

30-BLACK

ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES REQUIRED
BY BAHRAINI SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS
PROCEEDING TO TERTIARY EDUCATION.



by

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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This dissertation arose from a problem which the author encountered when establishing and developing the English Language Department in the College of Health Sciences in Bahrain. All courses in this college are taught through the medium of English. It was extremely important, therefore, that the students should be competent enough in English to profit from the lectures and other forms of instruction.

Most students entered the college straight from the secondary school system after finishing the Tawjiheah, or Secondary School Leaving Certificate. It was generally agreed that these students were not up to the standard in English, required for study in a tertiary institution. One reason for this was that almost all of their previous learning experience had been through the medium of Arabic. This judgement seemed to be confirmed by the opinion of the faculty in other tertiary institutions.

As a result of this state of affairs, it was decided to examine the problem at its roots. What were the competencies in English Language that a student required in order to make a smooth transition from secondary to tertiary education ? Could these competencies be identified, given an operational definition and prioritised ?

The members of the English Department in the College of Health Sciences arranged a series of meetings among themselves to discuss these and related questions. Eventually, a list of probable competencies was drawn up.

A pilot scheme was launched to canvass the opinion of other educators, outside of the department. These were asked to give a numerical value to their opinion of each competency's importance, on a scale of 5 to 1 with 5 for very important and 1 for unimportant. Re-actions were favourable and encouraging and early results looked promising.

It was decided to compile a comprehensive questionnaire which would ask, not only about the comparative importance of the competencies - EVALUATION, but also about how well the students had acquired these competencies by the time they had finished the Tawjiheah-ACHIEVEMENT. Opportunities were also given for comment, additions, suggestions, etc.

This questionnaire was administered to a cross-section of all those concerned with the problem of the insufficient level of English among secondary school leavers applying to tertiary institutions. So each of the three tertiary institutions in Bahrain were involved: the College of Health Sciences, Manama, the Gulf Polytechnic College and University College, Bahrain. Those questioned included English Language Lecturers, lecturers in subjects other than English, and students. In addition, through the English Language Adviser in the Ministry of Education, the opinions of the Senior English Masters in the state schools, together with a sample of those of their students, were canvassed.

When the completed questionnaires were returned a large amount of raw data was amassed. With over 200 of the questionnaires completed, there were more than 10,000 pieces of information for EVALUATION and another 10,000 plus for ACHIEVEMENT, as well as quite a large number of comments and suggestions. This information was analysed. The details of the methods and the findings are in the text.

It was found that there was a very strong body of agreement as to what basic competencies in English Language were needed by students proceeding from secondary

to tertiary education. There also seemed to be general agreement with the definition of these competencies as given in the questionnaire. Since opinions were expressed as a number, it was possible to arrange the agreed competencies into an order of priority.

The data on ACHIEVEMENT were not so clear-cut. On the whole, the scores for ACHIEVEMENT could be described as low. However, there was a considerable gap between the opinion of the lecturers on the one hand and the opinions of the students on the other.

The following important conclusions/recommendations may be drawn from the data.

Since there is strong evidence of a general agreement about the competencies in English Language needed by Bahraini students proceeding to tertiary education, these competencies should be the focus of attention in

- (1) the Tawjiheah examination,
- (2) the entrance examinations (English) of the College of Health Sciences and, perhaps other tertiary institutions,
- (3) any 'improvement courses' in English Language given after Tawjiheah.

As regards (1) above, it is recognised that the Tawjiheah has its own special purposes, which are not necessarily those of the tertiary institutions. Also, the needs in English of students not proceeding to tertiary education, may need to be identified... In any case, there are many implications for the learning/teaching process in English Language in the state secondary schools in Bahrain.

With regard to (2) above. Throughout the literature search, it became even clearer than previously that identifying and defining the competencies, though a major undertaking in itself, was really only a first step. What had to follow was a complete course built on these competencies, with its own materials, methodology and in-built evaluation system. As each of these areas is a vast field in itself, they obviously lay outside of the scope of this particular dissertation. However, since

there was an immediate need for some form of evaluation, an attempt was made to develop an examination that could at least serve as a stop-gap until further studies were completed. This was called the General Competence Placement Test and was based on the identified competencies. Details are given in the text and the full test is in Appendix H.

Also, the dissertation makes suggestions for a Common Entrance Examination and for making it an integral part of the secondary school academic year.

As for (3) above, the findings have important implications for the content, methodology and materials of any 'remedial courses', perhaps, better named, 'improvement courses' or 'special needs courses'. Also, the possibility of running such courses very shortly after the Tawjiheah, is examined.

Much of the above implies that there should be a much greater spirit of co-operation, first among the tertiary institutions themselves and then between the tertiary institutions and the secondary schools.

Finally, this dissertation opens up several other avenues for further research.

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I should like to express my gratitude to all who helped make this dissertation possible.

I wish, especially, to express my appreciation to the Ministry of Health and the College of Health Sciences, Manama, Bahrain, in the person of the Dean of the College, for giving me permission to conduct this investigation while pursuing my normal duties as Head of the English Department and also for his continual support.

Thanks are due also to all those who helped prepare, and fill in, the questionnaire. Here, I must single out the members of my own department, especially Mr. Phil Isle for his help with the Entrance Examination area of the study.

Invaluable assistance came from Mr. David Hamilton and Mr. William Dunn of the Department of Education, University of Glasgow. They not only gave a lot of advice, but also enabled me to have access to the University Library's computer to facilitate the literature search.

I am also very grateful to the authorities of California Coast University for their detailed advice, suggestions and support, in an exciting and highly practical venture in distance learning. I refer in particular to Dr. Lee W. Ralston, Dean, School of Education.

Finally, I owe a very special debt of gratitude to my family - my wife, Marie Dolores, my daughters: Anne-Marie, and Miriam Christine, my sons: Joseph Edward and Paul - for bearing with me, or with my absence, on many occasions during the long period of gestation. This work is dedicated to them...Deo Gratias.

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Section 1

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Bahrain prides itself on being in the forefront of the Gulf States when it comes to education. The records show that there is much to be said for this view, (Unesco, 1983). The first secondary school for males was opened in 1940 and the first for females in 1951. The latest figures from the Ministry of Education state that in 1983/1984 there were 14 secondary schools catering in separate establishments for both male and female students. These schools presented 3,552 candidates for the Tawjiheah (School Leaving) Certificate in May/June 1984. The pass rate was approximately 84%.

Successful students who wish to continue their studies to degree level have several options open to them.

Option 1 Students can go overseas, either to an Arabic medium university e.g. the Arab University of Beirut, or to an English medium university in an Arab country e.g. in Cairo or to an English medium university in the U.K. or in the U.S.A., Canada, etc.

Option 2 Students can attend the University College, Bahrain.

Option 3 Students can attend the Arabian Gulf University. At present only the College of Medical Sciences is open but the full university should begin by 1986.

Option 4 Students can attend the Gulf Polytechnic College, at Isa Town, Bahrain.

Option 5 Students can attend the College of Health Sciences Salmaniya, Bahrain. Here, most students obtain an Associate Degree but since October 1984 it has been possible to follow courses for a B.S. (Nursing) degree.

When we consider that Bahrain has a population of only about 400,000, one third of which is expatriate, the figures and the choices are quite impressive.

No matter which option the students take, they find themselves confronted with certain problems. For a fuller account of these problems please see Appendix A but here it is the question of language which is being addressed. Basically, the students leave a milieu where the native language, Arabic, is dominant and is the medium of instruction, and change to a milieu where the English language is very much more important and becomes the new language of instruction.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that, in general, the level of competence in English, of students leaving secondary schools is not as high as it needs to be. No definitive studies in this area are known to the author. However, two years' experience teaching Tawjiheah students and close contact with many of those responsible for English levels in the state schools, give credence to the statement. Also, experience in receiving post Tawjiheah students into the English Department of the College of Health Sciences suggests that, in terms of the TOEFL exam, the students' average score would be in the region of 300. There is a big gap between this and the 500 plus usually required of non-native speakers by tertiary institutions in the U.S. Professor Madsen, a noted authority on the TOEFL, calculates that it takes several hundred hours of learning English to make up 50 points in the TOEFL. (Madsen, 1982). These figures give some indication of the size of the problem.

Whether one talks to the members of the English Adviserate in the Ministry of Education, or to the Chairmen/ Heads of Department in the tertiary institutions, or to the lecturers there, or, indeed, to the students themselves, all are agreed that, by and large, the students find that their level of competence in English is a major obstacle to their progress as they pursue their tertiary education. Further confirmation of this fact comes from the practice in the tertiary institutions of offering intensive, remedial English courses in, at least, the first semester of each academic year.

For further details about Bahrain please see Appendix B.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The fact that students leave secondary school without the competencies in English needed for tertiary education has several undesirable results.

In the first place, the students feel very frustrated when they realise that their paper qualification in the Tawjiheah is insufficient in the real world of tertiary education. In many instances it also reinforces a fear of inadequacy already there at the thought of all that is involved in a 'university' education. The students are unable to demonstrate their real abilities.

Then, the lecturers in the tertiary institutions feel similar frustrations. They find that their students are unable to cope with their lectures not simply because of the inherent difficulties of the subject matter but simply because the language used is beyond them. Also, at this standard, lecturers have not the experience either to modify their language or to become 'temporary English teachers'. Often they will form unreal judgements about their students' ability and we have the phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecies.

Attempts to remedy the situation by having remedial English classes are both costly and time wasting. Often, the students will be studying English at quite a low level, yet still taking, at least some, lectures delivered in English of a much higher level. Often too there is no great rationale behind the remedial/intensive lessons and often they are merely a repetition of what has already failed to do any good at the secondary level.

The core of the problem is that the competencies needed by students moving from secondary to tertiary education and from an Arabic to an English medium of instruction, have not been thoroughly investigated and identified. When these competencies should be acquired - in secondary school, in a summer session between secondary and tertiary, or in the first weeks of tertiary education

is beside the point. The question to which this dissertation addresses itself is, "What are these competencies and how can they be assessed?"

Perhaps, here, we should stress that the research in this dissertation is concerned with the early weeks of tertiary education. Later, other competencies may come into play, or the significance of any particular competency may change.

STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE

The problem as stated above, has been a very real one for the College of Health Sciences in general and for the English Language Department in particular. The Health Professions, especially Nursing, do not automatically, attract the most gifted students and it was found that a lack of competence in English was proving a very big stumbling block for our students.

Before the English Department was set up in its present form, an outside body was contracted to run the English courses for the College. This body examined the situation and decided that of the 36 hours of tuition a week which were available for incoming students, 24 would have to be devoted to English, at least for the first three months. The work was judged to be mostly remedial.

It soon became clear that such an arrangement was unacceptable since it consumed such a large proportion of students' time and administration funds.

This situation forced those responsible for the teaching of English to re-examine the fundamentals. Thus, since 1980, the English Language Department has been engaged in some form of what was originally called 'Needs Assessment'.

At first, this was informal. Then, the twelve members of the department, in a series of meetings, drew up a list of the competencies which experience and observation suggested that incoming students should have. This list was discussed with lecturers in disciplines other than English and also with the students involved.

Opinions about obstacles to communication, due to language, between lecturers and students and between students and students, in such areas as Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Human Biology etc. were discussed. Special difficulties arising from the great variety of nationalities among the lecturers and the consequent varieties of English to which students were exposed, were also considered.

Further meetings of the English Department followed. All the views canvassed were used to modify and expand the original list of competencies. The new list, comprising 35 items, became the basis for courses taught in 1984.

During this year, it was felt that lecturers and students should be consulted in a more formal way and that the enquiry should be extended to the other tertiary institutions operating in Bahrain i.e. The Gulf Polytechnic College, Isa Town and the University College of Bahrain, also in Isa Town. In addition, it was decided to invite the participation, through the English Adviser in the Ministry of Education, of teachers and students in the Tawjiheah classes. In this way, it was hoped, all of the interested parties would become involved.

It seemed reasonable to suggest that, if common ground could be found among all the contributors to the investigation into required competencies, then the English Department in the College of Health Sciences could feel confident that it had a solid basis on which to build up course content, materials and methodology. It would also have a solid rationale for assessment procedures, both formative and summative.

It was also expected that the motivation of the students would be enhanced if they understood why various discrete points of grammar etc were being taught.

What held true for the College of Health Sciences would, probably, also hold true for the other tertiary institutions in Bahrain and, possibly, even for those in the rest of the Gulf Region, at least for those in the G.C.C. countries.

are those students proceeding from secondary to tertiary education. The focus of attention is on the competencies they need in the first semester of tertiary education.

Acronyms: There are so many acronyms with regard to the teaching of English as a second/foreign language that it is not feasible to list them all. The issues of FORUM for January 1985 and April 1985 carried more than 50 of them from EALP (English for Academic Legal purposes) through EVP (English for Vocational purposes) and TEA (Teaching English Abroad) to VESEL (Vocational English as a Second Language). One author even coined TENOR (Teaching English for no obvious reason) (Abbot, 1984) and another (Perren, 1971) turned the generic ESP (English for Special/Specific purposes) into English for specious purposes. Where acronyms are used in the text they are normally explained if an explanation seems necessary.

LIMITATIONS

A discussion of various research procedures is given below in the section on the Review of Literature. Eventually, it was decided that the best method of collecting the necessary data would be a questionnaire. This is discussed fully in the chapter on methodology. The plan was to distribute the questionnaire as widely as possible in the three tertiary institutions - the College of Health Sciences, the Gulf Polytechnical College and the University College of Bahrain - as well as in the state schools. The new university, the Arabic Gulf University, was not fully opened at the time the decisions were being made and it was not included in the investigation.

However, certain practical considerations limited the scope of the research project. In the first place, since the problem was an urgent one, there was pressure to have the findings as quickly as possible. Again, the bulk of the work in tabulating and analysing the data was to be done by one person and, since the questionnaire had 50 items to be marked for 2 different things - EVALUATION and ACHIEVEMENT - this seemed no small task. It was felt that if 100 lecturers and 100 students were canvassed, giving a

total of 20,000 items (200 x 50 x 2), it would be as much as could be successfully handled.

Again, to avoid too many complications, no effort was made to ascertain the opinions of students (or of their lecturers) who went directly overseas to tertiary education after finishing their Tawjiheah examination. It was felt that, although their experiences would be interesting, they would be outside the scope of this particular project. Similarly, no attempt was made to distinguish between the male and female participants in the questionnaire.

It should also be mentioned, perhaps, that there was no effort made to introduce a psychological or a sociological dimension into the investigation as, for example, with other Bahrain-based projects such as one by the British Council (Munro, 1981) and one by a colleague, (Shoemaker, 1984).

As yet, there is no tradition of co-operation among the tertiary institutions in Bahrain. Thus, it was thought that it would not be surprising to find a certain reluctance to spend valuable time on 'another College's questionnaire'. In the same way interest among English Language teachers in a sister college would be likely to be higher than the interest of lecturers in other areas of the curriculum. Such a 'distance factor' was expected and as far as possible arranged for but, as will be seen from later tables, (Table A, p.53) it affected the number of replies.

As regards participation by teachers from the state schools, naturally, the whole point of the research is of a very sensitive nature. No matter how much the researcher insists that no criticism is intended and that the research is meant only to help all of those involved, especially the students, a certain suspicion remains. This could affect answers to the questions. Fortunately, the author has close personal contact with those involved, having taught with them in the same schools and so, hopefully this helped to minimise any adverse effects. The anonymity of the participants also helped.

It is hoped that some of the common defects associated with questionnaire, such as the 'Halo Effect' will have been taken care of by the statistical procedures wherever

this proves feasible. Of course, in this study, the 'halo effect' does not, strictly speaking, apply. This term usually means that respondents classify the object of the investigation, on each scale, according to a general impression rather than according to the demands of the particular scale. It therefore refers, normally, to a questionnaire where several scales are used. The effect might appear here when contributors with a strong previous impression, say, of student achievement before tertiary education, score items according to this impression without really giving the item the scrutiny and attention that it requires.

Section 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Experience

The author's experience covers more than a quarter of a century in close involvement with education at all levels - primary to tertiary - and in a wide geographical context from Britain through Africa to Bahrain. This experience has extended to all aspects of education: teaching, lecturing, administration, curriculum development, teacher training, evaluation of courses, the preparation/administering/evaluation of various types of examination and, finally, writing about various aspects of education. Thus it would appear that there is a solid basis for this present study. Working on this small island of Bahrain has provided the author with considerable experience in the form of a multitude of contacts with professional associates working in the same field. This is particularly true of the exchange of ideas made possible through BELTS which is the, as yet unofficial, organisation for promoting contacts among the Bahrain English Language Teachers - hence the acronym.

Sources

The immediate source of literature has been the library services available in Bahrain itself. Initially, this has meant the College of Health Sciences library, the Ahmed Al Farsi library, which was set up by the Ministry of Health to cater for the needs, not only of the College, but for all the Ministry personnel, especially the physicians. Though it is a small library - with a little over 16,000 volumes - it is of an excellent quality and is particularly strong in its coverage of professional journals and magazines. Naturally, most of the works are oriented to some aspect of the delivery of health care but two points are worth noting in this connection.

First of all, since great importance is attached to competence in English and since there is a strong English Department in the College, (approximately 14% of the whole Faculty), the various aspects of TEFL, teaching English as a foreign language, are catered for both as regards numbers of periodicals and books on the subject and as regards the updating of the TEFL works.

Then, as the College runs a teacher training unit - as part of its Development of Learning Resources Centre - there is a strong emphasis on education in the different health specialities, Nursing being a case

in point. It is also true that the present trend towards continuing education in the field of medicine - a field of far-reaching and rapid change - has meant that, very often, innovative ideas are being explored and implemented by educators in this area before educators in other, more tradition-bound disciplines, where, to quote Richterich, 'the general conclusion is, that changes in education occur slowly, much more slowly than the needs of the learners.' (Richterich, 1977). Or, as another author puts it, more unkindly, 'trying to reorganise a university (of the traditional type) is like trying to reorganise a graveyard.' (Bennis, 1969).

Although it was mentioned in the section on limitations that no attempt has been made to assess the opinions of those in the Arabian Gulf University, when distributing the questionnaire, the library of the College of Medicine and Medical Sciences has been a further source of literature. This college, built some miles away from the main campus, is on the same grounds as the College of Health Sciences. It was officially opened in October 1984 and, although the library services are still being built up, it has been a significant source of literature especially for such publications as, 'The Journal of Medical Education' and 'The Psychological Bulletin'.

Longer established libraries are those in the other tertiary institutions whose lecturers took part in the investigation i.e. the Gulf Polytechnical College (with 20,000 volumes) and the University College of Bahrain, (with 43,000 volumes). Their facilities have been generously put at the disposal of the author. Together, these libraries provide a comprehensive and up-to-date coverage of the teaching of English as a foreign language as well as of other areas dealing with education generally. The U.C.B. library is particularly strong in these areas since a large proportion of the students there intend to make their careers in education.

Still in Bahrain, there is the British Council library, (10,000 volumes). Here again, there is a strong emphasis on education and on English as a Foreign Language since the Council runs a very large (over 1,000 students) English Language Centre. Equally useful to the books immediately available in the library is the ease of access through the British Council in Bahrain to the CILT publications (the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research) and to the ETIC documents i.e. those from the English Language Teaching Information Centre run by the British Council offices in London.

Both the British Council and the United States Information Service sponsor lecture tours for well-known educationalists specialising in the teaching of English as a foreign language e.g. Professor Harold Madsen. Recently, (Jan. 1984), Professor Widdowson of the University of London gave a series of lectures on 'Grammar in the Communicative Syllabus'. More recently still Dr. Grant Henning from North Texas State University talked on such topics as 'TEFL- the state of the art '; 'Fallacies in Teaching English as a Foreign Language'; and 'The place of Motivation in TEFL'. (February 1985). In addition such exhibitions as 'Education Arabia' are held regularly in Bahrain. That of February 1984 had as its focus the Teaching of English as a foreign language. It consisted of a week-long symposium combining lectures, discussions and displays by dozens of companies of the latest publications and technology available on the market.

Finally, the author has had access to a much wider range of literature through the good offices of Glasgow University, Scotland. He is, in fact, the official representative of the University in Bahrain. In conjunction with Mr. William Dunn, Senior Lecturer in Education in the Education Department and with Mr. David Hamilton, Research Fellow in the same department, the author was able to institute a computer search for literature relevant to the subject of the dissertation. These references

were obtained either during summer leave visits to the University of Glasgow or by correspondence with the Head of the library.

Research in the Gulf area has not touched in any noticeable manner on the subject of this dissertation. Correspondence and personal contact with the English language units of the Bahrain tertiary institutions reveals that while the subject is of considerable interest and acknowledged significance little systematic work has been done on it. Husain Dhaif prepared a paper for the Ministry of Education ,Bahrain on 'The Teaching of English in Technical Secondary Schools in Bahrain: a statement of aims.' (Dhaif,1978) Its scope was very limited.Also,there is an interesting report on 'The Use of Television for the Improvement of English Language Skills in Bahrain' (Edington,1982) but it is very much concerned with the technical details and barely touches on the competencies or skills themselves.

Raja T. Nasr, Professor of Education and Linguistics, Beirut University College,Beirut is anacknowledged expert on the teaching of English in Bahrain having been a visiting lecturer on many occasions for various teacher training courses and having been commissioned by the Ministry of Education under the late Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Ben Mohammed Al Khalifa,to head a high powered commission to investigate the teaching of English in Bahrain. The findings were embodied in a report: ' A Survey and Evaluation of English Language Teaching in the State of Bahrain'. To give one short quotation:

'In a meeting with the Senior Teachers of English (in secondary schools) a number of important issues were discussed.There was general agreement that the major issues centred around the following:

The need to specify the aims and objectives of English for all levels,and to base the course content and methodology at each level on these objectives.'

Perhaps the best commentary on the effectiveness of the Nasr Report, (Nasr, 1978), is a quotation from a lecture Professor Nasr gave at the Education Arabia Conference held in Bahrain in 1980.

'The general and specific objectives of English teaching on various levels are far from clear to many teachers...The brief enumeration of the problems...should explain to a great extent why applicants to colleges and universities are so deficient in language...There is practically no co-ordination between the high schools on the one hand, and the colleges and universities on the other. (Nasr, 1980).

To be fair, it should be noted that the title of Professor Nasr's talk was, 'English Language Teaching. Prospects and Problems in the Arab World in the 1980s.' so his remarks were intended for a wider audience than Bahrain. Nevertheless, they certainly do have relevance here.

There are some points of interest, touched upon later in the dissertation, in the Occasional Papers of the English Language Centre of the King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia and also from 'Al Manakh', the journal of the Language Centre in the University of Kuwait. The editor of this journal, Mr. David Newby, informed the author that he knew of no research parallel to this dissertation in the Gulf Region. He did, however, put him in touch with a Mrs. Salwa Haddad of Kuwait University, who is investigating the learning styles of students moving from secondary schools to Kuwait University. While the interchange proved interesting and stimulating, Haddad's research is only partially relevant to the purposes of the present study. It might be best described as 'complementary'.

