of Jordanian university students in 2014 showed that around 25 per cent reported 'weakness' or 'complete ineffectiveness' in their university professors' educational and pedagogical abilities, while 24 per cent found their professors 'highly effective'. Yet, university faculty members are less likely to deploy English pedagogies in curriculum design or assessments unless directly demanded to by the MOHE or university boards. The European University Association, which represents 47 countries, asserts the need to address the quality of teaching and learning at universities. Accordingly, plenty of countries have mandated compulsory pedagogical development initiatives for university instructors.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, there is a need and scope for higher education staff development regarding their teaching practices that move away from rote learning. Although the MOHE in Jordan is moving forward with stipulating the licensing of faculty members, the English language component has not been given significant weight compared to learning and teaching pedagogies and online education.<sup>13</sup> According to the HRD strategy, to achieve real change in the higher education system in Jordan, high-quality teaching and learning should be attained by raising standards of students' admission, faculty member recruitment and training. In addition, the development of curriculum and assessment methods should be in harmony with labour market practices with a focus on English language communicative competencies. In contrast to undergraduate studies, graduate studies regulate English language proficiency as admission criteria. Nonetheless, for graduation requirements, there is no stipulation for English proficiency for undergraduate or graduate specialisms.<sup>7</sup>

Interestingly, the MOHE has recently approved the recommendations for developing university degree paths' compulsory requirements to include courses that prepare university students for the job market. Nonetheless, the lack of rigorous and innovative professional development programmes that address university faculty members' use of effective English language teaching and assessment methods informs the need for more reform efforts at the policy and practice level to improve the current English language status in higher education.

## **English language in the labour market**

In 2016 the term 'fourth industrial revolution' was introduced at the World Economic Forum, highlighting the start of a new era that is competency-based. Although Jordan ranks highly in the higher education systems in the region, university graduates in Jordan cannot easily find work in their areas of specialisation. Findings from Pearson English in the 2011 Global English Business English Index report showed that employees across MENA companies have the lowest ranking average (3.5 out of ten) for business English competencies. One of the main reasons is that universities do not plug in the gap between their educational practices and the demands and needs of the labour market.

Jordan has always emphasised the need to develop high-quality human capital, which has been critical to its economic growth<sup>16</sup>. In this respect, the Jordanian government has created the HRD,<sup>7</sup> which aims to outline the key plans needed in the school education system, vocational training and higher education to keep Jordan's human capital competitive. The government has a ten-year strategy that includes reforming technical and vocational education and training (TVET), increasing the number of centres of excellence for vocational training to satisfy training programmes and labour market needs with the help of the private sector. The strategy also includes building a culture of entrepreneurship and self-reliance through self-employment programmes, matching supply and demand in the labour market, and filling gaps by restructuring the educational and training process outputs in harmony with labour market needs.



## Employment needs of English competencies

Department of Statistics (DOS) reports show that the unemployment rate reached 19.3 per cent in 2019, which significantly increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, reaching 23 per cent across different sectors.<sup>17</sup> This alarming percentage requires an understanding of the current situation regarding skills acquisition of graduates and the impact of teaching methodologies that affect the development of highly skilled graduates for the labour market. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines employability skills as ‘the skills, knowledge, and competencies that enhance a worker’s ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if he/she wishes or has been laid off and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods of the life cycle’.<sup>18</sup> Taking this into account, English is a critical element of the development of employability profiles of graduates, whether from high school, universities or TVET, as English is the universal language for many job advertisements and having good to excellent English is a requirement for employment.<sup>19</sup>



There is an assumption in the MENA region that English proficiency levels allow the government to promote the workforce to potential investors as well-educated and fluent bilinguals could encourage them to invest in the region. Nonetheless, one of the main challenges, according to a 2015 British Council report entitled *The relationship between English and Employability in MENA*, is the language issue.<sup>20</sup> The study, which was carried out by the Jordan Strategy Forum (JSF), demonstrates the importance of the private sector, including small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in generating jobs in Jordan.<sup>21</sup> It revealed that all firms recognised the need for creating a wide range of jobs in specific sectors as well as the skills in particular that would be necessary to make this effort productive. Among the latter was the focus on communication, especially English language capabilities. In a labour market study, which investigated new graduate employment in the Jordanian ICT sector, low English proficiency level was cited as one of the main factors for the lack of employability skills.<sup>22</sup> Also, according to the World Bank Jordan Jobs Diagnostic, fresh graduates lack English language skills in reporting, communicating and presenting themselves or their work achievements.<sup>23</sup>

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) carried out a labour market assessment in some geographical areas in Jordan (Irbid, Mafraq, Jerash, Ajlun and Zarqa) to provide vital information for the planning, programming and improvement of its livelihoods programme. Results showed that one of the promising skills that they expect to be the most needed in the future are employability skills, including the English language.<sup>24</sup> The study stated that these skills could enhance the competencies of Jordanian and refugee workforces through English language courses, job matching services and career guidance. Employers who participated in the survey highlighted English and computer skills as the competencies most needed for positions they expect to become available over the next three years. Discussions with unemployed people revealed that the gap between supply and demand is due to the mismatch between job opportunities and academic qualifications and specialisations. Also, conversations with business owners provided a more nuanced understanding of the gap between supply and demand.<sup>25</sup>

In their report to assess the status of TVET, perceptions of TVET among employed and unemployed youth and employers in the hotels and hospitality sector indicate the importance of developing practical knowledge in TVET training programmes with a focus on English and presentation skills.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the 2017 ILO report on labour market governance in Jordan provided a good example of matching language teaching to the labour market through several training programmes in collaboration with private sector employers in the hospitality sector. This customised way of preparing the workforce has successfully attracted adequate Jordanian workers throughout the recent years. The Jordan Hotel Association subsidises the training provided by Ammon College, for example, and helps place Jordanian graduates in suitable jobs. In addition, the Jordan Education for Employment initiative, funded by a variety of international and local organisations, offers training in technical and soft skills which are considered important by the hotels, namely commitment and discipline, general communication and English language.<sup>27</sup> This experience of the hospitality sector may present a starting point for replication in more sectors and thus encourage collaboration among the labour market and education institutions.



# Methodology

At the beginning of the design phase of this research, the research team met with British Council representatives to identify and agree on the research purpose and scope. Based on this discussion, the research team designed and implemented the research study between February 2021 and May 2021. In addition, the research triangulated data from MOE teachers and education supervisors, university professors and students, and private sector institutions to understand the needs and perspectives of teaching and learning English language among the different stakeholders.

## Research purpose

This research seeks to understand how the current policies and practices of teaching and learning English at Jordanian schools and higher education institutions contribute to increased work opportunities for young people in Jordan. Hence, understanding education system requirements for the labour market and establishing appropriate English language education reform recommendations. For this purpose, three main domains of people, policy and practice have been covered.



- **People:** perceptions of relevant key stakeholders around English teaching and learning, potentially contributing to English language educational reform efforts.
- **Policy:** overarching policies and the status of English language provisions of curricula, assessment, materials and resources to enable alignment between the education system learning outcomes and the labour market needs.
- **Practice:** gaps and potential solutions in English language teaching and learning, including pedagogies, resources and students' behaviour as well as the perceived role of English practices in the school classroom, higher education institutions and the workplace.

Moreover, due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected all life aspects, the research has examined educators' overall perceptions of the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning English.





## Research questions

This research answers one main question:

To what extent do the current policies and practices of teaching and learning English at schools and higher education institutions contribute to increased work opportunities for young people in Jordan?

Moreover, the research identified three sub-research questions.

1. What strategies do English language teachers and university professors use in teaching and assessing English at schools and universities?
2. How motivated are students to learn English according to school teachers and university professors?
3. How important is English for students' future careers, according to employers?

## Research design

The study used a mixed-methods approach to answer the research questions by deploying quantitative and qualitative research techniques for data collection, sampling and analysis. The research team designed all data collection instruments while considering the three main domains of people, policy and practice. The research collected data through three main phases:

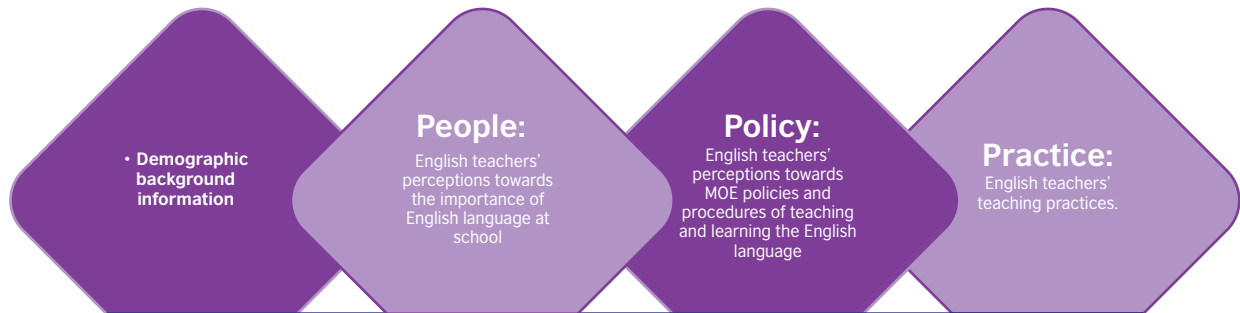
### Desk review

The research began with an extensive desk review of existing English language teaching and learning policies and practices to set the context for the study. The desk review investigated the English language curriculum and expected students' outcomes, English teaching pedagogical practices, assessment in English language teaching and learning, alignment of national English language assessments with international standards, availability of material and resources for English language teaching and learning, and English language teachers' professional development. In addition, the desk review examined regulations stipulated by the MOE, MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL and CSB in Jordan concerning English language requirements in the labour market, as available.

### Quantitative data collection method

To respond to the broader domain of data collection for this research and develop an understanding of English teaching and learning practices in Jordan, the research team created a questionnaire (Appendix 2) to gauge perceptions of English language teachers at the MOE.

Owing to the tight timeline, data was collected online, with the research team preferring to collect the questionnaire data using an over-the-phone one-hour interview with each participant in the Arabic language. The research team read consent forms to each participant before starting the questionnaire to obtain approval to participate in the study. The research team also opted for this procedure to minimise missing data and ensure that respondents clearly understood the study purpose. The questionnaire items collected data on the following domains:



Under these main domains, the questionnaire collected data on the English language curriculum, pedagogical practices, assessment in English language teaching and learning, available or needed materials and resources for English language teaching and learning, perceptions of English language proficiency levels, English language professional development needs, students' motivation towards learning English, challenges facing teaching and learning English, and perceptions of the Covid-19 impact on teaching and learning English language.

## Qualitative data collection method

To develop an in-depth understanding of English teaching and learning practices in Jordan, the research team also developed key informant interview (KII – Appendix 3) and focus group discussion (FGD – Appendix 4) protocols. These instruments aimed to gauge the perception of the different key stakeholders at the MOE, MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL and CSB, a sample of Jordanian university professors and students, and a sample of private sector representatives. Additionally, the research team aligned the KII and FGD protocols to the questionnaire domains to allow data triangulation. Each of the KIIs lasted for an hour, whereas each of the FGDs took an hour and a half. All KIIs and FGDs were conducted in the Arabic language online using Microsoft Teams and Zoom due to Covid-19 health measures. A pair of researchers attended each KII and FGD to guide the discussion, taking notes and monitoring the data collection. The research team read the consent forms to the participants and obtained their approval to take part in the study. The KIIs and FGDs collected data on the following set of domains:





Under these main domains, the KIIs and FGDs collected data on the English language curriculum, pedagogical practices, assessment in English language teaching and learning, available or needed materials and resources for English language teaching and learning, perceptions of English language proficiency level, English language professional development needs, students' motivation towards English and their perception of the extent to which their English language learning experience at schools and higher education institutions prepares them for work opportunities, employers' perceptions of the demand for the English language in workplaces, challenges facing teaching and learning, and perceptions of the Covid-19 impact on teaching and learning English language.

## **Data collection instruments**

The design of any study should ensure its robustness and trustworthiness of its findings. Therefore, it was vital to scrutinise the research scope of work and any possible threats to validity. Thus, the research team formulated all data collection instruments in both English and Arabic. The instruments were first developed in English, then translated into Arabic. To support the stability of the measures used in this study and the development of the data collection instruments, the research performed three phases of review of the data collection instruments among the different members of the research team to ensure that both Arabic and English give the same meaning and measure what is intended. The research team consisted of evaluators and English language specialists who reviewed the instruments to ascertain their alignment to the research purpose and scope of people, policy and practice. These data collection instruments consisted of both quantitative and qualitative types to collect both the broad and the in-depth perspectives of the research domains. Moreover, the research team met weekly throughout the study to ensure all participating researchers took part in developing the data collection instruments and had a unified understanding of how to use them for data collection.

## **Participants**

The initial discussions between the research team, British Council, and representatives from MOE, MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL and CSB and the initial phase of the desk review guided the sample selection of the research to enable representation of the different perspectives of key stakeholders. Thus, the study collected quantitative data from a random sample of MOE English teachers. In addition, qualitative data was collected using purposive sampling of relevant stakeholders, including officials from the MOE, MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL and CSB, representatives from several private sector organisations, and university students from different majors, including English language. The study focused on BA degree students as they represent the first stage in higher education and the largest segment of graduate supply to the labour market.

