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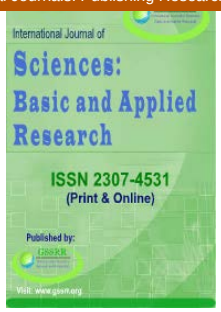

Improving the Learning Environment at a University in Saudi Arabia: Identifying Factors That Impede or Motivate Learning

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Abstract

The teaching of English language in Saudi Arabia remains a challenge in spite of good language planning, curriculum design, appropriate textbooks and infrastructural facilities as well as efficient and qualified teachers. This paper identifies possible factors that impede or motivate learning of the English language at the university's preparatory year program. A survey was conducted with students and instructors of preparatory year program at King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia during the 2013/2014 academic year. The results of the survey show some of the common problems faced by students that include attitudinal issues amongst students, difficulty in switching from L2 to L1 and inefficient English language teaching and learning programs in schools. This paper also discusses the results of a blended learning experiment involving proposed innovative enhancements based on survey results, including the incorporation of edu-gaming and role play simulation. The experiment yielded a positive outcome.

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Keywords: English language learning; blended learning; e-learning; edu-gaming; role play simulation; innovation

1. Introduction

Teaching of English at the university's preparatory year program (PYP) serves two purposes: it strengthens the foundation of English language mastery and prepares students to master discipline-specific

English that many will use in practicing their academic or vocational specialties after graduation from university. English is also taught at the school level in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), but it does not enjoy as important a part in the Saudi curriculum as it does in many other developing countries. In spite of providing good planning, curriculum, and textbooks as well as qualified teachers and effective administration, English language teaching in Saudi Arabia remains a challenge.

The recent expansion of scientific specializations in KSA universities has led to increased emphasis on teaching English to prepare students for academic purposes. A program offered by King Faisal University (KFU) in Saudi Arabia is one example of this new surge in English instruction. However, preliminary evaluation using the Michigan Proficiency Test (MPT) has been discouraging, as students' MPT scores have been rather low [1]. Without a reasonably solid background in the language [English], many students find it impossible to come even close to achieving the required outcomes, resulting in frustration for both teachers and, more importantly, students [2].

A study was conducted at King Abdulaziz University to investigate factors impeding current implementation of English language teaching in the preparatory year program and identify possible improvements of the teaching and learning (T&L) environment to motivate students to learn. In order to improve the T&L environment, the second portion of the study focused on the factor of attitudinal problems amongst students, investigating the prospects for enhancing the T&L environment with innovative approaches to motivate and change the attitudes of students towards learning. Results of the study indicate that students are much interested in learning through innovative approaches with the assistance of technology which included integration of edu-gaming and role play simulation into the T&L environment.

According to Torrisi-Steele [3], "[d]espite prolific use of the term 'blended learning' in tertiary institutions, agreement on a definition remains elusive". There are various definitions of blended learning that make it almost impossible to agree on one. Due to this lack of consensus on a definition and the various available techno-centric definitions of the term hinders the exploration of the pedagogical potential of blended learning. In the context of this paper, blended learning refers to enriched learning experiences made possible by the harmonious integration of various strategies, achieved by combining face to face interaction with information and communications technology (ICT).

The main contribution of the study lies in identifying current problems and proposing solutions to improve the T&L environment through the use of innovative approaches in e-learning which could possibly be replicated in similar situations elsewhere.

2. Literature Review

A teacher of English faces many problems while teaching English to Arab students especially in Saudi Arabia [4]. According to Al-Khatib, Malak, Sleiman and Zadorian [5], most research on the teaching of English as a second language has focused only on the main difficulties that second language learners experience within the British Commonwealth, without paying much attention to the Arab region. Recently and with the global spread of English as an essential tool for communication, trade and worldwide exchange, more interest has been centered on the concerns, problems and needs of Arab learners studying English. Several initiatives are underway to identify and understand the difficulties associated with studying English in the Arabic context and to propose appropriate T&L support. In a conference organized by the Arab Open University held in 2011, it was concluded that traditional approaches to English Language teaching have not resulted in sufficient preparation for the learner. More research may advance new perceptions and methodologies that can improve learners' experience with English.