Correspondence with Dr. Mohammed Saeed Daffa, the Supervisor General of the ELC in King Abdulaziz University led the author to an unpublished PhD thesis by Dr. Muhammad Shafi, now Assistant Professor at the ELC. His research presented at the University of Wales in 1982 was concerned with English Language competency in Saudi high schools. The results of the survey were presented again recently at a seminar in Saudi Arabia. The following quotation is

from the MIDDLE EAST TRAINING AND EDUCATION magazine, Volume 7 Number 2, 1985, News Review. It suggests that Saudi Arabia has the same concerns as Bahrain about the need to improve the English skills of would-be tertiary students.

'Speaking at a seminar for English language teachers held in the ELC, King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Dr. Muhammad Shafi expressed deep concern over the frequently observed fact that the average intermediate school graduate moving on to higher education cannot understand, speak, read or write English to the standard required at this level. "The students who proceed to the university are lacking the basic language skills," he said.'

Format

The format of the literature review will be a consideration of some of the ideas arising from a study of the literature, with appropriate references and comment rather than using the publications themselves as a starting point.

Since the literature concerning EFL is so vast in amount the Literature Review has been confined to current research and opinion. There is no attempt at an historical overview. Selection has tended to concentrate on three highly relevant areas.

- (i) The meaning and the implications of the word 'competency'.
- (ii) Possible methods of determining the required competencies and giving them operational definitions.
- (iii) Methods of evaluating whether or not the competencies have been achieved.

Also touched upon, though a full treatment has been deliberately excluded from this dissertation, are such areas as educational statistics, psycholinguistics - especially with regard to the acquiring of a second language - and curriculum development and methodology.

Of course, all of these are parts of one whole. They cannot be separated in practice. However, for the purposes of this dissertation the stress lies elsewhere.

The Meaning of 'Competency'

Education has always been competency-based in the sense that, at least theoretically, it has been intended as a preparation for life. It is 'the systematic process of imparting knowledge and skill'. (Heritage, 1975)

Recently, the term 'competency-based' has taken on a new lease of life among educators and has become the focal point of a more pragmatic approach to education. However, the meaning of the word, 'competency' is not always clear. In the literature it appears as 'levels of achievement' (Shulman, 1970), as 'learners' needs' (Mackay, 1978) 'the skills needed' (Prince, 1981), 'specific objectives' (O'Reilly, 1979), 'job competency' (McClelland, 1976), 'communicative purposes' (Long, 1976), 'communicative competence' (Widdowson, 1979), 'performance objectives' (Coffey, 1984) and 'ability to do specific tasks' (Willis, 1979). Evely even gives us a neurological viewpoint with great emphasis on the role of the hippocampus and defines competence as 'the ability to act appropriately in a situation...the ability to integrate information by defining the situation and planning an appropriate action'. (Evely, 1981).

Moving from general education to English as a foreign language, the same plethora of terminology is to be found, as authors attempt to make the finest of distinctions concerning the competencies involved in a variety of language uses. They distinguish competencies for real and for imagined needs, competencies that are demanded or expected or merely felt, prior competencies. First of all, there was simply ELT, English Language Teaching, which Peter Strevens has called 'the probable proto-TEFL term' (Strevens, 1977) and which dates back to the 1940s. Then there was a distinction between EFL, (English as a foreign language) and ESL, (English as a second language). Next came the fecund ESP, (English for

special - or, a little later still, specific - purposes) which spawned a whole tribe of acronyms. These have already been mentioned on p.7. The example which follows is merely meant to confirm the lengths to which we can go. It is ERFA. It stands for, 'Erfahrungsaustauschring Fremdsprachen in der Wirtschaft' (Informal Association for the Exchange of Experiences on Foreign Language Teaching in Industrial Firms). It refers to an association of people responsible for language teaching in some major industrial concerns in Western Europe.

Whatever the reaction to these expressions, the point being made is that, more and more, those concerned with the teaching of English as a second or as a foreign language are looking to the competencies needed for specific uses of the language. They are moving away from the idea of 'general English'. They wish to delineate in specific terms the competencies which a student ought to be able to demonstrate, as a result of following some particular course. Edwin Rosinski, for example, defines competency-based education as, 'an educational programme or course, designed on the basis of explicitly-defined competencies which an individual student should possess', (Rosinski, 1975).

The term 'competency' is preferred to others such as 'objective' because the former states what a person can do while the latter suggests goals which are to be striven for. The other common term, 'needs', is too vague. As Richterich baldly states, 'The very concept of language needs has never been clearly defined and remains, at best, ambiguous', (Richterich, 1983).

Chomsky's original formulation of 'competency' referred to a speaker's knowledge of the language on some ideal plane. It was 'generative' in the sense that it created sentences which had not existed before, (Chomsky, 1965). However, this is a grammarian's definition not a user's. Widdowson has recently tried to draw a distinction between this idea of competence and his own idea of 'capacity'. He has coined this word in order to express what he

thinks of as an ability of the learners to exploit the rules they have learned for their own ends.(Widdowson,1983).

In this dissertation competence means the ability to use English in a definite,real-life situation - specifically as a student in the first weeks at an institution for tertiary education - in much the same way as a native speaker would be expected to.Perhaps the best expression of this idea that the author has come across in the literature is in the following quotation from CRITICAL ISSUES IN COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION,by S.V. Monjan and S.M. Gassner.

'The hall-mark of competency-based education is a commitment to the definition of all educational goals in terms of explicit behavioural descriptions of what a person is able to do once an educational activity has been mastered...This specification extends to evaluation procedures...when a student has successfully attained a performance objective,he is considered to have developed a competency in that area...there is little room for ambiguity.'

So the student knows what has or has not been achieved; the institution is able to measure effectiveness;the educational purpose is kept in focus and there is constant feedback. (Monjan,1984)

The implications of the above for the teaching of English as a foreign language are obvious. Monjan also points out a possible danger which has been taken into account in the preparation of the questionnaire mentioned later in the dissertation,i.e. forgetting that the purpose of 'explicit behavioural descriptions' is to clarify,not to break down into an endless list of parts which can overwhelm both learner and teacher. On the other hand competencies are made up of lesser skills - before you can read,you must be able to recognise the individual letters or clusters of letters. Most writers on language acquisition would agree with Chodkiewicz when she says,'In defining competent performance,or skilled language performance many re-searchers have distinguished between skills and abilities in different ways.What seems certain is that all acts

of language performance constitute a hierarchy of sub-tasks, spatially and temporally integrated.' In this dissertation when attempting to list the operational definitions that appear to be needed, an attempt has been made to pick a cautious way between the Scylla and Charybdis described - too general v too specific.

It should be repeated that one needs to keep in mind all the time a holistic view of the teaching of English as a foreign language. This view would seem to cover the following parts:

- (1) a sound theory of language acquisition;
- (2) a definition of the competencies required;
- (3) a curriculum based upon number (2);
- (4) materials suitable for the curriculum objectives;
- (5) a methodology. (In Bahrain this should lie somewhere between the traditional, teacher-centered methods, via non-interference strategies (Allwright, 1976) and the total individualisation of learning as explained by McCafferty (1982) or Geddes (1982)).
- (6) methods of motivation for both students and lecturers;
- (7) development of evaluation techniques;
- (8) feedback, leading to a continuous assessment of the whole process.

To cover all of these areas would be far in excess of the ambitions of this dissertation. The problems are much too complex. Take (1) for instance - the need for a coherent theory of language acquisition. We have only to consider, say, Krashen's theories (Krashen, 1980, 1981, 1982) dealing with various hypotheses such as the Input Hypothesis, the Acquisition versus Learning Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis and the Monitor Hypothesis. Then we look at the controversy his ideas have aroused. Thus, Widdowson (in private conversation) suggested that, 'Krashen is now under seige - and, I think, rightly so.' Also, it has been claimed that he has put forward nothing new on the teaching side and that he has left many questions unanswered. (Rivers, 1980; Stevick, 1980, 1982).

Or, again, there is the difference of opinion over

the question of the existence of 'a substantial general factor' (Oller,1980) which suggests that language proficiency is a unitary and indivisible trait. The idea is strongly opposed by such writers as Pang who, after a statistical examination of Oller's claim, concluded that it could not be substantiated - 'the existence of a 'g' factor is still an open question'. (Pang,1984). Vollmer also, calls for caution in accepting Oller's findings. (Vollmer,1983).

The above are only two examples, given to show how difficult and controversial a field we are dealing with. However, the purpose of this dissertation is deliberately curtailed, non-controversial and pragmatic. It aims to take one part of the holistic view outlined above i.e. (2) find out the opinion of the 'experts' on the spot and produce a list of needed competencies which will be non-controversial, of obvious importance in the day-to-day learning/teaching situation and therefore accepted and implemented.

A Competency-based Approach to EFL

What are the competencies in question as far as the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language are concerned ?

Looking at the broad picture, one might conclude that these have long been identified. There are those for whom English is a lingua franca, as in Ghana, for example (Traynor,1976). It can be used as a language of wider communication, at an international level. The competencies for those wanting an integrative approach to English will be different from those of students with purely instrumental motivation. (Lambert,1972) Halliday puts the whole point succinctly when he quotes a German student of his saying, 'I use High German officially but I put on my vernacular, with my slippers, in the evening.' (Halliday,1964) i.e. the skills used will simply depend on needs. It is some time since Fishman asked the basic questions, 'Who speaks what language, to whom, on what occasions and for what purposes ?' (Fishman, 1972). It is the answers to these questions that

determine what competencies are needed.

Similar questions are apposite in the narrower field of TEFL. Indeed, it was the very issue of competence (or, perhaps, more truly incompetence) in English which obliged educators to modify, if not altogether discard, the traditional descriptive approach to the teaching of English. For a while 'grammar' became a four letter word: teaching about language was not the same as teaching language use.

The attempted replacements were many. In a very interesting article, Markee refers back to clay tablets apparently used for teaching languages to Mesopotamian children c. 3,000 - 2,000 B.C. and drily suggests that, 'formal language teaching is probably as inefficient now as it was 5,000 years ago.' She then goes on to list what she calls 'THE METHOD in its various, latest Incarnations': Grammar/Translation, Direct Method, Reading Method, Audio-lingual Method, The Cognitive Code, The Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response and The Natural Approach. (Markee, 1984).

Even before Markee, Hatch had reviewed the various 'bandwagons', from 'applied contrastive analysis' to 'applied conversational analysis' and warned EFL teachers 'not to accept every attractive proposition without reservations.' (Hatch, 1978).

All teachers of English as a foreign language are familiar with the terms, 'functional approach', 'notional approach', 'the functional/notional approach' as expressed in the 'communicative approach' refined in turn to 'the communicational approach' (Prabhu, 1980) or the 'communicative/capacity approach' (Widdowson op.cit.). One may perhaps, be forgiven for recalling the passage from HAMLET when Polonius is advertising the versatility of the Players:

'The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history or pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical - historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral...'

'Words, words, words,' indeed! The teacher of EFL has surely

to be alert to tell a hawk from a handsaw.

If then the history of TEFL is replete with different 'approaches' why should the list be extended even further with a 'competency-based' approach ?

First of all, competency is the foundation of all the approaches. All are searching for ways to produce competency. It seems essential then that the starting point is establishing just what the over-all competency consists of. What are the sub-sets, the sub-competencies which can be handled at classroom level ?

Again, a competency-based approach is compact in expression and, apparently at least, capable of exact measurement. This last point has great appeal for learners, lecturers, educational administrators, fee-paying parents and the general public. (Even in tax-free Bahrain, with the fall in oil revenues there is a parallel desire to get value for money.)

The literature suggests that the question of measurement is of particular importance because, increasingly, interest is being shown in the concept of accountability, (Lello, 1978). Mackay did an imaginary study for a company (LOOT) to illustrate the kinds of questions raised by those funding new or established programmes. Questions like, 'Do the programmes work ? Are they more effective than previous programmes ? Can the expense be justified?' (Mackay, 1981).

An emphasis on accountability inevitably leads to the need for instruments measuring the effectiveness of programmes. This, in turn leads to a greater precision in framing the competencies concerned. As Mackay puts it, the demand for accountability leads us to specify with precision, the level of linguistic sophistication which is needed in the performance of language-related tasks, with how much accuracy, with how much mastery.

In using the word 'competency' the dissertation is underlining the need for mastery learning. Thus, if the competency is, 'to take down, in English, telephone messages with a minimum of two pieces of information', then the 'customer' needs to know that every message will be taken down accurately. Seven correct messages out of

ten will not do. The 'customer' wants ten out of ten. To quote Block (1971),

'Mastery learning offers a powerful approach to student learning... It can provide almost all of the students with successful learning experiences... It promotes the student's fullest development, makes student learning more efficient, covers more material in less time and rouses greater student interest.'

Bloom, also, has a lot of interesting things to say in favour of mastery learning stressing particularly the fact that if our thinking is dominated by the idea of 'normal distribution' then we expect automatically that a fair proportion of students will fail. These prophecies have a habit of fulfilling themselves, to everyone's detriment. Yet as Bloom says, there is nothing sacred about the normal curve. (Bloom, 1971).

A further argument in favour of the 'competency-based approach' is that it stresses DOING, the ability to act in a defined situation. The competency is clearly defined, is taught then in a very direct manner until the student is able to say, 'I can do this... I can do that...' This ability 'to do' is particularly important in our rapidly changing world. Society, for instance, is anxious that the professions acquire and maintain 'professional competence'. This can be seen in a whole range of examples from Medicine, (Committee of Inquiry, 1976) to Accountancy (Institute of Chartered Accountants, 1976). A case in point is the research going on in the University of Glasgow, Scotland, financed and sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Security, along with the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 'to identify the competencies needed by practising pharmacists, and thereafter, to determine the priority areas in a competency-based continuing education programme.' (Dunn, 1982).

Again, a competency-based approach to teaching English as a foreign language fits in well with the modern tendency to place the learner at the centre of

the stage, (Rea, 1979, Tavlor, 1983) and to see education as a process rather than as a product. (Whittaker, 1984) Following this idea, a competency-based approach has a built-in flexibility; competencies are listed according to the requirements of the student, for a particular period of time, for a particular purpose. They are highly sensitive to any change in the circumstances such as level of student entry to a course, the length of time available for a course, the student's changing needs. This last point is particularly note-worthy, for, as among others, Richterich has pointed out, 'needs make their appearance... change... then go away.' (Richterich, op.cit)

Competency in EFL

What then does 'competency' mean as far as English as a foreign language is concerned? - our original question.

Inevitably, the answer to this question must seem evasive. It must begin, 'Well, it all depends...' Competency has many facets. To say that Jamila Jamal is competent in English, does not really mean very much. Similarly, neither does a statement such as, 'Ali Basheer is incompetent in English.' It is much too imprecise. In what circumstances, of purpose, time, place etc. is Jamila competent? or Ali, incompetent? Jamila may be perfectly competent in English as she goes shopping in her role as housewife, yet totally incompetent as a personal secretary to the director of the National Bank of Bahrain. Or Ali, incompetent in English as a foreman on a building site, might be fully at home in English as an announcer of programmes on Radio Bahrain. We can say that Jamila is competent to do A, or A and B, and B, and C where A, B, C are definite language skills.

So, we come back to the fundamental questions:

- 1) What are the operational definitions of the competencies needed by Bahraini students proceeding from secondary to tertiary education?
- 2) What is the order of the priority of these competencies?

- 3) How can we know that the students have acquired these competencies ?

Needs Assessment

The above questions are the ones which this dissertation attempts to address. To obtain the answers, some form of needs analysis is required. The literature is rich in its references to Needs Assessment.

However, the primacy accorded to the need for this assessment has been met with a certain scepticism which centres on two aspects of the problem. If language needs are broadly defined the definition must consider social and cultural factors which have implications far beyond the classroom. On the other hand, if language needs are too narrowly defined, then the definition will become coterminous with a list of linguistic targets and objectives which are of little practical value. (Lehmann, 1983)

This is not the only problem. What Chambers has described as 'terminological inexactitude' has allowed a profusion of related but not identical items being referred to as 'needs' and being treated as if they were more or less identical. He asks the questions, 'Whose needs?' 'The students' ? 'The employers' ? 'The sponsors'? 'The material writers' ? (Chambers, 1980) He concludes this particular discussion with the aphorism, 'Whoever determines the needs, largely determines which needs are determined.'

It is a warning that has been kept in mind during the data-gathering and data-processing for this dissertation.

Another difficulty in needs analysis, touched upon earlier, is that encountered in pinning down the needs. (Robinson, 1980). James talks of real needs, imaginary needs, demands, requirements, expectations, symptomatic needs, felt needs etc. and comes to the conclusion that the plethora of terms suggests a 'lack of direction'. (James, 1974) Other writers, e.g. Mackay, 1981, talk of 'hypothetical future needs', 'teacher created needs'

'student desires' etc. and contrast them with 'real current needs'. 'It is only the last that are of real value.' (Mackay, 1981).

Chambers (op.cit.) is of the opinion that the term 'needs analysis' should be reserved for those situations where aims have been established by TSA (target situation analysis). Other 'needs' would be better described as 'constraints' or 'intermediate objectives' and thought of as stages toward meeting the designated need. But there is no consensus. Some writers e.g. Svendsen et al. (1984) are wary of TSA on the grounds that it relies heavily on discourse analysis which is still very much in its infancy. (Gardener, 1984).

Despite all the above which stress the possible errors which can occur in needs analysis, there is strong agreement in the literature with regard to the necessity for needs analysis. As Savignon puts it, 'needs assessment surveys are the first steps (my emphasis) to confirm impressions of learner interests and to dispel myths about learner attitudes.' (Savignon, 1983). He gives four examples of such surveys to illustrate his point. It is interesting to see that Savignon has a strong theoretical approach to the question with chapters on 'hypothesis formation', 'research design', etc. This contrasts with the more practical approach of such authors as Johnson. In the third of a series of papers covering his ideas from 1976 - 1980 he examines the principle of needs analysis and the rival claims of what has come to be known as, 'semantic syllabus inventory' with its emphasis on such areas as 'settings', 'topics', 'functions'. However, Johnson discusses needs analysis only in terms of linguistic specification as can be seen from his 'parable' of Hans, the international, German, lawyer, and Else, his secretary. Hans is obliged to practise in England and Else has to go ahead of him to make the necessary preparations. The suggestion is that two quite different syllabuses can be created for them. In Krashen's terms (Krashen, op.cit.), this suggests very fine tuning

indeed as opposed to the possibly more effective, rough tuning.

Another strong supporter of needs analysis is Kaufman. He claims that, 'picking the correct and appropriate problems and finding the best solutions are the keys to educational success,' and that 'here, needs assessments are tools for radical change, because they are rational, logical and functional.' He goes on to define needs assessment as 'a formal process which determines the gaps between current outputs and required outputs, places these gaps in priority order and selects the most important for resolution.' It will be seen that it is this definition that the present dissertation favours.

Richterich, who has had extensive experience with the teaching of English as a foreign language, through his work for the Council of Europe language programmes, declares that, 'the identification of language needs is the "sine qua non" of all learner-centered teaching, of all learning that is matched to the learner's resources and expectations.' He talks about the 'technocracy of needs' - the claim to be able to define and foresee everything. He cautions that relating teaching to language needs remains the most difficult problem to solve in the implementation of learner-centered teaching systems. (Richterich, 1983).

Possibly, the writer who has gone nearest to creating a 'technocracy of needs' is John Munby with his seminal work on communicative syllabus design. He goes into tremendous detail, particularly in chapters nine and ten, the former dealing with his theoretical model and the latter with an actual model. A 'tour de force' indeed, placing needs assessment in its rightful place at the forefront of syllabus design.

However, Munby is not without his critics. Markee, (op.cit.) for instance, suggests that he has leaned too far towards a socio-linguistic view of the problem of needs assessment, at the expense of a psycholinguistic dimension. There is also the danger that Munby's method would merely produce lists of grammatical

structures but no one - to - one relationship with communicative functions. While Markee states that, 'infatuation with high technology afflicts the Munby model,' other writers claim that, 'It is customary now to say that as far as needs analysis/course design is concerned we are living in the post-Munby era.' (Coffey, 1984). It would appear that his work has been overtaken by the flood tide of ESP. As Prince expresses it, 'There is an ever-increasing need for "employment-focused language" for the skills needed to keep a job.' (Prince, 1981). Communicative competence is the watchword for ESP as it comes to its maturity, (Coffey, op.cit.) Recently, the complete volume of the ESP Journal was given over to what used to be called EOP, English for occupational purposes, but which is now more commonly designated as ,VESL - Vocational English as a second language.

The main concern of ESP is authenticity and all ESP teaching is, in essence, a simulation of real life activity. When this is done with a very narrow focus, it would appear to those engaged in the activity that the needs of the students are self-evident. A good example of this is an article in the ESP Journal by Geoffrey Land where he describes, 'a highly successful course', for banking staff in Italy. He does not mention needs assessment as such but lists the 'objectives' without explanation of their origin but vaguely suggesting that they were what the management of the bank in question, wanted. The following were the first three objectives.

'For Course A (below Threshold Level)

During the planning stage the following objectives were established:

- 1) To teach the basic fundamentals of the English language.
- 2) To prepare students to understand all items of English that they meet in their technical (banking) course.
- 3) To ensure that the students are capable of writing such items as may be expected in the normal course of their work.' (Land, 1983).

Again, in Krashenian terms, very rough tuning indeed.

The 'success' of such courses does not, naturally, prove that needs analysis is unnecessary. Finer tuning might have improved them even more. Also, some form of needs analysis must have taken place at some stage e.g. when preparing teaching materials for 'all items' mentioned in objective 2) above. 'Success' - and we are not told how this was measured - was probably due to the fact that all those concerned knew either through experience or intuitively, what their needs were. Also, they were highly motivated. Again, in the three month course - no number of hours is given - there were very close links between the English course and the technical (banking) course which ran parallel to it.

What the success of such courses 'proves' is, perhaps, that there are no hard and fast rules concerning needs assessment. It can be done in various ways, to various depths, with varying amounts of success, depending on a whole multitude of 'outside' factors.

One such factor is 'needs' as perceived by the students for whom the courses are being prepared. There are different schools of thought. So, writers such as Salimbene, ask the question, 'How do teachers determine the present and future needs?' Then they give their own reply, 'Only the students themselves KNOW what they want.' (Salimbene, 1983). Balet, describing an experiment to determine the needs of the students, 'on an individual basis but in a social context', simply states that, 'It was assumed that the best way to determine the students' needs was to ask the students themselves.' (Balet, 1985). Richard Allwright describes an interesting investigation of an attempt to involve a group of learners of ESP in the identification of their own needs in contrast to the usual method of a needs analysis by the teacher or 'language learning expert' alone. The results were mixed.

Certainly, some writers, Richterich among them, are very definite in their opposition to asking the students themselves. To quote Richterich again, 'Experience shows

that, in general, the learner is little aware of his needs and is unable to express them, except in vague terms.' Drobnic concurs. He declares, 'Linguistically naive students should not be expected to make sound language decisions concerning their training.' (Drobnic, 1978).

