

# **Factors Leading to the Decline and Slow Progress of Learners' Standards in English as a Foreign Language in Tabuk University: A Case Study -The University College of Umluj – Male Section**

**Makki Mohamed Mohamedani Bhlool**

Assistant Professor, Applied Linguistics, The University College of Umluj,  
Tabuk University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
makki@ut.edu.sa

## **Abstract**

The decline and slow progress of the learners' standard who major in English language in the university college of Umluj Male Section necessitate carrying out this study. Based on this view, first, the impacts of the environment where learning takes place. Second, the teaching-learning techniques adopted by the teachers and students respectively. Third, the personal traits of the learners. These above-mentioned factors are the focal point of this research paper. The tools used to collect data were questionnaires. Specific questionnaires were designed for the lecturers and other ones were designed for the students. The population of the study involved 10 teachers and 70 students selected randomly. The findings of the study revealed the fact that the factors investigated have paramount impacts on the students' performance and language proficiency as well as the teachers' performance. As a result, the findings are essential for those who engage in decision-making in the college and similar groups. The Ministry of Education, private institutions as well as individuals whose concerns include teaching or learning English as a foreign language could find the findings useful, significant and feasible. Furthermore, the

findings could be of great benefits to the researchers whose fields of enquiry require some information about the effects of those investigated factors.

**Keywords:** Acquisition Device, Genetic Blueprint, Strategy, Scaffolding, Detrimental Factors, Formulaic Expressions, Analytic Learner.

## 1. Introduction

English language in the King of Saudi Arabia is a compulsory subject. It is the unique foreign language, which is officially adopted by the government. The Saudi policy of education in relation to English language learning is documented as follows. "providing students with at least one of the living languages in addition to their native tongue, in order to enable them to acquire knowledge and sciences from other communities and to participate in the service of Islam and humanity" (AL-Hajailan, 2020). The Ministry of Education in KSA has been exerting strenuous efforts since 1925 to improve the environment where education takes place, making it attractive, enjoyable and interesting. Moreover, the processes of teaching and learning are given much consideration by conducting seminars, teacher-training programs and the like. Schools, universities, the related institutions are supplied with teachers, and education equipment such as projectors, laboratories equipped with computers, tape recorders containing well-designed materials related to teaching and learning. Let alone the internet which constantly available. With this supreme effort of will, the Ministry of Education tries hard to create a learning environment that eliminates detrimental factors and embrace favorable ones. "The Ministry of Higher Education is committed to achieving excellence in effective English language teaching and learning in education, however, progress has been slow and continues to be insufficient, particularly at the college level (Dr. Nadyh alawafi, 2020). Outside school door, students could effortlessly enjoy watching or listening to programs containing authentic materials designed and implemented by native speakers to disseminate English culture and keep the status of the language around the world.

Formulaic expressions are used deliberately in those programs to enhance English language and English culture. Halliday et al. (1984, p.16) suggested that "oral mastery depends on practicing and repeating the patterns produced by a native speaker of the foreign language". Khan, (2011, p.69) stated that "Despite good planning, curriculum, textbooks, qualified teachers and effective administration, the learning – teaching process sometimes seems to be futile when the actual skill development is not up to the mark". Indeed, students' language proficiency does not measure up to standard, which indicates that there are other unknown factors at play.

One of the salient detrimental factors which boggles the minds of the researchers for decades if not centuries is believed to be the mother tongue's impact. It is suggested that the learners' mother tongue's impact could be positive assisting the new language or it could be negative impeding the progress of a learner in learning another language. It depends on the similarities and differences between the two languages.

"The native language of learners will be a highly significant system on which learners will rely to predict the target language system. While that native system will exercise both facilitating and interfering effects on the production and comprehension of the new language, the interfering effects are likely to be the most salient". Brown (1994, p. 27). A cluster of researchers stated that, the accessibility of the target language aspects relies on the common features it shares with the first language of the learner. In contrast, its specific features may pose some difficulties, Wode (1980). Umar (1985) in his studies of the differences between Arabic and English postulated that, these two languages do not emerge from the same origin. Arabic is Semitic language, whereas English is one of the Indo-European. He pointed out that, the differences between Arabic and English are not only noticeable in their phonology, but also in their morphology, semantics and syntax. In phonology, there are several sounds that are problematic to Arab learners.

