

# Curriculum, Policy, and Politics in English Language Teaching: Comparative Perspectives from Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen

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## Abstract

**Objective:** This study examines the models, contexts, and ideologies shaping English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula in three developing countries: Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen. It focuses on how national priorities, policy orientations, and institutional constraints influence curriculum development and classroom practice. **Theoretical framework:** The analysis is grounded in Tyler's (1949) Objectives Model, Taba's (1962) Grassroots Model, and modern approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). These frameworks are assessed through a critical perspective that views curriculum not only as a pedagogical tool but also as an ideological instrument implicated in debates on linguistic imperialism. **Literature review:** Previous studies highlight curriculum as both pedagogical and ideological. Tyler's model, Taba's grassroots approach, CLT, and TBLT inform debates on policy, context, and linguistic imperialism in developing-country ELT. **Methods:** A qualitative descriptive approach combined with a critical review of literature was employed. Data included curriculum and policy documents, as well as academic studies published between 2000 and 2024. This triangulated method highlights the interplay between policy design and educational realities. **Results:** Findings reveal uneven progress. Indonesia shows partial achievement of communicative objectives but struggles with contextual challenges. Nigeria's curriculum remains dominated by examination-driven practices, limiting communicative competence. Yemen demonstrates stagnation caused by weak governance and insufficient infrastructure. Differences in pedagogy, teaching resources, and assessment underline the gap between intended aims and actual delivery. **Implications:** Sustainable ELT reform requires systemic teacher training, equitable resource allocation, and contextually relevant policies. **Novelty:** This comparative study contributes uniquely by integrating literary, pedagogical, and ideological perspectives, offering insights into ELT curricula as both educational frameworks and instruments of political influence.

**Keywords:** elt curriculum, developing countries, comparative education, communicative language teaching, curriculum reform.

## INTRODUCTION

English Language Teaching (ELT) in the Global South is a dynamic yet challenging area. English's continuing ascendancy as the global lingua franca and the need for its acquisition have become an integral part of education in policy and practice across the Global South [1].

From Southeast Asia to Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, English language proficiency is not just a skill but rather understood as a means to higher education, social mobility, scholarship, and economic opportunity [2]. Despite path-dependent possibilities for the effectiveness of and equitable English language provision, achieving ELT is perseverant and problematic. From structural issues in an educational capacity, to political instability, to teacher shortages, to how to talk about or think of language, and to competing linguistic and ethnic identities [3]. These cultural and material realities impact the pedagogical design, implementation, and effectiveness of ELT curriculum, as such, and have significant implications for English education overall. Since these contexts differ from one developing area to another, and even from city to city, so too must our understanding of how English education is framed and practically embedded [4].

The colonial experience of the country plays an important role in determining the path of English language policies in many contexts. In Nigeria, English was institutionalized under colonialism and left what is now a fairly complicated legacy affecting language-in-education policies [5]. In decolonized countries such as Indonesia, English has been established as a foreign language strongly tied to globalization and economic modernization [6]. Despite being based on different experiences, an undercurrent in this is the tension between a global dominant language and the indigenous linguistic and cultural identity. As a result, EFL curricula often represent ideological struggles that go beyond relating to a linguistic goal. They can also be considered sites of national policy, identity negotiation, and educational reform [7].

Modern English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum in developing countries are increasingly adopting international educational trends like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Competency-Based Learning, and learner-centered approaches, which advocate for language being used practically and support student autonomy and interaction, but there remains a challenge that overall systems cannot make significant headway in implementation overall despite the very high aspirations built into the curriculum frameworks [8]. Research suggests that many factors block teachers from implementing new pedagogy, including access to modern technology, professional development, relevant teaching resources, and large class sizes [9].

Curriculum development is a context-specific process, perhaps more so in linguistically diverse and economically disadvantaged regions. Effectively developing an ELT curriculum requires an understanding of international standard-setting and recognizing locality, on the one hand, and defining needs while also appreciating capacities, and generating viable educational reform that acknowledges sustainability and equity. If ELT curricula are to be effective, they must be flexible and adaptable, respond and be foundationally sustainable, and incorporate conceptual understandings of the sociolinguistic context in which the curricula are operating. Unfortunately, in many developing nations, ELT curricula are influenced or totally borrowed from Western models, which are routinely not adapted to a local context [10]. These disparities both alienate and elicit a resistance to the ELT curricula from the educators using it, often creating ineffective learning outcomes and reproducing inequalities in access to education [11].

