EFL Teachers' Perceptions, Evaluations and Expectations about English Language Courses as EFL in Saudi Universities

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The focus of this study is to explore EFL teachers' perceptions, evaluations and expectations about English language courses as EFL in Saudi tertiary level. In other words, this article aims at creating a new avenue for effective EFL teaching-learning curriculum techniques and syllabus in the Saudi tertiary context. Saudi universities offer credit and non-credit Foundation English courses as a part of their program, which are not being very effective. These courses do not promote the students in dealing with their disciplines or programs oriented courses. Even after completion of the Foundation English courses in consecutive two or three semesters, students fail to grasp comprehensive control over the reading materials of their discipline-oriented courses. This is a common scenario in almost all the universities in KSA. The author of this paper ventured to study the predicament of EFL courses in some universities through survey questionnaires, observation as well as primary and secondary sources. The data were collected through questionnaires from a total of 25 EFL teachers at renowned Saudi universities. The research results revealed that the existing Foundation English Course syllabus is not tailored appropriately to the needs of the students so far as the higher studies concerned, and EFL classroom is not conducive to *task-based language teaching (TBLT)* practice due to large class size (100-140). It, therefore, suggests that university Foundation English Courses should be redesigned in assimilating the learners' standard and previous learning, and course contents should cover the socio-cultural factors of the learners. The study also concludes with some effective implications and recommendations based on the findings of the present research.

Key Words: Perception, Attitude, Socio-cultural milieu, EFL courses, Motivation

INTRODUCTION

In Saudi Arabia, English is chosen as foreign language, i.e., it is an EFL (*English as a Foreign Language*) country. Here, English is used as a means of communication, commerce and trade, business, diplomacy, tourism, and as a medium of teaching-learning in the arena of higher education. "English as a subject matter has received a lot of care from Saudi Ministry of Education as well as from Saudi community" (Hajailan, 2003, p. 01). English education in KSA develops through a number of changes and revolutions underlining it as a foreign language. This education in Saudi Arabia has

been observed to lag behind that of other countries in Asia. English here in the Kingdom just like the majority of countries in Asia is treated as a subject for study rather than as a living language to be spoken in daily conversation. Therefore, the EFL teaching learning context is very different from a natural ESL learning environment. On this backdrop, this study investigates the reasons for tardy English learning progress and outlines to modify the contents of English syllabus, classroom techniques and teaching methodology. The reasons why English is chosen as foreign language (EFL) in KSA are: "English a superior language, being an international language, and the language of science and technology, research, electronic databases and technical terminology… (English) is more appropriate for teaching medicine, pharmacy, engineering, science, nursing, and computer science" (Jarf, 2008). Moreover, English language is significant due to its dominance over higher educational, technological, politico-social, and labour market. "Due to latest developments in information and communications technology …English has become more dominant in all walks of life than ever before...English is the official language of major political and economic alliances such as the Commonwealth countries, the EU, the NATO, OPEC, and the ASEAN. It is the language of 85% of international organizations and the main language of technology, business, finance and tourism. Most research, references, technical terms, international conferences, electronic databases are in English. World-famous newspapers, T.V. stations, movies, airlines, multi-national companies, and 90% of the material published on the Internet use English as a primary language" (Jarf, 2008). In addition, the kingdom has diplomatic relations with the countries of native and non-native speakers of English. The country is also important to the world for some inevitable reasons, such as a dominant oil exporter, and two holy shrines of Makkah and Madina for Muslims, and it has huge population with numerous immigrants. For all these activities, English language serves as a means of communication in the Kingdom. Considering all these factors, Saudi Government introduced English courses as a compulsory subject quite early. Under the tutelage of such backdrop, the aim of this paper is to accumulate highly experienced EFL teachers' practical perceptions, practices, beliefs, attitudes, and evaluations of English language courses as EFL, and to diagnose the pitfalls of the EFL courses in making an effective curriculum plan and suggestion to progress the EFL teaching-learning aspect in KSA.

TEFL in the Saudi Context

Teaching EFL in any context is very much challenging. Saudi context is not exception to that. *"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undergone great political, social and economic development. To meet new challenges, the Ministry of education has introduced English as a foreign language (EFL) in schools since 1925"* (Al-Ahaydib, 1986). It is imperative to look into the present EFL scenario in the Kingdom for the pursuit of excellence in English language teaching and learning practices.

