

***ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
CONCEPTS INCLUDED IN GSSC TEST:
A FIVE-YEAR EVALUATION***

Abstract.

This study aimed at determining the extent to which the general secondary examination (baccalaureate) questions in the subject of English Language for the years 1989 - 1994 were related to the levels of cognitive domain of the objectives, i.e. information, comprehension, application, analysis, construction and evaluation, in other words, the extent to which the general secondary examination questions in the subject of English Language included the levels of cognitive domain of the objectives. To achieve this, special lists were prepared, covering the school year and the levels of cognitive domain, and were distributed to members of the sample, which consisted of supervisors and teachers of English Language at the Ministry of Education.

In order to select the results, they were unloaded onto a computer and analyzed by using suitable methods and showing the results of the five study years and the responses of the members of the sample in special schedules. In order to clarify the results, graphs were designed to illustrate the various variables of the study and their interrelationships.

The results of the study showed that the examinations of the general secondary level in the subject of English Language for the years 1989 - 1994, concentrated, in general, on information, comprehension and analysis in this order, while the other levels appeared less prominent and did not appear in the examinations of certain years covered by the study. The study recommended avoiding these aspects of deficiency and that the final examinations of the general certificate of secondary education should cover the various levels of the cognitive domain in view of their importance and because they formed part of the objectives of building the curriculum.

Introduction:

Pupils' ability to perceive, understand and solve problems is the key to how they function in almost every area of their study. Such ability is always seen as two - fold; verbal and quantitative. Verbal ability is a key element in acquiring information, facilitating communication, and securing interaction necessary for educational attainment. Any linguistic deficiencies are important not only as possible problems in their own

right but also in generating others. Pupils of low linguistic competence have difficulty in acquiring skills necessary for scholastic achievement in other subjects.

Alongside the theoretical changes in the concept of language acquisition, its measurement has also become increasingly sophisticated and subject to reservations and qualifications.

Tests elicit only restricted samples of pupils' intellectual competence and tend to emphasize certain acquired knowledge, disregarding skills of a more important potentiality. What pupils have learned may well be a good guide to their present functional level, but not necessarily an indication of their potential capacity for learning. They may do reasonably well at some aspects of language testing, yet many obtain low scores on grammar as a specific aspect of such testing. Those who are able to perform relatively much better at language structure tasks get to show a higher level of achievement in the long run. Caution must, therefore, be exercised in building tests and interpreting their results.

There is considerable controversy about evaluation. It is the traditional battlefield of the contending content - objectives armies and has of recent years acquired an extra dimension of social significance. Arguments on both sides are highly related to the concept of education in the society. Are we teaching a certain content in the form of syllabus or aiming at some objective within no content - limit? Test designers have to decide which way to go. A balanced view would hold that pupils are to be tested for objectives through content concepts. The content is not an aim in itself but a basis for objectives to be realized. Concepts act as a stimulation for a wider range of opportunities for learning. Many educational problems of pupils are connected with unrewarding school experiences. Tests constitute the main link between the specific objectives and wider opportunities. Which is the "cause" and which is the "effect" is an unresolvable question. It is clear, however, that many of these problems would be tolerated and alleviated in a stimulating school environment which gives more concern to the motivational aspect of tests. Teachers are, therefore, in the best position to alleviate the problem, if they can assess their teaching and evaluation techniques.

English Language Teaching Curriculum is designed to realize certain educational objectives. Such objectives are incorporated into the syllabus as major concepts.

ELT is highly oriented towards enhancing the acquisition of these concepts. Major developing plans are directed at implementing the ELT objectives as emphasized in the syllabus content. Syntactic and semantic components are included in the syllabus. Teachers are exerting their main effort in helping pupils to master these components, thus constitute the main blocks for evaluation.

In order to get the accurate feedback, measurement and evaluation procedures should be given due care. Measurement in education is a quantitative description of how much a student has achieved, while evaluation is a qualitative judgment of how good or how satisfactory the student's performance has been. Although it is partly based on the measurement of achievement, it is affected by the evaluator's personal impression.

The Ministry of Education administers the Public Exam to compare the standard of a student in the light of the sought objectives.

For any type of a written exam, it is necessary to have a definite plan for preparing the exam items. The development of such a plan is essential for preparing the exam items. Then, a specification table is designed. It includes the set objectives. These objectives are useful for guiding the construction of exam items.

The plan should include the distribution of the exam items over the content areas, the types of items to be used, the total number of items in the exam in addition to specifying the difficulty weights. To obtain the maximum value from the exam, scorers should record their opinions about the student's answers. The findings can be used for planning future remedial exercises, especially for those students who sit for a second-session exam.

