

An investigation of Problems Encountered Libyan English Students in Learning English Language Skills (the problem and remedies).

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الملخص

بشكل عام ، يواجه معظم الطلاب بعض المشكلات في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية أو أجنبية في البلدان غير الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية مثل ليبيا. لذلك ، فإن التحقيق في مشاكل تعلم مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الثانوية العامة الليبية في القرابولي هو الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة. يواجه الطلاب الليبيون أنواعاً مختلفة من المشكلات والعقبات التي تجعل العملية بطيئة وضعيفة نوعاً ما. هذا يجعل الباحث يركز على المهارات الأساسية وهي الاستماع والتحدث والقراءة والكتابة. ويمكن القول أن الطلاب لا يحصلون على التقنيات المناسبة لتعلم هذه المهارات. لذلك ، يجب على المعلمين اتباع أفضل الإجراءات لتدريس مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية.

Abstract

It has been generally that most students face some problems in learning English as a second or foreign language in non-English speaking countries like Libya. So, the investigation of the problems in learning English skills in Libyan public secondary schools in Al-Garabuli is the main aim of this study. Libyan students face different kinds of problems and obstacles that make the process slow and rather weak. This takes the researcher tries to focus on the core skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing It can be said that students are not given

appropriate techniques through learning these skills. Therefore, teachers should follow the best procedures for teaching English skills.

Keywords: Problem-based learning English core skills, a problem and its remedies

Introduction

Since English has become an international language, many countries, like Libya, introduced the language into its educational system. Learning English as a Foreign Language (LEFL) has become very popular during the last century, and foundations have been set to this discipline. Students, still face different kinds of problems that make the learning process slow and rather weak. Learning English in Arab countries, especially in Libya, encounter many problems that prevent students to achieve their task sufficiently. Therefore, the difficulties that faced by Libyan students are shared with other students in other Arab and non-Arab countries. Though, English is introduced as a compulsory subject in the Libyan educational system from the seventh to the twelfth grade. There are still some serious problems in learning English, especially for the intermediate stage. Teaching English in Libya faces different kinds of obstacles due to little understanding of the aims of teaching English and dearth of qualified teachers. Libyan learners have been negatively affected by cancellation of English subject between 1986 and 1992 from secondary education, as was the case with the other educational levels, due to the tension between Al-Qaddafi's government and the West.

Understanding the problems and obstacles more specifically, it could be confirmed with the help of two basic facts: there are problems and obstacles in teaching / learning the target language (L-2), and there have to get solutions of those problems. The researcher says that, like all other languages, English is a

skill-based subject. This takes the researcher recommended to give the priority on explaining the core skills namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing should by English teachers. Any deprivation in any of these skills could cause a far reaching impact on the acquisition of the language as no skill can be learned or used in isolation from others. Accordingly, these problems affect students' proficiency in English. This study aims at detecting these problems in order to suggest some remedial steps to overcome the aforementioned problems

In the context of the current study, English language is used as a foreign language; it is learned in classrooms and is not widely used outside classrooms. However, due to the increasing use of English as a global language in educational and economic fields, the teaching and learning of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills have recently become extremely important in the Libyan context. The growing interest in the teaching of these skills is due to the increasing demand for learners to perform English efficiently in order to facilitate a channel of communication within local and international marketing. That interest coincided with a change in Libyan foreign policy that aimed to re-establish a friendly relationship with the West during the 1990s. To meet these demands, many centres of English language have been established in the private sector since the early 2000s. These centers teach the English language for all levels and for general and/or academic purposes, and are assessed on whether they provide good programmes for the teaching of these skills. That is, the main aim for learners who register in these centers is to master the English language.