There is, presumably, a *via media*. In the research for this dissertation, an attempt has been made to find out the opinion of the students as to their own perceived needs. This seemed important from two points of view. First of all, not to consult student opinion would leave a gap in our knowledge. They may, indeed, be 'linguistically inarticulate', but there are various ways of helping them to communicate. Then, from a psychological angle it seemed more likely that the students would be well motivated in co-operating to fulfill the chosen needs if they had had the opportunity (or at least their peers had had the opportunity) to make their own contribution to the research.. This was thought especially true if students from different campuses could arrive at some consensus. How much weight the students' opinions would carry would depend to some extent at least, on their level of sophistication and on their previous experience. For example, usually, the opinion of a student who has just completed semester one of tertiary education will be more informed than that of a student just completing secondary school... Even here though, we cannot afford to be dogmatic.

In conclusion to this section of the literature search we may agree with Long when he says,

'The principal tasks of the team of educational planners syllabus designers, materials writers and teachers are
1) the identification of those communicative purposes which students have or are going to have and
2) the creation of as many and varied opportunities as possible for learners to communicate... for these purposes.' (Long, 1976)

Nevertheless, we should also heed the cautionary voices. Here, Sinclair's notion of 'off-line' and 'on-line'

research has some significance. The former he defines as, 'needs established by research prior to the course'. The latter is defined as, 'a more or less continuous assessment of the 'off-line' needs, for their continued appropriateness and attainment.' (Sinclair, 1978). It is very important that we do not consider needs assessment as a one-off affair but that, having identified the needs at one particular time, we keep the identification under constant review in the certainty that changes are bound to occur. The changes will sometimes even be fundamental. We should keep in mind Richterich's warning that 'The general conclusion is that the changes in education occur slowly, much more slowly than the needs of the learners.'

Determination of Competencies

In this section some of the possible methods of collecting the data necessary for determining the competencies are examined.

- 1) The Content Knowledge Approach.
- 2) A task analysis approach.
- 3) The Delphi Technique.
- 4) The Critical Incident Technique.
- 5) The Behavioural Interview.
- 6) Canvassing student opinion.

The 'content knowledge' approach.

This is the traditional approach. The tertiary institution views the would-be entrants as having some competency in English after about a decade learning English in school. They are like vessels that have been filled with large amounts of 'English' - listening, speaking, reading, writing, in a subject-based curriculum, totally teacher-centered.

Thus, they conclude that it is possible to examine the secondary school syllabus for English language to find competencies which are, or are not, contained there in. From the final secondary school examination (the Tawjiheah in the case of Bahrain) it should be possible to determine the performance of any individual student in the competencies listed in the syllabus.

For many reasons, but basically because they have no control over curriculum content, teaching methodology or examination procedures, tertiary education institutions, at least in Bahrain, prefer to take the Tawjiheah results in conjunction with their own assessment. It is important that the tertiary institutions know the new students' 'point of departure'. To quote Ausubel,

'If I had to reduce all of educational psychology to just one principle, I would say this: the most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly.' (Ausubel, 1968).

So the tertiary institutions usually set up their own examination in order to determine what competencies the students have or, perhaps more to the point, do not have.

On the face of it, this seems a reasonable approach and the fact that it has, in some way at least, stood the test of time would seem to indicate that it has been found adequate. Yet it does have some drawbacks. For example, does the examination in question really test the competencies that will be needed in tertiary education ? Are they the essential ones, or merely peripheral ? Are they relevant or irrelevant ? Again, all competencies cannot be examined in examination time. On what basis are the choices made ? Is there any way of answering these questions and similar ones apart from simply relying on intuition and experience ?

A case in point is the TOEFL examination. This must be one of the commonest traditional examinations purporting to test competency in English language. Every year, about 70,000 sit for it. (Sharpe, 1979) Yet it has many drawbacks. For a full treatment of this question, please see Appendix E. Here, it is only necessary to note that the TOEFL ignores completely the basic skills of writing and speaking. (Traynor, 1985 and Stansfield, 1985).

In all 'pencil and paper' examinations there is little evidence to suggest that impressive scores necessarily mean that a student will cope with the

future demands on his competency.(McClelland,1973).This is because classroom knowledge and ability do not inevitably transfer easily to real-life situations.If for no other reason than this the 'content knowledge' approach,by itself, would be insufficient to determine needs.(McGaghie,1978).

The Task Analysis Approach

This,at first,appears to be a very attractive strategy.It involves ,for the purposes of this dissertation, following the new,tertiary student in his/her first weeks/ months/semester,to the various lectures,practical sessions, tutorials etc. and noting down what competency or array of competencies,is needed on what occasion. In theory, this would provide a detailed description of the situations in which the student would use English language skills. A programme,based on these findings,could then be prepared.

These ideas have been aired in many places but that most relevant to this dissertation is Volume 3 No.2 of the ESP Journal mentioned earlier in connection with VESL, Vocational English as a second language.

The College of Health Sciences,Manama,Bahrain,has some experience in this area since the task analysis approach is precisely that used in one of its programmes, viz. The Medical Secretaries'Programme,(part-time students). The lecturers visit the students at their place of work and observe,either helping with immediate problems in English or noting points that will need more extensive coverage in 'College time'. Also,supervisor's comments and opinions are sought.

The less attractive side of this approach is that on a large scale it is not practicable.It consumes an inordinate amount of time even if the lecturer/researcher confines the investigation to a few students and to a limited number of procedures.This has been the CHS experience.It is confirmed by the experience of others also.Urey describes an attempt to analyse nursing tasks. Even though it was organised and funded as 'a major

undertaking' the investigators were able to analyse only six procedures out of the many possible ones.(Urey, 1968).

Apart from the possible complications arising from the attitude of those responsible for the work places, to 'outsiders' invading their domains there is another fundamental objection. This attempted comprehensive approach might serve only to produce a mammoth list of functions. This then would be followed by an even more detailed list of how each function is performed. For example, the observer might write down, 'uses the telephone regularly'. But why ? When ? To whom ? In what circumstances ? Each of these questions will have several quite different answers and will beget further questions still, in an endless exercise. Eventually, we will be unable to see the wood for the trees. The order of priorities becomes confused and we do not use the limited learning time to the best advantage.

The Delphi Technique

This is sometimes known as the 'Wise Man' approach. It is discussed at length in an issue of the Irish Journal of Education which also supplies an extensive bibliography. (O'Brien, 1978). For the purposes of this dissertation, it may be briefly summarised as follows.

Quite simply the Delphi Technique means obtaining the opinion of a panel of people considered expert in their field. The number of these experts will vary but it should be sufficiently large. The experts are required to

- 1) identify the specific competencies in knowledge and skill in the areas under discussion and
- 2) provide an operational definition of each of the listed competencies.

This is a powerful and practical technique, (Spivey, 1971) although, as suggested earlier in the literature search, there may be some uncertainty as to how to identify 'experts'. One possible definition might be: an expert in a field is one who possesses a high degree of theoretical

knowledge and several years' successful experience in the application of theory in practice, in real life situations.

Some of the difficulties that might be anticipated in applying this technique are the vested interests of those concerned, the well-known difficulty of getting a consensus of the experts, especially in the academic field and, perhaps very noticeably in education, the weight of the dead hand of tradition and the status quo militating against change.

Critical Incident Survey

The critical incident survey is another long - established, sophisticated method for collecting data about competencies. As early as 1954, Flanagan was outlining the procedure and discussing its good and bad points. 'In order to report a critical incident, you need the setting of the event; an exact description of what occurred; an account of the outcome; the reason why the incident was effective or ineffective.' (Flanagan, 1954).

In this method, both students of and lecturers in EFL are asked to describe incidents of English language learning/teaching, in their direct experience, which reflected either good or bad communication. The emphasis here is on the incident itself and not on the individuals concerned. (Fivars, 1969). For each incident Flanagan's four-point evaluation procedure is followed.

As the number of individually described incidents increases, the incidents should fall into 'clusters' and then through these 'natural' clusters the areas of essential competence should begin to emerge.

To illustrate the method, here is one example of a critical incident report.

Critical Incident Report No.71

May 1985

Setting: Secretary's office in the English Language Department, CHS. She wanted some information from the Registrar's Office and phoned one of the assistants.

Both participants in the conversation were Bahrainis not native speakers.

Occurrence

The conversation was like this.

Secretary: Is that the Registrar's office ?

Registrar: Yes.Can I help you?

Secretary: Good morning. Can you tell me the percentage of male students admitted to the College this year,please?

Registrar: No. I'm afraid that we don't have mail for students in this office.

The participants then reverted to Arabic to sort things out. Eventually,the information was forthcoming.

Reason

The person speaking for the Registrar's office had confuse the homonyms,'mail' and 'male' and was probably unfamiliar with the word percentage,at least over the phone and with no context to give clues to the meaning.

Presumably,this incident would be one of many,forming a 'cluster' and from it conclusions might be drawn as to the items that ought to be taught. Thus,this technique indicates the areas where communication is at risk and provides the basis for a programme of continuing education to help learners to overcome their real problems.

A point against the method is that the division into clusters depends a lot on the subjective opinion of those doing the division. Also,the sophistication of the technique is such that it would require the sustained co-operation of those supplying the data.To be effective, it has,of its nature,to be a longitudinal study.Moreover, whatever we might think of Pitt Corder's inter - language theory and the literature this idea gave rise to,(Corder,1981) there may be a real difficulty in blurring the distinction between 'errors' which cause a lack of communication and those which are merely inaccuracies.Yet in the context of tertiary education these latter cannot be treated in too cavalier a fashion.(Richards,1980).

The Behavioural Event Interview

In this technique for gathering data, (McClelland, 1976), a number of practitioners of the skills, competencies in question, are chosen as being 'good' at their job. The identification would be by peers and 'supervisors' and those 'in the ranks'. (Lewin, 1976). Then each member of the group is interviewed in depth being asked to recount from his experience the most critical situations he had encountered in practising his skills. Detailed descriptions of these events are provided: the lead up to the event, the participants, the interviewee's thoughts, feelings, re-actions and the resolution of the situation, if there was any. At the end of the interview, the person concerned is asked to give an opinion as to the skills or competencies that he feels are necessary for the successful practitioner of whatever 'profession' or 'state' is under investigation. (Kane, 1979).

Thus, for each person interviewed there is an implicit and explicit description of the abilities needed and this at a much greater depth than could be provided by the Delphi technique.

Again, if the interviewee's were students, the same procedures could be carried out with a group of students who had been previously identified as 'poor' students. Hopefully, a comparison of the interviews of the 'good' and the 'bad' would reveal what competencies made the difference.

Despite a certain promise, this method is not one to be too readily adopted. Interviewers with the necessary skills for the task required are hard to come by and tend to be expensive when found. Even more scarce are people skilled enough to interpret and analyse the data gathered by this technique. (Spencer, 1980).

Canvassing Student Opinion

This is an important area for gathering data provided the limitations associated with student opinion, already touched upon earlier, are remembered. Student opinion is

canvassed in a less rigorous way than that suggested for the Behavioural Event Interview. Students are asked to express their needs as they perceive them, as they have actually experienced them. Two groups of students may be distinguished: (i) students who have finished secondary school and intend to continue their education in a tertiary institution but have not yet begun to do so and (ii) students who are in the process of completing their first semester in a tertiary institution.

A further refinement would be to re-interview those students in (i) after they have had a semester's experience of tertiary education. The new results would help confirm or modify the previous findings.

Evaluation of Competencies

If agreement can be reached as to what the main competencies, needed by secondary school Bahrainis proceeding to tertiary education through an English medium, are, then this will have important implications both at secondary and at tertiary level for the curriculum content and for methodology. After all, the aim of any competency

study is to provide a basis for a programme of relevant courses which will answer the real needs of the students.

However, to develop this study along those lines is outside the powers of the individual researcher and is, in any case, outside the scope of this dissertation. Hopefully, such a development may be one fruit of this study. Meanwhile, it is hoped to suggest means by which the competencies identified in this investigation, may be assessed. It is on this point that the last section of the literature search concentrates.

The distinction made between reasons for testing is one that is made by every writer on the subject e.g. Gronlund, 1981. The three main categories given are, usually, formative testing, diagnostic testing and summative testing, with, perhaps, placement testing as a further alternative. Since the main purpose of this dissertation is to identify and prioritise competencies needed in

English, for tertiary education and to discuss methods of assessing whether potential students have these competencies, the concentration here is on the summative aspect of evaluation. Naturally, there will be overlapping ground but, in general, we may assume that the other aspects belong to the teaching/learning process, (Cronbach, 1970).

As stated earlier, this dissertation is meant to be eminently practical. Although aware of conflicting theories the author wishes to steer clear of too close an involvement, especially as there seems little consensus among the 'experts'.

The study has already mentioned two mutually-exclusive theories about second language ability, summarised as, 'indivisible competence' versus 'partially divisible competence'. The supporters of the former are of the opinion that 'all language tests are, in reality, testing the same underlying ability.' (Oller, 1980). After research based upon a battery of sub-tests, including the FSI Oral Interview, various TEFL tests, five TOEFL sub-tests, as well as cloze and dictation tests, with the results subjected to factor analysis (using the technique of Principal Component Analysis with Iterations), Oller and his associates concluded that, 'a substantial general factor' existed. The rebuttal by Pang and Vollmer has already been quoted.

As far as the 'state of the art' in evaluation is concerned there is a tremendous variety of issues and that, at a very sophisticated level, engaging the attention of language testing researchers, at the present time. For example, Alderson and others have brought together four background papers on various issues in language testing together with further papers giving reactions to the original papers and a summary of the ensuing discussion. (Alderson, 1981). The titles of the original papers give some idea of the scope of the discussion. They are,

(i) Communicative Language Testing: Revolution or

Evolution' by Keith Morrow.

(ii) 'Specifications of the English Language Testing Service'(ELTS) by Brendan Carroll.

(iii) 'Basic Concerns in Test Validation' by S. Palmer and L.F. Bachman.

(iv) 'Why are we interested in General Language Proficiency ?' by H.J. Vollmer.

What comes across from this particular collection of papers, apart from the all-embracing variety of issues and opinions is a refreshingly strong consensus against the idea of any form of dogmatising.

However, even in the realm of the more practical approach to the problem of evaluation, there is not necessarily, a great deal of agreement. This point can be illustrated by reference to two common forms of testing; dictation and the cloze test. For a long time the former was out of favour, belonging to what Valette calls 'the pre-scientific approach to evaluation' (Valette, 1977). Now, however, it is being re-appraised and instead it is recommended both as a testing device and as a highly useful learning activity (Morris, 1983). As for cloze tests, Brown claims that, at least as regards oral ability, they are extremely useful (Brown, 1983) and Schaeffer praises them as being as valid and reliable as other tests, as well as being easy to construct and administer and mark. 'They are powerful and inexpensive.' (Schaeffer, 1982). On the other hand, there are those who find that the cloze test (not to mention MCQs) have too precise a focus on some particular learning point, e.g. a point of grammar. (Yule, 1980). Thus, 'the message-carrying elements may be obscured by the abundance of grammatical/rhetorical elements.' Yule put forward a modification of the cloze test. In a 'reasonably long' passage, fifty words were removed but there was no indication where they had been. Then fifty questions, based on the omissions, with simple answers, were given. Yule claimed that his modified test proved more successful than either the MCQs or the more usual cloze test.

Yule does stress, however, that his test has 'no external validity'. What is being tested is, whether the student is 'good enough' in using English, for a particular task, in a particular situation. It will be noted that this comes close to what is meant by competency in English as defined for this dissertation.

Still on the 'uncertainty of the art' in evaluation processes, it is interesting to note that once revered examinations are being called into question. Traynor, (1985) has already been quoted as well as Stansfield's defensive reply. (ELT Journal, April, 1985). Another example is the Pimsleur Battery of Tests. Despite its widespread use, it has come under fire as a predictor of student performance. (Curtin, 1983). A third example might be the ELTS, the English Language Testing Service of the British Council (1983) now enjoying world-wide usage. In the endeavour to cover all the options, to become all things to all men, it has become very cumbersome indeed. There is a real danger that it will test the students' powers of endurance rather than their powers of communication.

For all of the above reasons then this dissertation tends to prefer experience and practice as guiding stars rather than putting too much faith in any one theory or group of theories. Hopefully it will remain both eclectic and pragmatic. Of course, this may not obtain the approval of such experts as Widdowson. He claims that already, at least in the general field of ESP, there is too much activity and not enough theory and he decrys this state of affairs - 'feverish digging is no substitute for a knowledge of geology'. (Widdowson, 1984). Yet, the digging, if it did not precede, at least paralleled, the theorising and afterwards confirmed it, or modified it. Geologists did not wait around for a fully-fledged conceptual theory acceptable to all geologists before picking up a spade. Perhaps in Widdowson's terms, this dissertation will be seen as 'exploring a seam' rather than as being the work of one of the 'parasitic camp-followers'.

In the literature dealing with assessment there is a lot of emphasis on the importance of integrating it with the teaching process. Assessment and examinations should not be, in the words of Heywood, 'the grand afterthought of the educational process. They must become an integral part of the teaching activity.' (Heywood, 1977). He adds that, 'It is generally agreed that the assessment procedures have a powerful affect on learning,' and he could have added 'on teaching'.

So it is necessary to take at least a quick look at some of the things the literature is saying about the teaching/learning process. If any particular point stands out, it is, perhaps, the emphasis one sees on the idea of having 'real situations', 'authentic dialogue', 'the carrying out of genuine tasks'. So Tomlinson,

'A theory of language acquisition which stresses the importance of a rich, varied and meaningful input, plus frequent motivated opportunities to participate in authentic discourse, facilitates the power of generalisation...' (Tomlinson, 1983).

There are echoes here of Krashen, 'The Input Hypothesis may be the single most important concept in second language learning acquisition today.' (Krashen, op.cit.) In a later work Krashen argued that the most effective classroom approach is to avoid explicit teaching as much as possible and, instead, 'create as many natural communicative situations as possible'. It follows that assessment procedures should follow the same lines.

Not all writers agree with this totally 'real' approach. Widdowson, for instance, argues strongly for a very gradual adoption of 'authentic' materials. (Widdowson, 1979). Nevertheless, the trend seems to be to revive the old idea that, as the well-worn clichés express it, 'learn by doing', and, 'more is caught than taught'. Sorlie describes his experience in the University of Illinois, College of Medicine, where basic sciences are learned in a context of actual, defined, clinical problems so that the learning and the testing are virtually simultaneous. 'Students learn by doing...students gain a real appreciation of rules and

learning is accelerated.' (Sorlie,1973).

There is nothing very new here, really, cf Ramalingaswami, 'The suggestion that education in Medicine be built around the process of problem-solving, decision-making and judgement, would be supported by learning theorists, who have long recognised that knowledge must be put to use if it is to acquire meaning and to be remembered.' (Ramalingaswami, 1968).

In the College of Health Sciences, here in Bahrain, there has been a concerted effort to marry practice and theory in the teaching of all the subjects. Thus in English, it has been the policy not to give intensive English courses for the first months of the first semester, spending little time on anything else. Instead, there is a small but steady 'dose' given every day and, parallel, there are classes where what has been learned must perforce be practised. In some ways this was an empirical choice but it is good to see that it is borne out by the theorists, endorsed by the literature:

'Learning and teaching gain greater meaning when didactic courses and experience are brought together. This is especially important for human learning and memory.'

(Ausubel, op.cit.)

'Curriculum should consist of language study and practice on the one hand and language use on the other.'

(Stern, 1981).

It is against this background that this dissertation deals with assessment. Again, the pragmatic approach is stressed. Oller defines a pragmatic test : 'Briefly, it may be defined as any task in which the linguistic skills are integrated and which challenges the learner's developing grammatical system in real time.' (Oller, 1979). Put another way, if the curriculum is task-based, problem-solving based, real-life-situation based, then the assessment procedures will reflect this.

It must be admitted at this point that we appear to have argued ourselves off course somewhat. For if the steps necessary to successful teaching can be summarised as

- 1) identifying and prioritising the competencies,
 - 2) building courses - content, materials, methodology,
based on the findings in 1),
 - 3) developing summative and formative assessment tools
to evaluate the success of the course,
- then, since 3) is totally dependent on 2) and 2) is outside the scope of this investigation, 3) must also be outside the scope of the investigation.

Touché. What this dissertation can do, however, is to suggest a summative assessment tool that will help those concerned to decide, on the basis of established competencies, whether or not students are ready for tertiary education. Steps two and three above will take quite a long time to develop fully but, meanwhile, there is an immediate need for an assessment tool.

What is being proposed is that an examination be developed along the lines of Carroll's JL77, English Entrance Test, (Carroll, 1977), as modified by the English Language Centre, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and re-modified by the CHS, English Language Department over the period 1982 - 1985.

A full description of the Carroll test, as well as a sample, is given in Appendix F. The main point to be noted here is that the test is 'a broad, coarse, screening instrument'. It covers structure/lexis, reading comprehension and writing. Its main feature is that it divides candidates into Bands. These are described in detail in the appropriate appendix but they range from Band 9, 'very competent native speaker' to Band 1, 'non-speaker of English: may not even recognise text or speech to be in English.' These descriptions may appear to be rather peculiar when we consider that, in fact, the test does not attempt to assess spoken English. This is among the reasons why modifications were felt to be necessary. The rubrics of the test also give tentative suggestions for the length of time likely to be needed to move from one Band to another.

It was this 'blunt instrument' which the English Language Centre of King Abdulaziz University adopted and then adapted, for their own needs. KAAU has always stressed the importance of task-based learning as opposed to teaching what Wilkins calls the 'semantico-grammatical categories' (Wilkins, 19) and this has naturally affected their assessment policy, (ELC, Handbook, 2, undated), and therefore their adaptation of Carroll JL 77. Full details of this adaptation are given in Appendix G which consists of the King Abdulaziz University, English Language Centre, Publication No. 3, Assessment.

Basically, there has been an attempt to link course objectives (competencies) and assessment and an attempt to produce less ambiguous and, therefore, more useable descriptions of language ability. The idea of half-bands was introduced and the number of bands was reduced to five. The applicability of Band Sheet X, page 4 of the Handbook: Assessment, to each identified competency is reasonably obvious and opens up avenues for further exploration.

In a parallel but unconnected move, the English Language Department of the College of Health Sciences also adopted and adapted the Carroll JL 77 test. The most significant change was the introduction of a listening comprehension component. It was considered necessary since it appears to be a very important 'early' competency needed by students in the first days of their tertiary education. Also, the Band descriptions were re-written. This seemed especially necessary in the writing component of the original test, and the number of bands was reduced since our potential students were seldom, if ever, in the native speaker category, nor, indeed in that of the absolute beginners. For further information, a copy of the test booklet, called 'The General Competence Placement Test, English', has been made available in Appendix H .

It is considered that two areas of the test still need some attention. No 'speaking component' exists as

yet. Although the department is working on this project, it is not easy, as the remarks of Charles Stansfield re the TOEFL, will confirm. It presents many administrative and practical difficulties. (Stansfield, 1985). Then, in the writing component, there is still more subjectivity than is desirable, despite a lot of time spent on various efforts at standardisation, as suggested by Mr. James Weaver, of Columbia University, U.S.A. (Weaver, 1984). Research is proceeding along lines which, it is hoped, will produce some form of objective testing of writing skills.

Despite these reservations, experience over a three year period during which the examination has been tried and modified several times, gives ample grounds for confidence in the test. It has proved itself a very useful and accurate tool for predicting student success in handling the English language needed by students in the early weeks of their tertiary education.

