



The Outcome of Teaching English in the State Elementary Schools in Kuwait

Dr. Abbas H. AL-Shammari*

Abstract:

This study is intended to present an overall review of the English teaching-learning process in the state schools in Kuwait. The study gives priority to the experiment of teaching English in the state elementary schools. The researcher has showed that this step has been taken after lengthy deep studies due to two main reasons: 1) extending the period of teaching English so that learners have longer practice and use of the language, and consequently, gain consolidated and reinforced outcome of English when leaving school, that would pave the way for pursuing their studies, in English, whether in Kuwait or abroad 2) to follow up the most didactic methodology of teaching English as a foreign language. The study depicts a real picture of teaching English in the elementary state schools in Kuwait. The findings of the research have been vindicated through the examination result sheets, and the opinion of English language teachers from 12 schools included the three stages; the elementary, the intermediate and the secondary over the six provinces of Kuwait. This step has contained collecting data and statistics, analyzing them, and tracing out the significant achievement of the experiment of starting teaching English as from the elementary cycle. The study went through the characteristics of learners in the three stages of education: the primary, the intermediate and the secondary. Considerable space has been devoted for the syllabus content analysis, motivation factor in the learning process, and the characteristics of the English language teacher. The research has shown how the experiment of teaching English in the elementary stage has been satisfactorily reflected on both: the learners' results in the intermediate and in the secondary stages, and the progress in the level of learners in the use of English communicatively.

(*) Teaching English As a Second/Foreign Language, University of Wales, U.K, 1988, Language Center, Faculty of Social Sciences, English Language Unit, Kuwait University.

Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language has been one of the eccentric issues that occupies a vast space of the interest of the linguists for a long time since it focuses on conveying a new tongue to learners. Of all various subject areas of the elementary, intermediate and secondary school curriculum, it can be argued convincingly that teaching English encompasses the broadest, richest and most diverse branches. Effective teaching programs have the potential for contributing much to pupils' understanding of a foreign language to communicate in the world that they live in, and enhancing their ability to function effectively through accepting learning a strange foreign subject.

Experience has shown that the general objectives of education are in harmony with the specific objectives of teaching English. These objectives are driven from the goals of education, and can be defined separately as follows:

First - The General Aims of Education in Kuwait:

- 1 - Inculcating the principles of Islam so that they become method of thinking and a style of life. These principles should be translated into realistic behavior, and directed into proper channels.
- 2 - Providing opportunities for the pupils to develop mentally, morally, spiritually, physically and emotionally to the utmost of their capacities in the content of the Kuwaiti society, its traditions, its philosophy and its heritage.
- 3 - Providing opportunities for pupils to be competent leaders assuming the responsibility of reconstruction, development and education of all features of backwardness, illiteracy and stagnation.
- 4 - Patronizing the gifted and brilliant students in order to prepare distinctive leadership capable of taking initiative for the progress of the society.
- 5 - Preparing students to lead a decent and efficient life in a

democratic society, insuring their dignity and freedom, and developing in them the spirit of sacrifice for their society, and facing the challenges and dangers whatsoever.

- 6 - Developing the students' capabilities for creativity, discovery and innovation, and inculcating in them the scientific thinking, the power of observation, and the ability of reasoning and taking decisions.
- 7 - Orienting them in the human as well as the material resources of the Arab world as a step towards realizing a complete integration and cooperation among the Arab countries.
- 8 - Consolidating the ties of solidarity, fraternity and family spirit among individuals, and getting rid of racial, class, religious and regional prejudice. (Min. of Ed. Guide, 2002, Chap. 3, pp. 22, 37).

Second - The Specific Objectives of Teaching English at the State Schools in Kuwait:

These objectives can be summed up in the following points:

- 1 - To understand a foreign language when spoken at normal speed on a subject within the range of students experience. That is to say to develop the listening or the aural skill.
- 2 - To speak fluently enough to communicate with a native speaker on a subject within the range of the student's experience, too. That is to say to develop the skill of speaking, or in other words: To understand and to be understood.
- 3 - To read with direct understanding without recourse to the native language; the Arabic.
- 4 - To write using authentic patterns of the language, written, or spoken by a native speaker.
- 5 - To understand through the foreign language the contemporary values and behavior patterns of the people whose language is being studied.
- 6 - To acquire knowledge of the significant features of the country where the language is spoken. (Eng. Curriculum Dept., P. 20, 1994)

Research Problem:

Since there is general weakness in English language acquisition at the state intermediate and secondary schools in Kuwait, this research has been written to demonstrate the progress that has been achieved in this field after introducing English paper in the state elementary schools through comparing the grades the pupils gained in English, after and before teaching English as a foreign language in the elementary stage. Thus, introducing the English paper has been an effective remedy for treating the weakness of students in English, particularly in communication field.

Research Goals:

The goal of this research is mainly to present the result of the experiment of teaching English as from the elementary stage, and how that was noticeably reflected on boosting the level of students in the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The research also discusses ways of providing sufficient scope in writing experiences for students on high school courses to gain confidence, and speed in handling English to express their knowledge by communicative tools. More serious, however, is the fact that -as another target of the research- the researcher aims at demonstrating the variance in the English paper results of students who learnt English from the intermediate stage, and those who started with it from the elementary stage. In order to obtain authentic information, the researcher extracted his data from the books and statistics of the Exams Department of the Ministry of Education in Kuwait. The study also gives an overall review of English language teaching in Kuwait elementary schools. Besides, it sheds light on the outcome of teaching English in the forthcoming stages.