The Statement of Problems

Teaching and learning English language depend on the use of four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) perfectly. The teaching of receptive and productive skills faces number problems which need to be addressed. We cannot

say that one particular skill is more important than others are. In fact, we cannot separate them from one another. Of course, the method and the style of teaching of all the four skills are different. Libyan English teachers and students encounter some problems in their classroom activities. These need big efforts to ease teaching process and create some solutions. In the current study discusses these problems for each skill and tries to get remedies for them.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are presented below:-

1. To identify the problems that are related to four core skills of English as a foreign language in secondary schools.
2. To suggest some remedies to overcome problems which encounter Libyan secondary school students

Literature review

Brown (2014) defines teaching as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand. Teaching cannot be defined apart from learning, teaching is guided and facilitated learning, enabling a person to learn, and setting the conditions for learning. He mentions that learning can be defined as acquiring knowledge of a subject or a skill via study, experience, or instruction. Yule (1998) asserts that for most people, learning a second language is completely different from learning first language, people learn the first language when they are babies, while they learn the second language while they are teenagers or adults. The environment where you learn the first and second language is also different, while the baby acquires the first language from the people around him like parents and relatives; the second language is usually learned at schools. The process of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) includes several elements, such as

teaching materials, methods of teaching, teacher's role in teaching English, teacher's experiences, teaching-learning environment and resources and teaching aids.

Learning a language is a long process but it is not tiresome. It is enjoyable but the condition is that there should be a highly qualified and competent teacher. Appointing teachers to teach English as a foreign language is a hard task, so, the authority should concentrate on appointing a professional teacher. Therefore, the learning of English totally depends on competence of the teacher. If a teacher is found incompetent, he should immediately be replaced by a competent teacher.

Many reasons that cause students poor performance of their learning English as a foreign language such as the weakness of curriculum design, weakness of English teachers, and lack of students' learning motivation. According to John & Ehow (2011), stated that the problems of learning English language derived from many different factors in different environments such as school resources, class size, quality of teachers, and the school attendance of learners. Murray & Christison (2010), observed that many students think English is only a school subject and they don't see its significance for their prospective employment to work with multinational or national companies where English graduations are employed.

Normazidah, Koo, & Hazita (2012, p.42) presented factors that impact the EFL learners to have poor performance in English language learning as follows: "{(a) English is regarded as a difficult subject to learn. (b) Learners' learning depends on the English teachers as authorities. (c) There is a lack of support to use English in the home environment and the community. (d) Learners have insufficient or lacking of exposure to the language as there is a limited opportunity to use English outside the classroom. (e) Students have a limitation of vocabulary proficiency as

well as English reading materials are not always available. (f) Learners have an unwillingness and lack of motivation to learn English as they do not see the immediate need to use the language. (g) Lack of motivation for learning or the negative attitude towards the target language."

Roozenburg (1995) defines a problem, as it always has to do with dissatisfaction about a certain situation. However, satisfaction is a relative concept, so problems are also of a relative nature. A big problem for a person may not be a problem at all for someone else. Practically, problems of learning EFL are those obstacles faced by students during the learning process.

Hornby, (2005, p.124), stated that pay attention to somebody that you can hear. This implies the idea of understanding the message you hear so that you can respond to it and interact with the person you hear.

According to Ur (1996) it is important to work on the development of listening comprehension, since students must learn to function successfully in real-life listening situations. Harmer (2007) mentioned that there are two different types of listening (extensive and intensive). Extensive listening refers to listening, in which students often do for pleasure or some other reason. The audio material they consume in this way often on CDs in their cars, on MP3 players, DVDs, videos or on the internet. This kind of listening is very important from the motivational point of view, because it increases dramatically when students make their own choices about what they are going to listen to. On the other hand, Intensive Listening is the one in which students listen specifically in order to study the way in which English is spoken. It usually takes place in classrooms or language laboratories, and typically occurs when teachers are present to guide students through any listening difficulties, and point them to areas of interest.

Speaking skill is very important for teacher to encourage students to speak in the classroom. Teachers do not encourage students to use the language, so, the student will never improve their speaking. Students usually do not use the target language beyond classrooms. That is why they need to speak up in the classroom. If the students make any mistakes, the teacher himself will evaluate those mistakes. Most of the students are unwilling to speak because they do not acquire the target language. Students do not even interact with other students or keep silent when they are asked to speak English all the time. Therefore, it is important to create a comfortable atmosphere in their classrooms where students are not afraid to use communicating with their teacher

Zhang, 2009 argued that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English. According to Ur, (1996, P. 121), there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking. They are as follows:-

- a. Inhibition. Students are worried about making mistakes, fearful, or simply shy.
- b- Nothing to say. Students have no motivate to express themselves.
- c. Low or uneven participation. Only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominant, while others speak very little or not at all.
- d. Mother –tongue use. Learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue.

