

English Language Learning: Issues and Strategies for Middle School Students with Low Proficiency

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Abstract

This qualitative research purposed to explore some of the issues that face English language learners during learning English which negatively affect their learning. In addition, it aimed to identify the best strategies for improving low proficiency students in English from the perspectives of English teachers. The study was conducted on 17 middle school English teachers who were randomly chosen to participate, and 35 of their low proficiency students. The data collection consisted of open-ended questionnaire for the students and semi-structured interview for the teachers. The results of the study indicated that there are many issues that may affect the learning of English language learners with low proficiency in English. These issues include: lack of listening and speaking tests, teaching method is not communicative, students' attitude towards English, lack of the necessary facilities, and role of the teachers in improving speaking skills. Further, the findings of the analysis indicated some of the best strategies for improving middle school students "low proficiency in English" from the teachers' perspectives. Those strategies consisted of teacher-centered learning method, presentation method, seminar method, and student-centered learning method. In contrast, another result showed that teachers agreed about the lecture method to be the least beneficial strategy for improving students' English.

1.0 Introduction

The English language is the language of the modern century due to its wide spread and adoption as a second language in some countries of the world, which have made contributing significantly in communication between people from all around the world. The language in addition helps transfer different cultures and sciences from one part of the world to the other parts which contribute to the development of the modern era industrially economically cognitively and technically.

The English language nowadays is considered to be the world's language because it is the language of science and technology. As mentioned by Crystal, a statistic was conducted on 12,500 international organizations from around the world, and when sampling the equivalent of 500 organizations (taken randomly according to the letters Orthography) it was found that approximately 85% of them use English as an official language, and nearly 90% of the articles published in the academic field are written in English (Crystal, 2003).

Therefore, being aware of those advantages of the English language, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has sought to spread the culture of the English language in the academic levels and its teaching - including the primary stage -. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, represented by the Ministry of Education, has paid attention to teaching English to its children, starting from the first grade to enhance the students' skills required for the twenty first century (Ministry of Education, 2021).

Exposing students to English language at an early age may have advantages on students' acquiring the language. However, it mostly depends on teacher's ability and qualification to deliver it. The complicated nature of learning and instruction and the contemporary trend in education has increased the difficulty of the teacher's job. This new position entails providing students with more information and investigating strategies related to teaching and learning. The National Policy on Education in Saudi Arabia stressed the importance of providing their children with quality education to develop the skills and competencies necessary to operate well and address societal issues (Picard, 2018). The new trend in educational techniques will enable Saudi Arabia to achieve and realize these significant educational ambitions.

These innovative teaching and learning methods allow students to conceptualize and successfully manage their own learning, which helps them retain knowledge and apply it in real-world settings (Alzeban, 2019). Students should be taught with strategies that can help them learn English better. Thus, this research aims to explore issues that teachers and students face when teaching English language, and the best strategies for improving low academic performance students in middle school.

1.1 Problem Statement

Saudi Arabian students begin learning English in primary school with the mindset that they only need to pass the test. Additionally, it doesn't appear that the study process at this time has been systematic. The students experience various issues when communicating after studying English for almost nine years. The students' lack of vocabulary makes it difficult for them to communicate effectively and sustain conversations for extended periods of time in the classroom (Abugohar & Yunus (2018). They lack the knowledge needed to comprehend simple directions. Most of them still cannot produce a single phrase devoid of errors. The students struggle to understand the meaning of particular words and texts as they read. The teaching-learning process might occasionally appear pointless when the actual skill development is not up to par, despite strong preparation, curriculum, textbooks, qualified teachers, and effective management. Since, the importance of English language is increasing across the globe, and its consistency found equally in every subject, therefore getting a thorough idea about the language and its connection with the academic performance is more than mandatory. The youth of Saudi Arabia is becoming fonder of getting state of the art education, so they could become competitive in

the current environment. English is important in the current cycle, therefore they are focusing more on understanding the language with professionalism. There is a very little research that focuses on the area of Saudi Arabia, therefore this research explored the same thing in detail along with identifying the strategies that can be used for improving the low performing students in the English Language in Saudi Arabia. The research will certainly help the educational ministries to adopt the tactics and strategies to provide better English Language education to the students.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

1. To determine issues affecting middle school students' learning English as a foreign language.
2. To explore the best strategies for raising low proficiency "English language students'" academic performance.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the issues affecting middle school students' learning English as a foreign language?
2. What are the best strategies for raising low proficiency "English language students'" academic performance?

1.4 Significance of the study

This study aims to explore issues and strategies regarding teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and the level of significance of this study comprises in a broad paradigm for different outcomes. The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education will gain from the students' findings by hiring qualified teachers to raise student performance. Further, it will be effective in designing English curriculum while considering EFL issues and effective strategies. Further, the study's findings will significantly contribute to teachers' understanding of teaching and acquiring the English language, and will provide them with strategies which they can use to enhance the performance of their students. Similarly, the research would be equally effective for the researchers who want to conduct similar research in the future because it provides sufficient grounds.