## **Quantitative data sample**

The selection of the MOE teachers to participate in the study followed representative sampling techniques for quantitative data. The research team obtained the English teachers' database from the MOE that included 8,652 English teachers according to MOE records in February 2021.

The records had teachers' names, phone numbers, educational level, course of study, regions, location of work according to MOE directorates, and gender. The research team planned for a sample of five per cent from MOE English teachers for this study. Nonetheless, the research team sought to increase the sample size by about one per cent as risk mitigation to maintain the five per cent sample of respondents to the questionnaire if Covid-19 lockdowns created challenges. Accordingly, the research team used a multi-stage sampling technique to select 558 participants, a 6.4 per cent sample size. The region basis was used to calculate the sample size. The three regions – Central (Amman, Balqa, Zarqa and Madaba), North (Irbid, Mafraq, Jerash and Ajlun) and South (Karak, Tafilah, Ma'an and Aqaba) – were classified as primary sampling units (PSUs), then teachers were randomly selected from these units. The sample included all teachers from both genders and all directorates while considering a confidence level of 95 per cent. The sample disaggregation is illustrated in Table 1 below:

**Table 1** Quantitative sample details

Sampling frame							Sample			Actual reached				
Region	Governorate	Males	Percen. &	Females	Percen. &	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Males &	Females	Females &	Total
Central	Amman	981	43.0	1,303	57.0	2,284	47	62	109	49	45.0	60	55.0	109
	Balqa	175	37.6	291	62.4	466	8	14	22	8	33.3	16	66.7	24
	Zarqa	414	42.4	563	57.6	977	19	27	46	19	38.8	30	61.2	49
	Madaba	114	41.6	160	58.4	274	5	8	13	5	45.5	6	54.5	11
TOTAL		1,684	42.1	2,317	57.9	4,001	79	111	190	81	42.0	112	58.0	193
North	Irbid	762	44.0	970	56.0	1,732	44	57	101	46	43.0	61	57.0	107
	Mafraq	383	43.5	498	56.5	881	22	29	51	22	45.8	26	54.2	48
	Jerash	177	47.6	195	52.4	372	10	12	22	10	47.6	11	52.4	21
	Ajlun	119	44.4	149	55.6	268	7	9	16	7	43.8	9	56.2	16
TOTAL		1,441	44.3	1,812	55.7	3,253	83	107	190	85	44.3	107	55.7	192
South	Karak	275	42.5	372	57.5	647	34	45	79	32	38.1	52	61.9	84
	Tafilah	90	40.7	131	59.3	221	11	16	27	11	44.0	14	56.0	25
	Ma'an	139	41.9	193	58.1	332	17	23	40	20	47.6	22	52.4	42
	Aqaba	71	35.9	127	64.1	198	9	15	24	9	40.9	13	59.1	22
TOTAL		575	41.1	823	58.9	1,398	71	99	170	72	41.6	101	58.4	173
OVERALL TOTAL		3700	42.8	4,952	57.2	8,652	233	317	550	238	42.7	320	57.3	558

## Qualitative data sample

The selection of the participants for the study followed a purposive sampling technique for qualitative data. Qualitative data collection started and continued until data reached a saturation rate; that is when data became redundant in both the KIIs and FGDs. KIIs were done in groups and individually. The KIIs started with the MOE, including the Policy and Training Directorate, Monitoring and Evaluation Department, Supervision Department, and Curriculum and Examination Department. Moreover, KIIs with the MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL and CSB also took place with representatives responsible for higher education and employment policies. Following the KIIs with MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL and CSB, the research team identified seven public, private and semi-private universities. The selected universities were Jordan University,

Al Balqa University, Muta University, Al Yarmouk University, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Jordan German University and Princess Sumaya University. Finally, 15 KIIs took place with faculty members from universities that were nominated to participate in the interviews. Participants represented different majors, including English language, scientific majors and social sciences. In addition, three FGDs of eight students in each group took place with a random sample of students who were nominated by these universities to participate in the study. One group of students represented a mix of majors from universities which use English as a medium of instruction. Another group included students who exclusively specialise in English language. The third group had a mix of students from other social sciences majors from the same universities sample. Accordingly, 42 KIIs took place with 60 participants, in addition to three FGDs with 25 participants. The details of the KIIs and FGDs are described in Table 2 below:

Methods	Number	Female participants	Male participants	Sector	Total participants
KIIs	7	5	10	MOE officials	15
	1	-	3	CSB officials	3
	1	4	3	MOL officials	7
	1	-	2	MOHE officials	2
	1	-	2	AQACHEI officials	2
	15	3	12	University professors	15
	16	10	6	Private sector organisations	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>60</b>
KIIs	3	13	12	University students	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>

To select the private sector organisations and their representatives for the KIIs, a review of the DOS statistics took place to choose a sample of sectors that show high employment rates in the labour market and may need the English language as part of the job requirements. Sectors were identified based on the DOS's Employees and Enterprises by Economic Activity and Size Group of Employment for the year 2018 For Both Public and Private Sectors. The research team selected organisations from each sector and contacted their HR department to invite them to participate in the KIIs. The details of the selected sectors and private sector organisations are described in Table 3 below:

**Table 3** Labour market sectors representatives' details

Selected sectors	Estimated number of employees	Selected private sector organisations
Manufacturing and energy	245,402	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jordan Association of Pharma Manufacturers (JAPM)</li> <li>• EDAMA Energy Council</li> </ul>
Health	78,776	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jordan Hospital</li> </ul>
Hospitality, accommodation and food services	57,893	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A travel agency – Leon for Tourism</li> <li>• Hyatt Amman Hotel</li> <li>• Marriott Dead Sea Hotel</li> </ul>
Finance and insurance	42,154	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jordanian Banks Association</li> <li>• GIG – Arab Orient Insurance</li> </ul>
ICT and media	25,016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT council – INTAJ</li> <li>• ITECH Company</li> <li>• ZAIN Telecommunication</li> <li>• Al MAMALKA TV</li> </ul>
Transportation, shipping and logistics	24,499	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Royal Jordanian</li> <li>• Aramex</li> </ul>
Construction and civil engineering	33,296	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Jordanian Engineers Syndicate</li> <li>• Jordan Architectural Engineering Council</li> </ul>

## Data analysis

The research team used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse the quantitative data collected through the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to identify frequencies and means of the questionnaire data items. Crosstabulation was also used to examine the data for the different regions and the respondents' gender. In addition, the Microsoft Office suite was used to generate visuals of the data analysis results and prepare the presentation of findings. Moreover, concerns for external validity were resolved by choosing English language teachers to randomly participate in the study from the MOE database while considering appropriate demographic variables.

As for the qualitative data, the research team transcribed and coded the data as it was collected under the three main domains of people, policies and practices.

First, the research team methodically read through data in pairs to ensure a unified understanding and coding of data, enable inter-rater reliability and avoid bias. Then, the researchers identified information and matched coding to begin the interpretation process.

## Ethical considerations

The research team committed to ethical research considerations for working with people, both children and adults, throughout this research. Ethical considerations such as anonymity and consent of the participants have been accounted for through all data collection phases. Ethical considerations were implemented according to the following.

- Before the research started, the research team sought permission from the MOE and MOHE to communicate with participating teachers, university professors and students. As a result, the research did not put any participants, both adults and students, at any risk. In addition, the researchers ensured that the participants were not exposed to any emotional or physical harm.
- Data collection took place virtually using online platforms, and participants were given a choice to turn their cameras on or off as they felt appropriate. The research team read the consent forms to participants before starting the discussions and obtained all participants' approval to record the interviews and focus groups.
- The research team informed all participants about the research purpose and scope and recruited participants through official letters from the research team and the British Council. Moreover, all participants were reminded of the research purpose and scope at the interviews and the focus groups.
- The research team only collected data essential to the research. All data was treated confidentially, stored securely and made available exclusively to the research team. In the study, disruption to the normal working of the participants, both adults and youth, was minimal.
- All results were reported as overall findings and did not identify specific individuals to ensure participants' anonymity.

## Research limitations

Time and access to the target population were significant challenges in this research. Therefore, starting from the beginning of this research, the research team proposed to the British Council to focus the scope of this research on English teaching and learning in the MOE school education system and a sample of higher education institutions. Accordingly, private sector schools, including both teachers and students, were not included in this study as they could be considered for future research purposes. Therefore, the research team prefers to be cautious about the absolute generalisation of the study results, so this school education category has been excluded. Furthermore, the short timeframe for data collection and analysis and the imposed restrictions due to Covid-19 limited the research team's access to a broader range of all involved key stakeholders, especially the students at both the MOE and MOHE. Though the impact of Covid-19 in terms of learning loss was not part of this study, the research team sought to obtain a sense of the participants' general perceptions of the effect of Covid-19 on teaching and learning English. The reason behind this was to allow for any explanation of findings that may have occurred because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition, the short research timeframe did not allow for piloting the instruments before actual data collection. Therefore, the research team used a mixed-methods approach to collect representative quantitative data from MOE English teachers to complement the qualitative data from the KIIs and FGDs conducted with relevant key stakeholders within such a timeframe. To ensure a high response rate, the research team invested in extensive follow-up with target samples to ensure a complete questionnaire response rate of 100 per cent. Moreover, the research team used data triangulation for the main three domains of people, policy and practice throughout and crosstabulation of representation of results, conclusions and recommendations.







# Results

Overall, the research shows that most key stakeholders who participated, including the MOE, MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL, CSB and representatives of the private sector organisations, have mixed views on the quality of Jordan's English teaching and learning practices. All research participants have acknowledged the efforts education institutions and decision makers have taken to align English language teaching and learning outcomes with labour market requirements throughout the past years.

Nonetheless, the majority of research participants indicated that English language overarching policies, the national curriculum, assessment methods, available materials and resources, and educational pedagogies and practices among educators and students still do not match today's labour market needs. Thus, more collaboration efforts and policy considerations among key stakeholders are necessary to adapt English language teaching to labour market needs. Additionally, most participants stated that tackling the challenges English teaching and learning currently face in Jordan must primarily begin at the school education level, which is the starting point for education, and subsequently continue at higher education levels, leading eventually to the labour market.

In the following section, the research findings have been disaggregated according to the main three domains of people, policy and practice. Under each domain, data analysis results from both quantitative and qualitative data have been triangulated to scrutinise the research findings and support the proposed conclusions and recommendations.

# People

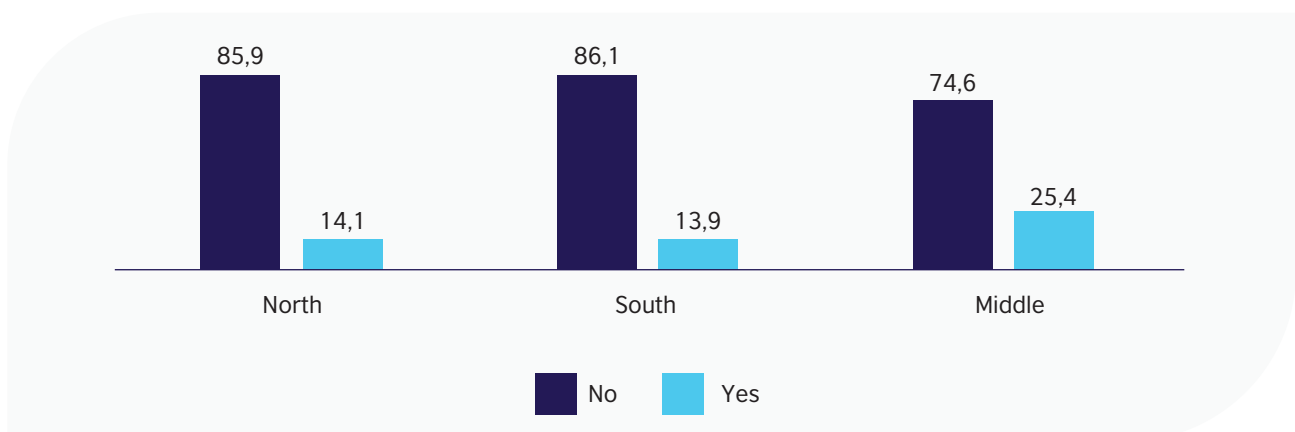
## School education system

Key stakeholders who are likely to affect English teaching and learning in school education have been identified to probe their perceptions of students' motivations for learning English, English language proficiency tests, as well as their perceptions of the role of English language in increasing students' future job opportunities in the labour market.

## Teachers

MOE teachers were asked whether they have ever taken any standardised proficiency tests to assess their English proficiency levels. Most teachers (82.1 per cent) who responded to this question indicated that they have never taken any standardised English proficiency test, while only 17.9 per cent said they had. Among the teachers who had taken such tests, 23 per cent cited TOEFL, while the rest of the teachers reported tests such as IELTS, Cambridge tests, Michigan English Test and others. Also, data analysis showed variation among the percentage of teachers who had taken such tests in the three regions. For example, teachers in the Central region represented a higher proportion than the North and South regions, as shown in Figure 1. Teachers who indicated taking such tests were also asked to estimate their proficiency levels in these tests. Fifty-five per cent of teachers identified their levels between average and very good, 26 per cent identified their levels as excellent, 11 per cent indicated low proficiency levels, and eight per cent preferred not to state their levels or said they do not remember.

