The Significance of an English Foundation Course at the Kuwait International College of Law, (KiLaw) in Kuwait

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Abstract

Since the researcher of this paper is a counselor for the English Unit of Kuwait International College of Law (KiLaw), which is entirely specialized in law and legal studies, his pivotal focus through this paper is to analyze a worrying problem that he noticed with regard to the outcome of the English papers at this college. The researcher pokes into the reasons beyond the wide chasm between the high outcome of students> achievement in English in the high school and the stumbling results they attain in the English subjects exams at the said college. The researcher demonstrates a host of factors that lie beyond the students> weakness in English, which stymie their academic progress. For remedying this problem, the researcher recommends an English foundation course that fresh students should join before commencing their academic study. The goal of this course – the researcher claims – is to prepare the students to pursue their study of the English papers without retard.

A foreign language can be quite difficult to master especially for learners who are living in their mother country. However, students are expected to have certain knowledge in English language to be able to continue their studies and communicate easily in their personal and professional life. Unfortunately, most of today's students do not seem to reach the level required due to some reasons that the researcher intends to discuss in this paper. In addition to that, the researcher will investigate another issue, which is the retardation of high school students in passing English papers exams when joining the university although they have already passed English exams of the high school certificate appropriately. The pivotal focus of this paper is to analyze the reasons beyond the wide chasm between the high outcome

of students> achievement in English in high school and the low results students could attain in the English subjects exams at the university.

Introduction

A foreign language can be quite difficult to master especially for learners who are living in their mother country. However, students are expected to have certain knowledge in English language to be able to continue their studies and communicate easily in their personal and professional life. Unfortunately, most of today's students do not seem to reach the level required due to some reasons that the researcher intends to discuss in this paper. In addition to that, the researcher will investigate another issue, which is the retardation of high school students in passing English papers exams when joining the university although they have already passed English exams of the high school certificate appropriately. The pivotal focus of this paper is to analyze the reasons beyond the wide chasm between the high outcome of students> achievement in English in high school and the low results students could attain in the English subjects exams at the university. The researcher believes that one of the most evident causes that entail weakness in English among Kuwaiti students is their lack of will and awareness. They often think that there is no point in learning another language, so they do not exert any effort in it. Some of them may give it some attention but they succumb eventually because of the hard work and practice that studying English demands. There are also indolent students who just prepare to pass the exam. Therefore, they seldom remember anything after the exam, Cooper, N.(2003). So, this is one of the reasons that hinders those students particularly of the state high school students from passing the English subjects at the university. However, the researcher thinks that sometimes the students are not the only ones to blame. There are some instructors who are not well qualified and do not really know what they are do-

ing. Teaching is not an easy job that anyone can do. The lagging in English is attributed to some incompetent inexperienced, unqualified or unskilled teachers. Some of them are not familiar with the different techniques and methods of teaching. Others cannot manage a class properly. Consequently, students have difficulties to absorb the information and may lose interest in the subject. In the last case, some linguists claim that neither the students, nor the teachers are guilty. The books and learning resources used can seriously affect the performance of students. Hence, the outcome in English exams will not be as satisfying as when the environment of the learner involves a wide range of didactic resources.

Goal of the study

It has been generally well-known that most students face some problems in learning English as a second or foreign language in non-English speaking countries. Kuwait's state schools students are no exception. This paper intends to explore students' weakness towards English language learning as a foreign language although they pass the high school certificate's exams including the English paper, successfully. For that purpose, the researcher proposes a foundation course in legal English at KiLawcollege that fresh students should take prior to proceeding with their academic studies.

Problem of the study

The problem of this paper concentrates on tracing the reasons that impact on the poor English performance of the Kuwaiti state schools students when they pursue their study at KiLaw.

Data were drawn from the question "Why do the Kuwaiti students encounter problems with the English subjects at KiLaw?" This question was administered through a questionnaire designed by the researcher to a specimen of 100 students from different years of study at the college. Based on the findings of the survey, the responses agreed on four main causes of weakness in English. First, the majority of students stated that the English teachers at the secondary schooling stage are not well-trained; for instance, they use the Arabic language when teaching, so they cannot perform well to attract the interest of the students. Secondly, students lack English foundation background in the skills of English learning. Third, students lack confidence to use English because they feel afraid and shy of making mistakes. Fourth, the curriculum is inappropriate for helping students to improve their English proficiency. Finally, yet importantly, English language is not difficult to learn when students are well-motivated, and encouraged to be involved in new learning strategies. Furthermore, students do not practice speaking English with English native speakers, and class environment does not correlate with the teaching pedagogical procedures.

