The practices of teaching English at the University of Al-Fateh, Libya

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The practices of teaching English at the
University of Al-Fateh, Libya

by

Walid Abdulatif Hawana

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of English in Libyan Secondary Schools</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Instruments</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents of Chapters</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHODOLOGY IN ENGLISH TEACHER PREPARATION</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of English Teachers</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology of Teaching Languages</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Language Learning</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ENGLISH PROGRAM AT AL-FATEH</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Situation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonspecialist courses: College of education</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonspecialist courses: Other university colleges</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist courses: Department of English</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in the program</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty members of the program</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCEDURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES CITED</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX A: METHODS USED IN TEACHING LANGUAGE ................ 35
APPENDIX B: TYPES OF TESTS USED IN EVALUATING LANGUAGE LEARNING ......................... 42
APPENDIX C: OUTLINE OF ENGLISH COURSES: UNIVERSITY OF AL-FATEH .......................... 45
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INTRODUCTION

Learning a second language is considered today a necessity, especially if the medium of communication between one country and another no longer depends on one specific language, but rather on two or more. Foreign students who come to the United States experience the strong contrast between their study of English in their own countries and the realities of study and use of English in the United States. In such situations, it is not unusual to find that these students, who were trained largely by non-native speakers, speak English with a heavy accent. Furthermore, the grammatical errors are generally numerous, and the sentence construction is usually limited to one or two patterns. The English listening comprehension of most of those non-English speakers is weak due to their exposure only to their own culture and dealing mostly in their native language. Thorough language learning is a long, difficult, and tedious process, with no royal road. In order to be able to handle a foreign language with anything like the facility with which we handle our own, many weary hours must be spent in study, drill, repetition, and conversation.

Level of English in Libyan Secondary Schools

The education ladder in Libya is divided into 6-3-3. No foreign language is taught before junior high school where English is taught for three years beside the native Arabic language. Surprisingly, students
stop learning English when they enter senior high school; instead, they start studying the French language for three years. But not surprising is the fact that the majority of students can neither write nor speak nor understand English or French when they enter college.

The caliber of the language teachers in the Libyan high schools is not a good one. For most, their academic qualification does not exceed a bachelor's degree. The degree, however, may or may not be in the field of the language. The teachers may have had little or no training in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Although the ratio of teacher to students is quite reasonable, i.e., 1:15\(^1\), teachers still complain of crowded classes. Their instructional materials do not usually exceed dependence on the textbook and the flannel-board. Few language teachers use pictures, slides, or films; but one main problem is the fact that they present most of their materials and discussions in the classroom in Arabic. It is well-known, however, that the social variables to enhance language learning are home, community, occupation, school, ethnic group, church, play group, radio and television, and reading. Unfortunately, students in Libyan secondary schools depend on only two of these variables, i.e., school and reading. Furthermore, students are poorly motivated to study a foreign language because they know that they will suffer no grade loss if they fail in the language course; they will be moved to the next grade anyway!

Despite the assumption that languages are means to communicate and

\(^{1}\text{There were 12,792 teachers to 194,866 students in 1979.}\)
get meaning across from one party to another, it is surprising to know that after three years of studying English, an average high school student in Libya cannot express himself in the simplest form of the written or spoken language. Although very few students can express themselves in English, those few who can make many spelling mistakes in the written form and many pronunciation mistakes in the spoken form. A number of those students will enter college and enroll in an English program; they will be future high school English teachers, prepared by the department of English at the University of Al-Fateh.

The Statement of the Problem

Since its establishment in 1960, the University of Al-Fateh is considered as the most important single institution of higher education in Libya. Opened with only one college, the petroleum engineering college, it soon opened another college, the college of engineering, in 1964. Later, several colleges were added, and today the most important of all colleges for the Libyan government is the college of education, which was opened in 1968. It is important for the Libyan government because it prepares teachers for the secondary schools of the nation. The programs of all the departments in the college of education are geared toward producing secondary school teachers because of the problem of a shortage of native teachers. The problem becomes evident when we know that at present more than 65 percent of the secondary school teachers are non-Libyans, mostly Palestinians and Egyptians.
In order to meet the pressing need of English teachers, the department of English at the University of Al-Fateh has established its program in order to (1) produce English teachers for the secondary schools, (2) supply the government and other home institutions with English-speaking personnel, and (3) decrease the dependence on foreign expertise.

The English program at the University of Al-Fateh is language-oriented. It is a program of teaching English as a foreign language. But although the objectives of the program sound relevant to the need of the Libyan culture, the real outcome of the program is not exactly successful. Ironically, most of the fourth-year students cannot even look up words in a dictionary, spell unknown words by following the sound pattern, pronounce words properly, speak fluently and without serious mistakes, or write simple letters or reports without outside help. Yet they memorize many vocabulary words and know their meaning in Arabic.

The University of Al-Fateh does not run into any financial problems. It furnishes the department of English with an adequate language laboratory. The laboratory consists of forty carrels, each equipped with one head phone, a tape recorder, and an instructional manual for using the equipment. It contains a great amount of pre-recorded tapes, as well as blank ones. But unfortunately, the laboratory is not thoroughly used by the majority of the teachers; on the contrary, only three teachers use it.

Books, on the other hand, are generally in short supply and high demand at the college library. The library lacks a lot of reference books, especially literature books. Furthermore, the library contains no journal on teaching English as a foreign language. The library lacks up-to-date
books in the field of language. The university bookstore supplies books to all departments based on teachers' orders one year earlier. But not all books ordered by teachers are obtained. In addition to that, there is always the problem of getting books on time at the beginning of the specified semester. There is a paucity of good English books specifically designed for Libyan students and their problems in English. The textbooks available are inadequate in number and material to the extent that teachers must make up their own materials. Students, in this case, depend more on the spoken word of the teacher than on the written word of the book. Generally, the teachers' handouts are not clearly printed since they have to be typed through the department by a typist who may or may not have a good command of the English language.

