

Evaluate the causes of student's weakness in writing and speaking skills in English language, case study of Jordanian schools.

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Abstract

The English language is a collection of different skills which support to communication between persons. Although the textbooks of English language in schools are based on communicative knowledge but their capabilities of speaking and writing language are much low. They are not able to interact with people even by using simple sentences of English language. These weaknesses of writing and speaking English language maybe due to many reasons. This study investigates the causes of this poor impacts on the students of Jordanian schools. Data was collected through 150 respondents which was the teachers of Jordanian schools. As indicated by the research, the student's weakness in communicating and composing the English language the twenty main reasons were estimated in the Jordanian schools. The adopted questionnaire was used to measure the major reasons of student's weakness in writing and speaking skills. The school and family don not support, focus of teachers and follow-up of the significance of English language was the first main reason of student weakness in writing and speaking skills. Through the proper specialist of English language teachers, launching a campaign to spread awareness, proper follow-up, inspiration by social bodies and government like ministry of education.

Keywords: English language, writing, speaking, Schools

Introduction

English language appeared as lingua franca; hence many people learn English and it's the only way to move in society because of its importance in many fields (Crystal, 2002). According to Cook (2005) everyone is well aware of the facts that English is the only rapidly progressing language for global dealings. Crystal stated (1997), "The medium of English is a great deal of the world's information, more importantly in the fields of medical and science technology. "Most of the critics like Held et al. (1999) said English has turned into the primary mode of language of correspondence in business, political issues, organizations, science and the students community, just as being the dominant language of globalized promoting and popular culture. Benson and Lor (1999) are in the opinion since English is the language which becomes on the highest rank globally, this is the only reason it is important for everyone to learn English language. It becomes the basic need of our routine to move in any society because it is the only way through which everyone interacts easily. Similarly English is admired as the language of high class in Yemen also. We could see the importance of English in every field like political activities, television broadcast, global investment, transfers, ingresses and oil establishments. Moving toward the importance of education in academic, students of Yemen's have opportunity to learn it in first six basic and secondary years of his educational life. After all these efforts students who leave the secondary school they have very low proficiency level in English. They face many difficulties in communication in English even they are unable to speak or write very simple sentences. We are aware of this fact because when these students appear for entrance exams for specialized studies like English studies, medical or

engineering. it is very important to know about the issues because it is difficult for long time TEFEL and General Studies.

Yemeni school learners have many factors which affect their English learning in different ways positively and negatively. These factors may be included schooling procedure, linguistic space among Arabic and English, linguistic position, student's requirements and objectives, noble clusters, preliminary stage for linguistic knowledge, education graces and approaches, enthusiasm, and schoolroom interface. However these issues must need to identify properly and find the best ways which affect the students of concern at great level.

When we talk about English Language (EL), it seems to be that we are talking about the major window by which we get the whole view of the world since it is the first language used in most areas of life. The most important handiness of English language that leads to effective communication between people is speaking skill. Bygate claims that "Speaking proficiency is the ability in using oral language to explore ideas, intentions, thoughts and feelings to other people as a way to make the message clearly delivered and well understood by the listeners". Khamkhen (2010) believed that language proficiency is significant in a second language. So; most people who learn English Language have in their minds that they like to master the goal of developing proficiency in speaking skill though it is a difficult task.

Celce and Olshtain (2000) noted that the most difficult skill to learn is speaking as it needs the speech command and further skills like terminology repositioning, grammatical pattern's choice, and sociocultural capability. The linguists tried to find an appropriate method for teaching English Language according to the importance of skills from their Perspectives. The views of those who interested in methods of teaching a language were various. For example, in language translation method, the concentration was on reading and writing abilities whereas, in direct method the focus is on speaking and listening. The supporters of each method believed that the skills were vary according to their importance. Anyhow, they all agreed that any skill is developed through practice, that is (read to read, speak to speak etc).

