The Impact of Poor English Language Proficiency on Professional Development of Professors at Jordanian Universities

Nisreen Al-Khawaldeh
Department of English Language and Literature
The Hashemite University
Zarqa, Jordan

Baker Bani-Khair
Department of English Language and Literature
The Hashemite University
Zarqa, Jordan

Yaser Al-Edwan
Department of English Language and Literature
The world Islamic University for Science and Education
Amman, Jordan

Abstract
It is widely acknowledged that English has become the language of communication internationally (Yahya, 2012; Pennycook, 2014). To the researchers' best knowledge, no research has reported on neither the difficulties non-English major professors face when using English as their formal language of instruction nor on the impact of these difficulties on their professional development. Thus, this paper aims to offer a better insight into the different problems that university professors non-major in English specifically face when communicating in English and their influence on their academic and professional advancement. Non-English major professors need to be competent in communicating English because they need to contact international organizations for publications, introducing partnership, present up-to-date findings in their fields and so on. The sample of the study comprised of 20 non-English major lecturers randomly selected from Hashemite University. Data collected via semi-structured interviews revealed that the participants encountered numerous difficulties in reading, writing and speaking and listening when using English and that these difficulties impact negatively on their academic and professional development. In light of these findings, the paper concludes with some of the participants' suggestions to solve these difficulties.
Keywords: English learning difficulties, bilingualism, limited English proficiency, academic and professional development
Cite as: Al-Khawaldeh, N., Bani-Khair, B., & Al-Edwan, Y. (2016) The Impact of Poor English Language Proficiency on Professional Development of Professors at Jordanian Universities. *Arab World English Journal, 7*(3). DOI:https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol7no3.10

1. Introduction

Language is a very important aspect in people's life as it sharpens their thoughts and controls their entire activity, carries civilization and culture (Bolinger, 1968). In the modern global world, people need to learn languages to communicate and share ideas. As a result, the majority of them are becoming bilingual which Brown (2000) described as becoming a way of life.

English has become the language of communication internationally (Yahya, 2012; Pennycook, 2014). It has got a privileged position as the language of the world in all fields of humanities, science, and social science, international trade, and diplomacy. In particular, Al-Khatib (2000) claims that Arab countries make special efforts to facilitate using English language among their citizens considering it as one of the main focus in their school curriculum in 1920s. Recently, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has put the condition of passing the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) for admitting university postgraduates to ensure their high competency in English language (Alkhawaldeh, 2010). Literature relating to the difficulties English as a foreign language EFL learners encounter in general is available in bulk (e.g. Mourtaga 2006; Kannan, 2009; Jdetawy, 2011), but studies discussing the present research objectives are absent. The lack of opportunities for getting familiar with English, no encouragement for self-learning English, the lack and weakness of the input in their language teaching context, in addition to the lack exposure to the target language indicate that university professors non-major in English could encounter more difficulties than EFL learners when using English as their way of communication.

2. Literature Review

The difficulties English as a foreign language (EFL) learners face in all skills and sub-skills and suggestions to overcome them have been a very hot topic for research since English Language proficiency is currently a requirement in all aspects of work, study, entertainment and communication (Adas & Bakir, 2013; Asassfeh et al, 2011; Jdetawy, 2011; Alkhawaldeh, 2010; Mourtaga, 2006; Rababah, 2003; & Chen, 2002). Asassfeh et al.'s (2011) is one of the studies that tackles the problems EFL face in learning English language. They ordered the skills according to their difficulty: speaking, reading, writing and listening respectively. With regard to speaking, they report the following problems: speaking English fluently as native speakers do, pronouncing words correctly, speaking English with an English or British accent, using idiomatic expressions properly, determining the stressed syllable in a word, using intonation in pronouncing sentences and speaking grammatically correct language. With respect to reading, the difficulty was to understand an English text unless read more than once and infer information not explicitly stated in a text. Concerning writing, most difficulty was reported in writing the first sentence in a text, finding the appropriate word that fits the context as well as writing grammatically correct sentences.