Method of the study

For the purpose of this study, the researcher followed the qualitative methods involving a questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observation at KiLAW college, and at 10-selected high schools for boys and girls, were deployed. The questionnaire consisted of 35 items of 5-point Likert scale (For example, each student was asked to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with statements. In addition to that, tables, charts and figures have been used to illustrate the findings.

Questions of the study

This paper is intended to give reasonable responses to crucial questions related to reasons behind the low performance of the KiLAW college students in English papers although they have passed the English subjects during their secondary stage of study.

Discussion

Like other Arab students, the KiLaw learners face problems in both English speaking and writing. Many Arab linguists have confirmed this notion. The Kuwaiti students, for example, learn English in their homeland, where their native language is Arabic. The only way to learn English in Kuwait is through classical didactic and memorization instructing. Thus, there is a little chance to acquire English through natural interaction in the target language, Candilon, F.K. (2004). This is only possible when students meet native speakers of English in Kuwait, or when they visit Britain or America. And this is not available very often, to all students.

To shed light on the problems that the KiLaw college students encounter in their study of the English subjects, the researcher could – through the specimen- spot lexical, syntactical and phonological mistakes which the KiLaw students commit. The most common linguistic areas in which the KiLaw students make errors are in the writing and speaking skills. This can be attributed to:

1- Accumulated weakness started from early stages of schooling.

2- Lack of sufficient practice.

3- Poor performance of some unqualified teachers which is negatively reflected on the competence of students in the English

paper. One low-level teacher may produce at average 25 students weak in English.

4- Reluctance of some students to learn English.

5- Curriculum components are not appropriately-pedagogically designed.

6- Much focus on communication at the expense of the writing and reading skills.

7- Shortage of homework, assignment and tasks.

8- Ignorance of family members in English leaves the student unaided at home.

9- Insufficient follow up by the teacher leading to encourage indifference and idleness from the student.

10- Interest and time devoted for studying the English paper is not enough.
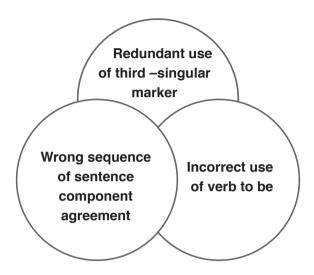
Pedagogically, there are definite purposes set for the teaching of English at the secondary stage in Kuwait. Among these, students are expected to write English texts, grammatically correct, properly punctuated and coherently organized. In addition, students should be able to understand and communicate using various forms of syntax, semantics as well as different lingual functions, Ben, M. (2011). Accordingly, the Kuwaiti secondary school graduates will not be able to develop native–like facility in English, which helps them to communicate spontaneously, effectively and confidently about a broad range of topics. However, the results of the students in the English papers exams at the KiLawcollege have shown depressed outcome. Most of the students stumble in the subject, and those who pass the paper -in most cases- obtain humble success grades although they passed the high school

certificates exams including the English paper with an average that meets the admission requirements of KiLaw, KiLaw, Exams Board (2013). The researcher argues that the English language department at KiLaw accepts most high school graduates either on the base of their total credits without taking into consideration their actual proficiency level in English language, and whether or not they will be able to pursue their study in this domain. Accordingly, the outcome will not certainly be up to the suitable standard that enables the graduates to experience a healthy ability of English at the stages of their career life. This case will surely be badly reflected on the level of students when they join KiLawcollege.

Types of errors

The papers' specimen demonstrated major syntactic errors in the verb phrase and the noun phrase errors in essay writing exams. Furthermore, the researcher spotted out main forms of errors in the use of phrasal verbs, verb formation, verb tense and subject-verb agreement. From the verb tense, the researcher sorted out five types of errors in:

a. Tense substitution
b. Tense marker
c. Tense sequence
d. Omission task
e. Confusion in the use of the perfect mood

The researcher, too, identified three types of subject-verb agreement errors. They are listed in the following figure.