**Figure 1** Percentage of MOE teachers who have taken any standardised proficiency tests across the Jordanian regions



Teachers who said they never took such tests were asked to explain possible reasons for not considering them as a tool to assess their English proficiency. Most teachers (47.9 per cent) said they did not have the chance, 25.3 per cent explained that such tests are required by neither the MOE nor the labour market, and 3.4 per cent said they do not believe in such tests as assessments of English proficiency. The rest of the teachers either preferred not to answer or stated other reasons such as lack of familiarity with such tests or the absence of recognition by or stipulation from employers.

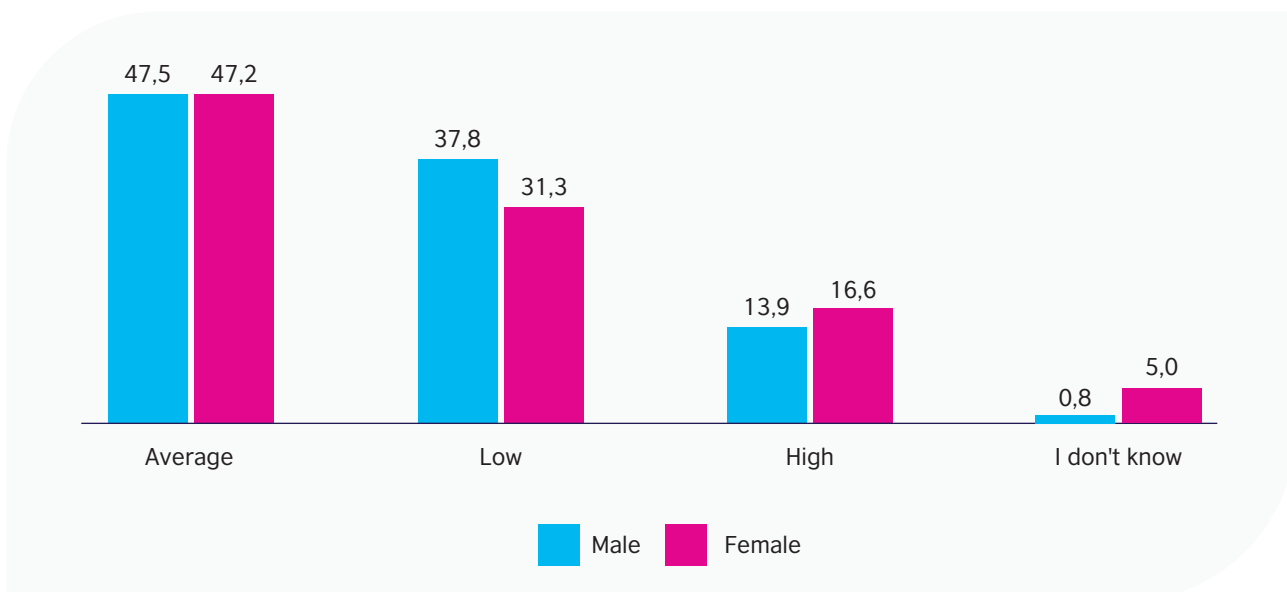


Moreover, teachers were asked about the extent to which the current teaching of English language at schools prepares students for future job opportunities: 30.3 per cent of teachers reported a high level of preparation, 45.5 per cent of teachers reported an average level, and 18.5 per cent reported a low level. Only 5.4 per cent said that current English teaching would not prepare students for employment at all, and 0.4 per cent preferred not to respond to this question. Those who reported high and average levels cited reasons such as teachers being fully prepared to teach English (34.6 per cent), availability of adequate educational resources (26.1 per cent), alignment between the English curriculum and labour market needs (23.6 per cent), parents' sufficient follow-up on their children's learning (10.4 per cent), and current views at the MOE that English is a universal language in practical life and all jobs (2.9 per cent). The rest of the respondents did not provide specific reasons.

On the other hand, teachers who reported low levels or totally disagreed gave reasons such as lack of educational resources (36.7 per cent), the need for more follow-up from parents (29.7 per cent), and teachers' need for more training on English teaching pedagogies (16.6 per cent). 10.4 per cent said English is not widely required in the labour market, and 3.5 per cent mentioned the lack of English competencies among teachers and students, the poor educational environment, the irrelevant curriculum compared to the labour market's needs, and overpopulated classrooms. In addition, 1.9 per cent identified the challenging economic circumstances, which are also getting worse due to Covid-19, and 1.2 per cent identified students' lack of interest and fear of learning and speaking English.

When teachers were asked about the extent to which they think school students are motivated to learn English, 15.4 per cent reported high motivation levels, whereas 47.3 per cent reported average, 34.1 per cent low, and 3.2 per cent said that they do not know. As shown in Figure 2, results for males and females did not show significant variation for each one of these categories.

**Figure 2** Teachers' perceptions of students' motivation to learn English



Furthermore, teachers who reported high levels of motivation among students gave reasons such as students' recognition of the importance of English in their higher education and future career path (37.9 per cent), students' satisfaction with the English curriculum (31.1 per cent), or their satisfaction with the teaching pedagogies and teachers' styles (28.8 per cent). 1.5 per cent said students learn English to earn better grades.

In contrast, teachers who reported average and low levels of motivation among students gave reasons such as the lack of students' familiarity with the importance of English for their future higher education and career paths (24.7 per cent). 22.8 per cent cited students' low ability to learn English, 18.8 per cent reported the lack of parental support and follow-up on their children's learning. 17 per cent mentioned the lack of educational resources, and 15 per cent mentioned the current online learning situation imposed by the Covid-19 lockdown. 1.6 per cent identified students' fear of the English curriculum, as well as the lack of motivation among English language teachers and their lack of teaching competencies, whereas the rest of the teachers preferred not to provide a reason for their answers.

## Education supervisors

On the other hand, the MOE English language supervisors who participated in the study indicated that upon completion of their school education, students' English language competencies do not adequately prepare them for higher education or the labour market. When asked about current assessments used for English, the supervisors mentioned that the national English assessment tests which the MOE periodically undertakes to assess students' English language competencies in grades 4, 8, 10 and even Tawjihi are not representative and do not accurately reflect students' levels in the four skills of English language. Thus, current assessments do not prepare students for the labour market or even support proposing appropriate measures in this regard. Teachers elaborated that although such tests assess students for some competencies like reading comprehension, they don't test other essential skills that the labour market requires, such as speaking, writing and listening.

One supervisor also explained that several newly hired English teachers who take the MOE new English teachers test score very low. The supervisor elaborated:



**This could show that the outcomes of the higher education institutions in English language majors are weak, and this also came from a weak English education background at schools.**



Additionally, supervisors were asked about their perceptions of students' motivation to learn English. Most of the supervisors agreed that the overall motivation to learn English is different from one student to another. One supervisor said:



**Motivation varies, and the reason for this is the individual differences between students which include age and maturity, surrounding environment, and the goal for learning the English language. All these factors play a role in motivation, but, in the current situation, there is even a decrease in motivation than the previous years due to the Covid-19 circumstances.**

MOE supervisors also mentioned that motivation and passion for learning English decrease over time among students due to different reasons such as learning environment, ability to understand the language, interest in learning a second language, lack of appropriate materials and resources, and ineffective follow-up from parents on their children's education. However, the supervisors indicated that the main reason that students' motivation to learn English decreases as they grow up is teachers' inability to continue engaging and motivating students, especially in higher school grades. One supervisor said:



**Most students are motivated to learn the English language, but this motivation decreases with time due to the teaching styles of teachers and the frustrations the curriculum creates in not meeting the needs of the students, and the big difference between the curriculum and its capability to simulate the ability to speak the English language in reality. For example, the Arabic language rules that we learned came through the practice of the language in our life.**

# Higher education system

## University professors

Most university professors have explicitly acknowledged the importance of the English language in creating future job opportunities in the labour market. They indicated that the labour market needs people who are proficient in the English language. Hence, mastering the English language increases the chances of seizing good opportunities in the labour market. However, most professors said that current English language competencies among graduates would not support them to secure employment opportunities. Most professors indicated that English is primarily used in scientific majors, not in social sciences, and is seldom used in the teaching of majors that probably do not need English, e.g. Arabic language studies, law or religious studies. All university professors underlined the poor outcomes of the school education system, especially public sector schools, as the main reason behind the poor English outcomes of higher education, except for those who study English majors or those who study at universities that use English as a medium of instruction.

When asked about a proposition for imposing labour market-oriented qualification standards for English language skills on a national level, professors indicated that, in general, this may help in identifying the English language levels of students. However, professors expressed different views of how such qualification standards could be approached. Some professors mentioned that such qualification standards may only succeed in English language majors. One professor indicated that such standards should not contradict Arabic language regulations in an Arabic-speaking country, and some professors mentioned that setting qualification standards is needed in scientific majors. One professor also proposed that internationally recognised English language tests such as IELTS or TOEFL could be used to assess compliance with any proposed English language qualification standards. The professor said:



**There should be mandatory qualification standards in scientific majors in addition to the existing 99, 101 and 102 English tests. Also, students must succeed in one of the international English language tests such as TOEFL or IELTS to complete education requirements in scientific majors.**

Moreover, when asked about students' motivation, many of the professors said that students are motivated to learn English. Still, they are struggling because what they learn in school and university does not meet the language requirements of the labour market.



Professors also explained that many private sector organisations ask their employees to complete English language training from accredited institutes to develop their English language skills because of their poor English competency. Some professors from universities that use English as a mandatory medium of instruction indicated that a high level of language competency is an essential factor for high employability rates among their graduates compared to other universities that do not stipulate English as a medium of instruction. One professor said:



**Our use of English as a mandatory language of instruction during the students' learning journey across the different majors ensures that students have sufficient English language skills by the end of their studies.**

Additionally, most professors said that universities cannot address insufficient English language competency within only four years as this should start from early school education stages.

## University students

A few university students who participated in FGDs said they took English proficiency tests to identify their level of competency and improve it. Most of those students also explained that their interest in proficiency tests stems from their interest in studying abroad. One student said:



**I took the IELTS exam. I achieved 7.5, but I do not see this is enough, and I took this exam as a personal effort and not based on advice or a nomination from anyone.**

Many students also indicated that their main challenge is their fear of speaking in English before others and making mistakes as they are not used to this. Students mentioned that overcoming this challenge in higher education depends on how much their university professors encourage and mentor them to practise speaking English, which significantly varies among different universities and professors. Non-English language major students from universities that use English as a language of instruction generally reported more positive perceptions of their English learning experience. Students from these universities also showed more positive perceptions of English competencies after graduating. Still, similar to all other students in all majors, they said these competencies were insufficient to fully meet the labour market needs.

Some students indicated that their universities help them by providing sufficient mentoring and resources, while others said they find ways to improve by themselves. All students said that learning the English language depends, more than anything else, on the university professor as a primary source of encouragement to improve language skills. One student said:



**I was afraid to talk in front of everyone in English, and I was afraid of making mistakes, so I worked on myself, brought videos, worked on discussions, and the professor helped us and forced us to speak in English.**

Furthermore, most English language students from all participating universities said they study English because they like it. Still, they have no information about the labour market demands for their major. According to what they heard from their families and friends, the English language major students identified possible future job options mostly as translators, English language teachers or employees at embassies.

## The labour market

### Private sector representatives

When asked whether the education system outcomes for English language skills fulfil labour market needs, all participants reported discrepancies among the different sectors and universities for non-English language major students. All participants said that most university graduates, aside from those with English language majors, generally lack the English language proficiency levels required for the workplace. Additionally, most participants said that English language major graduates typically have good language skills. Still, they noted this varies depending on the university. All participants indicated that graduates from universities that focus on English language, use hands-on learning models and foster good English language skills are highly preferred for hiring in the labour market. One participant said:



**We always give fair opportunities for all candidates to apply for our job opening, but honestly, we prefer the graduates of certain universities. According to our experience, these universities equip graduates with better subject skills and English language skills.**





When asked about their perception of the lack of English language proficiency among higher education graduates, participants gave reasons such as the current English language curriculum, which is limited to grammar and spelling – both of which are irrelevant to labour market needs. All participants also mentioned that university students' poor entry level is due to poor school education. One participant said:



**Students finish school, especially those in public schools, with inadequate English level. This is transferred to the university that also does not fix it, and students eventually graduate without adequate English language skills.**

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One participant said that it is hard to claim which university has the best outcomes for the labour market, as there are big discrepancies in how different professors teach – even within the same university. All participants said that having some standardised tests for the English language, such as IELTS or TOEFL, can be an added value to the graduates. Such tests may help them identify their competency in English and take action to improve it in alignment with labour market needs. One participant said:



**From my perspective, I expect that the essence of English language is the mastery of the English language skills, including reading, writing and speaking. This is evident for those who have acquired a good English language education at their schools at a young age. The university is insightful, but their English teaching is customised to the specialism-related terminology. So, I mean, reading, speaking and writing skills should be dealt with at the school level.**

# Policy

## School education system

Data analysis results under this domain present key stakeholders' perceptions of the role of English teaching and learning policies in increasing students' future opportunities in the labour market, particularly in regards to guidelines and standards for English curricula, assessment strategies, and the needed materials and resources that foster English language teaching and learning.