With respect to writing skill in particular, Gomaa (2010) reports some difficulties EFL students face in writing: running on sentences with no punctuation marks, using words translated from the first language causes misunderstanding confusion, using punctuation marks appropriately and writing organization (i.e. essay writing). EFL learners' also find it very hard to produce high-quality texts distinguished by coherence, cohesion and smooth logical flow of ideas (Hinkel, 2001, 2002). To overcome these difficulties, Adas and Bakir (2013) recommend

working on supporting the notion of blended learning among both teachers and students, training both teachers and students on blended-learning techniques and strategies to make the process of writing easy, improving the facilities and the technical infrastructure by providing higher internet speed, wireless internet, and stronger server. Blended learning, according to Colis and Mooner (2001) is a using traditional face-to-face in combination with online learning where instruction occurs both in the classroom and online.

Regarding the speaking skill, Rababah (2001) found that Arab students find it really hard to engage in authentic communication using appropriate and correct English because of the poor vocabulary repertoire. Hesitation to speak English during class time could be ascribed to lack of communicative competence and the feeling of being under evaluation by others (Bachman, 1990).

Jdetawy (2011) ascribes the difficulties EFL learners face to the fact that their mother tongue and the mainly language used for communication is Arabic, the Arab EFL learners' preference and tendency to use Arabic in EFL classrooms rather than English, the lack and weakness of the input in their EFL teaching context, the lack of EFL learners' personal enthusiasm, the unsuitability and limitations of the English language curricula adopted by some academic institutions. Besides the aforementioned problems Zughoul (1983), Mukattash (1983), and Suleiman (1983) believe that the problems encountered by Arab EFL learners can be referred to ineffective teaching methodology and the lack of the appropriate and effective language environments.

3. Rationale for the present study

English language is the international language used for communication worldwide. Therefore, any difficulties people face when communicating in English must to be identified and solved in order to facilitate communication for academic and personal purposes nationally and internationally. The review of literature shows that even EFL learners face various difficulties in communicating in English (Rababah, 2001; Jdetawy, 2011). Thus, it is definite that those non-major in English who handle English classes (such as scientific branches) face insurmountable difficulties. However, none of the foregoing literature tackled the types of difficulties faced by university non-major when communicating in English with regard to the four language skills and the impact of them on the professional development. Unraveling any difficulties and being consciously aware of them would help researchers and specialist find ways to overcome them and provide effective solutions accordingly. Thus, the present study tries to fill the research gap by investigating the difficulties university non-major face when communicating in English and the impact of them on the professional development along with some suggested solutions. Theoretically recommended methods for enhancing proficiency in English without considering potential difficulties communicators face would not be prove successful. Such investigation may unravel certain serious difficulties which English languages users themselves are not conscious of their hindrance of reaching English language proficiency. Thus, they cannot choose the suitable method to solve them. It is in this context that the present study was undertaken to capture valuable insights into how non-major in English university lectures in Jordan perceive their difficulties with English language four skills. The study reported here aims to add to the knowledge base in this area.

4. Significance of the study

The study contributes to the existing literature related to applied linguistics fields particularly TESOL and TEFL fields. It enriches the domains of the difficulties that learners face when acquiring or using a foreign language. Taking the difficulties and challenges learners from different academic backgrounds face in mastering the English language into consideration is significant because they will soon embark on their teaching career and will be in constant contact with many people from different academic and national backgrounds. Overcoming these difficulties could be a great assistance to them. It is also of value that the main reasons behind these difficulties that roadblock leaning English have been investigated and suggestions have been given in order to overcome such problems. In addition, it could significantly serve those who are interested in studying the relation between First language (L1) and Second language (L2) by shedding some light on the possible impact of the L1 on L2 and vice versa. Furthermore, it is significant for teachers as it clarifies the weakness points which should be considered when designing English language curriculum.

5. Research Methodology

The research is qualitative in nature. The researcher has adopted the interview rather than a questionnaire as the research instrument for this study for so many reasons. It suits the objectives of the study. It also allows the participants enough time to probe for providing rich data that better describes their perception of both their behaviour and its related social reality (Gray, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Patton (1990:278) argues that the mainly used "find out what is in and on someone else's mind". The interview has been found to be widely used in needs analysis particularly as it is more flexible in the sense that the order and wording of the questions in this type of interview can be changed based on the direction of the interview and the interviewer's discretion. This indicates that they are more reliable in yielding valid responses about the participants' perceptions and attitudes about their experiences and real life (Punch, 2005). The researcher followed the following interview protocol: the interviewees were assured that the interview data will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of this research study. They were asked to provide some general information to make them feel relaxed, they were informed that interview contains questions regarding your attitude toward English learning, difficulties and their impact on their professional development, and they can stop the recorder anytime they want and refuse to answer any of the interview questions if they were not comfortable responding to it, besides they were able to direct any questions related to this research. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed and their content were analyzed thematically.

6. Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of male and female non-majors lecturers at the Hashemite University who did not even have any experience living abroad. A convenient sample of 20 lecturers, non-major in English, were selected for interviews lasting from 20 minutes to 35 minutes to enable them talk about the difficulties they encountered when communicating (reading, writing, speaking and listening) in English.

7. Results and discussion

The participants revealed their awareness of the importance of being proficient in English language for academic and professional development. They were aware that English is quickly

becoming the international lingua franca. They were also conscious of they need to have a good command of English as they are normally required to use English in publishing papers, reporting on certain projects, contacting foreign organizations to establish mutual relationships, writing and correcting students' assignments, delivering speeches and presentations. However, it appeared that there were certain difficulties that hindered that. The vast majority of the participants referred these difficulties to the degree to which their mother tongue (i.e. Arabic) differs from the target language (i.e. English) besides the excessive use of Arabic compared to English in and outside classroom. They also made it clear that cultural differences in communication styles and preferences may also significantly contribute to the difficulty. The difficulties that the participants revealed could be summarized in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: *The difficulties lecturers face when communicating in English*

The skill according to the difficulty	The difficulties
speaking	incapability and lack self-confidence to engage in an ongoing English authentic communicative situations due to the feeling of being under scrutiny, poor vocabulary repertoire , poor pronunciation, and the inability to balance between varying vocabulary, applying correct grammar and pronouncing correctly.
Listening	The uneasiness when listening to any speech in English due to their incompetence, limited vocabulary, inability to follow the quick speech
Writing	The difficulty of generating and organizing pertinent ideas in well-written grammatically correct sentences which are correctly punctuated.
Reading	The inability to determine the main ideas in a long text, use contextual clues to guess the meaning and infer implied information.

A considerable number of the lecturers (93%) highlighted listening and speaking in English as the most difficult skill to master followed by writing then reading. One of the difficulties is the inability to use English for communication particularly engaging in authentic communicative situations. They lack self-confidence in keeping the interaction in English going for an extended period of time with their Arab or foreigner peers. Their poor vocabulary repertoire contributes to loosing self-efficacy in communicating in English language. Their poor pronunciation also contributes to their inability to speak English fluently. This could be ascribed to the fact that English contains a number of sounds that are not present in Arabic language. Thus, they might not feel natural to them. They basically face difficulty in distinguishing between vowel sound, i.e. ……..Pin-pen /u/ with /ʊ/ (fool vs. full vowels), (law and low) and of /ɛ/ with /æ/ (bet vs. bat vowels). Thus, speakers end up mixing pronunciation of words and not being able to distinguish between them such as Arabic language consists of only /b/ sound, the letter /p/ would sound by Arabic native speakers' tongues and ears as /b/instead such as in words "parking" which may sound more like "barking". The majority also highlighted the fact that they were unable to keep balance between varying vocabulary, applying correct grammar and

pronouncing correctly. Such imbalance causes hesitation, confusion and embarrassment for them which all result in low speed in talking, repetition of the same vocabularies and no intonation being applied in pronouncing sentences. Most of the interviewees revealed that having the feeling that you are under scrutiny by others and in a very evaluative society could also contribute to their inefficiency in speaking English or undesirability to even try to speak in English. Thus, they find it really difficult to express themselves comfortably and competently even when they deal with academic topics or everyday topics. Accordingly, they avoid interactions with native speakers and their English speaking counterparts because of their frustration or awkwardness at their poor English. In light of this finding, teachers should recommend EFL learners to listen to native speakers through pronunciation laboratory, watching films and using visual aids so as to strengthen their capability at phonological aspect.

Very related to the speaking skill is the listening skill. A vast majority of the participants stated that they feel uneasy when listening to any speech in English. They referred this difficulty their incompetence in this skill to having limited vocabulary and expression repertoire, their inability to understand the quick speech and words they hear, recognize and distinguish the English vowels. This results in asking for more repetition for the sake of understanding.