Research Questions:

The research tackles the questions beyond the low level of the intermediate and the secondary stage pupils in English language learning for more than two decades ago, and their level as from 1993 on, after starting teaching English from the elementary stage. The study, too,

raises the question of upgrading the level of the intermediate and secondary stages students after introducing the teaching of English in the elementary stage. The research gives answers to frequently repeated questions linked with the possibility of boosting the plane of the syllabus. The researcher raises the matter of tailoring English language curriculum based on the local environment of Kuwait, in order to connect what is being taught with real life of the students.

Research Procedure:

The research followed both: the descriptive and the analytical procedures. Characteristics of learners, motivation, and the learning-teaching process of English at the three stages of education in Kuwait state schools have been presented. On the other side, the results of progress in English level of the intermediate and secondary stage pupils after they had English from the elementary stage, have been analyzed through facts, statistics and tables. The study is designed to evaluate the experiment of teaching English in the elementary stage through: (a) teachers' opinion, (b) assessment of the textbooks, and (c) administering questionnaire and interviews with personnel working in the field of teaching.

Teaching English in the Elementary Stage:

During the last two decades, Ministries of Education in most countries of the world have been trying the idea of introducing foreign-language teaching (most likely the English) at the early stages of teaching. In Kuwait, the experiment started as early as 1993 when the English language was firstly introduced at the state elementary schools. (English Curriculum Dept., Min. of Ed. 2004, Chap. 1, p. 31).

Several goals were targeted at teaching English from the elementary stage. **They can be listed as follows:**

- 1 - Consolidation of firm foundation for life-time use of English.
- 2 - Introducing English as a real language that is normally employed for the purpose of communication. Older pupils sometimes think of learning a foreign language is just like any other school activity.

- 3 - Giving pupils a positive attitude towards English that will assist them to confront the difficulties of English grammar in higher classes.
- 4 - Getting use from the fact that young children naturally tend to acquire rather than learn a language: It is simply not possible for them to commit the mistakes of being too intellectual or mechanical in their approach to a foreign language. Particularly with English, new techniques and materials for language teaching make the most of the natural abilities of young learners.
- 5 - Manipulating the young learners' enthusiasm to any new subject that is presented elaborately.

As a fact, the role of English teaching in the elementary stage shall not be to teach as much language as possible. The amount of language to be taught is quite moderate. It should be carefully chosen and frequently recycled. It is significant to impress materials taught through communication, and introducing them to effective techniques for achieving the intended purpose. The concentration throughout is on the development of language skills, so that children can actually use English not just memorizing a few English words or some rules about English structure, at large.

Teaching Young Learners:

When going a little further in the experiment of introducing English teaching in the elementary schools in Kuwait since 1993, the facts of the research show that teaching young children from the age of the elementary stage is very different from teaching older children. It is not definitely an issue of demanding a bit less of the younger pupils. It is also persistent to know the features of the young pupils and their implications. (Min. of Ed. Paper, 1998, pp. 61-62, 68 & 71).

Characteristics of the Elementary School Learners in Kuwait:

Kuwaiti young children differ in their experience of English specially in the Kuwaiti cosmopolitan houses where multi-nationalities housemaids take care of younger children, and the communication means between those children and their foreign caretakers is just very

poor Arabic, and some little incorrect English. Thereby, children take distorted doses of English. Though, the English that those young children take at kindergarten is not sufficient to remedy the poor English they have acquired from the housemaids since children spend longer time with them. That is simply because the majority of those maids are from south-east Asian countries, and they are either illiterate, or know very poor English that in most cases abuse the English the young learner has acquired from the kindergarten. So, it is very common to find that children have some knowledge of the English alphabet, numbers and some simple words when they go to the elementary school. However, this presents a problem for teachers who may have to undo incorrect learning.

The other problem that young children encounter in English learning at the elementary schools is how to accept the concept of learning a foreign language. Notwithstanding, it must be mentioned that at this age, children are fairly competent users of their mother tongue. They have been learning Arabic for a certain time now, and have established some initial rules of Arabic syntax. Thus, they have some language awareness that they may use in foreign language class. They may be able to sing, play games, or even tell some simple stories that are familiar to them.

The Cognitive Side of the Elementary Stage Learners:

Most children will be able to switch their experience to a new language. At the age of eight and nine, children begin to be aware of the adult world have established their basic concepts, and have formed relatively clear vision of some aspects of the world outside their closest family. They become able to differentiate between fact and fiction when they read books, watch television and express what they like and what they dislike. The teacher can thus consult them on objectives, techniques and activities. Furthermore, children at this age are able to cooperate and learn from their peers, and therefore pair work and group work are highly recommended. However, it must be remembered that some pupils work best alone. (Barber, M& Dann, 2003, p.211).

In addition to that, young learners are known as very active physically, so their comprehension comes through their ears, hands and eyes. Young pupils dislike sitting calmly for more than few minutes, especially if the activity is not that exciting. The teacher can attract their attention by asking them to do some physical movements, such as miming, playing games or even running to touch an object inside the class. The teacher can use the surroundings and physically demonstrate, if possible, what the children are required to do. (Carnall, C., 2000). Forming groups, or pairs, or simply standing up are also examples of physical movements that keep the children vigorous. Physical reaction is the most effective way of making young learners remember the meaning of a word. But, elementary school learners also respond to words, as well as physical activities and games though they still need a lot of visual and real objects to stimulate them. Moreover, we can say that young learners are uninhibited. They are not so worried about making mistakes in front of the peers (despite they enjoy being praised in front of them). They feel joyful to repeat utterances that they do not fully understand. (Hymes, D. 1996).

Regarding fluency and accuracy, it is counter-productive to focus on a high level of accuracy rather than fluency. Fluency should be motivated and accuracy will come later when the language introduced at this level is recycled and consolidated at higher levels.