## English language curriculum

### Teachers

When teachers were asked about the extent to which MOE English language curricula build proficiency in all four skills of English, 72 per cent of those who responded to the question said it does, 27.4 per cent said that curricula do not conveniently cover these skills, and the rest said they do not know. Results did not show any significant variation among teachers' responses from the three regions. More than half of the teachers (60.4 per cent) agreed that MOE English language curricula give considerable weight to productive speaking and writing skills, while 38 per cent said they do not, and 1.6 per cent said that they do not know. However, 49.4 per cent of the teachers reported that MOE English curricula are ineffective and hence need to be improved to meet new English language learning approaches in order to engage students. Yet, 39.8 per cent of teachers reported positive perceptions of MOE English language curricula and indicated that they are effective and meet students' learning needs; 10.8 per cent of teachers meanwhile said that the curricula do not enhance students' abilities to compete with their peers from private schools. Teachers' responses varied across the three regions in Jordan. Most teachers who said that the curriculum is ineffective were from the South, while most teachers who reported that the curriculum is effective were from the North. Teachers who said that the curricula do not enhance students' abilities to compete with private schools came from the Central region.

### Education supervisors

MOE supervisors who participated in the study also indicated that the English language curriculum does not prepare students for higher education and the labour market. All supervisors agreed that the English language curriculum covers the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing. Still, not all teachers adequately cover these four skills in their teaching. Most supervisors also said that the same curriculum (action pack) has been used for several years now with no proper review and update to be conveniently aligned with the dynamic changes in the labour market. Supervisors indicated that the content distribution of the English language curriculum throughout the school years is not effective and could be improved. To illustrate, one supervisor said:



If we review the English language curriculum from the first grade until Tawjihi, we will find an imbalance in weight. For example, the 8th grade curriculum has rich content, while in the Grade 9 curriculum, only two grammatical rules are covered. Teachers in Grade 9 find themselves looking for activities and materials to give to students because there is no rich content in the 9th grade textbook. Then when you look at the 10th grade curriculum, you find it almost similar to the Tawjihi curriculum. There is no logical distribution of the scientific materials in the textbooks for the English curriculum.

All supervisors agreed that English is an integral part of any job market regardless of what the sector is.

Additionally, with the ongoing development the world is experiencing, English becomes a necessity. Supervisors said that in delivering the school curriculum, teachers tend to mainly focus on reading and grammar and neglect speaking, which is a vital skill for English and primarily required in the labour market. Therefore, the current curriculum does not adequately prepare students for the labour market. A few supervisors also said that the bureaucracy involved in making decisions about teaching and learning English is challenging, which underscores the need for flexibility and delegation pertaining to sharing expertise in many teaching-re

## English language assessment, materials and resources

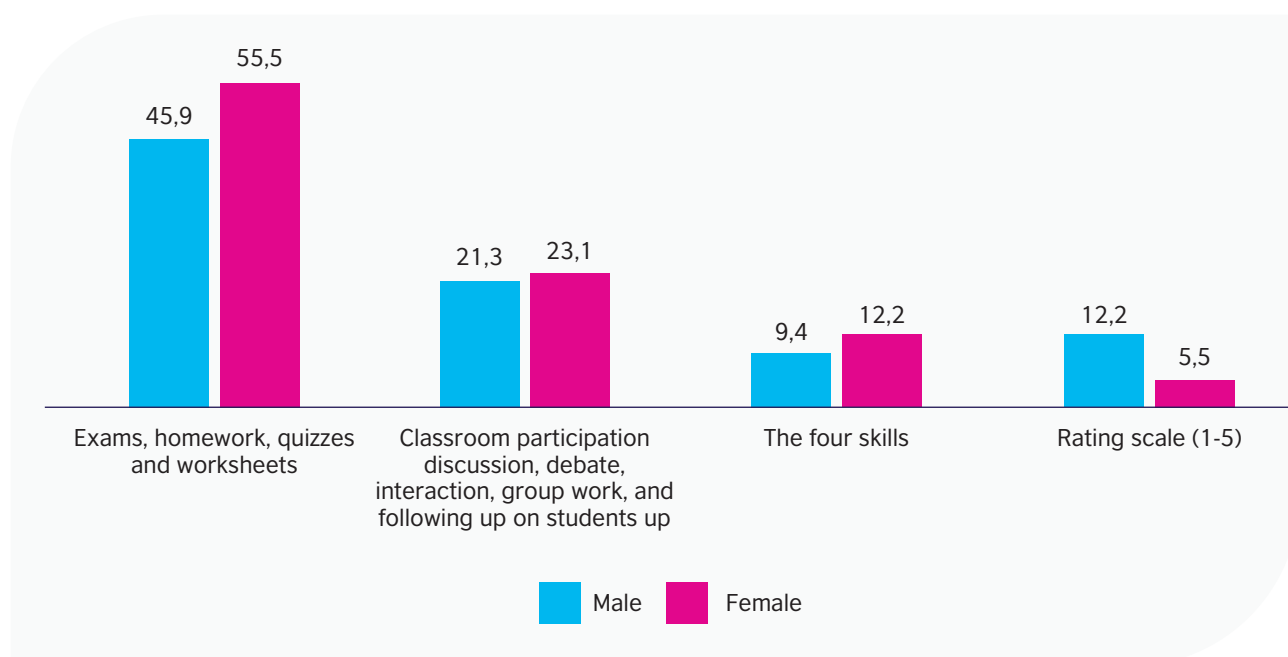
### Teachers

When asked about their perceptions of MOE policies for English language assessment and standards, 49.8 per cent of teachers stated they were not aware of the MOE Foreign (English) Language Specialised Standards of teachers for grades 1–12, compared to 49.1 per cent of teachers who reported their awareness of these standards, and 1.1 per cent who preferred not to answer this question.

Among those who reported their lack of awareness of the MOE standards, 48.9 per cent attributed this to their adherence to the teacher’s guide only, and 38.5 per cent said that the MOE did not share the standards with them. When the teachers were asked about the English teaching strategies they use, 35 per cent indicated engaging students in different activities such as conversations, group work, and questions and answers; 22.3 per cent of the teachers indicated focusing on the four skills of language; 8.8 per cent said they use the ‘teacher’s book’ as a resource and 7.7 per cent said they use indirect teaching and methods like learning through play. The rest of the teachers (26.3 per cent) reported using flipped classrooms, interactive boards and songs.

Among teachers who said they are aware of the MOE English language standards, 49.3 per cent said that these standards are effective and meet the students’ learning objectives. On the other hand, 42.7 per cent said that the standards are ineffective and need to be improved to meet the new learning approaches. In addition, 7.3 per cent said the standards do not enhance students’ ability to compete with their peers from private schools. Moreover, 60 per cent of the teachers indicated that MOE standards support the role of English language in increasing students’ future opportunities in the labour market. Conversely, 38.3 per cent said the standards do not, and 1.1 per cent of teachers said they do not know. When asked about the assessment strategies and tools they use, 50 per cent of teachers said they use tests, homework, quizzes and worksheets to assess students’ competencies in English; 22 per cent said they use classroom participation, discussions, debates and group work; 17.4 per cent said they use assessments like rubrics, checklists, flashcards and exit cards; 10.6 per cent said they focus on the four English language skills, and the rest of the teachers preferred not to answer. Male and female teachers’ responses did not show noticeable disagreement, as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3** Assessment strategies and tools





When asked about retrofitting the assessment strategies, 47 per cent of teachers indicated that the English language assessment strategies need to be updated, 31.5 per cent said they need to be improved, and 15.8 per cent said they need to be changed, while 5.7 said they do not know what measures need to be taken for the assessment strategies or preferred not to answer. Among those who said assessment strategies need to be improved or updated, 59 per cent explained that this is because the assessment strategies and tools need to meet the new approaches for students' learning, and 40.5 per cent said that these assessment strategies and tools do not assess students' English competencies effectively. The rest of the teachers said they do not know or provided irrelevant answers.

Teachers were also asked about the materials and resources they sometimes use to supplement the English curriculum. 49.4 per cent of teachers said they use 'online platforms and applications', 46.3 per cent said 'worksheets and multimedia resources', and 3.9 per cent said they use flashcards, smartboards, computer labs, mobile phones, presentations, YouTube and a teachers' book. However, when teachers were asked whether these resources are adequately available, 59 per cent said they are not available, 40.9 per cent said they are available, and 0.02 per cent preferred not to answer. Moreover, 52.7 per cent of teachers said digital resources are not sufficiently available to implement the current MOE online learning curriculum, whereas 47.3 per cent said that digital resources are available. Results showed that the highest percentage of teachers who lack necessary digital resources to teach English are in the North (54.2 per cent) and South (55.5 per cent) regions, with 48.7 per cent in the Central region.

## Education supervisors

Most supervisors said that assessment skills and policy in the school education system do not effectively qualify students to achieve the language competencies required for the labour market, and the most significant proof of that is students' test results. Teachers have access to various written policies and strategies for assessing students, but most teachers only use traditional strategies such as pen and paper to undertake assessments. One supervisor said:



**Through my experience and my supervision of nearly 250 English language teachers, I noticed that a student whose teacher requests a research, a presentation or a project is privileged because this assessment approach builds their confidence in the future work they present. As a result, this student is better prepared for the future and the university stage, and they differ from the students whose teachers practise the traditional teaching methods.**

Supervisors said their supportive role in the educational field to enhance assessment skills among teachers is challenging because the supervisor/teacher ratio is large, going up to 35 schools for one supervisor. Therefore, it is hard to provide the expected guidance and mentorship for teachers.

All MOE supervisors stated that they are aware of the MOE's specialised standards of foreign language. However, the supervisors said that the teachers' awareness varies when it comes to these standards. One supervisor said:



**The standards are not known much because they are not presented well by the MOE. For example, by printing them with the curricula for the teachers' reference and distributing them to the schools once a year, this will increase people's awareness of them.**

Most of the supervisors believe that the actual implementation of standards within schools is far from reality. Teachers and supervisors need more induction on these standards to be actively implemented. Most supervisors said that the MOE's previous hiring policy for English teachers did not include any English competency exams or assessments, as supervisors and school principals are used to assess teachers. However, the MOE policy has recently changed, and newly hired teachers in the public sector undergo a test which the MOE and CSB prepared before employment. Additionally, all supervisors agreed that not all MOE teachers possess the expected proficiency level in the four English language skills. They mentioned that some teachers usually code-switch their instruction language to Arabic during the English lesson, which is a malpractice that can create a gap within the teaching pedagogy and hence affect students' learning. One supervisor said:



**The teacher must be familiar with the four main skills related to the language, which are speaking, writing, listening and writing, but not all teachers are familiar with these skills, as most of the explanation language in the classroom is in Arabic and not in English.**

Furthermore, most supervisors said that lack of teaching resources and poor infrastructure at schools do not allow teachers to use different teaching practices. Many schools are rented, and they have small classrooms with many students.



Such learning environments do not enable group work, for example. Additionally, a few supervisors explained that their mobility in the field to support teachers is not easy and is costly, especially for females. In addition, most supervisors indicated that not all schools are equipped with audio equipment to teach English language sufficiently. Moreover, supervisors reported a lack of English language labs required to teach the listening exercises and activities in the English curriculum. Therefore, students do not learn the four English language skills adequately. Most supervisors also said that the MOE English standards are not printed in toolkits and then offered to teachers. Thus, teachers are not practising the MOE English standards in their teaching.

## Higher education system

### English language curriculum

#### University professors

On the other hand, university professors reported that teaching and learning English at the university level is dependent on the major. Most of the coursebooks are in English in scientific, technology and medicine majors as there are not many approved resources in Arabic, which is a challenge for students. All professors also explained that majors such as religious studies and law do not need English language because they are taught in Arabic and have sufficient books and resources. When asked about whether students have the English language proficiency to deal with the curriculum, most professors said it is weak and should be honed during the school education phase rather than waiting until university to develop English language skills. One English major professor said:



**If we want to enhance the students' English language level, we need first to include the learning of English and prepare students in advance, such as from elementary school and then more at high school so that when they reach the university, they would be able to advance better in English language skills rather than starting from scratch.**

#### University students

All university students who participated in the study agreed that the quality of the English curriculum differs from one major to another and from one professor to another.

English language major students explained that most of their professors used the traditional ways of teaching English. Therefore, students are still struggling with some aspects of their study, such as pronunciation and English creative writing. On the other hand, some students said that a few professors use presentations and group work, which help students learn better. One student said:



**Enhancing students' English learning skills will make it easier to find a job. Landing a job is the responsibility of the student. Still, the university should lay the basis for them to achieve the competencies that help them in doing that.**

Students from one of the participating universities mentioned that they need to fulfil six levels of English at that university to finish their study, which can improve their English proficiency compared to other universities.