Judging the quality of the exam is a complementary part of its planning, administration and scoring. Such measures lead to improvement of the exam components. Messick (1989) sees exams as providing teachers with an occasion to re-think about their understanding of the

subject matter and its fundamental goals. Clark (1987) emphasized the fact that assessment encourages students and teachers to develop the sort of learning and teaching strategies that seem most likely to lead towards the objectives and educational aims aspired to, i.e. to effect a healthy backwash upon learning and teaching.

Al-Dabbous & Howells (1994) stressed the idea that there is little point in spending time and effort in improving our classrooms and our teaching if we have no way of assessing how well our learners are able to use the language we have been teaching them.

Raimes (1983) postulates that in recent years, language teachers have been increasingly urged to recognize that the teaching of the writing skills involves more than training in producing grammatically correct sentences or in the use of cohesive devices. It has been pointed out that the process of composing is often a long-drawn out affair, involving both the formulation and manipulation of ideas as well as the expression of those ideas in the most appropriate language in EFL classes.

Madsen (1983) emphasized the idea that good evaluation of our test can help us measure student's skills more accurately. It also shows that we are concerned about those concepts that we teach. For example, test analysis can help us to remove weak items even before we record the results of the test. Therefore, we do not penalize students because of bad test questions. Students appreciate an extra effort like this, which shows them that we are concerned about the quality of their exams. A better feeling towards our tests can improve the students' attitude, motivation and even performance.

Related studies:

Most of the studies, made by the turn of the century, reflect a contradiction between teaching objectives and teaching practice. Questions are basically oriented towards something that is mainly written in the textbook or acknowledged by teachers as a possible exam-item. This reflects the great popularity of the recitation method. It seems that teachers are emphasizing recalling textbook content rather than realizing educational objectives as stated by the Ministry of Education in

Kuwait. The prevalence of such practice has been accepted by those involved in education. Complaints following each exam are revolving around classifying questions as "out of the syllabus". Rosenshine (1976) reviewed a set of three large correlational studies completed in the early 1970s. Their results indicated that students learn best when questions tend to be narrow, pupils are expected to know rather than guess [the] answer, (p.365). "Narrow" was Rosenshine's term for a fact question that is highly based on information recalled from a textbook. Redfield and Rousseau (1981) reviewed 20 teaching and evaluation experiments using meta-analysis. They concluded that "predominant use of higher level questions during instruction has a positive effect on student achievement"; (p.241). Student achievement in the experiments was measured by texts requiring fact recall and demonstration of thinking skills. Both are mainly useful and serve different purposes included in the aims of teaching. The challenge for teachers is to use both types and base their evaluation on basic aims.

The consequences of teacher bias in building their test question to get lower-level answers, show incongruity with teaching aims. This suggests that teachers should give themselves sufficient time to think of aims (whether general or specific) before designing a test. The research on test questions challenges typical classroom practice. The findings demonstrate clearly that questions do not necessarily relate to aims targeted by pedagogical policy and practice; (Gall, 1984).

Recent studies have concentrated on analysing the content of tests to evaluate its validity in relation to objectives. Conian (1992) examined one section of the objective paper of the Hong Kong Examination Authority's (HKEA) use of English Examination. One of the exam types in this section of the examination involves candidates completing a cloze passage based on a text. It is HKEA's contention that the exercise involves summarizing/paraphrasing skills. The findings of the study, however, suggest that the validity of this test type is questionable since a substantial number of the blanks can be filled in without reference to the text. While it appears to be reliable and discriminates among candidates, as a test type, it would not appear to be achieving this by tapping the intended summarizing/paraphrasing skills.

The present study is of vital importance for designing exams that measure accurately the achievement of the set objectives.

Pomplun (1992) analysed English composition tests over years. The study comprised a detailed analysis of the difficulty over time of the essay prompts for the English Composition Achievement Test. Differential Difficulty was explored by considering the relationship between the reference groups of male and white students and the focal groups (female, American Indian, Asian American with English as a Second Language, Black Hispanic American, and Hispanic American with English as a Second Language). Students' achievement had remained constant over the 7 years studied (1983, and 1985 through 1990).

To study the relationships between the ECT objective and the ECT with essay, linear regressions and conditional means of essays scores on objective scores were computed. For each comparison, difference lines for regressions and conditional means were plotted to identify years with aberrant differences. Differences were very consistent across the years, indicating that essay prompts did not generally cause groups to perform differentially. However, two essay prompts that may have caused differential performance were identified.