The above are some characteristics of the elementary stage learners, which influence the English language syllabus of the elementary cycle in Kuwait state schools. As their cognitive capacities have not got matured enough, and they cannot handle abstract concepts, one must avoid teaching rules. Thus, this course is based on the notion that pupils know absolutely nothing about English, and the teacher should teach accordingly.

The Type of Language That is Taught at the Elementary State Schools in Kuwait:

The researcher shows that this matter raises an important question because the selection of language to be taught at this stage is mainly governed by the nature of young learners, and by the

intention to give them a positive and enjoyable introduction to English. This sort of language which is being taught at the elementary schools in Kuwait is restricted to things that young children face in everyday life. For the age of 1 to 4, the language is mainly limited to things that this category of learners may encounter at school or at home. The elementary 5th level, language extends to the surroundings outside home and school. By this technique, teachers introduce language that is relevant to children's immediate communicative needs. It has been found that the course includes language that lends itself to a lot of oral, communicative activities. For instance, much time is assigned to short questions and answers. These questions provide an appropriate way of introducing new words in sound simple structures, as well as consolidating the structures themselves.

Young children usually have a relatively simple approach to deciphering the patterns of language. Very young children generally face problems with pronunciation, but those who are between eight to ten are still more aware, and resist the irregularities of language. They often shorten words to one or two syllables that is one reason why the course avoids long words and irregular plurals and verbs as far as possible in the early years of the elementary stage. (Kennet, K. 2002, p. 337)

Young learners cannot learn new words that are beyond their mental ability even if they try to learn them in their own language. This means that neither abstract words are introduced in the English course of the elementary schools in Kuwait, nor language that relates to things outside their experience. This also points that grammar rules are taught in the simplest possible way, as few limited number of pupils at this age are able to cope with. Therefore, teachers are instructed to make brief comments about a rule, and to avoid lengthy illustrations.

Teaching grammar and structures is not completely avoidable in the English course of the state elementary schools in Kuwait. There are a lot of grammar drills in book 5. Structures in this course are restricted so that pupils are able to practice immediately through context and communication. It is fundamental not to engage young children by giving them the impression that learning English is just a matter of rote-learning rigid rules. Because of the focus on the communicative

approach, situational functions are taught from the beginning. The functions of language are such things as approval, request, advice, warning etc. (Duignan, Q.H. & MacPherson, M.S., 2005, p.374) The course includes functions which arise normally in the classroom so that children gain experience in practicing authentic language.

The four skills are combined in an integrated manner in this syllabus. The aural/oral skills are stressed in the early years, but only because this is the optimal way of exploiting the nature of the young learner. The course as a whole gives equal importance to all the skills. It also makes use of many English words that young children are already familiar with in an Arabised form. (Min. of Ed., 2002, Chap. 3, pp.22, 37).

The Use of the Mother Tongue in Teaching English at the Elementary Stage:

During meetings with the teachers of English in different areas in Kuwait, the researchers focused that the use of Arabic is not encouraged, but it is not prohibited altogether at this stage. It can still be helpful at the elementary stage as it can be used to make young children feel at ease, and to teach them the classroom rules. The learning of any foreign language may be odd for some at first, and it is reassuring for them if they can ask for help in their own language.

Even at this early stage, however, the course shifts quickly as possible to the use of English as the classroom language- the language used for giving instructions or making requests. Pupils should think of English as a real language- one that they use for genuine needs- and not just as academic exercise. For the same reason, teachers provide instructions for activities in English. However, it is sometimes necessary to explain that in Arabic rather than allowing pupils to waste time on an activity that they do not understand. English language teachers at the state elementary schools in Kuwait are always reminded of the fact that the majority of pupils consider English as a foreign language they try to learn. Although they very much believe that a simple one-to-one translation is possible between English and Arabic, but they are permanently instructed to avoid that technique as

much as possible. (Edmonds, P.1999a, p. 210) Teachers may translate some words, which cannot be introduced through the common methods of teaching vocabulary, such as the abstract words or terms. (Scott-Clark C., 1995)

In short, English language teachers at elementary state schools may revert to Arabic in the following cases:

- 1 - When the teacher is setting up pair or group activity to make sure the instructions and tasks are fully understood.
- 2 - When directing hand movements in learning the proper formation of letters.
- 3 - In some workbook activities for clarification of the activity.
- 4 - A few remarks to arouse pupils' interest.
- 5 - For abstract words to save time.

However, teachers of English at the elementary schools in Kuwait are restricted to using Arabic inside classroom except for limited conditions listed above. Teachers are also directed to use English followed by Arabic, because many things can be understood through body language and gestures.

Even if teachers resort to translation to teach a new word (though this is not valid in the communicative method) they have to do this once only and orally. (Harris, D.P. 1998, pp. 29, 56) It is eventually mistaken for children to utter both English and Arabic every time they use a word. It has been noticed that the motive beyond using Arabic by some teachers very much is simply because it is an easy way of teaching. Yet, it has been shown through the visits of the researcher to 12 elementary schools in Kuwait that teachers of English constantly exert to minimize the use of Arabic as much as possible, and maximize the use of English. Should they use Arabic, it would only be when it is really necessary, and they are careful to use modern standard Arabic, especially in the first and the second grades of the elementary school. The casual use of Arabic in the classroom is inevitable, but it must be used with much care.

Since children like imitating, and they are brilliant at listening and mimicking correctly what they have heard, teachers of English resort to the audio-video technique in introducing their lessons. This enables the pupils to acquire correct pronunciation from the native speakers. In addition, teachers at this early stage of learning use songs, choral work, and even playing as impressive methods of teaching, but in a pedagogic way (Munby, J. 1999).