Confirmation of this claim comes from outside of the department. A former Registrar of the College of Health Sciences, Ms Bessma Khoury conducted a longitudinal research project into the ways of predicting the success of students entering the College. The predictions were then compared with the actual results attained by the students. She came to the conclusion that the best predictor of success was the English Language Entrance Examination. (Khoury, 1982).

This would appear to be an appropriate note on which to bring the literature search to a conclusion.

Section 3

METHODOLOGY

Reasons for a Questionnaire

As has been seen in the previous section, Literature Search, several ways of gathering data were considered. Eventually, it was decided that the most appropriate basic tool for the investigation would be a questionnaire. The reasons for the choice were many.

In the first place, a questionnaire seemed to combine some of the best aspects of the various methods considered under 'Determination of Competencies' above. Thus, it applied the Delphi Technique by being open to the majority of the 'experts' in TEFL in Bahrain. While avoiding the involved procedures of the 'task analysis approach', it could take note of the opinions of the lecturers in other disciplines than English Language. Again, by embracing both student and teacher opinion it came some way to satisfying the demands of a 'content knowledge approach' and it also directly canvassed student opinion on both sides of the divide between secondary and tertiary education.

Another reason for choosing the questionnaire method was that it was inexpensive, requiring little expenditure beyond that required for the paper and the typing. The questionnaire could be delivered and collected by hand. Again, the analysis of the data was within the capabilities of one researcher and could be completed within a reasonable time scale.

A third reason for choosing a questionnaire was that it was a familiar instrument. Those involved in imparting the required information, known as the 'participants' or 'the respondents', were familiar with this technique and were therefore more likely to feel less threatened by this than by other methods, especially in the case of the students, and were more likely to be co-operative. Further, this method taxed neither the time nor the attention of the participants, unduly.

Finally, the questionnaire seemed the least cumbersome and most efficient of all the methods. Based on models endorsed by Brayfield and Roth (1951) and Shoemaker (1983) and using the Likert (1932) scale of measurement, it seemed the most likely way of quickly and accurately, acquiring the required data.

Pilot Questionnaire

After some discussion (p.4) a Pilot Questionnaire was prepared. This eventually resulted in the document, 'English Department, Students' Needs Project, Progress Report.' This, at the expense of a little repetition, is reproduced in Appendix I. As mentioned in this Report, there was a suggestion that the student version of the questionnaire be put in Arabic. In the end it was decided not to do so because of time and cost factors. However, care was taken to have fluent English/Arabic bi-lingual speakers on hand while the questionnaire was being filled.

The Pilot Questionnaire of the Progress Report was given to a group of twenty lecturers, chosen at random but including roughly, half English Language specialists and half lecturers in other subjects. After the competencies for each of the four skills - listening, speaking, reading, writing - spaces were left for the respondents to add their comments.

Although the questionnaire contained a place for the participant's name, it was not required that it be filled since many participants wished to preserve their anonymity. However, they were asked to give the Institution where they worked, the Department, and their position in the department. They were also asked to state their native language. Although this information would not necessarily have a direct bearing on the present investigation, it was felt that it would be of interest in further detailed analysis of the questionnaires and might throw light on some of the answers given.

As a result of the Pilot Questionnaire, quite a

few changes were made. Some items seemed ambiguous. As it was important that items should be specific enough to preclude, as far as possible, two readers from interpreting them differently (cf El Fadel, 1985) the offending items were revised. It was also suggested that some of the items be broken down into their component parts. Thus, Item 24 in the Pilot Scheme was overlapping with Item 27 and they were re-written appearing in the final version of the questionnaire as Items 28, 29, 30, and 31. Other suggestions for improving the questionnaire were put forward, discussed by the members of the English Department in the College of Health Sciences and either incorporated or dismissed.

The main improvement was, as mentioned earlier, the addition of ACHIEVEMENT. It seemed that information on how well or how badly the competencies had been achieved before tertiary education began, would be important. This was an opportunity to gather that information without much further effort on the part of the participants - whatever about the researcher himself. Of course, it was also realised that not all of the items would lend themselves easily to objective judgement for achievement and that some e.g. Item 46, would not be at all appropriate. This point is taken into account in the section on the results and the conclusions to be drawn from them.

The final version of the questionnaire is reproduced in full in Appendix J.

Methods of Analysis

Approximately 250 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 206 were returned. The breakdown of this figure is given in Table A on the following page. The number of returns (involving, incidentally, over 20,000 pieces of information) and their 'spread', seemed an adequate basis for reaching some quite firm conclusions about the competencies that were being investigated.

To analyze the results the following method was used. First the questionnaires were divided into 12 groups as per Table A. Then using forms of the type Sheet A, p.50.

1.	5	4	3	2	1	TOTALS
2.						
3.						
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19.						
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22.						
23.						
24.						
25.						
TOTALS:						

the opinions of each individual in a group were recorded for each competency. This was a time-consuming process, especially as each entry had to be double checked. Sometimes a participant circled two figures. When this happened for EVALUATION, the lower figure was taken; when it happened for ACHIEVEMENT, the higher figure was taken. This was because the hypotheses were based on an expectation of high values for EVALUATION and low values for ACHIEVEMENT. It was felt that this would give the results more validity. Occasionally, a zero rating was given and even -1. These were recorded as 1. When, whether by accident or design, an item was omitted, it was not recorded at all.

The next step was to add the marks horizontally, thus getting the total marks given for each competency. The highest possible total was the number of participants multiplied by the highest possible mark that could be given i.e. 5. For example, to get the opinion of the English Language lecturers in CHS, as a group, we first found the maximum mark they could give for any competency. Since there were ten respondents, this maximum mark was 10 multiplied by 5 i.e. 50. Then, the total score actually given was counted up. It was then easy to calculate what percentage of the possible 100% had been given. Thus, for Item 1 for the English Language lecturers in CHS the maximum number possible was 50. The score actually given was 48. So the percentage score was recorded as 96%. This was done for each competency, for each group.

TABLE A . Questionnaire Returns

Institution	English Language Lecturers	Other Lecturers	Students	Totals
CHS	10	47	44	101
GPC	20	03	21	44
UCB	10	00	20	30
STATE	11	N/A	20	31
Totals	51	50	105	206

For the next stage, a further sheet was prepared showing the eleven contributing groups and the scores each had given for ACHIEVEMENT and for EVALUATION. (It was decided to ignore the British Council contribution in the final tabulation of results because it was irrelevant to the purposes of the dissertation.) As this was done for each competency it resulted in a total of 50 sheets and they are given in Chapter 4. From these figures it is possible, almost at a glance, to see the various correlations. For example for Item 1, it is interesting to note that the four groups of students were in close agreement about the importance of everyday greetings, with scores of 94%, 91%, 95% and 94%, whereas one group of lecturers estimated the importance at only 79%.

By adding the scores of each group it was possible to calculate the overall average score for each competency. (Note that contributor H, 'U.C.B. Other Lecturers', was entered but marked N/A. Not applicable.) Taking Item 1 again, as an example, the scores added up to a total of 912 for EVALUATION. This was divided by the number of contributors, 10, giving an average of 91%.

Once the average for each competency had been calculated it was possible to put the Items in the order of their importance beginning with the competency gaining the highest score. This 'priority list' is also given in Section 4, p.109.

The average score for ACHIEVEMENT in each competency was calculated in the same way. This score appears on the 'priority list' in brackets after the EVALUATION score.

The possible number of Tables of contrasts and comparisons seems endless and the reader will not be burdened with them. One, however, seemed particularly important: ACHIEVEMENT as perceived by lecturers, by students and by state teachers. See Section 4 p.57.

Validity of Questionnaire

How valid and how reliable are the results obtained by this questionnaire? The short answer is that we do not know. At least, we do not know in a scientifically provable fashion.

Thus, if we consider 'Validity'. Briefly it can be defined as 'the success the scale of measurement shows in measuring what it is supposed to measure'. As Moser and Kalton point out, 'It is easy to see what validity means but to measure it in practice is exceedingly hard.' (Moser, 1979).

It could be argued that since a common thread runs through the questionnaire, that common thread being the participants' attitude towards the competencies listed, then at least the questionnaire has 'face validity', although Gronlund (op.cit.) dislikes the term.

As for content validity, the questionnaire has to cover the whole range of competencies in a selective but balanced way. Essentially this is a matter of subjective judgement. The fact that so few real additions were made to the questionnaire despite the opportunities given for this purpose, suggests that the 'team of judges' were largely in agreement.

Predictive validity - how well the measurements will forecast the future - was not relevant in this investigation. Nor was 'discriminatory validity' as described by Campbell (1959). But the main form of concurrent validity - how well the scales and questions used, measure present reality - was central. Yet, to measure such validity must inevitably be indirect. Here again, it is maintained that since those who gave the figures were indeed those most closely involved with either teaching or learning the listed competencies and since they can be presumed - because of precautions taken - to have answered in as conscientious a manner as could be expected, then it is reasonable to assume that the picture given by the questionnaire is very close to the actual reality.

There are of course certain statistical techniques which might help to establish validity, in particular

factor analysis. However, this technique with its correlation matrix, factor extraction, factor rotation, etc. seemed far too complex and far too cumbersome for the present investigation. It would have needed access to a computer and to professional services.

The same remarks that have been made about validity may, *mutatis mutandis*, be made about reliability. The questionnaire is reliable to the extent that when repeated under the same conditions and provided there has been no reason in the meantime for a marked change of attitude, it will produce the same results. One way to show reliability then is the 'test/re-test method'. Another is the 'alternate forms' method. However, both of these are flawed and have come in for a lot of criticism. (Moser, *op.cit.*) As for statistical methods, it would be possible to apply the 'split-half method' and then use the Spearman - Brown formula. This would be a lengthy, time-consuming process and in the end would give us little more than some assurance of internal consistency in the questionnaire. The effort would not seem to be worth the result. The reliability of this questionnaire rests on the proven knowledge of the participants, the conscientiousness of their efforts to reply, the seriousness with which they approached the exercise and on their real - life experience.

To conclude and summarise this section: although some writers, among them, Daniel Wayne consider that the questionnaire as a method of gaining information is 'plagued with limitations', it remains true that it can be a successful tool if the limitations are kept in mind. After all, as Eugene Webb and his associates rightly claim, '90% of social and educational research is based on interviews and questionnaires'. (Webb et al. 1966).

Section 4

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings and results arrived at by the methods described in the previous pages. These findings appear to confirm the hypotheses upon which this investigation was founded.

EVALUATION

To a large extent the figures speak for themselves. However, some comment is appropriate.

In the first place, it was proposed that it would be possible to discover a consensus of opinion as to the competencies needed, in English Language by students leaving secondary school and proceeding to the first semester of tertiary education. This study covered all of the 'interested parties', as diverse as university lecturers in English Language and students just finishing secondary school, as diverse as secondary school English Language teachers and senior lecturers in, say, Physics, at a polytechnic college, as diverse as Arabic speakers and English speakers, diverse in age, from 16 to 60, as diverse as male and female. Despite this diversity, several factors stand out as confirming the existence of a clear consensus of opinion among these disparate groups.

First no changes of any real significance were suggested by the contributors in the original competencies of the questionnaire. Respondents were given every encouragement to criticise any of the competencies listed and to add any that they thought might have been omitted. As may be seen from a study of the respondents' comments - a representative selection of which appears in Appendix K - nothing of importance emerged. On the contrary, comments suggested a general satisfaction with the competencies proposed.

Again, the contributors returned very high scores for

virtually all of the competencies proposed. Thus, over three-quarters of them had a score of 80% or over and only 3 competencies scored less than 70%, the lowest score being 63%. Obviously, then, contributors were in agreement as to the importance of the competencies.

Perhaps, particular stress should be placed on the fact that for any competency's importance there seems to have been only a small difference between lecturer opinion and student opinion.

It was also expected that as a result of this study it would be possible to prioritise the competencies. This assumption turned out to be correct. To facilitate the process, the numbers of the 'priority list' have not been rounded up. This may seem somewhat artificial. For instance to compare 'Item 31: to write a paragraph when describing, reporting, explaining', with 'Item 32: to keep a well-ordered note-book...'. Is the difference between 82.9% and 82.8% of any real significance? Hardly. Yet, the general division - ten competencies with 90% and over, twenty-eight competencies in the 80s and eight competencies in the high 70s - does have significance, as does the emphasis on various individual items such as the need to improve writing skills (Item 5) before the other three skills.

ACHIEVEMENT

The figures for ACHIEVEMENT contrast strongly with those for EVALUATION. The former are much lower, on the whole, than the latter.

Only one ACHIEVEMENT score exceeds 80% and one other exceeds 70%. Two fall as low as 36.8% (original Item 30) and 33.9% (original Item 23.) respectively.

Even more significant is the gap between student opinion and lecturer opinion. As Table B clearly shows lecturers have a much poorer opinion of student achievement than the students themselves have. State teachers and state students appear to be a little closer in their opinions.

TABLE B A Breakdown of ACHIEVEMENT scores

The scores which appear in this Table are the averages of the scores given by each group for all fifty competencies. (Round numbers)

INSTITUTION	ENGLISH LANGUAGE LECTURERS	OTHER LECTURERS	STUDENTS
C.H.ScS.	47	40	68
G.P.C.	36	40	65
U.C.B.	42	N/A	72
STATE	54	N/A	62

NOTE

With regard to 'Other Lecturers', it is worth pointing out again that there were no contributions from U.C.B and only 3 from G.P.C. In addition, among those responding from C.H.ScS., many expressed some reluctance about giving an opinion on ACHIEVEMENT on the grounds that they met students only after they had had further instruction in English Language beyond the Tawjiheah. Nevertheless, enough responded to make their contribution significant and it has been recorded.

Again, some items e.g. 44 - 50 did not lend themselves to easy scoring for ACHIEVEMENT (and, indeed, to a lesser extent, for EVALUATION) since they are not 'competencies' in the sense of the other items but are, perhaps, better described as 'needs'. For example, Item 46: to have lecturers who can communicate in Arabic when there is need to do so. Contributors evaluated this and similar items as to how important they felt the 'need' to be and, correspondingly, how far the student's need had been satisfied before the student came to a tertiary institution.

RESULT SHEETS

KEY

- Item No. : the competency as it appears in the questionnaire.
- Contributor: the group responding to the questionnaire.
- Col.A : ACHIEVEMENT: how far the competency has been achieved by the average student at the end of secondary education.
- Col.B : EVALUATION: how important the competency is for students proceeding to tertiary education.
- C.H.ScS. : College of Health Sciences, Manama, Bahrain.
- G.P.C. : Gulf Polytechnic College, Isa Town, Bahrain.
- U.C.B. : University College, Isa Town, Bahrain.
- State : Secondary Schools, State of Bahrain.
- Numbers : represent the percentage mark given by each group of contributors. (Nearest whole number)

RESULT SHEET Item No. 1

to understand and respond to everyday
greetings.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	82	96
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	60	85
C. C.H.ScS. Students	83	94
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	70	79
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	93	87
F. G.P.C. Students	82	91
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	76	98
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	90	95
J. State Senior English Teachers	86	91
K. State Students	82	94
AVERAGE	80	91

RESULT SHEET Item No. 2

to understand, so as to be able to comply with,
simple oral instructions and requests.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	78	100
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	54	95
C. C.H.ScS. Students	75	84
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	58	96
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	87	93
F. G.P.C. Students	67	79
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	73	96
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	90	95
J. State Senior English Teachers	69	93
K. State Students	72	97
AVERAGE	72	93

RESULT SHEET Item No. 3

to understand and answer short questions showing
ability to recall or deduce information.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	60	100
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	44	92
C. C.H.ScS. Students	84	87
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	50	88
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	67	93
F. G.P.C. Students	75	84
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	60	94
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	84	79
J. State Senior English Teachers	69	93
K. State Students	74	96
AVERAGE	67	91

RESULT SHEET Item No. 4

to follow a fifteen minute lecture on a subject other than English,
possibly accompanied by visual aids, at first semester level,
understanding at once the gist of the lecture.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	42	98
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	48	86
C. C.H.Sc. Students	60	82
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	37	89
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	60	93
F. G.P.C. Students	54	82
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	50	84
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	57	64
J. State Senior English Teachers	53	78
K. State Students	61	88
AVERAGE	52	84

RESULT SHEET Item No. 5

to ask for repetition, clarification, amplification,
exemplification.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	52	98
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	42	91
C. C.H.ScS. Students	81	86
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	40	89
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	47	100
F. G.P.C. Students	63	87
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	58	88
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	82	94
J. State Senior English Teachers	66	85
K. State Students	62	83
AVERAGE	59.	90

RESULT SHEET Item No. 6

to comment, explain a procedure, give an example,
clarify a point.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	40	90
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	30	86
C. C.H.ScS. Students	80	79
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	35	77
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	40	93
F. G.P.C. Students	59	78
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	40	82
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	74	79
J. State Senior English Teachers	46	84
K. State Students	60	81
AVERAGE	50	83

RESULT SHEET Item No. 7

to discuss e.g. seek approval of any assignment
given.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	42	86
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	36	84
C. C.H.Sc. Students	66	79
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	36	72
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	53	60
F. G.P.C. Students	57	74
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	40	82
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	75	81
J. State Senior English Teachers	55	80
K. State Students	49	82
AVERAGE	60	78

RESULT SHEET Item No. 8

to listen and respond to peers in a lecture or
tutorial situation.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	48	86
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	52	94
C. C.H.Sc. Students	71	91
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	37	74
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	47	87
F. G.P.C. Students	59	74
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	44	86
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	72	78
J. State Senior English Teachers	55	82
K. State Students	56	92
AVERAGE	54	84

RESULT SHEET Item No. 9

to understand and respond to oral corrections

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	58	98
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	56	93
C. C.H.Sc. Students	85	88
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	45	87
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	47	87
F. G.P.C. Students	71	82
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	60	94
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	76	74
J. State Senior English Teachers	64	85
K. State Students	68	94
AVERAGE	63	88

RESULT SHEET Item No. 10

to speak for 2 to 3 minutes on a prepared topic

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	30	76
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	36	77
C. C.H.Sc. Students	71	72
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	26	50
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	34	53
F. G.P.C. Students	58	80
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	40	82
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	79	83
J. State Senior English Teachers	55	78
K. State Students	62	93
AVERAGE	49	74

RESULT SHEET Item No. 11

to read simple instructions well enough to be able
to carry them out

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	66	100
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	56	97
C. C.H.ScS. Students	80	90
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	48	95
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	73	100
F. G.P.C. Students	78	86
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	53	100
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	91	97
J. State Senior English Teachers	78	100
K. State Students	70	95
AVERAGE	69	96

RESULT SHEET Item No. 12

to read questions in order to answer orally
or in writing

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	56	100
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	54	98
C. C.H.Sc. Students	79	93
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	50	89
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	60	100
F. G.P.C. Students	77	90
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	53	96
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	90	87
J. State Senior English Teachers	75	98
K. State Students	78	95
AVERAGE	67	95

RESULT SHEET Item No. 13

to read paragraphs of a length and complexity,

appropriate to the level of studies, to understand
the main facts

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	48	96
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	44	93
C. C.H.ScS. Students	58	79
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	41	95
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	93
F. G.P.C. Students	71	85
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	47	86
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	73	91
J. State Senior English Teachers	55	89
K. State Students	56	90
AVERAGE	54	90

RESULT SHEET Item No. 14

to deduce further information from what has been
read

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	44	94
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	42	84
C. C.H.Sc. Students	69	78
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	26	81
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	87
F. G.P.C. Students	66	89
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	49	92
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	85	89
J. State Senior English Teachers	46	84
K. State Students	59	89
AVERAGE	52	87

RESULT SHEET Item No. 15

to read continuous English in order to pick out
a particular piece of information

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	50	100
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	38	92
C. C.H.ScS. Students	73	86
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	38	83
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	93
F. G.P.C. Students	59	81
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	51	90
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	82	94
J. State Senior English Teachers	44	78
K. State Students	68	91
AVERAGE	54	89

RESULT SHEET Item No. 16

to read charts, graphs, diagrams and the like, understanding both the
contents and their relation to the passage illustrated

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	60	96
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	42	87
C. C.H.Sc. Students	67	80
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	35	82
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	80
F. G.P.C. Students	66	90
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	47	80
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	75	79
J. State Senior English Teachers	51	87
K. State Students	62	88
AVERAGE	54	85

RESULT SHEET Item No. 17

to read hand-written notes (as on the board or in
exercise books) as well as printed material

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	62	74
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	52	84
C. C.H.Sc. Students	66	72
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	43	76
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	89
F. G.P.C. Students	75	83
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	62	90
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	79	84
J. State Senior English Teachers	62	89
K. State Students	74	94
AVERAGE	61	84

RESULT SHEET Item No. 18

to write legibly, using the common forms - cursive,
lower/upper case - where appropriate

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	64	96
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	42	86
C. C.H.ScS. Students	61	80
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	51	94
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	53	93
F. G.P.C. Students	62	81
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	42	96
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	76	86
J. State Senior English Teachers	56	96
K. State Students	66	89
AVERAGE	57	90

RESULT SHEET Item No. 19

to spell accurately

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	36	86
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	38	87
C. C.H.ScS. Students	64	82
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	34	73
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	87
F. G.P.C. Students	73	70
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	29	86
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	59	90
J. State Senior English Teachers	47	98
K. State Students	56	98
AVERAGE	47	86

RESULT SHEET Item No. 20

to present neat, well-ordered work for any
written assignment

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	54	96
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	44	96
C. C.H.Sc. Students	66	69
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	38	84
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	40	80
F. G.P.C. Students	62	89
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	40	96
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	68	87
J. State Senior English Teachers	53	85
K. State Students	74	97
AVERAGE	54	88

RESULT SHEET Item No. 21

to use the common forms of punctuation: capitals
and full stops.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	54	98
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	32	90
C. C.H.Sc. Students	77	91
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	38	98
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	47	87
F. G.P.C. Students	76	89
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	42	98
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	82	95
J. State Senior English Teachers	56	95
K. State Students	68	93
AVERAGE	57	93

RESULT SHEET Item No. 22

to use the commas, apostrophes, inverted commas
(speech)

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	44	84
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	26	69
C. C.H.Sc. Students	66	80
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	29	68
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	27	80
F. G.P.C. Students	67	79
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	27	90
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	74	92
J. State Senior English Teachers	46	82
K. State Students	60	95
AVERAGE	46	82

RESULT SHEET Item No. 23

to use colons and semi colons.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	28	52
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	14	62
C. C.H.ScS. Students	58	62
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	22	49
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	20	73
F. G.P.C. Students	57	68
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	11	54
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	45	62
J. State Senior English Teachers	38	67
K. State Students	46	77
AVERAGE	33	63

RESULT SHEET Item No. 24

to take notes from the board.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	42	92
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	44	91
C. C.H.Sc. Students	72	85
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	41	71
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	53	87
F. G.P.C. Students	76	88
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	56	90
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	82	87
J. State Senior English Teachers	67	89
K. State Students	67	98
AVERAGE	60	88

RESULT SHEET Item No. 25

to take notes from text books etc.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	36	66
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	36	80
C. C.H.Sc. Students	62	73
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	37	68
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	87
F. G.P.C. Students	73	82
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	40	84
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	79	85
J. State Senior English Teachers	58	78
K. State Students	61	91
AVERAGE	51	79