Redundant use of third –singular marker

Wrong sequence of sentence component agreement

Incorrect use of verb to be

Weak points in the students' level of English paper

The KiLAW college students encounter certain difficulties connected to pronunciation. Some of these problems are found in stress, others are linked to intonation. However, most of these obstacles can be referred to the variances in pronunciation of sounds between English and Arabic. Smooth and correct communication in the target language is another hindrance that KiLAW learners of English meet in their study. This may be referred to as the methods of the English language teaching in the previous schooling stages, the learning Arabic atmosphere, in addition to the lack of constant practice of using English. Nafez, S. (2012). When engaged in authentic communicative situations, the researcher noticed that students often lack the necessary tools to express their intent clearly simply because they translate what they tend to utter from Arabic into English without letting the

speech flow spontaneously, and due to their lack of the language content. As a result, they cannot maintain extended span of inter-action and communication.

This situation indicates that just a few of the Kuwaiti high school graduates are qualified for admission into the freshmen program of the English language department at Kuwait Universi-ty had they the desire to join it. The weakness of KiLAW students is referred to various reasons:

a. Lack of competence in English on the part of school graduates when they join the university.

b. The English language curricula.

c. The teaching methodology.

d. Lack of the target language environment.

e. The learners' motivation.

The researcher classified the problems that KiLAW learners of English face into two types:

1- Students perpetrate some basic and frustrating flaws and mis-takes in pronunciation, spelling, morphology and syntax.

2- Students are unable to express themselves smoothly and comfortably either when dealing with academic topics or com-mon everyday English.

The researcher claims that the KiLAW students' major difficul-ty emerges from the fact that they cannot employ lawful English correctly and appropriately neither in the classroom nor outside it when they are required to do so. This affirms that the difficulty is connected to the students' deficiencies in communicative pro-ficiency and in self-expression. Harris, F. (2009). The researcher,

too, attributed the students' failure in using English as a tool of self-expression to achieve their communicative goals to the study plans and methods of teaching.
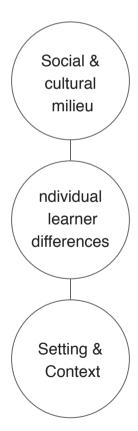
He argued that the constant discontent with the performance of the Kuwaiti students in English courses in early study stages suggests a lack of fundamental criteria in syllabi design, testing, oral communication skills, and the development of productive skills at the university level. The researcher examined the curricula of the English subject of the secondary stage of the state schools in Kuwait. He concluded that the curricula were elaborately tailored, but he noticed instability in the teaching methodology, testing, and evaluation procedures. He also noticed imbalance in such sort of state which is badly reflected on the level of students in English. Furthermore, there is an imbalance between language and linguistics in the curriculum where the language component particularly appears the weakest. The language component typically includes two branches; in communication skills and in writing. John, C. (2010). In fact, the curriculum designers suppose that the fresh incoming students are proficient in the language and that they do not need any further language training. This assumption practically proved to be unauthentic when considering the results of the college students in the English paper exams. Furthermore, most of the courses at KiLawcollege are taught in Arabic. The portion of the English credit is an independent paper of general English content taught over one academic semester. Naturally, this short period of English teaching would not be sufficient to enable the graduates to master the target language and to communicate freely and effectively. They are thus likely to face some obstacles in their performance, especially in the lawful language. Therefore, the weakness of the

students in English in KiLAW college cannot be attributed to accumulative weakness piled over through the pre-university years of study. The researcher speculates that it would be even more effective if this is the case in high schools and in KiLAW college, to use English in teaching all the credits at university level except for the Arabic language paper. This would certainly improve the students' linguistic ability, which would in turn, improve their communicative competence. MacIntyre, P.D. (1998). The lack of knowledge on the part of the incoming English majors could be another reason for retardation in English. Hence, it can be safely generalized that the linguistic competence of the high school incoming student and, for that matter, even the graduate from the KiLaw cannot be assessed as an acceptable Standard English. The researcher claims that the most remarkable problems, which impede the progress of the Kuwaiti KiLAW college students, may be construed as inadequate mastery of the four language skills; namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. This supports the researcher's claim that English language instructors should have solid knowledge in language and methodology because the major difficulty that impedes KiLAW college students is that they find it is not easy to communicate in the target language. This cannot only be referred to as mother tongue interference, but also to a lot more related to the teaching/learning process as a whole. Gardener, R.C. (2001).

