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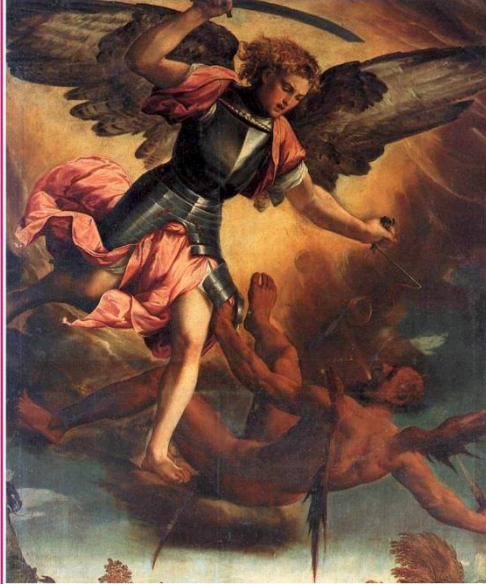
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Failure of the EFL Classroom: Factors Affecting English Language Acquisition Schools

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Abstract

The current study is an effort to highlight the aspects which contrarily affect learning outcomes in the EFL classrooms. The study was quantitative in nature and both EFL learners and teachers were taken in the loop in one way or another. The findings show that factors causing poor learning included less exposure to listening/speaking activities in daily life interaction, less language learning ability, age, previous knowledge, attitude, and motivation. In conclusion, opportunities for peer interaction were lacking in the classrooms, there was lack of motivation, hesitation in language use, lack of interaction with teachers in English and improper communication.

Keywords: Acquisition, English Language, EFL learners.

Fracaso del aula de inglés como lengua extranjera: factores que afectan a las escuelas de adquisición del idioma inglés

Resumen

El estudio actual es un esfuerzo por resaltar los aspectos que afectan de manera contraria los resultados de aprendizaje en las aulas de EFL. El estudio fue de naturaleza cuantitativa y tanto los estudiantes de EFL como los profesores fueron tomados en el circuito de una manera u otra. Los hallazgos muestran que los factores que causan un aprendizaje deficiente incluyen una menor exposición a las actividades de escucha / habla en la interacción de la vida diaria, menos capacidad de aprendizaje del idioma, edad, conocimientos previos, actitud y motivación. En conclusión, en las aulas faltaban oportunidades para la interacción entre compañeros, faltaban motivaciones, vacilaban en el uso del idioma, carecían de interacción con los maestros en inglés y se comunicaba incorrectamente.

Palabras clave: Adquisición, lengua inglesa, aprendices de inglés como lengua extranjera.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the e-learning system and technological revolution, the English language has developed as the most significant instrument in the world especially for formal communication in the current digital and cyber age paradigm. English has been considered as the global language because the knowledge of the world is generally conserved in

English. Additionally, English is also preferred more in the regions where the native language is considered as significant as their culture. However, when one cogitates on the link language problem, English appears as the language which deals with cross-cultural communication problems. According to sociolinguistics, the early learners are better placed as compared to adult learners because former can learn faster than the latter as most of their learning goes concurrently with physical movements and locomotion. Alshumaimeri (2003) declared that finally learning has been turned into a routine-like and this ultimately causes boredom (Yang et al., 2019).

Some researchers like Martin et al. (1988) claimed that the most important time to acquire a language begins from the age of two and continues till puberty. It is not possible for children below two years to learn due to many maturational issues like cognitive part of the brain would have not been developed so far. In fact, following learning of other languages will become more difficult after puberty due to the loss in cerebral plasticity caused by cerebral dominance which is in a way related to the localization of language function. McKay & Bokhorstheng (2017) mentioned that this practically means that the mind has matured and elasticized both emotionally and physically and is just not getting exposed towards new stuff in the language field.

2. CURRENT STATUS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

According to Fageeh (2011), the educational scenario of Saudi Arabia became more exciting as early as 1959. To begin with, English was taught as a foreign language from grade seven but today, it is taught as early as grade four. With the spelling out of the goals of development in Vision 2030, there is greater consciousness and commitment in the country towards global trends, especially in education. On inspecting the classified job ads, one can clearly see that English is a prerequisite this is true even in the case of medical and engineering fields.