The Learner in the Elementary Stage (6-10 years of age):

In this stage of education the child is hyper-active. He spends a lot of time playing, running, and doing other activities. Teachers of English in Kuwait have been trained to carefully exploit this energy when teaching English. The child enthusiastically shifts from a certain activity to another without feeling tired. Boys' activities tend to be more violent than girls' activities, because boys usually depend on their muscles more than girls.

When coming to teaching English at the elementary stage in Kuwait, the English syllabus has -among other factors- concentrated on the linguistic growth of the children at this age: the increase of child's mastery of vocabulary. He becomes more aware of the proper use of expressions, and understands grammatical usage through practice. A child in this stage can describe and tell what he sees: flash cards, pictures, letters, objects and so on while learning English.

When preparations for teaching English at the elementary stage, firstly started, the syllabus was intended to be communicative so as to engage children in real-life learning situations. It was the product of many parties in Kuwait who realized that audio-lingual and grammar translation methods of foreign language learning were not fruitful. Their target was to let children learn enough realistic, whole language, and communicate in the culture of the language but through materials specifically tailored for the primary school children.

Unlike the audio-lingual approach which deals with repetition and drills, the communicative approach – after being applied in the

elementary schools in Kuwait – appeared to leave children in suspense as to the outcome of a class exercise, which realistically varies according to their reactions and responses. Findings of the researcher display that the communicative approach has been the most conducive to young children's differences. Real life situations change constantly, so shall the responses of the pupils. Pupils' motivation to learn through syllabus of fun comes from their desire to communicate in amusing ways. (van Dijk, T.A. 2002)

The researcher attended English classes at elementary schools in different areas in Kuwait between 2000 and 2005 to see how the communicative approach works, and what is the amount of success that the experiment of teaching English from the elementary stage has achieved so far. He noticed that there was stress on the use of language functions in context, both the linguistic, which is after a piece of dialogue demonstrated by pictures, and social or situational context which is after the speaking skill. In addition, the researcher found that there was great emphasis on the listening skill, too. The child is often asked to listen to native speakers through audio aids. Focus on this skill is crucial, especially in the elementary stage because young children have noticeable ability to listen. Teachers of English at the elementary schools in Kuwait are always reminded that to execute the communicative approach successfully, they should be patient listeners in order to monitor their pupils, activities and response inside classrooms.

From the researcher's experience, the role of the teachers in communicative classrooms and teachers of English language at Kuwait elementary schools are well aware to talk less and listen more in order to become active facilitators of their pupils' learning. They must virtually set up the lesson or the exercise, and act as a referee or a monitor. A classroom in an elementary communicative activity is far from being quiet since pupils are doing most of the talking, and therefore may be moving around the class. This is done at elementary classes due to the

nature of teaching at this early stage. However, because of the increased responsibility to participate, pupils find confidence in using the target language. When teaching young children English, teachers remember that real life calls for an integration of all four skills, and that is why the communicative approach attempts to integrate them. Although teachers teach the four skills in an integrated manner, they get an understanding of each one separately. (James, K. 2003, pp.17&244).

As for the learner's age, the core of the English teaching process relies on the matter of attracting the young child's attention to adapt himself with learning something completely new to him. After passing this phase successfully, the child's memory and comprehension will start absorbing the given material and react therewith should it be presented in an atmosphere of joy and fun. (Mark, R. 2003, pp. 386&390).

The Process of Teaching English at the Elementary Stage in Kuwait:

The interest in teaching English as a foreign language at the intermediate and the secondary stages in Kuwait started long time ago before 1993. But the expansion to the elementary schools level was just after 1993. This experiment has been introduced for the purpose of giving children the chance to learn English earlier, from the one hand, and to improve their level through the extending the period of study to 12 years instead of 7 years when the Kuwaiti children used to study English as from the intermediate stage, on the other. The significant result of this experiment has been positively reflected on the level of English of children, who promoted to the intermediate stage in comparison with those who started studying English just at the intermediate school. The variance can be referred to two factors: Firstly, the prolongation of the English language period of study from 7 to 12 years, and secondly, the change of English syllabi to more updated communicative books. Even more, this could be clearly noticed at the secondary stage through the differences between the results of the students who studied English as from the intermediate school, and those

who started from the elementary school, as well as differences between boys schools and girls schools. (Raimes, A. 1994, pp. 75, 93).

Tools of the Research and Statistical Analysis

For the purpose of the research, the researcher used:

Statistical procedure: Statistical processes were done using figures drawn from official examination registers listed in tables to find out the significance of the differences between the given data.

A questionnaire, containing 25 questions pertaining the secondary stage.

The researcher collected data from examination registers of 12 state secondary schools belonging to the six provinces of Kuwait; two schools from each province, one for boys, and one for girls. The targeted subject was English. The researcher selected the grades that pupils of the high school certificate obtained in the final exam of the English paper in 2005- who studied English as from the elementary stage- and compared them with the results of 2004- for pupils who studied English only from the intermediate stage. The data the researcher got are listed hereunder.

Table No. (1)
difference rates of grades in English that pupils of secondary study
certificate obtained in 2004 and 2005.

	Percentage	Percentage
Province	pass of pupils studied	pass of pupils studied
	Eng. from intermed. in 2004	Eng. from element in 2005
Capital	79%	94.2%
Hawalli	68.7%	90.9%
Farwaniya	74.4%	92.2%
Jahra	70.3%	89.6%
Ahmadi	73.8%	90.4%
Mubarak Al-Kabeer	76.9%	91.5%

From the data shown by Table (1), it can be concluded that there is a real significant difference between the levels of the two categories of pupils in English paper, and it indicates that the length of the period of studying English from the elementary stage has led to apparent rise in the level of pupils in English, and consequently to their gain therein, in comparison with pupils who studied it just as from the intermediate stage.