Pedagogically, the mastery of English depends on practicing and repeating the patterns produced by a native speaker of the foreign language. It is the most economical way of thoroughly learning a language. When students have such a control of the essentials of a language, they can automatically produce the usual patterns of that language almost correctly. Wynne, L. (2011).

In order to use English language smoothly, college students should be involved in real-life situations. Unfortunately, in Kuwait, English is used only as an academic subject taught in a school or at the university. Without practice, English or any other language cannot be acquired. College graduates do not have enough practice in English; they use Arabic most of the time even after becoming English language users. They only deploy English when they encounter a situation where they are bound to use English as a medium of communication, although practice is very important for mastering any language. Therefore, the conclusion is that most speaking time of graduates is in Arabic. As a result, this would result in weak outcome, and the cycle is repeated generation after generation.

The researcher stresses the importance of using the target language in language teaching. Most of high school English paper teachers in Kuwait use Arabic to teach difficult words. Vocabulary items are still taught in isolation, though the Communicative Language Teaching approach focuses on the importance of teaching vocabulary items in context. Verkin, G. (2011). The majority of school teachers do not address listening materials. Instead, they just read dialogues to their students who should do the exercises while listening to their teachers. Ofcourse, this method does not provide the learners with the necessary native speaker model. This also deviates students' attention and makes the lesson dull and boring. Dialogues are designed to be read by two or three partners, not by the teacher alone, who would read role A and role B with the same voice and intonation. Thisis probably due to the effect of the audio-lingual method, which most teachers are influenced by, and used to it when they were students. Baldin, C.T. (2009). The adopted methodology in teaching English

currently in Kuwait, is claimed to be eclectic which concentrates on communicative approaches to language teaching because teachers' practices in the classroom are more likely a grammar translation method. The researcher believes that shortage of the target language exposure as spoken by its native speakers during the high schooling stage could be a reason behind the KiLAW college students' weakness in English communication. The absence of exposure to the target language would certainly lead to weakness in acquiring the target language particularly in the domains of intonation and stress. Linguistically, there are static facts about second language learning. They are shown in the following figure.

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        │ Social & │
        │ cultural │
        │  milieu  │
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        │ Setting &│
        │  Context │
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Motivation

Motivation engages a significant role in promoting and developing the students' communicative proficiency. Raymond, Y. (2010).Language experts categorize motivations to learn a foreign language in three types:
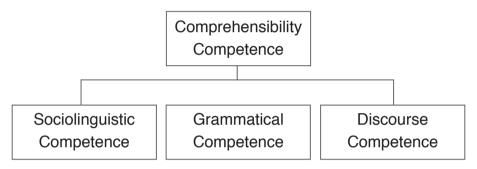
a. The transformational

b Integrative

c. Personal

Yet, the researcher believes that one essential factor in second-language learning is four personal variances:

i. Cleverness

ii. Aptitude of learning

iii. Situational adaptability

iv. Eagerness to learn

Attitudinal studies conducted on Kuwaiti students have consistently demonstrated that they are instrumentally motivated to learn English and are well aware of the utility of knowing English especially in the well-off environment they are living in. This means that the main stimulus for learning English is instrumental, i.e. to realize an aim , e.g. a career. Adkina, A. &Macferson, I. (1999).It is true that some Kuwaiti students are interactively motivated, but they constitute a minority. According to the researcher, students with integrative motivation have a genuine interest in the target speech community, which they are longing to become a members of.