1.5 Limitations

There are numerous obstacles that the researcher must encounter during the assignment in any form of research activity. The issues encountered during this might be due to delays in acquiring the pertinent data required for the research work and people's unwillingness to compromise while providing the necessary information.

2.0 Literature Review

It is tough to teach English in Saudi Arabia. There is still much space for improvement, despite the efforts made by the Ministry of Education to improve the English teaching and learning process. According to Al- Nasser (2015), learning English is significantly hampered by the influence of one's mother tongue. Since, the importance of English Language is increasing across the globe because of its current recognition in the respective marketplaces. Even an individual wants to learn a skill to do freelancing on the internet, then English is the main thing that needs to be accurate. Programs and other technological devices are operated mostly in English Language. Considering the current criteria, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has mentioned that the education of English Language should have been provided to the students as early as Grade-1. In this way, a strong base of a second language could be made, which will help them when they further their career.

The government has mandated that English be studied in school. However, the mindset toward English instruction and learning needs to be changed from the ground up. The use of inadequate teaching techniques hinders the teaching and learning process. Al-Sobhi and Preece (2018) have noticed that utilizing ineffectual showing techniques obstructs the education and growing experience and prompts that teachers ought to get appropriate preparation to give successes. The majority of the lesson period is spent in Arabic. This method shortens students' exposure to English, which will have a negative impact on their learning outcomes.

The students' everyday openness to English is incredibly restricted. Saudi students don't have many beyond-class chances to rehearse their English. Arabic is generally utilized in books, media, amusement, and innovation contraptions, as well as in each part of day-to-day existence (Al- Nasser, 2015). Thus, there are few chances to learn and grasp English in a true setting. Educators can't try to convey in L1 to show L2 dialects (Kayi-Aydar, 2022). Then again, students in other emerging countries who are signed up for school have various chances to collaborate with English. By talking with instructors, companions, the media, utilizing innovation, and so forth, they can get English. The instructive climate should be connecting with and pleasant for the EFL students in secondary school, school, and college (Khasanova et al., 2020).

Before drafting any course material, instructors should lay out goals in light of the requirements of the students. They should perceive and apply productive instructing strategies to come by the ideal outcomes. Learning is a deep-rooted process that should be customized to the students' assumptions, necessities, and interests. The materials and offices required for EFL students are deficient in addressing the issues of instructors and students (Khasanova et al., 2020). Regardless of whether they want to draw out the best in their students, excited and imaginative teachers habitually miss the mark in doing such due to adapting to countless students and lacking assets.

2.1 Students Attitudes toward Learning English

As per scientists in the space of student' mentalities toward learning, students' disposition toward learning English is critical and should be considered while fostering an educating technique. The specialists tried noticing students' perspectives and presentations while learning a language. Yet, they experienced difficulty recognizing the ideal demeanor for learning to ensure that the interaction moves along as planned and successfully (Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020).

Instructors ought to perceive that students display both negative and uplifting outlooks and that negative perspectives can be changed to positive ones by including extra procedures that help the students' learning. Moreover, students' capacity to get familiar with the English language as a subsequent or unknown dialect might be impacted by the students' perspectives regarding their general conviction toward the language (Saeed & Al-Zayed, 2018).

Three components frequently make up demeanor: the educated person, which incorporates the students' convictions about the language or the conditions encompassing the language; the assessment, which incorporates the students' assessments of the language; and the social, which incorporates the students' activities (Aslan, 2018). Also, the disposition of students, whether positive or negative and its association with further learning are significant elements in demeanor in English language learning. Furthermore, L2 capability is impacted by the students' perspectives. The perspectives of the students might overwhelm their language learning triumphs and accomplishments.

Accordingly, the students' perspectives toward learning English are mostly affected by their feelings, and assumptions. Furthermore, the students' mentalities, abilities, and strategies decide if the students can incorporate the intricacy of the language (Ebadijalal & Yousofi, 2021). As per Soomro & Farooq (2018), students can have positive or negative mentalities toward a specific language, and every behavior produces for various reasons.

Thus, when students display a pessimistic disposition and need to get familiar with the language, they should figure out how to connect with individuals in the L2 people group; then again, uplifting perspectives are most likely shaped through students' related involvements. Like this, Gilakjani et al. (2020) concentrate on utilizing semi-organized interviews with studies to exhibit how students' quiet in English language study halls in Saudi mirrored their mentalities. They found that Saudi studies exhibited similar mentalities about concentrating on the English language as did different studies, who showed calm in English-language meetings.

The Saudi methodology was utilized to conceal any hint of failure. Still, this approach can be respected unfavorably in a learning circumstance since quiet in English illustrations is deciphered as a "lack of engagement" in the language. For example, when sees for English were analyzed among Saudi students, it was found that the two teachers and guardians, as well as certain students, had great perspectives on the language. Students with inspirational

perspectives on learning English are spurred, while those with a negative viewpoint seem to need learning independence (Su, 2018).

