Impediments to Speaking Skills and Oral Fluency at the Kuwait International Law School (KiLAW)

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This research is intended to poke through the obstacles that stymie students of the Kuwait International Law (KiLAW) School from communicating in English fluently. The researcher analyses the difficulties of speaking correct English in terms of pronunciation, intonation and stress. This paper also tackles the issue of conveying ideas and expressing opinions and attitudes in correct grammar context, and how to initiate opening statements and questions to help determine appropriate communication among people. In addition, the problem of interacting in an academic milieu whilst keeping a sense of identity, and explaining situations and commenting on them smoothly, has also been addressed. The researcher, too, investigates the reasons that hinder students from responding to social stimuli in English. He proposes a series of recommendations to remedy the defects of oral proficiency among KiLAW students. He argues that in order to guide students to communicate effectively, there must be development of communication patterns based on expectations and responses to others. The researcher also stresses that students should be active in reproducing an account or experience orally.

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ملخص البحث

القصد من هذا البحث هو التمحيص في العقبات التي تعيق طلاب كلية القانون العالمية الكويتية من التواصل الطلق باللغة الانكليزية. كما يقدم هذا البحث تحليلا لصعوبة التكلم باللغة الانكليزية في سياق النطق، نبرات الصوت، والتشديد على مقاطع الكلمات بشكل صحيح، وكذلك كيفية مباشرة استخدام عبارات وأسئلة افتتاحية تساعد على تحديد التحادث المناسب بين الأشخاص. كذلك يتناول البحث مسألة التفاعل الكلامي في وسط أكاديمي مع المحافظة على الإحساس بالهوية، وشرح المواقف الآنية والتعليق عليها. أيضا، دقق الباحث بالأسباب التي تعرقل الطلاب عن التجاوب مع المواقف الاجتماعية. حيث يقترح حزمة من التطبيقات لمعالجة عيوب الكفاءة الشفوية بين طلاب الكلية. ولغرض التواصل الفعال، يشدد الباحث على أهمية تطوير أنماط تواصلية مستندة إلى أفعال وردود أفعال الآخرين. إضافة إلى ذلك يؤكد الباحث على ضرورة أن يكون الطلاب فاعلين في التعبير عن حالات و تقديم وصف لها بشكل شفهي.

Introduction

The speaking skill to the majority of second language learners commonly expresses problems of feeling default in using the target language expressively.

When it comes to English, it is noteworthy that English is a universal language, which most nations of the world use in some way or another. Communicatively, the speaking skill composes an essential pillar in the process of acquiring any foreign language. Communicating conveniently is a standard that gauges the speaker's competence in any foreign language. The researcher noted that a considerable number of college students have the desire to converse in English at ease. They consider that their weakness in the speaking skill is a true indicator of their low level in English, although they are smarter in other branches of the language. Mastering speech of a foreign tongue is a problematic issue to students who learn that language as a second language. Clustered linguistic factors lie beyond that issue. One of the difficulties encountering more advanced non-native speakers of English is that of acquiring articulator fluency in multi-word utterances. *Dawn, D. (2010).* While largely competent at pronouncing English words perfectly in isolation, nonetheless, the researcher noticed that his students stumble, hesitate or are distorted when they are to string words together in meaningful sentences or phrases. Based on that fact, one of the most challenging difficulties in learning a second language is finding ways to improve one's oral fluency. This is spotted as true in KiLAW where the students voice one mother tongue, namely Arabic. The lack of fluency in English may be due to the fact that the college students have very little or no exposure to use the English language outside the lecture rooms except for a

tiny number of them. Most of the language specialists argue that language fluency is just a lingual habit and an accumulative wealth of vocabulary and grammar rules. As a result, Lightbown believes that "when students use English to speak out their thoughts, attitudes, and reactions, they face the difficulty of knitting their inner lingual outcome into correct homogeneous series of statements." *Lightbown, P. (2003).* They produce stumbling influent speech teemed with errors and pauses. This can be linked to three significant reasons: 1. lack of lingual components, 2. translating what should be linguistically articulated in correct molds from their mother tongue; the Arabic into English and 3. due to very poor use and practice of English outside the classrooms. This paper brings up to air the causes that affect the majority of the College's students' ability to acquire the oral fluency habit in English as a second language. The researcher, too, highlights the factors that boost the oral fluency skill, and diagnoses the hindrances which impede fluency among the College's students.

Problem of the study

Communicating in English smoothly is a goal that all students of the college are keen to attain. The researcher noticed that his students always complain of being inexpressive and influent in English. He referred such incompetence to shortage of oral proficiency while learning to speak English. Additionally, the speaking skill, unfortunately does not receive due interest from both the instructors and the students simply because much concentration is put on other components of English, like grammar, vocabulary, writing and reading which are required in exams, tests and in quizzes. For the sake of encountering the weakness in oral and speaking proficiency, the researcher investigates through the reasons beyond the lack of oral fluency. Meanwhile,

he suggests remedial procedures, which are necessary to solve the problem of communicating in English without the feeling of anxiety among the College students, because, most of the College students always wonder why they are unable to speak English properly although they can grasp the speech of their foreign instructors. Furthermore, they stumble and stutter when they have to respond to any situation they may face inside or outside the class.