Specifically, this thesis intends to discuss the following problems:

1) The teaching practices of the English teachers at the University of Al-Fateh are not adequately preparing the prospective secondary school English teachers.

2) The available resources of the department of English at the University of Al-Fateh are not adequately made use of in teaching.

3) English teachers at the University of Al-Fateh are "preaching" the language, not teaching it.

This thesis is intended to meet the following objectives:

1) To describe English teacher preparation programs in general.

2) To describe the present English program at the University of Al-Fateh.
3) To point out areas of strengths and weaknesses of the present English program.

4) To propose better teaching practices for teachers of English at the University of Al-Fateh.

5) To provide information useful for teachers of English in third world countries in general and in Libya in particular.

Research Instruments

Because the author is currently on the faculty of the college of education at the University of Al-Fateh, he has been able to conduct personal interviews with the majority of the thirty-eight teachers of the department of English. The questions during the interviews focused on the following: description of the nature of the courses taught by the interviewee, the methodology used in teaching, the caliber of the students taught, the using of the instructional resources, the points of strengths and weakness of the program, and the recommendations to improve the outcome of the program.

Furthermore, the author taught an education course to fourth-year students of English at the University of Al-Fateh for four months during which he checked on their English pronunciation and fluency in speaking when meeting with him privately.

The college of education bulletin served the author in establishing some basic historical account of the college in general and the department in particular. It provided the number of teachers, the qualifications needed for hiring, and the objectives of the department. The
bulletin is dated 1980 and published in Arabic language only.

Contents of Chapters

The remainder of the thesis is composed of three chapters. Chapter two discusses English teacher preparation programs, methods of teaching English, and evaluation procedures used by English teachers. Chapter three discusses the present situation of the English program at the University of Al-Fateh with its courses, students, and faculty members. Chapter four discusses ways to improve the teaching-learning process in the English program and provides some recommendations.
METHODOLOGY IN ENGLISH TEACHER PREPARATION

This chapter will discuss various English teacher preparation programs, various methods used in teaching English as a foreign language, and various evaluation procedures used by the English teachers. This chapter is meant to develop sufficient background and to provide norms or benchmarks by which to evaluate the present program at the University of Al-Fateh discussed in chapter three.

Preparation of English Teachers

The preparation of teachers of English for schools in general necessarily includes work in general education, professional education, and academic subject matter. Preparation differs, however, according to prospective stages and levels of teaching, viz., elementary school English teachers, secondary school English teachers, and college English teachers. Of course, the task is not exactly the same on all levels, nor are the duties of the teacher. Academic preparation is deeper and more specialized for the secondary school level than for the elementary, and still more so for the college level. Furthermore, what characterizes the process of teaching English is that the subject matter itself is not narrowly defined like that of botany, for instance. Literature reaches out into all the arts and all the sciences; language, with its dynamic features, deals with phenomena that more than anything else differentiate man from the lower species; composition involves such diverse processes as creative writing, writing reports, writing business letters and spelling.
skills; oral manipulation of the language requires mastery of three basic skills: pronunciation, stress, and intonation. Therefore, teaching the language, or preparing teachers to do so, is a hard job, but it becomes even harder when a program is meant to prepare teachers of a foreign language.

In the United States, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in 1961 recommended that the secondary school teacher should devote at least 40 percent of his study to general education, at least 40 percent to academic specialization, and no more than 20 percent to professional preparation. Studies made during the 1960s revealed that the gravest weaknesses in the subject matter preparation of teachers of secondary school English lay in their lack of college work in the English language and in composition. Even in the 1970s, Larson et al. (1976), Wynne (1977), and O'Donnell (1979) report that most high school teachers are trained in literature rather than in language which is mostly needed in secondary schools.

Another study by the NCTE Commission on the National Interest showed statistics that 25 percent of the nation's colleges required a course in the history of the English language and its linguistic development, only 17 percent required a course in modern English grammar, and 41 percent required a course in advanced composition, despite the fact that the major responsibilities of a secondary school teacher lie in language and composition. Subjects such as dialectology, semantics, lexicology, the psychology of language, and creative writing often were not available and seldom were required (NCTE, 1961). But even though that was the case in
the 1960s and early 1970s, yet Fagan and Laine (1980) reported that there is a great deal of satisfaction among graduates of English teacher preparation programs of the 1960s in regard to their academic and professional preparation.

Today more and more colleges are requiring at least two courses in the English language and one or more in advanced composition. And in order to get rid of the inadequacies of programs for English teacher preparation reported by Viall et al. (1967) and Hook et al. (1969), all major guidelines for English teacher preparation in the 1970s have emphasized the need for inclusion of language, composition and literature in their subject matter preparation (Judy, 1975). But the importance of professional preparation for English teachers reported by NCTE (1961) lies in (1) the social, philosophical, and historical backgrounds of education, (2) psychological foundations of learning, (3) using methods and materials in each subject of study based upon research and a systematic study of English teachers' experience reported in the literature, and (4) student teaching and/or internship. Instruction in the various possible methods of teaching English and real application of those methods in classroom situations are recommended. Increasingly, large university departments in the United States are offering seminars in teaching and supervised experience in teaching of undergraduate and secondary school courses of English.