According to Wongsuwana (2006) skills of speaking language can be proficient and it does not rely on the talent. The linguists and experts of languages wrote many articles and books which affect the problems in learning distant languages in general and predominantly speaking skills. In Jordan, the students start learning the skills of English Language from the first year of school (grade 1) extending to the last year of school (grade 12). From involvement as a teacher of English thirty years in the Ministry of Education in Jordan, I noticed that the students in general do not have the desire to study English Language and this could be clear on the days of the General Secondary Exam of English Language. This may refer to factors that students suffer from.

Mueen (2000) stated that students facing different issues which effect on learning performance of student in speaking English proficiency; which included, absence of acceptable and proper terminology, bashfulness, worried, dreadful to express, and absence of self-assurance. Harry stated that "anxiety and depression are just two effective factors that contribute to learning difficulties or are the result of learning difficulties. The impact of persistent failure can adversely affect a pupil's self-esteem, confidence, perceived self-efficacy, attitude and motivation. When confronted by certain tasks pupils may develop anxious feelings, fearing they will fail." Biber (2007) stated that some important educational abilities such as presentation and taking part in classroom conversation help them to improve their terminology related to English language, believed that some student spoken abilities, for example, giving spoken introduction or taking part in classroom discourse need a lot more extensive scope of spoken information, syntactic complexity and dissertation capability and maintain this for daily life conversation.

Theoretical Background

In Jordan English is known as secondary language. In Jordanian system of education still it is compulsory subject for all students of schools (AlKhasawneh, 2013). Instead of learning language in primary and secondary schools the aptitude of English is very low. Their students are bearing many problems predominantly in scripting skills. (Zawahreh, 2012). Works which already done on written projects of EFL students have shown us, their scripts are full of many issues. According to the knowledge of researchers, students of Jordanian schools make errors when they have limited knowledge for writing passage. The purpose of these research works were to highlight the errors done by the students and improve their writing and reading capabilities. In this research the purpose is to find out the speaking and writing problems in English language among the Jordanian schools. The purpose of this study should be continue if the authorities take notice and put some efforts on teachers and lecturers to make them better so these issues could be resolved by applying certain issues.

Literature review

James (1988) clarifies that mistakes recorded as a hard copy, for example, relational words, sentences, and weak terminologies in language in which biggest portion of mistakes which are regularly performed by the students of English language. As the structure of sentence that is estimated as a part of the arrangement, a couple of learners that are habitual for the significance of procedure, they made amount of errors. The students of language typically feel inconveniences during learning of grammar in the Language, like, utilization of topic understanding, preposition and the utilization of right sentence. Abushihab et al. (2011) analyzed the mistakes of language in Jordan they exposed the most doubtful areas of the students in making out of entry were relational words, morphological errors, action words, passivation articles and paragraphs.

James (1988) feels that English language is one of the high-positioning assumptions of the learners of second language. It is identified with the assessment of the errors made by the students of second language by clashing in the levels of learners and the goal of language measures and explaining the perceived mistakes. Crystal (1999) understands, that mistake examination is the investigation of incorrect methods created by second language learning students throughout the learning of second language. James (2001) said that examination of mistakes mentions to " the study of linguistic ignorance, the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance " while Ridha, (2012) describes mistake investigation as "the procedure to watch, arrange and dissect the deviations of the standards of the second/unknown dialects and afterwards to uncover the frameworks worked by student".

As we know about the fact now English is recognized as the medium to communicate in any field.it is the need of every society businesses such as legislation, knowledge, fine art, travel, and finances. If anyone want to identify what is happening in all around the world, to learn the English language is important. In each language there are certain standards and guidelines correspondingly when they start writing in English and when attempt to speak them some different guidelines of the primary issue learners experience of composing and they didn't have a clue how to place them in their words. This is the reason students of ESL/EFL face many difficulties (Harris & Cunningham, 1994).

Rama et al. (2007) directed an activity of a research study on the hypothesis of applying games of English language to recover the expertise of spoken English classes in a grade school called "Jurong" in Singapore. The members in this investigation were seventy eight learners. The scientists utilized two distinct techniques for two unique gatherings, they separated learners into trial clusters in which was actualized an open strategy where were executed games of English language to

improve language abilities, and a control cluster which was engaged in an instructor focused technique in which educators utilized genuine exercises including the fundamental jargon to play out a discussion. The aftereffects of the investigation composed in two tables. The main table demonstrates the investigation of pre-tests and post-tests where 4 learners were not available in class during the pre-test and an aggregate of thirty five learners were available in pre-test and post-test.