The challenge of curricular reform in English language teaching is exacerbated by global systemic issues, such as political turmoil, bureaucratic ineffectiveness, and limited funding. In fragile streams of educational practice, such as Yemen, conflict and economic crises make it impossible for educational institutions to engage in continuous reform efforts [12]. Likewise, in chronic underfunded contexts such as Nigeria, a top-down bureaucratic approach obstructs the very attempts to stabilize and modernize English language teaching [13]. Even in a relatively stable context such as Indonesia, with plans for educational reform, the decentralization of budgeting and execution in Jakarta leaves regions prone to variations in curriculum implementation [14]. These structural challenges should be considered when examining curriculum documents and making recommendations.

A curriculum is more than a collection of course materials and lesson plans; it is an expression of a society's view of education, cultural interests, and future aspirations. The English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum, in particular, is complex in its meanings, signifying both a mode of communication and a means to show a desire for modernity and social mobility [15]. It also raises questions of linguistic imperialism, cultural decimation, and the displacement of indigenous languages. Due to this complexity, exploring the ELT curriculum is not technically, but rather politically and ideologically, engaged work. A critical, comparative reading of the ELT curriculum captures what is left unsaid, power relations, and pedagogical decisions that are evident within official educational narratives.

Despite the importance of English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum studies, there is still a noticeable lack of comparative studies that examine regions with multiple developing countries situated within the same analytical context. Generally speaking, studies are case-based and rely heavily on single national case studies, thus limiting their ability to uncover cross-national patterns. He and Li stress that the ELT curriculum must evolve away from native speaker demand and embrace pragmatic communication skills, mainly toward making teaching materials and methods contextual to local needs [16]. Bildik and Altun log the specific topics that arose from the scope of their Turkish ELT curriculum regarding the subsequent issues related to an implementation gap, which emphasizes the need for analysis outside of localized contexts [17]. Such studies can be considered preliminary, but they all exemplify the disjointed nature of research in this area.

This study seeks to address that gap by providing a comparative literary analysis of English language teaching (ELT) curricula in three developing countries: Indonesia, Yemen, and Nigeria. These countries were selected to explore linguistic contexts that are multifaceted, formerly colonial countries with differing educational levels [18]. By analyzing curriculum documents, policy documents, and academic papers, this article seeks to reveal common themes, pedagogical trajectories, and contextual issues in ELT curriculum construction. In particular, it focuses on goals for curriculum, preferred pedagogies, assessment practices, material selection, and structural limitations at the macro level [19]. Additionally, it examines the tensions between national priorities and global participation in the curriculum texts. The comparative approach means that this article can find shared challenges, but also unique and different responses in each country, as well as in each country's sociolinguistic context, thereby deepening our insights into how to configure ELT practices that are relevant both in local contexts and in global engagements.

The theoretical foundation of this study integrates classical and modern curriculum models. Tyler's Objectives Model emphasizes designing learning around clear objectives and structured evaluation, while Taba's Inductive Model highlights teacher input and bottom-up curriculum design. In contrast, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) prioritizes fluency, functional language, and real-life communication. Collectively, these frameworks provide valuable tools for critically analyzing the coherence, relevance, and effectiveness of English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula in different sociopolitical and educational contexts.

This study is novel for its interdisciplinary and comparative approach. Previous studies of curriculum or pedagogical assessments for effectiveness have been relatively comprehensive, focused on a strict context [20]. The integration of literary, policy, and educational theory allows a study to interrogate ideologies and pedagogy at deeper levels of English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula, situating. Using qualitative content analysis, the study engages with three different curriculum texts from distinct national contexts to deliver original contributions to educational theories of curriculum and the ways of framing, justifying, or implementing ELT in developing countries [21]. The authors also introduce a new way of thinking about curriculum as a sociopolitical document, rather than pedagogy as curriculum. As this position implies, the nuanced political and socio-cultural understandings of both local and global education can inform curriculum and curricular decisions.

The aim of this article is not only to compare ELT curricula in Indonesia, Yemen, and Nigeria, but also to contribute to broader debates on curriculum reform, localization, and educational equity. By offering insights for policymakers, curriculum designers, and teacher educators, the study emphasizes the need to make ELT more relevant in resource-limited contexts. It also calls for further interdisciplinary and critical research on curriculum policies in the Global South, with particular attention to inclusive design that values diversity and equity.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

An English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum goes beyond a syllabus or materials; it reflects a nation's language ideologies, educational philosophy, and sociopolitical agendas. This curriculum contains such things as goals of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, communicative competence, and cultural understanding. Richards stated that an ELT curriculum functions as a framework that reflects pedagogical aspirations and the realities of context. Tyler's rational model was an excellent basis for curriculum objectives, pedagogy, and assessments. Taba developed a teacher-centered, inductive curriculum development approach focused on what students needed. These models continue to underpin ELT curriculum development in different contexts. The current literature emphasizes the significance of context-enhanced curriculum in education beyond the pandemic [22].