With the rise of the American notion of accountability of teachers, new teacher education programs took the lead. Competency-based English teacher education programs are found relevant to insure a consistent quality product of English teachers. Velazques (1976), Sieben (1977), and O'Donnell (1979) reported that a certain methodology should be adopted by the teachers of English in order to secure a quality product of their students who are the prospective English teachers. Language competencies can easily be identified by the teacher who can identify his goals, his students', and those of the program. Some competencies of English language are identified, by teaching area, in a model program reported by Sieben (1977) aiming at preparing college teachers of English. The skills of an English teacher do not stop at specifying the minimum level of required language competencies but rather extend to specify the students' ability in manipulation of necessary equipment and materials in teaching English. Fichtenau (1976) and Chadwell (1978) emphasize the importance of the preparation of the English teacher in using educational technology, especially using the language laboratory. The skill of using such equipment should make a big difference on the achievement of students.

Methodology of Teaching Languages

There are as many methods of teaching languages as there are schools and teachers of the art. Each method must have its characteristics, but they all have a common pattern. The English teacher teaching English as a foreign language must go through a selection process in order to determine what and how much is taught. There must be some gradation process in
order for the English teacher to determine the order in which the materials are going to be presented to convey the meaning and the form of structures; and there must be some repetition process in order for the English teacher to make use of the unconscious language competency.

The most common types of methods of teaching English are the following methods: (1) the direct method, (2) the mimicry-memorization method (audio-lingual), (3) the natural method, (4) the psychological method, (5) the phonetic method, (6) the reading method, (7) the grammar method, (8) the translation method, (9) the grammar-translation method, (10) the eclectic method, (11) the unit method, (12) the language-control method, (13) the practice-theory method, (14) the cognate method, and (15) the dual-language method. Of all these methods and more, an English teacher chooses the method either because he had been through it himself when he was a student, or because it fits the goals and objectives of the course taught. Of the previously mentioned methods, the most common and widely-known methods are the direct method and a variation of the mimicry-memorization method, viz., the audio-lingual method.1

It is hard to differentiate between one method and another as far as strengths and weaknesses are concerned because all methods have them in different degrees. Professor John B. Carroll of Harvard described in 1965 a comprehensive experiment tried out to determine the efficacy of the two basic methodologies used in teaching English, the audio-lingual (aural-

1See Appendix A for descriptions of the methods.
oral) and the cognitive code-learning (the traditional method based primarily on the written language) (Carroll, 1965). Three hundred students had participated in this experiment for two years, under the auspices of the United States Office of Education and the University of Colorado. At the end of the first year, the aural-oral group was significantly better in listening and speaking but somewhat behind the traditional group in reading and writing. By the end of the second year, the traditional group was still slightly ahead in writing ability, but the two groups no longer differed in listening and reading. This suggests that it does not make much difference which method to use, provided that the quality of instruction is uniformly good. Dr. Carroll suggested a revision for the audio-lingual method, particularly in the direction of combining it with some of the good elements of the cognitive code-learning method. Therefore, it is not wise to claim that there is one correct method to impart or learn languages; every method has its own merits.

Evaluation of Language Learning

Evaluation of language learning is another vital task of the English language teacher. Through his initial preparation, he encounters several types of tests and examinations, the main purpose of which is to help him learn better, and consequently teach better. A well-prepared teacher should be able to administer the appropriate tests to his students and interpret their results. Although the measurement of language learning mainly concerns itself with the performance of the learner, the types of tests and examinations that evaluate his knowledge of the language often
determine the variety of methods and techniques which teachers have to use to teach the language (Mackey, 1967). Tests, however, may be designed for four different purposes: (1) to find out how much of the language a person actually knows (proficiency tests); (2) to get an idea of how much of it he will be able to learn (prognostic tests); (3) to find out how much of a course he has actually learned (achievement tests); and (4) to discover what remains to be taught (diagnostic tests).  

Summary

The preparation of English teachers concerns itself with their professional education and academic subject matter. However, some programs go farther by providing the teachers with general education courses. The emphasis on each of these areas differs according to prospective levels of teaching. The general weakness seen in some programs is the lack of the teacher's college work in language and composition. The teaching of the proper methodology for teaching and testing students of English is another aspect of a good English teacher preparation program.

These are some important characteristics of sound programs with which a comparison of the present English program at the University of Al-Fateh should take place.

1See Appendix B for types of such tests.
THE ENGLISH PROGRAM AT AL-FATEH

This chapter will discuss the present situation of the University of Al-Fateh with its courses, students, faculty, and weaknesses of the English program.

Present Situation

The department of English at the University of Al-Fateh provides nonspecialist English courses for all departments of the university colleges. All university departments require their students to take from two to four semester courses in the English language in order to graduate. Based in the college of education, the department of English offers specialist and nonspecialist courses. The aims and objectives of the courses offered for the departments of history, geography, psychology, library science, etc. differ from the aims and objectives of the courses offered for the departments of the scientific colleges. Still a third set of aims and objectives exists in the courses offered for specialist (major) students in the department of English. The course descriptions which follow present the desired, optimum goals which, of course, are not always achieved in actuality. The descriptions are divided into those of nonspecialist courses for the social science departments of the college of education, nonspecialist courses of other university colleges, and specialist (major) courses.
Nonspecialist courses: College of education

Students in the college of education have to take four semester courses in the English language. The curriculum is similar for all departments. Little variation may take place, according to the teacher's methodology. The curriculum is specifically designed to give students a good base in grammar to act as a shortcut to the language, in order to help them in developing competence in English reading, writing, and comprehension. But these competencies are rarely achieved by students. Students generally look at English courses as a waste of their time since most of their references are in Arabic. They feel they don't have to read any foreign references in their field of study.

Not much difference exists between the objectives of the first-year curriculum and those of the fourth year. The basic grammatical structures are taught along with comprehension, vocabulary, and application in the same manner from first year to the fourth year. The difference lies in the gradation of the materials offered by the teacher. The aim in the four years is to produce fluent and accurate control of informal spoken English. At least ten lecture hours are spent on reviewing the structures encountered before gradually proceeding to more difficult points. Reading comprehension work in the curriculum consists of structurally graded non-fiction passages, with multiple choice questions to test the level of comprehension and the competency in using structural words and lexical items.

