

Investigating the factors that cause the deterioration of the students' performance in English language

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the reasons of deterioration of Saudi secondary school students in spoken English. Moreover, it measures the training of the teachers in Afif area and the training of students speaking outside classroom. The study followed the descriptive analytic approach. Findings of the study show that, there is no adequate training for the language teachers and the students do not participate in the activities of the book also the efforts for developing the students are limited. They practice speaking only in the classroom. The study recommends that teachers of English should receive progressive training in teaching listening and speaking. English should be considered as a main subject which affects students' progress in the education system. Speaking skill should be taught and assessed equally to other skills. Listening skill should be taught and assessed equally to other skills. Future studies are suggested to focus on investigating the problems of implementing the communication skills methods in English language classes in terms of different levels of students, suitable materials and aids.

Key words: Saudi secondary school students, English skills, teaching English

INTRODUCTION:

English language is going to be a tool of communication to other countries. Nowadays, no matter how fast the country

progresses in science and technology, how to have students and teachers be aware of using and understanding action research procedures in their language learning and teaching are still significant for Saudi education development. Although, students had serious problems about speaking in English, having negative attitudes and bad experience in language learning, they were most interested in improving speaking skills according to data obtained from a minor in investigating in the first day of the first semester (2017). Preliminary data of students' learning requirements in English of third year Secondary schools (5 secondary schools for girls in Afif / KSA).

Statement of the problem:

The deterioration of the students' performance in English in general education is a very serious issue. Many factors have contributed to this problem. Many factors have contributed to this problem.

At the end of the academic year, and sometime after the Secondary School Certificate Examinations, a conference is held in which the (Minister of Education announces the results of the candidates' performance. In such conferences, the Minister usually expresses both his pleasure and satisfaction concerning the results in most school subjects, except mathematics, Arabic and English. Usually, during these conferences, heated discussions by journalists prevail, but they do not lead to anything. Then, in the Ministry of Education Headquarters, conferences, panel meetings and seminars are conducted to look into the reasons leading to the deterioration of the standard of the English language. The participants always come up with the same reasons and the same recommendations to remedy the problem. But all these efforts were in vain, and no actions have been taken afterwards.

Hypotheses of the Study

- 1- Many factors played different roles in deterioration of the students' performance in English language.
- 2- There were no serious actions taken to overcome the students' deterioration in English language learning.

Questions of the study

- 1- What causes the deterioration of the students' performance in English language?
- 2- Are there any solution to overcome the students' deterioration in English language?

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

- 1- Investigate the factors that cause the deterioration of the students' performance in English language.
- 2- Evaluate the actions taken to overcome the students' deterioration in English language learning.

Significance of the Study

Hopefully, this thesis will be an attempt by which both practicing and potential language teachers of general education at Saudi secondary schools.

Furthermore, it is hoped that the insights, which have been gained from attempting to deal with issues relevant to the subject.

Limits of the Study

The researcher is going to deal mainly with the situation at the secondary level. Thus, the concentration will be on the English language performance of secondary school students in communication skills at Afif State. (Julie/2016)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students won't talk or say anything one way to tackle this problem is to find the root of the problem and start from there. If the problem is cultural, that is in your culture it is unusual for students to talk out loud in class, or if students feel really shy about talking in front of other students then one way to go about breaking this cultural barrier is to create and establish your own classroom culture where speaking out loud in English is the norm. One way to do this is to distinguish your classroom from other classrooms in your school by arranging the classroom desks differently, in groups instead of lines or by decorating the walls in English language and culture posters. From day one teach your students classroom language and keep on teaching it and encourage your students to ask for things and to ask questions in English. Giving positive feedback also helps to encourage and relax shy students to speak more. Another way to get students motivated to speak more is to allocate a percentage of their final grade to speaking skills and let the students know they are being assessed continually on their speaking practice in class throughout the term.

A completely different reason for student silence may simply be that the class activities are boring or are pitched at the wrong level. Very often our interesting communicative speaking activities are not quite as interesting or as communicative as we think they are and all the students are really required to do is answer 'yes' or 'no' which they do quickly and then just sit in silence or worse talking noisily in their L1. So maybe you need to take a closer look at the type of speaking activities you are using and see if they really capture student interest and create a real need for communication.