A meta-analysis released by the US Department of Education provides support for blended delivery courses. The study found that students who took part of their instruction online performed better, on average, than did those taking the same course through face-to-face instruction. Those who took “blended” courses, which combine online learning and face-to-face instruction elements, appeared to perform best of all ([6].

Games are inherently experiential [7]. Those who play games engage multiple sense modalities. Edu-games, games that are incorporated into the T&L environment, include crossword puzzles which have produced encouraging results. They have been used in various fields of learning such as soil science [8] as well as in chemistry [9].

Crossword puzzles exercise useful skills for students including: reasoning, making inferences, evaluating choices, spelling and drawing conclusions [10]. Crossword puzzles associate with game playing, fun, and recreation, and therefore can be less intimidating to students as a learning tool. Goh and Hooper [11] conclude that using crossword puzzles in learning provides gaming motivation and challenge the students, requiring both lateral and longitudinal thinking to solve the puzzle. Puzzle solving involves an active style of learning, and engages students with the material more intensely than passive techniques.

Shah, Lynch and Macias-Moriarity [12] investigated students’ perception of crossword puzzles as creative and interactive educational materials to enhance their learning experience. Over 90% of students in their study indicated that crossword puzzles enhanced their learning and served as a review tool of the lecture material. Crossword puzzles also enhanced class interaction, as most students enjoyed working together with their classmates while solving the puzzles. The research concluded that use of crossword puzzles provides a simple and creative way to incorporate active learning.

Role play simulation is an experiential learning approach. Through role play simulation, students take on the role of practitioners and learn from making decisions and mistakes while avoiding real world consequences. A simulation is usually based on principles and practices associated with a particular role. A key feature of role-

based learning is its experiential nature and its dependence on reflecting on actions that are taken within the activity. This simulation approach advocates that experience is the best teacher.

It has been found that social media such as Facebook and Twitter have engaged almost every socially and literate person. People share many aspects of their lives via such tools. Facilitation of effective discussion and collaborative learning can take place. Intelligent use of social media tools engages students in interactive learning, which is essential to a successful education [13].

3. Method

In this study both primary and secondary sources of data were used. While the literature review of this study provided the source of secondary data gathered from published research articles, the primary data for this study were collected through questionnaires administered to randomly selected respondents who represented students and instructors of preparatory year English language courses at King Abdulaziz University in the KSA.

A total of 182 questionnaires were distributed randomly to female students and 124 to female instructors from the English Language Institute of the university for the 2013/2014 academic year. This study was limited to the female participants due to the segregation of the gender. Mixed gender education is not allowed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The society in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is homogeneous in terms of religion, culture and even in education. Because of the cultural, religious, and educational limitations, only female participants were the focus of this study. Due to the above stated limitations, researchers were not be able to even gather information from men campuses of KAU. Surveys were conducted and data compiled and processed to get information on:

- Factors that impede the current T&L environment
- Factors that motivate learning
- Assessment of the new approach after experimentation.

The following steps defined within the approach were taken:

1. Review of secondary data
2. Design of survey questionnaires and sample selection
3. Calibration and testing of questionnaire
4. Translating questionnaire
5. Printing of questionnaire
6. Conducting survey
7. Compiling and processing of the data
8. Analyzing and summarization
9. Formulation of the proposed environment
10. Blended learning experiment
11. Post experiment survey

12. Analysis and summarization of blended learning experiment results.

4. Details Pertaining to Blended Experimental Model and Implementation

The university has a learning management system (LMS) in use. Blended learning for English language courses was implemented using the LMS while augmenting it with innovative content in the form of edu-gaming and role play simulation components. The e-learning components used and their mode of usage are discussed next. Standard features of the LMS and requirements include the following:

- Course Plan which gathers and provides critical course information including weekly plan of activities with submission deadlines
- Glossary of terms defined and highlighted by underlining in learning and assignment material
- Forum discussions comprising of a Q&A forum and topical forums each with a deadline
- Drill Quizzes comprising of a drill quiz for each chapter for practice purposes
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) with useful and commonly asked questions
- Download Centre for uploading of material which can be downloaded and viewed offline by students.