Communication strategies

In fact, the ultimate goal of English language teaching is to develop the students' communicative competence, which will enable them to communicate successfully in the real world. Dunkin, F. (2011). Communicating successfully refers to conveying a comprehensible message to the listener. According to many linguists, communication strategies comprise of:

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │ Comprehensibility│
                    │   Competence    │
                    └─────────────────┘
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┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
│ Sociolinguistic│  │  Grammatical │  │  Discourse   │
│  Competence   │  │  Competence  │  │  Competence  │
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The communication strategies refer to the individual's ability to use communication components, e.g. paraphrase, circumlocution, literal translation, lexical approximation, and mime, to float their message across, and to compensate for a limited or imperfect knowledge of rules or the interference of physical factors such as fatigue, distraction or inattention. Osmond, C. (2002). Other experts believe that communication strategies include the ability to select an effective means of performing a communicative act. Strategic competence is measured, not by rate of correctness, but rather by degree of understandability, or effectiveness. Other linguists think that communication strategies are the techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language. In short the ultimate aim after using communication strategies is to achieve a communicative goal. Rodd, L. (2000).

College students most often deploy communication strategies spontaneously although mistakenly, sometimes to adapt themselves to the problems they meet while trying to use a foreign or a second language. John, C. (2010). They attempt to solve communication obstacles when they are short of adequate proficiency in the target language. This case exists even in first languages. Sometimes there are words that we do not know in our native language, so we try to convey the meaning to the listener by means of paraphrase, description and gesture, verbal and non-verbal. Actually, one of the most widely used strategies is the literal translation. Instructors of English always advise their students to think in English when they write or speak. Despite this- the researcher noticed- that KiLAW college students still translate literally from Arabic into English. He suggests that the only way to minimize the use of this strategy is by correction and explanation. Students should therefore be corrected when they make such errors. The researcher believes   that this technique would make students aware of such errors so that they can avoid them in future communicative situations. Creating a good English learning environment will help students to acquire English easily which will, in turn, help them to shun using such a communication strategy. Fernando, S. (2005). Notwithstanding, literal translation can be a very useful way in realizing the communicative goal, and may only fail in few cases in conveying a message that is clear and comprehensible. Hence, these techniques may be recommended when no other means are available to the learners.

There is a necessity of raising the college students' awareness of the nature and communicative potential of the communication strategies by making them conscious of those saved in their rep-

ertoire, and mold them to the appropriate situations. Hudson, G. (2000). The instructors' role is then, to rehabilitate their students and direct their attention to these strategies. The researcher strongly advises students to take the risk and use their available capacity of communication strategies without fearing of making mistakes.

Nurturing some communication strategies is necessary for the following reasons:

1. Communication strategies enable learning by eliciting unknown language items uttered by the interlocutor.

2. The employment of communication strategies is not a clue to communication weakness; on the opposite, they may be very beneficial in making up for the lack of linguistic knowledge.

3. Communication strategies form important constituents of language use even to native speakers in order to keep the conversation flowing.

KiLAW college students should therefore be aware of these strategies and grasp their significance. English language low achievers have to exert effort to acquiring them. Making usage of language is easier, and it helps them surpass their communication problems, in particular. Doris, T. (2000). As a rule to be a good speaker, learners should be good listeners. Because, careful listening also helps improve pronunciation and manifests how communicative language expresses meaning.

Listening to real-life situations is an excellent way to expose students to the different ways in which things can be said, which will help them in their attempts to express themselves. The more the student is exposed to the target language, the faster and easier it will be to assimilate the language. Nordon, L. (2008). In an

Arab country like Kuwait, this goal can simply be achieved by attainable means such as watching English and American satellite channels, listening to English songs, using the modern electronic devices such as, iPod, iPad and the like in order to make artificial communication and contact in an English milieu.

Upon the aforementioned data, the researcher claims that if KiLAW college students become more aware of certain language features, they will obtain a better opportunity of tracing these features in the language input they are exposed to. In other words, they may become more receptive to them, and can therefore tend to assimilate them in an implicit way, and to systematically make them part of their active language competence.

The epitome is that the use of the communication strategies can convert even weak students to be good at transmitting understandable and clear messages. They also can transgress all English major learning problems at some point in their production in the target language. The researcher has extracted most of his data from a questionnaire he conducted among a specimen of 150 students selected from KiLAW college. Copy of the questionnaire and the data thereof are shown hereunder.