Another way to encourage your students to speak in English is simply to speak in English yourself as much as possible in class. If you are shy about speaking in English, how can you expect your students to overcome their fears about

speaking English? Don't worry if you are not completely fluent or don't have that elusive perfect native accent, as Swain (1985) wrote "We learn to speak by speaking" and that goes for teachers as well as students. The more you practice the more you will improve your own oral skills as well as help your students improve theirs.

When students work in pairs or groups they just end up chatting in their own language.

Is the activity or task pitched at the right level for the students?

Make sure you give the students all the tools and language they need to be able to complete the task. If the language is pitched too high they may revert to their L1, likewise if the task is too easy they may get bored and revert to their L1. Also, be aware of the fact that some students especially beginners, will often use their L1 as an emotional support at first, translating everything word for word to check they have understood the task before attempting to speak. In the case of these students simply be patient as most likely once their confidence grows in using English their dependence on using their L1 will begin to disappear.

Are all the students actively involved and is the activity interesting? If students do not have something to say or do, or don't feel the need to speak, you can be sure it won't be long before they are chatting away in their L1.

Was the timing of the activity good? The timing of a speaking activity in a class can be crucial sometimes. How many teachers have discovered that their speaking activity ended up as a continuation of the students break-time gossip conducted in the L1? After break-time, why not try giving students an activity to calm them down and make them focus before attempting speaking activities that involve groups or pair work. Another way to discourage students speaking in their L1 is to walk around the classroom monitoring their participation and giving support and help to students as they

need it. If certain students persist in speaking in the L1 then perhaps you should ask them to stay behind after class and speak to them individually and explain to them the importance of speaking English and ask them why they don't feel comfortable speaking in English in the class. Maybe they just need some extra reassurance or they don't like working with certain students or there is some other problem that you can help them to resolve.

When all the students speak together it gets too noisy and out of hand and teacher loses control of the classroom.

First of all separate the two points a noisy classroom and an out-of-control classroom. A classroom full of students talking and interacting in English, even if it is noisy, is exactly what teacher wants. Maybe teacher just feels like any one losing control because the class is suddenly student centered and not teacher centered. This is an important issue to consider. Learner-centered classrooms where learners do the talking in groups and learners have to take responsibility for using communicative resources to complete a task are shown to be more conducive to language learning than teacher-centered classes (Long & Richards 1987). Nevertheless, many classrooms all over the world continue to be teacher centered, so the question teacher has to ask himself is, how learner centered is his/her classroom?

One way to take this problem is to find the root of the problem and start from there. If the problem is cultural, that is in your culture it is unusual for students to talk out loud in class, or if students feel really shy about talking in front of other students then one way to go about breaking this cultural barrier is to create and establish your own classroom culture where speaking out loud in English is the norm. One way to do this is to distinguish your classroom from other classrooms in your school by arranging the classroom desks differently, in groups instead of lines. Or by decorating the walls in English language and culture posters. From day one teach your

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When students work in pairs or groups they just end up chatting in their own language.

METHODOLOGY

This study mainly depends on the pre-test, post-test in the process of data collection. For many true experimental designs,

pre-test and post-test designs are the preferred method to compare participant groups and measure the degree of change occurring as a result of treatments or interventions.

Subject

The total number of students in the secondary schools of Afif (girls) in Academic year (2016 – 2017) is 200 students, but 70 students withdrew and 30 students failed the first semester. Sampling procedure, 45 students are randomly selected as the sample for this study from the 175 students who passed the first semester and transferred to the second term.

Tool

The pre-test is a set of questions given to participants before the student begins in order to determine their knowledge level of the course content. After the completion of the course, participants are given a post-test to answer the same set of questions, or a set of questions of comparable difficulty. Comparing participants' post-test scores to their pre-test scores enables researchers to check whether the student was successful in increasing participant knowledge of the book content. In addition, a well-designed pre- and posttest can help trainers understand which concepts or competencies were well taught during the teaching and which ones need additional time, or need to be covered using alternative methods.

Test for this study is divided to three main question. The total mark of the test is 15. Oral test organized to measure four: the students' fluency, confidence, Pronunciation, and accuracy.

Procedure

The pretest will be administered to the selected sample at the beginning of the third week in the first semester. Students will be located in three classes with 15 students. Test time is half an hour, but students will have the option to leave whenever they finish. Exam grads will be gathered, and saved by the

researcher to be analyzed along with post-test after being implemented at the end of the semester.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses and presents the analysis and interpretation for the data and test of the results against the hypotheses, questions and objectives of the study. Data analysis and interpretation will be organized according to the configuration of the instruments implementation as stated in chapter three.