There is no denying the fact that considerable development took place in this area following global advancement in the teaching trends and approaches. But Saudi Arabia

is lagging behind. English education in the Kingdom undergoes several changes and modifications. The Saudi TEFL curriculum was prepared by the department of English in the Directorate of curriculum under the Ministry of Education in 1999 A. D. specifying the TEFL goals imparting basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading & writing) in order to communicate with English- speaking people. According to Dr. Talal A. Al- Hajailan in his *Teaching English in Saudi Arabia* (2003*)*, during the history of Teaching English in the Kingdom two curriculum documents were prepared to specify the aims and objectives of TEFL. First document was made in 1408H (1987) and became the basis for all TEFL text books. "*The new series 'English for Saudi Arabia' was born in 1410H(1989) by a group of authors collaborated with the King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals(KFUPM) came into life…The new books employed the last method of teaching 'the communicative method'*" (Hajailan, 2003, p. 16). The Second document for TEFL was made and *"modified by the department of English in the Directorate of curriculum under the Ministry of Education in 1421H (2000)"* (Hajailan, 2003, p. 24). The general aims and objectives of Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Saudi Arabia are defined in the Saudi Policy of Education. According to Article No. 50 of Saudi education policy, the pivotal ideas of education are:

" Furnishing the students with at least one of the living languages, in addition to their original language, to enable them acquire knowledge and sciences to their communities and participate in the spreading of Islam and serving humanity" (Hajailan, 2003, p. 23)*.*

Taking this Article into consideration as a guiding principle, English was introduced and prescribed among the important subjects taught in Saudi public Schools (Madrasha), Colleges, and Universities. In order to achieve the above TEFL objectives converged on the higher goal of making the students appreciate the significance of English as an international language of communication and participate in transferring and sharing achievements of other cultures along with introducing their own culture and scientific and technological advancements across the globe.

Review of Literature

Christo Moskovsky and Fakieh Alrabai demonstrate in a research on '*Intrinsic Motivation in Saudi Learners of English as a Foreign Language'* in relation to the role of motivation in the attainment of English as a foreign language (EFL) in the Saudi educational setting that Saudis possess fairly substantial 'dormant' reserves of motivation which in more favourable conditions could be deployed to produce better learning outcomes (Moskovsky & Alrabai, 2009, pp. 1-10). Prof. Reima Al-Jarf conducted a study particularly related to TEFL in Saudi context in developing EFL freshmen students' spelling problems. The study diagnosed the Arabic speaking Students' *Phonological and Orthographic Problems in EFL College Spellers* presented in TELLIS Conference Proceedings, Azad Islamic University ˗ Roudehen, Iran. The study diagnosed that 63% of the spelling errors were phonological, and 37% were orthographic. It also suggested that spelling instruction should include phonemic

segmentation practice; patterns of sound-to-letter correspondences and words can be visualized in terms of syllables and non-phonetically spelled words. Haifa AL-Nofaile in a study under the caption '*The Attitude of Teachers and Students towards using Arabic in EFL Classrooms in Saudi Public Schools*' examined the attitudes of Saudi teachers and students towards employing Arabic as a facilitating tool in English classes, a topic which gained positive response (Al- Nofaile, 2010, pp. 64-95).

Sripathum Noon-ura in her article, 'Teaching Listening Speaking Skills to Thai Students with Low English Proficiency', suggests that "In an EFL situation, time allocation for English learning may need reconsidering if students are expected to reach a high level of proficiency. In many Thai universities, students are required to take one or two compulsory English courses when they are in the first year, and English is optional in their later years. Students with average or low ability may never want to take any other elective courses once they have met the curricular minimum requirement... When they graduate, it is apparent that they are not good at English and they cannot meet the demands for English used in the workplace. From the current study, it seemed obvious that in order to improve the learners' language skills, they should be exposed to the language every day, rather than the once or twice a week of regular classes" (Noon-ura, 2008).