It is the stated goal of the administration to preserve and propagate the Koranic culture and values and subsequent to this, all other goals are subservient to this primary aim. The education system has been immersed deeply into the values of Islam too, in spreading the concepts of Islam and ensuring development as per the precepts of Islam. Having such powerful rooting in the culture, there was natural opposition towards studying a foreign language such as English which could be considered as a threat to the pristinely glorious Islamic culture. Yet, in a masterful stroke, the policymakers encouraged the people to look at the writings over the wall and gain knowledge on English to create a beneficial and better future in the international field. However, it may be noted that the English teachers were usually not given training on linguistics (Adriana & Holanda, 2016; Mendes & Silva, 2018; Haghshenas et al., 2015).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK BASED ON LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of Language Acquisition

In the midst of technological revolution and e-learning systems taking over practically all aspects of human lives, the world is becoming a smaller place, and the value of cooperation and collaboration being realized, the English Language has emerged as one of the world's most important tools of formal communication. Language acquisition has been one of the ideal human traits since non-humans will not interact with the help of language.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study included both ten teachers and forty EFL learners from two Saudi Secondary Schools. This study was inferential as well as descriptive. Therefore, a modified questionnaire was utilized as a measuring tool. The participants were requested to record their perceptions about different facts and possibilities related to the EFL class, curriculum, environment, materials and intangible learning outcomes. The perceptions of the teachers were also included to gain a holistic insight into the problems afflicting the EFL classrooms (Indriastuti, 2019).

The instrument used in this study was EFL learners and teacher's questionnaire and its focus was the perceptions and obstacles

vis-à-vis the EFL classroom. The questions were close-ended and responses were sought on the 5-point Likert scale type. Quantitative results were obtained by applying SPSS followed by Descriptive Statistics to arrive at the standard deviation, frequency, and mean of the collected data for answering the research questions. All results are shown in the following section.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

		Frequency	Percentage
With sisters	Always	2	5.0%
	Mostly	3	7.5%
	Sometimes	20	50.0%
	Very Little	7	17.5%
	Never	8	20.0%
With parents	Always	1	2.5%
	Mostly	1	2.5%
	Sometimes	10	25.0%
	Very Little	5	12.5%
	Never	23	57.5%
With brothers	Always	0	0.0%
	Mostly	1	2.5%
	Sometimes	5	12.5%
	Very Little	12	30.0%
	Never	22	55.0%
Others	Always	0	0.0%
	Mostly	0	0.0%

	Sometimes	2	5.0%
	Very Little	1	2.5%
	Never	37	92.5%

Table 1: Frequency of speaking English at home

Table 1 presents the participants’ frequency of speaking English at home. Findings revealed that they spoke English with sisters only sometimes at 50% and they hesitated to speak with brothers, parents, and others. Graphically:

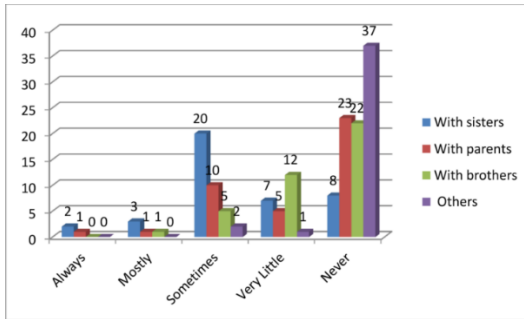


Figure 1: Frequency of speaking English at home

		Frequency	Percentage
With classmates	Always	0	0.0%
	Mostly	5	12.5%
	Sometimes	12	30.0%
	Very Little	8	20.0%
	Never	15	37.5%
With teachers	Always	20	50.0%
	Mostly	5	12.5%
	Sometimes	7	17.5%
	Very Little	8	20.0%

Table 2: Frequency of using English in the classroom

Strongly Agree	2	5.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Agree	3	7.50%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Not Sure	11	27.50%	4	10.00%	2	5.00%	26	65.00%
Disagree	9	22.50%	7	17.50%	5	12.50%	11	27.50%
Strongly Disagree	15	37.50%	29	72.50%	33	82.50%	3	7.50%

Table 4: EFL learners’ perception of the acquisition of English skills

Table 4 presents the EFL learners’ perception of their progress in the acquisition of English skills. As per the findings in the table above, it was noted that 65% of them were not sure about the support of EFL class towards developing innovative strategies; only 2% of them agreed that they felt they were getting the right opportunity to improve their knowledge in EFL classroom. Graphically represented as:

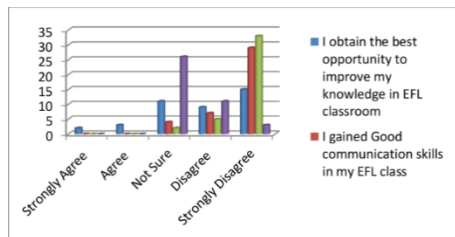


Figure 3: EFL learners perceive the acquisition of English skills

Lesser exposure to listening/speaking activities in my daily life interaction	My language learning ability	My age	My previous knowledge	My attitude and motivation
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	Freque ncy	Percenta ge	Freque ncy	Perce ntage	Fr eque ncy	Perce ntage	Freq uenc y	Perca nta ge	Freq uenc y	Perca nta ge
Stro ngly Agr ee	39	97.50%	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	39	97.5 0%	40	100. 00%
Agr ee	0	0.00%	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %
Not Sure	1	2.50%	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	1	2.50 %	0	0.00 %
Disa gree	0	0.00%	5	12.50 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %
Stro ngly Disa gree	0	0.00%	35	87.50 %	40	100.0 0%	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %

Table 5: Factors that pose a challenge in the acquisition of English language skills

Table 5 highlights the factors that EFL learners felt are the obstacles in the enhancement of English proficiency. 97.5% of them agreed that they had less exposure to listening/speaking activities in their daily life interaction, language learning ability was quoted by 85% of the respondents, age was reported to be a factor by all the respondents (i.e., 100%), previous knowledge by 97.5%, and attitude and motivation by 100%. To demonstrate graphically:

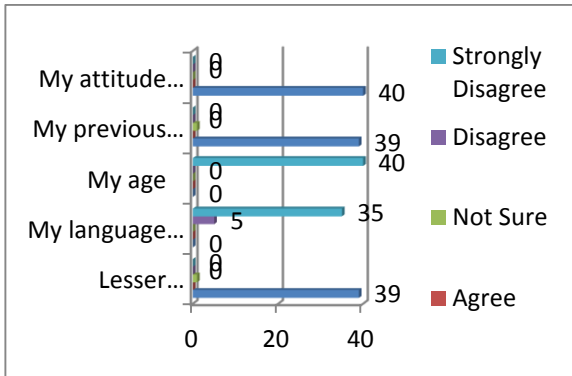


Figure 4: Factors that pose a challenge in the acquisition of English language skills

	I think EFL learners obtained much knowledge in EFL classrooms		EFL learners pick up good communication and professional skills		My learners obtained good entrepreneurial skills		Learners acquire leadership skills in EFL classrooms	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Agree	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Not Sure	8	80.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Disagree	1	10.00%	4	40.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Strongly Disagree	1	10.00%	6	60.00%	10	100.00%	10	100.00%

Table 6: Perception of teachers towards EFL learner’s progress in English

Frequency analysis was carried out on the teachers’ responses and it was noted that 80% of them are not sure about EFL learners’ obtaining much knowledge in the EFL classrooms, 60% of teachers strongly disagreed with the statement that EFL learners picked up good communication and professional skills in the class, 100% of respondents disagreed that their learners obtained good entrepreneurial skills as well as any leadership skills in the EFL classrooms.

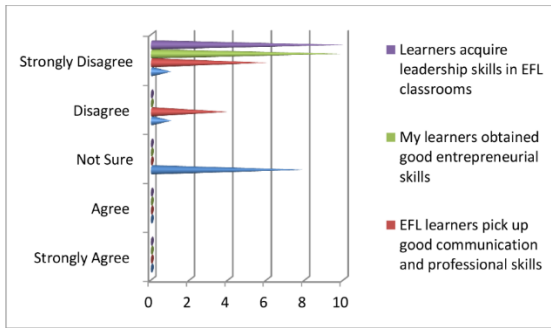


Figure 5: Perception of teachers towards EFL learner's progress

	Failure to interact with others frequently in the classroom		Lack of motivation		Hesitation in language use		Lack of interaction with teachers in English		Improper communication	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	80.00%	10	100.00%	10	100.00%	9	90.00%	10	100.00%
Agree	1	10.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	10.00%	0	0.00%
Not Sure	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Disagree	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Strongly Disagree	1	10.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

Table 7: Perception of teachers towards obstacles for students in learning English skills

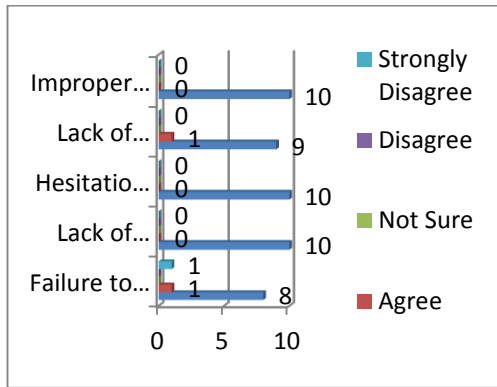


Figure 6: Perception of teachers towards obstacles for students in learning English skills

Teacher’s perception of obstacles for students in learning English skills is recorded in the above table. As per the table, it is clear that 80% of teachers strongly agree that the students are unable to interact with others frequently in classroom, they face a lack of motivation (100%), they hesitate in language use (100%), and there is poor interaction with teachers in English (90%) and improper communication (100%).

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The afflictions of the EFL classroom in Saudi Secondary Schools are many. But innovation and keeping a tab on learners’ thought process can bring about a turnaround in the dismal situation. The teacher must support the EFL learners through facilitating

activities and ensure greater inclusion of group communication. The environment should be favorable for learning like giving positive support by appreciation and honest but polite feedback. The government must make sure that sufficient resources like appropriate textbooks are available and must support higher education for English teachers for language development.

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