Natasha (1992) engaged in a Final Evaluation Profile Project. The project offered "Helpful Opportunities for Pupil Enrichment" (Project Hope). It was designed to provide services to Chinese-speaking and Spanish-speaking students of limited English proficiency. In 1991 - 1992, 160 male and 159 female students were enrolled. The project aimed at providing students with activities to promote the acquisition of English and the development of mathematics, science, and computer skills. A career orientation component was included. Project HOPE was highly successful and the staff collaborated successfully with various city and state agencies to organize program activities. Some difficulties were encountered in finding a qualified curriculum developer in Spanish. An exam was administered to evaluate students' proficiency. The project met many objectives with respect to Chinese native language achievement, others which are related to Spanish and English

achievement were not fully met. It was found necessary to re-evaluate the objectives and expand out-of-class services aiming at improving English proficiency.

Breland and his "colleagues" (1992) studied the performance versus objective testing and its relation with gender. Random samples of free-response test (200 males and 200 females) were taken from the 1986 U.S. History Advanced Placement Examination. Re-scoring focusing on the historical content and analyses indicate that free-response tasks, in contrast with objective tests, may have inherent characteristics that reward females' English-composition abilities. It has been clear from the above that, analyzing the exam findings should have its impact on the instructional process.

A study was carried out by the English Language Teaching General Inspectorate Ministry of Education - Kuwait (1993). Such a study included a random sample of 4000 answer sheets for male and female students who attended the exam of the General Secondary Stage Certificate. Two thousand answer sheets were taken for the Science Section male and female students and the other two thousand answer sheets were taken for the Arts Section male and female students. The average marks of every branch (question) were calculated. Such a procedure was carried out for Papers I and II. Then, the general average of both papers was calculated.

Language testing is different from those related to other school subjects, Language curriculum and teaching are based mainly on promoting certain skills. Language levels (phonetics, syntax, semantics, morphology) constitute the main blocks of such programme. Hence, evaluators often stick to concepts evolving from such categorization. It is rather difficult to think of Bloom's taxonomy of objectives (cognitive, affective, psychomotor) as a basis for teaching language as independent domains. Although we are not teaching for testing, yet most teachers think of expected questions while teaching their students. They tend to stress some points and ignore others, in reference to final exams. This constitutes the main issue underlying the present study.

ELT, as all language teaching, is primarily directed to enhancing language skills. These skills are rotating around functions, structures

and study skills. Effective evaluation is related to effective teaching. Both are based on aims proposed by those in charge; namely the General Directorate. The study aims at identifying the basic aims of ELT as identified in GSSC final tests, by supervisors and senior teachers (test-building corps). These aims are mainly linguistic and incorporated in syntactic and semantic levels.

Study objectives:

The present study aims at:

- 1 . Finding out the extent of comprehensiveness in final exams.
- 2 . Spotting the missing concepts disregarded in these exams.
- 3 . Specifying the concepts which occur more frequently than others.
- 4 . Exploring differences regarding weights given to each concept in the 5-year tests.

Importance of study:

- 1 . Updating and upgrading the Public Exam design to suit recent developments in the educational field.
- 2 . Eliciting interest in evaluating tests.
- 3 . Motivating Exam designers to improve its quality.

Study limitations:

The study dealt with the exams of 5 school years 1989 - 1994 (excluding the year of the Gulf War) for English language concepts designated by the researcher, and included in the ELT objectives.

The problem:

The problem to be dealt with in this study is mainly the extent to which the exam components cover the major and minor language concepts as postulated by ELT directorate.

Main questions of the study.

The study attempts to answer two questions:

- 1 - To what extent is each concept perceived to exist in the GSS final exams designated by the study?
- 2 - Do differences exist among the five-year exams regarding their inclusion of these concepts?

Method:

ELT curriculum is mainly designed to realize certain educational objectives. Such objectives are translated into instructional materials which implement the major and minor concepts. It also includes promoting several skills, enhancing abilities, as well as positive attitude towards learning and what is learned. Student evaluation is directed towards these objectives. Nevertheless, tests of language learning are highly oriented towards measuring student's command of linguistic aspects on the syntactic and semantic levels. The main aim of the study is to see if such aspects are included in student evaluation by the end of the general education stages, namely 12th grade. Test-building corps (supervisors and senior teachers) are asked to give their opinion whether such aims are incorporated in the final tests or not.