2.2 Self-esteem and Learning the English Language

Confidence is an individual's evaluation of their viability and communications in a specific setting. This variable can be perceived as similar to how everyone respects oneself. It concerns the individual's impression of their worth corresponding to others (Tilfarlioglu & Sherwani, 2018). Confidence influences how somebody acts, interfaces with others, and performs at work. Furthermore, having high confidence makes it simpler for somebody to be more guaranteed about their learning results and propels them to face challenges. Furthermore, specialists investigated whether confidence influences students' exhibition and found that every likely result, whether ideal or ominous, or inconsequential, is an expected variable to consider; however, a direct relationship is truly challenging because there is no immediate affiliation (Lowie & Verspoor 2019).

In addition, since analysts have expressed that confidence is likewise associated with students' mental qualities, for example, feelings of despair and sadness, the meaning of confidence might be vital for every individual's thought process, feelings, and responses to parts of life (Okwaraji et al. 2018). Then again, research recommends that in language learning settings, confidence might be affected by extra factors that connect with academic achievement.

For example, negative perspectives toward the school and teacher bring about lower inspiration, capricious, demotivating conditions, and lower fulfillment with the school. The connection between students' confidence and academic achievement probably won't be the entire story since different factors, like their mental capacities, may affect their confidence. Confidence, which is a side-effect of self-conviction, may, in this way, affect scholastic achievement (Mihalec-Adkins & Cooley 2020).

Tragically, low confidence is normal in settings including second dialects. Low confidence is regularly shown by an individual's miserable standpoint, feeling of dread toward dismissal, and hesitance to face challenges. There is little uncertainty that having high confidence, self-assurance, and consciousness of one's gifts is fundamental for effectively learning a subsequent language (Marantika, 2021). The connection between students' skills and confidence has been the subject of various examinations. As indicated by Batool (2020), a student's confidence affects the outcomes they get than about the inspirations driving those objectives. Per one review directed at a gathering of American undergrads learning French as an unknown dialect, their solid exhibition on oral tests or tasks was connected with their positive confidence (Park et al. 2018).

As per Al-Samiri (2021) hypothesis, students with elevated degrees of confidence are bound to be imaginative and take a functioning part in their public activities. Also, Marantika (2021) showed how confidence and learning English remain inseparable forever. They noticed that the association is subject to individuals' perspectives on their accomplishments and that confidence is

impacted by different variables, like concern, dread, and confidence. This connection isolates capable English speakers from less capable speakers since studies have shown that inspiration and confidence fundamentally affect scholarly interaction and results.

Coffey and Warren (2020) underlined that teachers and teachers ought to be concerned, assuming that students need adequate inspiration and confidence; regardless, a portion of the ramifications should be considered instructive obstacles in EFL explicitly. Confidence has generally been perceived as hugely affecting training, regardless of how it has been believed to be lacking regarding self-conviction and students' achievements (Wang et al., 2021).

2.3 Teacher Roles and Students' Language Proficiency

As well as showing the language and caring about the topic, explores have shown that an English language teacher's liabilities additionally incorporate taking care of the necessities and inclinations of the students in the classroom. For quite a while, specialists have discussed the elements of English language teachers, fighting that they should be steadier with the students and not simply center on classroom guidance (Kayi-Aydar 2022). Thus, English teachers should have both individual and expert capabilities. They should likewise educate students on the most proficient method to use and profit from the language because an expert teacher's fundamental goal is to set up their charges to involve the language in genuine settings.

Analysts have stated that the relational way of behaving among instructors and students characterizes the idea of teacher communication. They noticed that a few instructors use the methodology of being well-disposed with their classes while others decide to keep a separation (Misbah et al., 2021). The teacher association is alluded to as correspondence in instructive examination (Marin & Useche, 2018). The connection between students and teachers proposes that teachers have the best effect on students' choices to keep considering and on their inspiration in language examples (Marin & Useche 2018).

Furthermore, research has shown that the associations among students and instructors are associated with the students' impression of the teachers' criticism, correspondence, and study hall the board. Therefore, connections between students and teachers in language classrooms are straightforwardly connected with students' results (Zarrinabadi et al., 2021). The connections between English teachers and students are viewed as demotivated, and the students display protection from learning. The connections between instructor amicability, resistance, and backing for students' disparities and the conduct result joins are undoubtedly associated with students' learning results (Behzadnia et al. 2018).

According to certain investigations, there are eight models of conduct that teachers display. The eight areas that make up the model for relational instructor conduct are "Leadership (DC), Helping/Friendly (CD), Understanding (CS), Student Responsibility, Freedom (SC), Uncertain (SO), Dissatisfied (OS),"

Admonishing peak, and Strict (DO) conduct, as indicated by Behzadina et al. (2018). Every area depicts an alternate part of instructor conduct.

The teacher-focused way of dealing with English guidance in Saudi Arabian schools keeps students from securing sufficient language abilities (Widodo et al., 2022). Teachers rule the instructive cycle in Saudi Arabia, and students focus on them as their essential wellspring of data (Al-Seghayer, 2021). Classes are normally peaceful as students play a latent job in the growing experience since English teachers spend most of the illustration talking and scarcely at any point offer student a chance to talk or seek clarification on some pressing issues.