The goal of the research

Since KiLAW is newly founded in Kuwait, in 2010, the researcher has been curious enough to conduct a fresh experiment on fresh students in a field that is not very commonly tackled. This research attempts to highlight the link between verbal fluency and oral proficiency. Through this effort, the researcher seeks to analyze the difficulties that hamper the correct production of oral speech. His major aim is to weigh the ability of verbal fluency of English among a specimen of KiLAW students. This paper also attempts to bring forward the reasons behind college students' feeling entangled when they come to express themselves automatically, rapidly and smoothly in English. Then, the researcher recommends effective methods that would be guidelines to instructors of English to follow in order to enhance the skill of oral fluency of their students.

Tools of the research:

This research employs an eclectic approach of both qualitative and quantitative methods for analysis and data format. The findings collection has been performed through a sample of 50 students randomly selected and belonging to the academic years 2011 and 2012. The specimen involved students with different linguistic, social and educational backgrounds. Some of them come from Arabic high schools, and some have obtained high school certificate from foreign schools in Kuwait; American or British. Therefore, this extraneous collection of students forms an ideal milieu for the researcher to identify the verbal deficiency among the College students. The participants have been subject to oral experiments including oral presentation, speech delivery, pair dialogue and group conversations. The data has been classified in charts, tables and figures for more illustration. For the purpose of covering a wide range of students' experiences and their causes, the writer considered the qualitative approach as an appropriate strategy. He also utilized the quantitative approach in counting the number of errors students perpetrated while testing their oral fluency. The type of this paper is exploratory, by which the writer gauged a pedagogic issue empirically.

Statement of the Problem:

English language has occupied the first rank among all world used languages especially at educational institutes. It has become a global language, and due to this status, English has raised the need to acquire smart communication skill. This target is very crucial to the educated strata of the society, namely the college students. Frankly enough, to speakers of English as a second language, competence of communicating in English skillfully reflects and indicates to a distinguished personality. This paper handles the oral proficiency hindrances, and appropriate means that help overcome such obstacle.

Questions of the study

This paper provides answers to essential questions with regard to oral fluency and speaking skill. The questions are listed below:

1- What makes oral fluency competence lag behind among English learning components as a second language?

2 - What are the main causes of oral fluency weakness?

3 - How can the problem of oral default be encountered?

Significance of the study:

The negative impact of limited oral proficiency over verbal fluency of college students when they tend to convey their ideas in smooth English, tensionlessly, is the core of this work. This study is also of special significance owing to its implications where the subjects of it are from one linguistic, social and cultural background. The investigation of speech mechanism that emerge while learning to speak the target language in less stressful environment, gives this study special importance.

What is oral fluency skill?

The four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are all interconnected. Proficiency in each skill is necessary to become a well-rounded communicator, but oral communication forms an essential part in a network. Moreover, oral fluency is a measure of how well and how easily the learner can translate his ideas clearly and accurately via speech. Most linguists agree that correct pronunciation of individual sounds and words is very important for fluency; the listener has to be able to hear and distinguish the produced words. Aloria, S. (1996). However, stress, rhythm, and intonation can be even more important, for they help make both single words and combinations of words, like phrases, clauses, and whole sentences, understandable to the listener. On the other hand, grammar is the structure of the language and vocabulary holds the individual building blocks, so both are also essential elements to fluency. In conversation, the speaker also has to be able to understand what the other person is saying. So good listening skills are also needed in oral fluency.

Combining listening and reading with oral skills is a great way to improve fluency. Speaking, therefore, is a natural act a person performs to draw attention, express viewpoints, share thoughts, and show feelings. Nevertheless, to speak out these functions in a second language fluently and correctly is the main concern of any learner especially in an academic environment where the individuals are supposed to accomplish this job smoothly. Within this sense, the researcher remarks that college students are barely interested to become real speakers of English language. They strive to react talkatively and securely using situational English. To any learner of a second language, this skill is very