Silent reading is encouraged in some classes for short periods of
time, followed by oral comprehension questions to enhance students' self expression by restating some parts of the passages already read by students, followed by in-class writing assignments of short length. Ideally, this is the case, but in fact very few students participate willingly in the discussion throughout the course meetings.

More emphasis is put on practicing translation from English into Arabic by the senior-year students. However, this practice alone does not suffice for a student to read and understand an English article in his field, all on his own. After four courses of English instruction, an average student can hardly understand a simple English paragraph. He can neither speak fluently, as the objective of the curriculum has been specified, nor express himself in more than the basic statements of the language, i.e., "My name is ____," "This is my book," etc. However, pronunciation, intonation, and stress are really the gravest weaknesses besides spelling and writing. The problem for fourth-year students, who are supposed to concentrate on translation drills from English into Arabic, rises when the department of English appoints a non-Arabic-speaking teacher to teach the course because of the shortage of Libyan college English teachers. In this case, the objective of the curriculum for fourth-year students is being neglected, while more comprehension drills are given by the teacher.

Nonspecialist courses: Other university colleges

The students of the scientific colleges of the University of Al-Fateh differ in the number of English courses they have to take during their
undergraduate program. The number of courses of English differs from one department to another, but no department requires less than two semester courses; some require four courses.

The first-year curriculum is based on the assumption that students have acquired a certain basic, nonscientific English skill from their studies while in the junior high school. Supposedly, they are somehow able to handle the common English sentence patterns. But as mentioned in chapter one, the junior high school students are not prepared in the English language as well as the curriculum at the University of Al-Fateh assumes.

The courses usually begin with an intensive review of basic written English. Special attention is paid to structural items which constitute the problem areas of the Arab students learning English. Punctuation and orthography are usually given some but not enough attention in the classroom. The ultimate objective of these courses is to enable students to understand scientific English and to be able to express themselves clearly and correctly when dealing with scientific topics. This objective is not as hard to achieve for students of scientific colleges as it is for the students of the college of education. The usage of the English language is somehow limited in the scientific topics. Students are introduced to the basic language of scientific English made up of sentence patterns and structural and nonstructural vocabulary common in all scientific disciplines.

Each year the amount of scientific vocabulary increases with the more intensified reading of more complex and longer scientific textbooks of
other subjects, since all teaching in these colleges is in English. The curriculum assists students in coping with the technical subjects; therefore, emphasis is put on deriving definitions of specific phenomena using all possible sentence and phrase patterns.

Specialist courses: Department of English

This is the curriculum of the undergraduate English language major. The curriculum consists of forty-seven courses out of which only five courses are electives or substitutes for specific phonetics courses. The skeleton of the English major curriculum consists of four comprehension courses, nine grammar courses, four composition and exercise courses, three phonetics courses, three linguistics courses, four laboratory courses, five literature courses, three written texts courses, three writing courses, three reading courses, three oral practice courses, two methodology courses, and one individualized study course.¹

The objectives of these courses differ according to the competencies expected from the students, but they are ideally designed for an ideal product. Yet this does not mean that they are properly carried out. Students of the fourth year, who are expected to hold teaching positions in some high schools, are mostly unable to write one single paragraph without either a grammar mistake or a spelling mistake or both.

¹See Appendix C for descriptions of the courses.
Students in the program

With the start of the academic year, teachers spend a few class hours reviewing what has been taken before by the students. In the case of the first-year students, teachers review what has been taken before in the junior high school. Teachers start from the very beginning, practically teaching the alphabet.

Based on teachers' evaluations, students are divided in the first year into two categories, A and B. Supposedly, students in the A category have a better command of the English language than students in the B category. The main advantage of being in category A is the fact that its students enjoy a one-semester course of study in England. Such students live in a boarding school, with all the expenses paid by the department of English of the University of Al-Fateh.

The main reason for sending students to a boarding school in England is to help them develop their fluency in the English language and for them to get the feel of the different accents encountered during their study at Al-Fateh, since their teachers are a mixture of different nationalities and, consequently, with different English accents. However, students who go to England do not get to meet often with English natives, except when they meet personnel of the school and other institutions. In fact, Libyan students meet with each other more often when in England and speak their mother tongue. They are afraid to open their mouths in English until they have mastered all its intricacies. They are even afraid to try to speak the language among themselves. Therefore, there is little gain for the students who go to England carrying the Arabic
A teacher on the faculty of the department of English at Al-Fateh administered a Comprehensive English Language Test (CELT) to first-year, third-year, and fourth-year students in 1980. Second-year students were not tested. Surprisingly, Dr. James H. Callas found that fourth-year students didn't know English much better than those of the first year! He also found that there is no difference between first- and third-year students as far as language comprehension is concerned, although third-year students have already spent one semester in England. One teacher complains that his third-year students in a literature course could understand absolutely nothing of Thomas Carlyle's "Past and Present." He found out about this after he gave the students a test on the subject; however, he did not give them the test until they had no further questions to ask about the subject. Another teacher mentions that most of his fourth-year students cannot read new and unfamiliar English vocabulary on their own, although they had had three phonetics courses already in their program.

The students, on the other hand, complain that there is a very weak personal relationship between their teachers and themselves. They also complain that some teachers have no methodology of teaching that fits their needs. They either demand so much of the students that they become inhibited and unable to cope with these demands and, consequently, lose interest in the course, or they make students feel as if they will never be able to master the language, and so create a low morale among the students so that they become still less motivated.
Furthermore, students complain of the paucity of good books for learning the language. They also complain that the amount of hours specified per course per semester is not enough, since national events, holidays, and other special circumstances cut down on the number of class meetings. Students as well as teachers find themselves pressed for time, and so they have to squeeze the teaching units together. There are good students worth teaching at the University of Al-Fateh, as most teachers agree, but the lack of a good program hinders their progress.