Globally, in the area of EFL teaching-learning development, researchers have attempted to provide available insight into the matter. In Chinese context, Christina Ng and Eunice Tang in their article 'Teachers' Needs in the Process of EFL reform in China' made a report that the pragmatic view on English teaching is consistent, but the teaching focus has expanded to include the four skills. Teachers need to be exposed to a wide range of methodologies to enable them to maintain a certain degree of flexibility in teaching. They should be aware of the individual differences among students in the learning process (Ng & Tang: A Report from Shanghai). Buyukyavuz, Oya in his thesis entitled 'Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions of their current English skills and their pre-service teacher education' focused on EFL teachers' perceptions of English language skills and their perceptions of pre-service education. Findings indicated that the Turkish EFL teachers were not satisfied with their speaking skills but they were satisfied with their grammar knowledge. The researcher proposed a five-year program model to meet up the needs (Buyukyavuz, 1999).

Motivation is a significant factor in teaching-learning EFL at any context. In this regard, Raghad Dwaik, & Adnan Shehadeh conducted a study aiming at investigating the influence of various variables, such as, the students' major field, level of education, desired level of proficiency, and gender on their motivation patterns. The study shows that "The motivation patterns dominant among Palestinian students are extrinsic in nature, e.g., learning the language because it is a compulsory requirement or learning the language to protect one's culture from the influence of the target culture. It is also important to raise the students' awareness to the diversity in the Western cultures and the dangers involved in stereotyping or identifying the policy of the government with

the orientation of individual members of the society. In the case of the Palestinian students, instrumental and required motivations may respond to the students' needs throughout the college years....This may lead to the development of a limited functional or survival ability in the target language..." (Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010, pp. 333-360).

Abdu Mohammed Al-Mekhlafi and Ramani Perur Nagaratnam in their article **'**Difficulties in Teaching and Learning Grammar in an EFL Context' have pointed out that "EFL Curriculum and material developers should show an understanding of learners' and teachers' difficulties, and provide sufficient guidance and help in the curriculum document and the teachers' book showing how the potential difficulties could be addressed in planning their classroom activities…Educators should consider students' attitudes and perceptions when making decisions about how to teach grammar" (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011, pp. 69-92).

Omar Atari in his article 'EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Writing Quality and Holistic Evaluations' finds that "There is a discrepancy between the teachers' perceptions of the mechanics and their actual evaluation…These teachers do not pay attention to coherence in their actual holistic evaluation nor do they think of coherence as significant…Some cohesion categories are perceived as significant, namely sentence structure. Other elements, for example, transitional links are not seen as such...It is recommended, therefore, that workshops on cohesion and coherence be conducted for EFL teachers" (Atari, A.H. 1418/1998, pp. 49-59). Ostensibly, this aspect of the related literature review reinforces the importance and value of the present study.

AUTHENTIC TEXTS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Authentic textbook is a highly significant factor to develop language teaching-learning practices in the real life situation and to fulfil social purpose of the community. According to Cunningsworth, EFL textbook should ensure *"that the materials selected closely reflect [the needs of the learners] the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program"* (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 7). Berardo provides three criteria for choosing authentic texts: suitability of content, exploitability, and readability (Berardo, 2006, pp. 60-69). Bacon and Finneman add that *"the texts should be culturally relevant to the experience of the students"* (Bacon, S. & Finneman, M., 1990, pp. 459-473). In this vein, Lee states that *"a careful and wise selection of materials focused on learners is a must if we want a positive response from them"* (Lee, 1995, pp. 323-328). Readability refers to the language of the text, including the structural and lexical difficulty as well as the amount of new vocabulary and grammatical forms. Brown and Eskenzai claim, the primary criteria for selecting appropriate authentic text should be the reader's current vocabulary knowledge and the desired vocabulary knowledge throughout the curriculum, in addition to grammar difficulty and text cohesiveness (Brown, J.& Eskenazi, M., 2004).

In addition, Rivas (1999) and Mishan (2005) argue that learners' interests and needs are the most essential factors in the choice of authentic texts. In this respect, Little et al, (1989), state that "The more texts are related to learners' personal concerns and interests the deeper and more rapid the processing will be" (as cited in Mishan, 2005).