Results of the test:

Pre-test/post-test evaluation is one of two assessment tools that is strongly recommended for use by faculty because it is a concise and effective direct evaluation that brings about reasonable dialogue to improve student learning.

Pre- and post-tests are used to measure knowledge gained by participating in a book course. The pre-test is a set of questions given to participants before the student begins in order to determine their knowledge level of the course content. After the completion of the course, participants are given a post-test to answer the same set of questions, or a set of questions of comparable difficulty. Comparing participants' post-test scores to their pre-test scores enables researchers to check whether the student was successful in increasing participant knowledge of the book content orally.

The designed test for this study is divided in to three main items. The total mark of the test is 15. Oral test organized to test four major assessment .first one fluency, second is confidence, third Pronunciation , fourth accuracy.

Table (4-20) Descriptive analysis for pre-and post-test

No	Strategies	Pre		Post	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Fluency	1,511	,626	1,556	,6930
2	Pronunciation	1,600	,751	1,756	,570
3	Confidence	1,889	,682	2,156	,706
4	Accuracy	1,733	,837	1,956	,903

Table (4-20) shows that there is a remarkable difference in the performance of the students in the post-test. In fluency, the mean was 1.511 in the pre-test while in the post-test it was 1.556. In Pronunciation, the mean was 1,600 in the pre-test but in the post-test the mean went up to 1,756. In Confidence, the mean was 1,889 while in the post-test it was 2,156. Accuracy strategies in the pre-test which the mean was 1.733 compared to 1.956 in the pre-test.

Table no.(4-21):Different between pre & post

Test	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-value	P-value
Pre	6,667	2,620	,933	0.356
Post	7,229	2,820		

From above table, it is clear that:

The P-value of T-test (0.356) is greater than significant level (0.05) that mean there is non- statistical difference between pre- test and post -test .

4-4-1-1: The PRE- TEST of the First class

4-6-1-1 Calculating Stability coefficient by split half

Table (4-22) Shows the correlation for the 1st class questions

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix PRE- TEST					
Strategies	Fluency First class	Pronunciation First class	Confidence First class	Accuracy First class	All First class
Fluency First class	1	0.617	0.395	0.856	0.889
Pronunciation First class	0.617	1	0.296	0.452	0.818
Confidence First class	0.395	0.296	1	0.268	0.582
Accuracy First class	0.856	0.452	0.268	1	0.802
All First class	0.889	0.818	0.582	0.802	1

The average correlation coefficient for the first class is 0.81

$$\text{Reliability Coefficient} = \frac{2r}{1+r}$$

$$\text{Reliability Coefficient} = \frac{2 \times 0.81}{1 + 0.81} = 0.89$$

This is an acceptable and statistically significant stability coefficient

4-4-1-2 Calculating Stability coefficient by alpha Cronbach

Table (4-23) Shows the correlation for the 1st class questions

Item-Total Statistics PRE- TEST					
Strategies	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Fluency First class	12.7333	13.638	0.87	0.895	0.742
Pronunciation First class	12.6667	15.952	0.71	0.958	0.798
Confidence First class	13.0667	16.638	0.485	0.893	0.83
Accuracy First class	13	15.286	0.757	0.943	0.783
All First class	7.2	5.6	0.985	0.991	0.791

Reliability Statistics PRE- TEST		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
0.825	0.881	4

The average correlation Alpha coefficient for the first class is 0.825

We note from these results that the value of the Alpha stability coefficient is 0.825, which is an acceptable stability coefficient. This is an acceptable and statistically significant stability coefficient

The column (Correlated item - total Correlation). The coefficient of discrimination for each paragraph of the questions is positive and strong, indicating the internal consistency in the study questions.