Moreover, the nature of an teacher-relationship can be impacted by the instructor on the off chance that they are deficiently gifted at encouraging the student' social and mental abilities. The idea of an instructor- student relationship is said to add to the improvement of student. Past exploration in the field has contended that educators' viability might impact student' adequacy, too, so low instructor viability will, without a doubt, add to low accomplishments. However, instructors' solid adequacy added to the viability of the guidance (Banfield, 2020).

Furthermore, in EFL programs, coordinating educating and learning ways of thinking assists student with uplifting outlooks and ways of behaving (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2020). Further, language student regularly finds out more when information is provided through a scope of approaches instead of one explicit style (Loewen & Sato, 2018). Students' cooperation in the educational experience, or all the more explicitly, their impression of their educators' genuine way of behaving, is firmly connected with how they are attracted in the classrooms (Frenzel et al., 2018).

2.4 Teaching English as a Foreign Language

“The essential objective of directions was a capacity to talk the language, and not to discuss the language,” asserted (Almoayidi, 2018). As indicated by Almoayidi (2018) becoming bilingual isn't generally the consequence of learning a second language since certain individuals are powerful at it. Then again, an unknown dialect is shown in schools as an expected component of the educational plan; thus, FL reading material is made in the country where the students are examining; for example, Saudi Arabian course books and guidelines are utilized to show English in the country (Deroo et al. 2020). Another fascinating truth is that English is currently trained from one side of the planet to the other to assist student in fostering more grounded attaches with different nations. Nonetheless, the way that the teaching method isn't completely dedicated to the classroom time frame renders English out of reach to students (Setiyadi, 2020).

As per Dewaele et al. (2022), some unknown dialect classrooms are different from second language study halls since student in these settings can't get to the language's way of life and etymological parts in the classrooms. Accordingly, they need more contact with the language. Also, assuming the

teacher communicates in objective language, they probably won't figure them out. At times, student's negative perspectives uncover that they are only keen on learning the language to breeze language tests. A few specialists in the field have underscored the significance of teachers' viability in EFL classrooms, saying that excellent teacher planning further develops advancement in all cases, particularly in investigating unknown dialects.

Like a subsequent language, which is the dominating language in the study hall, a subsequent language is a language that an individual learns notwithstanding their local tongue. Because of the way that learning a subsequent language happens both inside and beyond the classroom, which provides learning with the nature of securing, the procurement interaction is featured more. Teachers of second dialects should consider their student's prerequisites and introduce various language-learning strategies.

Furthermore, it is educated that an teacher concerning English as a subsequent language becomes more familiar with the phonetic varieties and headways in friendly communications among their student. They ought to likewise have the option to carry out language teaching methods in the ESL classroom that will be valuable for student, like utilizing an open way to deal with guidance and relational cooperation (Villegas et al. 2020).

The more prominent utilization of an informative methodology, then again, makes second language classes compelling because it allows language students the best opportunity to acquire individual learning and empowers them to utilize the language since language learning is a union of students' way of behaving, procedures, activities, and strategies. A colossal measure of accentuation has been put on the necessity of involving an open strategy in English language classes to get familiar with the language. As the essential objective is to comprehend the students' novel gifts, this procedure relates to the student's ability to cooperate in the English language examples. An open system was likewise observed to be trying to apply in EFL classes, regardless of the way that teachers' perspectives uncovered that open methodologies regularly function admirably in FL classes (Hashmi 2019).

Teachers are fundamental in EFL programs since they are the primary part of the guidance, yet there are still a few inquiries regarding how viable English instructors are. Since they need phonetic mindfulness, EFL teachers, normally non-local speakers, give trouble to EFL student. As per Qadeer (2019), Saudi student expect non-local teachers in EFL classes; however, they expect local speakers when they concentrate on English abroad. Be that as it may, a few English teachers in EFL programs are non-local, which makes the Saudi student can't help thinking about why English is being shown by non-local speakers in a local talking country.

Furthermore, since teachers prevail in Saudi Arabian study halls, which makes any remaining points of teacher-focused, English guidance is tied to communicating data. Since they fundamentally don't participate in the learning

exercises, Saudi English teachers are viewed as data moderators and material shows instead of language facilitators (Dragojevic et al., 2021).

Intriguingly, Banegas and De-Castro (2019) had a brilliant idea when they suggested that teachers conduct their research to understand better the challenges they and their students may encounter in teaching languages. As a result, Saudi English authorities advise Saudi English teachers to implement the same strategy.

2.5 Learning Environments for Second and Foreign Language and Students' Achievement

The Merriam Webster online word reference expresses that “the student’s meaning of climate is the conditions wherein a person or thing exists; the conditions and impacts that affect a person or thing’s development, wellbeing, progress, and so on” Environments for learning a second or unknown dialect upgrade language learning results fun and useful. As indicated by Mackenzie et al. (2018) research, the student’s inherent inspiration is straightforwardly connected with the learning climate. Notwithstanding, the connection between the learning climate and inspiration is mind-boggling. As per Roembke et al. (2018), a language learning climate should allow student to connect in class.