These sounds are:

1. the short vowel / e/ as in " net"
2. the long vowel / 3: / as in "bird"
3. the diphthong /ei / as in " wave"
4. the diphthong /eə/ as in " air"
5. the consonant / p/ as in "past"
6. the consonant /v/ as in "video"
7. the consonant / n / as in " reading"

Umar (1985), Conrie (1989).

In addition to, the consonant /tʃ/ as in "chair"

The syntactic differences show themselves in sentence structure, prepositions, negative, word -order and adverbial particle as well. While Arabic depends on a non-verb type in its sentence structure, English sentence structure is founded on verb type only. Concerning word -order, in Arabic sentence, the subject is preceded by the verb whereas in English the opposite is true. A change in word -order in English results in a change in the meaning, while Arabic word -order may reflect various stylistic flexibility. Al- Subahi (1990). Other areas of differences include:

1. Spelling; a problem that does not exist in Arabic.
2. An adjective precedes a noun it modifies in English whereas in Arabic the opposite is true. In English, we say, "That is a red pen" while in Arabic we say "ذاك قلم أحمر"

Furthermore, the physical environment, i.e. the educational building, particularly the classroom is believed to have a tangible impact on the learners and the teacher alike. Another factor that might be of profound effect in the University College of Umluj and other similar contexts are believed to be the teaching – learning techniques employed by the teachers and students respectively. Teachers should fully

comprehend how to implement the required techniques that help students tap into learning opportunities in order to realize the goals set by themselves, and the Ministry of Education. Freeman (1989) suggested four components that should be available in a prospective teacher if he/she were skillfully trusted to teach: knowledge, skills, attitude, and awareness. Those ultimate goals could be achieved when a teacher uses some teaching techniques that are directed towards helping students to use the language in their communication. Brown (1994, p.29) offered some help in this area "Given that communicative competence is the goal of a language classroom, then instruction needs to point toward all of its components: organizational, pragmatic, strategic, and psychomotor. Communicative goals are best achieved by giving due attention to language use and not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy, to authentic language and contexts, and to students 'eventual need to apply classroom learning to heretofore unrehearsed contexts in the real world". For the teachers to dexterously handle teaching techniques and expected to guarantee students success in learning David Nunan (1991, p.279) imparted professional advice and information which are worthy of mention:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself.
4. An enhancement of the learners' own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom language.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language action outside the class.

In fact, every mentally and physically fit person could easily learn a language as it was suggested by Chomsky. Chomsky in his "Acquisition Device i.e. LAD" stated



that a child is endowed with an innate device that helps him/her acquire language. Although the researcher partly agrees with Chomsky in his assumption, he believes that Chomsky derives his insight from The Holy Qura'n, verse No. 31 Al-Bagrah Chapter.

"وعلم آدم الأسماء كلها ثم عرضهم على الملائكة فقال أنبؤني بأسماء هؤلاء إن كنتم صادقين" وكذلك عندما نفخ فيه الروح قال آدم الحمد لله رب العالمين.

How could he speak if Allah did not give him the ability of acquiring languages? According to this, Adam the father of mankind was equipped with an innate device that enabled him to learn all names including languages and so are his descendants. This means every person has the genetic blue print of language. Beside the environment and the teaching-learning techniques, students' motivations are ranked among the factors, which lead to enormous and deep satisfying towards the meaningful language, developing language ego, self-satisfaction. "The most powerful rewards are those that are intrinsically motivated within the learner. Because the behavior stems from needs, wants, or desires within oneself, the behavior itself is self-rewarding, therefore, no externally administered reward is necessary at all" Brown (1994, p.20). Likewise, students' investment of his/her time, efforts, and care is one of the key elements that boost learning a foreign language. There are often high hopes for students' level of proficiency to rise since scholars, and researchers have been working hard to bring this to light and they may find a panacea for that tantalizing goal. It is of great benefits to copy down what Oxford and Cohen (1992) stated in this area in relation to training strategy to be avoided or to be implemented.

1. Lack of clear-cut definition of strategies.
2. Inadequate pretraining assessment of the learners' needs.
3. Uncertainty on the part of teachers and researchers about whether to integrate strategy training into regular class activities.