Hamzah and Ting, (2009) directed a qualitative research study on accomplishment of utilizing gathering work in encouraging speaking study of English classrooms. In this research study there was thirty-three students and three English instructors. The analysts directed three verbal exercises where learners were watched then they got questionnaires and three qualified instructors were seen too. Questionnaires, perceptions and meetings were utilized as collected information tools. The researchers did a sequence of surveys in Malay language where learners could give their assessments about the gathering work exercises to improve the spoken skills and their awareness of cooperation in those trainings. The outcomes of the investigation communicated energy in gathering work trainings and capability in communicated in language, since they were secure of conveying everything that needs to be conveyed in little gatherings which stayed away from pressure to communicate in another language.

There are many factors which play active part in the procedure of learning English language. There are some additional features which show major role of knowledge and learning, students' requirements and objectives, instruction and erudition graces, and school room interface (Walqui & Ed, 2000). In the opinion of Gawi (2012), some of the major issues which track toward the failure of students in English language were lack of self-confidence, energy, test oriented knowledge and outside help. While the other scholars are in the opinion that age is the important factors which create issues in learning English (Gawi, 2012). The opinion of how learners achieve the way of carrying classes. Researcher is in the thinking that linguistic student's beliefs to attain top position but they encounter some issues which causes failure in learning language (Horwitz, 1999). Ability to refine self-governing, make brilliant theories, traditional suitable confirmations, make opportunities to practice the system foundation reservations and uses right informational approaches have been assigned by teachers that known as great characters which help the learners to turn into a fruitful learning in language. There are many reasons behind the flaws of the schools in Yemeni weaker in English language (Brown, 2007). Abdolmalek (2009) has claimed that students who failed in learning language is because of their large family and this is the problem which leads them toward child labor. He also gives us other problems that are instructors and the way how they treat students, course books also reach to them very lately and the problem which is very important to resolve is overcrowded classrooms. These problems lead them toward the weakness of student's performance in different fields.

According to Abbad (1988), students are weak because of unsuitable linguistic training approaches and unsuitable linguistic erudition atmosphere. Similarly, some other scholars were in the point of view that Arab students are weak in learning this language is because of syllabus problem and unnatural way of delivering lectures and they have not proper environment with all these issues they have lack of self-assurance. Some of them were in point of view that behavior and enthusiasm are the key point which helps them to play a successful prominent rule in learning English. According to Shabbir and Bughio (2009) said that Arabic students are the one who face more difficulties in English language because both languages English and Arabic both have completely opposite structure according to articles, prepositions and culture.

After looking for many works, Iddou-Derraz (2009) concludes that the important feature which basis on the failure in students of these schools is only the process and method which is indicated by

the teachers and it is very difficult for students to cope up with all these things in small period of time. Her point of view is that if learner start learning this language in very early age (Singleton, 1989). Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) were in the opinion that students who start learning L2 in their early age their proficiency rate is much better than others who started this in primary or secondary level. Iddou-Derraz (2009) also state that students behavior, absence of enthusiasm to know about language, not firm belief on self, and many other issues which move them to ineffective education. Shively (2008) opened a research on students of Spanish and come up with facts and figures that how they become very well aware of the significance concerned with some exact dynamics. The most important factor is that when in the beginning of their life and they come to know about the word linguistic the focus shifted toward the local instructions and information, most importantly toward the pronunciation in classrooms also.

Speaking is the main language ability from all the four “writing, reading listening and speaking”. The best path through which everyone could tell the other about his thoughts and feelings or even can also express their illusions is speaking. Moreover, if anyone is aware of any linguistic he is known as the speaker of that language. Furthermore, Willis (1996) there should be more four terms to meet if we come to know about the verbal language to occur, struggles for spoken language to happen, and they are: the coincidental to exercise the language, enthusiasm, the acquaintance, and appropriate training. According to Willis students also emphasizes that students prerequisite the chance to prompt their emotional state or judgments and tryout an inspiring neighboring expending the linguistic they have attained minus sensation daunted by anybody or no matter what.