Al-Abri, (2008) argued that the lack of oral activities in textbooks is a strong reason for students' difficulties in speaking, and thus, he recommended including some oral activities in the form of songs, rhymes, and simple stories and more conversational language to enable students to have more fun and enjoy learning to improve their speaking skill.

Reading is a receptive language process. It is a psycholinguistic process; it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with a meaning, which the reader constructs. There is an essential interaction between language and thought in reading. The writer encodes thought as language and the reader decodes language to thought.

Heilman, Blair, and Rubly, (1998) defined reading as an active process of constructing meaning from a written in relation to the experiences and knowledge of the reader. Grabe (2002) explored that different people use the term “Reading” in different ways. Hadfield, (2008) says teachers play a crucial role to develop reading skills, so, They should help students to focus their reading, in that way, they read for meaning instead of getting involved on individual words or important details for using the meaning of a text. Teachers also need to help their students to read in diverse ways and use sub-skills that will help them to improve and understand what they are reading efficiently.

According to Harmer, (2007) to understand reading texts, students need to do some activities or use some strategies, called Reading Skills. First, students need to be able to scan the text, which means reading quickly while looking for specific information. On the other hand, students also need to be able to skim, which is used to quickly identify the general idea of a text, readers are focused briefly on a few words per line, headings or the first and last sentence in a paragraph.

Writing is a complex metacognitive activity that draws on an individual's knowledge, basic skill, strategies, and ability to coordinate multiple processes. Graham (1997) identified the following four vital areas in the writing process. They are:

- a. Knowledge of writing topics.
- b. skill for producing and drafting text.
- C. .processes for energizing and motivating participants to write with enthusiasm,

and e- directing thought and actions through strategies to archive writing goals. Grape and Kaplan(1996), in their book (*Theory and practice of writing*), explored the meaning of writing in terms of the rhetorical triangle in writing. Such a triangle consists of the reader, the recipient of the final product of the writing process, the writer, the originator of the message; and the subject matter and the text itself. Both the writer and the reader have to consider all these aspects when writing and reading, respectively for each one plays a significant role in the journey towards meaning.

Problems related to four skills

1. Listening skill problems

- a- Most of teachers did not use tape recorders in teaching listening comprehension and even those who used tapes did not use them effectively.
- b- Teachers did not use pre-listening during listening or post-listening activities in teaching listening comprehension.
- c- Teachers did not do any modifications to the new syllabus tasks to suite their student's level and interest.
- d- Teachers were not aware of the importance of teaching listening and of the use of the authentic materials in teaching English.
- e- Most of the teachers, as models, had problems in pronunciation, reading and speaking especially in dealing with the tape script.
- f- Listening comprehension was not involved in exams.
- G- No specific courses for teachers to develop teachers towards the importance of teaching listening.
- h- The time that given to teach listening skill is insufficient
- i- Some teachers did not have clear pronunciation and this might affect students' performance.

j- Crowded classes were an obstacle for the teachers to teach and test listening, and the teachers were not able to give chance to every student to participate.

However, teachers need time to divide the students into groups to make the process of teaching and testing listening as simple as possible.

k- Some teachers did not introduce the topic to the students and did not write down the new words on the board of listening lesson which makes it easier for the students.

L- Only very few teachers motivated and encouraged their students by giving them pair and group work.

3. Speaking skill problems

Learning English speaking is often one of the most difficult aspects. It has traditionally been very difficult to achieve good standards of oral production. In addition, it is difficult to find realistic situations that motivate students to communicate in the target language. Consequently, students could not share ideas, exchange thoughts or even converse in the target language. The fewer the opportunities that exist for students to engage in conversation, the worse listeners and speakers they become. Most teachers lack the right techniques for teaching the four skills, especially speaking. They always fill students' minds with information and grammar.

Libyan EFL students face different problems in speaking skill. From the observation and the personal experiences of the researcher, most of the problems faced by Libyan EFL learners are related to pronunciation, use of adjectives, erroneous use of grammatical rules, prepositions and idioms, negative transfer and semantic errors. Each of these is briefed below with examples recurred in the speech of Libyan EFL learners.

