



Social

DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECONDARY LANGUAGE IN THE SAUDI ARABIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

English as an additional language is inevitable in the Saudi Arabian education system. This study is an analysis of some of the causes of English learning problems. The goals of the study were to find out the root cause of the problems in learning English; to find out if there was a significant difference in the causes of the problems that students were comparing due to various attributive variables such as gender, location, habit of reading English daily newspapers, and a habit of listening to English news. The methodology for collecting information was a survey method. The sample consisted of 500 students with 307 boys and 193 girls. The data collected was analyzed. The result of this study showed that the environment was the main cause of learning English. Boys had more problems compared to girls. Another important finding was that rural students felt more problems than urban students.

Keywords: English Learning; Saudi Arabian Education System; Secondary Language.

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1. Introduction

As Saudi Arabia becomes globalized, there is a sense of English as a global language, not just a foreign language of the United States or the United Kingdom. Arabs in different contexts are more likely to have witnessed, or experienced benefits to have more skills than before. These changes in functions and benefits have resulted in change in the status of English from that of a foreign language to a global language. In the field of teaching, English is growing day after day because of good and dedicated teachers; the researchers contributed something to the English language teaching and in addition many linguists have made imprint in the field of applied linguistics.

2. Literature Review

English instructing and learning in KSA dates back to the late 1920s, when English was first presented in the Saudi training framework. The correct date that English was presented first as an

outside dialect in Saudi Arabian instruction is obscure. Al-Shabbi (1989) has expected that it dates to 1924, when the General Directorate of Education was built up. Niblock (2006) agreed, expressing that ELT was presented before the development of KSA as a state in 1932. Baghdadi (1985) likewise showed that English was presented as a school subject in Saudi grade schools without precedent for 1924. Al-Seghyer (2014), then again, trusts that English started to be instructed in Saudi Arabia in 1928, five years after the Directorate of Education was set up in the nation in 1923. Different creators have shown that English was acquainted with Saudi schools in the late 1930s or even later. Al-Johani (2009) guaranteed that English was presented in the 1930s after the disclosure of oil, and was utilized just with regards to business, while the administration held up until the 1950s to acquaint it with the syllabus. Al-Ghamdi and Al-Saadat (2002) observed that the teaching of English was accessible first in KSA in the Scholarship Preparation School, set up in 1936 in Makkah to plan Saudis to obtain Western training. The revelation of oil in the mid-1930s impacted the educating and learning of English in the nation. For instance, Zuhur (2011) affirmed that after the Second World War, the world turned out to be substantially more intrigued by Saudi Arabia on account of its newfound enormous oil holds. Faruk (2013) reasoned that the undeniably cozy connection amongst KSA and the USA around then made English more pertinent to Saudi monetary and social advancement than any time in recent memory. In this regard, Mahboob and Elyas (2014) brought up that English has turned out to be connected inseparably with the talk of oil. The business has demonstrated so crucial to the advancement of English that a few analysts, as Karmani (2005), have named the investigation of the flow of oil and the spread of English in the Arabian Gulf district, including Saudi Arabia, 'petro-semantics'. They included that this monetary request, which was driven by a social goal, supported the interest for enhanced English direction in the nation. Al-Braik (2007) cleared up that English ended up critical in the KSA instruction framework in view of its apparent financial esteem. He included that, as right on time as 1978, KSA as of now depended vigorously on the vast number of outside organizations that contributed fundamentally to the financial advancement of the nation.

The Saudi government passed a lot of major policies on instructing English in the nation. As indicated by Mahboob and Elyas (2014), English was acquainted with KSA state funded school in class 7 from 1970– 2001. The private schooling framework is totally extraordinary, and non-public schools in KSA have given English training from class 1 since the start of the 1970s (Faruk, 2013). Szyliowicz (1973) cleared up that English was incorporated into the educational programs of just a couple of the early Saudi schools and afterward just for a couple of hours for each week at the secondary school level. Up to the mid-1980s, 6 hours for each week were assigned for teaching English in both middle and secondary schools (levels 7-9), yet this number was later decreased to 4 in the two phases. At the college level, Faruk (2013) expressed that English was first educated as a mandatory subject in the Islamic law school set up in Mecca in 1949 for 2 hours for every week for a long time. Al-Abed Al-Haq and Smadi (1996) believed that King Saud University was the primary college to build up an English division in 1957. They included that the main English division for female students was established at the Women's College of Education in Mecca in 1972. As indicated by them, the majority of the colleges set up in the 1970s, including King Saud University (1957), King Abdul-Aziz University (1961), Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud University (1974), King Fahd University (1975), King Faisal University (1976), and Umm Al-Qura University (1980) had English divisions. The globalization and modernization strategies received in KSA in the 1990s have prompted the expanded utilization of English in the nation. Looney (2004) demonstrated that the rise of the term Saudisation, which alludes to the procedure of

governmental policy regarding minorities in society for Saudis ordered in the mid-1990s, made it critical for Saudi nationals to accomplish etymological fitness in English so they could catch benefit industry positions and additionally positions inside the center businesses.