Further, a variety of text types can be selected, such as articles, advertisements, interviews, poems, application forms, train timetables, and brochures. Leading experts in the field of Curriculum design opine that authentic texts for a successful instruction should be designed to expose students to a variety of learning styles, linguistic and learners' intra socio-cultural contexts including issues or content areas with a focus on communication, with a view to developing cognitive skills and understanding cultural variations.

METHOD

Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted in Saudi tertiary level of the South region of the Kingdom, where two types of English education prevail: one for English major students, and the other for non-English major students. Language education for English major students focuses on developing students' language proficiency in advanced level. A small number of university students enrol on this program. Education for non-English major students is called "College English". This program is designed to facilitate developing "in students a relatively high level of competence in reading, and an intermediate level of competence in listening, speaking, writing, and translating so that students can communicate in English" (Team, 1999, p. 01)**.** Non-English major education embraces the largest portion of tertiary level students pursuing undergraduate degrees in a variety of disciplines, such as Management, Science, Law, Nursing, Business, Medicine and so on. These students study English as an instrument to gear up their advancement in own fields of study, and this research is an attempt of this kind.

The participants of this study are university level EFL teachers who have high profile language teaching experience ranging from 2 to 23 years. The participants were chosen on random basis. The teachers were not categorized in terms of Linguistics/Literature stream background but all the teachers have at least two or more years of TEFL teaching experience in Saudi universities. A total of 25 teachers took part in this study. We took in our purview two famous universities of Saudi South region, viz. King Khalid University, Abha, and Jazan University, Jizan. It is expected that the research survey at these universities will make available insights into EFL teachers' beliefs, practices, perceptions, and expectations of EFL courses. Presumably, this survey will underscore a clearer view of the overall standard of EFL courses and help in assessing the success or failure of these courses. The findings and implications from this survey will also be helpful for other universities to measure their levels and standard of EFL courses. Furthermore, this study will help identify both the levels of problems and unsuitability, and the pathways of designing proper contents for Foundation English language course syllabi.

Data Collection & Questionnaire

The device of data collection for this study encompasses a two-page written research questionnaire (See Appendix). The **researcher** contacted 30 native and non-native

Saudi EFL teachers directly and distributed printed copy of questionnaires composed in computer in between January and February of 2011. There were multiple choice questions as well as questions asking for short suggestions, offering the respondents a free rein. The pedagogical goal of the survey was explained in the appendix, and asked the participants to answer the questions. They answered the questionnaire quite willingly, and most of them made some precious suggestions. Actually, the research questionnaire "measures opinions and is probably the single most widely used research type in educational research" (Weirsma, 1995, p. 169). The questionnaire for this survey quests for teachers' perceptions, evaluations, beliefs, attitudes, and suggestions about English language courses as EFL in KSA. Moreover, the questions are set to receive information about EFL teachers' teaching level and experience, to diagnose the setbacks of language courses, and to gain their self-reported opinions, feelings, experiences, and expectations. It is important to mention here that

"*personal reflections are integral to the emerging analysis of a cultural group, because they provide the researcher with new vantage points and with opportunities to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange*" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 100). Out of 30, a total of 25 questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 83.33%.

RESULTS

Data Analysis

The data are analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively in order, "to stress the unique strengths of the genre for research that is exploratory or descriptive" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 60).The data analysis process continued in several steps. The collected data of questionnaire were sorted out, and the percentage of teachers offering the same answer was computed. The questionnaires were tabulated to record the responses from each participant for each option of the questions. Then the tabulations were considered and re-considered, read and re-read carefully to sort out the patterns and common phenomena of the same purport. Typically, throughout the data analysis process, according to Creswell, the researchers "*seek to identify and describe patterns and themes from the perspective of the participant(s), then attempt to understand and explain these patterns and themes*" (Creswell, 2003, p. 203). Results were reported both quantitatively and qualitatively. Tables are drawn below to sum up the frequency of responses to almost all the questions. (See Tables)

In the third question the respondents were asked, "Do you think EFL class will be *task-based language teaching (TBLT) practice?*" 80% of the respondents answered "yes" while 16% of them answered "no". 4% of the respondents replied, "I do not know". (table-1)

Table 1: Do you think EFL class will be *task-based language teaching (TBLT) practice?*

Choices	Answer	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	80
No	04	16
I do not know	01	04

The majority of the teachers' approval of implementing TBLT practice in the classroom implicates two things. First, there may be existed TBLT based materials in the book but it is not possible to materialize because of large class size (100-140 students). On the other hand, secondly the materials in the book are not arranged in accordance with TBLT practice oriented.