Motivation in Teaching English in the Elementary Stage:

To motivate the young learners is to enhance the desire of learning in them. It means also to provoke their thinking, and to elicit their answers. Learning a new language can be difficult for young children if they are not given supporting reasons or justifications about the necessity of learning such a language. (John, S. Burgis, M. 2000, Project, pp. 33, 57).

The researcher, too, proceeded with a field questionnaire composed of 25 statements. The subjects of the questionnaire were 60 teachers of English teaching at 12 state secondary schools, for boys and girls at the six provinces of Kuwait. The aim of the questionnaire was to collect view points of the sample on the outcome of the experiment of starting teaching English from the elementary stage, and how could such experiment help improve the level of pupils at English.

The questionnaire has been designed as follows:

Statement	to a very little degree	to a little degree	to a mod. degree	to a large degree	to a very % large degree
1. Level of secondary stage pupils at English is satisfactory					
2. English syllabi at Kuwait state schools are up-to-date					
3. Level of pupils today is better than that prior to 1993					
4. Teaching English at element. stage is necessary					
5. Teaching English at element. stage is very different from other stages					

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Statement	to a very little degree	to a little degree	to a mod. degree	to a large degree	to a very % large degree
6. Young learners can cope with learning a foreign language easily					
7. Elementary English syllabus is communicatively elaborated					
8. Grammar rules in young learners English books are not accepted pedagogically					
9. Use of mother tongue is unavoidable with young learners of English					
10. Teachers of English at elementary stage should have specific experience					
11. To learn English, young learners should be given reasons therefore					
12. Secondary English syllabus is carefully selected and continuously recycled					
13. English syllabi should be reviewed every 5 years					
14. English level of secondary stage pupils varies according to number of years of studying English					
15. Project work at secondary stage significantly promotes level of pupils in English					
16. Self-instruction technique facilitates learning English					
17. Communication-based activities are apparently reflected on oral skill of pupils					
18. Pupils who studied English from element. stage are better at English than those who studied it from intermediate stage					
19. Matter of young age is not important in learning English					

Statement	to a very little degree	to a little degree	to a mod. degree	to a large degree	to a very % large degree
20. Teaching English at element. stage has been positively reflected on results of secondary stage pupils					
21. Secondary stage pupils show better ability of expressing themselves after studying English from element stage					
22. Secondary stage pupils can employ situational functions easily					
23. Teachers of English at secondary stage do not face problems in introducing new structures					
24. Parents greatly appreciate teaching English from elementary stage					
25. Pupils will no more face problems with English at university					

Data Analysis of the Questionnaire:

The researcher allocated 100 points in total for the questionnaire statements; 4 points per each. The scale of points is divided as follows:

- From 0 to 12 = to a very little degree
- From 13 to 24 = to a little degree
- From 25 to 36 = to a moderate degree
- From 37 to 48 = to a large degree
- From 49 to 60 = to a very large degree

For items (1, 3), 70% of the teachers respond that the level of pupils at English is satisfactory to a large extent. For items (4,5,6), 70.3% of the subjects of the sample agree that teaching English from the elementary stage is necessary to promote the level of English teaching in Kuwait. 60% of the teachers choose moderate degree for items (7,14) regarding the suitability of the language being taught at the elementary stage. As for items (8, 9), 80% of the teachers think that the use of the mother tongue is unavoidable at the elementary stage in some cases. 66% of the sample agree on items (12,13) regarding the English syllabi. 78% of the teachers agree on items (15,16,17,25)

concerning the activities of teaching English inside the class. 76% of the sample agree on items (1,2,18), concerning the matter of age in learning English. 68% of the teachers are with item (19) regarding the type of the elementary stage teachers. For item (20), 78% of the teachers agree that teaching English at the elementary stage has been positively reflected on the results of English paper of the secondary certificate pupils. 78% teachers are with items (21,22,23) regarding the ability of the secondary stage pupils of expressing themselves. While for item (24), 80% of the sample agree that parents of pupils are very satisfied with the experiment of teaching English from the elementary stage. Despite differences in most of the data mentioned in the analysis, there is unanimous attitude towards the necessity of teaching English starting as from the elementary stage. And the success of this experiment is confirmed by responses to items (20, 21) of the questionnaire, as well as tables (2&3) drawn before.

Motivating Young Children to Learn English:

Young learners always need a friendly and relaxed atmosphere in their classes. Also, flexibility plays a basic role in getting small pupils love to learn English. Young pupils should know that making mistakes is normal when learning any new language. A highly motivated teacher would strive for making class time lively and interesting because he is dealing with very young children with short attention span. (Leech, G. & J. Savartvik, 2000, pp.239&306). So, using of different kinds of teaching aids would help pupils understand better when they see, feel and touch things. For example, if the teacher wants to teach them the word "soft", bring a toy rabbit and let the pupils feel the softness of its fur while he is explaining the meaning of "soft".

Actually, elementary learning stage is often referred to as the period of concrete operations. Therefore, the essence of an effective motivation from the side of the teacher of English at the primary stage should contain the opportunity for observation, accumulation of knowledge, experience, and trial. Motivation has the strongest effect on the learner's speed and ease of learning new language. Human beings are the most dependent of creatures especially when they are

young and require intensive efforts to be educated, (Sam, K. 2004, pp.185, 210&342).