Data Interpretation and Analysis

Questionnaire Items and Statistics

Questionnaire items N=35	Agree	Disagree
1.Group work is important in learning communicative English.	%54	%46
2. Group work enables students to speak English actively and easily.	%73	%27
3. Teacher-centered teaching methods in English class are more effective..	%28	%72
4. Student-centered teaching methods in English class are more beneficial than teacher-centered methods.	%59	%41
5. Self- confidence is not enough to im-proving English learning.	%48	%52
6. Instructors should assess students progress in English learning., not stu-dents themselves.	%64	%36
7. Atmosphere of group work should strictly be monitored by instructors.	%31	%69
8. Voicing opinions or posing questions in the classroom are not right ways of communicating.	%70	%30
9. Instructors are unquestionable per-sons inside the lecture rooms.	%77	%23

10. Students work hard especially at English paper exam for success only.	%%78	%22
11. Group work is always directed towards common goals.	%62	%38
12. Some students get nervous when answering questions in class because of fear feeling of being wrong.	%78	%22
13. Taking part in group work with English native students in an English class is enough to learning English.	%37	%63
14. Instructors should pass on knowledge to students rather than they should discover it by themselves.	%61	%39
15. Learning English must be in small classes between 7 to 10.	%75	%25
16. Giving oral explanations on written practice, e.g. TOEFL or iLets would be much helpful.	%72	%28
17. When speaking English in the class or in a group, students prefer to pre-plan their utterances rather than speaking spontaneously.	%80	%20
18. Students should make a plan of English study needless to home assignments.	%40	%60

19. Learning English at class is better than drawing a timetable to study it.	%81	%19
20. Students must have specific expectations on the progress they will make to improving their English.	%41	%59
21. Students have to evaluate their English progress so that they can overcome weakness points.	%73	%27
22. Students should evaluate their effort to know their learning problems .	%63	%37
23. Different language learning strategies is not always necessary to fit specific learning tasks.	%37	%63
24. Selecting difficult reading materials would improve students' English level after class.	%78	%22
25. Catering about understanding of every detail of any text is more important than analyzing its components.	%43	%57
26. Reading English texts many times after class enables students acquire the four English skills.	%80	%20
27. Instructors or students have to analyze the grammatical structure of the sentence/text.	%33%	%67
28. Students should be accustomed to recite large chunks of English texts that they think are well written.	%65	%35

29. Listening without reading teaches correct English pronunciation.	%79	%21
30. Read English newspapers, magazines and storybooks or internet information teaches students standard English.	%51	%49
31. Listening to BBC English on the radio teaches students the skill of speaking.	%38	%62
32. Students should not initiate questions; they should be listeners to instructor's explanation only.	%69	%31
33. Watching English films and programs is enough to teach students English after class.	%23	%%77
34. Students should have the habit of speaking English with their friends or local native English-speaking people after class.	%84	%16
35. Students should keep chatting with English friends through the internet to acquire best of English competence.	%64	%34

The extracted data from this study clearly reflect Kuwaiti KiLAW college students> perceptions of their learning experiences. Regarding group work in class (i.e., group discussion, role-play, and language games), the findings generally reveal that Kuwaiti students showed miscellaneous views; a considerable number of the students in the study tend to be active in group work. It ap-

peared that different students held different views about speaking out in class as well as about their learning experience. Some interviews conducted by the researcher reveal that some students did not seem to enjoy their English papers learning when they were at high schools very much, nor could their teachers fully introduce the pedagogical value inherent in the communicative approach. The reasons are multifaceted. For instance, they thought that instructors seemed to spend too much time involving students in group discussions. Some students found such a teaching approach time-consuming and useless, since students would receive very limited «authentic» linguistic data in class. Some students argued that group work was most likely conducted by «brilliant students only.»

Another reason for these perceptions is related to Kuwaiti students' own beliefs about learning and teaching. A closer look at their interview accounts indicates that students were not adapted to the communicative approach, which was deemed incompatible with their own conceptualization of what constitutes good learning and good teaching. Therefore, it is not surprising that Kuwaiti KiLAW college students felt their learning needs and expectations were not achieved. While recognizing the good points of group work and participation, some college students –the researcher noticed- still believe that group activities were over-emphasized at the expense of linguistic forms and structure. In addition, during interviews, students affirmed that some topics for interactive activities were dull, out of the scope of their intuitive knowledge, and inconsistent with their cultural background. Even if they knew that the teacher's purpose was to encourage them to speak, they often found that they had little to talk about in such circumstances.