## English language assessment, materials and resources

### University professors

All professors said that the current policies for assessing students' proficiency in English skills are inadequate as the main commonly used assessment strategies are tests, presentations and in some cases reports. A few professors identified the lack of training in the English language as a soft skill and the lack of social activities and community service extracurricular activities as a downfall in teaching and assessing English. One professor said:



**I know that there are organisations that work at universities to train students on the labour market skills. Maybe co-operation should be made with them to check whether they train or can train on the English language as well.**

Additionally, a few professors reported attempts to improve English teaching and learning on the national level. For example, AQACHEI is now working on activating the NQF, which the government of Jordan endorsed in 2019. In addition, AQACHEI is starting discussions with several labour market sectors to discuss bridging the gap between labour market needs and the majors offered in higher education institutions. Nonetheless, the English language does not seem to be a well-identified element of the NQF. When university professors were asked if mandating an English language competency stipulation for university students and instructors would affect English teaching and learning, they all said it would be instrumental.





However, universities cannot mandate English instruction in all disciplines, because the language of instruction at most universities is Arabic. Moreover, professors who use English as a medium of instruction are mainly graduates of foreign universities and have advanced levels in English. Additionally, this might not be easy because the output of the MOE education system may not be able to compete with any advanced English language stipulations for universities. One professor said:



**It would be ideal if certain stipulations for English language skills are put in place as admission and graduation requirements. Nonetheless, improvement in school education system at English teaching and learning needs to occur first before reaching the university level. Otherwise, many students will no longer obtain university education due to poor English language skills.**

## University students

All university students said that their peers have not developed English language abilities despite studying English during K-12 school education. All students agreed that new assessment approaches such as project-based assessment would be more helpful and could move them away from the traditional and tedious English learning methods. Also, all students said they know that English fluency would support them in finding a good job in a big company. However, most students do not think that the current assessment approaches, which focus mainly on tests, enable them to be ready for labour market requirements. A few students said that some of their professors inform them of the labour market requirements. Nonetheless, most students said they do not know about future employment needs. One student said:



**I do not know the labour market demand for my English major, but I might work in organisations that need English language skills. However, my university does not familiarise me with the labour market needs.**

## The labour market

### Private sector representatives

All participants indicated that the MOE English language curriculum and teaching methods do not effectively prepare students for the labour market. Participants also stated this as a challenge at the university level, where not all universities' curricula seem to prepare graduates who master English language skills. One participant said:



**Honestly, I feel that it is the school and even the nursery or kindergarten that should build English language skills. These are the institutions that prepare for the English language at the university level. There is also a disparity between university students' levels in English. So, of course, not all graduates have adequate skills.**

Most participants said that the English language is essential for securing a job and excelling in it. One participant said:



**Because English is the official business language and because Jordan is open to most donors, it is a business hub for most international companies in the region. This requires a unified and common language, which is English.**

All participants reported students' good English comprehension abilities, but this is not mirrored when it comes to speaking skills. Some participants said that they conduct English language proficiency tests for hiring purposes to ensure that their applicants possess sufficient command of English. One participant said:



**We need English language skills in our work. Therefore, we developed an English language test that any candidate needs to pass to get hired at our company. It is not a sophisticated test like international ones, but it works well with us.**



Most of the participants from the private sector also said that the training courses offered at work are mainly specialised training in the area of expertise required within their scope of work and not focused much on the English language. Only two participants confirmed that they conducted English training for their employees upon requests from their staff.

Participants also said that they are not familiar with any policies created by the MOL to encourage or mandate any assessment for English language competencies for employment. Most participants noted that finding employees who can master all four English language skills is not easy at all. One participant said:



**If I find someone good in English conversation, their weakness in the remaining skills is not unusual.**

Additionally, all participants agreed that fluency in speaking and business writing skills are among the essential English language competencies they seek. Skills such as writing an email or conducting a presentation in English are the minimum requirements for a good job.

All participants indicated that hiring depends on the technical skills that match the job description for the position as well as the educational level and mastery of English language skills. Moreover, some participants explained that English is critical for some sectors such as hospitality and hotel management. In addition, there is high demand for proper communication skills and fluency in the English language in the ICT and media sectors. One participant said:



**English is a basic demand for the people working in the ICT sector because all technologies require a high level of English language command.**

For other sectors, such as banking, logistics, industry and others, the focus may be more on the competencies and skills depending on the job level and scope. However, English generally is highly sought after for specific posts. All participants also said that their institutions are always open to creating partnerships with universities and educational institutions to help in strengthening technical and English language skills. All participants stated that many universities have recently been putting effort into developing links with the private sector to build graduates' practical skills. One participant said:



**As part of our social responsibility strategy, we love to link education outputs with the requirements of the labour market, and we are trying to strengthen this role. We build links between universities**

and companies that request graduates for the labour market. Most of our projects are implemented in partnership with universities.

## Practice

### School education system

Data analysis results under this domain present key stakeholders' perceptions of the English teaching and learning practices and the labour market needs for English language skills.

### Teachers

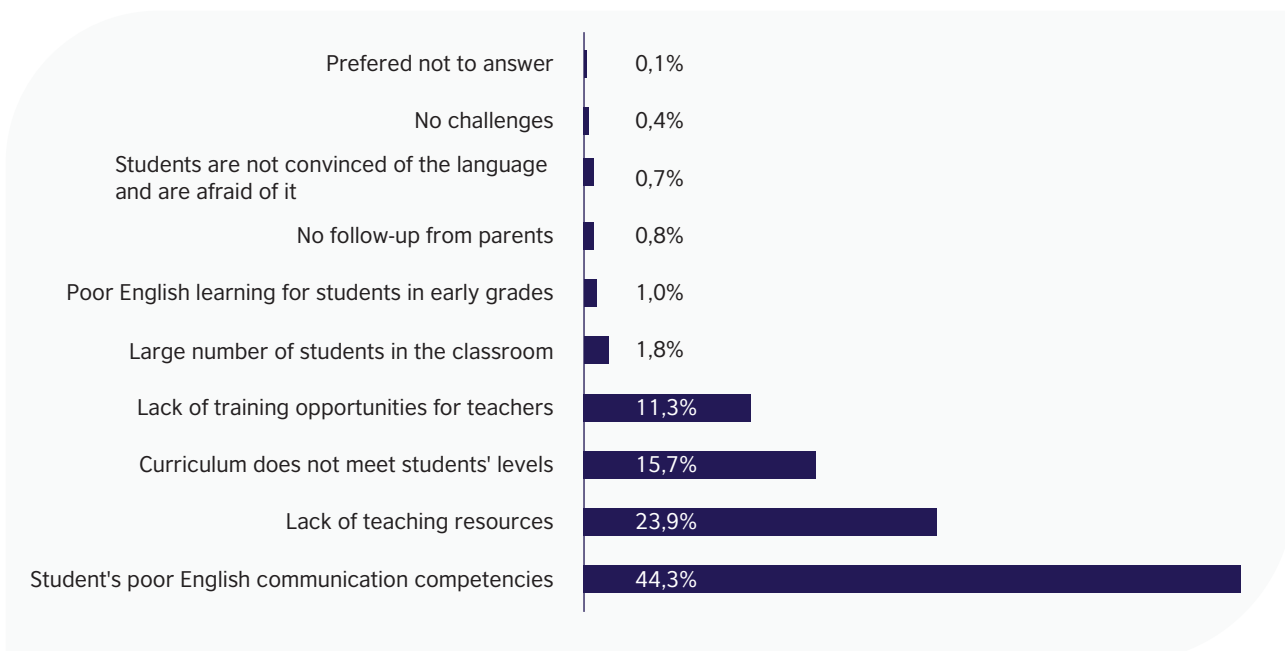
When asked whether they perceive a strong correlation between learning the English language at school and getting future opportunities in the labour market, 88.9 per cent of teachers who responded to this question said yes. 10.4 per cent said no, and only 0.7 per cent said that they do not know. Moreover, teachers were asked about how they use pedagogies and resources to enhance the role of the English language in increasing students' future employment opportunities. 22.7 per cent of teachers who responded to this question said that they use direct teaching methods, and 22.7 per cent said they use pedagogies such as verbal tests as well as pen and paper for assessment. In addition, 22.6 per cent said they use interactive methods such as learning by playing and extracurricular activities. 16.8 per cent said they use group work and open discussions, and 15.0 per cent said they use interactive methods that focus on integrating the four English language skills. Teachers were also asked whether they have the needed resources to apply these pedagogies. 61.3 per cent said yes, they partially have them. 27.4 per cent said yes, they fully have them, and 11.1 per cent said they do not have the resources they need at all. 0.2 per cent preferred not to answer.

Teachers were also asked whether they focus on pedagogies that mirror future work opportunities during English lessons. 40.7 per cent of teachers who responded to this question said yes, they partially use pedagogies that reflect the student's future work opportunities. 29 per cent said they fully use pedagogies that reflect the student's future work opportunities, but 27.2 per cent reported not using them at all. Three per cent of respondents preferred not to answer this question. Among those who said they use English teaching pedagogies, 45.5 per cent said they use 'open discussions, essay writing, group work, field visits and extracurricular activities'. 23.7 per cent said they use activities that foster the 'four English language skills', 15.9 per cent said they 'discuss topics about the labour market', and 11.6 per cent said they 'encourage students and use interactive boards and technology methods'. Of the teachers who said they do not use new pedagogies at all, 38.0 per cent stated that this is due to lack of time, 23.4 per cent said that the current Covid-19 lockdown has affected their ability to use up-to-date pedagogies, and 17.6 per cent said they lack the needed resources for such pedagogies. 5.4 per cent said they do not know such pedagogies, and three per cent said they only adhere to the curriculum. 5.9 per cent also said they do not know the link between what they teach and future work opportunities.



Additionally, teachers identified several challenges they face when teaching the English language. As shown in Figure 4, 44.3 per cent of the teachers identified low communication competencies among students, 23.9 per cent the lack of teaching resources, 15.7 per cent challenges with the English curriculum itself, and 11.3 per cent the lack of professional training opportunities in English teaching pedagogies. When teachers were asked whether they tried to overcome these challenges, 34.1 per cent of the teachers said they asked for professional development programmes to help them build their teaching practices. 28 per cent of teachers said they started reading more resources that discuss teaching practices, and 24.5 per cent of teachers said they sought consultation from English supervisors at the MOE to help them to enhance their teaching practices. The rest of the teachers also mentioned other actions such as focusing on teaching activities that encourage interaction among students, preparing remedial plans for weak students, and communicating with parents to increase follow-up on the children’s learning.

**Figure 4** Challenges teachers face in teaching English



When teachers were asked whether they participated in any professional development programmes to enhance their teaching practices, 52.3 per cent said they did. Nonetheless, 47.1 per cent of teachers said they did not take professional development programmes to develop their teaching practices, and 0.6 per cent preferred not to answer. Teachers who took professional development programmes indicated examples such as the novice teachers’ training (31.6 per cent), curriculum development training (18.6 per cent), and the English teaching pedagogies programmes at Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA) (11.4 per cent). Moreover, teachers were asked to identify the professional development programmes they need to develop their English teaching practices. As shown in Table 4, 30.5 per cent requested programmes that would help them develop and use new teaching and assessment approaches and methods. 19.5 per cent asked for training on how to teach the four English language skills effectively, and 19.2 per cent asked for the English language teaching and learning pedagogies offered by QRTA. Interestingly, 15.9 per cent of teachers said they do not need professional development courses.

**Table 4** Teachers' professional development needs

Teachers' professional development needs	%
How to develop and use new teaching and assessment exercises and methods	30.5%
How to use teaching and learning through play	1.3%
The Delta training	0.2%
Computer and ICT training	5.0%
Training in linguistics	0.4%
QRTA English language teaching and learning pedagogies	19.2%
How to build self-learning competencies in teaching the English language	1.6%
How to communicate with students	2.5%
TOEFL	1.8%
IELTS training	1.3%
Intel training	0.9%
How to effectively teach the four skills of the English language	19.5%
I do not need professional development courses	15.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Education supervisors

Most supervisors reported variations in English teachers' use of teaching methods and practices. They indicated that most teachers use direct teaching, while some teachers use methods like project-based learning or integrate educational technology applications. Most supervisors mentioned that the teacher's guide contains several teaching practices and pedagogies which teachers can use to teach English. Nonetheless, teachers mostly use direct teaching due to the dense curriculum which they must finish. One supervisor said:



**Most of the teaching methods teachers use are teacher-centred rather than student-centred, which is wrong.**



Most supervisors also said that teachers avoid direct teaching methods only during supervisors' lesson observation visits. Additionally, some supervisors said that they try to fix this situation during their visits and encourage teachers to use different interactive and engaging teaching methods during the lesson. One supervisor said:



**When I attend classes, I sometimes change the method the teacher uses, and I put the students in groups where I see the interaction among them, and I break the boring routine of a traditional learning environment.**

Another supervisor said:



**The students only know about the English language but do not practise the English skills, and this is wrong. Students are incorrectly approaching reading texts; the literal translation of texts is something wrong. This only makes students memorise these texts and neglect the skill of reading.**

Some supervisors also said that some teachers are not convinced of the importance of focusing on listening and speaking skills. Therefore, teachers do not work appropriately with students to build these two crucial skills.

## Higher education system

### University professors

All university professors said they ask students to do presentations in English and submit reports in the English language to enable practising language skills during their study. Most English language professors said that project-based learning is a core teaching approach to enhance English technical skills. All professors agreed that such practices increase English language communication skills among students and increase students' confidence to use English within their ongoing communication, even for those who do not study the English language as a major. Moreover, most professors, including the English language major ones, stated that their job is sometimes challenging because their students come with inadequate English language competencies from schools, especially those who come from the public schools.