Writing is the third skill in its difficulty. The majority of the lecturers (78%) suffers from planning for the writing process including generating and organizing ideas that are pertinent to the required topics, writing grammatically correct sentences, punctuating the written text properly. The use of the appropriate word that fits the context and the cohesive linking words in properly is also a source of difficulty for the participants. This finding indicates that English teachers should focus not only teaching English basics but also the finer points of English writing conventions. They should be made conscious of the point that they should produce complete sentences rather than fragmented phrases that are normally used in speech. Things such as correct verb tenses, article usage, subject-verb agreement, determiner-subject agreement, complex sentences, and collocations usage should be clearly explained to them. In addition, because of the considerable effect that written performance may have on students' success, teachers should pay particular attention to how learners' view their own writing level. This is because though learners' self-assessments may not be an accurate indicator of their actual language proficiency, their perception of their own English skills may greatly affect their interest in taking extra support writing courses.

Reading was viewed as the least difficult skill. A large number of the lecturers (64%) stated that determining the main ideas in a text particularly in a relatively long text. That is why they need to read any text written in English more than once in order to understand its content. They also need to repeatedly check English-Arabic dictionary. They lack the ability to invest the strategy of using context clues to guess the meaning of unknown words. Inferring information not stated clearly in a text is another difficulty they face when reading any English text. The difficulties found in the present study are consistent with those found in Mukattash (1983), Wahba (1998), Abbad (1988) and Rababah (2001). They found learners face difficulties in pronunciation, spelling, morphology, and syntax and they were unable to express themselves comfortably and efficiently in communicative situations. This indicates that the situation is almost the same in the Arab countries.

Grammar in English has been viewed by the participants as a cause of low proficiency in the four skills. The researchers support Abdullah and Hussein's (2013) claim that learning of a second language is a complex process, if the two languages have distinctly different structures. This involves a seemingly infinite number of variables. It could be because English has a relatively large number of verb tense forms with some quite subtle differences compared to Arabic language. In other words, besides the simple past, simple present, and imperative known in Arabic, English has present perfect, past perfect, progressive, perfect progressive forms, and future which add to the complexity of using English. Besides the tenses, the participants find it difficult to manipulate the various ways in which English uses modal verbs and auxiliary verbs in aces such as negation (e.g. she hasn't been playing.), inversion with the subject to form a question (e.g. have they been playing?), and tag questions (have they?), the case when auxiliary are main verbs and when they are used to replace other verbs.

The differences between definite, indefinite and zero article are also another source of difficulty for the participants since they only have definite and zero article in Arabic. They pointed out that the uses of these types of articles are not always clear thus not easy to learn. Vey related to this is the fact that many participants face difficulty in using prepositions with verbs and remembering their exact meaning correctly. Very related to this is the difficulty they face in using phrasal verb (e.g. give up, put on, and look for). Due to these difficulties, they are not able to produce even a single sentence without any grammatical error in English. This could be partly ascribed this the fact that the participants view learning English it from the examination perspective only, and partly to the fact that examination system applied at schools and university mostly focuses on students' memorisation rather than testing their analytical, creative and applicable skills which ultimately results in short team learning of English.

The participants also revealed a very important point which could be the reason latent behind their less proficiency in English that is the influence mother tongue exert on the acquired foreign language. They pointed out that even when trying to speak or write English, they feel they still think in in their mother tongue (Arabic). In other words, in order to understand, for instance, a text in English, they try to explain it first in Arabic. They also carry over the Arabic grammatical patterns to English. This is problematic because both languages have different grammatical patterns. There are large numbers of subtle differences in both languages' tenses that lecturers may have great difficulty detecting. This finding lends supports to Richards, et.al. (1992) who state that learners frequently made errors result because of borrowing patterns from the target language, and expressing meaning using the vocabulary and syntax which are already known. The finding is in line with other researchers' finding regarding the possible effect of mother tongue on difficulties of learning English as a foreign language (Beardsmore, 1982; Makattash, 1983; Abbad, 1988; kambal, 1980 & Wahba, 1998). This could also assert cook's (1991) claim that there exist a bidirectional interdependence amongst the (L1) and the (L2). Due to the influence L1 exerts on L2, the researchers agree with Ellis's (1997) claim that teachers should make their students distinguish between errors and mistakes. As he puts it errors reveal gaps in the learners' knowledge as they don't know the correct whereas mistakes reflect infrequent lapses in performance as learners are unable to perform what the correct form they know in a particular case.