RESULT SHEET Item No. 26

to fill in various forms e.g. a lab report.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	46	94
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	46	86
C. C.H.Sc. Students	66	80
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	30	66
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	47	80
F. G.P.C. Students	58	68
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	40	88
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	61	84
J. State Senior English Teachers	56	91
K. State Students	52	80
AVERAGE	50	82

RESULT SHEET Item No. 27

to take dictation from a lecturer.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	50	86
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	34	71
C. C.H.Sc. Students	73	73
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	30	57
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	28	67
F. G.P.C. Students	69	85
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	40	90
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	65	89
J. State Senior English Teachers	31	75
K. State Students	58	78
AVERAGE	47	77

RESULT SHEET Item No. 28

to write simple sentences when occasion demands.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	62	98
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	48	93
C. C.H.ScS. Students	77	89
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	44	97
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	93
F. G.P.C. Students	71	84
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	51	100
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	75	82
J. State Senior English Teachers	71	91
K. State Students	74	84
AVERAGE	60	91

RESULT SHEET Item No. 29

to write compound sentences when occasion demands.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	48	84
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	30	80
C. C.H.Sc. Students	61	79
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	27	82
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	20	30
F. G.P.C. Students	66	80
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	33	86
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	71	81
J. State Senior English Teachers	40	78
K. State Students	53	74
AVERAGE	44	75

RESULT SHEET Item No. 30

to write complex sentences when occasion demands.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	36	74
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	30	60
C. C.H.Sc. Students	53	71
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	24	71
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	20	67
F. G.P.C. Students	56	68
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	20	74
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	55	76
J. State Senior English Teachers	33	75
K. State Students	41	66
AVERAGE	36	70

RESULT SHEET Item No. 31

to write a paragraph when describing, reporting,
explaining.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	40	88
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	34	82
C. C.H.ScS. Students	64	80
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	28	83
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	20	73
F. G.P.C. Students	60	84
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	27	94
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	68	79
J. State Senior English Teachers	44	78
K. State Students	52	88
AVERAGE	43	83

RESULT SHEET Item No. 32

to use interrogative and negative.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	56	100
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	36	77
C. C.H.ScS. Students	70	88
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	46	91
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	27	80
F. G.P.C. Students	67	72
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	50	92
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	70	83
J. State Senior English Teachers	56	89
K. State Students	64	89
AVERAGE	54	86

RESULT SHEET Item No. 33

to use the passive.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	40	76
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	38	70
C. C.H.Sc. Students	70	85
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	29	77
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	77	67
F. G.P.C. Students	66	76
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	33	84
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	70	85
J. State Senior English Teachers	66	87
K. State Students	65	82
AVERAGE	55	79

RESULT SHEET Item No. 34

to write a piece of continuous prose with an
introduction, a main point, a conclusion.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	28	72
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	32	73
C. C.H.Sc. Students	63	81
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	24	73
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	20	67
F. G.P.C. Students	69	90
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	44	90
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	78	88
J. State Senior English Teachers	42	80
K. State Students	52	81
AVERAGE	45	80

RESULT SHEET Item No. 35

to use the library facilities available.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	40	90
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	28	89
C. C.H.Sc. Students	59	72
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	30	83
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	73
F. G.P.C. Students	58	78
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	33	90
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	62	74
J. State Senior English Teachers	56	93
K. State Students	60	90
AVERAGE	45	83

RESULT SHEET Item No. 36

to keep a well-ordered note-book of the work covered
in the semester.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	38	82
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	40	86
C. C.H.ScS. Students	60	78
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	33	88
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	87
F. G.P.C. Students	57	67
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	42	92
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	61	61
J. State Senior English Teachers	78	100
K. State Students	89	87
AVERAGE	53	83

RESULT SHEET Item No. 37to use the language laboratory effectively.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	48	96
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	22	84
C. C.H.ScS. Students	55	86
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	25	45
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	20	73
F. G.P.C. Students	61	81
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	42	80
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	77	82
J. State Senior English Teachers	33	76
K. State Students	62	86
AVERAGE	44	79

RESULT SHEET Item No. 38

to summarise orally.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	46	80
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	36	81
C. C.H.ScS. Students	56	77
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	31	64
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	87
F. G.P.C. Students	62	68
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	36	80
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	70	92
J. State Senior English Teachers	44	85
K. State Students	55	86
AVERAGE	46	80

RESULT SHEET Item No. 39

to summarise in writing.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	38	72
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	34	75
C. C.H.Sc. Students	64	84
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	26	72
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	27	87
F. G.P.C. Students	60	79
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	36	76
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	76	89
J. State Senior English Teachers	35	80
K. State Students	62	92
AVERAGE	45	81

RESULT SHEET Item No. 40

to improve English Language skills by using English Language
newspapers and radio and T.V. programmes

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	60	78
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	36	80
C. C.H.Sc. Students	67	85
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	27	69
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	20	80
F. G.P.C. Students	77	93
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	29	91
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	67	91
J. State Senior English Teachers	47	93
K. State Students	52	93
AVERAGE	48	85

RESULT SHEET Item No. 41

to communicate confidently with different kinds of
people met daily on the campus

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	60	92
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	36	82
C. C.H.ScS. Students	61	86
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	40	64
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	40	73
F. G.P.C. Students	54	79
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	42	78
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	60	87
J. State Senior English Teachers	55	87
K. State Students	60	93
AVERAGE	50	82

RESULT SHEET Item No. 42

to find information on college or departmental
notice-boards.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	44	96
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	44	88
C. C.H.Sc. Students	66	90
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	40	71
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	53	87
F. G.P.C. Students	67	82
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	40	96
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	61	83
J. State Senior English Teachers	51	89
K. State Students	58	92
AVERAGE	52	87

RESULT SHEET Item No. 43

to learn the technical vocabulary for the subjects
to be studied e.g. engineering.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	44	94
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	36	89
C. C.H.Sc. Students	61	59
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	42	75
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	87
F. G.P.C. Students	62	81
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	40	89
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	46	56
J. State Senior English Teachers	44	93
K. State Students	55	92
AVERAGE	46	82

RESULT SHEET Item No. 44

to build a strong foundation by following a course
of mainly 'general' English.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	48	96
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	32	86
C. C.H.Sc. Students	58	82
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	35	84
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	93
F. G.P.C. Students	61	73
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	38	91
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	68	86
J. State Senior English Teachers	62	89
K. State Students	46	82
AVERAGE	48	86

RESULT SHEET Item No. 45

to follow a course of mainly English for Special
purposes (ESP).

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	38	68
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	36	77
C. C.H.Sc. Students	54	70
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	26	44
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	20	40
F. G.P.C. Students	59	80
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	40	76
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	55	65
J. State Senior English Teachers	51	85
K. State Students	55	85
AVERAGE	43	69

RESULT SHEET Item No. 46

to have lecturers who can communicate in Arabic when
there is need to do so.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	24	58
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	58	71
C. C.H.ScS. Students	64	70
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	15	40
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	40	73
F. G.P.C. Students	70	90
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	24	42
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	77	89
J. State Senior English Teachers	42	69
K. State Students	56	76
AVERAGE	47	68

RESULT SHEET Item No. 47

to concentrate on improving listening skills.

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.ScS. English Language Dept.	52	96
B. C.H.ScS. Other Lecturers	42	89
C. C.H.ScS. Students	64	78
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	31	78
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	93
F. G.P.C. Students	60	84
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	44	98
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	70	91
J. State Senior English Teachers	53	91
K. State Students	76	99
AVERAGE	52	90

RESULT SHEET Item No. 48

to concentrate on improving speaking skills

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	50	98
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	44	93
C. C.H.Sc. Students	67	89
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	37	67
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	93
F. G.P.C. Students	68	81
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	31	93
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	70	86
J. State Senior English Teachers	51	98
K. State Students	71	98
AVERAGE	52	90

RESULT SHEET Item No. 49

to concentrate on improving reading skills

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	42	86
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	48	92
C. C.H.Sc. Students	69	84
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	35	92
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	93
F. G.P.C. Students	63	75
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	44	98
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	76	89
J. State Senior English Teachers	49	95
K. State Students	74	97
AVERAGE	53	90

RESULT SHEET Item No. 50

to concentrate on improving writing skills

CONTRIBUTOR	Col.A	Col.B
A. C.H.Sc. English Language Dept.	32	94
B. C.H.Sc. Other Lecturers	44	89
C. C.H.Sc. Students	73	90
D. G.P.C. English Language Dept.	30	96
E. G.P.C. Other Lecturers	33	93
F. G.P.C. Students	54	81
G. U.C.B. English Language Dept.	33	98
H. U.C.B. Other Lecturers	N/A	N/A
I. U.C.B. Students	70	84
J. State Senior English Teachers	49	95
K. State Students	67	94
AVERAGE	49	91

<u>ITEM.</u>	<u>%</u>
1. to read simple instructions well enough to carry them out(11)	95.7 (69)
2. to read questions in order to answer orally or in writing (12)	94.6 (67)
3. to use the common forms of punctuation: capitals and full stops (21)	93.4 (57)
4. to understand,so as to be able to comply with, simple oral instructions and requests (2)	92.8 (71)
5. to concentrate on improving writing skills(50)	91.4 (49)
6. to write simple sentences when occasion demands(28)	91.1 (61)
7. to understand and respond to everyday greetings(1)	91.0 (80)
8. to understand and answer short questions showing ability to recall or deduce information (3)	90.6 (66)
9. to ask for repetition,clarification, exemplification (5)	90.1 (59)
10. to concentrate on improving reading skills(49)	90.1 (53)
11. to read paragraphs of a length and complexity, appropriate to the level of studies,to understand the main facts (13)	89.7 (54)
12. to write legibly,using the common forms - cursive, lower/upper case - where appropriate (18)	89.7 (57)
13. to concentrate on improving listening skills (47)	89.7 (53)
14. to concentrate on improving speaking skills (48)	89.6 (52)
15. to read continuous English in order to pick out a particular piece of information (15)	88.8 (54)
16. to understand and respond to oral corrections (9)	88.2 (62)
17. to present neat,well-ordered work for any written assignment (20)	87.9 (52)
18. to take notes from the board (24)	87.8 (60)
19. to find information on college or departmental notice boards (42)	87.4 (52)
20. to deduce further information from what has been read (14)	86.7 (52)
21. to build a strong foundation by following a course of mainly 'general English' (44)	86.2 (48)
22. to use interrogative and negative (32)	86.1 (54)

23. to read hand-written notes (as on the board or in exercise books) as well as printed material (17)	85.9 (61)
24. to spell accurately (19)	85.7 (47)
25. to improve English Language skills by using E.L. newspapers/radio/and T.V. programmes (40)	85.3 (48)
26. to read charts,graphs,diagrams and the like, understanding both,the contents and their relation to the passage illustrated (16)	84.9 (54)
27. to follow a fifteen minute lecture on a subject other than English,possibly accompanied by visual aids a first semester level,understanding at once the gist of the lecture (4)	84.4 (52)
28. to listen and respond to peers in a lecture or tutorial situation (8)	84.4 (54)
29. to use the library facilities available (35)	83.2 (46)
30. to comment,explain a procedure,give an example, clarify a point (6)	82.9 (50)
31. to write a paragraph when describing,reporting, explaining (31)	82.9 (44)
32. to keep a well-ordered note-book of the work covered in the semester (36)	82.8 (53)
33. to communicate confidently with different kinds of people met daily on the campus (41)	82.1 (59)
34. to use the comma,apostrophe,inverted commas (22)	81.9 (47)
35. to fill in various forms e.g. a lab report (26)	81.7 (50)
36. to learn the technical vocabulary for the subjects to be studied (43)	81.5 (46)
37. to summarise in writing (39)	80.6 (46)
38. to write compound sentences when occasion demands (29)	80.4 (45)
39. to write a piece of continuous prose with an introduction,a main point,a conclusion (34)	79.5 (45)
40. to take notes from text books etc. (25)	79.4 (52)
41. to summarise orally (38)	79.0 (47)
42. to use the language laboratory effectively (37)	78.9 (45)
43. to use the passive (33)	78.9 (56)
44. to discuss e.g. to seek approval of,any assignment given (7)	78.0 (51)
45. to take dictation from a lecturer (27)	77.1 (48)
46. to speak for 2 to 3 minutes on a prepared topic (10)	76.4 (49)
47. to write complex sentences when occasion demands (30)	70.2 (37)

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 48. to follow a course of mainly English for Special
Purposes (ESP) (45) | (69.0) (43) |
| 49. to have lecturers who can communicate in Arabic,
when there is need to do so (46) | (67.9) (47) |
| 50. to use colons and semi-colons (23) | (62.6) (34) |

Section 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This study began with the premise that the level of achievement in English Language skills, among students leaving secondary schools in Bahrain, was not sufficiently high to enable them to make a smooth transition from secondary to tertiary education. It was also postulated that it was possible to establish a consensus of opinion as to what the necessary skills or competencies were. Further, it was assumed that once these competencies had been identified, it would be possible to rank them in some order of importance. Finally, it was felt that some suggestions could be made for the immediate problem facing tertiary institutions: how to find out whether or not secondary-school-leavers for this year were sufficiently skilled in English Language to benefit from tertiary education.

After a careful and comprehensive literature search, a questionnaire was evolved in order to collect the required data. This was carefully analysed. Both the data and the analysis have been presented in the previous chapter. In this section the conclusions and recommendations are presented. This presentation is given with reference to the College of Health Sciences, Manama but it is expected that it will have similar implications for other tertiary institutions, not only in Bahrain but in the other Gulf countries also.

Given the facts of the previous section, it would seem that the conclusions to be drawn are fairly obvious. Basically, the hypotheses on which this study was founded have been proved correct. From this it follows that our present procedures with regard to 'new' students will have to be reviewed in the light of these hypotheses. If adjustments are found to be necessary then they ought to be made.

One of the first areas that will need to be examined is the college entrance examination. If the College wishes to know whether would-be students have the necessary competencies in English Language then it is these competencies that the entrance examination must assess. Using the information from Section 4 above it should be possible to draw up a Table of Specifications along the lines of that on page .Then a similar table might be drawn up for the entrance examination as it stands at present to see how much there is of 'perfectness of fit'. In fact, since the college entrance examination (English) was developed at the same time as, and parallel to, this present study, it is expected there would be a good match. Nevertheless, this match needs to be shown and documented.

However, the matter is not quite so simple as it appears. According to the data collected under ACHIEVEMENT, there are grave doubts among the lecturers in the tertiary institutions as to whether the secondary-school leavers have attained the necessary competencies. So the revised entrance examination might very well be evaluating competencies that were already known to be non-existent. To put it bluntly, the examination would become too difficult and not discriminate enough to be of use. The number of qualified students would be too low to fill the quota of students needed - at present about 120 per annum. Therefore the college would be obliged to take in students who had failed in terms of the newly-identified competencies.

Yet, is there anything new here ? Each tertiary institution regularly admits students whose English Language skills are sub-standard even by the previous ill-defined standards. The proof of this is the feverish remedial work that goes on at the beginning of the first semester, and often, right through the semester, to bring the students to an acceptable level.

At least with the suggested innovations the picture of which essential skills were missing or weak, would be

clearer. This would have an obvious impact on what was to be taught in the remedial sessions and therefore on the materials and methodology used during these sessions. The results could be far-reaching.

It would also make sense to have the college entrance examination earlier than now, preferably, shortly after the Tawjiheah. The advantage would be that the college would know as early as mid-June how far the new group of students needed remedial work. It would then be possible to organise a summer school with a programme specially designed to 'top up' as it were, for skills that were found to be absent or deficient.

This point could be developed further. Since there is close agreement among the tertiary institutions on what constitutes the necessary competencies it should not be beyond their capabilities to devise an agreed Common Entrance Examination. This would be set, administered and corrected by a panel or panels appointed by the tertiary institutions and made compulsory for all students wishing to pursue tertiary education in Bahrain. Thus the Common Entrance Examination would become an integral part of the school year. Which institution the individual student and what mark would be acceptable as a 'pass' would be left up to the candidate and the institution of his/her choice.

To go further still. If it were felt desirable, the tertiary institutions could combine to run whatever improvement courses were necessary, possibly saving time, manpower and expense.

Before leaving this point, it may be as well to address a possible concern of those directly involved with the Tawjiheah English Language examination. They may very well feel that such arrangements as have been suggested for the Common Entrance Examination might, in some way 'downgrade' the importance of the Tawjiheah. This fear and, incidentally, much of the criticism of the Tawjiheah English Language examination, arises from a misconception as to the purpose of each examination.

The Tawjiheah English Language examination is meant to test, in very general terms, language skills acquired over the secondary school period. The Tawjiheah is the formal proof that a student has received a general education and the English Language component is only one among many. The Common Entrance Examination on the other hand would be much more specific. It would answer the question, 'Has this student the skills in English Language necessary to pursue whatever particular path he chooses after secondary school ?' Of course, this path is not necessarily that of higher education. Some students will take up work immediately; others will enter industry and train for a particular task e.g. a telephone operator; others will enter the world of finance - perhaps in a bank position; others could choose a career in tourism and enter the School of Catering.

If the Common Entrance Examination were fully developed as well as having 'common core' sections, it could also cater in alternative sections for the different professions and careers open to secondary school leavers.

Nowadays in Bahrain, despite a continuing tradition of pursuing knowledge for its own sake, the drive is for practical education. Learning English simply because it is 'a good thing' to do so - *ars gratia artis*, as it were, is a luxury that the country can no longer afford. There is a new insistence that the schools teach skills which can be of immediate use. Education is part of the economy; it is an investment. A large number of unemployable, young men and women is dangerous - morally, culturally, and politically. What is true of education in general is also true of English Language. It must be taught in order that it may be used.

Another, though related, conclusion arising from this investigation is that there would need to be changes in the secondary school English Language syllabuses. This is often acknowledged but is difficult to accomplish. However, the entrance examination could be a powerful lever for change. It is a well known fact (Heywood, op.cit.)

that examinations have a great affect on both teaching and on syllabuses. Once a common entrance examination was established, pressures would build up, from students, from parents, from education administrators for much more relevant teaching. Meanwhile, good teachers and well-organised departments would anticipate the students' newly-identified needs and develop the curricula accordingly. A spin-off benefit could be a strong fillip for motivation - of both students and staff.

Another area that needs to be closely examined is that concerned with ACHIEVEMENT, where the study looked at how the success of the secondary school English Language programmes was perceived. According to the findings the perception is low with the overall average mark about 53%. More significant still, there is a sharp difference between the opinions of the lecturers and the opinions of the students. The former recording an average of about 45% and the latter one of about 62%. There is also quite a gap between the opinion of the secondary school teachers and that of the lecturers the figures being 54% and 42%, respectively.

These figures suggest that there should be a much closer liaison between the secondary schools and the tertiary institutions. This, of course, is only re-inforcing what has already been mentioned implicitly in the previous conclusions. But these figures also suggest that at student level also, there is need for more communication. Obviously, the students do not realise how high the standards are that the tertiary institutions demand from them. On the other side of the coin, perhaps, lecturers, out of touch with the realities of the situation in the secondary schools, have allowed their expectations to rise too high. The resulting disillusion on both sides can have a traumatic effect on the early days of tertiary education.

The ACHIEVEMENT scores in the individual competencies are also important. They have a direct bearing on the importance of the competency. For example, it may be

decided that a good starting place for the 'improvement course' might be those competencies where the students themselves feel most need. Alternatively, the opinion of the lecturers' may be given priority especially in the competencies where their EVALUATION is high and their ACHIEVEMENT low.

Although this study had its origins in the needs and experience of the English Language Department in the College of Health Sciences, Manama, Bahrain, it seems clear that the results and conclusions apply also to the other tertiary institutions in the country as well as to the secondary schools. The literature search and resulting correspondence further suggest that the findings of this dissertation investigation might also have implications for other Gulf States where circumstances are similar to those in Bahrain.

If the facts are as this study presents them and if their effects could be so important, then, perhaps, further research is needed, on a wider scale. It may be that under the auspices of some prestigious body such as the Ministry of Education or the British Council, the tertiary institutions of Bahrain, together with the English Language Adviserate from the Ministry of Education and with the cooperation of the Senior English Language teachers in the secondary schools, should form a committee to replicate these studies in a deeper and wider manner than has been possible for one person. Should the findings of this study also be replicated, as seems very likely, then a foundation will have been laid for a changed attitude to English Language learning/teaching which will affect this very important subject for the rest of this present century.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

If the results of this study are valid, then these conclusions follow.

1. A number of fundamental competencies in English Language needed by the student beginning tertiary

education in Bahrain, have been identified and defined.

2. An order of importance or of priority has been imposed on these competencies.
3. There is an instrument ready to test these competencies, though an improved version is expected to be prepared as an integral part of any new programmes arising from the teaching of the newly-identified competencies.
4. Secondary school English Language syllabuses should be reviewed in the light of these competencies.
5. The content and methodology and materials of the present 'remedial' programmes of the tertiary institutions ought to be reviewed in the light of these competencies.
6. There is need for a much greater degree of cooperation between the tertiary institutions themselves and between tertiary institutions and secondary schools.
7. There is room for further research with a view to giving the investigation a national and even regional dimension.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX ACULTURAL SHOCK

TEFL teachers need to know a lot more than the content of their subject and techniques for getting it across. They have to come to terms with the question of cultural shock. This is particularly true for EFL teachers coming to the Arab World. Of course, the "shock" affects both teacher and student but this article only considers the latter.

If I might do so without appearing to be frivolous, I should like to illustrate the point with a story, presumably apocryphal, which I heard as a raw, young EFL teacher, many years ago, in West Africa.

A certain diplomat, educated in Government School, Umuahia, Eastern Nigeria, locally esteemed as "the Eton of the East", was invited by a friend to dine in the restaurant attached to the House of Commons in London. He arrived in perfect regalia: white shirt, grey, three-piece suit, matching tie, highly polished black shoes and white gloves. The effect, however, was somewhat spoiled by the fact that he was wearing his silk top-hat upside down on his head. Swiftly his friend came forward before his guest could get too far inside the dining-room and welcomed him warmly with apparent sang froid. Casually, the host commented, "Oh, by the way, my good fellow, we don't usually wear top-hats in this particular restaurant". "Not to worry, old chap," came the reply. "Can't you see? I'm not wearing it; I'm carrying it."

A perfect illustration of the clash of cultures and the clash of cultures and language.

The teacher of English as a foreign language must be ready to see his teaching in this context. The impact of education in general in the Arab World is causing and paving the way for, considerable changes. Thoughtful Arabs are constantly warning of the possible dangers. Thus, Mr. Faisal Al Faris, director of the Arab States Educational Technology Centre, in Kuwait, declares, "Arab educators have a great responsibility to build a new Arab society and achieve civilised progress," but he strongly supports the principle of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALESCO) that is is important to create an Arab individual, "who is able to play a creative part in the movement and civilisation of this age, while at the same time preserving his moral values, traditions and historical identity." And in a similar vein Dr. Mohammed S. Al Khatani, rector of King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia, says, "Our priority is to produce balanced personalities proud of their Islamic religion, culture and roots. How to achieve this goal is our constant pre-occupation."

Of course, to live is to change and the problem is by no means solely an Arab one. The universal pre-occupation of education is how to ensure change for the better without risking change for the worse. However, for well known historical and economic reasons it is a problem of particular significance to the Arab Nation at present. Tensions abound.