Additionally, the professors said that students who study English language majors do not always come with high Tawjihi grades according to the university admission policy at MOHE. One university professor said:



**Although I teach English language major, most of my students come from schools with poor competencies in basic English. They cannot read or write properly, they cannot speak basic English at all. I end up in several cases speaking in Arabic to explain what I am saying, and this is wrong.**

Professors from only two universities said that their students' English competencies are not a serious problem at their universities, as their students possess good English skills and usually come with high Tawjihi grades.

When asked about the alignment between higher education institutions and the labour market's English language needs, all professors said most universities do not build proper English language competencies. All professors from the English language major indicated that students build English language skills only from activities inside the classroom. As a result, students are not aware of the skills needed outside the university campus such as the ones needed in the labour market environment. On the other hand, all professors from the scientific majors, especially civil engineering, and architecture said that their students practise their technical and English language studies in real-life situations at the labour market due to partnerships their universities created with relevant syndicates. Most professors from other majors such as social studies or business said that students do not have real practical training opportunities in the labour market where they can apply their technical or English language skills. Therefore, they end up graduating only with theoretical knowledge of what they studied at the university. Some university professors also mentioned that organisations such as KAFD have agreements with the universities where they have offices on campus to deliver courses on life skills training to students to prepare them for the labour market. However, professors were not sure to what extent these training programmes address English language skills, especially speaking.

## University students

All students, except for some from the English language major, said that the English language practices at the higher education institutions do not effectively prepare students for the labour market. Most students said that working in sectors such as ICT, medicine or engineering requires high levels of English proficiency because such jobs require ongoing reading, written and verbal reporting, or giving presentations in the English language. Some students said that a few professors from the English language majors or from majors that use English as a language of instruction use various activities to create an interactive environment among students to practise the English language.





For example, professors ask students to do presentations in English, engage students in English language discussions, or ask students to prepare writing assignments in the English language. If this had been the situation at schools, where teachers used interactive and effective methods to build English language skills among students, transition to higher education and then to the labour market would have been easier, according to some students.

Additionally, all students reported a wide gap in the English language levels between students from many public sector schools and others from private sector schools. All students said that most of them do not have the basic entry levels for English at universities. Nonetheless, they either pass their university English admission test, which is a multiple-choice question test, or study two course of basic English during their study span. One student said:



**I faced this challenge when I joined the university. From Grade 10 until Tawjihi, all grammar is the same, nothing is new. There must be good and simple things in English which we could learn, but we do not know them. I did not have proper English language level, so I had to work hard to develop mine.**

## The labour market

### Private sector representatives

All participants underscored the importance of creating a solid education that promotes good English language learning and teaching practices from the early years of education to prepare students for life and the labour market. Most participants said that the English language is now dominant globally, imposing itself as an essential skill that students need to develop to secure good jobs in the labour market. One participant said:



**When we have a foreign visitor or an engineer who would be training our workers on a certain machine in English, having an English-speaking staff in our organization becomes handy.**

Another participant said:



**It is important to have proficient English staff, even more than one language, especially for businesses that work internationally.**

English language requirements varied among the different sectors. According to participants, tourism, hotels, hospitality and ICT, for example, require high levels of English language competencies as hiring requirements.

All participants hold the conventional education approaches, whether at universities or at schools, accountable for the insufficient English language competencies in the labour market. All participants said that these outdated approaches to education do not support practising English language effectively. Most participants mentioned that the traditional English language curriculum, assessment methods and materials most schools and universities use do not align with labour market needs. Thus, these education institutions produce incompetent English language users, especially in speaking and writing skills. For this reason, most of the participants indicated that they prefer to hire employees who graduate from certain universities, which, in their opinions, promote better English teaching and learning strategies. One participant said:



**From my experience in the labour market, there are a few universities which produce excellent outcomes for the labour market. Their teaching strategies are better, and their students have good English language skills.**

All participants stressed the importance of practical training for university students to develop a sense of the workplace requirements and build technical and soft skills, including communication in the English language. Some participants also mentioned that they already have co-operation agreements with some universities to provide training opportunities for students, which in their opinion should become part of national policies governing the education system and labour market organisations.



## The impact of Covid-19

### School education system

The research team sought to gain an overall understanding of the effect of Covid-19 on English teaching and learning practices in schools. Both MOE teachers and education supervisors said that Covid-19 had affected teaching and learning in general, including the English language. Generally, it put restrictions on creating an interactive learning environment through online platforms and limited using teaching resources to teach language. Nonetheless, the pandemic seems to have also enabled a positive practice in foreign language teaching, and that is the delivery of lessons in English language only, where English language lessons were recorded by the MOE teachers and broadcasted on online platforms to public sector students.

### Teachers

As shown in Table 5, 44.6 per cent of teachers said that Covid-19 reduced students' ability to learn English properly. In addition, 28.8 per cent said that Covid-19 reduced teachers' ability to use effective teaching and assessment pedagogies. More possible effects that teachers reported are shown in Table 5:

**Table 5** Effect of Covid-19 in schools

Covid-19 effect on English language teaching and learning at schools	%
Reduced students' ability to learn English properly	44.6%
Reduced teachers' ability to use effective teaching and assessment pedagogies	28.8%
Limited students' ability to practise the English language with their peers	25.5%
Caused a lack of follow-up by parents and students' due to students failure to use the platform	0.5%
Caused a lack of interaction between the teacher and the students	0.4%
I do not know	0.2%
Covid-19 did not affect teaching and learning English	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Additionally, 15 per cent of teachers who said that students have average and low motivation levels to learn English indicated the current online learning Covid-19 imposed as a primary reason. 23.4 per cent of teachers who said they use traditional pedagogies identified the Covid-19 lockdown as the main reason for limiting their ability to use up-to-date pedagogies in teaching.

## Education supervisors

Additionally, all MOE supervisors reported the negative effects of Covid-19 on teaching and learning English. Yet, they all agreed that the way the government quickly responded to Covid-19 to keep the learning process ongoing was a great success. They explained how the MOE made learning platforms such as Darsak available to students and provided teachers with booklets that help deal with distance learning considering the ministry's limited resources. A positive aspect that all supervisors highlighted was that English language lessons on the Darsak platform were all in English. Students, in this case, have to learn in English, and teachers would not speak to them in Arabic, similar to face-to-face lessons. Nonetheless, all supervisors mentioned that online learning does not reflect students' actual level because of how assessments are currently undertaken. Therefore, most supervisors indicated that this transition to online learning due to Covid-19 had decreased students' motivation to learn English and other subjects, especially male students. One supervisor said:



**Motivation varies, but, in the current period, there is even a decline in motivation when compared to the previous years due to the surrounding circumstances because of Covid-19.**

## Higher education system

### University professors

All university professors from different majors stated that Covid-19 had put restrictions on creating an interactive learning environment on the online platforms. Nevertheless, some professors said Covid-19 had positively impacted the ICT sector and majors at universities. Students in these majors had real opportunities to learn more about ICT skills and best online practices. However, all English language professors said that the impact of the pandemic on their work was negative. They indicated how challenged they were in their attempts to maintain the quality of the overall education process for a major that depends on interaction among people, especially in situations where students turn off their camera or lose their internet connection.

In addition, most professors indicated that assessment methods are not as accurate as before, as many weak students get higher grades now in online assessments. Moreover, having overpopulated classes does not enable an effective online learning environment for teaching languages. Yet, some professors did also indicate a positive effect of Covid-19. They said that online learning encouraged professors and students to look for and use online resources, and lectures are now recorded for students to replay whenever they want.



If the situation continues after education institutions return to normal, it could provide extra resources to support the curriculum. One professor said:



**One good effect of distance learning is that online lectures are recorded so that students can replay them and practise when it comes to English language skills.**

## University students

All students from the different majors said that Covid-19 adversely affected the education system, the overall learning process, and the teaching pedagogies. Although most students now lack motivation and enthusiasm to attend online lectures, they have to in order to pass their courses. All students in all majors identified the absence of adequate human interaction between professors and students as the main reason for their decreased motivation for learning. Some students mentioned that this situation caused depression for some of them. These students also said that fair assessment was not always ensured in the online environment because some academic malpractices such as cheating became easy. English language major students mentioned that this virtual environment negatively affected their learning more than students in other majors. They reported their lack of access to language labs or opportunities to practise English language speaking skills as they used to before in the face-to-face environment. One student said:



**The online learning experience was not effective for me because we no longer have resources we need during the class as English students. Also, assessments and tests are no longer fair and do not measure actual levels of students in the class.**

However, a few students from the English language major mentioned that there might be positive effects of the online learning experience and options for students to keep developing their learning even in an online environment. These students said that they now feel more responsible for their own learning and improve their skills by searching for information or finding other ways they can enhance their English language levels. One student said:



**I took the online learning experience as an opportunity to work on my English language skills. I started reading more resources in English online and looking at what my colleagues do and try to speak with them in English. Difficult situations may sometimes create opportunities.**





# Suggestions for improvement

62  
63

As part of this study, the research team sought to explore participants' perspectives on how English language teaching and learning could be improved at school and university level. Accordingly, this section provides a range of suggestions that teachers and education supervisors provided for how policies, people's engagement and practices in teaching and learning English could be improved.

## English language governing policies

When teachers were asked about the current policies that govern English language teaching and learning, 83.5 per cent said that policies that govern the English language curriculum structure need to improve. Teachers suggested including a stronger focus on effective teaching and learning strategies for all four English language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), with much emphasis on speaking. Teachers also suggested that the curriculum needs to be reviewed and aligned to the dynamic and developing environment of the labour market. Teachers suggested increasing extracurricular activities, raising awareness of the importance of the English language in the community, and investing heavily in teachers' training and professional development to improve teaching practices at schools.

All supervisors suggested investing more in teachers' professional development programmes, focusing on new teaching pedagogies for the four English language skills. In addition, supervisors proposed expanding the pool of professional development programmes and partnerships with organisations that provide such programmes.

## English language curriculum

When teachers were asked about the English language curriculum, 93.7 per cent asserted the need for a national reform of this curriculum that involves the key stakeholders in the school education system, the higher education system, and the labour market. This reform needs to create alignment between the school education curriculum, the higher education curriculum and labour market needs. Teachers suggested integrating educational technologies into the curriculum and including real-life experiences and extracurricular activities that strengthen the four skills attainment and simulate real-life work contexts. Most supervisors asserted the need to review and update the English language learning outcomes document by the Curriculum Directorate

## English language assessment

When asked about assessments, 80.5 per cent of teachers suggested changing the current assessment methods to include extracurricular activities that reflect the labour market needs as a context for assessments. Additionally, authentic assessments that measure students' progress in learning the four English language skills should be developed. Teachers also suggested mandating diversified assessment methods that focus on topics such as real-life conversations, business writing or oral presentations which encourage students to practise English in simulated workplace contexts

Most supervisors suggested improving assessment methods to make them more practical and authentic, measuring the four English language skills, especially speaking tests, in realistic contexts instead of the conventional paper-based tests





## English language materials and resources

When asked about needed materials and resources, 88.9 per cent of teachers suggested integrating and providing modern, high-quality educational technologies, interactive boards, video and audio resources, and access to educational YouTube channels. Additionally, teachers suggested investing in training both teachers and students on using technology in education.

Most supervisors also proposed that the MOE could work on its strategies and start providing the needed resources for English language teachers in all schools. In addition, supervisors suggested finding solutions to decrease the large number of students in the classrooms, which is a significant obstacle that hinders learning.

## Students' motivation to learn English

When asked about students' awareness of and motivation to learn English as an essential future skill for the labour market, 90.3 per cent of teachers suggested finding new approaches to increase motivation and awareness of the importance of English language among students and parents. For instance, teachers suggested introducing students to native speakers from other English cultures to develop fluency. Also, teachers suggested finding ways to work with students to practise speaking and remove the fear barrier of committing language mistakes. Additionally, involving parents in English language extracurricular activities such as discussions was one of the teachers' suggestions to maintain proper follow-up on their children's education.

All in all, increased collaboration among key stakeholders involved in English teaching and learning is absolutely needed to align English language learning outcomes with labour market requirements.

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# Appendix 1:

## RAG rating – research recommendations

RAG rating scale proposed for the research recommendations



Very high



High



Medium



Low

The rating is given for three areas:

1. the importance of taking an action to implement the proposed recommendation
2. the impact the implementation of the recommendation will have on improving English teaching and learning and bridging the gap between English learning outcomes and labour market needs
3. the level of difficulty for implementing the recommendation in terms of required time, effort, resources, etc.