The Tool: Supervisors and senior teachers are asked to filter linguistic aspects included in the secondary school syllabus. These aspects are chosen to be the linguistic aims subjugated for inclusion in testing. These aims are revised and categorized under three subtitles (functions, language focus, study skills), within the eight units of the set-books. Content validity is secured by such revision in referral to the Teacher's Guide.

An opinionaire is built to get the opinions of those involved, about these concepts inclusion in the final tests of GSSC, in years 89, 91, 92, 93, 94. Year 90 is not included because the State was under Iraqi invasion. A two-year test was given in 1991, to make up for such flaw.

Reliability alpha Cronbach is secured at (.99) indicating a high level, good enough for this study.

Opinionaires were sent to ELT supervisors and a random sample of senior teachers in bi-term secondary schools. Subjects were given a copy

of the relevant year exam. Each one was asked to read each item (concept), check the relevant year exam, and decide whether such concept is included or not. Responses were written on the form given. Returned forms are revised. Incomplete ones are disregarded. Thirty forms (15 from supervisors, 15 from senior teachers) are recollected.

Results:

Data are analysed. Frequencies are calculated for each item regarding agreement and disagreement. Agreement implies that the concept is included in the test, while disagreement indicates that the respondent sees it is not present in the test. Tables (1-8):

TABLE I

Table 1 shows the percentage of the opinions of the respondents who agree/disagree on the basic concepts of teaching English in the 4th secondary grade related to Unit 1, and to what extent they have been related to evaluation in the final exams in school years (89 - 91 - 92 - 93 - 94).

Unit 1	1989		1991		1992		1993		1994	
	agree	disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Items	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q1	100.0	0.0	76.7	23.3	90.0	10.0	100.0	0.0	96.7	3.3
Q2	26.7	73.3	26.7	73.3	26.7	73.3	30.0	70.0	30.0	70.0
Q3	93.3	6.7	90.0	10.0	90.0	10.0	80.0	20.0	73.3	26.7
Q4	100.0	0.0	96.7	3.3	76.7	23.3	86.7	13.3	53.3	46.7
Q5	76.7	23.3	50.0	50.0	86.7	13.3	56.7	43.3	60.0	40.0
Q6	90.0	10.0	86.7	13.3	56.7	43.3	53.3	46.7	66.7	33.3
Q7	23.3	76.7	26.7	73.3	33.3	66.7	40.0	60.0	46.7	53.3
Q8	80.0	20.0	83.3	16.7	83.3	16.7	76.7	23.3	80.0	20.0
Q9	56.7	43.3	76.7	23.3	73.3	26.7	83.3	16.7	80.0	20.0
Q10	76.7	23.3	73.3	26.7	70.0	30.0	73.3	26.7	66.7	33.3
Q11	70.0	30.0	43.3	56.7	53.3	46.7	60.0	40.0	63.3	36.7
Q12	70.0	30.0	86.7	13.3	83.3	16.7	63.3	36.7	86.7	13.3

Frequencies of agreement on the part of the sample as for the inclusion of tests to the basic concepts of the unit - are high regarding the majority. However two of them seems to be neglected or rather

ignored. These are “making a speech”, “prefix re-”. The first is an essential verbal communication skill. Poor expressive language refers to pupil’s difficulty to talk at the level expected for his/her age in such terms as vocabulary, length of sentence and specific content.

Confused speech is inevitably more bound up with prevailing cultural of what is good speech. “Making a speech” forms with other functions in the unit a cluster of skills.

The inclusion of the other skills makes up for lack of one. Yet, persistent negligence may end in deleting such skill from the teaching process. GSSC graduates may be prone to some kind of impairment. as for “prefix re”, it is highly related with morphological ability that has to be considered as well. It is worth asking now “are these concepts meaningful to be taught and evaluated?”

Table 2

Table 2 shows the percentages of opinions of the respondents who agree/disagree on the basic concepts of teaching English in the 4th Secondary Grade related to Unit 2 and to what extent they have been related to evaluation in the final exams in school years (89 - 91 - 92 - 93 - 94)

