

**Learning Problems of English Students at
Riyadh Al Salhin Secondary School**

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out the difficulty of students in learning English language at the Riyadh Al Salhin Secondary School. Since English language is very important in the society today, we must all learn correctly so that it will be easy for us to interact with other people especially in the work place. This is why it is a very significant research applicable to the kind of society we have. This research is made possible through formulation of questionnaires with the questions about the difficulties of students at Al Salhin, the reasons of the difficulties and what are the steps in enhancing the students' better learning of the English language at the school. Based on the results, it was found that the main difficulty was pronunciation, comprehension and learning style. For the reasons of difficulty, the respondents say the students lack interaction of the language and considering they have the Arabic tongue which makes them hard to pronounce. Another reason for difficulty is that students are lazy to learn their lessons in English. For the enhancement, respondents say the students must have a better foundation during their early years in school. It is also important for the constant interaction using the English language. Other students say they need more facilities and materials including exerting more efforts in studying.

Introduction

As we all know, the English language is the most common form of communication in the world today, be it in the work place or any institution. Therefore, it is a must for every student to have a good training in order to follow such communication instruction in the society. This research will highlight the learning problems of secondary English students at Riyadh Al Salhin School and see the reasons of such difficulty based on the survey done on some twenty

respondents. In the next section of this report, the writer gives some proof through some articles in the Internet about the difficulties in learning English language in Saudi Arabia.

Literature Review

As published in an article of Al Arabiya (2014), authored by Khaled Almaeena, one of the negative aspects of teaching English is “poor pronunciation”. In my opinion, this proves the fact that the students of Al Salhin say the most difficult part is how to pronounce English words. Just because of the mother tongue which can rumble all the correct pronunciation of the language. If teachers have the problems in pronunciations then the students will also adopt this deficiency. Also an article about teaching English in Saudi (Teachsaudi.50webs.com, 2014) tells that there are “issues on phonemic difficulties in all levels in school”. It also talks about different deficiencies which results into “pronunciation and conjugation problems”. These were also mentioned by the students at Al Salhin whom were selected as respondents on the survey. While on this reviews at Al Arabiya and website on Teach Saudi tells only about poor pronunciation and phonemic difficulties, my respondents on the survey conducted tell more reasons for difficulties. One of them is the learning style of the students that affects the difficulties in learning English language. Perhaps because of the many activities of students at home such as watching television, going out with friends, no strict encouragement and teaching from their parents, the lack a better learning style that could make them better English learners. Learning style can also point to the lack of emphasis of the subject from teachers like strict submission of home works, obligating them to speak in the class or whatever lacking motivation that could improve their skills. Another thing that is different from what I have found from the survey is that, the students lack the ability to comprehend or understand the

subject. This perhaps happens when students have very little background or foundation of the subject that when they were still in the lower levels in school, there was no good teaching that they have experience which until now makes them to really have a hard time in understanding the subject. These were the different reasons I have found out in the survey aside from the ones said by the authors of the literature from the web.

Significance of Research

The most common mode of communication nowadays is English as it is the official international language used in all kinds of communication, be it in correspondence and interaction. Even the media and all aspects in the society, English is always there as a solution for people and business to understand. Therefore, learning English language is very important for everybody to be able to become competitive in the work place especially in writing and spoken. The significance of this research is to know the aspect in English language learning in the secondary level that needs to be changed or enhanced for students to become competitive later on in their careers.

Research Questions

This research will find the answers to the following questions to arrive at the objective of this writing to know what aspects in the English curriculum is needed for students to be more competitive later on in their career. One is that what are the most common difficulties of learning English language at Al Salhin Riyadh Secondary School? Another is what are the reasons why there are difficulties in the Secondary level at Al Salhin Riyadh Secondary School?

The last question would be what the ways of enhancing the learning skills of English language students at Al Salhin Riyadh Secondary School?

Research Methodology

The method used in this research is the formulation of survey questionnaire to be able to obtain vital data from the stakeholders at Al Salhin Riyadh Secondary School based on the questions given. Stakeholders in this survey will be the students, teachers and even parents who are the best people who know the ability of their children at school. The tools that are to be used is the Word processor of Microsoft Office, printer and paper. It will be printed in one page only in order not to waste more paper as it needs a lot to be printed. Upon completion of questionnaires, it will be disseminated to the target respondents in school. I have to coordinate the survey to the school management in order to have permission to get some confidential information at the school. Once the permission is granted, I will seek the help of my friends to distribute the questionnaires to respondents and wait until the respondents are finished. Once the questionnaires are collected I will make a table to put all the data on the reasons for difficulties, the main reasons of such difficulties and some points to develop how students may eventually help them to learn the English language better. The information of the respondents will also be noted on a separate table to know their identities. When these criteria are formed, it will be written on a table form and each point in each criteria will be filled based on the answers of the respondents. Totals of each point in the criteria section will be added to see which point has the most count and will be the basis of the results.