There are some other problems as well including lack of vocabulary, fear / embarrassment while communicating. However, lack of ideal environment and weak teachers lead to wrong learning of English. Neither native speakers are available as teachers nor are the teachers who are trained and skilled by the native speakers. This results in learning English in the way it is understood and taught by Libyan teachers of English. And this is what the Libyan EFL learners try to do while speaking- they speak English in their own way.

The lack of ideal teaching methods contributes to the problems faced by Libyan EFL learners in the speaking skill. The overuse of students' mother tongue in English classes lead to the wrong teaching. Therefore, the educational authorities attempts to provide a good syllabus to help teachers in imparting effective and dynamic teaching. This results in teaching language skills by disintegrating them and in limited time, which often do not contribute to create ideal learning environment. Nor do learners get many required opportunities for practicing their language, which results in only reception and no production. So, the situation is not much promising at secondary schools and university level. Lack of unified syllabus, lack of native speakers, lack of well equipped, operational language labs, restrictions of teaching time and lack of much required English language learning and practicing environment are considered to be the problems of Libyan EFL learners at the secondary level.

5. Reading Skill Problems

The study shows that many-faceted problems exist with students' reading skills. The main problem is their insufficient vocabulary. New words in every sentence prove a main obstacle for them to understand texts. Many students depend on dictionary meaning more than contextual meaning of words. As a result, they fail to understand the meaning words assume in the context of a text. Moreover, most

of the students are unable to understand and analyze long sentences in a text. They also have problems with understanding syntax and surveying text organization. These problems are classified into four categories as follows:

A. Reading Problems Related to the Misunderstanding of the Reading Process

Weaver (1988) defines reading as ...the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction [transaction] among the reader's existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of the reading situation. (p. 161).

It is claimed by the researcher that teachers' misunderstanding of the reading process is the cause of many reading difficulties their students face. Miller and Yochum (1991) maintain that the reading difficulties students face may be related to inaccurate knowledge of the reading process. If this is true, teachers themselves have inaccurate knowledge of the reading process, too. This relationship is clear in Weaver's words: Children's success at reading reflects their reading strategies; their reading strategies typically reflect their implicit definitions of reading; children's definitions of reading often reflect the instructional approach, and the instructional approach reflect a definition of reading whether implicit or explicit (P. 2)

B. Reading Problems Related to Insufficient Linguistic Competence in General, and Practice of Reading in Particular

Hargis (1999) states that readability measures are the number of difficult words, frequency of these words and sentence complexity. When Libyan EFL students are asked why they find English a complicated language to read, the common answers are that most of the words in the text are new and they do not know what they mean.

Libyan EFL secondary students are poor readers because they find reading materials something new and hard to deal with. While they think that all of the meaning lies in the print, they do not have the linguistic competence to utilize that. In addition, they are not trained or told how to use their schemata because their teachers may think that the meaning lies only in the print. Therefore, teachers must focus on many things at one time: phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic clues. Smith, 1988: P.71 says that “the harder we try to look, the less we may see”. This means that hard for the brain to attend to all these things simultaneously.

In addition, Donnell and Wood (1999) state three categories of factors that affect comprehension: factors in the reader (interest/motivation, fluency and metacognition); factors in the text (concept density, organization, and style); and readability (length of sentences and difficulty of vocabulary). If the students do not have the above categories of knowledge, and the teachers are unaware of the factors that affect comprehension, then, students will be really difficult to reading skill to become slow and with little comprehension.

C. Reading Problems Related to Differences between English and Arabic Languages.

It is assumed that phonological differences between L1 and L2 constitute some of the reasons that make reading difficult, for example, in a study of Haitian refugees conducted by the Center of Applied Linguistics in 1981, it is reported that Haitian students find many reading problems as a result of differences between their language and English.

The Arabic alphabet is different from the Roman alphabet. For instance, there are no capital letters of the 28 Arabic letters, many of which have different shapes, depending on their position in a word. In addition, Arabic is written through the

line from right to left, which makes the adaptation to the opposite direction in reading a problem. Undoubtedly, this can be a serious problem to fast reading in skimming, scanning, and note taking.