Unit 2	1989		1991		1992		1993		1994	
	agree	disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Items	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q13	26.7	73.3	20.0	80.0	30.0	70.0	33.3	66.7	36.7	63.3
Q14	70.0	30.0	70.0	30.0	73.3	26.7	70.0	30.0	63.3	36.7
Q15	63.3	36.7	73.3	26.7	83.3	16.7	83.3	16.7	76.7	23.3
Q16	40.0	60.0	30.0	70.0	63.3	36.7	70.0	30.0	63.3	36.7
Q17	53.3	46.7	70.0	30.0	70.0	30.0	80.0	20.0	70.0	30.0
Q18	43.3	56.7	60.0	40.0	60.0	40.0	50.0	50.0	46.7	53.3
Q19	56.7	43.3	53.3	46.7	60.0	40.0	66.7	33.3	56.7	43.3
Q20	70.0	30.0	43.3	56.7	80.0	20.0	60.0	40.0	53.3	46.7
Q21	16.7	83.3	33.3	66.7	36.7	63.3	36.7	63.3	36.7	63.3
Q22	16.7	83.3	36.7	63.3	40.0	60.0	36.7	63.3	46.7	53.3
Q23	23.3	76.7	30.0	70.0	40.0	60.0	40.0	60.0	50.0	50.0
Q24	46.7	53.3	43.3	56.7	60.0	40.0	66.7	33.3	53.3	46.7
Q25	83.3	16.7	76.7	23.3	73.3	26.7	63.3	36.7	73.3	26.7
Q26	53.3	46.7	56.7	43.3	36.7	63.3	40.0	60.0	46.7	53.3
Q27	36.7	63.3	33.3	66.7	33.3	66.7	33.3	66.7	33.3	66.7
Q28	40.0	60.0	20.0	80.0	33.3	66.7	40.0	60.0	26.7	73.3

Opinions show that most of the concepts targeted by teaching and content are not included in evaluation. Persistent negligence of language functions as well as study skills is clear from assessing EI tests. The instrumental function of language seems to be systematically overlooked. Reading practice is the most fundamental of scholastic achievements. It is also a most complex cognitive task involving linguistic and infra - linguistic as well as psychological competence. It constitutes a major skill in language teaching and needs to be given due consideration in evaluation.

TABLE 3

Table 3 shows the percentage of the opinions of the respondents who agree/ disagree on the basic concepts of teaching English in the 4th Secondary Grade related to Unit 3 and to what extent they have been related to evaluation in the final exams in school years (89 - 91 - 92 - 93 - 94)

Unit 3	1989		1991		1992		1993		1994	
	agree	disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Items	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q29	96.7	3.3	70.0	30.0	60.0	40.0	53.3	46.7	83.3	16.7
Q30	20.0	80.0	40.0	60.0	36.7	63.3	53.3	46.7	60.0	40.0
Q31	30.0	70.0	36.7	63.3	23.3	76.7	56.7	43.3	43.3	56.7
Q32	30.0	70.0	66.7	33.3	33.3	66.7	56.7	43.3	56.7	43.3
Q33	43.3	56.7	56.7	43.3	46.7	53.3	73.3	26.7	80.0	20.0
Q34	73.3	26.7	66.7	33.3	76.7	23.3	73.3	26.7	66.7	33.3
Q35	63.3	36.7	46.7	53.3	56.7	43.3	70.0	30.0	66.7	33.3
Q36	56.7	43.3	70.0	30.0	53.3	46.7	76.7	23.3	56.7	43.3
Q37	23.3	76.7	20.0	80.0	20.0	80.0	20.0	80.0	16.7	83.3

Most of the concepts in this unit have not been included in the last five - year evaluations. These are highly related to the previous unit, thus adding internal consistency in opinions about tests under investigation. The larger proportion of communication skills and particularly those dealing with everyday life are included in the three units 2,3,4. The ordinary living verbal communication will be severely limited. Pupils deprived of such skill may be inadequately understood, thus refrain from language usage. Diagnostically speaking, the most accurate source of information in this area is careful assessment. The findings will lay down a good base for improving teaching practice.

TABLE 4

Table 4 shows the percentage of the opinions of the respondents who agree/disagree on the basic concepts of teaching English in the 4th Secondary Grade related to Unit 4 and to what extent they have been related to evaluation in the final exams in school years (89 - 91 - 92 - 93 - 94)

Unit 4	1989		1991		1992		1993		1994	
	agree	disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Items	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q38	60.0	40.0	60.0	40.0	83.3	16.7	83.3	16.7	80.0	20.0
Q39	40.0	60.0	36.7	63.3	40.0	60.0	46.7	53.3	63.3	36.7
Q40	90.0	10.0	86.7	13.3	83.3	16.7	86.7	13.3	83.3	16.7
Q41	23.3	76.7	23.3	76.7	30.0	70.0	16.7	83.3	33.3	66.7
Q42	36.7	63.3	30.0	70.0	33.3	66.7	36.7	63.3	36.7	63.3
Q43	26.7	73.3	30.0	70.0	26.7	73.3	30.0	70.0	30.0	70.0

Focus in this unit is on the traditional language functions. Without ruling out the importance of these functions, other functions seem to be increasingly used.