A good example is detailed in a book by Sami Khalil Mari'i, "Arab Education in Israel" (Syracuse University Press) where the author describes the psychological tension in the Arab teachers among the half million or so Arabs in Israel. They are pulled between what Mari'i calls their "Israeliness" - with the emphasis on the modern and the need for progress - and their "Arabness" - with the emphasis on the traditional and the need for a national identity.

A further example comes from the Middle-East Education Magazine for June 1981. It describes the College of Architecture and Planning, at King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia: "With the almost umbilical links between Muslim society and the surrounding environment," fears have been expressed that in the drive to progress, it is not only the older buildings which are being swept away but also the cultural values that they embody and represent. Therefore, the Islamic Architecture Centre is in the forefront of the battle to ensure that despite changes, society's heart - Islam - will remain unchanged. The Islamic Architecture Centre is meant "to nurture and maintain the Islamic way of life and the realisation of the appropriate architecture of Islam. The Arabic house has a common Islamic core."

Parallel to the above is the attitude of Dr. Khalid Al Saif, vice-rector Al Hasa (the University's Agricultural Campus). He claims that, "the Agricultural Department aims to show farmers that modernisation and mechanisation can be achieved without losing sight of the country's Islamic roots."

In their book, "Curriculum and Teacher Education", editors, M.H. Al Afendi and N.A. Baloch (Holder and Stoughton, 1980), summarise the problem very well. "It is nonsense," they say, "to talk of a system of education which implies no ideal of man or society. A moral or normative view is always pre-supposed. When we speak of Islamic education, there is pre-supposed the ideal of a person to which the education is leading, and an ideal of society for which the education is meant to fit the individual member."

The various contributors to the book argue how best to attain the desired ideals and it is interesting and informative to see how views differ from one essay to another. On the one hand, a certain Ustaz Ahmed Al Beely advocates the opinion that "physical sciences have no place in religious secondary schools" and on the other Mr. Abu Ali claims that "the curriculum should consist of all those subjects which can help the student in discovering this talents and abilities and developing them to become a vice-regent of God on this earth."

In the light of all this it is, perhaps, a truism to say that the young Muslim student nowadays is faced with a series of cultural shocks which may vary from slight tremors to ones of earthquake proportions.

Now, somewhere on this scale comes the impact of learning English as a foreign language. How great the impact is depends upon a variety of influences but the EFL teacher should be

constantly aware that in addition to what might be termed "linguistic shocks" that any similar student experiences, Muslim students in particular, may face quite severe cultural difficulties.

On one level, there is the question of course materials. Publishers, naturally, wishing to give their product as wide a market as possible, aim at some kind of world-wide, common denominator - some would say the lowest common denominator. So in their TEFL books there is a quite amazing amount of alcohol. Young men and women socialise quite freely in mixed groups at restaurants, dances and bars. Illustrations suggest fashions that pay scant heed to modesty. There are sometimes unacceptable political overtones and large dollops of the acquisitive materialism of the modern western world. And, of course all the "characters" must like raucous pop music and, preferably, play electric guitars.

In this connection, it was interesting to see a quote from Arthur Jearum, B.B.C. Enterprises, Middle-East Sales Representative, which appeared in the Middle-East Education magazine April, 1980. "At school level, Ministries of Education in Saudi, the U.A.E., and Kuwait, are showing keen interest in our (film) titles in Maths, Natural History, Geography and History - areas where the materials are most unlikely to offend Arab culture and social mores. " He goes on to say, "Nevertheless, the B.B.C. prides itself on its self-censorship ." Yet commerce and idealism are uneasy bed-fellows and many publishers pay only limited lip-service to the need for text books designed solely for the Arab World.

The EFL teacher needs to be fully aware of the cultural cross currents if he does not wish to capsize. From a very simple situation he can contrive an offence - though I must hasten to add that Arab students, at least in Bahrain, are very tolerant of the strange ways of foreigners ! For example, in class recently, I suggested that to practise the difference between the phonemes /p/ and /b/ we might learn a song. I was informed that this would be "haram": First because it was still within the forty day feast of Muharram and secondly because, "singing led to dancing and dancing led to going mad." Rather crudely expressed, the speaker's command of English being still only basic, but very genuine nonetheless.

Or again. I know of one teacher who thought he had hit on a very good way of motivating the students to speak and write English. In fact, he quite scandalised them by suggesting that they write a drama based on the Prophet Muhammed's life and act it on the stage.

The implications that teaching English as a foreign language can have struck me forcibly last year when I was attempting to arrange for groups of students to visit England during the summer to have a working holiday improving their English. One vital aspect I stressed in the letter to the parents was the question of insurance. A comprehensive policy would be their safeguard. Then it suddenly struck me. Should I warn the parents that there was no insurance possible against the influence of new ideas, that these students would learn a lot more than merely English, that they would be "exposed" to many "alien" ideas and influences?

The point is that "cultural shock" goes a lot deeper than the surface of curricula texts or class-room interaction of teacher and student. Again, I should like to illustrate the point with an early experience from West Africa. Our headmaster, a Scot, opposed the introduction of cricket into the school. A real old "colonial type" who had spend many a long year "on the Coast" expressed great surprise at such short-sightedness. "But how," he asked, "can these chaps be said to have learned English if they haven't learned to play cricket?" He was deadly serious. As well he might have been. For English, like any language, is inseparable from the culture which nurtured, and nurtures, it. It is arguable, of course, that the English Language carries two cultures: British AND American. Or even three or more.

It has long been established in Sociolinguistics that a distinction is to be drawn between those who seek a target language merely as a tool - a key to open up a new literature, a kind of computer to provide a new technology - and those who study with a view to assimilation, as for example with may immigrants to America who would even forbid their children to speak their original mother tongue. But between these two extreme positions there are a thousand gradations and there is not one of them which will leave the learner, particularly the young learner, totally untouched, even if it is only to confirm him in his pre-conceived ideas.

It is this fact that the EFL teacher, the students and all those responsible for Arab education must bear in mind. Very few

teachers of English as a foreign language (unlike, perhaps, their French counter-parts?) are likely to view themselves as ambassadors of the English way of life, pioneers in some form of cultural imperialism. Nevertheless, every lesson taught has a potential cultural impact.

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.....

APPENDIX BBAHRAIN THE ISLAND STATE

(adapted from Volume 4, Number 3, THIS IS BAHRAIN, series.)

Bahrain is unique among the Arab States of the Gulf in being an island; in fact an archipelago of 30 small islands with a total area of 255 square miles and a population of around 400,000 (1985 figure). The main islands in the group are Bahrain itself, Muharraq, which contains Bahrain's international airport, Nabih Saleh, Um Nasan and Sitra. The capital city of the state is Manama, situated in the north of Bahrain island which houses around half of the population.

The name, Bahrain, means "two seas" and is a reference to the natural springs of fresh water which are to be found on the island and under the salt waters of the Gulf around its shores. This ready availability of fresh water coupled with the strategic position of Bahrain in the Gulf, has been a major factor in making Bahrain an important commercial centre through the ages. It has wielded an influence out of all proportion to its size.

Thus, it is hardly surprising that present day Bahrain remains a communications and trading centre for the Gulf. Oil was discovered on the island in 1936 and was the first oil to be commercially developed in the Gulf area; but the state's supplies are not huge and, in fact, oil revenue alone would not, today, be sufficient to balance the budget. Bahrain has built a relatively sophisticated infrastructure with heavy industry, commerce, communications and banking all playing a part in the present day prosperity of the nation.

Bahrain was an important transit port in the third millenium B.C. and has been identified as the legendary island of Dilmun mentioned in Babylonian and Sumerian records. The merchants of Dilmun exercised a powerful influence over the sea trade of the Indus valley civilizations.

Throughout the centuries, Bahrain suffered fluctuations of fate as ambitious neighbouring dynasties rose and fell. Although the rulers of Bahrain generally sought peaceful

coexistence with their neighbours, powerful nations, attracted by Bahrain's strategic geographical position and by her wealthy pearling industry, continually vied for control of the island.

Bahrain was invaded at the end of the 8th century by the Assyrians and was later visited by the exploratory expeditions of Alexander. Islam came to Bahrain in 628 A.D. and for the following 305 years Bahrain was ruled by governors on behalf of the Caliphs. Among those who fought for control of Bahrain were the Carmathians, the Omanis, the Portuguese and the Persians. Political stability came to Bahrain only with the conquest and consolidation of the islands under the Al-Khalifas. They came to Bahrain in 1782.

Britain began her association with Bahrain in the 19th century. British influence remained constant until the Declaration of Independence on August 15th, 1971, under the rule of the Emir, Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa. Bahrain became a constitutional emirate in December 1973 and a National Assembly was elected by male adult suffrage. However, the new assembly was unable to co-operate with the government and the Emir acceded to the Cabinet's request to dissolve the Assembly in August 1975 in order to maintain security. A new Cabinet was formed on August 25th, 1975, governing by Amiri decree.

Under this system of government, Bahrain has made many advances. The establishment of the off-shore banking sector and more recently, the provision for off-shore companies to base themselves in Bahrain, are two significant examples of economic development. The Labor Law, Social Insurance Law and the implementation of various orders to regulate commercial activity demonstrate the government's desire to meet the needs of the business sector while placing the highest priority on the needs and protection of the individual.

Government participation in industrial development has also grown. The Bahrain National Oil Company was founded; the Government's stake in the aluminium smelter, Alba, has grown to 57.9 percent; Bahrain has a major stake in the Arab Shipbuilding and Repair Yard, jointly owned

by seven Arab oil exporting countries; the Bahrain Aluminium Extrusion Company, is a 100 percent Government venture; the Government has taken share holdings in important industries, such as United Building Factories, and has assisted private sector developers of hotels, so that temporary financial problems should not deprive the Island of vital facilities in its long-term development.

Bahrain lists twenty commercial banks, thirty representative bank offices, and fifty-three off-shore banking units. Bahrain maintains commercial television stations, transmitting both in Arabic and English. Radio Bahrain is a commercial English-language station; there are six independent Arab weekly newspapers, plus the Gulf Daily news which is an English daily newspaper and the Arabic Akhbar Al-Khalifas published daily.

The excellent internal and external communications systems in Bahrain are operated by Bahrain Telephones and Bahrain International Communications respectively, which were both services of the Cable and Wireless division. Bahrain has several first class hotels and the service and facilities of these hotels are outstanding.

APPENDIX C

The TOEFL: an appraisal*Raymond Traynor*

The TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is a very important examination for students of English as a foreign language. TOEFL results have far-reaching effects, since they are used as criteria to measure achievement and to predict future success by a host of authorities: College Admission Boards, employers, and teachers. However, the TOEFL appears to suffer from some very serious defects. This article attempts to identify and examine these defects, using examples and information from official TOEFL publications. The general conclusion of this investigation is that we ought perhaps not to rely so heavily on the 'evidence of ability' provided by the TOEFL as we may have done in the past.

According to statistics supplied by Pamela J. Sharpe, Director of the American Language Institute of the University of Toledo (Sharpe 1979), 70,000 students from 120 countries take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) every year. The purpose of this article is to ask if the TOEFL really does the job it is supposed to do. The TOEFL's growing importance in developing countries, and especially in the Arab Gulf Region, warrants a closer look at this passport to higher education in the United States and Canada, and in the countries which have followed their educational systems.

Since 1975, the TOEFL, which was established in the early 1960s, has been divided into three sections: (1) listening comprehension, (2) grammatical structure, and (3) reading comprehension.

The listening comprehension section comprises fifty questions. The candidate hears single sentences, or short conversations plus a question, or longer passages with several questions. For each question there is a choice of four answers A, B, C, D, and, having chosen what he or she considers the appropriate one, the candidate fills in, in pencil, the corresponding oval on the answer sheet.

Similarly, for the structure part of the test, there are forty questions, all with four possible answers. The questions cover such basic points as concordance, tense, correct use of prepositions, etc.

For the reading comprehension there are sixty questions. First, vocabulary is tested. In a given sentence one word is underlined. Four possible synonyms are given and the candidate must choose the 'best' answer. Then, there are several passages for comprehension. These range in length from fifty to several hundred words, and in content from advertisements to history and scientific theory. Finally, the candidate may be given a sentence and asked to choose, from among a further four sentences, the one closest in meaning to it.

Answers are either right or wrong, only one letter being acceptable. Since no marks are deducted for wrong answers, candidates are encouraged not to leave any question unanswered—that is, they are encouraged to guess.

When they do so, they have a one-in-four chance of being correct.

When the marks for each of the sections have been added up, the result is a 'raw' score. These raw scores are then, by use of special mathematical tables, converted into TOEFL scores, which range approximately from 214 to 699. There is no passing or failing score on the test, but 490 is considered to be about the mean (Gruber and Gruber 1973:63).¹

Those responsible for administering the TOEFL claim that as a result of these scores they are able to say whether or not a candidate is ready to study at first-degree level in an English-medium university. Most universities in the United States ask non-native speakers of English for a score of 500-plus before granting them admission. A candidate falling between 470 and 500 may be given conditional admission, that is he or she may be admitted subject either to passing a special entrance examination set by a particular university, or to undergoing a special English course given by the university in question.

The TOEFL is a very formidable obstacle which would-be degree-level students have to go through. Many find it an insurmountable obstacle. Others take several years and spend a not inconsiderable amount of money before succeeding. Again, since the TOEFL carries such prestige, it is often used by bodies outside the direct TOEFL orbit to identify 'worthy' students. Thus, a Government Ministry may suggest that, for promotion to a mid-level administrative position, an employee must secure, say, 450 or over in the TOEFL. Or a company may not consider an employee for further technical training overseas, even in countries which do not recognize the TOEFL, unless he or she has secured a given total of marks in the TOEFL.

Yet, despite its obvious importance, the TOEFL has some very serious drawbacks. In the first place, it does not test either ability to speak English or ability to write it, two skills that are essential for anyone embarking on a course of higher studies. Theoretically at least, one could score well in the TOEFL without being able to say a single word in English or write a single word other than one's name.

The standard answer to this criticism is that any student who has developed listening and reading skills to the extent required to score 500 plus in the TOEFL will have developed corresponding speaking and writing skills. It is claimed that 'studies have shown this to be true' (Carroll *et al.* 1967). This may be so. If a student works equally at the four main language skills and is then tested on only two of them, there may well be a close correspondence between the scores on the tested skills and ability in the untested skills. But it is a big 'if'. Experience shows that once a test is established, we very often have the situation where the tail wags the dog. This seems to be true in the case of the TOEFL. Because speaking ability and writing are not tested, they are often neglected in teaching. Students become so mesmerized by the mystical number 500 that they do not want 'to waste time' on skills which do not feature in the examination.

Such an attitude may be deplored, but it is understandable when we consider that most of those taking the TOEFL are workers, not full-time students. They hold down a job during the day and study several evenings a week in their spare time. Often they have family and other commitments also. When a student is preparing for the TOEFL, his or her interest in speaking and writing skills declines in direct proportion to the length of time remaining between the lesson and the examination.

Some of the reasons for not testing speaking and writing are sound. But

they are for administrative convenience, or because of financial constraints or difficulty in framing questions; they are not pedagogical.

The above criticism is borne out by the TOEFL Research Report 4 (Clark and Swinton 1979:1), which admits that the connection between speaking skills and pencil and paper examinations for individual test candidates may be considered 'rather questionable'. Suggestions have been made for establishing an oral component in the TOEFL, but it has not yet materialized.

Another major criticism of the TOEFL is its strong, even intense, cultural bias. It appears to be prepared by Americans for Americans. The point is perhaps best illustrated by considering some of the items taken from the official hand-outs prepared by the TOEFL administrators.

Suppose we classify the items as American, non-American, and neutral. Examples, in order, would be:

American: As owner and editor of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Benjamin Franklin made the periodical popular. (The answer to a structure question.)

Non-American: (a question in listening comprehension) Who developed the kind of cement that is used today? Answer: (a) an Egyptian, (b) an ancient Roman . . .

Neutral: In all organisms, from human beings to bacteria and viruses, the genes, or units of heredity, are composed from nucleic acid. (In this sentence the candidate had to pick out the non-acceptable item.)

Out of the 150 examination questions in the Practice Test in the official TOEFL Test Kit, 30 per cent can be classed as definitely 'American'. This means that a student with a knowledge of American history, American geography, American sport, etc., has a decided advantage, both practically and psychologically.²

Of course, it may be argued that if a candidate is intending to study in the United States then he or she *ought* to be familiar with things American. This may be so, but the TOEFL is not the place to test this kind of knowledge and, in fact, makes no claim to do so.

A third major criticism of the TOEFL is that it is very much a blunt instrument—it has more of the cudgel than of the rapier about it. In the first place, a relatively large number of right answers can be obtained by guesswork. This is a well-known feature of all multiple-choice tests, and there are formulae for taking it into account (cf. Cleary and Hilton 1968). Yet TOEFL actively encourages guessing, and at the lower end of the scale no distinction can be seen between the skilful guesser, who for instance selects one letter, (say A) as the answer to all the questions in a section and secures 25 per cent of the marks available, and the conscientious 'plodder' who has used his or her limited skills to get 25 per cent on merit.

Of course, a counter-argument might be that the TOEFL is not meant for students of such low ability in English. Yet the criticism remains valid that the TOEFL is not a fine measuring instrument, and it also serves as a warning to those who might be inclined to use it with any group of students.

Again, in the multiple-choice format of TOEFL, the candidate's answer is marked totally right or totally wrong. Consider what happens when the distractors include one which is close to being correct. Take, for example, this one from the official Test Kit practice examination, Section 3 (Vocabulary/Reading Comprehension).

Directions: . . . Choose the word which *best keeps the meaning* of the original sentence.

Question 18 Communication is one of the most important *bonds* that hold cultural systems together.

(A) obligations (B) qualities (C) links (D) needs.

To the native speaker, the obvious answer is 'links', and 'qualities' is the least likely. However, in certain contexts 'needs' might very well hold people, and therefore systems, together. Yet the candidate who perceives this is penalized as heavily as the one who, completely at sea, chooses 'qualities'. One's confidence is not restored when the official notes dismiss options (B) and (D) because they do not 'fit grammatically in the sentence'. One wonders why not.

It might be possible to get round this difficulty by assigning *four* marks for the correct choice. Then there would be some leeway for awarding marks to close 'second choices'. This of course would make the examination harder to set and to mark. Further time would be needed to divide each total by four in order to maintain the proportion of marks. In other words, the reason for having multiple-choice questions—administrative convenience—would be very much weakened. But is this not getting to the very heart of what is wrong? The TOEFL appears to take too much account of the convenience element, so that pedagogical considerations suffer.

A more subtle criticism of the TOEFL concerns the Listening Comprehension section. Here the reading 'load' is often so heavy that it distorts the final mark. The following is an example taken from a TOEFL Research Report (Clark 1977:19), where the same point is made.

[Script] Woman: Having answered all the questions, Tom left the room.

- (A) Tom left because all of his questions had been answered.
- (B) As he was leaving the room, Tom answered all the questions.
- (C) Tom left after all of his questions had been answered.
- (D) Tom left after he had answered all the questions.

As well as being able to understand the spoken sentence, the candidate must, in twelve seconds and under examination pressure, be able to read four closely related options, eliminate three, mark his or her answer sheet and be ready to listen to the next question. Similarly, in the longer passages (e.g. an extract from the news, perhaps including a weather or sports report), there seems to be an emphasis on testing memory as much as listening comprehension.

Further, in specific test items there is the question of the similarities or dissimilarities between English and the candidate's native language. Alderman and Holland (1981:31) claim that 'a high proportion of TOEFL items' were 'sensitive to examinees' native languages'. As an example they give an item requiring examinees to choose the response which best kept the meaning of a word in a sentence:

14. The card had *perforations* in the upper left-hand corner.

- (A) holes (B) numbers (C) symbols (D) lines.

Spanish-speaking students, familiar with 'hoyo' and 'perforacion' in their own language, would have an advantage over say, Arabic-speaking stu-

dents. Alderman and Holland also claim in their conclusion that 'statistical procedures now available can isolate [such] instances'. However, they are not very convincing.

Perhaps enough has been said here to suggest that TOEFL results need to be approached with more caution than they are at present. It is probably too much to hope that we can influence what might be called 'the TOEFL establishment'. (It must be remembered that in terms of prestige, influence, and finance, TOEFL is big business.) However, those making decisions about a person's future on the basis of TOEFL results may be induced to think twice. They may be ready to agree with Pike, who did so much to improve the TOEFL, when he facetiously suggests (1979:iii) that the acronym TOEFL closely resembles the German for 'devil' (*Teufel*) and might therefore be loosely translated as 'a devil of a test'. □

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Notes

- 1 Madsen, a noted authority on TOEFL, suggests (1982) that in considering TOEFL scores, we should allow for a standard deviation of plus or minus 25.
- 2 This is so marked that a major publisher is considering bringing out a handbook on 'American culture' to give TOEFL candidates some background reading.

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APPENDIX D

ENGLISH ENTRANCE TEST (JL77-A)

TEST BOOKLET

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TEST

This test is in 3 parts: A Sentence test; multiple choice
 B Cloze test; multiple choice
 C Writing test; picture description

You will have 40 minutes to do the test; 15 minutes for Part A, 15 minutes for Part B, and 10 minutes for Part C. If you finish one part, do not wait but go on to the next part without being told.

In the multiple choice tests, select the best choice and mark the letter on your Answer Sheet, and mark the letter A, B, C or D, and not the words themselves.

Show your answer by putting a thick mark in pencil across the letter, like this: A B ~~/~~ D. If you want to change the answer, change the mark to a cross, and put a mark on the new answer, like this: ~~/~~ B ~~X~~ D.

Please do not write in this Test Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PART A

Look at your Answer Sheet and see how we answer the questions in Part A.

Examples: 1. I want a glass _____ milk.

A. but B. for C. and D. of

2. Snow _____ not fall in summer.

A. does B. do C. didn't D. has

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PART B

Look at your Answer Sheet and see how we answer the questions in Part B.

Examples:

Rain does not often fall _____¹ the
 desert; therefore plants do _____²
 grow there.

	A	B	C	D
1.	to	in	by	with
2.	often	never	soon	not

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PART C

Write as many sentences as you can to describe the four pictures. Some words are given to help you; but you may use any words you wish. Try to make an interesting story from the pictures.

Now please fill in your Name, the Date and your Number on the Answer Sheet, and begin when you are told. Work quickly.