Similarly if we continuously looking toward the same side, we come to know about that the problems encounter by students are the same and it is also important to maintain the level teaching by the instructors. Furthermore, Rababa (2005) give us the view of many issues which basis of problems in speaking English language between learners and some issues also directly connected to the students, education methods, program and the setting. Oxford (1990) declares that the maximum key feature which influences the process of learning is upgrade the status of teachers and the way how the deliver the lecture by using this kind of instruction they help them to avoid failure and the issue encounter in learning language which is very necessary and become the need of society. The effective factors need to take by the administrations which overcome different major issues included self-consciousness, nervousness, deficiency of self-possession, noble compression, intimate or families support, enthusiasm and apprehension.

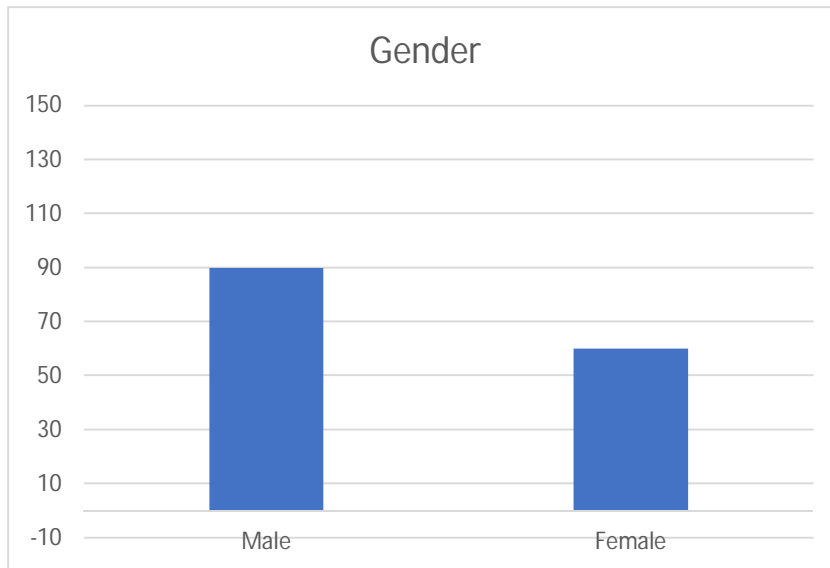
Methodology

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the main causes of student’s weakness in writing and speaking skills in the English language, a case study of Jordanian schools. This research study is based on the adopted questionnaire which includes quantitative research design to achieve objectives. In this research study the population contain the teachers of the private and government schools of Amman city. The sample size of 150 teachers was selected through random sampling technique which consists of male and female teachers who can evaluate the causes of student weakness in writing and speaking skills in the English language.

Data Analysis

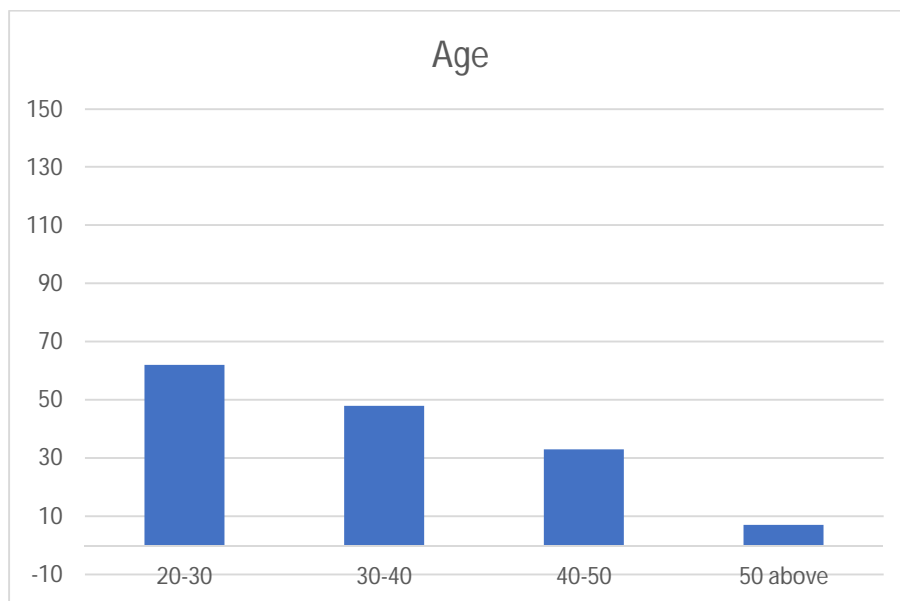
Data were collected from participants carefully from the teachers of schools in Amman. The frequency and percentages were found to show the weight of each factor which causes of student’s weakness in writing and speaking skills in English language.