Faculty members of the program

There were thirty-eight teachers of English at the University of Al-Fateh in the academic year 1980-81. The department of English seeks teachers from English-speaking countries; however, currently there are five Libyan teachers, two Indian and two Pakistani teachers.

Teachers are hired every year according to need. Every academic year almost twenty-five percent of the teachers resign and consequently are replaced by new teachers. The minimum academic qualification for working in the department is a master's degree in English. Years of previous working experience is not of great importance for hiring; in fact, many teachers have no teaching experience when they are hired. They are even hired without being interviewed and without taking into consideration their qualifications as teachers of English as a second language.

But teachers complain, as students do, about the "malfunction" of the department of English. To the teachers' agony and dissatisfaction, they do not know what or whom they will be teaching in advance in order
to prepare their materials for the course according to the level of the
class. Appointing teachers for classes usually takes place very late,
but not later than one week after the semester session starts!

Another problem that faces the English teacher coming from foreign
countries is the living and housing conditions. The department of English
announces in its advertisements to fill vacant teaching posts that it is
responsible for providing housing for the foreign teachers. But it does
not advertise whether this housing will be adequate or not. Many foreign
English teachers break their contracts with the university during the
academic year; some do not even sign the contract in the first place;
they return home immediately. Of course, the dissatisfaction of the
teachers reflects on their students and reduces willingness to do a superb
job in teaching.

Certainly the fact that teachers have to teach the language from a
very low level, to specialist and nonspecialist students, and make up the
curriculum materials because of inadequate book supplies inhibits and
demoralizes them. Probably this is a good reason why many teachers do
not use the language laboratory, although more than fifteen courses of
the English curriculum could be taught in the laboratory.

As far as teaching practices are concerned, each teacher follows a
specific model or method of teaching his subject. Few of them vary
at all or follow more than one or two methods of English teaching.
Students' voluntary participation in classroom discussion is usually nil
unless a teacher asks a certain student to answer a question more often
raised by the teacher himself. Most of the teachers lack the knowledge
of motivation techniques. Students' participation takes place mostly after a take-home assignment has been given. But unfortunately, assignments are not given very often by the teachers, nor are quizzes and tests. These procedures are vital for the teacher in order to know his success in teaching.

Summary

The department of English at the University of Al-Fateh offers specialist and nonspecialist English courses. The main objectives of the department are to prepare English teachers for the junior high schools and to provide the government with English-speaking personnel. The major weakness of the program is that it is not meeting its objectives in any way. Students who graduate still are unable to express themselves in the English language to work in the government. They are not adequately prepared to teach English in the junior high schools. Another problem is that the objectives of the courses are too ideally set so that they do not practically suit the aptitude of the Libyan students. The teachers are unable to function properly in an unstructured academic environment, the matter that affects the students the most. The absence of good instructional materials is a major obstacle to teachers' planning of their courses. On the other hand, the inadequate usage of the language laboratory is a major factor in the ill-preparation of the prospective teachers and personnel.
PROCEDURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will discuss procedures to improve the teaching-learning process in the English program at the University of Al-Fateh. It will be concluded with recommendations to improve the program and for future research on the English program in the university.

Procedures

To start the teaching process, teachers should establish a good knowledge of the needs of the Libyan students. The teacher should find out where his class stands as far as language proficiency is concerned. Students in the first year should be checked for their background in the English language gained in the junior high school. Teachers must be aware that there is a three-year gap before the students enter college, during which no English instruction takes place. Thus, teachers usually have to start again practically from the alphabet! However, they should not give the students the impression that they are way behind for first-year college English. Motivation techniques play an important role in attracting students' attention. Although some students are highly motivated, teachers should understand that the unstructured academic environment in Libya, the unannounced obligatory student meetings, and the unexpected national "close-outs" for unannounced national events are obstacles to students' progress in academia. Therefore, teachers should try to make up these lost class hours at some other time; teachers should complete their teaching plans to the last details.
After the teacher formulates his course objectives, he should share these objectives with the students in order for them to be aware of what is expected of them and to work accordingly. This is a good procedure to hold students accountable, and thus they will not give excuses of such meetings and celebrations.

Teachers of all English specialist courses should keep in mind that their students will be junior high school English teachers one day. This far-reaching goal should always be dominant in the course objectives. Therefore, the teachers should make sure they are providing students with the needed skills of a high school English teacher.

As far as methodology is concerned, the teacher should use a variety of methods in order to create an interesting atmosphere in the classroom. Since Libyan students at the department of English in the University of Al-Fateh do not have a well-trained ear in English nor a mastery in pronunciation or reading, it is very practical for the teachers to depend on two teaching methods: the audio-lingual method and the direct method. The first method develops the listening and speaking capabilities, while the second trains and develops the listening comprehension capability and encourages involvement of students in the class discussion. However, a teacher should not rely totally on a specific method, as there is no single one suitable to all teachers of English.

Another aspect of good English teaching is to test students more

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1See Appendix A for descriptions of the methods.
often. Teachers in Libya should not depend only on the mid-term and/or the final examinations to test the proficiency of their students. In fact, teachers should make clear to students that a test will be administered following the completion of each unit. The testing process may include the following:

1) Written tests to measure grammatical proficiency, i.e., matching, true-false, and essay tests.

2) Oral tests to measure skill in pronunciation and intonation.

3) Oral tests to measure the command of the language:
   a) Is the student understood by English-speaking people?
   b) Does he use correctly the grammatical structure taught at this level?
   c) Does he read with a reasonable degree of speed?
   d) Does he recognize errors of other students?