4. Too limited a time period for the strategy training itself.
5. Too limited a period over which the effects of training were assessed.
6. Too easy or too difficult a task.
7. Uncertainty of learners about whether the training was relevant to their language learning needs.

Careful scrutiny of the aforementioned information leads to the factors targeted by this paper i.e. the impacts of the environment, the impacts of teaching-learning techniques and the impacts of the learners' personality traits.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

There is a wide spread belief that the decline of learners' standards and their slow progress in English language are attributed to some detrimental factors. First, the environment where teaching and learning take place. This environment could be assembled under two main rubrics. The impact of the community dominating language i.e. the mother tongue and the location where teaching and learning are carried out i.e. the physical building including the classroom impact. Al-Nassser (2015) postulated that “the influence of mother tongue works as a major obstacle to learn English. Insufficient exposure to English day to day life, absence of English from the beginning of elementary education prevents the learners from making effective communication both in oral and written form”. AL-Nafaie, 2010) expressed similar opinion on the reason behind the slow progress of students in learning English. Other researchers such as Ashraf (2015 p.440) stated that “Saudi learners are left with very little opportunity to practice English apart of the classroom”. Brown (1994) reported that “The rule of thumb here is usually to restrict classroom language to English unless some distinct advantage is gained by the use of their native language”. Seyed (2003), Alrabia (2010) and Al bousaif (2011) supported those points of view by saying that “Saudi learners have low level of English aptitude”.

This situation might ensue from the impact of the environment and the teaching-learning techniques in addition to the learner personal traits. Saudi are monolingual people, they communicate in Arabic and it is rarely possible to hear someone speaks English. As a result, the environment is not conducive for learners to build on the adequate capacity for learning English in order to ascent to the level of proficiency required. For English language learners in Tabuk area in general and the University College of Umluj Male section in particular, such paucity of practice outside the school milieu demotivates learners to develop their level of English proficiency. Brown (1994, p.27) stated the impact of the mother tongue as “The native language of learners will be a highly significant system on which learners will rely to predict the target language system. While the native system will exercise both facilitating and interfering effects on the production and comprehension of the new language, the interfering effects are likely to be the most salient”. Associated with the environment, is the physical building of the educational institutions. It is suggested to have inevitable impacts on the performances of both teachers and students. The healthy, well-equipped classroom facilitates teaching and learning alike and guarantees a cordial relationship not only between the teacher and students but also among the students themselves leading to an optimal ambience that could ease learners into understanding and comprehension of the taught materials.

Jian Zahang (2023) pointed out that “a good teacher-student relationship in the learning environment has a positive impact on English learners' motivation and learning achievement ... good interaction and communication between teachers and students can build learners' confidence and self-confidence in learning”. On the other hand, the ill-equipped one leads to frustration, tension and the failure of education operations and it may jeopardize the whole situation. Chuma (2012) reported that “crowd within a classroom delays teaching learning process”. Lyons (2001), Tylor and Vlastos (2009) said that “classroom with large class size poses a difficult condition for students to focus and therefore minimize the duration teachers can use



in actual instruction of learners”. The second factor which plays a pivotal role in determining the progress or decline of the teaching and learning objectives are the kind of approaches implemented to deal with the vicissitudes of teaching and learning foreign languages. An approach that is designed to meet learners' needs and interests and applied by a trained teacher ensures the improvement of students' language proficiency. A plethora of these approaches are suggested to better learning foreign languages particularly English which is a global language needed for human communication and interaction. Alharbi (2015) reported that the inadequacy of authentic language learning leads to the graduation of unqualified students specially in speaking skill. “An absence of authentic language learning had produced many students with inadequate oral skill”. He suggested an implementation of creative teaching approaches such as Scaffolding, which has been developed to break the barriers of shyness and hesitation among some learners and encourage them to be active participants in oral skill. A highly trained teacher verifies his teaching techniques according to the immediate needs of his students. Therefore, he is expected to produce a high cadre of students whereas the less trained teacher plays down the role of enthusiasm and motivation in the students leading them to the brink of inefficiency. Fareh (2010, p.3602) observed that the ill -conceived teaching approaches slow down the pace of teaching and learning processes. He recommended high training of teachers as a solution in order to guarantee the expected results. He added that “a considerable percentage of class time is run in Arabic such practice minimizes the time of exposure to English and thus the learning outcomes will not be adequately accomplished”. In the same vein, Prosser (1999), Entwistle and Smith (2002), Muller et al. (2012), Ahmed (2012), and Cochran-Smith et al. (2015) stated that “students learning experiences are influenced by their teachers. They opined that students' learning experiences in higher education are substantially impacted by teaching approach used when teaching”. Similar opinions were given by Entwistle and Person (2004), and Alhawsawi (2013). Oxford (1996) had preceded them by