Augmented content embedded in the LMS and provided at the Download Center include the following:

- Lecture Slides which allow students to prepare themselves before lectures and carry out revisions after lectures

- Screen Recorded Lecture for each chapter covering difficult to understand topics that are elaborated in detail, benefitting the students much if they view these iteratively for improved understanding
- Crossword Puzzles in interactive online mode and for use in class as a review tool at the end of each chapter
- Role Play Simulators in interactive mode allowing students to take on a role and learn from making decisions and mistakes, providing tips to help them recognize when an improper decision becomes proper.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Survey on Students

A total of 182 female students participated in the survey to improve on the T&L environment. The survey outcomes for students have a 95% confidence level with a confidence interval of 7.1%. Some Internet access statistics were compiled. These include the following:

- A very high percentage (97.8%) of students surveyed has access to the Internet at home
- Similarly, a high percentage (96.7%) of them has a mobile phone or portable electronic device that allows them to access the Internet, anywhere, anytime.

5.2 Assessing attitudes towards the proposed enhancements.

A set of questions in the survey covered assessment in terms of attitude of students for items proposed as enhancements to the T&L environment. These cover the introduction of items into their T&L environment, in addition to face to face classes. The items are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Items covering assessment of attitude for items proposed as enhancements

P1	In addition to face to face classes, I think it is beneficial to learn courses through the use of e-learning resources.
P2	In addition to face to face classes, I would like to learn through the use of social media e.g. Facebook.
P3	In addition to face to face classes, I would like to learn through the use of edu-gaming which is the use of games in learning.
P4	In addition to face to face classes, I would like to learn through the use of simulation which is the use of computer to emulate real-life processes

When evaluating attitudes, a 4 point Likert scale was used throughout the study to elicit respondents' opinions weighted as follows: Strongly Disagree (rating 1), Disagree (rating 2), Agree (rating 3) and Strongly Agree (rating 4).

The distribution of students' attitudes for items proposed as enhancements to the T&L environment is given in Table 2. The table indicates that students broadly agree (76.9%) on the benefit of learning courses through the use of e-learning resources. They prefer the use of edu-gaming (83%) and simulation (74.2%) in T&L environment. However, students indicate disagreement on the use of social media in learning. This is perhaps because they do not view social media as a learning tool based on the experience they have in using social media.

Table 2: Distribution of students' attitudes towards items proposed as enhancements of the T&L environment

Item	*Strongly Disagree (%)*	*Disagree (%)*	*Agree (%)*	*Strongly Agree (%)*	*Weighted Mean*	*S.D.*	*Attitude*
P1	8.8	11.5	55.5	21.4	2.92	0.84	Agree
P2	27.5	35.2	27.5	8.2	2.17	0.93	Disagree
P3	4.4	11.0	50.0	33.0	3.13	0.78	Agree
P4.	9.3	14.3	47.8	26.4	2.93	0.89	Agree

Results pertaining to students' attitude and perception related to the proposed enhancements (for all questions at once) are given in Table 3. The table shows the results obtained when using the Likert scale to measure students' attitudes and perceptions related to the proposed enhancements for all questions at once. It shows that the overall attitude is 'agree' with an average weighted mean of 2.79. The total percentage of students who selected categories 'agree' and 'strongly agree' is approximately 67 percent. In general, this indicates agreement

with the outcomes obtained through the question by question approach except for the item on the use of social media.

Table 3: Results for students' attitudes and perceptions related to proposed enhancements (for all questions at once).

Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Weighted Mean	SD	Attitude
12.5	18	45.2	22.25	2.79	0.86	Agree

5.3 Assessing students' attitudes towards possible problems affecting current implementation.

A question in the survey covered factors that students rate as problems affecting current implementation of English language T&L at the English Language Institute of the university. The factors presented for assessment were:

A. Untrained instructors
B. Outdated teaching approach
C. Inadequate language laboratory facilities
D. Inadequate number of hours for English language course
E. Attitudinal problems amongst students
F. Attitudinal problems of academic staff
G. Inadequate English language teaching and learning in schools
H. Difficulty for students in switching to the English language from the Arabic language due to differences in language elements such as letter characters.

The distribution of students' attitudes towards items pertaining to problems affecting current implementation of English language learning is given in Table 4. The table indicates that students agree on 3 factors listed by decreasing total percentage of categories 'agree' and 'strongly agree':

- Inadequate English language teaching and learning in schools (72%)
- Difficulty in switching to English language from Arabic language due to difference in language elements (60.4%)
- Attitudinal problems amongst students (52.7%).

It is worth noting that factors relating to exposure to the English language prior to entering university represent the two highest percentages in the above list. It is interesting as well to note that students agree that there are attitudinal problems amongst students. It is also important to note that students strongly disagree regarding inadequate number of hours for English T&L. This indicates that they believe the number of hours is sufficient.

Table 4: Distribution of students' attitudes towards items representing problems affecting current implementation

Item	*Strongly Disagree (%)*	*Disagree (%)*	*Agree (%)*	*Strongly Agree (%)*	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Attitude*
A.	31.9	34.1	16.5	14.8	2.61	1.04	Agree
B.	30.2	45.1	15.9	6.6	2.45	0.84	Disagree
C.	20.3	38.5	24.7	11.5	2.50	0.93	Agree
D.	69.2	16.5	6.6	14.8	2.08	0.87	Disagree
E.	15.4	25.3	36.8	15.9	2.95	0.74	Agree
F.	21.4	31.3	28.6	13.2	2.40	0.89	Disagree
G.	9.9	15.9	23.6	48.4	3.30	0.90	Strongly agree
H.	13.7	23.6	37.9	22.5	2.82	0.89	Agree

Table 5 shows results obtained when using the Likert scale to measure students' attitudes and perceptions towards possible problems affecting current implementation for all questions at once. It shows that the overall attitude is 'disagree' with an average weighted mean of 2.33. The total percentage of students who selected categories 'agree' and 'strongly agree' is approximately 55 percent, a marginal majority. However, this does not fully represent the details within the questions as obtained through the question by question approach.

Table 5: Results for students' attitudes and perceptions towards possible problems affecting current implementation. (all questions at once)

Strongly Disagree (%)	*Disagree (%)*	*Agree (%)*	*Strongly Agree (%)*	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Attitude*
26.5	28.79	23.83	18.46	2.33	0.95	Disagree

5.4 Investigating relationships between attitudes of students

Table 6 shows possible relationships between attitudes towards possible problems and benefits of using e-learning. From the table, it can be concluded that there are the following correlational relationships:

- Responses to learn through the use of social media and inadequate number of hours for English language courses. This is perhaps due to social media being seen as a possible solution to those who feel that there is inadequate number of hours.
- Responses to learn through the use of edu-gaming and factors of untrained instructors and outdated teaching approach. This is perhaps due to edu-gaming being seen as a possible solution to those who believe in the 2 factors.