PART A

1. He can do it by himself -----?
 A can't he B isn't it
 C won't he D isn't he

2. It's ----- hot for me to work in here.
 A very B too
 C enough D fairly

3. You aren't going to the cinema, -----?
 A isn't it B can you
 C aren't you D are you

4. In some schools they have to speak ----- English all the time.
 A the B an
 C with D -

5. I always drink tea without ----- sugar.
 A a B some
 C - D a little

6. He ----- captain of the hockey team this year if he hadn't been ill.
 A will have been B would have been
 C would be D is

7. I've lost my purse. Can I ----- some money from you?
 A take B lend
 C borrow D owe

8. She did ----- she was told.
 A as B that
 C this D which

9. The cook was ill, so I had to prepare the meal -----.
 A for me B myself
 C alone D to me

10. Most of the city ----- by an earthquake in 1944.
 A destroyed B has been destroyed
 C was being destroyed D was destroyed

11. As Peter felt sick, the teacher gave him ----- to go home.
 A cause B excuse
 C permission D permit
12. I arrived home very wet because I had ----- my umbrella behind at the office.
 A forgotten B left
 C lost D put
13. ----- the time John was born his father was a farmer.
 A At B For
 C During D On
14. I asked her to ----- me a favour.
 A do B give
 C make D allow
15. The fishermen ----- nothing by the time they returned home.
 A was catching B have caught
 C had caught D had been catching
16. He ----- during the school holidays when he was a boy.
 A was working B has worked
 C has been working D used to work
17. If I haven't arrived ----- six thirty, don't expect me to come at all.
 A by B for
 C on D at
18. She is the only girl ----- I have ever loved.
 A which B -
 C who D what
19. Although the film was good, ----- people came to see it.
 A many B a few
 C few D a little
20. The man sitting next to me on the bus asked if I knew what the ----- to Oxford was.
 A cost B bill
 C ticket D fare

PART B**THE SAHARA DESERT**

Between the Atlantic Ocean and the River Nile is a land of rocks 1 sand. This is the Great Sahara Desert. The Sahara is changing slowly. It does 2 rain there, but men find water 3 the sand. In some places, they pump the 4 to the surface, or they get it from the wells. The water goes 5 the farms in pipes. Farmers can 6 vegetables, fruit and trees. They 7 their crops to the cities in lorries and trains. Men from towns can 8 work in the desert. Parts of the Sahara 9 going to be rich, green places 10 nice towns and farms.

	A	B	C	D
1	on	with	and	in
2	never	some	any	not
3	on	above	with	under
4	water	oil	pipe	river
5	over	to	from	until
6	make	put	grow	get
7	purchase	market	send	see
8	make	give	never	find
9	is	are	will be	were
10	with	and	or	also
	A	B	C	D

A LETTER OF ENQUIRY

Dear Sir,

I am 11 a holiday in London next month and 12 like to take some English lessons whilst there. Having studied English for many years 13 the opportunity to speak it, what I chiefly need is practice in conversation. Will you be 14 any small groups for this purpose? I should 15 to be in a class with students who do not speak my language.

Please 16 me your prospectus and details of fees for a month's course of ten lessons a week. I should 17 be glad to know 18 the school helps students to 19 suitable accommodation in the vicinity.

I should be 20 for an early reply

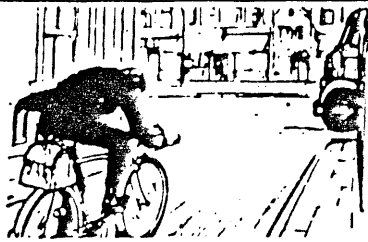
Yours faithfully,

Maria S.

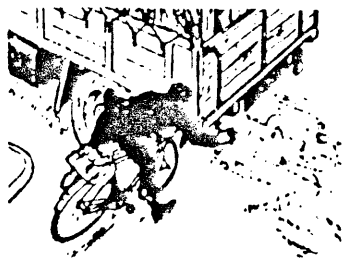
	A	B	C	D
11	going	plan	planning	takes
12	will	should	shall	may
13	without	until	before	with
14	making	arranging	hold	taking
15	want	hate	like	aspire
16	send	deliver	lend	sell
17	therefore	also	too	much
18	why	because	if	how
19	take	unearth	receive	find
20	pleased	grateful	happy	glad
	A	B	C	D

PART C

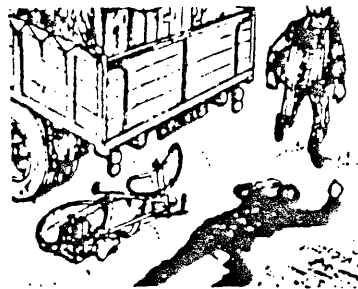
Now write 2 or 3 sentences for each of these pictures, and try to make an interesting complete story from them. The words given with each picture may help you.



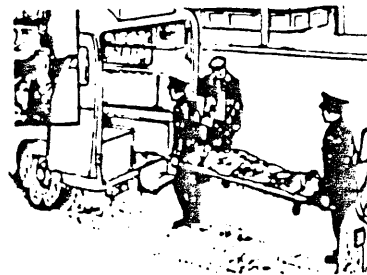
cyclist - ride - fast - road
- main road - traffic



lorry - collide - fall
- accident



injured - unconscious -
damage - driver - help - stop



telephone - hospital - ambulance
- assistants - stretcher -
carefully

ENGLISH ENTRANCE TEST (JL77)
INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION

1. FOREWORD

This booklet has been prepared as a guide to staff administering the English Entrance Test. It includes a description of the test, a guide for administering it, and guidance for marking and interpreting the results. A good deal of care has gone into the preparation of the test and into its trials both overseas and in Britain. IF YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO OBSERVE SCRUPULOUSLY THESE INSTRUCTIONS, PLEASE DO NOT USE THE TEST AT ALL.

2. PURPOSE

We have devised this test to meet a widespread need for the rapid testing in English of large numbers of applicants to language courses. The test is therefore a broad, coarse screening instrument for group testing; it is not designed for making fine diagnostic decisions about individual students, a job best done by detailed diagnostic tests coupled with teacher assessments.

3. THE TEST PACKAGE

The test package is in four parts:

- 3.1 Instructions for Administration
- 3.2 English Entrance Test Booklet
- 3.3 Answer Sheet for Students
- 3.4 Marking Sheets

4. THE TEST COMPONENTS

There are three sub-tests:

4.1 Part A, Sentence Test (15 minutes)

A multiple-choice test of 20 items to test how far testees have mastered common structural and lexical patterns in English

4.2 Part B, Cloze Test (15 minutes)

A multiple-choice test of 20 items based on two continuous passages, one a narrative, the other a letter of application.

4.3 Part C, Writing (10 minutes)

A series of pictures is given to elicit a continuous description of an event. The writing is judged according to a Writing Assessment Scale.

4.4 Important Note

In the test instructions, we refer to the choice of the best response, not the correct one, because some of the alternatives given are in fact grammatically possible. We use the term 'best' - that is, the response most

likely to be used by a competent native speaker - because we wish to test to some extent the ability to judge the appropriateness of a response to its context, not just its formal correctness.

5. TEST ADMINISTRATION

5.1 We repeat the warning that the test instructions must be scrupulously observed - students must be clear about the mechanics of responding and there should be no mistakes in correcting the responses and recording the scores. We say this because in a recent trial we found that virtually every one of 60 papers initially marked by teachers had serious errors in marking and counting responses; in another trial we discovered that the timing instructions for the test had been ignored. It is natural that, under pressure, testers will make mistakes, but these can be considerably reduced by a thorough study of the test instructions and a procedure for checking all marking and counting.

5.2 Student Preparation

Before the test, each student should have a Test Booklet and an Answer Sheet; students should be told that they should write (in soft pencil where possible) on their Answer Sheet and not in the Test Booklet. If this is done, you will be able to economise by using the Booklets several times. It is a good idea to translate the instructions on the first page of the Test Booklet into the major local language(s) to be certain that all students are quite clear about how to do the test.

5.3 Conduct of Test

After giving the Test instructions, tell the students to begin, noting down:

- the time of starting (eg 1010)
- the time 15 minutes later when students are told to go on to Part B (eg 1025),
- the time 30 minutes later when they are told to go on to Part C (eg 1040)
- the time 40 minutes later when they are told to stop writing (eg 1050)

Students who finish before time may leave as long as they hand in their Answer Sheets and Booklets. Under no circumstances should Answer Sheets or Booklets be allowed to leave the test room.

If possible, two members of staff should supervise each group so that it is ensured that all students are responding correctly and that they are working independently of each other.

6. MARKING

6.1 The best method of marking is to use the transparent marking sheet. Copies can be made on plain paper and windows can be cut with a sharp blade. The worst way is to mark from a list of accepted answers as many slips occur between list and Answer Sheet. (See Answers in Table V)

Count one point for every square with a diagonal line (/) in it. Give no points for a blank square, or one with a cross (X) in it.

6.2 Raw scores for Part A and Part B are entered in the spaces provided at the top of each Answer Sheet. Add together the scores for A and B and convert into the standard 'L' score.

6.3 Writing is judged on impression using the Writing Assessment Scale given below in Table III. There is no need to mark errors, punctuation and so on. Just decide which band is the appropriate one; an independent second assessment is a useful check and subsequent comparison with 'L' scores is also useful.

6.4 A reminder - it is prudent to have all marking, assessment, counting and conversions checked independently.

7. CONVERSION FROM RAW TO 'L' SCORES

Scores on tests A and B can be converted to standard scores 0 - 99 to fit into ten competence levels. The highest levels, 90 - 99, relating to very competent native speaker performance and the lowest levels, 0 - 9, relating to non-speakers of English. A Conversion Table from raw to standard 'L' scores is shown in Table I below.

8. WRITING ASSESSMENT SCALE

The writing is judged on a similar scale but reduced by a factor of 10. The range is from 'Educated Native Writer' at Band 9 to 'Illiterate in English' at Band 0. It will be seen that the 'L' scores on Tests A and B are therefore comparable with performance on the Writing Scale in that an 'L' score of, say, 45 is in the same Band as a Writing Assessment of 4. It would be possible to break down the Writing Scale further, using, say, 5.8 as a good 5 rating and 5.2 as a low 5 rating but human assessments are not usually so refined as this and we do not recommend the use of such a refinement. The Writing Assessment Scale is to be seen in Table III below and the Conversion Table for the Writing Test is given in Table II

9. GENERAL COMPETENCE SCALE

What we need from our tests is an assessment of General Competence (rather than a detailed diagnostic description of strengths and weaknesses). If we combine our Test scores (on tests A and B) with our Writing Scale performance (on test C) we will get a broad assessment of general language competence in Bands 0 to 9. The General Competence Scale with language tuition needs is described in Table IV below.

10. INTERPRETATION OF SCORES

To get an overall assessment of a student's competence, we combine the 'L' Score with the Writing Scale Assessment. All we have to do is to average the A + B 'L' score, and the Writing 'L' score. Here are examples of score interpretations.

Student	<u>A + B</u> <u>'L' Score</u>	<u>Writing</u> <u>'L' Score</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Level</u>
X	70	70	70	Competent non-native (Band 7)
Y	53	50	52	Marginal Communicator (Band 5)
Z	42	40	41	Limited Communicator (Band 4)
W	28	20	24	Beginner Level (Band 2)

11. USE OF SCORES

Much work remains to be done in interpreting the scores of the test, but we put forward at this stage some tentative assumptions about how to relate the scores to the length of course needed by a student.

10.1 It should take about 150 hours to move from one band to the band above. That is, 6 weeks of full-time teaching and 1 year plus of 4 hours per week teaching.

10.2 To communicate without problems in a native-speaker environment requires competence at about Band 7.

10.3 Examples

- A student at Band 2 at present wishes to communicate effectively and without problems in an English-Speaking environment. He has to move from Band 2 to Band 7. What course would he need, first, full-time, secondly part-time at 4 hours per week? He has to improve 5 bands i.e. 750 hours. This could represent 30 weeks of full-time teaching or 4 plus years at 4 hours per week.
- A student at Band 3 at present wishes to manage fairly well in English, but is prepared to put up with blocks in communication at times. He has to move from Band 3 to Band 6. He needs a course of minimum 450 hours; that is 18 weeks, full-time or rather less than 3 years part-time at 4 hours a week.

10.4 Reservations

- We give the progress formulae above with considerable reservations, as much will depend on the efficiency and relevance of the language course, the capability and application of the student and the opportunity he may have for picking up English outside the teaching programme. We would allow a margin, plus and minus, of 25% for such factors.
- Considerable economies can be effected if the communicative needs of the learners can be precisely estimated. If, for example, a student has a known requirement for studying texts in his own subjects and does not require listening, speaking or writing skills in English, there can be drastic reductions in the time needed for tuition.

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7 December 1977

TABLE I CONVERSIONS TABLES FOR TOTAL PARTS A + B

SCORES		SCORES	
RAW	'L'	RAW	'L'
40	75 (or above)	20	36
39	73	19	35
38	70	18	34
37	68	17	32
36	66	16	30
35	63	15	29
34	61	14	28
33	59	13	26
32	57	12	25
31	55	11	24
30	53	10	23
29	51	9	22
28	49	8	21
27	47	7	20
26	45	6	18
25	43	5	16
24	42	4	14
23	40	3	12
22	39	2	10
21	38	1	8
		0	7 (or below)

TABLE II CONVERSION TABLE PART C - WRITING

RAW RATING	'L' SCORE	RAW RATING	'L' SCORE
9	95	4	45
8	85	3	35
7	75	2	25
6	65	1	15
5	55	0	5 (or less)

TABLE III

WRITING ASSESSMENT SCALE

BAND	EDUCATED NATIVE WRITER. Could write a good letter to 'The Times' of interest, relevance and attractiveness. No stylistic restrictions or errors (apart from 'slips') [eg] Graduate teacher, professional man, no English tuition needed.
9	
8	<u>NATIVE WRITER OR EQUIVALENT.</u> Could write an essay, article or thesis in his own subject. May have occasional infelicities and restrictions in stylistic flexibility. No real errors. Communicates effectively. [eg] Keen Polish lecturer, foreigner partly educated in the UK, or with British Spouse. No English tuition needed.
7	<u>COMPETENT BUT RECOGNISIBLY NON-NATIVE WRITER.</u> Can write a fair essay or letter. Can take good useable notes for his studies. May need occasional correction re style and usage. No real communication problems re the essential thread of his message. Fair, but not perfect use of idiom. [eg] Good overseas EFL Student above FCE standard, Nigerian ESL student. Exposure to English medium studies will provide adequate orientation. No special English lessons needed.
6	<u>OBTAINING NON-NATIVE BUT BROADLY COMMUNICATIVE.</u> Can write a school essay of relevance and some interest but with several errors and infelicities. However, can keep main thread of argument/description going. Quite restricted re idiom and lexis. [eg] FCE level year candidate, good Saudi Arabian student who has benefited from a semester or so of special English. Will probably need an induction course of about a month to face full English medium studies.
5	<u>MARGINAL COMMUNICATOR.</u> Reasonable fluency and confidence to try, but will have grammatical errors and inconsistencies. Limited re style, idiom and lexis and not fully fluent. Language errors, however, will not grossly impede flow or thread. Lacks precision in parts. [eg] Average intermediate student; needs substantial pre-course English to assume full benefit of English medium teaching.
4	<u>LIMITED COMMUNICATOR.</u> Thread of essay is broken, may backtrack and pad out irrelevantly, but can sustain idea for at least 2 or 3 sentences. Will have errors in usage and a great restriction of style/idiom. [eg] Average secondary student in the common ESL situation. Will need major pre-course tuition if indeed it is thought an English medium pathway is feasible.
3	<u>OVERALL NON-COMMUNICATOR.</u> Can copy. Can string together a few simple sentences; likely to contain at least one error per sentence. Does not convey at all precisely the meaning or sustain the thread. Handwriting probably faulty. [eg] Low average secondary student or slow learner on English course. Intensive in-country English course needed before risking English medium studies, especially in UK.
2	<u>ALMOST ILLITERATE IN ENGLISH.</u> Can copy simple words or very short sentences and take a few words from dictation, but cannot write a sentence of any length. Frequent errors, no real communication; spelling and hand writing probably very poor. [eg] Mid-secondary student with poor ESL teaching, or former learner who has forgotten earlier skills. No chance of English medium education.
1/0	<u>ILLITERATE IN ENGLISH.</u> May know some letters or a few words; can't even copy with any accuracy. [eg] Cook/driver without secondary education. No chance whatsoever of English medium education for a very long time.

TABLE IV

GENERAL ASSESSMENT SCALE

BAND	COMPETENCE DESCRIPTION	REMARKS
9	Very competent native user.	No language problems.
8	Ordinary native user or high level non-native user. Advanced level.	No language problems, but may benefit from improved study skills in English.
7	Competent but recognisably non-native user. Competent level.	Main problems are of fluency and style in using English.
6	Broadly communicative user, but limited in style, fluency and accuracy. Higher Intermediate level	Will require assistance both as to language correctness and its use in day-to-day communication.
5	Marginally communicative, with gaps in language competence. Intermediate level.	Can manage/survive, but will have usage and style errors and difficulty in keeping up in day-to-day communication
4	Limited communicator with very uneven level of accuracy and fluency. Basic level.	Has constant difficulty in following and communicating in day-to-day English. Will need extended remedial work.
3	Overall non-communicator, little better than a beginner; possibly however a 'false beginner'.	Can get snatches of the meaning of a dialogue. Quite unable to hold his own in English. Systematic extended course needed, including basic English usage.
2	Knows a little English but has no real ability to communicate except in simplest of terms. Beginner.	Requires a course as if he were a beginner, with a systematic start on all basic language elements.
1/0	Non-speaker of English; may not even recognise text or speech to be in English. Beginner level.	May know 1 or 2 greetings ('por favor!') and words but not a user of English in the accepted sense.

TABLE V

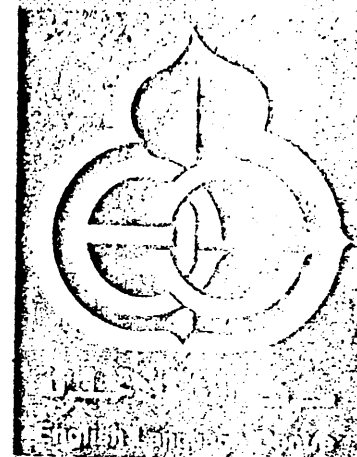
ACCEPTED ANSWERS

ITEM NO PART 'A'	BEST ALTERNATIVE	ITEM NO PART 'B'	BEST ALTERNATIVE
1	A	1	C
2	B	2	D
3	D	3	D
4	D	4	A
5	C	5	B
6	B	6	C
7	C	7	C
8	A	8	D
9	B	9	B
10	D	10	A
11	C	11	C
12	B	12	B
13	A	13	A
14	A	14	B
15	C	15	C
16	D	16	A
17	A	17	B
18	B	18	C
19	C	19	D
20	D	20	B

APPENDIX EELC
HANDBOOK

3

ASSESSMENT



King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah,
Saudi Arabia. P.O. Box 1540

1. ELC ASSESSMENT POLICY

All ELC course programmes are designed, in consultation with the Colleges and Departments we serve, to cater to the specific language and academic skills needed by particular students. Certain linguistic and study skills are thus identified as necessary for any student to participate in and complete the tasks he has to encounter within a University where English is a medium of instruction and/or communication. These skills are then codified into a set of objectives which form the specifications for each language programme.

Course programme design, then, is based on as realistic and as practical a set of objectives as possible. Our assessment policy is also generated by these objectives and seeks only to discover how far at any time in his ELC career a student has progressed towards successful attainment of the objectives laid down by his study programme.

A student's study programme ends at the point where he is seen to have reached the requisite standard of achievement to enable him to participate without undue difficulty in whatever English medium areas are agreed upon between the University and ELC.

This is not to say that his English language studies are then completed but that it is henceforth more efficient for him to extend his competence by taking up his main University role without the benefit of further formal ELC support. However, more specialised and individualised support - for example, with particular study problems or the writing of a particular dissertation - can be extended to any student who seeks it in the later years of his University career.

2. ELC BANDING SYSTEM

How is it possible to decide, at any point, whether a student has reached "the requisite standard of achievement"?

Our answer can only be given in terms of our banding system.

The idea of language ability bands was an early legacy to the ELC from the British Council's Language Testing Service. We have adapted the idea to fit our purposes and it now forms the backbone of all ELC assessment schemes.

In a banding system, the complete range of language ability - from absolute beginner to educated native speaker - is divided into nine bands, each one representing a distinct, discernible and describable level of ability. An early example of a British Council 'band sheet' is shown opposite. It conflates all areas of language ability into each short description and adds some very general remarks mainly on language training requirements.

As it stands, it constitutes a rather blunt 'all-purpose' instrument with no precise function or means of application.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT SCALE

BAND	COMPETENCE DESCRIPTION	REMARKS
9	Very competent native user.	No language problems.
8	Ordinary native user or high level non-native user. Advanced level.	No language problems, but may benefit from improved study skills in English.
7	Competent but recognisably non-native user. Competent level.	Main problems are of fluency and style in using English.
6	Broadly communicative user, but limited in style, fluency and accuracy. Higher Intermediate level.	Will require assistance both as to language correctness and its use in day-to-day communication.
5	Marginally communicative, with gaps in language competence. Intermediate level.	Can manage/survive, but will have usage and style errors and difficulty in keeping up in day-to-day communication
4	Limited communicator with very uneven level of accuracy and fluency. Basic level.	Has constant difficulty in following and communicating in day-to-day English. Will need extended remedial work.
3	Overall non-communicator, little better than a beginner; possibly however a 'false beginner'.	Can get snatches of the meaning of a dialogue. Quite unable to hold his own in English. Systematic extended course needed, including basic English usage.
2	Knows a little English but has no real ability to communicate except in simplest of terms. Beginner.	Requires a course as if he were a beginner, with a systematic start on all basic language elements.
1	Non-speaker of English; may not even recognise text or speech to be in English. Beginner level.	May know 1 or 2 greetings ('por favor!') and words but not a user of English in the accepted sense.

The next step - both for the Council and for ourselves - was to clarify the function (or functions) of the instrument and to sharpen its applicability. It was necessary to produce less ambiguous, more useable descriptions of language ability which could be applied to particular groups of foreign learners with the greatest possible degree of accuracy.

The close link desired between course objectives and assessment schemes at ELC has already been mentioned (p.1). Linguistic and study skills are acquired by the student for the specific purpose of being able to cope with University level study tasks. Thus, the student's ability to complete the requisite tasks becomes the guiding principle behind both the production of course materials and course assessment instruments.

Once the above principle is established, it becomes clearer that a band sheet needs to describe not only the ability of the student, but also the tasks which he is to attempt. The principle gave rise to the generalised 'Band Sheet X' shown opposite, which could be used quite easily for generating specific band sheets for any particular type of task. The left hand side of the sheet is constant and does not change from sheet to sheet. Only the right-hand side, the enumeration of observable tasks which exemplify the skills being taught, needs to be filled in and used for assessing student progress in any particular area of study.

It will be noted that the idea of bands has already been moderated to the extent where 'half-bands' can be employed and readily distinguished according to 'quality of performance'. ELC band sheets only need to cover bands 3-7 inclusive since students above or below these ability levels are excluded or do not require our services.