### Teaching and learning English in Jordan: People, Policy and Practice

Domain	Proposed recommendation and responsible agency	Implementation importance	Implementation impact	Implementation difficulty
Policy	The MOE: consider online platforms accessible to all English language teachers to share the MOE's specialised standards of foreign language teaching for English language. Moreover, conduct training workshops to promote teachers' awareness and implementation of these standards.	Very high	Very high	Low
Practice	The MOE and MOHE: consider providing broader professional development programmes for English language educators (K-12 teachers, education supervisors, and university professors) on using high-impact English language teaching practices and assessment strategies that provide students with communicative skills and better support educators to monitor learning attainment.	Very high	Very high	Low
Practice	The MOE: consider establishing effective professional learning communities for English language teachers to share knowledge and expertise that support improving English language teaching and learning practices.	Medium	High	Medium

Domain	Proposed recommendation and responsible agency	Implementation importance	Implementation impact	Implementation difficulty
Practice	The MOE and MOHE: consider developing clear guidelines for students and educators to replace the traditional teaching and learning culture with one that encourages students to be responsible for their learning.	High	High	Low
Practice	The MOE, MOHE and AQACHEI: consider further investment in providing appropriate English language Teaching and learning resources and upgrading existing language centres with the modern technology and educational resources required to advance English teaching and learning at both schools and universities.	High	High	High
People	The AQACHEI and MOL: consider integrating labour market-oriented qualification standards for English language skills on a national level. One feasible option would be the recently endorsed NQF.	High	High	Medium
Policy	The MOE, MOHE and AQACHEI: mandate English language extracurricular activities at school and university levels such as English language reading clubs, library programmes, and public speech and debate activities.	High	High	Low
Policy	The MOE: consider initiating a national dialogue among key stakeholders, including the MOHE, AQACHEI, MOL, CSB, NCCD, private sector representatives and syndicates, to identify practical steps aimed at bridging the gap between education system learning outcomes and labour market needs for English language skills. Periodic reviews and updates of the English language curriculum have to be held to continuously align with the labour market's dynamics.	High	High	Medium

Domain	Proposed recommendation and responsible agency	Implementation importance	Implementation impact	Implementation difficulty
People	The MOL, MOE and MOHE: consider establishing sector skills councils, or activating existing ones, with representation from key relevant stakeholders from different work sectors to assign these councils the responsibility for identifying actual labour market needs, including English language, and co-ordinating efforts with education institutions to bridge the gap between education learning outcomes and employment requirements.			
Policy	The MOHE, AQACHEI and universities: consider a review and evaluation of assessment methods to adapt new authentic ones that accurately assess students' progression in the four English language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The focus needs to be more on using project-based learning assessment methods which simulate future work requirements in the labour market.			
Policy	The MOE, MOHE and AQACHEI: consider developing a national policy as a roadmap for effective collaboration between schools, universities, syndicates and sector councils to design and offer life skills English language programmes to students. An example of a potential partner could be King Abdulla II Fund for Development (KAFFD), which has offices at universities and works with students on activities such as capacity building, employability, entrepreneurship and others.			
Policy	The MOHE and AQACHEI: consider a review and update of degree paths and English language-related admission requirements at higher education institutions to include more compulsory English courses, other than current foundational 101 and 102 courses, for the different majors which closely align with the labour market needs for English skills.			
Practice	The MOE, MOHE, AQACHEI and MOL: consider upgrading current practicum components in higher education degree paths to include effective internship opportunities for students that enable the development of English language and other life skills needed in the labour market.			

Domain	Proposed recommendation and responsible agency	Implementation importance	Implementation impact	Implementation difficulty
Policy	Universities: consider investing in systematic labour market evaluation and students' employment tracer studies to make evidence-based decisions for developing or modifying study courses. Such studies could be part of students' coursework and research activities, which may also develop students' research and analytical skills, which are crucial for the labour market.			
Policy	The MOE, MOHE and AQACHEI: consider incentivising English language competency tests for educators (K-12 teachers, education supervisors and university professors) as an employment requirement or privilege to maintain an adequate caliber of English language for educators.			
People	The MOE: consider reducing the education supervisors-to-teachers ratio. This will allow more time and resources for the education supervisors to provide ongoing support to teachers to adapt student-centred teaching and assessment pedagogies which ultimately improve education quality by moving away from traditional teaching.			

# Appendix 2:

## MOE English teachers' questionnaire

**March 2021**

Dear Teacher,

Hello. My name is ..... I'm working on a project about '**teaching and learning of English in Jordan**' conducted by the British Council and Queen Rania Teacher Academy. The purpose of this research is to understand the extent to which the current policy and practice of teaching and learning English at the Jordanian school education system and higher education system contribute to increased work opportunities for young people in Jordan; and hence, establish appropriate recommendations for English education system reform. The research will cover the following three domains:

- **People:** (relevant key stakeholders in English language)
- **Policy:** (curricula, assessment, materials, resources)
- **Practice:** (pedagogies, resources, student behavior)

We are interested in the different points of view teachers can share with us which make your feedback invaluable. There are no right or wrong answers as everyone's views are important. There is no need to prepare in advance and please feel free to stop us at any time to clarify or add further comments. You can decline to answer any question as well.

We will be recording the interview in which we collect the survey data, because we do not want to miss any comment. However, no one except the research team will listen to the interview and the recording will be destroyed afterwards. In the information provided to this research, including the report, answers will be anonymous and cannot be identified or linked to any of the people that have participated in this research.

Before we proceed can you please confirm that:

- Your participation is voluntary?  Yes  No
- Agree to record this interview?  Yes  No



## Section 1: Demographic background information

**1. MOE number:**

- 2. Sex:**  Male  
 Female

**3. Educational level**

- Diploma  
 Bachelor's degree  
 High diploma  
 Master  
 PhD

**4. University major**

- English literature  
 Translation  
 Applied linguistic  
 Other ...

**5. Region**

- North  
 South  
 Middle

**6. Governorate**

- |                                |                                 |                                 |                                  |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amman | <input type="checkbox"/> Madaba | <input type="checkbox"/> Jerash | <input type="checkbox"/> Karak   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balqa | <input type="checkbox"/> Irbid  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ajlun  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tafilah |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zarqa | <input type="checkbox"/> Mafraq | <input type="checkbox"/> Ma'an  | <input type="checkbox"/> Aqaba   |

**7. Age:**

**8. Number of working years:**



## Section #2: Teachers' perceptions towards MOE policies of teaching and learning English language (policy)

**1. Are you aware of the MOE Foreign (English) Language Specialised Standards of the Teacher for (1st – 12th) grades?**

- Yes
- No

**2. What are some of these MOE standards that you follow in teaching English language? (Specify)**

**3. If you are not aware of these MOE standards, then why?**

- MOE doesn't share them with teachers
- We follow the teacher's guide only
- There are no specific standards needed for English language teaching
- Other (Specify)

**4. If you are aware of these MOE standards, how do you evaluate them?**

- Effective and meet the students' learning objectives
- Not effective and need to be improved to meet the new learning approaches
- Don't enhance the students' ability to compete with their peers from private schools
- Other (Specify)

**5. Do you think these MOE standards support the role of English language in increasing students' future opportunities in the labour market?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**6. What assessment strategies and tools do you apply to assess students' competencies in English? Ask for specific examples.**

**7. What measures need to be done regarding these assessment strategies and tools?**

- Change
- Improve
- Update

**8. If there is a need to improve or update these assessment methods or tests, then why?**

- These assessment methods don't assess students' English competences effectively
- The assessment methods need to be improved to meet the new approaches for learning
- Other (Specify)

**9. What about the curriculum, do you think the English language curriculum covers all skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing)?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**10. Do you think the English language curriculum gives considerable weight to productive (speaking and writing) skills?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**11. All in all, how do you evaluate the effectiveness of the English language curriculum in the MOE schools?**

- Effective and meets the students' learning needs
- Not effective and needs to be improved to meet the new learning approaches
- Doesn't enhance the students' ability to compete with their peers from private schools
- Other (Specify)

**12. How does the curriculum content plug in the gap between the student and labour market? Ask for specific examples.**

**13. What teaching resources do you utilise to supplement English curriculum?**

- Online platforms and applications
- Worksheets and multimedia resources
- Other (Specify)
- Don't use any supplement teaching resources

**14. Have you ever participated in any professional training programmes to enhance your capacities in implementing English curriculum?**

- Yes
- No

**15. If yes, can you mention them? (Specify)**

**16. Do you think that you have all the materials and resources you need to teach English language?**

- Yes
- No

**17. Do you have the needed digital resources to currently implement the MOE curriculum?**

- Yes
- No

**18. What is a possible reason for not having enough resources?**

- Not required by MOE standards
- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of access to these resources
- Other (Specify)

**19. From your own perspective, what needs to be done at policy, curriculum, assessment, resources and materials, and students' behaviour towards learning English to enhance students' opportunities in the labour market? and by whom? (Ask for specific examples for each domain.)**

Policy:

Curriculum:

Assessment:

Resources and materials:

Students' behaviour:

**20. How has Covid-19 affected English language learning in schools?**

- Reduced the students' ability to learn English properly
- Reduced teachers' ability to utilise effective teaching and assessment pedagogies
- Limited the students' ability to practise English language with their peers
- Other (Specify)

## Section #3: Teachers' perceptions towards the importance of English language at school (people)

**1. Have you ever taken any standardised proficiency tests?**

- If yes, please specify the name and your level
- No

**2. If you haven't taken any proficiency test before, why?**

- I don't have the chance
- I don't believe in such exams
- Not required by the MOE and job market
- Other (Specify)



**3. To what extent do you believe that teaching English language at schools in Jordan will support students' job opportunities in the future?**

- High
- Average
- Low
- Not at all

**4. If it's high OR average why?**

- Educational resource adequate, available
- Teachers are fully prepared to teach English
- Parents follow up on learning adequately
- English curriculum matches labour market needs
- Other (Specify)

**5. If it's low OR not at all, why?**

- Lack of educational resources
- More training for teachers is needed
- More follow up from parents is needed
- Not widely required at labour market
- Other (Specify)

**6. To what extent do you think school students are motivated to learn English?**

- High
- Average
- Low

**7. If the answer is 'highly motivated', then why?**

- They like the curriculum
- They like the learning pedagogies
- They recognise the importance of English language in their higher education or future
- career path
- Other (Specify)

**8. If the students have 'low' or 'average' motivation to learn English, then why?**

- Low ability to learn English
- Lack of educational resources
- Lack of parental support
- They don't recognise the importance of English language in their higher education or
- future career path
- Online education and its negative impact on their ability to learn (during the Covid-19
- pandemic)
- Other (Specify)

**9. From your own perspective, what can the MOE do to increase students' motivation to learn English?**

- Use new pedagogies
- Provide extracurricular exercises
- Update the curriculum
- Raise students' awareness of the importance of the English language in their higher education or future career path
- Other (Specify)

## Section #4: English teaching practices (practice)

**1. What are the main teaching pedagogies that you use to teach English in the classroom? (Ask for specific examples.)**

**2. Do you have all the teaching aids that you need to apply these pedagogies?**

- Yes, completely
- Yes, partially
- Not at all

**3. During English lessons, do you focus on pedagogies that simulate the student's future work opportunities?**

- Yes, completely
- Yes, partially
- Not at all
- If 'yes' what are these pedagogies? (Specify with examples.)

**5. If 'not at all', why?**

- I don't know such pedagogies
- Lack of time
- Lack of resources
- I don't know the link with future work opportunities
- Currently, Covid-19 impact and online education in the current situation
- Other (Specify)



**6. From your perspective, is there any relationship between learning English language at school and the students' opportunities in the labour market in the future?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**7. What professional training courses could help you develop your English teaching competencies? (Specify with examples.)**

**8. What are the challenges that you face while teaching English?**

- Low students' communicative competence
- Lack of teaching resources
- Curriculum doesn't meet students' level
- Lack of training opportunities for teacher
- Other (Specify)

**9. How do you manage these challenges?**

- Ask for training
- Read more teaching resources
- Consult English supervisors at MOE
- Other (Specify)

**Thank you for your responses and co-operation.**

# Appendix 3:

## Key informant interview protocol

### MOE English language supervisors March 2021

Dear Teacher,

Hello. My name is ..... I'm working on a project about '**teaching and learning of English in Jordan**' conducted by the British Council and Queen Rania Teacher Academy. The purpose of this research is to understand the extent to which the current policy and practice of teaching and learning English at the Jordanian school education system and higher education system contribute to increased work opportunities for young people in Jordan; and hence, establish appropriate recommendations for English education system reform. The research will cover the following three domains:

- **People:** (relevant key stakeholders in English language)
- **Policy:** (curricula, assessment, materials, resources)
- **Practice:** (pedagogies, resources, student behavior)

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Before we proceed can you please confirm that:

- Your participation is voluntary?  Yes  No
- Agree to record this interview?  Yes  No



## Section 1: Demographic background

1. Sex:
2. Educational level :
3. Educational field
4. Position:
5. Region, Directorate:
6. Number of working years:

## Section 2: Policy

1. Are you aware of the MOE Foreign (English) Language Specialised Standards of the Teacher for (1st – 12th) grades?

Yes

No

2. What are standards that you use to support English language teaching practices? Ask for details and specific examples.

What do you think of these standards? And why?

What is needed to improve these standards?

How do these practices enhance students' linguistic competencies?

How are these standards customised to the local context in terms of labour market needs and priorities?

How do these standards bridge the gap between the students' competencies and the labour market? (How do these standards enhance students' opportunities in the labour market in the future? Ask for examples – prompt question.)

What are the challenges that you faced when applying these policies or strategies? And how did you deal with these challenges? Ask for specific examples.



**3. What assessment strategies and tools do teachers apply to assess students' English competencies?**

How do these assessment strategies and tools contribute to the students' future opportunities in the labour market?