Some tests may contain all of these types of tests combined. This would be very beneficial for fourth-year students and should be used as a "yardstick" for graduation. Students should restudy the material and take the test as many times as they need in order to pass it. The language laboratory should be the place where such tests take place. In all cases, teacher-made tests are considered more practical and valid for Libyan students than standardized tests.

The teachers should not sit idle in the face of the increasing problem of the shortage of instructional materials. If the administration at the department of English at the University of Al-Fateh is not doing anything about this problem, teachers should cooperate and form a committee
to order the books and other materials for the students. And since money is not a problem in the university, the teachers should take the initiative and do what they see to be necessary for the students' best advantage. However, teachers should always supplement the textbooks with their own worksheets and handouts. In all cases, the teachers should cooperate in planning for instruction and planning learning experiences for courses which they teach. Such cooperation can be easy for specialist courses because all students in the English major program at the University of Al-Fateh have the same goal to achieve, viz., to be junior high school English teachers.

As far as the present objectives are concerned, the department of English should distinguish between the two main ones, viz., preparing junior high school English teachers and supplying the government with English-speaking personnel in all areas. In order to achieve these objectives, two separate English programs should be set. However, a single program with two sections, each to achieve one objective, may suffice. Unfortunately, the present specialist program is not achieving any of its objectives properly. Of course, the objectives of the service English courses are different from those of the specialist courses, and so if there is to be improvement in the service courses, there must be a change in the teachers' methodology and planning. However, the next recommendations are useful for all the English teachers at the University of Al-Fateh in their teaching process.

Recommendations

The recommendations in this chapter focus on issues that concern the teachers, students, administrators, and researchers.
A. Teachers

1. Teachers should specify the minimum English competency required from students in each area in order to pass from one level to the next, i.e., mastery learning should be emphasized.

2. Teachers should not regard evaluation as a punitive procedure to pass or fail students. It should be clear that evaluation is to find out how much a student knows of the language (proficiency) and how much remains to be taught (diagnostic).

3. Teachers should know that mere dependence on the final examination to evaluate a student is not a fair procedure. Successive tests should take place, especially after teaching each unit.

4. Teachers should use all possible instructional media in order to create an interesting learning atmosphere for students; "preaching" is the dullest method of teaching almost all subjects.

5. Teachers should make maximum use of the language laboratory. The audio-lingual method should be emphasized as well as the direct method. Short periods of laboratory are preferable.

6. Teachers should make themselves available and encourage students to contact them on one-to-one basis in order to motivate the shy and the inhibited and to encourage the good and the self-motivated students.

7. Teachers should encourage students to speak only in English in the classroom when they speak to one another. They may even suggest that students try to speak English when they meet outside the classroom also.
8. Teachers should ask students to give in-class short oral reports (one to three minutes) each week.

9. Teachers may suggest that third and fourth year students write one to three short reports (100-150 words) per week, summarizing any Libyan Television English broadcast.

10. Teachers should alternatively require third and fourth year students to write extended reports (200-300 words) biweekly. This suggestion requires a great deal of cooperation among teachers of the class.

11. Teachers may organize role-playing activities representing actual life in an English-speaking country in order to help students understand the culture of the target language.

12. When ordering new textbooks for the next academic year, teachers should make sure that they themselves are going to use them. They should not order any textbook if they do not plan to stay in Libya the next academic year.

13. Teachers should provide the college librarian with an up-to-date list of needed reference books in language and literature.

14. Teachers should organize their efforts to publish some English textbooks specifically designed to meet Libyan cultural needs.

B. Students

1. Students should organize an English language club where they meet regularly, discuss matters in English, and organize activities. Teachers' participation is vital for guidance and motivation.
2. Students should make regular habits of listening to English radio broadcasts, watching English television programs, reading English newspapers, and conversing with their classmates in English as much as possible in order to excel in the English language. This suggestion should not imply that a student should neglect his mother tongue; these are means to speed up his aural-oral comprehension of the target language.

C. Administrators

1. The department of English should interview every teacher before a hiring decision is made. Qualifications for teaching English at the University of Al-Fateh should be specified for the following categories: aural understanding, speaking, reading, writing, language analysis, professional preparation, and previous work experience.

2. The department of English should not take it for granted that native speakers are necessarily good teachers of the language. This caveat is not to minimize the importance of having native speakers on the faculty.

3. The department of English should make every possible effort to create satisfaction among the teachers by meeting their job and housing demands. Teacher attrition poses a threat to the smooth continuity of the English program and to the academic welfare of students.
4. The department of English should recognize excellent teachers as well as excellent students.

5. The department of English should make sure that some of the second-year students who spend one semester in a boarding school in England do meet with English natives. Arranging for an English native as a roommate for a Libyan student may be one solution.

6. The department of English should ask Libyan Television to extend the English broadcasting hours from two to at least four hours daily.

D. Research

1. Further research should compare the achievement of junior high school students in English taught by graduates of the University of Al-Fateh as opposed to those taught by graduates of other local and foreign institutions.

2. Further research should measure the achievement of Libyan students who go to England for one semester as compared to those who stay in Libya.
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METHODS USED IN TEACHING LANGUAGE

APPENDIX A:

35
METHODS USED IN TEACHING LANGUAGE

1. The Direct Method

This is one of the most widely known methods and the one that has caused the most controversy. Its main characteristics are: (a) The use of everyday vocabulary and structure, (b) grammar taught by situation, (c) the use of many new items in one lesson in order to make the language sounds natural and to encourage normal conversation, (d) oral teaching of grammar and vocabulary, (e) concrete meanings taught through object lessons, abstract ones through the association of ideas, (f) grammar illustrated through visual presentation, (g) extensive listening and imitation encouraged until forms become automatic, (h) most of the work done in class; more class hours needed for the method, (i) the first few weeks devoted to pronunciation, and (j) all reading matter first presented orally.