needy when for example, attending a job interview, addressing a large audience extemporaneously, sitting an oral exam, or even when socializing. It has been noticed that competence in English oral fluency provides student as -second language learner- with self-confidence, pride and self-satisfaction. Helen, N. (2009).
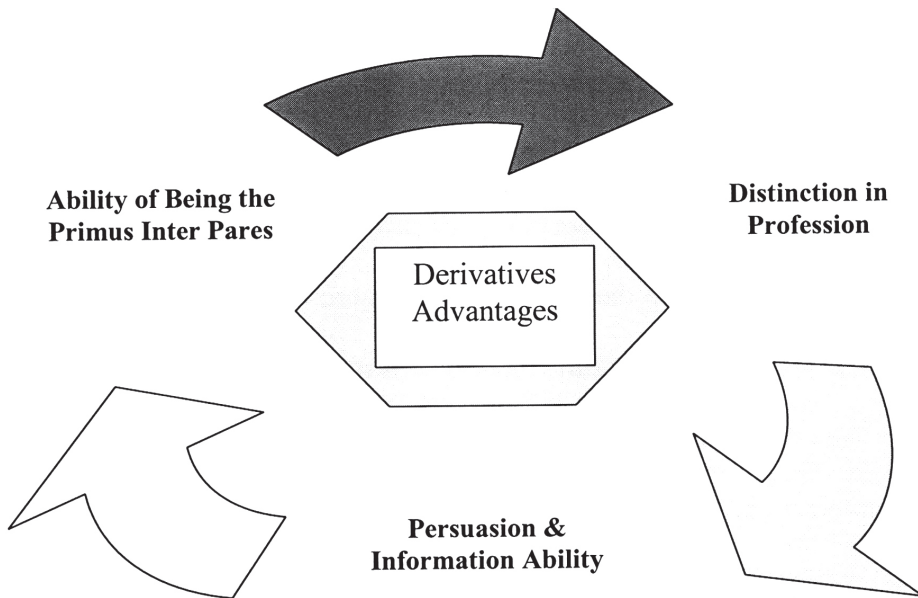
The importance of oral communication skills

Since the current age is stigmatized by globalization and space revolution, communicating in other languages has become essential. Clearly, this situation has led to development in language learning theories and teaching methods. The fact that the time we live in, certainly requires comprehensive interest for language learning with focus on the active components, particularly, the speaking and fluency skills. In fact, internationalization has concentrated on English language skills as the most popular used language all over the world, and therefore also on communicative capacity. Thus, the importance of oral communication has vastly been reflected on the teaching method of English. When students are incompetent in speaking English as a second language, fluently, it indicates that the there is a sort of pedagogic failure in the teaching process as a whole. Therefore, using English as a target language in the classroom is very essential, this paper stresses. The researcher argues that if the students are doing oral fluency activities however, the use of English in the lecture halls is more demanding, not only by students, but also by instructors especially the Arab ones. Therefore, he also explains that instructors shoulder the responsibility for oral and speaking skills acquisition since they are the source of comprehensible input and therefore it is crucial that the instructor should speak as much English as possible inside and outside the classroom, and shun the use of the mother tongue Arabic.

Additionally, the incumbent need of the English fluency and speaking abilities is specifically necessary not only for the College students, but also for the Kuwaiti citizens, at large, simply because –according to statististics of the Planning Authority in 2012- Kuwait is teemed with more than 120 foreign manpower from different nationalities, who work in this small rich oil-producer country. Hence, daily communication with this huge number of expatriates is the English language. The researcher notices that the fluency in English among the College is still lagging behind, in the matters of smoothness and correctness notwithstanding for two reasons. The first one is that most of those expatriates come from non-native English speaking countries. So, their pronunciation of English is widely influenced by their mother tongue, and they produce deformed English sounds. The other reason –the researcher explains- is that a considerable number of those foreigners are uneducated people. Most of them have not gone to schools before. And the poor English they communicate by, resulted from the intensive contact with each other and with the native Kuwaitis who they work for, and from the long period of time they spend working in Kuwait.

While any masterpiece painting may be worth a thousand words to describe in writing, nonetheless, those words will not be handy and understandable if the picture is presented defamed or poorly demonstrated because of lack of oral fluency. After all, the best way to communicate its description is through speech. This fact can be construed, as fluency is a productive skill in the oral mode. It is more complicated than it seems at first glance, and it engulfs more than just pronouncing or uttering words. The oral fluency may appear in three speaking situations. They are the interactive, the non-interactive and the partially interactive. Bruce,

H. (2007). The first type includes face-to-face conversations and talks in which listening and speaking are alternatively used, and the partners can exchange thoughts, opinions, or even narration of events. The non-reactive fluency cases are not many. They involve situations where no audience is, and where the speaker needs to record something on electronic devices addressed to unseen people. While the partial interactive situation is when the other partner does not respond, just listen. Here, fluency ability is very conspicuous, and need to be influential and attractive in order to catch the listeners' attention, and to impress them. Actually, the ability to speak English skillfully and fluently provides the language user with several distinct benefits to reflect attitudes, opinions, descriptions and feelings. They are summarized in the following:

Ability of Being the Primus Inter Pares

Distinction in Profession

Derivatives Advantages

Persuasion & Information Ability

Linguistically, consistent fluency derivative elaborates verbal ability and fosters the speaker's fluent negotiation skills, as well as self-confidence. Loonstra, A. (2001). Such advantage, also, gives a growing sense of ease that encourages the speaker to address a larger audience fluently and unhesitatingly. However, dexterity in oral fluency can only accumulate overtime, by lengthy practice, and education, as well; thereby granting the speaker specific credibility.
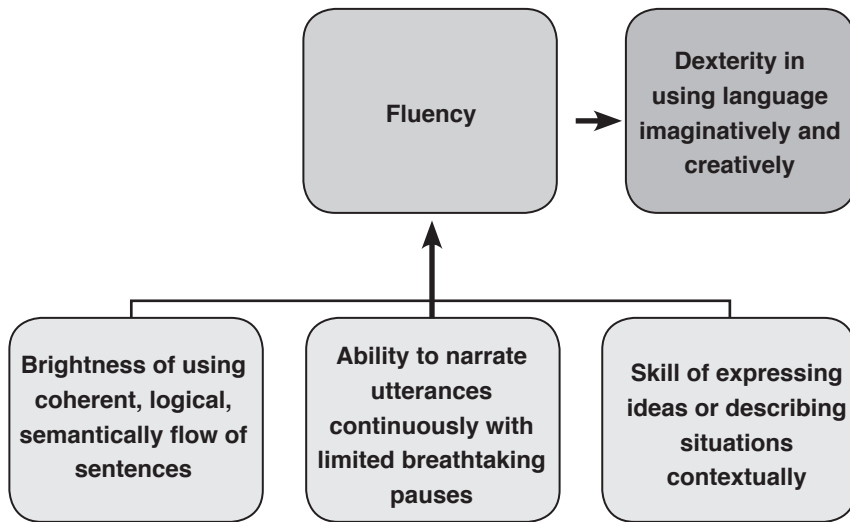
As a crude fact, oral glibness is the power that enables the speaker to vide information, convince others, steer a situation, react to an attitude or describe an event smoothly. Findings of the research's sample have manifested that students, among other goals, seek hard to develop their oral fluency competence to such a standard that they become master communicators. Students unanimously confirmed that the ability of speaking clearly and confidently could drag the attention of listeners. They also noted that such a procedure makes them feel free and released from the language tough meaning the need for competent oral fluency can be regarded as perfect when the speaker captures the attention of an audience with well-selected vocabulary, in well-delivered presentation in order to pass an influential and informative message. As for distinction in oral fluency, commonly, some educators tend to think that oral fluency is very familiar and accessible skill since it conveys a message in some way or another. The researcher affirms that facing a crowd and speaking to them fluently and effectively is really a hard task, not as anyone imagines. In the domain of this study's sample, the writer noticed that some students feel very confused and afraid of public speaking especially when they have to deliver an oral presentation task, or a power-point illustrative duty, although

they are somehow competent in English. Other students find it a tedious job to integrate thoughts into sentences, and voice them out to listeners. They were stammering with frequent pauses. The writer most often reminds his students that if they want to be primus inter pares in oral fluency, their verbal capacity should be honed and improved with constant practice and application so that they can stand out. Brilliant fluency to the sample students of the study is the ability to speak English well, whether inside the university campus, or outside it. They believe that speaking fluently is important to them not only for academic purposes, but also for career aspirations. Therefore, it is, and always will be well worth the effort in completely maintaining and developing. Gruenewald, P. (1999). Students concluded that smooth oral fluency offers the well-roundedness they seek for. Thereby, they can get rid of difficulties like inhibition, uneven participation, and the use of Arabic.

Diagnosis of the oral fluency problem of English as a second language

No doubt, English language pioneers other second languages particularly in the developing countries. Therefore everyone – at least the educated people- is craving for tools to obtain acceptable mastery over this language, and to speak it fluently similar to natives. In most academic facilities, education is performed in English. Therefore, students work hard to learn English with certain focus on speaking skill so as they can communicate and express themselves properly. Linguistically, the student is regarded as fluent in English when he is able to employ its structures correctly meanwhile focusing on content rather than on form. Dramond, P. (1996). He has to use the forms, patterns, and units smoothly at ordinary speaking speed according to the situation he is indulged in. The researcher coins the term 'fluency' as phenomenon of performance linked to spontaneous, continuous and automatic flow of speech. He stresses the students' need to acquire the social skill and the linguistic skill in order to become competent communicators of English. The writer argues that content perceiving linking between context and speech are the necessary pillars for making meaningful speech.

He suggests four types of competence combined under the item 'fluency'. They are defined in the following figure. Linguists usually do not devote much concern to discussing the matter of

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┌─────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────┐
│                 │          │  Dexterity in   │
│    Fluency      │  ──────> │  using language │
│                 │          │ imaginatively and│
│                 │          │   creatively    │
└─────────────────┘          └─────────────────┘
         ▲
┌──────────────┬──────────────┬──────────────┐
│ Brightness of│ Ability to   │ Skill of     │
│ using coherent,│ narrate    │ expressing   │
│ logical,     │ utterances   │ ideas or     │
│ semantically │ continuously │ describing   │
│ flow of      │ with limited │ situations   │
│ sentences    │ breathtaking │ contextually │
│              │ pauses       │              │
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mastering the oral proficiency of English as a second language. This researcher has tackled this branch of language components because College students face problems with communication and language. They most often suffer from difficulties with the language's form, namely; syntax, structure and sound, with the language's content; meaning or semantic, and with pragmatics, or what is known as communication or semantics, which all have significant impacts on students' oral fluency capacity. Prescott, T. (2006).