The fifth question asked the teachers, "What type of English courses is offered in your university?" In answer to this question 16% of the respondents chose the 'structured' option, while 40% selected the 'various language skills' option. 32% of the respondents favoured both 'structured' and 'focused on various language skills' option and 12% chose the 'literature & language combined' option. (See Table-2)

Table 2: What type of English courses is offered in your university?

Choices	Answer	Percentage (%)
Structured	04	16
Focusing on various language skills	10	40
Both a & b	08	32
Literature & Language	03	12

The responses of this question reflect that EFL teachers consider English language as a skill rather than the knowledge of research and comprehension. However, the paucity of structured approach in the offered courses throws light on the deficiency in the design of these courses.

The sixth question asked whether the teachers thought the English courses offered by their universities were properly designed in keeping with the needs of the students, or not. 60% of the participants answered "Yes", and 40% of them replied "No". (Table-3)

Table 3: Do you feel English courses offered are properly designed in keeping with the needs of the students?

Choices	Answer	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	60
No	10	40

The answer highlights more on appropriateness of the courses offered. Nevertheless, the presence of negative (40%) impression on these courses avows the unsuitability of course design. Moreover, it also shows confusion and wavering in the minds of the teachers as they suggest reshuffling and redesigning the English courses in dealing with another question whether they have any suggestion regarding the same.

The seventh question seeks to know the range of efficacy and appropriateness of the contents of existing Foundation English Syllabus for the higher studies concerned. 24% of the participants selected "Completely" option while 64% of them made a choice "Unsatisfactorily" and 4% for "Not at all" option. But 8% did not answer the question. (See Table-4)

Table 4: To what extent do you think the contents of existing Foundation English Syllabus to be appropriate for the higher studies concerned?

Choices	Answer	Percentage (%)
Completely	06	24
Unsatisfactorily	16	64
Not at all	01	4
Did not answer	02	8

The response of a large portion of the teachers draws attention to the fact that the contents of existing English syllabus are not satisfactory and appropriate for higher studies of different disciplines concerned. On the other hand, the presence of positive response for the complete suitability of the course syllabus underscores a subtle line that any curriculum design and policy needs to be adequately vetted and checked by the teachers concerned before it can be activated as a policy.

In the eighth question, the respondents were inquired of what the learners' reaction was regarding the courses. In terms of the three choices: 48% 0f the participants chose "Interested" option; 32% "Bored" option and 20% answered "Do not like". (Table-5)

Table 5: What is the learners' reaction regarding the course(s) you are teaching here?

Choices	Answer	Percentage (%)
Interested	12	48
Bored	08	32
Do not like	05	20

The answers of this question find nuance of expressions, evaluations, observations, and perceptions of the teachers about learners' stance and attitude. The most of the students feels interested in existing English courses, but a notable portion of them feels bored. It suggests the subtlety of overall course re-moulding with some funny and interesting events in the plot of the text.

The ninth question asked the teachers to comment on the use of English as the medium of instruction in the classroom. 80% selected "I support it fully" option; 16% selected the option "English and Arabic should be combined in the classroom", while 4% selected the option "Arabic should be gradually phased out". (See Table-6)

Table 6: What is your outlook on the use of English as a medium of instruction?

Choices	Answer	Percentage (%)
I support it fully	20	80
English and Arabic should be combined in the classroom	04	16
Arabic should be gradually phased out	01	4

The respondents who supported the use of English as medium of instruction show their awareness of EFL teaching-learning norms and forms in the truest sense of the term. The sensible reason is that the EFL classroom context is very different from a natural ESL learning environment. The lack of a surrounding community of English speakers outside the classroom increases the challenge for EFL teaching- learning. Classroom is the only place for the students to use English. Two other choices in the question

overtly mark the students' weakness in English and teachers' explicit problem to teach English in classroom.