Second Class:

4-4-1-3 Calculating Stability coefficient by split half

Table (4-24) Shows the correlation for the 2nd class questions

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix PRE- TEST					
Strategies	Fluency Second class	Pronunciation Second class	Confidence Second class	Accuracy Second class	All Second class
Fluency Second class	1	1	0.683	0.609	0.897
Pronunciation Second class	1	1	0.683	0.609	0.897
Confidence Second class	0.683	0.683	1	0.456	0.866
Accuracy Second class	0.609	0.609	0.456	1	0.739
All Second class	0.897	0.897	0.866	0.739	1

The average correlation coefficient for the second class is 0.88

$$\frac{2 \times 0.88}{1 + 0.88}$$

This is an acceptable and statistically significant stability coefficient

4-4-1-4 Calculating Stability coefficient by alpha Cronbach

Table (4-25) Shows the correlation for the 2nd class questions

Item-Total Statistics PRE- TEST					
Strategies	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Fluency Second class	12.6	19.114	0.906	0	0.81
Pronunciation Second class	12.6	19.114	0.906	0	0.81
Confidence Second class	12.4667	21.124	0.783	0	0.844
Accuracy Second class	12.7333	20.924	0.682	0	0.85
All Second class	7.2	8.029	0.974	0	0.894

Reliability Statistics PRE- TEST		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
0.864	0.936	4

The average correlation coefficient for the second class is = 0.86 .

The column (Corrected item- total Correlation) shows the coefficient of distinction factors for each paragraph of the questions is positive and strong, indicating the internal consistency in the study questions.

Third Class

4-4-1-5 Calculating Stability coefficient by split half

Table (4-26) Shows the correlation for the 3rd class questions

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix PRE- TEST					
	Fluency Third class	Pronunciation Third class	Confidence Third class	Accuracy Third class	All Third class
Fluency Third class	1	0.801	0.681	0.919	0.91
Pronunciation Third class	0.801	1	0.428	0.693	0.902
Confidence Third class	0.681	0.428	1	0.853	0.77
Accuracy Third class	0.919	0.693	0.853	1	0.917
All Third class	0.91	0.902	0.77	0.917	1

The average correlation coefficient for the third class is 0.89

$$\text{Reliability coefficient} = \frac{2 \times 0.89}{1 + 0.89} = 0.94$$

This is an acceptable and statistically significant stability coefficient

4-4-1-6 Calculating Stability coefficient by alpha Cornbrash

Table (4-25) Shows the correlation for the 3rd class questions

Item-Total Statistics PRE- TEST					
Strategies	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Fluency Third class	10.9333	15.638	0.911	0	0.777
Pronunciati on Third class	10.6667	16.381	0.819	0	0.798
Confidence Third class	10.8667	16.552	0.734	0	0.808
Accuracy Third class	11.0667	17.495	0.933	0	0.812
All Third class	6.0667	5.638	0.981	0	0.899

Reliability Statistics PRE- TEST				
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Standardized Items	Based on	on	N of Items
0.839	0.949			5

The average correlation Alpha coefficient for the third class 0.83

The column (Corrected item- total Correlation) shows the coefficient of distinction factors for each paragraph of the questions is positive and strong, indicating the internal consistency in the study questions.

Table no.(4-27):Different between pre & post

Test	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-value	P-value
Pre	6,667	2,620	,933	0.356
Post	7,229	2,820		

From above table, it is clear that:

The P-value of T-test (0.356) is greater than significant level (0.05) that mean there is non-statistical difference between pre-test and post- test .

Table no.(4.28): Different between pre & post in strategies

Strategies	Test	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-value	P-value
Fluency	Pre	1,773	,494	1,6666-	,110
	Post	1,666	,761		
Pronunciation	Pre	1,583	,775	1,229-	,207
	Post	1,883	,637		
Confidence	Pre	1,833	,701	1,881-	,073
	Post	2,166	,701		
Accuracy	Pre	1,541	,779	2,298-	,20
	Post	2,,8	,82		

From above table, it is clear that:

1. The P-value of T-test (0.110) is greater than significant level (0.05) that mean there is no statistical difference between pre-test and post- test in fluency.

2. The P-value of T-test (0.207) is greater than significant level (0.05) that mean there is no statistical difference between pre-test and post -test in Pronunciation.

3. The P-value of T-test (0.073) is greater than significant level (0.05) that mean there is no statistical difference between pre-test and post- test in Confidence.

4. The P-value of T-test (0.020) is less than significant level (0.05) that mean there is statistical difference between pre- test and post- test in accuracy for post.

From above results, the researcher thinks that the hypothesis that states is fulfilled.

Conclusion

Results of the analyzed data show that there was no improvement in the students' performance in the speaking skill after the implementation of the instruction plan what indicates that teaching communication (listening & speaking) was not properly applied among the classes in terms of activities and assessment.

Recommendations

- English should be considered as a main subject which effects students' progress in the education system.
- Speaking skill should be taught and assessed equally to other skills.

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