The findings uncover that while KiLAW college students in general held various attitudes towards the communicative approach, it seems that they still recalled the influence inherent in teacher-centeredness technique, in which they could learn much more linguistic input from teachers in class. They claimed that adequate attention should be paid to both meanings and linguistic forms so as to meet their needs to pass the TOEFL or IELTS examinations, required for universities enrollment abroad. Furthermore, classroom materials and the topics for group discussion should be carefully selected to stimulate the students' interest and help them express themselves freely without embarrassment when they make an error. The results also show that the College students preferred a small class for the English paper lectures.

The findings of the questionnaire demonstrate also that the College students often thought carefully before speaking English in class. This indicates that the surveyed students tended to focus more on accuracy than on fluency, as this would help them avoid making mistakes or experiencing loss of face. The implication of this finding is that teachers of the high schools were not accustomed to give their students enough time to think actively before they speak while also encouraging quick and impromptu responses. Didactically, being active in class does not necessarily mean getting physically involved in the classroom activities. Being mentally active also means being a good participant and active listener as well. Students seemed to be more concerned about their own linguistic accuracy. They pre-think in Arabic and translate what they want to express into English, which could result in speaking little in English class. This contradicts the communicative English language teaching principles, which larger preponderancefor

fluency over accuracy and focuses on students' involvement in classroom activities. The prerequisite of this finding for English teachers is that they should be aware of the fact that they need to create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom for their students to speak English freely and comfortably.

Recommendations and suggestions

English foundation course for undergraduate students

Since the researcher is the advisor of the English Unit, he noticed that the KiLAW college students face difficulties in passing the English papers exams, and a considerable number of them fail the paper, although they have passed in the English paper in their high school exams. Therefore, they are supposed not to find any problems with the English paper during their college study. After diagnosing the weak points of English condition that the Kuwaiti high school and college students suffer from, the researcher recommends a foundation course that college students have to undergo prior to pursuit of their undergraduate study. Hereunder is a detailed description of this course.

1- Goals

The first goal of the foundation course in English is to help the KiLAW college students overcome the linguistic difficulties involved in studying the English papers. The second goal of the course is to remedy the drops that the students have experienced during their previous stages of schooling, and the third goal will be a sound base from which the college students can proceed with their academic study smoothly and confidently.
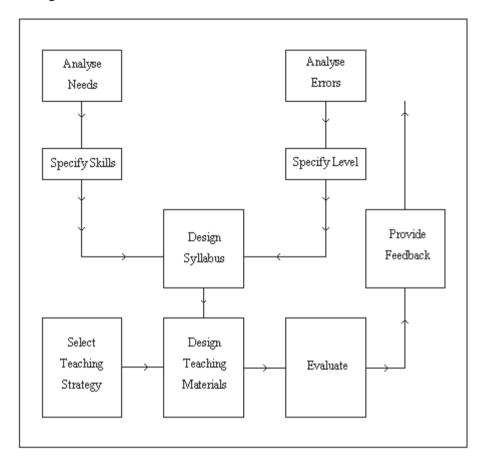
2- Background to the course

Whereas many changes in attitudes have been introduced into English language teaching and learning processes recently, the most significant of what is called the communicative competence, or broadly, linguistic competence, one may claim that the tacit knowledge of the formal structures has been looked upon as being too confined. Samuel, P. (2007). This case is conspicuously appears through the outcome of the English papers exams of students at the KiLAW college students. Consequently, there has been an incumbent necessity for encountering the weakness phenomenon of students in the English subjects through a foundation course suggested by the researcher.

3- The approach

The fundamental approach to this course design will be an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) approach, which means, an approach in which the teaching content is matched to the requirements of the learners; legal and academic atmosphere since the KiLAW college is specialized in law and legal sciences.

4- Course teaching syllabus design

Figure 1

Sam, V. (1999).

The core of the course is concerned in the present situation which is embodied in the skills, needs analysis and in syllabus design.