The tenth question invites the participants to rank the weakest points of their students' calibre in English. They were asked to choose from six options, viz. grammar; vocabulary; reading; writing; listening, and speaking. The following was the ranking size: grammar 12%; vocabulary 48%; reading 8%; writing 12%; listening 16%, and speaking 4%. (See Table-7)

Table 7: What are the points of weakness of your students' calibre in English? Rank in order of importance.

Choices	Answer	Percentage (%)
Grammar	03	12
Reading	02	8
Writing	03	12
Vocabulary	12	48
Listening	04	16
Speaking	01	4

An arresting thing about the choices is the preference for discrete items like vocabulary in lieu of any kind of skills. This reveals that the teachers foster communicative approach to the needs of the graduates in order to communicate both verbally and in writing. The focus on vocabulary points to the fact that the learners come to university with minimal vocabulary. Consequently, the teachers face tremendous debacle in making them advance in EFL courses. The second most focus on listening demonstrates the sensitivity to the needs of the EFL learners' perception of the lectures delivered by the teachers as well as other speakers in real life situation.

In the eleventh question, the respondents were asked whether the students need more English credit courses or not. 88% of the respondents chose "Yes", while 12% of them selected "No" option. (See Table-8)

Table 8: Do you think students need more English credit courses?

Choices	Answer	Percentage (%)
Yes	22	88
No	03	12

The answers report to organize more English credit courses to facilitate and advance students' command in English in order to run their respective field of study in English medium.

The 12th question asked the teachers about what should be the focus of English courses. In terms of six choices, they were asked to rank them. The ranking was: grammar 8%; reading 8%; writing 4%; vocabulary 44%; listening 24%, and speaking 12%. (See Table-9)

Table 9: What should be the focus of English Courses? Rank according to the degree of importance.

Choices	Answer	Percentage (%)
Grammar	02	8
Vocabulary	11	44
Reading	02	8
Writing	01	4
Listening	06	24
Speaking	03	12

The highest focus on vocabulary divulges the fact that the syllabus should stress on vocabulary learning as if the learners can develop language skills especially, speaking and listening which are the foremost demand of the market. The second most point is listening skill, which will enable the students to receive the speakers' speech and to respond them exactly and correctly. The third vital section is speaking skill, which will boost the communicative competence of the learners. So, the primary focus Of English syllabus should lay emphasis on vocabulary, listening skill, speaking skill with other skills concerned.

The thirteenth question was designed to know whether students must learn basic language skills in their pre-secondary levels or not. The respondents unanimously answered "Yes" representing the response rate 100%. This saga reminds the issue that the policy makers should be keen on re-designing the pre-secondary English syllabus imparting the basic language skills as though the students can keep pace in their subsequent academic stages.

The fourteenth question asked the participants whether they had any suggestions about English courses. Majority of them offered suggestions and few did not have any suggestion representing the percentage respectively 84% and 16%. We summed up their suggestions into structured answers. 24% suggested that Foundation English syllabus should be redesigned in keeping with the learners' standard and previous learning. 8% wrote that English courses should be introduced in primary and pre-primary levels. 4% pointed out that there should be more importance on reading and writing skills. 12% of the respondents claimed that course contents should cover the socio-cultural factors of the learners, i.e., Saudi socio-cultural milieu. 8% asserted that university foundation English courses should assimilate learners' secondary and pre-secondary language learning. 8% proposed that communicative approach should be followed in teaching. 4% claimed that English courses should be easy and interesting. 4% of the participants hinted that pre-university courses should be modernized and learner-centred and the same percentage wrote that grammar, vocabulary and literature should be paramount focus in the courses. (See Table-10)

Table 10: Suggestions from data analyses

Sl. No	Suggestions	Answer	Percentage (%)
1.	Foundation English syllabus should be redesigned in keeping with the learners' standard and previous learning	06	24
2.	Communicative approach should be followed in teaching	02	8
3.	Course contents should cover the socio-cultural factors of the learners	03	12
4.	More importance on reading and writing skills	01	4
5.	University foundation English courses should assimilate learners' secondary and pre-secondary language learning	02	8
6.	English courses should be introduced in primary and pre- primary levels	02	8
7.	Courses should be easy and interesting	01	4
8.	Pre-university courses should be modernized and learner-centred	01	4
9.	Grammar, vocabulary and literature should be paramount focus in the courses	01	4