TABLE 5

Table 5 shows the percentage of the opinions of the respondents who agree/ disagree on the basic concepts of teaching English in the 4th Secondary Grade related to Unit 5 and to what extent they have been related to evaluation in the final exams in school years (89 - 91 - 92 - 93 - 94)

Unit 5	1989		1991		1992		1993		1994	
	agree	disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Items	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q44	53.3	46.7	46.7	53.3	73.3	26.7	90.0	10.0	56.7	43.3
Q45	30.0	70.0	30.0	70.0	43.3	56.7	23.3	76.7	23.3	76.7
Q46	20.0	80.0	10.0	90.0	30.0	70.0	53.3	46.7	56.7	43.3
Q47	53.3	46.7	46.7	53.3	63.3	36.7	63.3	36.7	66.7	33.3
Q48	26.7	73.3	33.3	66.7	56.7	43.3	46.7	53.3	53.3	46.7
Q49	40.0	60.0	26.7	73.3	33.3	66.7	43.3	56.7	40.0	60.0
Q50	43.3	56.7	43.3	56.7	50.0	50.0	46.7	53.3	56.7	43.3
Q51	13.3	86.7	13.3	86.7	10.0	90.0	6.7	93.3	10.0	90.0
Q52	16.7	83.3	6.7	93.3	16.7	83.3	13.3	86.7	10.0	90.0
Q53	20.0	80.0	6.7	93.3	16.7	83.3	16.7	83.3	23.3	76.7
Q54	20.0	80.0	20.0	80.0	23.3	76.7	23.3	76.7	23.3	76.7
Q55	56.7	43.3	56.7	43.3	56.7	43.3	56.7	43.3	56.7	43.3

Study skills are given much care in this unit. However, due care in evaluating attainment is not seen. Most opinions see them as vacant cells in final tests. These linguistic skills are essential for university study, hence pupils getting ready for such type of study are requested to be motivated and evaluated in these skills.

TABLE 6

Table 6 shows the percentage of the opinions of the respondents who agree/disagree on the basic concepts of teaching English in the 4th Secondary Grade related to Unit 6 and to what extent they have been related to evaluation in the final exams in school years (89 - 91 - 92 - 93 - 94).

Unit 6	1989		1991		1992		1993		1994	
	agree	disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Items	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q56	16.7	83.3	23.3	76.7	43.3	56.7	43.3	56.7	26.7	73.3
Q57	36.7	63.3	40.0	60.0	23.3	76.7	56.7	43.3	46.7	53.3
Q58	56.7	43.3	70.0	30.0	46.7	53.3	73.3	26.7	66.7	33.3
Q59	26.7	73.3	20.0	80.0	23.3	76.7	26.7	73.3	40.0	60.0
Q60	60.0	40.0	40.0	60.0	50.0	50.0	43.3	56.7	66.7	33.3
Q61	13.3	86.7	63.3	36.7	30.0	70.0	30.0	70.0	53.3	46.7
Q62	26.7	73.3	30.0	70.0	23.3	76.7	36.7	63.3	40.0	60.0

The table shows that none of the concepts perceived as important targets of ELT is included in the final tests. An important aspect is really missing. If such aspect is not worth testing, why given a room in the syllabus. "Organizing and writing a text" is of great importance in essay writing, a skill that has to be given due care.

TABLE 7

Table 7 shows the percentage of the opinions of the respondents who agree/ disagree on the basic concepts of teaching English in the 4th Secondary Grade related to Unit 7 and to what extent they have been related to evaluation in the final exams in school years (89 - 91 - 92 - 93 - 94)

Unit 7	1989		1991		1992		1993		1994	
	agree	disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Items	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q63	23.3	76.7	13.3	86.7	10.0	90.0	16.7	83.3	20.0	80.0
Q64	53.3	46.7	50.0	50.0	66.7	33.3	63.3	36.7	63.3	36.7
Q65	53.3	46.7	63.3	36.7	56.7	43.3	60.0	40.0	60.0	40.0
Q66	76.7	23.3	83.3	16.7	70.0	30.0	80.0	20.0	56.7	43.3