The following are the relevant categories Munby, S. (1978), pp. 154-167:

5- Clients of the course

The course participants are KiLAW college students. They will be divided into three categories:

a. Low level students

b. Medium level students

b. Advanced level students

6- Setting - the duration and place

Students will have their classes at lecture rooms, laboratories, and at seminar rooms. The researcher suggests an intensive foundation course of two months.

7- Activities

Activities will be performed in forms of student-student, and student – instructor in legal atmosphere.

8- Medium of communication

e.g.	spoken - receptive and productive
	written - receptive and productive.

9- Channel of communication

e.g.	Open discussions, pair-work, group work and presentations

10- Dialects: will be the dialects that students can grasp and produce.

e.g.	Standard British accents and dialects.

11- The Target level : Will be the level of linguistic proficiency, which involves different skills of legal content.

12. The communicative event : Will be what the learner should have to do with English.

e.g.	attend lectures, participate in seminars, get involved in academic activities.

13. Communicative key: Will be the manner in which communication should be performed.

e.g. formal/informal plus range of legal attitudes.

14. Profile: Will be what the student needs to be competent in.

Tools of the Study:

1. Lectures
2. Seminars
3.Tutorials
4.Group projects
5.Practical sessions (legal)
6.Private study
7. Examinations

1. Lectures

2. Participating in seminars

a	Listening:	(i) listening for general understanding and specific points to remember in lawful language.
b	Speaking:	(i) asking for clarification (ii) oral presentation from notes/without notes (iii) discussion
c	Reading:	(i) reading handouts and board/OHP, iPad, Smart screen
d	Writing:	(i) taking notes that can be re-constituted.

4. Group Projects

a	Listening:	(i) listening for general understanding and specific points to remember. (ii) listening to and following instructions. (iii) listening to explanations of problems.
b	Speaking:	(i) reading handouts and board/OHP, smart screen, Powerpoint presentations. (ii) following instructions.
c	Reading:	(i) reading handouts and board/OHP, iPad, Smart screen
d	Writing:	(i) taking notes that can be re-constituted. (ii) writing reports. (iii) writing instructions

5. Practical sessions.

a	Listening:	(i) listening for general understanding and specific points to be remembered (ii) listening to and following legal instructions. (iii) listening to explanations of legal problems.
b	Speaking:	(i) asking for clarification. (ii) making suggestions. (iii) discussion.
c	Reading:	(i) reading handouts and board/OHP, smart screen. (ii) following instructions.
d	Writing:	(i) taking notes that can be re-constituted. (ii) writing reports. (iii) writing in support of work.

6- Private study: studying reference materials (textbooks, manuals, articles, handouts etc.) in library or at home.

a	Listening:	(i) reading lawful material intensively. (ii) reading for main information - skimming. (iii) reading for specific assignment oriented information - scanning. (iv) reading to discover and assess writer's position. (v) library skills.
b	Writing:	(i) note taking. (ii) selecting and organizing information for lawful reports and essays. (iii) describing theories, practices and trends. (iv) writing evaluative legal reports/essays on theories, practices and procedures.

6- Examinations

a	Listening:	(i) listening to instructions.
b	Speaking:	(i) asking for clarification.
c	Reading:	(i) reading and understanding examination questions.
d	Writing:	(i) writing relevant and correct answers.

Walton, M. (2005).

7- The course

The main sections of the course from which material will be selected depend on student needs and interests in legal career life. The syllabus defines what is expected from the studentsat the end of the course and will therefore prepare students to pursue their English paper study smoothly and fruitfully to acquire good English that provides specifications for the final examination. The main sections of the foundation course will be:

1. Writing

2. Listening

3. Reading

4. Grammar

5. Vocabulary

6. Seminar skills

Conclusion

According to the above exposition, it seems to be that the source of weakness in English among the KiLAW college students can be attributed to two main causes: i- They suffer from chronic accumulative weakness from the previous years of study, and ii- resulted from a host of factors involving arbitrary curricula, design, unqualified teachers, and poor methodology.

To remedy the problem, the researcher proposes an intensive English foundation course in English, which fresh students who tend to be admitted in KiLAW should join. The benefits of such a course will be very sound in finding solutions to the difficulties that students encounter with regard to legal English subjects, on the one hand, and place them on the right track, on the other.

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