saying that the method followed by teachers impacted the outcome of students' learning.

Moreover, Brown (1994, p.20) developed a method which he called the principle of Strategic Investment. For the benefit of the students, the researcher felt the importance of quoting it. "Successful mastery of second language will be due to a large extent to a learner's own personal 'investment' of time, effort, and attention to second language in the form of an individualized battery of strategies for comprehending and producing the language".

Third, a student's motivation is one of the powerful derive towards realizing his / her goals. Brown (1994) put it as follows "The most powerful rewards are those that are intrinsically motivated within the learner. Because the behavior stems from needs, wants, or desires with oneself, the behavior itself is self-rewarding; therefore, no externally administered reward is necessary". Accordingly, those three suggested factors will be the focal point of this paper i.e. the environment where teaching and learning take place, teaching-learning techniques and the learner's personal traits.

### 3. The Aims of the Study

1. To identify the factors that lead to the decline and slow progress of students' standard in English in the University College of Umluj.
2. To explain the reasons behind these factors.
3. To suggest solutions that could remedy the negative effects of these factors.

### 4. Methodology

#### 4.1 Population:

A group consisting of 10 staff members in the English Language Department. The experiences of these staff members range from 10 to more than 20 years. The other group was 70 students distributed among level 5 to level 8. They have been learning English for more than ten years.

#### 4.2 Data Collection:

The tools for collecting data for this research paper were made of two questionnaires, one for the teachers and the other for the students. At the end of each questionnaires, there was a blank space where the participants could offer their opinions and suggestions. As a member of the staff, the researcher met the participants in persons explained to them the purpose of the questionnaires, then he distributed copies among them. Those questionnaires were designed carefully in order to yield opinions related to the topics under discussions.

#### 4.3 Data Analysis:

The collected data resulted from the questionnaires were organized in tables in order to be statistically analyzed so as to guarantee the validity and reliability of the data obtained.

### 5. Results and Findings

**5.1** Questionnaires for EFL Teachers in the University College of Umulj (Male Section) these questionnaires contain ten items designed to obtain teachers' general and clear opinion about the reasons behind the decline and slow progress of students in learning English as a foreign language in the University College of Umluj in Tabuk area. They were distributed among ten teachers whose experiences range between ten to twenty years. Seven of them are PhD holders and the three others are MA holders in EFL. All the questionnaires were filled out and returned to the researcher.

**Question 1:** English should be introduced in the initial the stages of learning in the elementary school:

Choices	Answers	Percentage
Strongly agree	6	60%
Agree	4	40%
Disagree	0	0%

The percentage shows without doubt that the teachers widely held viewpoints that learning of EFL in the aforementioned area should be introduced in the initial years of elementary school in order to help students in the elementary school have strong background in English language to be used as a launching point in learning English at later stages.

**Question 2:** Listening to or watching English language learning programs designed and done by natives speakers enhance learning the language:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	8	80%
Agree	0	0%
Disagree	2	20%

As it appears in table 2, most of the participants ' personal opinion tend to perceive that such programs develop learners' abilities and enhance their level of language proficiency.

**Question 3:** The environment in Umluj is not conducive for learning English language:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	50%
Agree	3	30%
Disagree	2	20%

A glance at table 3, with a focus on the percentage of those who strongly agree and those who agree reflects that the impact of the environment in Umluj is among the reasonably assumed detrimental factors. It is rarely possible to hear someone speaks English. This does not help the students practice English language outside school door.

**Question 4:** A well-equipped classroom facilitates teaching- learning process:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	8	80%
Agree	2	20%
Disagree	0	0%

Table 4 shows that, there is a consensus of opinion among teachers that the physical environment of the classroom plays a pivotal role in motivating students and teachers alike to carry their jobs successfully, due to the facilitating devices available in the classroom.