Limitations of the Study

This research is only limited to the answers of the respondents based on the questions given to the stakeholders at Riyadh Al Salhin Secondary School. Since the requirement of this research is in just weeks, there is a time constraint into which a better research questions are to be prepared in order to make this paper better. Sometimes it is also hard to find respondents that could answer the questionnaires and how long will they return the questions. Some of them have not also responded to it so it is being delayed. This will also limit the number of respondents that will participate in answering the questionnaires. The more respondents, the more the study will be accurate rather than just limited number. The lack of helpers that would help out in disseminating the questionnaires at the school would spend a lot of time looking for respondents. Also the lack of cooperation of respondents to participate in the survey that would put the teachers or the school into trouble if they say negative things in the survey.

Expected Results

The survey says that in the difficulty criteria, the main reason of difficulty in the English language is the problem with “pronunciation” where 15 out of 20 respondents mentioned it. Another reason is “learning style” where 14 of the respondents say that. In the second criteria “main reason for difficulty”, respondents say why there is difficulty. “Lack of interaction” came out to be the most where 16 out 20 respondents say it. Also 15 respondents say it is just because of Arabic tongue that they have difficulty. There are also 13 respondents that say because of laziness of students. In the third criteria what kind of enhancement is to be done to eliminate such difficulties, 18 respondents say there must be better foundation before reaching secondary level. There must also be more interaction at home and school say 16 respondents.

Some 15 respondents say students must exert more effort in the English language subjects. The provision of facilities and materials like books and audio is also a must say 14 respondents.

References

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Mr. Akeel, Riyadh Al Salhin Secondary School

APPENDIX

Purpose: The purpose of this questionnaire is to get information as to what are the reasons of the difficulty of English Language learning among the secondary students at Al Salhin School.

1) Name of Respondent: _____ Gender (M/F): ____ Age: ____

2) Occupation/Year or Level in School: _____

3) Classification:

Student _____

Parent _____

Teacher _____

4) What do you think are the most common difficulties of the Secondary students at Salhin Secondary School in terms of English language learning?

____ Pronunciation (conflict with Arab tongue)

____ Comprehension (reading, writing, listening)

____ Conjugation (conflict with Arab conjugation)

____ Learning style

____ Other reasons: _____

5) What are the main reasons why there is difficulty of learning English language at Salhin?

____ Having an Arabic mother tongue

____ Lack of interaction with English language

____ Lack of experienced Teachers

____ Lack of English language foundation

____ Lack of Proper English Curriculum

____ Lack of facilities like audio, textbook, etc.

____ Students are lazy

____ Always absent

____ Not interested

____ Others reasons: _____

6) What do you think are the ways in enhancing/improving English learning at the School?

____ Provision of more facilities/materials

____ Provision of English experts/MBA graduates

____ Better foundation (before secondary)

____ English interaction in school/home

____ More effort in studies

____ Stricter rules in learning

____ Additional English subjects

____ Other reasons: _____

SURVEY RESULTS (APPENDIX A)

No.	Description	Number of Respondents																					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
1	Difficulties																						
	Pronunciation	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			15
	Conjugation problem	X											X		X	X		X	X	X	X		8
	Comprehension	X			X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				13
	Learning style	x					X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		14
2	Main Reason of Difficulty																						
	Lack experienced teachers	X	X			X					X			X	X					X			7
	Lack of facilities (audio, book)	X			X					X	X	X			X								6
	Arabic language tongue			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		15
	Students are lazy		X	X	X			X	X	X		X		X	X		X		X	X	X		13
	Lack of interaction		X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		16
	Lack English foundation			X					X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X						9
	Lack proper English Curriculum						X		X	X		X	X		X	X		X		X			9
	Not interested							X	X	X		X	X										5
	Depressed							X															1
3	Enhancement																						
	Better foundation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		18
	Need of experts	x	x	X	X	X								X	X								7
	English interaction-school/home	X	X	X		X	X		X	x	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				16
	More effort in studies	x	X	X	X	X	X		X	x		X	X	X	X		X	X	X				15
	Provision of facilities/materials			x				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		14
	Additional English subject								X				X	X			X						4
	Watch English videos						X																1
	Stricter rules in learning								x						X	X	X				X		5

RESPONDENTS INFORMATION (APPENDIX B)

No.	Name of Respondent	Age	Occupation/Grade
1	Fahad Al Dakheel	16	8 th Grade
2	Bander Al Ageel	16	8 th grade
3	Mohammed	16	8 th grade
4	Abdullah Almajeed	18	8 th grade
5	Belal Kilang	16	8 th grade
6	Saleh Mohammed	18	8 th grade
7	Abdullah Malila Bahaber	16	8 th grade
8	Hamdi Al Shafie	45	Teacher 10 yrs ago
9	No Name	-	Teacher
10	Sammy Zaki	18	8 th grade
11	Mohammed	16	8 th grade
12	No Name	16	
13	Ali	17	
14	No Name	17	8 th grade
15	No Name	17	8 th grade
16	Ahmed	16	8 th grade
17	Kalid	16	8 th grade
18	No Name	16	
19	Abdulrahman	16	
20	No Name	16	8 th grade