Garzón et al. (2019) declared that the instructive learning climate plan normally considers the student’ inclinations for a happy learning climate. Moreover, the classroom setting is a pivotal component in schooling that impacts different results, whether they come straightforwardly from the results of the student or, by implication, from their cooperation in class. The learning climate underlines the classroom’s qualities and features its mental, social, and scholarly parts. The learning climate, particularly in FL classrooms, indicates students’ inspiration to study.

A pivotal component of instructing and learning is the instructive climate. For English to advance explicitly, establishing a functioning learning climate requires a specific plan that will empower student to develop their language capacities through their reasoning skills. As per research, there should be major areas of strength for language students to work well for decisive reasoning and critical thinking (Campbell et al. 2022). Furthermore, Pandey (2019) outlined the meaning of a successful learning climate on every student’s objectives since it assists student with drawing in with various instructive assets that consider fitting connections with learning exercises.

Curiously, Pandey (2019) featured that class size, school style, topic, and grade level are firmly connected with how compelling the learning climate is. As per Lee (2022), a significant learning climate is a wellspring of information that helps student figure out their instructive experience. In like manner, the students’ methodologies to gain proficiency with the objective language will be sorted as devices to accomplish capacity in the learning climate since figuring out a learning climate depends on the student’ perspectives and upsides of their learning setting, which impacts different parts of their instructive exhibition (Loderer et al. 2020).

Regardless of whether the learning climate has its characteristics and importance, the communication between the instructor and the student is a necessary part of the classroom environment. Even though they guaranteed that the learning climate is more intently attached to students' mentalities than it is to students' results, some investigations have shown a high connection between students' accomplishments and the learning climate (Long et al., 2022). They resolved that, particularly with new teachers, an ideal learning climate and positive student instructor collaborations can facilitate children's discretion concerns (Long et al. 2022). It's fascinating to note that the significant reasons for disappointing learning results in English language circumstances are an absence of excitement and ridiculous language practice.

A student-focused learning climate, then again, is the most useful setting since it urges student to utilize a scope of serious learning methods in classrooms (Kember, 2020). The most pivotal part of the learning climate, notwithstanding the learning and showing esteem, is the idea of the connections among the student in the classroom. There is proof of the meaning of the students' understandings of the scholarly learning climate and their mentalities because of that climate, notwithstanding the cooperation among the class individuals.

3.0 Methodology

In this study, a qualitative research approach was employed to examine the strategies that may be applied to enhance academic performance for the middle school students. The research used triangulation in which multiple datasets have been used to collect, analyse and then match the analysis with previous researches conducted in the same domain. This is indeed a perfect element through which the validity and reliability level of the findings can be increased possibly and efficiently. It is characterized by Guetterman & Fetters (2018) as a method that qualitative approaches since they have advantages that counterbalance each other's weaknesses.

The researcher used a semi-structured interview for the teachers to explore issues that face EFL students during learning English and the strategies that can be used to help students with low English proficiency improve their English. In addition, the researcher used open-ended questionnaire for the students to explore their opinion about the issues that face them during learning.

3.1 Participants

The participants for this research consisted of 17 middle school English teachers who are working in different schools in a city at the South of Saudi Arabia and 35 of their students with low proficiency in English. The teachers were recruited randomly and each of the teachers have suggested 2-3 of their students who are having difficulty in learning English Language. The subtotal of the students was 40, however, only 35 students agreed to participate in the study.

3.4 Data collection and Instruments

Data was collected through semi-structured interview and open-ended questionnaire. Using semi-structured interview helps the researcher better understand and examine the teachers' opinion. The interview questions consisted of open-ended questions, which would help in getting in-depth information. It consisted of two parts: one focused on issues that face EFL during their English studying and prevent them from improving their English. The other part of the interview questions focused on getting information about strategies teachers can use to help low performance students improve their English. Further, students were asked to answer open-ended questions about the issues that affect their learning of English language.

The tools were piloted with another sample that was different from the sample of the study, and from other schools in the south of Saudi Arabia to check whether they examine what they were required. Feedback from the piloting workout was incorporated into the final instruments. The participants were interviewed individually to get the most response.

3.5 Data analysis

For analysing the data of the study, the researcher used thematic analysis. The data is examined for finding some themes, ideas, topics that are repeated. The analysis can be explained in six steps: familiarization and getting to know the data, using some coding to represent information, start generating themes, reviewing themes, naming and defining themes, and then writing up. Thematic analysis can be used to explore different participants' perspectives, and highlights differences and similarities. A rigorous thematic analysis can help produce insightful findings and trustworthy (Nowell et al., 2017).

3.6 Ethical issues

Request letters from the schools of Saudi Arabia were given to the researchers, who used them to introduce themselves to the participants and demonstrate the reliability of the study. Every participant received a guarantee that all information would be kept private and used solely for the intended purpose. On all parts of the research, participants were made aware that their involvement was completely optional and that they might stop at any point during the research.

4.0 Results and Discussion

This research purposed to explore issues that affect low proficiency students' English learnings and the best strategies for improving their language. To achieve this purpose open-ended questionnaire for the students and semi-structured interview for the teachers were conducted. Then, data was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings from the interviews and open-ended questionnaire with "EFL teachers and students" are broken down into issues affecting the EFL students' English learning and the best strategies for improving the students' language.