**Question 5:** Students' mother tongue is considered one of the affective factors in learning English as a foreign language:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	40%
Agree	6	60%
Disagree	0	0%

Table 5 shows that, the percentage of those who strongly agree is smaller than the percentage of those who agree. This shows that there is a window of opportunity for alleviating the problem. In fact, the students' mother tongue i.e. Arabic in our case has an impact leaning towards detrimental factors rather than facilitating ones since the percentage of those who disagree is 0 %. It is well -known that Arabic and English emerge from different language origins. However, a considerable number of scholars belief that the mother tongue is mostly impacted pronunciation rather than other domains of language. But, putting the percentage of those who strongly agree and the percentage of those who agree indicate the existence of the mother tongue's influence.

**Question 6:** A student's personal traits affect learning EFL:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	40%
Agree	6	60%
Disagree	0	0%

Table 6 displays the teachers' points of view about the impact of the student's personal traits in his English language attainment. It seems that the low level of student's attainment in Umluj is also attributed to the effects of the individual personal traits. This is crystal clear when we assemble the first two variables.



**Question 7:** Teachers who teach EFL in schools should receive high training before they start teaching the language:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	10	100%
Agree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%

A glance at the table shows the unanimity of teachers' viewpoints about the essential role played by training in helping the teachers do the job successfully and thereby gaining the status of professional facilitators in the teaching and learning processes.

**Question 8:** Preparation of lessons before teaching them is of paramount importance:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	10	100%
Agree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%

Table 8 shows beyond doubt the necessity of the preparation of the lessons. It is the initial step that guarantees the success of teaching-learning process. Otherwise, the whole situation is jeopardized and the students will be the victims of the teacher's negligence.

**Question 9:** Minimizing teacher-talk and maximizing student -talk in the English class develops, a student's oral communication:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	8	80%
Agree	2	20%
Disagree	0	0%

The result of what are displayed in the above table confirms the belief that if teacher- talk exceeds student-talk the process fails to push students step forwards in learning. Most teachers support maximizing students' talk in English class, because students are the ones that need practice and communication rather than the teachers do.

**Question 10:** Teachers should teach students some learning techniques:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	50%
Agree	3	30%
Disagree	2	20%

Table 10 reflects the importance of students' awareness of learning techniques that facilitate learning and canalize their efforts towards the desired goals. Accordingly, it behooves teachers to teach students some learning techniques.

## 5.2 Questionnaires for English as a Foreign Language Students:

The following questionnaires were designed to obtain information from students regarding their opinion about the reasons behind their decline and slow progress in learning EFL in the University College of Umluj. Ten items were included in the questionnaires. The participants were seventy students in the Department of Languages and Translation. The researcher distributed the questionnaires among them. To guarantee the clarity of the items and students' understanding, the researcher explain all the ten items to the participants, then they filled them in.

**Question 1:** Using much Arabic as a medium of instruction in the English language class impedes student's fluency in the language:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	22	31.428%
Agree	22	31.428%
Disagree	26	37.142%

Analyzing the percentages above separately, the balance leans towards the disagree point. However, when counting the strongly agree and agree points together tip the balance in favor of regarding the usage of Arabic as a medium of instruction in the EFL class impedes student's fluency . In fact. Students in such environment need exposure to the language and their only chance is in the EFL class. So, using much Arabic in the class undermines their learning and inevitably leads them to go about their tasks with little enthusiasm.

**Question 2:** My background in English language was weak, this is what affects my performance in the language in the college levels:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	50	71.42%
Agree	12	17.14%
Disagree	8	11.42%

Table 2 pinpoints the importance of having a solid background in a foreign language that could help a learner move forwards in his/her language achievement. Pondering over the displayed statistics, we notice that the percentage of those who strongly agree added to the percentage of those who agree indicate the previous learning background effects in the future performance of the student. Undoubtedly, learning a foreign language is an accumulative process, the above levels depend heavily on the foundational levels.

**Question 3:** The classroom in the University College of Umluj is well -equipped with learning facilities:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	40	57.14%
Agree	20	28.57 %
Disagree	10	14.28%

A glance through the displayed figures, shows beyond doubt that the classroom's ambience in the University College of Umluj is convenient for the teaching-learning process.