As ELT continues to evolve, especially in recent years and in post-colonial contexts, it has undergone large shifts in pedagogy, from teacher-directed instruction to communicative and functional pedagogies that advocate for interaction and learner autonomy. First labelled Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the communicative approach, which began to take hold in the 1980s, involved more meaningful uses of language instead of the rote grammar that had dominated the chosen methodologies for a long period [23]. Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emerged during the same post-Communicative era, took tourism and travel tasks as a step forward [24]. All of these important developments work towards developing real-world communicative skills and communicative competence that many developing countries are now trying to embed into policies of English Language Teaching (ELT) [25].

This article presents a comparison of ELT curricula in Indonesia, Yemen, and Nigeria, adding theoretical contributions to the discussion on curriculum reform, localization, and equity. The article includes recommendations for policymakers and practitioners to improve the effectiveness of ELT in low-resource environments. It also concerns itself with advocating for comparative and critical research in future studies across the Global South [26]. To promote accessibility and foster equity, an inclusive curriculum design must engage the diverse needs of the students, innovating in ways that allow for institutional pliability by recognizing the value of a variety of educational theories. This paper has suggested a pedagogical framework that combines ideology and practice, which can be useful when implementing it in contexts that face barriers to education. While allowing the local ELT practice to connect and engage with global standards [27].

Despite the role of English as a formal subject, there continues to be a gap in the disconnect between curriculum plans and classroom practice. In the case of many non-native English-speaking countries, for example, CLT-based reforms have failed partly because of a steep incline towards a path for all sorts of teacher training, inadequate or no materials and resources, exam-based systems, or lack of administrative support [28]. Western models are then often applied without modifications to suit local contexts, which creates a discrepancy between the intended goals and the aims in reality. While Murphy is concerned with Ireland, it presents an overarching issue for education and the gap between curriculum and practice. References to Liu, Mohamad, and Sulaiman are excluded from further discussion since they are not directly related to this concern of the curriculum-classroom gap [29].

Comparative education enables an understanding of how countries have attempted to address similar educational problems, including curricular development and aims. Crossley and Watson note that comparative inquiries highlight the commonplace problems shared but diverse responses uniquely informed, as a result of historical and political struggles [30]. However, the field of ELT has seen limited comparative curriculum studies. Most are investigated as single-country educational reforms, failing to synthesize research more regionally, and limiting, if not diminishing, the ability to glean useful generalizations and solutions that can be scaled.

Comparative studies of ELT curriculum provide insight into how countries set aims, acknowledge challenges such as teacher shortage or limitations on assessment, and implement language policies. Research exploring current or post-pandemic ELT instances across the Global South is also contributing to discussions around systemic inequities or innovations in educational practice. Further, studies exploring perceptions of reform in Africa and Asia offer contrasting views of implementation tensions between global norms and local identity. Not least, the political ideologies that constrain the curriculum emerge in comparative studies. In many post-colonial contexts, political ideologies see English as both a means to advance profession and identity but also as the mark of colonialism, which complicates localizing the curriculum [31].

Tyler's goal-based model and Taba's teacher-centered, bottom-up approach have influenced ELT. It is important to consider the goals and then match the content to those goals, while including teachers as contributors to curriculum design. The adaptations in some countries, such as the inclusion of world English in Korea and the requirement for Turkey to adjust its curriculum to suit the needs of their learners, illustrate how theory gives way to local adaptations [32]. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning (TBLT) have promoted language education that consists of genuine interactions and real-life communications between teachers and students in meaningful tasks [33]. Nevertheless, language education is reliant on the skills of the teacher, their classroom condition, and policy alignment, such as in the recent calls for reducing English proficiency standards in, but not limited to, EFL settings [34].