The figure below demonstrates the receptive and expressive aspects of the oral fluency problem of English as a second language.

These elements are cohered in the sense of receptive and expressive aspects of the language. Within this context, the spoken English of the KiLAW students is in worse condition. They spend twelve years of study before the university stage studying English, however, their fluency proficiency remains below the target level. The researcher refers that to three main causes. First, they do not

use English outside the classroom in real life that results a lack of practice. Second, instructors give specific preponderance to other branches of the language such as grammar, writing, vocabulary and writing over speaking and communication, particularly students have to answer questions related to these branches in their exams. Third, no special exam for oral fluency is involved in the English language credits exams. One can imagine that students study English just to pass the paper simply because evaluation is concerned with the written language and not with spoken language. Despite the college students have passed through a wide range of syntactic structures, vocabulary, verb tenses and other tools of language learning over their previous years of study, as cognitively mature learners they lag behind when they like to voice out their ideas and attitudes. Storm, C. (2010). The researcher argues that their communicative abilities are not quite likely reproduced from the scheduled presentation offered by the instructional material and the assigned curricula. Moreover, this finding indicates that, students are unable to utilize what they have learnt at college even in their daily life. Thus, the growth of the fluency can be developed by constant practice and use of language, rather than just diagnosing its causes. Because it has always been supposed that, the main objective in language learning consists of producing the speech, which should be not stumbled by silent pauses and hesitations. Hence, fluency talent is not an absolute dogma students should acquire skillfully or not, rather, it is a degree-based competence. It is that students should achieve some degree of fluency. The researcher notices that as second language learners his students worry that they lack fluency ability in English and they may speak quickly without adequate knowledge, in order to make up for it. However, for native speakers, it is hard to understand them. The writer says

that the College students strive hard to follow up their instructors inside lectures rooms, and to speak correct English. The writer often advises his students to use the spoken English. This is because it is mainly for transactional function- communicating a message- where key words are emphasized more and are said more slowly so that students are able to reuse them in similar situation. Crowe, S. (2003). However, making students speak the target language fluently is not always easily possible due to the fact that language is a communication system, and acquiring the communication constitutes a major part of learning a second language. The researcher noted that students may have different thoughts in their mind, and they cannot voice them out in English. They try to express something, but they feel they cannot stick ideas together. They have different words and images, but they are floating and messing.

Most often, a student starts a sentence, and then the very string of thoughts vanishes, and something like a blackout takes place in his head. The researcher points out that many students have gone through a number of embarrassing situations similar to previously described one, and they have found themselves entangled, then they immediately switch to Arabic. The writer categorized three types of obstacles that obstruct students from fluently talking. They are shown in the following figure:

Lack of rich vocabulary

Inability express thoughts	Difficulty of Correct pronunciation
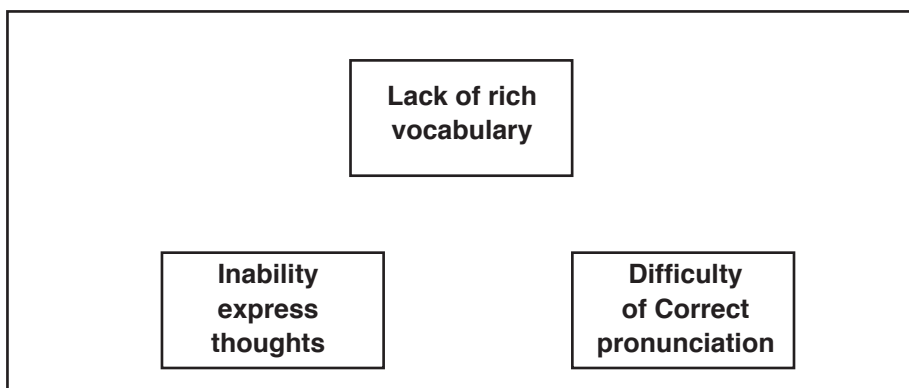
Types of oral fluency errors

The writer conducted an oral experiment on a sample of 50 students. The tools of the experiment were pair dialogue, group dialogue, and conversation, and speech delivery, field presentation, speaking sessions, role-play and discussions. The subjects of the sample were asked to perform the above activities in an exchangeable manner under the monitoring of the researcher.

The types of errors students have committed are listed in the following figure:

Insertion of wrong

Mispronunciation

Reversal

Omission
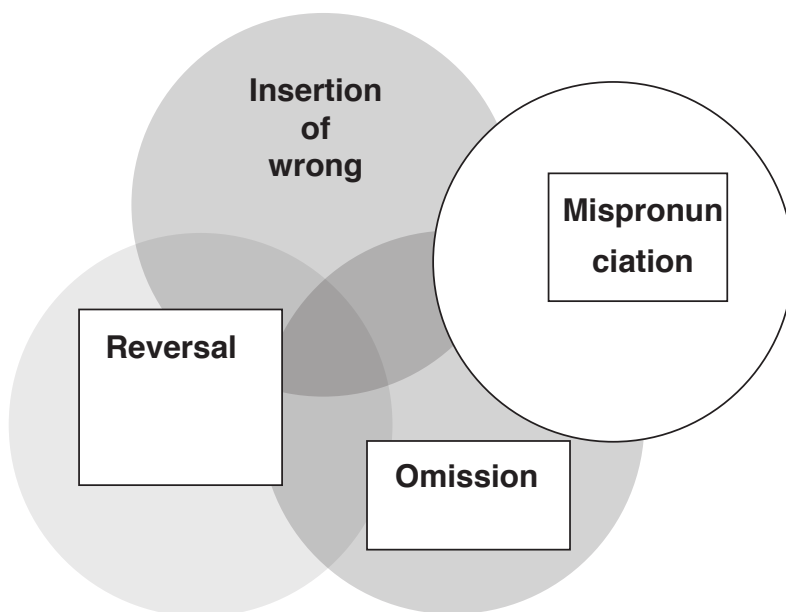
The researcher noticed that 23% of the sample participants have inserted unnecessary wrong words, mostly they translated these words from their mother tongue Arabic, with Arab cultural sense. The most frequent type of oral fluency errors students have committed was mispronunciation of words. The percentage of this kind of errors was around 26% of the sample. These flaws are conveyed from bad accumulative teaching over years of study. In addition, Kuwaiti students are largely influenced by the pronunciation of Arabic sounds when they utter English sounds. Reversal mistakes were also plenty. They formed around 21% of the total number of the sample members, especially with position of adjectives in the sentence formation. Here, students are also influenced by Arabic grammar where the adjective largely comes after the noun. The last type of mistakes was the omission of words. Such type composed 30% of the sample. Students –for shortage of sufficient wealth of vocabulary, they provide incomplete expressions.

Structural fluency problems

In addition to the above-mentioned errors students make in the fluency skill, the researcher pointed to types of difficulties that thwart the speech smoothness of the sample participants, and lead to committing mistakes. The excessive thinking of grammar rules while talking hampers fluency. Caring about grammatical rules slows down the rhythm and tone of the speaker and confuses him. Students of the sample recall the grammar rules before creating sentences and uttering them naturally like the native. Surprisingly enough, only a tiny fraction of the natives are familiar with English grammar. Meanwhile many ESL college students employ more grammar amount than that of the natives'. Natives may easily comprehend grammar rules, but they do not realize that they are off the top of their heads although they can communicate, listen, read, and speak effectively. It has also been shown that many of the students of the sample have relatively sufficient wealth of vocabulary, but they are unable to create sentences properly because of default in phrases correct use. If a student knows 1000 words he might not be able to utter one correct sentence. However, if he knows 100 phrases he can form numerous sentences appropriately, and may almost be regarded as a fluent English speaker. Troyer, K. (1997). Therefore, the researcher frequently advises his students to be well acquainted with phrases and not with piling words in order to be closer to English fluency.

Translation from the mother tongue Arabic, is really a very critical hindrance on the track of fluency. The researcher has made sure that the sample students translate the utterances from Arabic into English when they want to express their attitudes and responses. Therefore, they stutter largely, make many mistakes.

The reason is that the order of the Arabic words is totally different from the English; hence, students fall in this trap and produce wrong staggering speech. The writer always reminds his students to focus on learning phrases and sentences in order to shun thinking about the words they have to say. Then, speech flows smoothly, automatically, and spontaneously. Furthermore, when students translate from Arabic, they attempt to mingle Arabic grammar rules in their English speech. The result then is, scattered deformed English. Translating from, and thinking in Arabic sense create incorrect English which hamper the fluency of the Arab student, or the speaker, at large.

Reading English and listening to English are not enough to boost oral fluency, the researcher believes. Fostering the speaking skill is the only path to fluency. Normally, babies and children practice their lingual competence first through speaking, they grow fluent, and then they shift to practicing reading and writing. Harmer J. (2007). Hence, the instinctive steps of acquiring the components of any language are listening, speaking, reading and then writing. Despite schools over the world start teaching reading, then writing then listening, and finally speaking, because anyone who tends to learn a foreign language starts with reading, yet, the natural order -as the researcher sees it- is like this: listening, speaking, reading, then writing. Thus, nurturing the oral fluency ability springs out of listening, enhanced by practicing speaking, fortified by reading and consecrated by writing.

The reason that many students can read and listen is that they perform these tasks perpetually. Another structural problem which detains fluency among students at KiLAW, is that they are not around English at all times; they do not submerge themselves in

an English environment. They constantly hear and speak Arabic. They deal with English just inside the lecture halls for about one or two hours daily, which is a fraction of time not sufficient to fortify the fluency skill.

Tension of speaking fluently

Certainly, there is a sort of distinction between speaking and oral fluency. All students of the sample have the ability to speak English proportionally. Some are competent to speak somehow correct English, but they are not fluent enough to express themselves smoothly without stumbling. A group of them is in the middle. Their fluency standard is acceptable. They can pass messages and express themselves, but not adequately. On the other side, the writer remarked that some passive students whose fluency ability is low use incorrect English and with disconnected ideas.