What things need to be done regarding these assessment strategies and tools (change, improve or update)? Ask for specific examples.

**4. What about the curriculum, do you think the English language curriculum covers all skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing)? Please explain your answer.**

**5. Do you think the English language curriculum gives considerable weight to speaking and writing skills? Please explain your answer.**

**6. How does the curriculum content plug in the gap between the student and labour market? Ask for specific examples.**

**7. To what extent do you think English language teachers equip students with the needed skills for the labour market? Please explain your answer with specific examples.**

**8. From your perspective: what are the main labour market sectors that demand the English language in particular? And why? Ask for specific examples.**



**From your own perspective: what needs to be done at policy, curriculum, assessment, resources and materials, and students' behaviour to enhance students' opportunities in the labour market in the future? And by who? (Ask for specific examples for each domain.)**

Policy:

Curriculum:

Assessment:

Resources and materials:

Students' behaviour:

## Section 3: People

1. What do you think of students' motivation towards learning English? And why?

2. What do you think of the current students' English competencies? And why?

3. To what extent do you believe in English proficiency exams? And why?

4. What kind of exams do English students need to have to develop proficiency levels of English? And why?

## Section 4: Practices

1. What are the main methods, approaches that MOE use in teaching English language?

a. How do these methods enhance students' motivation to learn English?

b. What are the main methods that the teachers need to adopt to enhance students' English language skills? Why? Ask for details.



## 2. What are the main challenges that you face in supporting English language teachers at schools? Ask for details.

a. How do you deal with these challenges? What kind of support do you need to mitigate these challenges? And from whom?

b. What challenges do English language teachers face in teaching English at schools?

c. How can you support them in this regard?

d. How does MOE support English language teachers from your viewpoint?

## 3. How does the Covid-19 pandemic affect teaching English at the schools? Ask for details.

a. Is there anything needed to be done at the MOE level to reduce the negative impact of Covid-19? Yes, no, ask for details and examples.

## 4. What kind of support (material, resources, regulations) do you need as a supervisor to enhance the English language role in students' future opportunities in the labour market?

a. Who can provide these resources?

Thank you for your responses and co-operation.

## University Faculty Members (mixed disciplines) March 2021

Dear Teacher,

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Before we proceed can you please confirm that:

- Your participation is voluntary?  Yes  No
- Agree to record this interview?  Yes  No



## Section 1: Demographic background information

1. Sex:

2. Educational level:

3. University major which you teach:

4. University:

5. Faculty:

6. Medium of instruction:

English language

Arabic

7. Sector:

private

semi-governmental

governmental

8. Number of university-level years of experience:

## Section 2: Policy

1. What stipulations do MOHE make for the medium of instruction at the university where you teach? Ask for details about certain faculties, e.g. Medicine, Science, Arts.

a. What do you think of the current policies regarding the English language of teaching at your university? And why?

b. How do these policies enhance students' competencies in English?

c. If there is a need to improve or update these policies, then why?

d. Are you familiar with English language requirements in the labour market sectors? Please explain your answer.

e. To what extent do the current (language of instruction) policies at universities enhance students' English communicative skills in the labour market? Please explain your answer and give specific examples.

f. What are the challenges that you face when using English as a medium of instruction?

**2. Does the university where you work implement assessment strategies and tools that simulate the students' future work opportunities? If yes, give examples.**

a. What measures needed to be done regarding these assessment strategies and tools (change, improve or update)? Ask for examples.

**3. What about the university subject courses, do you think that only English coursebooks should be mandated? If not, which majors should mandate English coursebooks only?**

a. Do you think university mandatory general English courses are enough? If not, what could be done?

**4. To what extent do you think university graduates will be easily recruited based on their English language competencies?**

**5. As for Year 4 students, do the university's regulations necessitate internship periods so graduates can sense the labour market required language skills? Please explain your answer with specific examples.**



**6. From your perspective: what is needed to be done at policy, assessment, resources and materials, course syllabus, students' behaviour English language level to enhance students' opportunities in the labour market in the future? And by whom? Ask for each domain.**

Policy:

Assessment:

Resources and materials:

Course syllabus:

Students' behaviour:

## Section 3: People

**1. What do you think of students' motivation to learn English? And why?**

a. What are the reasons behind studying in English medium of instruction university for non-English major students?

b. Do you think there is a wide gap between students' motivation for learning English at schools and universities? Ask for examples.

**2. As for Year 4 English language major students, how do they get acquainted with the English language requirements of the different work sectors so they can fulfil the job market needs?**

**3. Do you think stipulating a certain English language proficiency level as a graduation criterion will motivate students to pay enough attention to their English language skills? Please explain your answer.**



**4. Do you think stipulating a certain English language proficiency level as a graduation criterion for English language major students will motivate students to pay enough attention to their English language skills? Please explain your answer.**

**5. Do you think stipulating a certain English language proficiency level examination will boost graduates' job opportunities locally and regionally? Please explain your answer. Also, can you mention some English exam names as proposed examples?**

**6. Do you think stipulating a certain English language proficiency level for English language major students ONLY will boost graduates' job opportunities locally and regionally?**

## **Section 4: Practices**

**1. Do you use certain teaching approaches that help you maximise the use of English language at your lectures?**

a. How do these methods increase students' motivation to learn English?

b. What are some teaching approaches that universities need to adopt to develop students' English language skills? Ask for details.

c. During your lectures and seminars do you focus on pedagogies that simulate the students' future work opportunities for the students?



d. If 'yes', what are these pedagogies? (Specify, e.g. project-based learning, collaborative learning.)

e. If 'no', why?

**2. What are the main challenges that you face in using English language as a medium of instruction (difficult textbooks, poor students' receptive or productive skills)?**

**3. How do you deal with these challenges? What kind of support do you need to mitigate these challenges? And from whom?**

**4. As for Year 4 students, how do they get acquainted with the English language requirements of the different work sectors?**

**5. As for Year 4 English language major students, how does the English department at universities familiarise and prepare them for the English language needs in different work sectors so they can fulfil the job market demand?**

**6. What kind of resources, skills and competencies do you need to highlight the role of English language in students' future career path?**

**7. How does the Covid-19 pandemic currently affect teaching English at universities? Ask for details.**

**Thank you for your responses and co-operation**

# Private sector representatives

## March 2021

Dear Teacher,

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Before we proceed can you please confirm that:

- Your participation is voluntary?  Yes  No
- Agree to record this interview?  Yes  No



## Section 1: Demographic background

1. Sex:
2. Educational level: Add:
3. University major: Add:
4. Entity name:
5. Sector:
6. Number of employees:
7. Number of employees with English language qualifications:

## Section 2: Policy

### 1. What are the main criteria of employee recruitment? Please specify.

a. What about the English language? To what extent do you recruit job seekers with English language qualifications? And why?

b. Do you ask for specific skills, competencies when recruiting? Yes? No? And why?

c. What are the main reasons for recruiting job seekers with English language qualifications in your company?

d. What English language skills do job seekers lack? And why?

**2. Are there any stipulations by MOL regarding the English language skills? Please explain your answer.**

**3. Is there any collaboration between the higher education bodies and the labour market? Yes, no, to some extent? Please explain your answer.**

a. How could this collaboration provide the labour market with the suitable human resources?

b. To what extent do you think that higher education institutions provide the labour market with the needed English language qualified employees? And why?

**4. As for Year 4 students, do you think if universities mandate internship periods, would this help graduates sense the labour market required language skills? Please explain your answer.**

**5. To what extent do you find the desired qualifications in employees in terms of English competencies? Please explain your answer.**

**6. Do you think that you as an employer can support higher education institutions in improving students' English language competencies? Please explain your answer.**

**7. Do you provide English language professional training courses to your employees? Yes, no and why? If yes, what skills do you focus on?**



8. What about other training courses: do you provide these training workshops in English? Yes, no and why?

9. In the annual appraisal, do you favour employees who are proficient in English? Yes, no and why?

10. What are the main challenges that you face when recruiting English language employees? And why?

11. What are the things needed to be done by the employing sectors such as your sector to meet these challenges? What should be done by the educational system and MOL to meet these challenges?

## Section 3: People

1. Do you favour any university graduates? If yes, on what basis then?

2. To what extent do you think that Jordan's labour market is lacking English language graduates or graduates with proper English language qualifications? And why?

3. What are the main reasons for recruiting job seekers with English language qualifications in your company? Please explain your answer.

**4. To what extent do you believe in the importance of standardised English proficiency exams? And why?**

a. What kind of exams do English universities' students need to have before joining the labour market and particularly your sector? And why?

## **Section 4: Practices**

**1. How do you use English language in your workplaces? And why?**

**2. How does the use of English language enhance your employees' communication skills? And why?**

**Thank you for your responses and co-operation.**



# Appendix 4:

## Focus group discussion protocol

### Year 4 university students March 2021

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**Participants:** Year 4 female and male university students enrolled in governmental, semi-governmental and private universities in Jordan according to the following categories:

<b>Group 1</b> from English-medium-of-instruction universities, mix of majors that represent the labour market sectors.
<b>Group 2</b> from an English major only.
<b>Group 3</b> from different majors that represent labour market sectors, may take English as a course or admission test only.

**Number of participants:** The total number of all groups will be as follows:

Groups	Total groups	Participants		Total participants
		Male	Female	
English-medium-of-instruction universities				
English major only				
Mixed group of majors where English mandate is left to the faculty				

The period:

Place of implementation:

Group number	
Participating universities	
Number of participants classified per university	
Name of facilitator	
Was the session recorded?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

## Section 2: : Participants’ perception towards the university strategies and techniques regarding English language (policy)

1. Are there any English language entry requirements for your university enrolment process? Proficiency test, placement test? Please explain your answer and give specific examples, especially when the answer is yes.

2. What obligations does your university, faculty, major have regarding the medium of instruction? Ask for details about certain faculties, e.g. Medicine, Science, Arts.

3. Are there any graduation requirements regarding your English language level?

4. Do you think the English language skills that you gained at school prepared you for your higher education studies? If there is a gap, what measures has your university taken to develop your language skills?

**5 From your perspective: what is needed to be done (on the school and university level) to prepare you for and expand your higher education opportunities? Please explain your answer and give specific examples.**

**6. As for Year 4 students, do the university regulations necessitate internship periods so graduates can sense the labour market required language skills? Please explain your answer and give specific examples.**

**7. Are you familiar with English language requirements in the labour market sectors? Please explain your answer and give specific examples.**

**8. From your perspective: what are the main labour market sectors (jobs) that particularly demand English language proficiency? And why? Ask for examples.**

**9. To what extent do the current language of instruction policies at universities enhance students' English communicative skills in the labour market? Ask for examples.**

**10. From your perspective: what is needed to be done at policy, assessment, resources and materials, course syllabus, students' behaviour English language level to enhance students' opportunities in the labour market in the future? And by whom? Ask for each domain.**

Policy:

Assessment:

Resources and materials:

Course syllabus:

Students' behaviour:

**11. Do you think the English language assessments enhance the students' future opportunities in the labour market? Please explain your answer and give specific examples.**



## Section 2: Participants' perceptions toward English language (people)

For questions 1–10 responses from English language major students vs non-English language students need to be considered and recorded for analysis of differences, similarities and trends

**1. What motivated you to select this major?**

**2. Are there any English language-related reasons behind studying in your current university?**

**3. What are the main challenges that you face in studying in English language medium of instruction? OR taking English as a one course OR studying English as a major (difficult textbooks, poor receptive or productive skills). This question needs to collect answer for the three different groups of students.**

**4. How do you deal with these challenges? What kind of support do you need to mitigate these challenges? And from whom?**

**5. As for Year 4 English language major students and English language medium of instruction, how does the English department at universities familiarise and prepare them for the English language needs in different work sectors so you can fulfil the job market demand? This question is for students in the English major group (2) and English language medium of instruction group (1).**

**6. What do you think of your English competencies after graduating from the university? And why?**

7. Have you ever taken any standardised proficiency test? Yes, no, and why?

8. What do you think about these assessments? Please explain your answer.

9. Were your expectations met after studying English major in terms of learning the language? This question is for students in the English major group (2).

10. To what extent do you think university graduates will be easily recruited in the labour market based on their English language competencies? Please explain your answer.

11. Do you think stipulating a certain English language proficiency level as a graduation criterion will motivate you to pay greater attention to their English language skills? Please explain your answer.

12. Do you think stipulating a certain English language proficiency level will boost graduates' job opportunities locally and regionally? (Can you mention some exam names?)

13. Do you think stipulating a certain English language proficiency level (English language major students) will boost graduates' job opportunities locally and regionally?

## Section 3: Practices

1. What do you think of the methods, approaches and strategies used in teaching English language in your university? And why?



**2. How do these methods, approaches and strategies enhance your motivation to learn English?**

**3. What are the methods, approaches and strategies that universities need to adopt to enhance your motivation to learn English? Why? Ask for details.**

**4. What are the main challenges you have faced in learning English language during your university studies? Ask for details and examples.**

**5. How did you deal with these challenges? What kind of support do you need to mitigate these challenges? And from whom?**

**6. How does the Covid-19 pandemic currently affect learning English at universities? Ask for details.**

**7. What kind of English language resources do you need to enhance the role of English language in your future opportunities in the labour market? Who can**

**Thank you for your responses and co-operation.**



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