The presence of a significant number who did not have any suggestion for the courses reveals that there is a certain amount of ennui or contentment among the teachers about the courses, which does not portend a sign of hope for the students. However, the varied suggestions and plans from the majority of the participants recall that the promising teachers were involved in the upshot of their students. Notably, the huge numbers (24%) who expected Foundation English syllabus to be redesigned in keeping with the learners' standard and previous learning point to the ticklish offshoot of the EFL planning in tertiary level. In addition, 12% of the teachers talked about the need for more integrated courses focusing the socio-cultural factors of the learners, which aver the lack of proper course design, and planning.

DISCUSSION

In this paper, the researcher examined the diverse information on EFL teaching-learning issues and experiences of teachers and students based on statistical research data analyses as well as overall research review, and found the following points of focus:

1. The findings of this present study reflect that 24% (Table-10) of the participants suggest that Foundation English syllabus should be redesigned in keeping with the learners' standard and previous learning. 64% (Table-4) of the respondents felt that the contents of existing English syllabus are not satisfactory and appropriate for the higher studies of different disciplines concerned. The paramount focus of English syllabus should lay emphasis on vocabulary, listening skill, speaking skill, and grammar with other skills concerned.

2. The teachers have nuance of expressions about learners' stance and attitude regarding the courses. Virtually, (12%, Table-10) course contents should cover the socio-cultural factors of the learners, i.e., Saudi socio-cultural milieu as "The more texts are related to learners' personal concerns and interest the deeper and more rapid the

processing will be" (as cited in Mishan, 2005). It means making the teaching materials relevant to the learners' personalities, backgrounds, needs, and interests as well as those of the teacher or institution. Indeed, textbook should include criteria that pertain to representation of cultural and gender components.

3. Based on research findings, 4% (Table-10) of the teachers believe that pre-university courses should be modernized and learner-centred. 48% (Table-7) of the teachers identified the foremost weak point of the students in vocabulary. Consequently, 100% of the participants unanimously opined that the education policy makers should be keen on re-designing the pre-secondary English syllabus imparting the basic language skills as though the students can keep pace in their subsequent academic stages. So, it is clear that pre-university English language courses should be reshuffled with a view to correlating and balancing with university courses.

4. In terms of '**task-based language teaching**' (TBLT) practice in EFL class, 80% (Table-1) of the teachers suggested that EFL class would be based on TBLT practice with small class size. Interestingly, the focal point of language teaching has been placed on changing the classroom practice from the traditional passive lecture to more active group learning so that learners can be more easily exposed to target language use. Thus, many teachers have a desire in using TBLT as a teaching technique, chiefly because they believe task-based learning has specific benefits for increasing learners' communication skills and interaction.

5. 80% (Table-6) of the participants in the present study preferred to use English as a medium of instruction at the university level. In the Saudi EFL context, the learners do not have much more opportunity to use English in everyday conversation like other EFL countries, for instance- Taiwan, Korea, and Kuwait. So, the rationale of using English in classroom teaching was to create a favourable language environment so that students would be immersed in English-speaking context.

6. The study also suggests that authentic texts for a successful teaching-learning should be designed to expose students to a variety of learning styles, linguistic and learners' intra socio-cultural contexts including issues or content areas with a focus on communication, with a view to developing cognitive skills and understanding cultural variations.

7. This study also reveals some important implications: (8%, Table-10) English courses should be introduced in primary and pre- primary levels; (8%, Table-10) university foundation English courses should assimilate learners' secondary and pre-secondary language learning. (88%, Table-8) Organize more English credit courses to facilitate and advance students' command in English in order to run their respective field of study in English medium.