Therefore, some persistent questions appear when analyzing the speaking and oral fluency skills, like;

a. To what extent is the student fluent?
b. How confident is he?
c. Does he promote himself convincingly and effectively?
d. Has he the ability to speak spontaneously and automatically?
e. To what rate does his mother tongue influence his English speech?

Within the context of the obstacles that hinder oral fluency among the students of the sample, the writer found out another difficulty that is called «fluency tension». In order to trigger this issue the definition of tension should be provided. In broader psychological sense, tension is a degree of anxiety, or worry

about imminent predictable thing, or fear from expressing oneself orally. Archila, A. (2006). Such feeling, the researcher comment can inhibit the ability of speaking since the student experiences a kind of tension or nervousness that hinders him / her from focusing in the speaking process. For sake of this research, some students expressed a reluctant attitude when they come to sit for oral exams or to deliver a presentation assignment. A considerable part of the students sample with speaking tension that have experienced failure in oral situations indicated, that those students remain calm rather than venturing of being exposed to embarrassing situation when they had to perform a verbal activity, just because of lack of fluency. Actually, in an academic milieu students who suffer from fluency tension usually show low self-confidence, which makes them remain quiet in all situations, even if they have the capacity to express themselves, and their educational background worth hearing. The writer believes that speaking anxiety and oral fluency tension can even affect language learning. He argues that tension is more likely tied to special situations and circumstances that make the student feel uncomfortable as, for example, delivering oral presentation in front of a larger group of fellow students. Fear of staggering fluency has a direct link with fear of exposure and non- confidence feeling in a group. The researcher differentiates between three types of oral fluency within the track of fluency tension illustrated in the following figure:

The fast fluent students – the researcher defines them as those who speak English flowingly, confidently, and correctly without tension. They are brilliant students from early stages of study, and since they are fluent in Arabic, they surely will be the same in English. The slow fluent students are those who speak
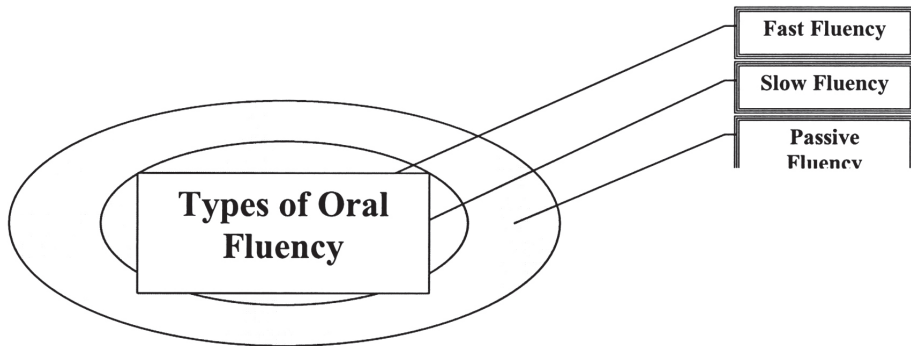
English hesitatingly and intermittently with much stammering and pauses, despite that, they are able to convey a message and express themselves. While the passive fluent students, the writer classified them as those who have poor English, non-confident students, and they have a significant amount of fluency tension. Furthermore, they have some fear of using English in the lecture halls. The sample of the study involved the three types. The researcher carried out oral activity experiments including conversations, presentations and dialogues. He came across the following findings:

Type of fluency	Competence rate
Fast fluent students	25%
Slow fluent students	45%
Passive fluent students	30%

The results of the experiment showed that only a quarter of the sample are relatively competent in oral fluency. This category involves students who come from distinctive backgrounds. Usually they belong to well-off families. They frequently attend English courses in Britain or in America. They have much contact with English language daily. Therefore, the rhythm of their fluency is fast and tensionless according to the common standards valid

in the College. The second type represents the majority of the sample. They are rather competent students. Their rate of oral fluency is not very high. They can cope with the situational and academic English. They can express themselves fairly well. Although the percentage of the passive fluent students of the sample is low, they represent a remarkable portion. This group includes students suffering from accumulative weakness in all English skills, not only in oral fluency. They tend to work on oral fluency disappointedly. Their main concern is just to pass the paper, in any way. They are not very keen on developing their level in oral fluency competence.

What causes fluency tension?

In fact, fluency tension has to do with fear, which in most cases has extended from nasty past events. It is most often proved that students who have not been motivated to speak English from an early stage of study also create weak communicators. Kail, R. (2004). Being silent at an early stage of age and study also leads to limited chances to practice oral skills. Parents' behavior and views on outspokenness, and poor oral fluency environment at schools have therefore a deep impact on students' fluency development. When students who were not used to speaking out are confronted with the College's challenging requirements in oral proficiency, their inhibition often ends in silence and withdrawnness. The researcher considers another aspect of the fluency tension students. He thinks that tension students are self-conscious, and often are afraid of being bullied or laughed at. This case produces fear of speaking fluently which is very closely linked to fear of exposure because fear of speaking is often instigated by the surroundings. The tension speaker does

not feel at ease and comfortable. The researcher always reminds his students how complicated the speech process really is, and how much effort it took to master the speaking of Arabic until it became an automated and natural skill. Then, how about speaking English fluently? Student individual's experience of his own speaking proficiency and voice is very closely related to the picture of his own personality. Learner characteristics that have to do with one's personality are also strongly connected to oral communication skills rather than acquisition of literacy or academic skills. Therefore, it is quite axiomatic that tension and low self-confidence happen in connection with negative experiences produced from poor speaking capacity.