4.1. Issues affecting the EFL students' English learning

4.1.1 Lack of Listening & Speaking Tests

Despite the significance of speaking assessments, the interviews with English teachers highlighted their dissatisfaction with the lack of listening and speaking assessments at the middle school. It seems so evident that writing and reading abilities and vocabulary and grammar are overrepresented on middle school exams. As a result, practically most of the English exams are written and only little scores for speaking skills. This is because teachers must adhere to the material provided. One teacher was adamant that:

“The reason beyond the students' low level in speaking is the assessment system. We teach the four skills in the intermediate level, but we rarely, test listening and speaking, so less marks for listening and speaking.

All of the student participants affirmed this. One student claimed that “The problem is that the textbook controls the teacher. I mean, the teacher has to abide by the textbook. For example, the textbook includes very limited listening and speaking practices which are not effective enough to improve the students' spoken ability.” Yet another student added that. “We are usually tested in reading, grammar, writing and vocabulary but rarely tests for listening and speaking. Students only participate and speak when the teacher discusses the lesson.”

4.1.2 Teaching method is not communicative

To enhance teaching results generally and specifically strengthen students' oral proficiency, teachers must make the best decisions possible. The correspondence cycle between the students should, in this manner, be worked with by the language teacher by recollecting them for the classroom activities to chip away at their capacity to talk and compliment understudy-engaged and pleasant learning.

Nevertheless, the researcher interview with the teachers and the students revealed that there were few opportunities for students to practice their English; as a result, most sessions were teacher-centred. Most teachers presented their classes using conventional techniques, primarily the Grammar-Translation Method. The courses were given in clear English, but there were still a lot of barriers that prevented teaching from becoming communicative. Most teachers are aware that they should employ contemporary communicative approaches in their instruction to increase students' competency. In any case, they can't find the legitimate helping assets and strategies to complete classroom exercises, so they settle for regular ones. The meetings additionally showed that the students' unfortunate English capability added to the teachers' general discontent with the ongoing instructive climate. That's what one teacher raised:

“Most students lack the basic knowledge of English. So, they find it difficult to participate in English in the classroom. So, they either keep silent or ask for Arabic translation.”

Another teacher said “In fact, I was trying to make my classes student-cantered. I'm trying my best to provide more time for students to talk and minimise my

talking time, but the students do not prefer this. Even if I speak in English or give them much time to speak, they just shift from English to Arabic.”

As per Alharbi (2021), this result is steady with his case that "almost sixteen years after its application, the open limit of the Saudi students moving on from the auxiliary schools is still very insufficient." The absence of openness to the objective language, as indicated by scholastics like (Afzal, 2019; Khasawneh, 2021; Bensalem 2019), is one of the essential drivers of the students' low degree of English. These components subsequently adversely affected the teachers' adequacy in the classroom.

4.1.3 Students' Attitude towards English

The discussions with teachers revealed that most students consider English more to be a subject to pass and study than a language to get and use for social correspondence. Put another way, and they adhere to the appraisal to float through the evaluations. According to the teachers' interviews, the assessment is the only drive for the students to earn excellent results. One instructor brought up that:

“Most of the students are caring only about passing the exams, and a few are caring about learning and a few even caring about nothing just give them a text to prepare at home and test their reading and mark it.”

This was emphasised by another teacher who stated that “Students are after the assessment. Everything is judged by the assessment, whether a continuous or a final formative one. In fact, marks and assessment are more important for the students than learning the language itself, and the text is not supporting language learning but supporting this point of assessment.”

The fact that students must complete at least the minimum course mark of 50% by the end of the year makes it normal for them to adhere to the assessment. Speaking, however, does not receive high marks under the grading system. Therefore, the students, in the teachers' point of view, foster a negative demeanour toward talking and put forth no attempts to work on their ability to talk. In any case, the meetings with the students showed that they had a positive mentality in regard to talking. They accept that talking is of most extreme significance, yet teachers don't grade it tragically, getting the extent of appraisals. Subsequently, they put an extraordinary worth on different capacities, critical parts of any English test. That's what one student asserted.

“I feel that speaking is the most important skill because it is spoken on a daily basis here in Saudi Arabia.”

Another student pointed out that:

“Speaking should be given more importance because it is essential in communicating with the community. For example, when you order something or go to a place, speaking is the most commonly skill we use.”

4.1.4 Lack of the Necessary Facilities

The lack of suitable instructional resources for instructors, such as smart board, or computers, has further hampered the process of teaching listening.

According to the study, computers are not available in the classes, so that prevents English teachers from using listening materials. One teacher said: "Textbooks are equipped with teaching materials, such as barcodes, however, tools to use them are not available, and this makes teaching a difficult task. There are no listening classes here simply because there is a few resources to use for listening."

Native English speakers are urgently needed for listening since children need to hear the right pronunciation. They can speak words and sentences correctly because of this. A different participant said

"We only have listening without tools to use so what is the point to give them listening. They should listen to a native speaker. They listen to the teacher all the time in the class, but this is not enough and they should hear and learn what is better, especially from a native speaker's voice."