Elyas (2008) expressed that the KSA government choose in 2003 to present English in every single elementary school. Faruk (2013) contended that Saudi Arabia's vision changed fundamentally in 2005, in an attempt to build up an information-based economy to coordinate with other nations. This has brought about a gigantic upheaval and the quantity of colleges in KSA expanded from just 8 of every 2001 to 28 government and 8 private colleges in 2015. This enormous development of instructive foundations at all levels has influenced the teaching of English in the country. Faruk (2013) expected that almost all Saudi colleges and universities today have English divisions and they focus to teach English for at least one semester. The present target of instructing and learning English in KSA was clarified in the official rules of the Ministry of Education manual (MoE 2002). Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) expounded on the present status of English in KSA, expressing that it is at present the medium of direction in specialized training, prescription, and other numerous majors. They are of the view that presently English is not treated a dialect to just pass examinations, but instead, is a subject essential in advanced education, worldwide correspondence and business, and exchange.

3. Methods and Tools

This investigation purposes at reviewing several reasons for the difficulties in learning English as an additional language. The data collection was done through survey method. The population comprised of 500 students from different universities of Saudi Arabia.

4. Results and Discussion

As observed in Table 1, Environment is the foremost cause in learning English while relating it with Attitude and available Resources.

Table 1: Causes of Problems in Learning English

| Dimension | Number | Score | Rank |
|-------------|--------|--------|------|
| Environment | 500 | 70.860 | I |
| Attitude | 500 | 75.055 | II |
| Resources | 500 | 76.42 | III |

It is evident in Table 2 that male students took Environment and Attitude as the main cause of problem in learning English than girls. The resources as the reason of problem in learning English with respect to gender is not much prevalent. The students studying in rural areas believed boldness and resources as the main cause of problems in learning English than urban students (Table 3).

Table 2: Problems in Learning English with respect to gender

| Dimension | Gender | Number | Mean | SD |
|-------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Environment | Male | 257 | 68.33 | 8.375 |
| | Female | 243 | 73.58 | 10.137 |
| Attitude | Male | 257 | 71.61 | 9.002 |

| | | | | |
|-----------|--------|-----|-------|--------|
| | Female | 243 | 78.75 | 10.006 |
| Resources | Male | 257 | 75.68 | 10.221 |
| | Female | 243 | 77.22 | 12.298 |

Table 3: Problems in Learning English with respect to Locality

| Dimension | Locality | Number | Mean | SD |
|-------------|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| Environment | Rural | 291 | 70.15 | 9.023 |
| | Urban | 209 | 71.94 | 10.339 |
| Attitude | Rural | 291 | 73.64 | 10.068 |
| | Urban | 209 | 77.20 | 9.890 |
| Resources | Rural | 291 | 75.17 | 10.888 |
| | Urban | 209 | 78.32 | 11.636 |

The number of students reading English newspapers and those having a habit of listening to news channels as per both gender wise and location wise is given in Tables 4 and 5. The males outshine females in terms of having a habit of reading newspapers and listening to news channels frequently. Also, the rural students lag behind the urban students in both newspaper reading and watching English news channels. This can be attributed to lack of resources and facilities at rural and far flung areas.

Table 4: Number of respondents having Habit of Reading English newspaper

| Habit of Reading English newspaper | Number (Gender) | Number (Locality) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Frequently | Male=145 | Rural=42 |
| | Female=55 | Urban=158 |
| Daily | Male=53 | Rural=48 |
| | Female=97 | Urban=102 |
| Occasionally | Male=48 | Rural=49 |
| | Female=52 | Urban=51 |
| Never | Male=31 | Rural=40 |
| | Female=19 | Urban=10 |

Table 5: Number of respondents having Habit of Listening to English News

| Habit of Listening to English News | Number (Gender) | Number (Locality) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Frequently | Male=162 | Rural=28 |
| | Female=38 | Urban=172 |
| Daily | Male=41 | Rural=20 |
| | Female=89 | Urban=80 |
| Occasionally | Male=43 | Rural=30 |
| | Female=57 | Urban=70 |
| Never | Male=42 | Rural=45 |
| | Female=8 | Urban=5 |

5. Conclusions

The result of this study showed that the environment was the main cause of learning English. Boys had more problems compared to girls. Another important finding was that rural students felt more problems than urban students. The government agencies need to produce an encouraging atmosphere in educational institutions to study English. They should offer them with English newspapers, journals and magazines to enrich the reading skill. The role of parents is however, to inspire the wards to communicate in English even at their homes and to encourage them to watch English programmes and listen to English news.

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