Table 6: Relationships between attitudes of students towards possible problems and benefits of using e-learning

Correlation			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Spearman's rho	P1	Correlation Coefficient	.045	.112	.031	.123	-.141-	.061	.068	-.035-
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.553	.141	.694	.108	.070	.435	.376	.642
	P2	Correlation Coefficient	.037	.100	.025	.188*	-.135-	-.094-	.034	.147
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.625	.186	.749	.013	.082	.222	.657	.052
	P3	Correlation Coefficient	.155*	.182*	.146	-.084-	.008	-.029-	.135	.009
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.016	.057	.271	.917	.705	.075	.909
	P4	Correlation Coefficient	-.018-	.038	-.015-	-.022-	-.094-	-.130-	.028	-.137-
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.814	.616	.849	.770	.227	.092	.717	.071

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

6. Survey on Instructors

The survey outcomes pertaining to instructors' responses to improve English language T&L environment have 95% confidence level with a confidence interval of 5.2%. Some Internet access statistics were compiled. These include the following:

- A very high percentage (99.2%) of instructors surveyed has access to the Internet at home.
- Similarly, a very high percentage (96.7%) of them has a mobile phone or portable electronic device that allows them to access the Internet, anywhere, anytime.

6.1 Assessing attitude towards the proposed enhancements

Results pertaining to the attitudes of instructors towards items proposed as enhancements of the T&L environment are given in Table 7. The table indicates that instructors strongly agree on the benefit of using e-learning resources. Instructors believe that students prefer edu-gaming, simulation and social media in the T&L environment. This indicates strongly that instructors believe that students will benefit from using e-learning in learning.

Table 7: Distribution of instructors' responses to items proposed as enhancements of the T&L environment

Item	*Strongly Disagree (%)*	*Disagree (%)*	*Agree (%)*	*Strongly Agree (%)*	*Weighted Mean*	*S.D.*	*Attitude*
P1	2.4	2.4	53.7	41.5	3.34	0.65	*S. Agree*
P2	4.9	25.2	55.3	14.6	2.80	0.75	*Agree*
P3	4.9	8.9	60.2	26	3.07	0.74	*Agree*
P4.	3.2	9.2	62.5	25	3.09	0.69	*Agree*

Table 8 shows results obtained when using the Likert scale to measure the instructors' attitudes and perceptions towards the proposed enhancements for all questions at once. Overall, approximately 58 percent of instructors chose category 'agree' with an average weighted mean of 3.075. The total percentage of instructors who selected categories 'agree' and 'strongly agree' is approximately 85 percent. This indicates strong agreement with outcomes obtained through the question by question approach.

Table 8: Results for instructors' attitudes and perceptions towards proposed enhancements (for all questions at once).

Strongly Disagree (%)	*Disagree (%)*	*Agree (%)*	*Strongly Agree (%)*	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Attitude*
3.85	11.43	57.94	26.78	3.075	0.71	*Agree*

6.2 Assessing attitude towards possible problems affecting current implementation

Results pertaining to possible problems affecting the current implementation of English language T&L are given in Table 9, which indicates that instructors strongly agree regarding the inadequacy of English language T&L in schools, with a total percentage of approximately 82 percent for categories of' 'strongly agree' and 'agree'. Instructors also agree on four other factors listed here by decreasing percentages of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' responses:

- Attitudinal problems amongst students (88.3%)
- Difficulty in switching to English language from Arabic language due to difference in language elements (70.5%)
- Untrained instructors (52.9%)
- Inadequate language laboratory facilities (48.6%)

It is interesting to note that instructors agree on the untrained instructor factor. It is also worth noting that the two factors relating to English language exposure prior to university are represented by percentages above 70%.

Table 9: Distribution of instructors' attitudes towards items representing possible problems affecting current implementation

Item	***Strongly Disagree (%)***	***Disagree (%)***	***Agree (%)***	***S. Agree (%)***	***Weighted Mean***	***SD***	***Attitude***
A.	16.5	30.6	28.1	24.8	2.61	1.04	Agree
B.	10.5	43.6	34.2	11.1	2.45	0.84	Disagree
C.	15	35.8	33.3	15.3	2.50	0.93	Agree
D.	29.9	36.8	29.1	4.3	2.08	0.87	Disagree
E.	4.2	17.5	57.5	20.8	2.95	0.74	Agree
F.	15.4	41.0	29.8	11.3	2.40	0.89	Disagree
G.	5.8	12.5	27.5	54.2	3.30	0.90	Strongly agree
H.	10.1	19.3	48.7	21.8	2.82	0.89	Agree