Additionally, there isn't a lab at the school where students can practice speaking and listening. There is a lack of libraries; where students can borrow English books and practice reading them.

"I use the textbooks, the activity books and that's it. Actually, we don't have an English lab, and the school library has a few English stories."

If the materials are available, students can benefit and learn languages more effectively. When the right teaching materials are employed, the students become more engaged, which improves their performance. However, if there aren't enough tools for learning, students would think that school is boring and traditional. The researcher noted that there aren't enough learning resources. The textbook is the only resource that is readily available to the students. The school does not have English study resources like a language lab, a library, audio CDs, video tapes, interactive CDs, etc. Sometimes computers are not available in the classes, so teachers seldom use them for teaching listening materials.

4.1.5 Role of the teachers in improving speaking skills

Children can benefit and learn languages more quickly if the materials are provided. Using the appropriate instructional resources increases student engagement, enhancing learning outcomes. However, students would believe that school is monotonous and conventional if there weren't enough resources for learning. There aren't enough learning resources, the researcher stated. The sole readily available resource for the students is the textbook. No English study tools are available at the school, such as computers, a language lab, library, audio CDs, video tapes, interactive CDs, etc. There are some computers in some schools but not for each classroom. Thus, there aren't many listening practices.

The speaking exercises in the classroom can be lifted and modified from various sources, including books, periodicals, newspapers, and the internet. Additionally, teachers should support the kids while they engage in the activities and participate to boost their confidence. The study revealed that most students had a good attitude toward using English. Unfortunately, this positive attitude slowly deteriorated because my speaking ability was completely disregarded.

According to experts, teachers should help students understand the value of speaking skills for their future.

4.2 Best methods for raising English language students with low proficiency in English

4.2.1 Teacher-Centred Learning Method

The first approach that was mentioned in the research, and even asked from the teachers is regarding Teacher-Centred Learning Method. Most of the teachers identified that Teacher-Centred Learning Method is a viable method that used to teach students and could enhance the performance of students. The teachers further pointed out that this approach encourages the teacher to control the teaching-learning session. Students are supposed to learn knowledge from the teacher. The idea was similar as identified by Hasha & Newman (2021) in their research. The author identified that this approach elevates the teacher to a position of absolute wisdom; as the only source of information or knowledge, the student body adopts a submissive posture, listening to and following the instructor's every command. Moreover, Katsioloudes & Cannonier (2019) pointed out that this system empowers spoiling in students because of the way that it doesn't matter action-based learning qualities to spur students to learn about genuine difficulties in light of reasonable data. Since the teacher is accountable for managing each part of the transmission and granting of information, she can try to boost data conveyance while limiting the time and exertion expected for students' maintenance. Since students have an item job in class, interest and understanding might be lost simultaneously. According to Okasha (2020), education should actively involve students as the main participants rather than just concentrating on imparting rules, definitions, and processes for them to memorize.

4.2.2 Presentation Method

The term "presentation method" refers to presenting information in front of the audience. Most of the teachers in the interview indicated that involving the students in presenting information help students improve their English because they can search for the information, read and then speak in front of their classmates. Further, some of the teachers stated that they can engage the students to speak through role-play, where they can act some of the information in the book. One teacher said "when I ask the students to practice the information they study in the book through role-play, most of the students want to participate." This result is consistent with the research by Soraya (2017) that approved the effectiveness of role-play strategy in improving EFL speaking skills. Another teacher claimed "applying presentation method helps persuade students to accept novel concepts, change their existing opinions, or act on presumptions." The presentation technique has several benefits, including making subject learning easier, boosting student confidence, being more appropriate for classes with a low quorum, encouraging students to read extensively for content, and emphasizing the teacher's or supervisor's

importance. This particular method endorsed by most of the teachers while asking, and it is also recommended by most of the teachers in Saudi Arabia as well.

4.2.3 Seminar Method

Most of the teachers while interviewing also mentioned the importance and implications of Seminar Method for providing English Language Education to the end-users. This strategy alludes to how a bunch of conversations are coordinated to follow a conventional show or another sort of involvement. The benefits of this strategy are that it animates and tests which may be examined, it further develops students' healthy identity - dependence collaboration and obligation and expertise in report composing and show to individual students for the trade of assessment and navigation. One teacher said "involving students in seminar using their English improves their speaking skills and their thinking as well". The restrictions of talk technique need sufficient time groundwork for the less fatty or moderator to design, compose, counsel the teacher begin delivering and present substance, a few students particularly who are peaceful and tentative will most likely be unable to take part completely during conversation time as well as certain students, especially the vocal ones could rule the conversation. As one teacher said "teachers need to pay attention and try to engage all the students when applying the seminar method to be affective because there are some students who won't be involved." It is also covered and mentioned by Zeng et al (2020) in their research, and assured that seminar method helps improve knowledge skills, active learning, and collaboration and interaction between teachers and students. As per the researcher, method canvassed above are used in both instructing and learning, but as there are various methodologies and settings in training, it is prescribed to involve a blend of these strategies to teach all more effectively.