These recent calls for adaptations, such as in bilingual contexts in China, illustrate ways that ELT is attempting to be localized for particular context adaptations for local needs. Furthermore, scholars in EFL programs are also recognizing the need for design improvements for curriculum by exposing gaps in cultural competency and assessment issues that are significantly present in many EFL programs [34]. These calls are also moving toward curriculum design that is more fluid and open-minded in terms of how students perceive and think about the materials they see as curriculum. A critical turn in theorizing curriculum, particularly around critical pedagogy led by Apple, Luke, and Phillipson, begins to frame curriculum as ideological that mirrors the most dominant power structures [36]. Decolonization processes in ELT may have differing outcomes, but attempt to resist the dominance of linguistic imperialism, and accept and include inclusive and culturally relevant education to model the reality of our world. It is clear that together with teachers, and using consideration of a multitude of perspectives, the more just, equitable, and effective ELT curricula can become [37].

**Table 1. Literature Review on ELT Curriculum Development in Developing Countries**

Author(s)	Key Focus	Main Contribution	Relevance
Tyler (2005)	Objective-based design	Aligns goals with teaching and assessment	Foundation for structured curricula
Taba (1962)	Teacher-led curriculum	Bottom-up, needs-based curriculum	Supports local adaptation

		planning	
Richards (2001)	ELT curriculum framework	Connects pedagogy with context	Promotes responsive curriculum models
Richards & Rodgers (2014)	Communicative Language Teaching	Emphasizes real-life, communicative fluency	Influences modern ELT policies
Nunan (2004)	Task-Based Language Teaching	Uses tasks to build practical communication skills	Advances in learner-centered instruction
Wei et al. (2024)	CLT & policy in developing contexts	Embedding communicative skills in national policies	Reflects recent reform trends
Paula et al. (2024)	Global-local ELT policy gaps	Aligns curriculum with global standards	Relevant to post-colonial ELT reforms
Pak et al. (2020)	ELT policy recommendations	Suggests reforms for low-resource contexts	Supports inclusive ELT policy design
Akintayo et al. (2024)	Inclusive curriculum	Advocates equity-focused curriculum	Relevant for marginalized learners
Wright et al. (2024)	Curriculum equity	Addresses diverse learner needs	Promotes inclusive reform
Falusi et al. (2023)	Institutional flexibility	Combines ideology with practice	Useful for systemic reform
Ahsan et al. (2021)	Gaps in ELT implementation	Highlights teacher training/resource issues	Explains failures of CLT
He & Li (2021)	Bilingual/localized curriculum	Shows localized ELT practices in China	Model for local adaptation
Polat & Çepik (2014)	Cultural/assessment issues	Reveals gaps in cultural relevance	Suggests curriculum improvement
Mambu (2022)	Decolonizing ELT	Promotes inclusive and ideological awareness	Challenges to linguistic imperialism

## METHODOLOGY

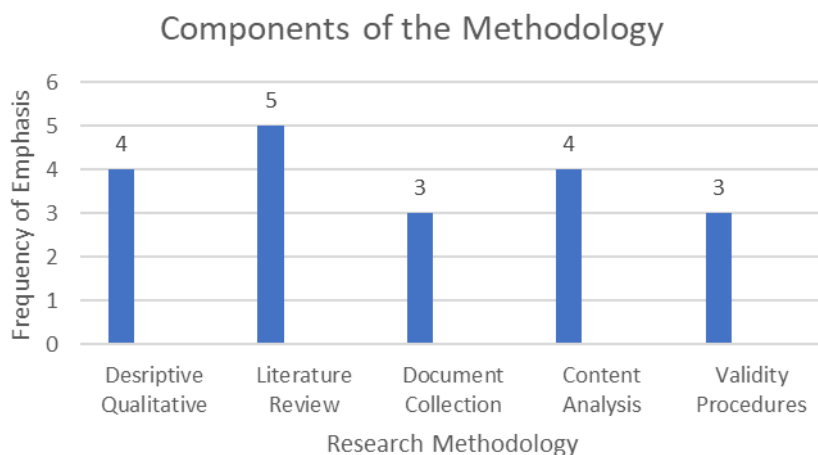
In this study, I adopt a descriptive qualitative research design, which is appropriate for examining complex educational phenomena such as curriculum documents, language policies, and pedagogical theories. Using a qualitative research design permits rich and textured interpretation of text-based data and allows me to fully examine multiple elements of the curriculum for EL concerning ideological, structural, and pedagogical dimensions across a three-national context. In contrast to trying to test hypotheses or generalize to a bigger population, however, my study aimed to interpret, compare, and critique the curriculum then and now as cultural and pedagogical artifacts. There is significance in understanding the ideological and literary premises of national ELT curriculum documents in developing countries such as Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen. The study adopted a constructivist paradigm where knowledge was viewed as socially constructed within sociopolitical and historical contexts [38].