Following such bilingual approach constantly may render them less confident in using the English language proficiently. In addition, the lack of knowledge of English idiomatic expressions was also highlighted by a number of participants as another possible cause that could be attributed their low proficiency in English language. This could be because English is reputed to have a relatively high degree of idiomatic usage.

The participants revealed that these difficulties make them less confident and less proficient in using English, accordingly they provided some suggestions to solve them in order to enhance their English language proficiency. Having such attitudes toward these difficulties affect learning the language and consequently improving the academic and professional status. This is very important because as (Everling, (2013) claims that lecturers with lower self-efficacy are not as effective in their instruction. This could be explained by the fact that the higher a person's self-efficacy, the higher their students' performance will be. The ability to communicate effectively provides high quality instruction.

The issue of how proficiency in English language relates to academic and professional achievement is clearly relevant to the following main concepts: background knowledge, the means of instruction, academic classification and promotion. Since there is a plethora of academic papers published in English, the participants complained that they cannot benefit from them. They also add that they are required to publish papers in English even if their academic specialization is not English. With all these difficulties, they feel discouraged to publish papers in international journals or even participate in international conferences. Non-English majors' level of English proficiency is an important criterion in determining their readiness for participating in the national and international conferences, meeting and forums. It influences their readiness for reading different types of books, articles or recent studies to keep up-to-date with any recent advancement and findings in their field. It also influences the ability to enhance and develop their abilities and knowledge in arts, math, and science. If Jordanian non-English major professors are to catch up academically to their native-speakers counterparts, they must engage in an extensive reading of books, papers, articles published in English so as to be exposed to academic language and be well-versed in their areas of specialisations. The majority of them dwelled on the point that they are not good at presentation because English language is not their mother tongue, thus they feel shy if they pronounce or use words inappropriately.

In addition, the affective side of the participants is also found to play a crucial role in developing their tendency to improve their English language skills. The learners' emotions control their will to activate their cognitive lingual abilities. The interviewee revealed that they are not sufficiently motivated to persevere on enhancing their English language skills. They are aware that a lack of personal impetus on their parts essential for enhancing their English proficiency. In addition, their past level in English that holds me back, their fear of failure and their prevalent feeling that it is not possible to attain fluency or mastery over English language and disappointing feeling that English is very difficult and whatever they do, they will not excel in English prevents them from learning it.

Therefore, the English syllabuses, the teaching methodology, and the target language environment need to be changed and developed in light of the difficulties they face in order to suit their needs. Being faced with the urgent need to use English in their future academic and

professional life presses hard on the need to be sufficiently motivated to learn English. Thus, it is extremely crucial to make lecturers recognize that learning English requires being patient and constant practice. Following these suggestions to make lecturers highly motivated and goal oriented could help solve their English use difficulties and can also attribute their success in different aspects. Reducing lecturers' passivity and raising the eagerness only is not sufficient, they also need to be directed to how to learn English. This result supports what Suleiman (1983) and Mukattash (1983) found that lack of motivation is one of the factors that contributes to the weakness of learners' English proficiency. It is also in line with Stevick's (1982:27) argument that "fluency depends at least as much on emotional factors as on amount of practice". Narayanan et al. (2008) assert that successful acquisition of a language seems to some extent, contingent upon learners' opinions of the language itself, learning environment, and its speakers. Accordingly, English learners need to have an interactive motivation. In other words, they will be more motivated if they want to set some goals and purposes for themselves such as becoming an accepted academically active member of the university. Being motivated to learn English could help improve and enhance learner's aptitude learn a new language.

Exploring this hot topic is of a great significance since leaving the difficulties non-English major lecturers face when using English unresolved would negatively impact professional development. A lack of sufficient quality professional development can in turn negatively influence professors' self-efficacy which in turn may result in the professors' having lower self-confidence in their knowledge and ability to be effective instructors.

Impact on professional development

The results showed that poor English language proficiency hinders university lectures' professional development. They admitted that English language is an indispensable mean for communication with most of the outside world in both daily and professional life. They acknowledged that their poor English language skills had hindered the development of their self-confidence in communication and information-handling skills particularly understanding, interpreting and conveying information, managing the self-learning and teaching process, computer skills learning and learning and teaching critical thinking and problem-solving. Their lack of proficiency in English poses some difficulties and results in failure in using English as a tool of self-expression to achieve their communicative goals to alter teaching plans and methods of teaching considering what is new in literature.