Tips to enhance fluency and speaking skills

On the other hand, fluency in English does not necessarily require the ESL learner be available in a pure native English milieu. Using modern electronic devices such as iPod, MP3 and others equipped with original English material would provide a simulated English environment greatly helpful to any learner who appeals for mastering fluency in English. By using these electronics, the learner can change his surroundings. However, to be brilliant in speaking English fluently they need to utter what they have listened to, and read into systematic speech molds. Therefore, listening and reading are not enough to teach speaking fluently. Intensive practice of speaking out loudly will certainly produce effortless smooth fluency Baldo, V. (2006).

The researcher argues English language instructors have to stick to the target language in the classroom in order to enable students to use it outside the classroom as well. He states that it is crucial to integrate language in all possible communicative

situations in order to conform to reality and make speaking the target language in the classroom a natural thing. The researcher stresses that learning a language requires developing the means of communication. By using the target language, the instructors give students opportunities to use the language in different contexts.

The researcher advises low-achieving students to improve their English oral fluency competence by applying, the following rules:

1. Pronounce the English sounds distinctively and loudly.
2. Use the correct function of the words; gender, adjective, noun, etc.
3. Enrichment of vocabulary.
4. Familiarity with many phrases and complete sentences.
5. Practice of using words in correct order.
6. Speaking out confidently without tension or hesitation.
7. Training fluency ability by addressing friends or family members in English.
8. Use modern electronic devices, such as iPod, MP3 and others to practice native situational English.

In addition to the above mechanical procedures, the researcher confirms that fluency in English needs learning English. The mastering of the English syntax and grammar is a priority. Therefore, it is essential to the student to be acquainted with the techniques of English reading and writing. Reading English printed matters teaches the regular conversational terms, accompanied with extensive use of a dictionary that gives the meanings of English words in the mother tongue; Arabic, is recommendable. The next step is when the student becomes able to catch English in general; him / her can proceed to speaking it no matter how fluent him / her is in the beginning because fluency is a matter

of habit. So, a passive fluent student needs to build up that habit through communicating with his/her fellow students in English, and watching English programs and movies that provide daily used English. The distinctive fluent students of the sample pointed out that it took them a long time to get familiar with the habit of listening and communicating in English to build up the habit of fluency. The basic rule here is, that there is a response time in the student's mind. Since he/she has listened to English, his/her mind is triggered to respond in English. The advanced step of enhancing oral fluency be benefiting from the sophisticated electronic devices that are equipped with audio tutorials for pronunciation and intonation, as well as conversational material that are of great help to any student who is willing to speak English fluently.

On the other side of the argument, the researcher stresses the significant role of the instructors to enhancing the students' competence in acquiring the speaking and oral fluency skills. The researcher thinks that the teachers have to be prudent when introducing the fluency and speaking subjects, with taking into account the individual variances among students. Such variances spring from the lingual background of students. Therefore, the researcher recommends some procedures to English language tutors at KiLAW to follow when tackling the skills of fluency and speaking. They can be listed as follows:

a. Creating an English atmosphere in the class.

b. Presenting the subject matter in an exciting situational manner.

c. Motivating passive students to share in the discussions.

d. Diversifying the techniques of oral practice.

e. Getting students launch open discussions on general topics.

f. Implementing the methods of group work, pair work and role-play.

g. Steering and monitoring the students' work.

h. Encouraging low-achieving students to carry out power point presentations.

<u>Conclusion</u>

To most Arab students mastering the oral fluency skill is the thermometer that gauges the success of the teaching/learning process of the English language. Students think that if they are not able to speak English fluently, they consider themselves illiterate learners. To sum up the research, the writer has reached some fixed conclusions concerning oral fluency skill. It has been shown that the major causes of oral fluency deficiency among the students of the KiLAW College, in particular is accumulative weakness of teaching, implementation of wrong pedagogic procedures, lack of practice, and much use of the mother tongue in classes. The researcher has categorized types of difficulties that hamper oral fluency skill. For mastering this skill, the researcher has prescribed effective remedial procedures that may help in overcoming this problem. These procedures include micro instructions for pronunciation and intonation, and theoretical tips that teach the learner the techniques of speech fluidity. In accordance with the findings the researcher has collected out of the experiments he performed on the participants of the sample, it has been confirmed that oral fluency is a habit which can be acquired by perpetual exercise, constant practice, and application of the speaking skill rules in real situations and attitudes.

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