Insufficient exposure to English is clear at schools, and in the wider community. At schools, for instance, there is always a small book of reading, and sometimes, a small story without any supplementary materials for the whole academic year. Even out of schools and universities, the sociolinguistic situation is too poor. Neither public nor private libraries exist. At home, fathers are more concerned about financing their big families than buying books, while mothers are always busy in their housekeeping. If some books are at home, they are almost in Arabic and about Islam. Then, how can we imagine developing students' reading comprehension with such little exposure, which is not enough to build a threshold for reading? Day and Bamford, (1989, 38) say that reading is the only way, the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers,

7. Writing skill problems

Writing is an essential part of classroom activities and it reinforces grammatical structures and vocabulary. It also helps students to express themselves and provide their ideas without being pressured by face-to-face communication. Writing as one of the four main language skills is considered to be a difficult one that face Libyan teachers and students. Writing is a valuable tool for communicating one's thoughts to others.

Difficulties encounter Libyan secondary school students

1- Students' mother tongue affects learning the target language.

2- Libyan English language students have limited vocabulary. Therefore, they end up repeating the same words. Then lack the adequate stock of vocabulary hinders creativity.

3- English language students don't use invented spelling and their written texts are restricted to words which they know.

4-The present tense is the only tense used in their writing.

5-The students' writing is difficult to understand because of the ill-structured sentences in composition.

6-Students are unwilling to share their work with their classmates and do not get the suitable

7- When learners read their writing aloud, they could not distinguish whether they read or write is right or wrong

8-Run on sentences in Arabic are accepted. In Arabic, we write endless sentences with no punctuation marks, and that is not accepted when writing in English.

9-Students' translation from Arabic to English create misunderstanding and confusion. For example, a sentence like (Flu infection spreads by peace with hand) is grammatically correct but meaningless. The student means (Flue infection is caused by greetings and handshakes). The words greetings and peace are of the same meaning in Arabic so, the student wrote one instead of the other.

.METHODS

There were twenty students from a girl's secondary school in Al-Grabuli- Libya. The name of this school is Libya Al-Ghad Secondary School, and twenty students were from boy's secondary school. Its name is Al-Garabuli Secondary School. The students' questionnaire was distributed and filled in by the students of the same both schools. The researcher has gotten the permission to do the practical

side of this study by the headmasters of those secondary schools that are mention in this study.

Instruments of the Study

The researcher utilized one instrument to accomplish the objectives of the study. This instrument was a questionnaire. In this study, a questionnaire was applied by the use of likert scale options (agreements and disagreements)

Discussion of Students' Questionnaire

Having collected data, students' answers were tabulated and a percentage of each question was calculated.

Data collected from students

General information	No. of students	Percentage %
Nationality	Libyans	100%
Male	20	50%
Female	20	50%

All students who answered the questionnaire (100%) were Libyans. The gender of students was males and females. The students were 20 males i.e. (50%) males and 20 students were females i.e. (50%) females.

Question (1) is to find out English teachers use Arabic language in their English classrooms.

14 (35%) of students strongly agreed that Libyan English teachers use Arabic in English classes and 17 (42.5%) of students agreed that Libyan English teachers use Arabic in English classes, but 2 (05%) of students chose to be neutral. 5 (12.5%) of students disagreed that Libyan English teachers use Arabic in English classes and 2 (5%) of students strongly disagreed that Libyan English teachers use Arabic in English classes. This means that the majority of students agreed that Libyan English teachers use Arabic language in their English classrooms. So,

English teachers should avoid their mother tongue in their classrooms to make students more comprehensible in English

Question (2) is to find out the effect of teachers' personality helping students in learning English.

21 (52.5%) of students strongly agreed that teacher's personality helps students to learn and 18 (45%) of students agreed that teacher's personality helps students to learn. 1 (2.5%) of students disagreed that teacher's personality helps students to learn. This means that the majority of students agreed that English teachers' personality affect on students' learning.

Question (3) is to find out the time which to English lessons is enough.

10 (25%) of students strongly agreed that enough time was given to English lessons and 18 (45%) of students agreed that enough time was given to English lessons is enough. 5 (12.5%) of students chose to be neutral, whereas 6 (15%) of students disagreed the time was given to English lessons is enough and 1 (2.5%) of students strongly disagreed that the time was given to English lessons is enough. It can be said that most of students agreed that the time given to lessons is enough.