This study primarily employs a literature review method, systematically analyzing research, curriculum texts, and policy documents related to ELT in developing contexts. Rather than merely summarizing prior work, the review critically engages with sources to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and new interpretive possibilities. As a qualitative approach, it provides contextualized insights into curriculum development, examining the thematic, pedagogical, and ideological dimensions of selected documents. This method enables a deeper understanding of how sociopolitical factors shape ELT and supports the development of contextually relevant curricular reforms.

The data gathering process was conducted with pre-determined inclusion criteria to provide relevant context and to meet academic standards of credibility. ELT syllabi, national curricula, and education policy documents from Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen formed the main sources included in the data gathering process; however, supplementary data would include peer-reviewed manuscripts published in scholarly articles (2000-2021), books written, and evaluation reports for current English language education curricula. The literature review included studies discussing ELT curriculum design and development, implementation, and comparative education. The data gathered from databases of Scopus, ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar provided scholarly articles. Policy texts were obtained from publications of UNESCO, their respective Ministries of Education, and the British Council publications. As systematic reviews need to be methodologically rigorous. Tackle the issues of identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing studies that will provide insights into the specific context of the study [39]. This systemic way of thinking about data ensures that the data is questionably evaluated to see how some data presents gaps and contradictions regarding the literature. Using the data from both primary and secondary sources enables a complete and nuanced description of the ideological and pedagogical dimensions regarding the curriculum for English language education in developing countries.

All documents were analyzed using content analysis, a qualitative technique of analysis for interpreting textual data. Texts were read and coded to identify themes, patterns, and contradictions in ELT curricula and policies in different contexts and countries. Coding was both inductive (themes derived from the data) and deductive (based on constructs such as Tyler's model, CLT, TBLT, and linguistic imperialism). The categories for coding were determined by the background constructs used in the literature review (curriculum goals, methods, assessments, ideology, sociocultural relevance) [40]. This analysis method allowed for flexible, in-depth analysis of ELT practice in a developing context. Coding research content qualitatively requires systematic and rigorous coding. Hence, the inductive-deductive framework also allowed for a holistic exploration of how theory is translated to practice. The inclusion of specific teaching methods, such as TBLT, allowed for a deeper perspective on the nature of pedagogy used in research studies. The inductive-deductive coding is relevant for a broader view of how theory is enacted in practice, while providing an important perspective when discussing a colleague's pedagogical behaviour [41].

To enhance the validity and reliability of the data, triangulation was another area that was used through the use of multiple sources for each country of focus. For example, information included national policy documents, independent academic evaluations, and international reports (UNESCO, British Council). This process helped verify the consistency of findings and minimize bias. In addition, reflexivity was monitored throughout the analysis, asking how personal assumptions and theoretical perspectives have an impact on my interpretations. Lastly, the study had legitimacy from procedures to make the sources available, an audit trail of transparent coding procedures, and a descriptive account of the analytical framework. Where applicable, member-checking with experts in curriculum studies and applied linguistics was undertaken to authenticate the interpretations and confirm academic rigor [42].



**Figure 1. Methodology Components in the Study of ELT Curricula in Developing**

This bar graph represents the allocation and emphasis of methodological elements employed in the qualitative inquiry of English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula across Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen. The methodological elements used included a *descriptive qualitative approach* (4), *literature review method* (5), *document collection* (3), *content analysis* (4), and *validity procedures* (3). The bar graph illustrates the contribution of each of the components in terms of the overall research design. Literature reviews and content analyses represented the greatest emphasis, given the document-based and interpretive nature of the inquiry. Overall, the components complemented one another and presented a balanced methodological framework consistent with qualitative inquiry while also emphasizing the systematic approaches taken to ensure depth of analysis, rigor, and credibility in examining downloadable national ELT curriculum documents.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Curriculum Goals

Curriculum objectives in English Language Teaching (ELT) set the framework for what learners will be expected to achieve along the continuum of language development [43]. Objectives may represent a broad spectrum of learner milestones, from simply demonstrating grammatical accuracy to higher-level skills, such as intercultural communication and critical thinking. In some developing countries, the curriculum objectives are shaped by socio-political policy agendas, international standards, and challenges concerning capacity. The current study identified that there are considerable differences in the developing and reforming curriculum objectives and priorities among Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen. The priorities of each curriculum reflect the ability of each country to respond to the challenge of revising their educational reform, related policy development, and future vision for language education. Curriculum objectives might serve an academic purpose, but they also encapsulate a nation's priorities and cultural expectations [44].