The successful motivating teacher can:

- 1 - deal with mind, body and emotions.
- 2 - motivate young children, not only their own minds.
- 3 - let kindness and understanding be his reward to his pupils.
- 4 - embody the idea that nothing motivates interest.
- 5 - relate subject matter to pupils' lives.
- 6 - manipulate the subject matter to enrich past experiences in pupils' lives.
- 7 - be creative to the extent that he can relate the given material to the pupils' immediate needs.

English at the Intermediate Stage in Kuwait State Schools

First of all, the syllabus of this stage aims to:

- consolidate learning process done in the primary cycle
- reinforce the grammar and vocabulary given during the study years at that stage
- develop the skills of reading and writing
- give pupils great confidence in using English
- create more opportunities for free communication outside the classroom
- develop critical and creative thinking
- exploit the young learners' enthusiastic approach to any subject that is presented in an appropriate manner
- give pupils a positive attitude towards English that will remain with them when they confront the difficulties of English grammar in higher classes.
- benefit from the fact that young pupils naturally tend to acquire rather than learn language, (Ministry of Education, Eng. Curriculum Dept. 2005, booklet, pp.14, 31).

The researcher showed that the amount of language to be taught in the intermediate schools is quite moderate. It is carefully selected, and continuously recycled. It is important to inculcate in pupils a

positive attitude towards the learning of English, and to introduce them to effective techniques for learning. The emphasis throughout is on the development of language skills, so that pupils can really use English, and not just rote-learn a few English words or some rules about English. Moreover, teaching English of the intermediate stage pupils is actually different from teaching older children. It is not simply a matter of requiring a bit less of the young pupils. It is essential to recognize the features of this category of learners, and their implications. Therefore, the project work is extensively followed in English teaching process at the state intermediate schools in Kuwait. It is done independently by pupils under the supervision of the teacher of English. (Quirk, R. et al 1998, pp67&92).

Brief Review of the Intermediate Stage Syllabus:

Generally speaking, the approach to the intermediate stage English language syllabus is attractive though leads to some excesses, especially with the skill of speaking and oral fluency, at the expense of writing skill.

This could be traced out in the workbooks of all grades. The cognitive side has occupied a considerable amount of the syllabus. The objectives of the units tackled varied subjects that pupils need to know thereabout. The psycho-motor activities have been elaborately designed, and ranged in difficulty from grade to another despite stumbles in the workbook of grade 9. Concerning the affective domain, the texts of the pupil's book guide pupils in a way that helps them recognize the ideas contained therein, and link and apply in real life situations. Precisely enough, all the above domains aim at building the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening communicatively. (Ministry of Education, Curriculum Dept. 2004, Booklet, Chap. 1, p. 31).

In addition to that, the English language books of this stage contain a lot of fun for the-sake-of -fun in unit convey messages to learners that they are seen as serious learners, and like to be treated as such. Frank-goal oriented language practice in lessons can be just as motivating and just as much fun as making models, but it is

interestingly applied in communication-based manner, which is the fundamental aspect of the applied methodology. It can be assumed that the language of the course is used to talk about interesting topics, and being taught communicatively, specifically in the books of grade 8. It is not only what is expressed that makes a particular instance of language communicative approach, but what purpose it is being used for. In other words, the communicative trait of a language course depends on the texts rather than on what is done with them: the teaching procedures.

In fact, the communicative approach is inevitably expressed through the material itself. The language for example, though described in the Teacher's Book in terms of skills, patterns and vocabulary, is presented throughout as a tool for expressing and illustrating specific targets. (Gills, D. 2004, pp. 298, 299&300). The recommended procedures usually consist of listen-and -repeat sections at the beginning of each unit together with the other techniques, but followed by practice of the new language through dialogues and texts based on illustrations. The Workbook exercises can not be done without understanding what the language says, and there are many varied task-based activities using all four skills didactically. Young pupils enjoy doing such activities, which certainly give effective practice. The workbook's illustrations are almost always an essential part of the tasks and convey meaning purposefully. (Ministry of Education, 2005, Circular from Intermediate Stage section).

This course appears to have been written by people from the Arab environment. Most of the characters and subjects are drawn from Arabic names and culture.

Result of Teaching English at the Elementary Stage in Kuwait as Reflected on the Results of Students in the Intermediate Stages:

The researcher inspected the statistic sheets of the English paper final exam of 240 pupils at 12 boys and girls secondary schools in the six provinces of Kuwait from 1998, (the year during which the first class of pupils has studied English at the primary school and passed to

intermediate stage), and up to the school year 2005. (Ministry of Education 2005, Exams Dept. Sheets & Books). There was clear difference between the results of both categories of pupils. Pupils, who studied English in the elementary stage, obtained higher grades in English than those who started studying English just in the intermediate stage. The researcher added up the total scores that pupils obtained in English in each study year, multiplied by the grade of English paper, divided by 100, then reached the percentage specified in Tables (3&4). (Ministry of Education, 2005, Exams Dept., Reports).

Table No. (2)
Difference of pass rate between pupils who started having English as from intermediate stage, and those who started having it from elementary stage at boys schools.

School Year	Pass rate of boys started having English in Intermed. Stage	Pass rate of boys started having English in primary stage
1998 /1999	%77.23	%97.08
1999 /2000	%76.21	%97.67
2000 /2001	%79.33	%98.42
2001 /2002	%78.56	%96.67
2002 /2003	%76.66	%95.81
2003 /2004	%78.41	%96.32
2004 /2005	%82.76	%95.18

The data shown by Table No. (3) indicate that there are real differences in teaching English in Kuwait state schools, before and after introducing English to the elementary stage. It is noteworthy that the above figures are drawn from official registers kept by school management. Therefore, they are authentic reliable sources. (Ministry of Education 2005, General English Language Supervision sheets).