4.2.4 Student-Centred Learning method

Most of the teachers when answering the interview questions backed this approach and guarantee that the globalization blunder of the twenty-first century is that it makes it simple for students to get to data all alone. Teachers states some examples of affective strategies that are student-cantered approaches which they believe can help improve low proficiency students' English skills. One claimed, "using strategies that benefit from the use of technology such as lipped instruction and Web-Quest strategies are great for teaching English because students can be able to learn based on their level and interests." The idea was similar as Vidoni & Maddux, (2002), study which results support the positive affect of using Web-Quests on improving knowledge and critical thinking skills. Further, the teachers explained the instructor's responsibility is to give a steady climate, so students can freely find and direct different learning designs (Baticulon et al., 2021). To rouse students, teachers are encouraged to apply a student-focused approach in the present day. Due to the expanding and widespread use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), which allow students to obtain notes online and change the role of a teacher from a

teacher to a facilitator, this strategy is considered the most appropriate for the world's educational systems. It is thought that this strategy also encourages goal-orientated conduct in students; consequently, the approach is said to be more effective in boosting student achievement.

4.2.5 Lecture Method

Apart from the above-mentioned four effective methods, the teachers also mentioned about the ineffective methods as well for teaching English, so that they could avoid it. While asking the questions, most of the teachers mentioned that Lecture Method is not an effective method for teaching English. The lecture method involves a teacher speaking to the class without allowing the students to remark or ask questions throughout the session. Teachers agreed that technique has a few qualities: while executing new scholarly substance or introducing an outline to students, it is reasonable to show fundamentally bigger gatherings of students and the teacher to cover a great deal of content in a short space of time. Although the lecture technique has some benefits, it additionally has downsides. While describing the problems associated with this method, the teachers mentioned that this method doesn't represent every student's one-of-a-kind requirements, feelings, or interests. Second, it doesn't demand student input. Third, if ill-conceived, it can bring about fatigue. Fourth, it is challenging to decide if or how much learning through addresses is poor, and the nature of that learning is poor and not dependable. One teacher said "I can see all the methods work for teaching any subject, however I can't see how lecture method can be applied to teach English, there is no way that can work" To wrap things up, the instructor invests a great deal of energy in making elaborate notes that are only from time to time at any point grasped by the student.

5.0 Conclusion

This qualitative research was conducted with Saudi EFL middle school teachers and their low proficiency students to explore the issues that may have effects on EFL learning. In addition, it also investigated the best strategies that can help EFL improve their English from the perspectives of middle school teachers. The results of the study indicated some of the issues that may affect learning the language in the following. One of the important issues is regarding the lack of listening and speaking tests, that's the reason why students do not concentrate on learning those skills. Another issue is concerning with teaching method is not communicative, so students are not having a chance to practice the language. In addition, students' attitude towards English show great impact on their way of learning. Further, having a lack of the necessary facilities, such as computers and speakers, for teaching English impair students' learning. Last issue is considering the important role of teachers in improving speaking skills. Further, the results of the study showed that some of the best strategies for improving EFL with low proficiency are: teacher-centered learning method, presentation method, seminar method, and student-centered learning method. Teachers agreed about the lecture method to be the least beneficial strategy for improving students' English.

تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية: قضايا واستراتيجيات للمدرسة المتوسطة

الطلاب ذوي الكفاءة المنخفضة

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية الأجنبية ، الإستراتيجيات ، القضايا.

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الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث النوعي إلى استكشاف بعض المشكلات التي تواجه متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية أثناء تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية والتي تؤثر سلبًا على تعلمهم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، كان يهدف إلى تحديد أفضل الاستراتيجيات لتحسين كفاءة الطلاب منخفضي الكفاءة في اللغة الإنجليزية من وجهة نظر معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية. أجريت الدراسة على ١٧ مدرسًا للغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الإعدادية تم اختيارهم عشوائيًا للمشاركة ، و ٣٥ من طلابهم ذوي الكفاءة المنخفضة. يتكون جمع البيانات من استبيان مفتوح للطلاب ومقابلة شبه منظمة للمعلمين. أشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن هناك العديد من القضايا التي قد تؤثر على تعلم متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ذوي الكفاءة المنخفضة في اللغة الإنجليزية. وتشمل هذه القضايا: عدم وجود اختبارات الاستماع والتحدث ، وطريقة التدريس ليست تواصلية ، وموقف الطلاب تجاه اللغة الإنجليزية ، ونقص المرافق اللازمة ، ودور المعلمين في تحسين مهارات التحدث. علاوة على ذلك ، أشارت نتائج التحليل إلى بعض أفضل الاستراتيجيات لتحسين طلاب المدارس المتوسطة "الكفاءة المنخفضة في اللغة الإنجليزية" من وجهة نظر المعلمين. تتألف هذه الاستراتيجيات من طريقة التعلم المتمحورة حول المعلم ، وطريقة العرض ، وطريقة الندوة ، وطريقة التعلم المتمحورة حول الطالب. في المقابل ، أظهرت نتيجة أخرى أن المعلمين اتفقوا على طريقة المحاضرة على أنها أقل إستراتيجية مفيدة لتحسين اللغة الإنجليزية للطلاب.

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