Table 10 shows results obtained when using the Likert scale to measure the instructors' attitudes and perceptions towards possible problems affecting current implementation for all questions at once. It shows the overall attitude is 'agree' with an average weighted mean of 2.64. The total percentage of instructors who selected categories 'agree' and 'strongly agree' is approximately 56 percent, a marginal majority. However, this does not represent the details within the questions as obtained through the question-by-question approach.

Table 10: Distribution of instructors' attitudes towards items representing possible problems affecting current implementation (for all questions at once).

Strongly Disagree (%)	*Disagree (%)*	*Agree (%)*	*Strongly Agree (%)*	*Weighted Mean*	*SD*	*Attitude*
13.43	29.64	36.03	20.45	2.64	0.89	Agree

6.3 Investigating relationships between attitudes of instructors

Table 11 shows possible relationships between attitudes towards possible problems and benefits of using e-learning. From the table, it can be concluded that there are correlational relationships between instructors' perceptions that students prefer to learn through the use of simulation and the following factors:

- Inadequate language laboratory facilities
- Inadequate number of hours for English language courses
- Attitudinal problems of students.

This perhaps indicates that instructors who believe in the above negative factors see the use of simulation as a possible solution.

Table 11: Relationships between attitudes of instructors towards possible problems and benefits of using e-learning

Variable			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Spearman's rho	P1	Correlation Coefficient	.143	.085	.119	-.159-	-.042-	.056	.031	-.140-
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.117	.365	.195	.087	.646	.548	.736	.129
	P2	Correlation Coefficient	.108	.046	-.142-	.077	-.027-	.068	-.094-	.065
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.240	.621	.122	.411	.767	.469	.305	.482
	P3	Correlation Coefficient	.023	.024	.000	.151	-.039-	.062	-.167-	.100
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.799	.797	.992	.104	.676	.504	.068	.279
	P4	Correlation Coefficient	.097	.160	.245**	.198*	.263**	.113	-.102-	.010
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.298	.089	.008	.035	.004	.230	.276	.912

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

7. Blended Learning Experiment Outcomes

Students were exposed to e-learning as a component of blended learning for a semester and a survey was conducted to assess their perceptions of blended learning. The sample size of students taking the survey was 148. A questionnaire was designed to measure the following factors:

- Students' interest and perception towards the use of e-learning
- Instructors' implementation of the required tasks.

The questions are given in Table 12 together with the survey outcomes. The questions represented a simple approach to data gathering with clear options. The table shows survey results for positive responses in percentages after the experiment. As we can see from the overall results given in the table, students very much enjoy the incorporation of e-learning (80%) and believe it is beneficial for them (81%). As to the usefulness of the content provided, students agree strongly that the content is very useful (81%). This indicates that students value the content provided on the e-learning platform. On the question pertaining to the ease of understanding

content, students agree that the content is easy to understand (77%). In the context of content adequacy, students believe the content is adequate (74%).

Table 12: Survey results of positive responses in percentages after experiment

No.	Question	%
1.	Do you enjoy learning using e-learning resources?	79.7
2.	Is the information/content in Course Plan of this course updated in EMES?	77
3.	Does the instructor of this course encourage you to use the e-learning resources?	90.5
4.	Does the instructor of this course participate in online activities (answering questions online, participate in online discussions, create online quizzes/exercises, etc.)?	86.5
5.	Are you requested to perform e-learning tasks in EMES by the instructor of this course?	86.5
6.	In addition to face to face classes, do you think it is beneficial to learn this course through the use of e-learning resources?	81.1
7.	Do you think the information/content provided for this course in EMES useful?	81.1
8.	Do you think the information/content provided for this course in EMES easy to understand?	77
9.	Do you think the information/content provided for this course in EMES adequate?	73.6