Identifying such specific areas that constantly challenge non-native speakers and the underlying reasons could lead researchers and English teachers to find and illuminate better ways through which they can help students on their journey of learning English language.
In light of the results, the researchers recommend that the essential principles in the English departments' programs and the designed curriculum should be revisited to be adequate to cater for the students' needs. Sufficient in-classroom communicative approaches should be provided to develop learners' communication skills. More extracurricular activities with native speakers should be devised in order to break the language and cultural barrier. Considering the limitations of increasing exposure to authentic English environment, virtual English learning environment particularly speaking courses may be efficient in improving their poor conversation skills. Offering is one hour English language support classes for those lecturers who might need help.

The researchers recommend English teachers to boost their students' self-confidence and stress the point that learning English language requires time, patience and dedication. This could in turn assure them that they difficulties they face would fade through time and will help reduce their feeling of depression when learning English language. The researchers also recommend that English teachers assert to their students the point that learning English is a skill which entails continuous practice. Practice helps students strive not only to learn English but also to master it. What is also of a great significance is the individual differences. Teachers and learners should also consider the fact that some people are better at learning languages than others due to having different personalities and learning styles. This would indicate as Harmer (2001) argues that there are differences in the ways individual brains work. According to Brown (2000), some students prefer oral learning compared to other who favor using visual materials for learning. On the top of that, English teachers should keep on their professional growth and development. These ways will encourage students be more committed to improving their English proficiency.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, the outcomes of the study show that the non-English major lectures struggled with notable difficulties when communicating in English: listening, speaking, writing and reading. They ascribed these difficulties to numerous resources: excessive use of Arabic compared to English in and outsides classrooms, the interference of their mother tongue and target language, lack of exposure to authentic language learning environment, low self-efficacy and passive motivation and to learning English as a foreign language.

The findings of the study stressed the importance of tackling such difficulties. Although there is a plethora of studies that have been conducted in different countries to investigate issues associated with language teaching and learning, it would be extremely problematic to say that people sharing certain cultural, academic, and educational background face only one set of problems. There will always be difficulties in learning English varying as time goes. Therefore, more studies are needed to specifically study difficulties each group face in order to resolve them. More Studies investigating difficulties of learning English in teams of experience, age, and gender among EFL students. Further contrastive studies examining difficulties of learning English among students specialized linguistics and those specialized in literature at English department. Teachers, curricula designers and lecturers themselves should be aware of these difficulties since they will then be better able to help in overcoming them. Further studies are required to specifically tackle each difficulty and provide appropriate solutions

About the Authors:

Nisreen Al-Khawaldeh completed her PhD in Linguistics at the University of Bedfordshire (United Kingdom) in 2014. She is currently an assistant professor in department of English Language and Literature at the Hashemite University. She has wide ranging teaching and assessment experience in different universities in Jordan. She is specialized in English Linguistics. She is interested in TEFL, pragmatics, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. She participated in different related conferences and has many publications in these fields.

Baker Bani-Khair earned his PhD degree in English literature from Texas A&M University Commerce in 2013. He is interested in teaching and researching issues related to English language and literature. He has had the chance to teach English as a foreign language at different

institutions in Jordan and America. He is currently an assistant professor at the Hashemite University in Jordan. He has many publications in the field of linguistics and literature.

Yaser Al-Edwan holds a PhD degree in Applied Linguistics – Curriculum and teaching Methods, Teaching English as a foreign language from Yarmouk University, Jordan. He is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics in Department of English Language and Literature-The world Islamic university for science and education. He has authored and co-authored a number of publications in this field of study including in Applied Linguistics and Language Learning and Teaching.

References

Abbad, A. (1988). An analysis of communicative competence features in English language text in Yemen Arab. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of IIIinoin, Urbana-Champaing.

Abdullah, A. & Hussein, G. (2013). Difficulties of Learning English as a Foreign Language among Students at English Department College of Education, University of Kirkuk in Terms of their Mother Tongue. *Al-Farahidi Arts Journal, 15,* 2-58.

Alkhawaldeh, A. (2010). The Challenges Faced by Jordanian English Language Teachers at Amman 1st and 2nd Directorates of Education. *College Student Journal, 44*(4), 1-30

Asassfeh, S., Al-Shaboul, Y., Zuraiq, W., & Alshboul, S. (2011). Lending Ears to EFL Learners: Language Difficulties. *The Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, *28*(01), 33-46.