Indonesia's ELT curriculum reflects globalization and ASEAN integration, emphasizing 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and collaborative communication. English is framed as a tool for global engagement, with curriculum documents shifting toward communicative, real-life objectives. The government promotes student-centered learning and requires teachers to integrate functional language use into lesson planning. These reforms illustrate Indonesia's deliberate effort to align ELT with international standards.

Nigeria's ELT objectives are closely connected to the use of English as an official and instructional language. The objectives focus on literacy, national integration, and academic

achievement, but oral fluency and communicative competence receive comparatively less attention. While some policy documents advocate for the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, the dominant approach remains focused on examinations. Students are prepared to perform well in the WAEC and other examinations, often at the expense of true communication skills. The curriculum prioritizes the teaching of written essays and grammar. This narrow approach to education reflects both institutional and national education priorities.

Yemen's educational curriculum aims at mastery of grammar, translation, and reading comprehension, and puts forth some traditional goals. There is scant focus on listening and speaking skills, and communicative competence is seldom taught. The curriculum is still based on a structuralist approach, emphasizing the focus on form rather than use. This is due to ongoing political instability coupled with obsolete pedagogical reforms. Such a lack of contemporary aims hampers students' prospects of attaining fluency in English. Consequently, students are likely to pass examinations but lack practical communication skills.

### **Teaching Methodologies**

Teaching methodology is a reflection of national pedagogy and institutional vision. Indonesian curriculum supports communicative orientations such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) [45]. The learners are encouraged to conduct group discussions, peer activities, and context-based language use. Interacting strategies are supported through curriculum documents and teaching materials and foster student autonomy and communication in the real world. However, success relies on teacher training and facilities. Implementation of these approaches in Indonesia varies from region to region. Urban schools stand a greater chance of employing well-trained teachers and having a higher level of exposure to international English Language Teaching (ELT) trends, while rural schools are disadvantaged as they have low levels of infrastructure and outdated pedagogical equipment [46]. Some instructors still practice instruction via lectures, which is a reflection of the disparate distribution of professional development support in the country.

Despite these challenges, support for contemporary approaches remains strong at the national level. In Nigeria, though, teaching approaches tend to be more conservative, where traditional grammar-translation approaches and rote learning still dominate. Communicative activities in classrooms are rare occurrences, largely due to overcrowded classrooms and inadequate amounts of teaching aids. Many teachers are not aware of CLT practices or are inadequately trained to apply them to their teaching; many national exams discourage the adoption of more interactive methods in classrooms. In turn, the realities of the classroom undermine the theorized goals.

In Yemen, the Grammar Translation Method remains the dominant mode of instruction for teachers. Lessons typically comprise an explanation of grammar, vocabulary lists, and translation. Most teachers have simply not had training in either CLT or TBLT, meaning there are very few communicative classroom activities. Speaking and listening tasks are rarely included, which represents limited reform in the curriculum and insufficient support for teachers. Classroom methodologies have limited the development of pragmatic and functional language skills [47].

### **Instructional Materials and Assessment Styles**

Instructional resources and assessment practices strongly influence how ELT curricula are implemented. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Education provides task-based textbooks and multimedia materials designed to support integrated skills and contextual learning [48]. Assessments increasingly include projects, oral tasks, and performance-based evaluations. However, regional disparities limit rural teachers' access to updated resources, forcing many

to rely on older textbooks, traditional grammar tests, and paper-based exams. Although policy encourages varied assessment, national examinations still dominate, and many teachers lack training in communicative assessment techniques [49].

In Nigeria, material development is inconsistent and decentralized. Many schools rely on outdated textbooks focused on reading, grammar, and vocabulary, with limited support for listening and speaking. Despite policy endorsement of continuous assessment, written examinations remain the primary form of evaluation, reinforcing traditional instruction rather than promoting communicative competence.

Yemen faces a severe shortage of educational resources. Textbooks are outdated and grammar-heavy, with little focus on communicative language use. Schools often lack audiovisual tools and internet access, leaving teachers to depend on translation-based activities. Assessment practices remain dominated by summative written tests, offering minimal opportunities for authentic language use [50].

### **Implementation Challenges**

The implementation of ELT reforms faces systemic barriers across all three countries. In Indonesia, despite curriculum documents promoting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), rural schools often lack resources, trained teachers, and manageable class sizes. National exam pressures reduce time for communicative activities, and many teachers trained under traditional models struggle to adopt student-centered approaches. Unequal access to training and limited administrative support further hinder reform efforts, leading to regional disparities.