Unit 7	1989		1991		1992		1993		1994	
	agree	disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Items	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q67	16.7	83.3	20.0	80.0	16.7	83.3	20.0	80.0	16.7	83.3
Q68	10.0	90.0	20.0	80.0	30.0	70.0	23.3	76.7	23.3	76.6
Q69	53.3	46.7	53.3	46.7	53.3	46.7	43.3	56.7	50.0	50.0
Q70	50.0	50.0	56.7	43.3	40.0	60.0	30.0	70.0	36.7	63.3
Q71	60.0	40.0	53.3	46.7	50.0	50.0	53.3	46.7	50.0	50.0
Q72	20.0	80.0	26.7	73.3	36.7	63.3	43.3	56.7	43.3	56.7
Q73	63.3	36.7	33.3	66.7	40.0	60.0	33.3	66.7	40.0	60.0
Q74	80.0	20.0	83.3	16.7	80.0	20.0	86.7	13.3	93.3	6.7

Test - designers seem to be unaware of the importance of using language as a tool of thinking as well as an information carrier. Other subject areas can make use of linguistic abilities in creating stimulating environment for their subjects. Embedding foreign language in other school subject is a two - way beneficial technique. Using language in writing reports and taking notes is worth emphasizing in evaluating pupils at this grade, and fills distorting gaps in the test assessment.

TABLE 8

Table 8 shows the percentage of the opinions of the respondents who agree/disagree on the basic concepts of teaching English in the 4th Secondary Grade related to Unit 8 and to what extent they have been related to evaluation in the final exams in school years (89 - 91 - 92 - 93 - 94)

Unit 8	1989		1991		1992		1993		1994	
	agree	disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Items	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q75	30.0	70.0	30.0	70.0	36.7	63.3	33.3	66.7	26.7	73.3
Q76	33.3	66.7	20.0	80.0	23.3	76.7	43.3	56.7	30.0	70.0
Q77	96.7	3.3	86.7	13.3	83.3	16.7	83.3	16.7	66.7	33.3
Q78	26.7	73.3	36.7	63.3	36.7	63.3	26.7	73.3	36.7	63.3
Q79	93.3	6.7	96.7	3.3	86.7	13.3	63.3	36.7	96.7	3.3

In addition to what have been said about other aims, “business English” seems to be neglected. We cannot assume that pupils have gained such practical skill. Lack of evaluation throws doubt on their competence, as such skills deficits are more often evident in test scores. Kuwait University has manipulated its admission policy to make up for such deficit. Yet, it is the ELT Directorate task to fill in such gap.

Generally speaking, the first question of the study has been given a slight negative response. Most of the samples have indicated their doubt regarding the inclusion of these concepts in the final tests for five years. A particular characteristic of language learning is the cumulative nature of the subject matter. Pupils who have not mastered the basic skills are, therefore, unlikely to make progress in more advanced areas of language usage. Along with the linguistic ability, the issue of psychological impact of language deficit is of importance in furthering study skills and academic achievement. Foreign language “phobia” is a contentious topic, sometimes referred to as “avoidance” or “rationalization” as a defense mechanism for propagating the use of Arabic rather than giving due care to it.

To explore differences existing among the five years regarding the inclusion of the designated concept's, X^2 's have been calculated for each item. Frequencies of disagreements have been used. X^2 values prove non-significant for all items. This indicates that there is a general trend among test - designers to ignore some items while emphasizing others. This reveals a shortcoming in building questions for such an important exam. it gives both teachers and students a rationale - at least for themselves - to ignore some concepts even though they are considered important.

DISCUSSION:

The findings show that:

Most of the concepts have not been applied for evaluation in all years. (1989 - 1994). The exams are not comprehensive. They do not cover the components of the prescribed material. The exams focus on the simple concepts while the advanced ones get little emphasis. Exams have the same format for a long time. The same types occur every year without any modifications.

However, the findings reflect the displeasure of disappointed teachers, when tests fail to respond to concepts implied in curricular planning. Such displeasure can be reversed if we make them feel that reliable forms of tests cannot be formulated on the yardstick model, but as a consolidated meaningful whole. This meaningful whole is secured

when some “unrelated concepts” can be dropped and still achievement is assessed. One striking feature of traditional curriculum testing is the principle of tying the matter taught closely to particular items in test. This principle must be overcome. What we need is a holistic approach that comprises language as a “holon”, and test it in the same manner. In fact language teaching is a total work of art. Tests must be designed on the same line.