Adas, D. & Bakir, A (2013).Writing Difficulties and New Solutions: Blended Learning as an Approach to Improve Writing Abilities. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 3*(9): 254-266.

Al-Khatib, M. (2000). The Arab world: Language and cultural issues. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*, *73*(2), 121-125.

Bachman, L. and Palmer, A. S. (1984). Some Comments on the Terminology of Language Testing. In: Rivera, C. (ed.). *Communicative Competence Approaches to Language proficiency Assessment: Research and Application,* 34-43. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Beardsmore, H. (1982). *Bilingualism: Basic Principles*. England: Avon.

Bolinger, D. (1968). *Aspects of Language*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc.

Brown, H. (2000), *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Chen, Y. (2002). The Problems of University EFL Writing in Taiwan. *The Korea TESOL Journal, 5,* 59–79.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. London/New York: Routledge Falmer.

Colis, B., & Mooner, J. (2001). *Flexible Learning in a Digital World: Experiences and Expectations.* London: Koganpage.

Cook, V. (1991). Second Language Learning and Language Teaching. London: Edward.

Ellis, R. (1997). *Second Language Acquisition.* Oxford: Oxford University press.

Everling, K. (2013). Professional Development and Self-Efficacy of Texas Educators and the Teaching of English Language Learners. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *3*(19):1-8.

Gomma, L (2010). Writing Trouble Spots for ESL Students of Arabic: The Apple Where Teachers Meet and Learn. Grabe W & Kaplan, R.B (1996). *The theory and practice of writing*. Addison Wesley-Longman Limited.

Gray, D. (2004). *Doing Research in the Real World*. London: Sage Publications.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Pearson education limited.

Hinkel, E. (2001). Matters of Cohesion in L2 Academic Texts. *Applied Language Learning, 12*(2), 111–132.

Hinkel, E. (2002). *Second Language Writers' Text*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ishag, A., Altmayer, C. & Witruk, E. (2015). A Comparative Self-Assessment of Difficulty in Learning English and German among Sudanese Students. *British Journal of English Linguistics, 3*(2), 18-26.

Jdetawy, L. (2011). Problems Encountered by Arab EFL Learners. *Language in India, 11*(3), 19-27.

Kambal, M. (1980). An analysis of Khartoum University students' composition errors with implications for remedial English in the context of Arabicization. Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of Texas at Austin, USA.

Kanan, D. (2009). Difficulties in Learning English as a Second Language. *ESP World 5*(26)*,* 1-4.

Mourtaga, K. (2006). Some Reading Problems of Arab EFL Students. *Journal of Al-Aqsa University*, *10*(2), 75–91.

Mukattash, L. (1983). The Problem of Difficulty in Foreign Language Learning. In Dahiyat, E. & Ibrahim, M. (eds.). *Papers from the First Conference on the Problems of Teaching English Language and Literature at Arab Universities,* Amman: University of Jordan.

Narayanan, R, Nair, N & Iyyappan, S. (2008). Some Factors Affecting English Learning at Tertiary Level. *Iranian Journal of Language Studies, 2(4)*, 485–512.

Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Pennycook, A. (2014). *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*. London: Routledge.

Punch, K. (2005). *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and qualitative Approaches*. London: Sage.

Rababah, G. (2001). An investigation into the strategic competence of Arab learners of English at Jordanian universities. Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

Richards, J., Platt, J., & Platt , H . (1992). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics.* England: Longman Group U K limited.

Stevick, E. (1982). *Teaching and Learning Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

Suleiman, S. (1983).Teaching English to Arab Students at the University Level. In Dihayat & Ibrahim (eds.). *Papers from the First Conference on the Problems of Teaching English Language and Literature at Arab Universities,* University of Jordan: Jordan.

Wahba, E. (1998).Teaching Pronunciation-Why? *Language Teaching Forum. 36*, 3, 3-32

Yahya, M. (2012). A Study of the Language Difficulties of the English Language Center Students at the Arab American University of Jenin.アシエンヅロナルオフメネゲメントサイネセゾアナドエグケサン,*1* (2):119-130.

Zughoul, M (1983).The Unbalanced Program of the English Department in the Arab World. In Dihayat and Ibrahim (eds.), *Papers from the First Conference on the Problems of Teaching English Language and Literature at Arab Universities,* University of Jordan: Jordan.