Question (4) is to find out the affects of teacher's speaking in learning English.

19 (47.5%) of students strongly agreed that the teacher's speaking in English affects the students' learning and 10 (25%) of students agreed that the teacher's speaking in English affects the students' learning. 5 (12.5%) of students chose to be neutral, but 4 (10%) of students disagreed that the teacher's speaking in English affects the students' learning, and 2 (5%) of students strongly disagreed that the teacher's speaking in English affects the students' learning. This means that most of students agreed that the teacher's speaking in English affects the students' learning.

Question (5) is to find out English teachers speak too much in classroom.

5 (12.5%) of students strongly agreed that English language teachers speak too much in classrooms and 9 (22.5%) of students agreed that teachers of English language speak too much in classrooms. 15 (37.5%) of students chose to be neutral, but 8 (20%) of students disagreed that teachers of English language speak too much in classrooms, and 3 (7.5%) of students strongly disagreed that teachers of English language speak too much in classrooms.

Question (6) is to find out the use of English in homes will improve learning English.

27 (67.5%) of students strongly agreed that the use of English in students' homes will improve their learning English language and 12 (30%) of students agreed that the use of English in students' homes will improve their learning English language. 1 (2.5%) of students disagreed that the use of English in students' homes will improve their learning English language. Through the existence of facilities like social media i.e. the action or process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts, the majority of students agreed that the use of English in their homes will improve their learning English.

Question (7) is to find out the cause of less opportunities of participation in classrooms.

32 (80%) of students strongly agreed that big classes caused frustration among students and lead to less opportunities of participation in class and 6 (15%) of students agreed that big classes caused frustration among students and lead to less opportunities of participation in class. But, 1 (2.5%) of students disagreed that big classes caused frustration among students and lead to less opportunities of participation in class, and 1 (2.5%) of students strongly disagreed that big classes caused frustration among students and lead to less opportunities of participation in class. The responses to this item show that the majority of students agreed that

big classes caused frustration among students and lead to less opportunities of participation in class.

Question (8) is to find out the enjoyable of English classes.

18(45%) of students strongly agreed that English classes are enjoyable because of English teachers and 16 (40%) of students agreed that English classes are enjoyable because of English teachers. 3 (7.5%) of students chose to be neutral, whereas 01(2.5%) (of students disagreed that English classes are enjoyable because of English teachers, and 2 (5%) of students strongly disagreed that English classes are enjoyable because of English teachers. It can be said that most of students agreed that English classes are enjoyable because of English teachers.

Question (9) is to find out the ability for reading in English.

9 (22.5%) of students strongly agreed that students do not read enough English, and 13 (32.5%) of students agreed that students do not read enough English. 9 (22.5%) of students chose to be neutral, but 7 (17.5%) of students disagreed that students do not read enough English, and 2 (5%) of students strongly disagreed that students do not read enough English. This means that English teachers have read lessons, text, and passages by themselves only whereas students listen only ... i.e. passive side in the classrooms.

Question (10) is to find out the ability for writing in English.

2 (5%) of students strongly agreed that they do not write enough in English and 9 (22.5%) of students agreed that they do not write enough in English. 3 (7.5%) of students chose to be neutral, whereas 16 (40%) of students disagreed that they do not write enough in English, and 10 (25%) of students strongly disagreed that they do not write enough in English. This means that most of students disagreed that they do not write enough in English.

Question (11) is to find out the ability for speaking in English.

6 (15%) of students strongly agreed that they do not speak enough in English and 13 (32.5%) of students agreed that they do not write enough in English. 2 (5%) of students chose to be neutral, but 11 (27.5%) of students disagreed that they do not speak enough in English, and 8 (20%) of students strongly disagreed that they do not speak enough in English. This means that English teachers do not encourage their students to speak in and outside the classrooms. This makes EFL students are too weak in speaking.

Question (12) is to find out the ability for listening enough in English.