Table No. (3)
Difference of pass rate between pupils who started having English from the intermediate stage, and those who started having it from the intermediate stage at girls schools.

School Year	Rate pass of girls who started having English in elem. stage	Rate pass of girls who started having English in intermediate stage
1998 /1999	%79.18	%94.12
1999 /2000	%83.45	%96.21
2000 /2001	%81.61	%95.44
2001 /2002	%84.53	%97.11
2002 /2003	%82.77	%98.05
2003 /2004	%80.09	%97.15
2004 /2005	%84.14	%98.01

From the data expressed by table (3), the difference between the outcome of girls who studied English just from the intermediate, and those who started having it from the elementary stage can be observed clearly. This can be referred by two facts: first, the length of period of studying English, and second, for the new update English syllabi that are being taught at state schools in Kuwait lately. (Ministry of Education 2005, Exams Dept. & English Supervision books).

English at the Secondary Stage:

Before going through this stage of education, it is worth to mention that this cycle is a complementary of the previous two stages: the elementary and the intermediate. Before handling the process of teaching English at the secondary stage, certain characteristics associated with this category of learners need to be presented briefly.

The age of learners at this stage is the adolescence phase, when the learner's personality gradually reaches maturity. Among the most important factors affecting this transformation are: home, school and the social milieu. The teenager, here, passes through gradual, natural and comprehensive growth, physically and intellectually. He experi-

ences some emotional and temperamental changes. He is usually moody because of his unstable emotions frequently swinging from a state of mind to another, i.e. from satisfaction to dissatisfaction, and from happiness to misery and indignation. These changes usually ensue from thoughts, fancies and personal problems. (Allen, W.S. 1995, pp. 331, 417).

At this stage, the teenager's behavior and social characteristics take their shape. He seeks independence and freedom. He tends to depend on himself and sticks stubbornly to his personal views and attitudes. Hence, teenagers' contradictory views, obstinacy and intransigence sometimes lead to conflict with their parents. Adolescents usually indulge themselves in prolonged arguments. They revolt against traditions, and dispute rigid customs and rules. They tend to make use of their groupings against adults. This inclination to mass and regroup could be exploited in directing teenagers' activities towards social reform, to engaging them in scientific and technical skills, and boosting their loyalty to their homeland and nation. (Brumfit, C.J. 2001, pp.218, 255, 330,334).

When dealing with the process of teaching English at the state secondary schools in Kuwait, there is a focus on the fact that within the cognitive side of the given material, the best method is to open a free dialogue with pupils related thereto. It is totally wrong to ignore the opinions or the viewpoints of such type of learners inside the class. The emotional and psychological problems that occupy a teenager's mind add to his restlessness and confusion, and make him in an incumbent need for containment and assurance, not only outside school, but also inside it. Concerning the teenager's cognition ability, it is assumed that this stage is a continuation of the previous stage, (the intermediate stage). Here, a teenager's distinguished talents, mental abilities, and intelligence reach their peak. He becomes deeply indulged in certain domain: reading, research, cinema, watching TV, access Internet, or any other hobby he may love madly, then abandon it at any time for unknown reasons.

The English syllabus of the secondary stage contains variety of activities and texts that are employed to satisfy the tendencies and suit

the personal traits of various levels of pupils. The affective and the psycho-motor domains of the syllabus content help pupils express themselves freely. (Chastain, K. 1996).

English Language Syllabus of the Secondary Stage:

The syllabus, generally, matches the abilities of pupils specially after they started studying English as from the elementary stage.

The pupil's book has been designed in a way that it gradually increases in complexity. Lessons contain activities and texts of step-by-step difficult. The thinking skills are presented through the context of the lessons. The vocabulary and grammar exercises are largely embedded and recycled in a smooth way. While the language functions are integrally tied to meaning in structure. Actually, all language skills are exposed in a balanced way. The units have been expanded to contain cohesive and coherent structure and sequence. Meanwhile, the topics of the lessons are relevant to pupils' lives, and the information inserted therein provide the bases for language use communicatively. The topics tackle real aspects of life in Kuwait, in particular, and in the Arabian Gulf area, at large. (Ministry of Education, Eng. Curriculum Section, 2006, Booklet, pp.16, 18, &20).

The workbook is meant to be used as an accompanying book to the pupil's book, but on an individual ground to foster independent learning. The activities in the workbook match the material presented in the pupil's book. Each unit in the workbook contains exercises that all pupils are expected to do. In addition, there are other activities intended for practice and skills development.

□ As for assessment, current best procedure stresses that there is an integral relationship between syllabus outcome, teaching materials and evaluation. Assessment indicates that the major skills outcome is exposed in an open-handed way, and involved the complete range of skills. Structure, topics, vocabulary, and functions are found in the pupil's book. From communicative and pedagogic viewpoint, all basic language four skills are introduced, assessed and valued equally. The above- mentioned works are steered by the teacher through the teacher's book which is a wealthy source of suggestions, strategies and answer keys that aid the teacher to guide the teaching process

appropriately. (Routledge, Cuban, L. Quarterly, 34(2), pp. 9,18).

Evaluation of the Study:

The English syllabi, which are taught at the three stages of state schools in Kuwait, have used the eclectic approach within communicative course, normally focuses either on the design of the materials that relate specifically to an analysis of learners' needs, or on the provision of classroom activities that encourage more pupils participation. This study, however, shows that eclectic approach that is followed in the English courses allows learners a greater role in the management of their learning-especially in the secondary stage-by providing opportunities for learner choice in the method and scope of study. Such opportunities could be introduced into the traditional classroom with minimal problems, and some suggestions for this are put forward. (Dickinson, L. 1998, pp. 237, 256).