2. The Natural Method

It starts with questions on objects and pictures. New words are explained by means of known words. Meaning is taught by inference. There is no use of the first language. Grammar is used to correct mistakes; the dictionary is used to help in remembering partly forgotten words. The order of presentation is listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar.
3. **The Psychological Method**

   It is based on mental visualization and the association of ideas by using objects, diagrams, pictures, and charts. Vocabulary is arranged into groups of short idiomatic sentences connected with the subject to form a lesson. Teaching is at first exclusively oral; composition is introduced after the first few lessons; grammar begins early while reading begins late in the course.

4. **The Phonetic Method**

   It is also known as the Reform or Oral Method. It starts with ear training, then goes on to pronunciation in the order of sounds to words to phrases to sentences. These are later combined into dialogues and stories. Phonetic notations, not spelling, are used in the texts. Grammar is inductive, and composition consists in the reproduction of things heard and read.

5. **The Reading Method**

   It is devised to promote a reading knowledge of the language. The text is divided into short sections, each preceded by a list of words to be taught through context, translation, or pictures. After a certain vocabulary level is reached, supplementary readers are introduced to consolidate the learner's vocabulary.

6. **The Grammar Method**

   In this method, rules of grammar are learned along with groups of
The words are then put together according to the rule. Knowledge of the rule is more important than its application. There is no oral work or teaching of pronunciation.

7. The Translation Method

It consists of practice in translating texts from the target language to the native language and vice versa. A variant of this is the Interlinear Translation Method where interlinear word-for-word translation and an idiomatic one are given.

8. The Grammar-Translation Method

The main features of the method are as follows: The grammar is an outline of formal grammar. The vocabulary depends on the texts selected. The teaching begins with rules, isolated vocabulary items, paradigms and translation. Easy classics are then translated. Vocabulary is divided into lists of words to be memorized. Pronunciation is either not taught or is limited to a few notations. Grammar rules are memorized as units, which often include illustrative sentences.

9. The Eclectic Method

It is called the Active Method (methode active) in France. The language skills are introduced in the following order: speaking, writing, understanding, and reading. Activities include oral practice, reading aloud, and questions and answers. There is a certain amount of translation, with some deductive grammar and some audio-visual aids.
10. The Unit Method

This is an application to language teaching of the five steps of the Herbartian system of teaching, viz., student preparation, presentation of material, guidance through induction, generalization, and application. After a unit of interest is chosen by the class, a committee of learners prepares a dialogue in the native language. The teacher translates it, trying to stress one grammatical point. The learner studies the content vocabulary of the situation; a list is made of the grammatical constructions; the vocabulary is learned by association; phrases and sentences are repeated and memorized. The teacher checks to see whether students have discovered the rule inductively; the scene of the life situation studied is acted out. Finally, a list of words is studied for free composition, translation, drills and exercises, or reading.

11. The Language-Control Method

The main thing in this method is the limitation and gradation of vocabulary and structure. The limitation may be based on studies of word frequency or on the usefulness of the items taught. The meanings may be taught through controlled actions and pictures and through objects and visual materials. Both oral and written drills are included.

12. The Mimicry-Memorization Method

This method is sometimes called the Informant-Drill Method. The teaching is divided into demonstration and drill. The demonstration
lessons teach grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary through a teacher and a native informant. In the drill lessons, the native informant, or drill master, reads a few sentences and the class mimics him again and again until the sentence is partly memorized. Grammar is taught inductively or through model sentences. A variation of this method, without drill master but with added recordings of dialogues and drills, is called the Audio-Lingual Method.

13. **The Practice-Theory Method**

This method is to some extent the reverse of the Mimicry-Memorization Method. Theory here follows practice. Model sentences are memorized through repetition. The model sentences are then analyzed phonetically and structurally to permit their expansion into new sentences.

14. **The Cognate Method**

In this method the student learns a basic vocabulary made up of words which are similar in form and meaning to those of his own language. These are then immediately used for oral and written expression.

15. **The Dual-Language Method**

Similar to the Cognate Method, this is based on the similarities and differences between the first and the second language. But these differences are not limited to vocabulary but also include the sounds, forms,
and syntax of both languages. The first language is used to explain differences in phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary. Each point of difference is used as the basis of systematic drills.
TYPES OF TESTS USED IN EVALUATING LANGUAGE LEARNING

APPENDIX B:
TYPES OF TESTS USED IN EVALUATING LANGUAGE LEARNING

1. **Proficiency Tests**

   The purpose of a proficiency test is to find out how much of a language a person has mastered, but not necessarily based on what the learner may have studied in a particular course. Proficiency tests are used to put people into categories according to their knowledge of the foreign language for the purpose of finding the level at which a learner should start or continue the study of the language. This may not necessarily be the same for all the language skills, however. A speech proficiency test may place a learner at one level while a reading proficiency test may place him at another, i.e., Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency.

2. **Diagnostic Tests**

   The purpose of a prognostic test is to predict how well a person is likely to learn a foreign language. It involves initially teaching an artificial micro-language unit containing in miniature all the basic elements of phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, and meaning. It includes such activities as imitating sounds and sound patterns, completing pattern changes, and inferring meanings from contexts, i.e., teacher-made tests.

3. **Achievement Tests**

   The purpose of an achievement test is to determine how much of the material of a course has actually been mastered; it includes only what has been taught. The amount of language learned in a course can be
measured by giving the same test before and after a period of instruction, or by giving two equal tests, or two different tests already tested and proved to be equal, i.e., Scholastic Achievement Test for English Second Language Standard I.

4. **Diagnostic Tests**

   The purpose of a diagnostic test is to find out what remains to be taught. What a class has been taught is not an indication, however, of what it knows. The teacher can determine how much of the language the class really knows or does not know by giving it this sort of a test, i.e., Examination in Structure (English as a Foreign Language).