Gender of Respondents



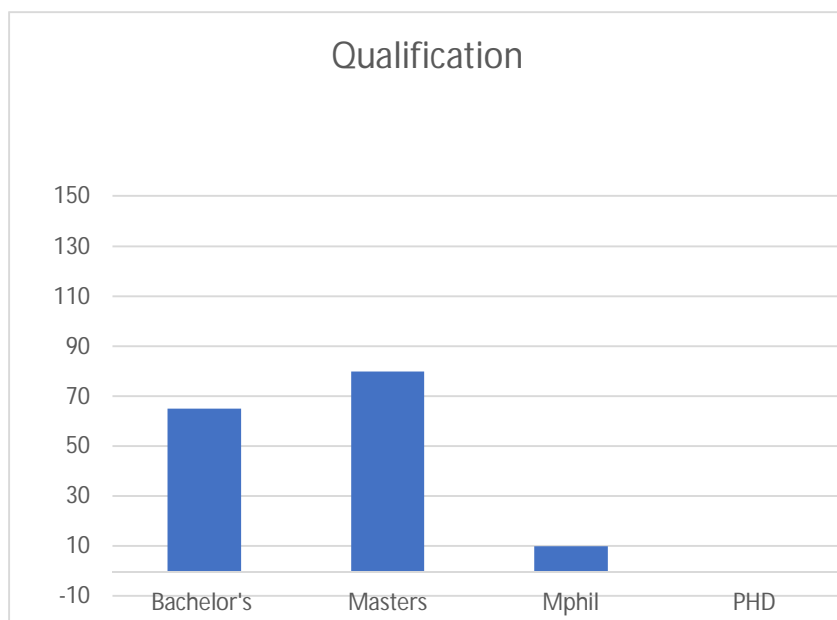
Above graph shows the demographic analysis of research, there were 150 total number of respondents in which 90 were males and 60 were females from the total sample of this study.

Age of Respondents



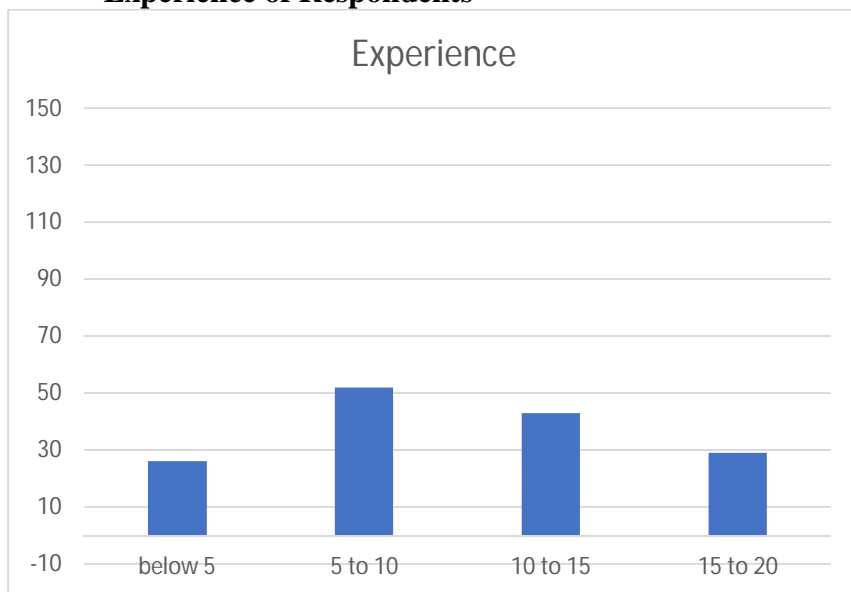
The above graph shows the age of respondents. From the total sample of 150 respondents there were 62 respondents having maximum age of 20 to 30 years while there were 48 respondents having age 30 to 40 years. There were 33 respondents between 40 to 50 years of age and 7 respondents were above 50 years.