The highly complex development towards a rather comprehensive examination makes it very difficult for teachers to cope with items concise enough to be fully saturated with the concept under evaluation. Today’s young people have to learn that we cannot itemize language and we cannot test it once and for all. The conclusion to be drawn for teaching is cultivating a change in perspective. Tests must not be strictly categorized into parts; (composition, comprehension, structure,.. etc.). Such categorization may result in limiting the scope of learning and breaking language into fractions. Insights gained from recent trends in language teaching have shown that it is necessary to fill students in skills highly interrelated. Therefore, it is important for teachers to structure classroom teaching so that pupils can be introduced to different skills at one time. Creative methods of teaching can help making lessons rather global without lessons becoming chaotic. Tests must therefore combine all concepts in a highly interrelated paradigm. Teachers’ evaluation of GsCC tests along the last five years show that these tests are insufficiently uniform and stray far from the traditional syntactic concepts of ELT. It may be argued that such practice will teach pupils less rigid knowledge about the language. In fact, more reflection will hold us back to that rigid categorization. It may be better to have good confusion than bad order.

Recommendations:

Exams should include all concepts designated to be taught, or at least the basic ones. An exam specification table should be designed to guarantee the inclusion of all concepts in a balanced way. As testing is considered a teaching device, it is necessary to benefit from the exam findings in improving future exams. Giving students practice/mock exams helps in making them quite familiar with the expected types of

questions. Moreover, such a procedure eliminates students fear when exams are administered. A measurement and evaluation course should be conducted for the concerned people to help them be well acquainted with such fields. In-service training sessions should be directed towards such aim.

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Appendix

Basic Concepts of Teaching English in the 4th Secondary Grade and to what extent they have been applied to Evaluation (Final Tests).

Unit	Concepts	1989	1991	1992	1993	1994
ONE	<p><u>FUNCTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expressing feelings - surprise, pleasure, anxiety, displeasure, disappointment, indifference 2. Making a speech. 3. Expressing reactions and feelings. 4. Inviting formally, congratulating and sympathizing. <p><u>LANGUAGE FOCUS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present simple and present continuous. 2. Future simple 3. Prefix re- 4. Passive 5. Past perfect 6. Mixed tenses 7. Past simple for narrative <p><u>STUDY SKILLS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing a letter 					
TWO	<p><u>FUNCTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making promises 2. Apologizing and giving explanations 3. Expressing obligation 4. Persuading 5. Expressing intention, approval and disapproval 6. Discussing obligations 7. Talking about what you'd like to do 8. Requesting 9. Talking about possibility 10. Talking about responsibility 11. Complaining <p><u>LANGUAGE FOCUS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Should/must + infinitive 2. Passive 3. Type 1 conditional with will, can, will be able to, could and might <p><u>STUDY SKILLS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading practice 2. Taking notes 					

Unit	Concepts	1989	1991	1992	1993	1994
THREE	<p><u>FUNCTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apologizing 2. Expressing forgiveness 3. Commenting on past events 4. Blaming 5. Approving and disapproving <p><u>LANGUAGE FOCUS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mixed tenses 2. Modal perfect verb forms should/might/could have + past participle 3. Present perfect + ever/never too, very 4. Language of advertisements 					
FOUR	<p><u>FUNCTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making suggestions 2. Persuading. <p><u>LANGUAGE FOCUS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Passive 2. there + to be <p><u>STUDY SKILLS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizing a paragraph 2. Reading practice 					
FIVE	<p><u>FUNCTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Giving advice 2. Recommending 3. Giving advice about events in the past <p><u>LANGUAGE FOCUS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modal verbs 2. Passive should be + past participle 3. Should/shouldn't have + past participle 4. Sequence words and phrases. <p><u>STUDY SKILLS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Filling in a form 2. Analyzing text 3. Organization 4. Sequencing a text 5. Writing a paragraph 					

Unit	Concepts	1989	1991	1992	1993	1994
SIX	<p><u>FUNCTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presenting an argument 2. Exchanging views 3. Expressing agreement and disagreement 4. Deduction <p><u>LANGUAGE FOCUS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adverbials of contrast 2. Type 2 conditional <p><u>STUDY SKILLS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizing and writing a text 					
SEVEN	<p><u>FUNCTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introducing plans <p><u>LANGUAGE FOCUS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mixed tenses for news 2. Reports 3. Past tenses for reporting 4. Historical events 5. Numbers 6. Mixed tenses for explaining how a situation has arisen 7. Type 1 conditional + If/unless 8. Present tenses for describing events as they happen 9. Language for stating conditions <p><u>STUDY SKILLS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taking notes 2. Writing paragraphs 					
EIGHT	<p><u>FUNCTION:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Giving instructions <p><u>LANGUAGE FOCUS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business English 2. Reported and direct speech 3. Imperatives <p><u>STUDY SKILLS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizing and writing a letter 					