**Question 4:** Watching films, programs run in English language develop a student's performance:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	54	77.14%
Agree	16	22.85%
Disagree	0	0%

The percentage of "strongly agree" coupled with the percentage of "agree" strongly support the significance of watching films and programs done in English language to EFL learners.

**Question 5:** Learning English formulaic expressions enhances learning English and promotes fluency:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	46	65.71%
Agree	24	34.28%
Disagree	0	0%

As shown in table 5, students are unanimous in regarding formulaic expressions as one of the positive strategies that enhance learning foreign languages particularly English language.

**Question 6:** The techniques used by some teachers in English class are not effective:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	28	40%
Agree	28	40%
Disagree	14	20%

Table 6 shows equal percentage of those who "strongly agree" and percentage of those who answer "agree". The two percentage indicate the crucial role of implementing particular technique that suits particular types of students according to their needs and interest.

**Question 7:** In the English class, teacher's talk is more than student's talk:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	30	42.85%
Agree	28	40%
Disagree	12	17.14%

Analysis of what is displayed in table 7, suggests the reverse of trend towards maximizing the student's talk. Because students are the ones that need interactive practice not the teachers.

**Question 8:** Students use varieties of strategies to improve their performance in EFL:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	27	38.57%
Agree	17	24.28%
Disagree	26	37.14%

Table 8 shows that the percentage of those who answer "disagree" almost equal the percentage of those who answer "strongly agree" This indicate that there is information gap regarding students' knowledge of some recommended strategies by experts in the field . Some students use only their own strategies which they gain by experience without coming across well-versed strategies so ever.

**Question 9:** I learn English because I want to be like people who speak English:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	42	34.28%
Agree	8	11.42%
Disagree	20	28.57%

What table 9 displays that approximately half of the participants possess somewhat a level of integrative motivation for learning English language. And a considerable number of the participants rejects the idea of learning English to be a member of English speaking people. They really lack motivation to join English speaking people.

**Question 10:** I learn English to pass exams, because it is a compulsory subject:

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Strongly agree	28	40%
Agree	18	25.71%
Disagree	24	34.28%



Pondering over table 10, it is crystal clear that students consider learning English as one of the subjects which are required to be learned; not as a language and a means of communication

## 6. The Researcher's Observation

Being a field worker differs from being an outside observer. The researcher has been teaching EFL in the University College of Umluj for more than ten years. The first felt and noticeable observation is that most of students join The Department of English Language and Translation with very weak background in English language. They lack basic vocabulary that enable them to read and construct simple sentences save compound and complex ones. This is why they heavily rely on their mother tongue to express themselves in relation to the teachers' feedback. The second observation is that, they fail to build a sense of self- determination that raise their motivation despite all the teachers encouragement, reinforcement, and efforts exerted. The third observation is that, most of the students in the English section have information-gap regarding the techniques which facilitate learning a foreign language

## 7. Recommendations

**7.1** The level where it is highly beneficial to introduce EFL in Umluj area. Humans are qualified for acquiring languages, whether it be first language or additional languages. It is an innate predisposition from the creator. “And He taught Adam the names – all of them.” (Verse 31-Al-Bagarah Chapter). Putting this in mind, researchers should search for factors that affect acquiring languages.

These factors could be intrinsic within the learner or extrinsic outside the learner. If they are within the learner such as personal traits i.e. motivation for instance, or extrinsic, such as the environment with its all human interference; researcher should identify the best ways that direct those factors to be creative rather than detrimental.

Concerning the situation in Umluj area, both factors are playing negative roles. Students mother tongue is Arabic. It differs greatly from English. Accordingly, a plan should be devised to help learners learn the new language. It should include when to introduce English language, where to introduce it, what components of it should be introduced first, how it could be introduced and who is targeted by this initial foundation in the basics of learning a foreign language. In Kuwait for example, "Extending teaching English downwards to the first primary grade is thought to allow more time for its assimilation, thus giving learners a wider chance for EFL exposure" Dr. Mohamed R. Essa Kuwait University and Dr. Najat A. Al Mutawa Kuwait University (1997). "In the Arab countries, studies have reported a positive influence of learning a foreign language, even at an early stage (Aziz, 1974 a, b; Boseiri, 1966; Dannan, 1984; Remsbury, 1988). "That is, FL can be introduced as early as the primary stage or even earlier; (McDonough, 1981).