The analysis of the rates shown by tables (2&3) indicates that learner's aptitude as a more fundamental aspect of a language. Course can also be provided through establishment of pockets of self-learning inside schools according to the stage. Teachers; and learners' positive attitudes to this notion have ensued significant results in the outcome of teaching English through out the intermediate; and the secondary stages after introducing English paper to the elementary stage. Nevertheless, there are more needs to be done to guide both teachers' and learners' expectations in order to make learner choices an active feature of English language study. (Straker, A., 1998, County Council Journal, p.28 & introduction, part iii).

The fact that teaching English from the elementary stage has achieved astonishing outcomes reflected through the results of the English paper exams in both the intermediate and the secondary stage can be referred mostly to the extending period of English study. Before 1993, teaching English language at state schools in Kuwait started from the intermediate through the secondary stage; that is to mean for 8 years only. After applying teaching English from the elementary

stage in 1993, the period of study of English has extended to 12 years. Naturally, this increase has led to improvement in the level of pupils in English and to the outcome they have achieved therein. This can be noted through the differences shown by tables (2&3). The new syllabi have had effective results on attaining remarkable progress whether in the level of pupils at English, or in the outcome that they have achieved.

The development of functional/notional approaches and related insights in socio-linguistics and psycho-linguistics have made it possible to construct detailed theoretical models for syllabus design. (Scott Clark C. & Hymas C. 1995, pp. 312, 404 &407). Thus, the English language syllabi, which are being taught at the state schools in Kuwait, are drawn up so as to relate specifically to the target-language needs of a particular group of learners. This has been done by analyzing the needs of the learners and drawing up lists of the functions and notions that the pupils will need to be able to express the grammatical structures they will have to manipulate, the topics they should be able to discuss, and the setting and roles in which they will need to operate. The syllabi of the intermediate and the secondary stages contain these items to a large extent. They are tailored elaborately, with credibility and reliability.

In another sense, the detailed specifications of the syllabi inevitably direct both the learners and the teachers. The syllabi have been devised through needs-analysis involves classifying the pupil as a member of a particular occupational or social category.

The personal interests and wishes of the learner are thus fulfilled. In addition, since the resulting syllabi are based on an analysis of the end-of-course situation of the learner, no room is allowed for needs that emerge during the teaching process. Although the needs analysis approach to the syllabi design did not imply any particular classroom methodology, it was clear that such syllabi were designed to meet the needs of both the teacher and learner.

Recommendations

The following recommendations and tips could help enhance the process of teaching English at the state schools in Kuwait:

- 1 - Teachers should not ignore their pupils' questions and investigation, and should help them solve even their private problems. At the secondary cycle of education, social service and psychological guidance are very imperative. Every teacher must be willing to offer help needed by his pupils to properly solve their problems.
- 2 - It is advisable to teachers to hold collective meetings to discuss pupils' problems, and envisage effective solutions thereto. Parents should attend such meetings.
- 3 - Teachers should put more interest on pupils' organizations, school groups and sportive activities, which offer the teenagers at this stage the opportunity to form societies, and to enhance their sense of belonging. Through these groups, personal views are discussed and free dialogues are set up. Sports activities also help disperse the excessive energy, and vent the surging emotions and feelings inside them.
- 4 - Study in the secondary schools should not be confined to conventional classes. Pupils should have access to other sources of knowledge and information.
- 5 - Teachers should be kind and rewarding all the time.
- 6 - Teachers should avoid long explanations by increasing pupil's talking time.
- 7 - Providing miscellaneous activities that trigger pupils' interest like: games, competitions, pair and group work, problem solving and projects.
- 8 - Varying the teaching techniques to create a lively atmosphere in the class.
- 9 - Relating the lessons to children's lives by transferring them from the situation inside the classroom to the real life where the

teacher could relate the subject matter to the pupils themselves. Yet, motivation is at its best when it comes from within the child.

- 10 - Engaging pupils with enjoyable and purposeful activities, such as the sponge activity that the teacher can do in the last ten minutes of the lesson.

In addition to the above mentioned, teachers may have another choice, which is the most common approach claimed to be learner-centered. It relates to how learning proceeds in the classroom, rather than to what learning is to be done. It is also recommended that a healthy classroom is the one in which learners are active and where teacher's talk is reduced to the minimum. Therefore, it is advisable to English language teachers to spend considerable amounts of time devising tasks that require learners to work in groups, to do role plays, to fill charts or grids, to give their personal opinions, and generally to engage in more oral work. These tasks can be devised particularly in relation to communicative approaches, since it is now believed that teachers should provide activities that require learners to use language for particular purpose, and to pretend that communication has taken place.

Conclusion:

After this lengthy expose and analysis of the experiment of teaching English from the elementary stage in Kuwait, which included critical review of the syllabus, recommendations to teachers, as well as an overall assessment of the outcome, the research shows how far the process has been successful. The reaction of children and parents was great. Young pupils liked the new subject as it is something strange arousing their curiosity to explore. Their response is remarkable. They cope with the material and benefit very much from it. Communicatively, pupils can use simple situational language actively. The research could detect these results through exploring the response, comprehension, reaction and level of pupils who passed to the intermediate and the secondary stages. No significant obstacles pupils may face in studying English at these stages, since they have got sufficient material

as from the elementary stage that helps them very much in proceeding with the process of learning English.

The study, also, demonstrates that the English teaching process fulfills the general and specific goals of education in Kuwait. There has been much emphasis on the matter of the pedagogical and psychological recommendations that the researcher has drawn out. Generally speaking, the study can be regarded as one of the very few valuable sources about the English language teaching which interested educators who can rely on and benefit from, not only in Kuwait, but also over the Arabian Gulf Area.

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