In Nigeria, overcrowded classrooms, often with over 60 students, make interactive learning impractical. Many schools lack electricity, teaching materials, and basic infrastructure. Low teacher wages and limited professional development opportunities demotivate teachers, reinforcing reliance on traditional, exam-focused instruction. Sustainable change would require systemic restructuring of education policy and teacher support mechanisms [51].

Yemen faces even more severe challenges due to ongoing conflict and economic collapse. Many schools are damaged, closed, or repurposed, and teaching is frequently disrupted. Teachers often work unpaid or without institutional support, leaving education delivery inconsistent and unmonitored. Under such conditions, meaningful curriculum reform and implementation are extremely limited.

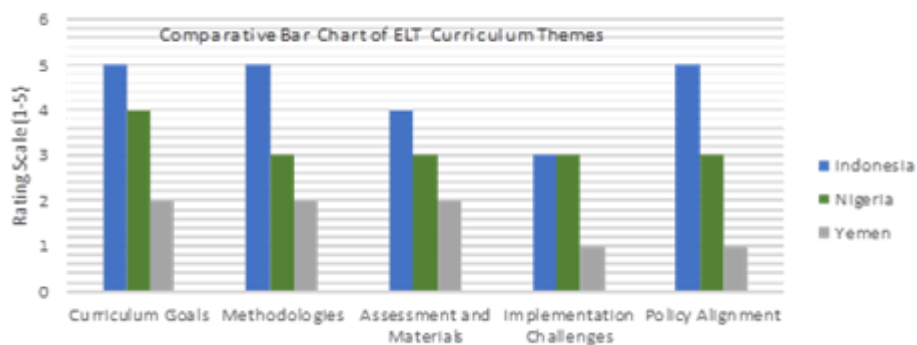
### **Policy Practice Alignment**

Bridging the gap between classroom realities and national policies is essential for effective ELT. In Indonesia, although the curriculum promotes communicative and digital competence, weak monitoring systems and limited teacher training hinder implementation. External examination pressures often push teachers back to traditional, teacher-centered methods, limiting progress. Urban schools are generally better equipped, with stronger training programs and accountability systems, while rural schools face systemic disadvantages and limited oversight [52].

Nigeria shows an even wider gap between policy and practice. Despite advocating communicative approaches, resource shortages, inadequate teacher training, and exam-driven instruction keep classrooms focused on rote learning and writing-based assessments, undermining policy objectives.

Yemen faces severe misalignment, using outdated curriculum documents with little revision or enforcement. Teachers often lack training, materials, and institutional support, making national policy largely symbolic rather than practical.

Many countries fail to meet national ELT goals due to structural barriers, inconsistent implementation, and disparities between urban and rural contexts. Effective monitoring, ongoing teacher development, and flexible resource allocation are crucial to turning policy aspirations into classroom realities [53].



**Figure 2. Comparative ELT Curriculum Themes Across Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen**

The bar chart illustrates the relative standing of Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen on each of the six components in ELT curricula: *curriculum goals*, *teaching methodologies*, *instructional materials*, *assessment types*, *implementation deficiencies*, and *policy and practice linkage*. In almost all categories, Indonesia stood highest, especially with respect to curriculum goals, teaching methodologies, and assessment types, and reflects a policy-driven focus on communicative competence and twenty-first-century skills. Nigeria scored in the mid-range for most curricular components, reflected in a mid-range focus on curriculum goals and on assessment, although Nigeria expressed lower effectiveness in implementing communicative methodologies and ensuring consistency of materials throughout the curriculum. Yemen occupied the lowest points on nearly all curriculum components, in particular in teaching methodologies and instructional materials, as a result of limited policies on curriculum, an outdated curriculum, and implementation processes that lack consistency and are continuously updated. In summary, the chart provides a broad illustration of structural and pedagogical shortcomings that contributed to ELT outcomes in these three developing contexts.

## Discussion

This comparative study reveals that ELT curricula in Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen are shaped by their unique political, economic, and educational contexts, resulting in divergent aims, teaching methods, resources, and assessments. In Indonesia, globalization and economic integration have driven curriculum reforms emphasizing communicative competence and student-centered learning. While Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) are officially promoted, implementation remains uneven, particularly in rural areas where resources and teacher training are limited.

Nigeria acknowledges the importance of communicative proficiency but remains constrained by overcrowded classrooms, limited teacher preparation, outdated resources, and an exam-oriented system. This mismatch between policy and practice hinders the adoption of communicative approaches.

Yemen presents the most severe case, with political instability, outdated curricula, and a lack of teacher training or educational infrastructure preventing any significant reform. Grammar-Translation remains the dominant method, and communicative pedagogy is almost absent.