5 (12.5%) of students strongly agreed that students do not listen enough in English, and 11 (27.5%) of students agreed that students do not listen enough in English. 1 (2.5%) of students chose to be neutral, but 17(42.5%) of students disagreed that students do not listen enough in English, and 6 (15%) of students strongly disagreed that students do not listen enough in English. This means that most of students have not the ability for listening English in and outside classrooms... i.e. their schools do not have facilities such as recorders, CDs, MP3...etc.

Question (13) is to find out the important English skill in teaching English.

38 (95%) of students strongly agreed that listening skill is very important in teaching and learning English, and 1 (2.5%) of students agreed that listening skill is very important in teaching and learning English. 1 (2.5%) of students chose to be neutral that listening skill is very important in teaching and learning English. This means that all students agreed that listening skill is very important in teaching and learning English except one student.

Question (14) is to find out the practice that given to listening English skill in classes.

3 (7.5%) of students strongly agreed that little practice was given to listening skill in English classes, and 2 (5%) of students agreed that little practice was given to

listening skill in English classes. 3 (7.5%) of students chose to be neutral, but 25 (62.5%) of students disagreed that little practice was given to listening skill in English classes, and 7 (17.5%) of students strongly disagreed that little practice was given to listening skill in English classes. In this item, most of students disagreed that little practice was given to listening skill in English classes.

Question (15) is to find out the practice that given to speaking English skill in classes.

1 (2.5%) of students strongly agreed that little practice was given to speaking skill in English classes, and 2 (5%) of students agreed that little practice was given to speaking skill in English classes. 4 (10%) of students chose to be neutral, whereas 12 (30%) of students disagreed that little practice was given to speaking skill in English classes, and 21 (52.5%) of students strongly disagreed that little practice was given to speaking skill in English classes. In this item, most of students disagreed that little practice was given to speaking skill in English classes.

Question (16) is to find out the practice that given to reading English skill in classes.

2 (5%) of students strongly agreed that little practice was given to reading skill in English classes. 30 (75%) of students disagreed that little practice was given to reading skill in English classes, and 8 (20%) of students strongly disagreed that little practice was given to reading skill in English classes. It can be said that the majority of students disagreed that little practice was given to reading skill in English classes.

Question (17) is to find out the practice that given to writing English skill in classes.

1 (2.5%) of students strongly agreed that little practice was given to writing skill in English classes and 2 (5%) of students agreed that little practice was given to

writing skill in English classes. 27 (67.5%) of students disagreed that little practice was given to writing skill in English classes, and 10 (25 %) of students strongly disagreed that little practice was given to writing skill in English classes. In this item, the majority of students disagreed that little practice was given to writing skill in English classes.

Question (18) is to find out that the listening and speaking skills have been given enough practices.

3 (7.5%) of students strongly agreed that English teachers give enough practices in listening and speaking skills, and 11 (27.5%) of students agreed English teachers give enough practices in listening and speaking skills. 7 (17.5%) of students chose to be neutral, but 12 (30%) of students disagreed that English teachers give enough practices in listening and speaking skills, and 7 (17.5%) of students strongly disagreed that English teachers give enough practices in listening and speaking skills.

From the above findings, it can be concluded that students preferred an active role in their classrooms such as participating in activities. They also like to work in pairs and groups and to interact closely with one another. The participants need activities and tasks to be good in these language skills. All students faced a lot of difficulties in learning English skills.

According to the results and discussion of the students' questionnaire, the researcher suggested some remedies to overcome problems of English skills as follows:-

Listening remedies

1- Not all the problems, which are written above, can be overcome but the Libyan teacher can use different techniques to improve comprehension listening skill in his/her classes.

- 2- The teacher must encourage the students to develop their confidence in their ability to deal with listening problems.
- 3- It is important for the teacher to give feedback so that s/he can judge where the class is going and how it should be guided.
- 4- Teachers must teach students how to understand that individual words can be learnt best in context of sentences.
- 5- Listening materials, tasks and activities should be graded according to the students' level, and provide authentic materials because the final aim of listening classes is to understand natural speech in real life.
- 6- Construct the listening exercises round a variety of tasks to engage the students' interest and help them learn listening skills subconsciously.
- 7- The teacher may try to find visual aids or draw pictures and diagrams associated with the listening topics to help students guess or imagine actively.
- 8- Different kinds of input should be provided, such as films, radio news, TV channel, everyday conversation CDs and cassettes, English songs, storytelling, natural speech in real life situations, and so on.
- 9- The teacher must give practice on the homonyms, elisions, liaisons, cliché, and some colloquial expressions which might be presented in the listening lessons to help students get used to the acoustic forms and rapid natural speech.
- 10- Ask students to listen and imitate native speakers' pronunciation so they will be aware of different native-speaker accents. students
- 11- Select short and simple listening texts for lower level and complicated authentic materials for advanced learners.
- 12- Provide background knowledge and linguistic knowledge of listening skill.