Qualification of Respondents



Above graph shows the qualification of respondents. There were total 150 respondents in which 65 respondents were bachelor’s degree holder, 80 respondents were with Master’s degree holder and 10 respondents were MPhil degree holder.

Experience of Respondents



Above graph shows the working experience of respondents from the total 150 respondents. There were 26 respondents below 5 years of experience, 52 respondents were 5 to 10 years of experience, 43 respondents were 10 to 15 years of experience and 29 respondents were 15 to 20 years of experience.

Table 1***The Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Students***

Items	Frequency	Percentage
The school and family do not encourage, follow-up and educate learners of the importance of English.	22	69.57
The lack of various instructional aids which can make English clearer and easier.	18	56.52
Students do not participate inside the classroom.	16	47.83
Students think that English is the language of Jewish people.	14	39.13
The large number of students in one classroom.	11	34.78
The society does not accept English because it is not used.	11	34.78
Teaching grammar rather than language use	9	30.43
Using traditional and boring instructional aids and materials.	9	30.43
The density of the curriculum leads to facing difficulties in doing the homework.	8	29.36
Students do not like English and studying in general.	6	26.52
Students' belief that English is difficult.	4	21.74
English is not introduced at earlier age.	4	21.74
Not doing certain activities such as morning broadcasting, wall posters and class competitions.	3	17.39
Students' aptitude may be weak.	3	17.39
Students have to study too many subjects that create difficulty to focus on English.	2	8.70
The time of the lessons is not enough.	2	8.50
Discipline problems in the classroom.	2	8.43
The lack of some English teachers in some schools especially in rural areas.	2	8.32
Teachers' low salary does not encourage them to do their best.	2	8.08
Some students write the meaning and pronunciation of some words in Arabic.	2	8.01

Findings

The above responses of school teachers produced a list of reasons why students were weak in writing and speaking skills in English language. These above results were associated to the weight of percentages. The majority of teachers said that the school and family members did not encourage, not proper follow-up and educate students for the importance of English language in our society, which were (69.57%). (56.52%) teachers were also point out the absence of several instructional support which make English language easy. Mostly students do not participate in the classroom activities (47.83%) teachers point out this and so on.

Conclusion

Analysis of overall results of this study, there were 20 reasons listed by teachers. Considering the each factor, the result shows the most important factor on first which needs improvement. The cause of "school and family do not encourage, follow-up and educate learners of the importance of English" was considered as the main cause of student's weakness in writing and speaking skills in English language. The above results in findings, suggested the teachers to take proper actions on the

key causes which give positivity to the achievement of students in English speaking and writing. This happens through proper specialist of English language, proper follow-up, inspiration of society and government departments like educational ministries. Advance teaching rules and strategies should be taught that can improve student's communicative and writing capabilities.

Recommendations

On the basis of above results of this study, the following recommendations can be helpful in order to assist and make easier for the students and teachers.

Teachers should cover all the weak areas of above results. Parents should try to motivate their children to participate energetically in learning English language. Teachers should not teach in their local language in the class of English language. The decision makers like relevant educational ministries should focus on the causes of weakness in English language. Course designers should manage the course content according to the current need. Improvement by launching promotional campaigns to encourage the awareness regarding the importance of speaking and writing English language in Arabic countries.

Future Research

On the bases of above findings future research can be on the assessment of teachers and the other important factors which contribute positively in the success to learn English language. Researchers can take student's point of view about the causes of weakness in their English language. Further research can be conducted on the other Arabic countries.

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