8. Highlights of Findings and Recommendation

8.1 General

On whether it is beneficial to learn courses through the use of e-learning resources in addition to face to face classes, instructors (95.2%) and students (76.9%) have high percentages of agreement. This indicates interest and motivation. The findings on students and instructors are similarly in line with the findings of Liawa, Huangb and Chen [14]. The finding on students is also in line with similar findings [15,16]. Students and instructors responded positively to recommendations for enhancements except for the implementation of social media in the T&L environment of which students disagree. In the context of the disagreement, it is worth noting that a study conducted by Wibea and Kabatab [17] highlights occurrence of disparity between the types of technologies instructors thought were useful for students' success and those that students thought were useful for their own success.

It is indicated that two factors that occur prior to university language exposure affect implementation. These are:

- Inadequate English language teaching and learning in schools
- Difficulty reported by students in switching to the English language from the Arabic language due to differences in language elements such as letter characters.

Students and instructors agree that these are problems affecting implementation which represent external factors requiring attention. The university has to ensure that efforts are made to identify students with entry level

language deficiencies and take appropriate remedial steps by providing effective programs to improve them. The common current implementation problems pertaining to which students and instructors agree on are:

- Attitudinal problems amongst students
- Difficulty in switching to English language from Arabic language due to difference in language elements
- Inadequate English language teaching and learning in schools.

The item pertaining to attitudinal problems amongst students needs to be addressed so that improvements can be made. One possible approach to addressing this is through instructor-student or mentor-mentee counseling

8.2 Students

Regarding proposed enhancements of the T&L environment, we note that students agree (76.9%) on the benefit of learning courses through the use of e-learning resources. They indicate a preference for edu-gaming (83%) and simulation (74.2%) in the T&L environment. However, students indicate disagreement on the use social media in learning.

Students agree on the following three factors as problems in the current implementation, listed by decreasing total percentage of categories 'agree' and 'strongly agree':

- Inadequate English language teaching and learning in schools (72%)
- Difficulty in switching to English language from Arabic language due to difference in language elements (60.4%)
- Attitudinal problems amongst students (52.7%).

8.3 Instructors

Regarding proposed enhancements of the T&L environment, instructors strongly agree on the benefit of learning courses through the use of e-learning resources. They indicate that students prefer learning through usage of edu-gaming, simulation and social media in the T&L environment. This indicates strongly that instructors believe the students will benefit from using e-learning resources in learning.

Regarding current implementation problems with respect to exposure to the English language prior to university, instructors strongly agree that English language T&L in schools is inadequate. Instructors also agree on the four factors listed below by decreasing total percentage of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' categories:

- Attitudinal problems amongst students (88.3%)
- Difficulty in switching to English language from Arabic language due to difference in language elements (70.5%)
- Untrained instructors (52.9%)
- Inadequate language laboratory facilities (48.6%)

This study outcome highlights the need to improve on the training of instructors and to provide adequate language laboratory facilities. The factor pertaining to inadequate English language teaching and learning in schools will be highlighted to appropriate authorities.

9. Conclusions

There are problems hindering effective implementation of the T&L of English language at preparatory level. These include attitudinal issues amongst students, difficulty in switching to English language from Arabic and inadequate English language T&L in schools. Survey results indicate that students are much interested in learning with technology through innovative approaches which can include integration of edu-gaming and role play simulation into the T&L environment.

The students surveyed for this study grew up with rapidly evolving technologies in a generation of which technology is a seamless part of their life. Continuous improvement of the quality of the T&L environment should be undertaken in tandem with appropriate new developments.

The problems of inadequate English language T&L in schools and the difficulty of switching to English language from Arabic language due to difference in language elements require further investigation on a wider scale and attention at the national level. Attitudinal problems of students present an intricate issue with many facets; as such, further work on identifying factors relating to attitude of students must be undertaken.

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