CONCLUSION

This paper reveals certain implications and recommendations emerging from the survey results and analyses. Firstly, Foundation English syllabus should be redesigned in keeping with the learners' standard and previous learning stressing on vocabulary,

listening skill, speaking skill, and grammar with other skills concerned. Secondly, course contents should cover the socio-cultural factors of the learners, i.e., Saudi socio-cultural milieu. Thirdly, teacher-centred EFL classes need to be replaced by the **task-based language teaching** (TBLT) practices as a teaching technique. Fourthly, pre-university courses should be modernized and learner-centred imparting the basic language skills as though the students can keep pace in their subsequent academic stages. Fifthly, English courses should be introduced in primary and pre- primary levels. Sixthly, more integrated EFL courses should be facilitated focusing the skills (Listening & Speaking) used in the workplaces. Finally, English should be used as a medium of instruction at the university level. Only after all these modifications, we can expect the Foundation English courses to be effective and students to be benefited. Actually speaking English as a global language for the nation to advance in education, science and technology to form better infrastructures, and to spread and disseminate the teachings of Islam, Saudi Arabia needs to be competent in English. To execute the same, government, educators, teachers, national policy makers and all concerned should come forward to improving and modernizing EFL teaching-learning tricks and techniques in Saudi Arabia.

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Appendix

I am doing a research under the caption **"EFL Teachers' Perceptions, Evaluations and Expectations about English Language Courses as EFL in Saudi universities".** Authentic data of teachers' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and expectations are highly significant in order to design and develop academic curriculum. That is why; I am seeking your precious opinion and suggestions especially what you actually experience and practice in the classroom. Therefore, you are requested to answer all the questions below carefully. I appreciate your cooperation with thanks.

Hussain Ahmed Liton
Lecturer, English Language Centre
Jazan University, K.S.A

Teachers' Questionnaire
Profile

Name: …………………………………………………………....
Department: …………………………………………………………...
University: ……………………………………………………………

Cell / E-Mail No: ………………………………………………….

1. How many years have you been working as a teacher/ instructor of English at Secondary/ University level?　---

2. What type of courses have you taught in the last two years or more?

a) ESP　　b) EFL major　c) Reading　d) Writing　e) ESL　f) Other (Please specify)…………………

3. Do you think EFL class will be *task-based language teaching (TBLT) practice?*

a) Yes,　　　　　　　　b) No　　　　　　　　c) I do not know

4. If 'no', please tell the reason(s).

a) Materials in the book are not appropriate for using TBLT

b) Difficulty in assessing learners' task-based performance in the classroom

c) Large class size is a bar for this practice

d) Other (Specify) --

5. What type of English courses is offered in your university?

a) Structured　　　　　　　　　　　b) Focusing on the various language skills

c) Both a & b　　　　　　　　　　　 d) Literature and Language combined

6. Do you feel that the English courses offered are properly designed in keeping with the needs of the students?

a) Yes　　　　　　　　　　　b) No

7. To what extent do you think the contents of existing *Foundation English Syllabus* to be appropriate for the higher studies concerned?

a) Completely　　　　b) Unsatisfactorily　　　c) Not at all

8. What is the learners' reaction regarding the course(s) you are teaching here?

a) Interested　　　b) Bored　　　　c) Do not like

9. What is your outlook on the use of English as a medium of instruction?

a) I support it fully

b) English and Arabic should be combined in the classroom

c) Arabic should be gradually phased out

10. What are the points of weakness of your students' calibre in English? Rank in order of importance.

a) Grammar　　　　　　　　　　1. ---

b) Reading　　　　　　　　　　 2. ---

c) Writing　　　　　　　　　　 3. ---

d) Vocabulary　　　　　　　　　4. ---

e) Listening　　　　　　　　　　5. ---

f) Speaking　　　　　　　　　　6. ---

11. Do you think students need more English credit courses?

a) Yes　　　　　　　　　b) No

12. What should be the focus of English Courses? Rank according to the degree of importance.

a) Grammar　　　　　　　　　　1. ---

b) Reading　　　　　　　　　　 2. ---

c) Writing　　　　　　　　　　 3. ---

d) Vocabulary　　　　　　　　　4. ---

e) Listening　　　　　　　　　　5. ---

f) Speaking　　　　　　　　　　6. ---

13. Do you think that students must learn basic language skills in their pre-secondary levels?

a) Yes　　　　　　　　　b) No

14. Do you have any suggestions about English courses?

(Please mention) ---