Hamdan (1985) "advocates teaching children a foreign language at an early age to grow concurrently with the mother tongue. He argues that such practice helps develop cognition and creativity on the child's part, enhance verbal fluency and language usage". Based on these points of views; the researcher suggests that introduction of EFL should be simultaneous with the mother tongue i.e. Arabic in our case. However, there should be well -versed ordering. Learning a foreign language is an accumulative process. It needs to be prioritized according to the needs and interests of the learners. In relation to the first level chosen to launch EFL learning scheme, starting by formulaic expressions dovetailed with the easiest vocabulary in the child's immediate environment could be successful start. In fact, formulaic expressions motivate a child to speak and he/she feels the sense of speaking English which helps in breaking the psychological barriers which prevent a learner to involve in the new language. There are ten factors from Brown's Teaching by Principles ( 1994) , that the researcher feels obliged to share with syllabus designers and teachers because they fit squarely in the project targeted:

1. Students' cognitive learning processes. Here the teacher is expected to engage in plenty of repetition of a limited number of words, phrases, and sentences.
2. The role of the teacher beginning students are highly dependent on the teacher for models of language and so a teacher-centered classroom is suitable. But students should not be deprived of pair work or group work.
3. Teacher Talk Teacher's talk should be very clearly articulated; using simple vocabulary and structures that are at or just slightly beyond students' level.
4. Authenticity of language Simple greeting and introductions for example, are authentic and yet manageable.
5. Fluency and accuracy Fluency is a goal at this level but only within the limited utterance length. The “flow” of language is important to establish from the beginning. Pronunciation work is very important at this stage.
6. Student creativity learning a language requires both receptive and productive creativity. Students can only be creative within the confines of a highly controlled repertoire of language.
7. Technique Group and pair activities are excellent techniques as long as they are structured and very clearly defined with specific objectives.
8. Listening and speaking goals listening and speaking functions for beginners are meaningful and authentic communication tasks.
9. Reading and writing Reading and writing topics are confined to brief but nevertheless real- life written materials.
10. Grammar Here grammar contains simple verb forms, personal pronouns, definite articles, singular and plural nouns and simple sentences. A teacher may profit from occasionally using students' native language to explain simple grammatical points. To help students make progress in EFL, some researchers suggest a batch of factors that play crucial roles in determining the standard of students. "The primary obstacles they encounter include a lack of real - world

discussion opportunities, fear of speaking, and ineffective teaching strategies" (Tika et al., 2021).

**7-2 Learning Styles and Learning Strategies** "Learning styles are general approaches to language learning while learning strategies are specific ways to deal with language tasks in particular contexts". (Oxford, 2003). There are three types of learning styles according to Brown (1994) auditory (learning by listening), visual (learning by seeing), and kinesthetic (learning by doing).

In addition, other scholars such as willing (1994) suggest four kinds of learning styles: communicative, analytical, authority-oriented and concrete. Communicative learners prefer learning by watching, listening to native speakers, and talking in English whenever there is a chance of doing so. Analytical learners like involving in problems solving set by the instructor such grammar and reading tasks. Authority-oriented learners depend on the teacher explanation and tend to answer questions set by him/her. But concrete learners favor games, pictures, films, videos and the like. Teachers should implement different tasks to suit their students and help anyone finds his /her preferred way to have high input. Likewise, Learners should discover their learning styles in order to help them easily understand any tasks and to canalize their learning strategies towards realizing their goals. The researcher hopes that the findings of this research paper will be disseminated among syllabus designers, teachers and students in order to maximize the benefits expected

## Conclusion

There are several variables that should be put into consideration when teaching or learning English as a foreign language in Tabuk area particularly in the university college of Umluj. Some of these variables have been discussed in this paper. The first variable that affects teaching and learning English language is the environment with its intricacies. The second variable is the teaching-learning styles that are adopted by

the teachers and the students respectively. The third variable that has been discussed is the personality traits of the learner. If the effects of these variables are controlled, then teaching and learning processes could be considered successful.

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