   Tests of these various kinds and more are listed in the Mental Measurement Year-book.
APPENDIX C:

OUTLINE OF ENGLISH COURSES: UNIVERSITY OF AL-FATEH
OUTLINE OF ENGLISH COURSES: UNIVERSITY OF AL-FATEH

Four Comprehension Courses

In courses 103 and 104, students are trained in the general comprehension of written and spoken English. Passages are normally extracted from simplified readers and gradually become more difficult toward the end of the academic year. A listening comprehension course (111), which is based on "Varieties of Spoken English" books and tapes, is carried out in the language lab. Students are introduced to different kinds of English usages in a variety of situations. Newspaper and/or journal articles are read out loud to students by native speakers and used for the purpose of discussion. A reading comprehension course (115), based on the Lower Cambridge Certificate (LCC), teaches the mechanics of good English reading styles, with some passages introduced as the basis for composition courses.

Nine Grammar Courses

The objective of courses 104 and 108 is to thoroughly review the grammatical principles and structures which the student has acquired in the junior high school and then to introduce new grammatical structures that may help build effective communication skills in English. A review of these two courses is done in courses 112 and 116, where emphasis is put on working out drills and exercises. In courses 121 and 129, emphasis is put on the structure of the sentence as a whole rather than
on simple phrases. Course 129 particularly emphasizes sentence synthesis. Courses 138 and 143 are designed for advanced students emphasizing structures considered as problem areas for them, especially stylistic writing. Course 146 is an alternative to Linguistics 135. Course 146 includes the discussion of the transformational rules and their mechanisms and the treatment of higher structures using these rules.

Four Composition and Exercise Courses

The aim of courses 105 and 109 is to enable students to write coherently and without major grammatical and lexical mistakes. Students must write one short composition per week in these two courses. But they are also assigned one short guided essay of approximately two hundred words per week related to written forms of formal and informal letters. Students are closely supervised and corrected in their in-class writing assignments. In courses 113 and 117, students are trained to write clearly and logically without grammatical and/or spelling mistakes. At this level, the use of a dictionary and other resource materials is introduced. Longer written passages are encouraged with greater emphasis on accuracy and coherent presentation of the themes.

Three Phonetics Courses

Courses 125 and 132 form a continuum. The first course begins with a brief introduction to the subject matter of articulatory phonetics, its practical applications and relevance to the teaching of English as a foreign language. The nature and production of speech is discussed along
with the role of organs of speech in speech production. The course concentrates on basic information about English segmental phonemes. The second course begins with a study of the system and application of primary cardinal vowels. Students are to be trained to see how the system can be used in describing and classifying vowels of any language. The theory of production and classification of English vowels, diphthongs and consonants is discussed with specific emphasis on language problems of Arabic speaking students. Course 134 expects students to be prepared for more advanced theoretical and practical work. A detailed study of the relationship between phoneme and allophone is followed by a study of segmental phonemes. English consonant clusters which present considerable difficulty to Arab students are thoroughly practiced. The course concludes with an intensive study of stress, intonation, assimilation, similitude, and elision.

Three Linguistics Courses

Both courses 126 and 135 teach the definition of linguistics and its various fields, the techniques of describing a language, and the isolation of sounds, words, and larger structures. But course 136 aims at providing a deeper understanding of higher linguistic structures. It introduces transformational grammar pointing out the differences between the transformational and structural linguistics. The third course 145 studies the inadequacies of structural linguistics and the publication and impact of Syntactic Structures. The theory of syntax is fully discussed.
Four Lab Courses

In courses 106 and 110, students are to encounter native speakers only. These courses are designed to consolidate basic English structures and mastery of correct pronunciation. The first course concentrates on the revision of basic tenses, common patterns of pronunciation and intonation. The lab courses 114 and 118 are a continuation of the previous lab courses. The first one is devoted to the development of students' fluency and accuracy in the use of spoken language. Some training in evaluation and criticism of what students hear is also included. The second course explores and discusses in more depth the subtler aspects of the language.

Five Courses of Literature

Course 119 is designed to acquaint students with the different types of English and American poetry. Simple poems representing various centuries are studied and analyzed. Literature 133 deals with nineteenth century English and American novels, and literature 142 deals with nonfiction. Course 148 introduces students to the history of literary movements of English literature. Course 149 is an introduction to the various types of criticism, critics, and major critical works of English literature.

Three Courses in Written Texts

Courses 120, 128, and 137 expose students to varieties of spoken English in different situations. Students must achieve a
reading comprehension of Lower Cambridge Certificate (LCC) standard. More advanced and difficult listening comprehension passages are taken in the second and third courses.

Three Writing Courses

Courses 122 and 130 mark a transition from guided and controlled writing to free writing. Students are encouraged to use dictionaries to achieve accuracy in their written work. They are introduced to more idiomatic English. Course 139 puts more emphasis on the flow of ideas, imaginative writing, and logical and clear presentation of ideas in written form.

Three Reading Courses

In courses 127, 141, and 144, students read passages with contemporary themes and issues, rewrite some of these passages, and enrich their vocabulary.

Three Oral Practice Courses

Courses 124, 131, and 140 continue to emphasize the development of the students' ability to understand the more elusive aspects of English. They are trained to evaluate and criticize what they hear, with attention to verbal expression and intonation techniques.
Two Methodology Courses

Courses 123 and 136 review the different methods of teaching, considering the strengths and weaknesses of each method, preceded by discussion of the different methods of teaching English. The general principles and practices of TEFL are emphasized.

One Individualized Study Course

This is an alternative course to any language course. Guidance is provided in course 147 by the teacher who supervises the individual student's work, each at his own pace.