Speaking remedies

1- The time allocated for teaching English should be increased in order to allow teachers to have enough time to teach the speaking skill and to give weak students remedial work.

2- Reduce class sizes to give the teachers the opportunity to teach the speaking skill by dealing with the students individually and to get more active learner participation,

3-Teachers should help students overcome their fear of speaking in English by always responding to what they say with respect and encouraging other class members to do the same.

4- Speaking should be integrated in teaching with the other three languages skills (listening – reading – writing) as well as the other language features such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, etc.

5- Students should not be interrupted while they are talking

6- Teachers should use plenty of group and pair work that maximizes the class time available for students to speak.

7-Teachers should try to reduce the use of the mother tongue as much as possible. They sometimes resort to students' mother tongue (L1) in the class to allow them to know English language perfectly.

Reading remedies

According to the results and discussion of both of questionnaires (teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire), the researcher suggested some remedies to overcome reading skill problems.

To teach a reading skill to Libyan students, a teacher should apply the following methods.

1. Forget the prescribed syllabus for sometimes, say one or two weeks and teach students whatever you think necessary for your students.

2. Make them revise the alphabets of English. Teach them capital and small letters and then jingle words.
3. Dictate and encourage them to write words.
4. Tell them to read, first silently and then loudly, what they have written.
5. Collect all the papers from students and then distribute them among the students tell them to correct the paper of their class-mates.
6. Finally, collect all the papers, correct and indicate their mistakes
7. After words, make them write sentences and gradually move towards longer and complex sentences.

Writing remedies

According to the results and discussion of students' questionnaire, the researcher suggested some remedies to overcome writing skill problems as follows:-

1. Teach them how to use the right stroke while writing anything in English. Wrong strokes make the writing slow and ugly.
2. Make them learn cursive writing. Most of Arab students do not know cursive writing. Two or three lectures should be devoted to this task.
3. Dictate them to write simple sentences.
4. Dictate some words and tell students to use them in their own sentences.
5. Encourage them to learn more and more words with correct spelling.
6. Students should be given a lot of class-work as well as homework on writing because practice makes the students good writers.
- 7- Class tests should be analyzed and mistakes should be explained to students so that they can avoid the same mistakes in their future course of examinations.
- 8- Teachers should use spelling games like flash cards, clueless crossword, word scramble, letter blocks, word search etc.

10-Students should write about topics of their interests, this motivates them to keep reading and selecting what is significant even if they encounter difficulties

Conclusion

This study concluded that there are many problems in learning English in the intermediate public schools in Al-Grabuli – area (Libya). First, there are some problems related to teachers themselves in terms of experiences, the overuse of the native language Arabic in the classrooms, and the emphasis on teaching grammar at the expense of other skills. Second, there are other problems related to teaching-learning environment and the availability of resources in the public schools; the insecure situation in Libya as a whole, large number of learners in the classrooms, sound pollution, lack of rich libraries, resources, teaching aids, supporting materials and audio-visual teaching facilities. Other problems emerged related to the students' themselves such as their educational background in the primary level that does not enable them to continue to the intermediate level

Recommendation

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations may be introduced to help solve the problems of using skills and methods effectively.

- 1-Teachers should be given enough time to take up and adapt activities and exercises in the classroom.
2. Teachers should conduct reading activities in the classroom, and they should encourage the students to take notes during the lessons.
3. Teachers should arrange group discussions, group activities and conversations among students.
4. Teachers should encourage the interaction between the strong and the weak students to create a positive relationship among the learners and provides a healthy atmosphere.

5. The researcher suggested that Libyan government (i.e. the ministry of education) should choose the experienced teachers in teaching the primary schools.

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