Across all three countries, the central challenge is aligning policy with classroom realities. Urban schools in Indonesia show partial progress due to better monitoring and support, whereas Nigeria and Yemen face deeper systemic barriers that keep ELT rooted in traditional

methods. Sustainable reform requires teacher development, adequate resources, alternative assessment practices, and robust monitoring mechanisms to bridge the gap between policy aspirations and actual teaching practices.

**Table 2. Summary**

Feature	Indonesia	Nigeria	Yemen
<b>Curriculum Goals</b>	Communicative competence, global skills	Exam-focused, national integration	Grammar, translation, exam preparation
<b>Methodologies</b>	CLT, TBLT promoted in policy	Traditional, limited CLT	Grammar Translation Method dominates
<b>Materials</b>	Modern, task-based (urban areas)	Outdated, uneven distribution	Old textbooks, minimal digital resources
<b>Assessment Styles</b>	Oral tasks, projects, and written exams	Mostly written exams	Summative, grammar-focused
<b>Implementation Issues</b>	Urban-rural disparities, teacher prep	Overcrowded classes, teacher demotivation	Conflict, lack of infrastructure
<b>Policy–Practice Gap</b>	Partial alignment (urban only)	Significant misalignment	Policies largely unenforced

## Analysis

The analysis of ELT curricula in Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen demonstrates how educational policies, pedagogy, and systemic realities intersect to shape classroom practice. Applying Tyler’s Objectives Model shows that all three countries articulate explicit curricular goals, but alignment with classroom implementation is inconsistent. Indonesia aligns most closely with Tyler’s model, particularly in urban areas where objectives emphasize real-world communication and performance-based assessment. Nigeria’s goals are undermined by weak implementation strategies, while Yemen’s objectives remain vague, grammar-focused, and disconnected from meaningful classroom application.

Through Taba’s Grassroots Model, the analysis highlights the limited role of teachers in curriculum design. Indonesia has taken some steps toward teacher involvement through training workshops, yet implementation remains largely top-down, especially in rural areas. Nigeria’s curriculum development is centralized, with teachers having minimal input, while Yemen lacks structures for teacher participation altogether.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is most evident in Indonesia’s curriculum, promoting interaction and fluency, but its success depends on teacher readiness and resource availability, which remain uneven. Nigeria mentions CLT in policy but maintains grammar-focused, exam-driven teaching. Yemen continues to rely almost exclusively on the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), limiting students’ opportunities for meaningful communication. Similarly, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is partially adopted in Indonesia but mostly accessible to well-resourced schools. Nigeria references TBLT superficially, and Yemen does not employ it due to its teacher-centered approach and outdated curriculum.

Finally, the ideological dimension reveals that English functions as both a tool of opportunity and a mechanism of cultural power. While Indonesia frames English as a means of modernization, Nigeria and Yemen reproduce colonial hierarchies through their reliance on English for status and mobility. Balancing global ELT standards with locally relevant pedagogies remains a crucial challenge.

## CONCLUSION

This comparative analysis of ELT curricula in Indonesia, Nigeria, and Yemen highlights significant differences in curricular objectives, pedagogy, resources, assessment practices, and the alignment between policy and classroom reality. Indonesia has integrated communicative competence and 21st-century skills into its curriculum, yet implementation remains uneven due to disparities between urban and rural schools and limitations in teacher preparation. Nigeria recognizes the role of English in national integration, but its exam-driven system undermines communicative approaches and reinforces traditional instruction. Yemen faces the greatest challenges, as political instability and lack of resources have preserved a grammar-translation approach with minimal reform. These findings underscore the importance of context-sensitive curricula that balance global pedagogical trends with local realities. Effective reform requires comprehensive teacher training, equitable access to modern teaching materials, and robust monitoring systems to bridge the policy–practice gap. Policymakers must also consider the sociopolitical and cultural dimensions of ELT, particularly in post-colonial contexts where language education is tied to identity and power. Future research should focus on classroom-based studies to evaluate how curricular reforms are enacted in practice and explore learners’ perceptions of ELT approaches. Investigating the role of digital tools in low-resource settings and the agency of teachers to adapt curricula could further enhance understanding. Expanding the comparative scope to other Global South countries will contribute to developing more inclusive, contextually grounded, and transformative ELT curricula.

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## Author Contributions

The authors solely conceived of the study, conducted the literature review, co-designed the methodology, collected the data and analysis, and wrote the manuscript. The work in this article is entirely original to the authors.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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