Band Sheet 'X'

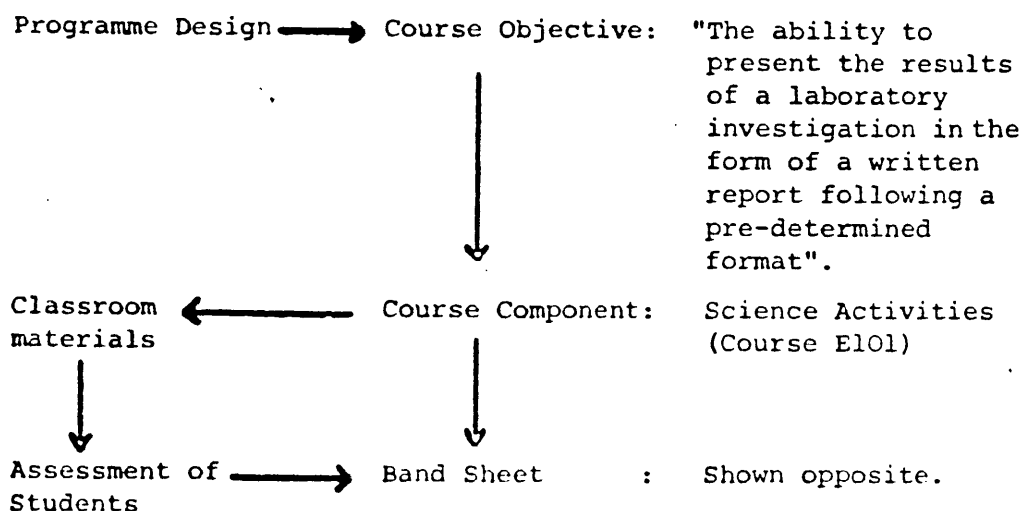
BAND	PERFORMANCE		TASKS
7.5	excellent		tasks pertinent or equivalent to level required during Senior Years at KAAU Faculty. (Examples to be listed: 'open-ended' tasks requiring evaluative powers from students.) Key Task: Evaluating
	good		
7.0	adequate		
	poor		
6.5	excellent	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	tasks pertinent or equivalent to level required for 1st or 2nd Year Studies at KAAU Faculty. (Examples to be listed: 'unguided' but not 'full-length' tasks.) Key Task: Explaining
	good		
6.0	adequate	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	
	poor		
5.5	excellent	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	limited tasks incorporated in 101/102-type ELC courses. (Examples to be listed: tasks at 'paragraph-level' and 'guided' tasks.) Key Task: Describing
	good		
5.0	adequate	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	
	poor		
4.5	excellent	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	restricted tasks incorporated in 101/102 type ELC courses (Examples to be listed: tasks at 'sentence-level'.)
	good		
4.0	adequate	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	Key Task: Recording information
	poor		
3.5	excellent	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	severely restricted tasks incorporated in 001/101 type ELC courses (Examples to be listed: tasks below 'sentence-level'.)
	good		
3.0	adequate	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	Key Task: Listing, Copying
	poor		

The link between course objectives and assessment schemes can now be exemplified in more detail.

In most cases, course programmes give rise to course 'components' - the practicable pedagogical realisations of the objectives of that course. Each of these components will normally realise one 'macro-task' - a major English-medium study situation which the student will encounter during his University career.

The macro-task can then be split up into smaller tasks - or sometimes levels of task completion - which can be sequenced into ascending band levels corresponding to the generalised scheme shown on the previous page. These 'smaller' tasks are then written into a band sheet, to be used alongside course teaching materials, for assessing a student's progress towards the goal of being able to perform the macro-task outlined.

An example of a course objective (from ELC Engineering programme) is given below. The course component is then named and the corresponding band sheet is shown opposite.





Band Sheet Science Activities

BAND	PERFORMANCE		TASKS
7.5			
7.0			
6.5	excellent good	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	To investigate a limited but <u>divergent problem using predetermined means: write a full report with some assistance.</u> - to discuss the problem and decide on relevant strategies, data collection etc. - to evaluate errors, suggest improvements etc. of experiment design - to incorporate textbook information in the report.
6.0	adequate poor	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	
5.5	excellent good	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	<u>To follow specific instructions, perform a convergent investigation; write a full formal report</u> - to draw limited conclusions from the experiment. - to write up the report with few or no language errors.
5.0	adequate poor	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	
4.5	excellent good	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	<u>To follow a series of simple instructions in a lab situation. To write the main sections of a formal report following standard procedure with language guidance.</u> - to collect and record experiment data - to perform simple data processing (e.g. plotting graphs, tabulating data etc.)
4.0	adequate poor	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	
3.5	excellent good	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	<u>To follow simple instructions under supervision. To carry out a simple experiment with assistance.</u> - to list simple data given. - to use standard headings of elementary report. - to copy or complete short, guided report with assistance.
3.0	adequate poor	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	

It is possible to go one step further with the use of band sheets. Apart from being assessed continuously by their tutors on their weekly or fortnightly work, students are also subject to end-of-semester examinations.

Given that a course component follows a definite objective and that a band sheet clearly charts the tasks the student performs, it is a comparatively easy matter both to write valid tests to confirm their level of achievement and to produce the band sheet to check their performance. Page nine shows a band sheet of the most detailed kind - that used for 'marking' a specific end-of-semester English test. No numerical marking of test papers is required. Test papers are graded by 'band score' only, each paper being assessed by two individual markers using the same band sheet.

N.B. It will be noticed that the band sheets on pp. 7 & 9 do not include descriptions above band 6. Science report writing to 'a pre-determined format' can only be considered a task 'pertinent or equivalent to the level required for 1st or 2nd year studies at KAAU'. Later in their Engineering English programme students go on to 'Project work' - which includes a report - which taxes the student's abilities to perform his own research through English and form his own conclusions at a level more appropriate to independent University-type study (band 7 level). This further course component has its own objectives and band sheet.



Band Sheet 'Variation of Temperature with Pressure'-
Report-Writing Test. (E101)

BAND	PERFORMANCE		TASKS
7.5			
7.0			
6.5	excellent		Communicates a significant conclusion to the report including: a) pressure is directly proportional to temperature. b) numerical value for slope of graph (approx. 0.045 lbs/in²). c) °C Absolute Zero is approx. -250°C to -330°C. NB: Check this value is obtained from graph.
	good		
6.0	adequate		
	poor		
5.5	excellent	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	Can communicate the two aims of the experiment. Can communicate the major parts of procedure section.
	good		
5.0	adequate	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	Includes a statement that pressure is proportional to temperature.
	poor		
4.5	excellent	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	Completes the graph as stated. (pressure on 'y' axis; temperature on 'x' axis. Straight line through four points extended to cut 'x' axis.)
	good		
4.0	adequate	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	Includes readings of temperature and pressure and how temperatures were obtained, i.e. ambient, boiling water, ice and water, salt and water.
	poor		
3.5	excellent	can attempt higher level tasks with some success	Produces the format and headings of formal report. Lists apparatus used.
	good		
3.0	adequate	cannot attempt higher level tasks with any success	Completes table of results.
	poor		

APPENDIX F

STATE OF BAHRAIN
MINISTRY OF HEALTH
COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

English Language
General Competence Placement Test

Name: _____

Date: _____ Telephone No: _____

Instructions:

There are four parts to the test:

- A. Structure : Questions 1 - 20
B. Listening Comprehension : Questions 21 - 42
C. Reading and Vocabulary : Questions 43 - 57

For each question, **choose the best answer**. Write the letter of the answer - A, B, C, or D in the space on the right of the page.

D. Continuous Writing

DO NOT BEGIN ANY PART OF THE TEST UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.
If you finish a part before time, revise **THAT PART ONLY**.

There are 15 minutes for each section.

<u>For Office Use</u>					
GCPT 3/06.85	PART A	PART B	PART C	PART D	TOTAL
Score					
Possible Total	20	20	20	40	100
Corrected By					
Checked By					

Part A Choose A, B, C, or D

Answers

1. Layla is the window at the garden.
 a. looking over b. looking through
 c. looking at d. looking after 1. ____

2. He is going to sell the car he for ten years.
 a. had driven b. is driving
 c. has been driving d. drives 2. ____

3. is the name of that student?
 a. Who b. How
 c. Whose d. What 3. ____

4. This new book next month.
 a. will be taught b. has been taught
 c. is taught d. will teach 4. ____

5. They are running they can.
 a. as fast as b. faster
 c. faster than d. the fastest 5. ____

6. There isn't enough tea for everyone, ... ?
 a. is it b. isn't there
 c. isn't it d. is there 6. ____

7. He never his family on Fridays.
 a. seen b. visits
 c. visiting d. is seeing 7. ____

8. National day is December 16th.
 a. at b. on
 c. in d. until 8. ____

9. There aren't people waiting.
 a. some b. few
 c. none d. many 9. ____

10. If you worked harder, you the tests much easier.
 a. would find b. would have found
 c. will find d. found 10. ____

Part B

Choose A, B, or C

Example:Answers

- a. Jamila will find the test difficult.
 b. The rest of the class will find the test hard.
 c. Jamila will find the test easy
-

21. a. We intend to visit Oman soon.
 b. We went to Oman last year.
 c. We have not visited Oman yet. 21. ____
22. a. I need a watch.
 b. I am a very busy person.
 c. I do not like studying English. 22. ____
23. a. My sisters never cook well.
 b. In our family we have two cooks.
 c. My mother is the best cook in the family. 23. ____
24. a. I have been to London.
 b. I went to London last year.
 c. I am not in London yet. 24. ____
25. a. There are no roads in the south of the island.
 b. Not many cars go to the south.
 c. No one can drive in the desert. 25. ____
26. a. He was going to the sea.
 b. He crossed the road near the sea.
 c. He walked along the edge of the sea. 26. ____
27. a. The time was 8.45 a.m.
 b. The time was 8.15 a.m.
 c. The time was 7.45 a.m. 27. ____
28. a. Ahmed will not watch television.
 b. Ahmed watches television after dinner.
 c. Ahmed likes to watch television at dinner time. 28. ____
29. a. The man wants to know the time the car was bought.
 b. The man wants to know the reason the car was bought.
 c. The man wants to know the place the car was bought. 29. ____
30. a. I now know how to write English.
 b. I'm still learning English.
 c. I have stopped going to classes. 30. ____
31. a. Yes, they have.
 b. No, they are clever.
 c. Yes, they are. 31. ____

32. a. The clerk will deliver the papers.
b. The clerk will bring the papers from the office.
c. The office will send papers to the clerk. 32. ____
33. a. Mona is never late for work.
b. Mona never goes to work after 7.00 a.m.
c. Mona is always late for work. 33. ____
-
34. a. It's gone to the garage.
b. It's probably got no petrol in it.
c. It must be too old. 34. ____
35. a. She won't go to the beach.
b. She'll go to the beach.
c. We are not told. 35. ____
36. a. The man's glasses.
b. The man's book.
c. We are not told. 36. ____
-
37. a. Airports in the Gulf.
b. What people think about Bahrain airport.
c. Bahrain airport and the different airlines. 37. ____
38. a. Good service
b. The best tickets.
c. Many aeroplanes. 38. ____
39. a. Ten.
b. Fewer than ten.
c. At least ten. 39. ____
-
40. a. He will go to America.
b. He is not sure.
c. He won't go to Kuwait. 40. ____
41. a. Kuwait.
b. Bahrain and Kuwait.
c. America. 41. ____
42. a. No.
b. Yes.
c. We are not told. 42. ____
-

STOP

STOP

STOP

STOP

STOP

STOP

Part C

Read the following paragraph and answer the questions which follow.

I was in the desert last Friday with my family. We were surprised at the amount of wildlife there. We saw several different flowers, and my children chased small animals like lizards. When we sat down to eat a little food, ants and birds tried to share our meal. High over our heads a falcon flew in circles.

43. Which of the following describes the passage **best**.

- a) There was more life in the desert than we expected.
- b) My family and I had a nice picnic in the desert last Friday.
- c) Children can enjoy themselves on an outing in the desert.
- d) There are more birds than animals in the desert in Bahrain.

43. _____

44. What does the last word in the second sentence refer to?

44. _____

45. Which word in the passage means "more than two"?

45. _____

46. In this passage, which of the following is **nearest in meaning** to "a little food".

- a) some food but not much.
- b) not enough food for us.
- c) hardly any food.
- d) not enough food to share.

46. _____

47. Which of the following is **nearest in meaning** to the last sentence?

- a) The falcon flew just above our heads waiting for food.
- b) The falcon was ready to attack the birds sharing our food.
- c) The falcon was flying over our heads waiting to catch lizards.
- d) The falcon was flying round and round high in the sky.

47. _____

48. When the sea is rough, the waves can be
- a. tiny b. huge
c. sharp d. smooth
49. When it rains, the roads become
- a. hard b. wet
c. rough d. heavy
50. Diseases of the lung are often caused by
- a. exercise b. breathing
c. accidents d. smoking
51. Most people travelling in buses are
- a. passengers b. drivers
c. Bahrainis d. students
52. Our beaches have recently been made unhealthy by
- a. traffic b. policemen
c. fish d. pollution
53. If you are about to leave, you will
- a. leave in a moment b. go back again
c. turn round d. leave later
54. We have our food cooked so that it will not be
- a. burned b. eatable
c. raw d. cold
55. When people get promoted, they
- a. get less wages b. must go on holiday
c. get a more important job d. lose their jobs
56. When a person makes a good living, it means that he
- a. takes care of his health b. lives in a clean house
c. earns enough money to live well d. spends money very carelessly
57. A thermometer is normally used for
- a. giving injections b. taking temperatures
c. giving blood d. checking pressure

STOP

STOP

STOP

STOP

STOP

Part D

In this part of the test, you have to show how well you can write in English. Choose **only one** of the titles offered. Write **about 100** words.

Write the title here:

[illegible]

GENERAL COMPETENCE
PLACEMENT TEST (ENGLISH)
INSTRUCTIONS TO MARKERS

1. One mark is given for each of the correct answers in the Multiple Choice questions. (Answer sheet attached).

(Cut-out marking sheets are recommended.)

Marks should be entered in the appropriate boxes on the Student's Answer Booklet.

2. For the written part you must familiarise yourself with Band descriptions attached. For each script, assign a Band number. Be exact. Use the decimal point. For instance if you think a piece of written work is almost Band 4 but not quite, you would give 3.9, or 3.8. If it is clearly 4. You might give 4.5, or 4.6.

Two markers should read each script. If there is a difference of more than 0.5 in the marks given, then the scripts must be reviewed by a third marker. If no consensus is reached, the average mark will be awarded.

3. When the Band mark for the written work has been ascertained, a mark will be awarded out of 40 according to the writing Band Conversion Table attached.

4. Interpretation of Marks

Since we are dealing with General Competence, the mark may be considered as a straight percentage with no pass mark fixed. The pass mark will depend on the Band required and this will be found by consulting the General Band/Score Sheet.

However, since experience shows there is often a big difference between writing and other skills, the two may be considered separately. Thus a candidate may be required to have Band 4 in writing skills but Band 5 in the other skills.

G.C.P.T. III (06/85)

Answers

Part A 1 Mark each

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. D | 11. C | 16. D |
| 2. C | 7. B | 12. C | 17. B |
| 3. D | 8. B | 13. C | 18. B |
| 4. A | 9. D | 14. B | 19. C |
| 5. A | 10. A | 15. D | 20. B |

Part B 1 Mark each

- Example A }
 21. C } Don't include in marks
 22. B }

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 23. C | 28. B | 33. A | 38. A |
| 24. C | 29. A | 34. B | 39. C |
| 25. B | 30. B | 35. C | 40. B |
| 26. A | 31. C | 36. A | 41. C |
| 27. C | 32. A | 37. C | 42. A |

Part C 2 Marks each

43. B
 44. the desert
 45. several
 46. A
 47. D

1 Mark each

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 48. B | 53. A |
| 49. B | 54. C |
| 50. D | 55. C |
| 51. A | 56. C |
| 52. D | 57. B |

BAND	COMPETENCE	REMARKS
1.	No competence. Complete beginner	Earliest extension class.
2.	Beginner. Can communicate in greetings and very simple question/answer situations. Some reading comprehension. Virtually no writing skills.	Early extension classes.
3.	Uses English only reluctantly for communications. In simple slowly-paced speech situations can listen well. Halting in replies. Can read in the 1,000 word list but writes very poorly.	M.E.(Vocational) Class or corresponding extension classes.
4.	Limited communicator outside the classroom. Fair listening and reading ability but uncertain in speech and more so in writing.	
5.	Familiar enough with English to communicate but does so with limited fluency and many inaccuracies especially in writing.	Average First Year student after the first semester.
6.	Uses English with a certain confidence and fluency but inaccurately. Writing clearly the weakest skill.	Average student entering Second Year A.D.
7.	Uses the four skills readily and effectively despite many inaccuracies. Limited vocabulary would score about 400 in TOEFL.	Average student finishing Second Year A.D.
8.	Shows a high degree of competence in all skills but still has regular mistakes in grammar, vocabulary and register.	Students preparing for TOEFL with the expectation of a score of 500.
9.	At home in using the language. Errors mostly 'slips' and easily self-corrected.	

REVISED BAND DESCRIPTION
G.C.T. WRITING WORK
DECEMBER 1982.

NOTE: Band Scores appear in
a range of .0 to .9.

Band (1-9)	
1 - 1.9	A beginner or virtual beginner in Written English. Will write nothing or almost nothing. Even copying will be very difficult. Hand-writing often illegible.
2.0 - 2.9	Knows how to write the alphabet. Is capable of putting a few words together. Can copy or write very simple dictation. Minimal punctuation. Frequent mis-spelling. Only very basic communication. Very uncertain hand - writing.
3.0 - 3.9	Attempts to form sentences. Forms correct groups of words but with poor punctuation and spelling. Little control of tenses. Hand-writing skill needing much improvement; communication still very dependent on the skills of the <u>reader</u> .
4.0 - 4.9	Still heavily dependent on 'aids' such as pictures. Vocabulary, or substitution exercises. Can take slow simple dictation with a limited vocabulary , making frequent errors. Is capable of producing correct simple sentences but has numerous mistakes in non-simple ones. Poorly formed hand-writing. Frequent mistakes. Low-level communicator.
5.0 - 5.9	Attempts to put sentences together in simple paragraphs but with errors in spelling, punctuation and tenses throughout. Simplest style and idiom. A definite, if limited, communicator as perhaps in a simple letter. Hand-writing only occasionally a problem.

6.0 - 6.9	Is able to write paragraph Despite frequent errors has a certain confidence in communicating. Can manage common forms of continuous writing, e.g. reports. Restricted in idiom or vocabulary.
7.0 - 7.9	Communicates well in written English on both general or work related subjects. Still makes a number of errors but many are 'slips' and easily corrected. Limited in style and idiom and, to a lesser extent, in vocabulary.
8.0 - 8.9	Writes with virtually 100% communication on subjects of his choice. Almost no real errors Can correct his own mistakes on proof-reading. Some limitation in vocabulary and more in use of idiomatic English. May also have difficulties with register.
9.0 - 9.9	Feels at home writing continuous English for work related purposes and for subjects of general interest. Has no communication problems and has a grasp of common idiomatic English.

BAND/MARK CONVERSION TABLE

This table is only for calculating an overall % mark.

It is not meant for making pedagogic judgements.

<u>BAND</u>	<u>MARK</u>	<u>BAND</u>	<u>MARK</u>	<u>BAND</u>	<u>MARK</u>	<u>BAND</u>	<u>MARK</u>
1.0	0	3.6	10	6.2	22	8.8	35
1.1	1	3.7	10	6.3	22	8.9	35
1.2	2	3.8	10	6.4	22	9.0	36
1.3	3	3.9	10	6.5	23	9.1	36
1.4	3	4.0	11	6.6	23	9.2	37
1.5	3	4.1	11	6.7	23	9.3	37
1.6	3	4.2	11	6.8	24	9.4	38
1.7	4	4.3	11	6.9	25	9.5	38
1.8	4	4.4	12	7.0	26	9.6	39
1.9	4	4.5	12	7.1	26	9.7	39
2.0	5	4.6	12	7.2	27	9.8	40
2.1	5	4.7	12	7.3	27	9.9	40
2.2	5	4.8	13	7.4	28		
2.3	5	4.9	13	7.5	28		
2.4	6	5.0	14	7.6	29		
2.5	6	5.1	14	7.7	29		
2.6	6	5.2	15	7.8	30		
2.7	7	5.3	15	7.9	30		
2.8	7	5.4	16	8.0	31		
2.9	7	5.5	17	8.1	31		
3.0	8	5.6	18	8.2	32		
3.1	8	5.7	18	8.3	32		
3.2	8	5.8	19	8.4	33		
3.3	9	5.9	20	8.5	33		
3.4	9	6.0	21	8.6	34		
3.5	9	6.1	21	8.7	34		

State of Bahrain
Ministry of Health
College of Health Sciences

APPENDIX G

English Department
Students' Needs Project
Progress Report

Prepared by
Ray Traynor
Head of Department

Students' Needs Project

INTRODUCTION

The College of Health Sciences is a tertiary College, one of three in Bahrain. It specialises in preparing mid-level, para-medical personnel for the Ministry of Health. The majority of the students are Bahraini nationals interested in becoming nurses, Public Health inspectors, radiography assistants, medical laboratory assistants, assistant pharmacists in Sports Medicine and the like. To enter the College courses students must have the Tawjiheah (i.e. School Leaving Certificate.) After two years of successful study they obtain an Associate Degree and proceed to work for the Ministry in Hospitals and Health Centres.

In the College of Health Sciences all courses are taught through the medium of English, whereas in Secondary School all of the studies are done through the medium of Arabic. English is taught as a foreign language and at a low level. This situation poses obvious difficulties for staff and students, both practical and psychological, especially in the students' first months in the College.

PURPOSES

The purpose of this study is to examine the needs, in English Language, of students making the great leap from secondary to tertiary education and from an Arabic to an English milieu. The enquiry is meant to

discover the needs with regard to the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing. The needs will be listed in as great a detail as seems possible or necessary. Then it should be possible

- (i) to draw up an agreed list of competencies needed.
- (ii) to rank these competencies in order of importance.
- (iii) to assess students who have finished their Tawjiheah, in order to predict how likely they are to succeed in studies at a tertiary level, in English.

Later, in a further project we would hope to prepare courses and materials which will help to bridge any gap perceived between the secondary and tertiary stages.

PRELIMINARY WORK

The Head of Department arranged for the twelve full-time members of the English Department to hold a series of meetings beginning in October 1982 to examine their own perceptions of students' needs. In the light of experience they pooled their ideas, discussed them and argued over them. A preliminary list of needs was drawn up.

Next, the lecturers from the English Department met with their colleagues in other departments dealing with First Year A.D. students. No special format was used for these consultations. The simple intention was to discover how lecturers in

disciplines other than English, perceived the needs of their students with regard to the use of English as a medium of instruction . Lecturers discussed the obstacles to communication between lecturer and student and between student and student, in such areas as Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry, Human Biology and so on. Special difficulties arising from the great of nationality among the lecturers and the consequent varieties of English to which the students were exposed, were also discussed.

The views expressed as a result of the meetings of English Language Lecturers and their colleagues were duly noted, discussed in the English Department meetings and used to modify and expand the original list of needs.

The new list was then distributed to the students for their comments as to their perceived needs. Again, their contribution was assessed and used to make further refinements to the earlier suggestions.

As a result of all this activity, the English Department was able to draw up a set of objectives to be achieved in the first semester. A copy of these objectives is attached.

NEXT STEPS

We intend to ascertain the opinions of the other lecturers in tertiary institutions in Bahrain re the problems encountered by students moving from the secondary school to higher education and their needs as regards English Language. We would like to do this

by means of a questionnaire which will be distributed to the following:

- (1) Members of the Gulf Polytechnical College English Language Department.
- (2) Faculty in the G.P.C. apart from the English Department.
- (3) Members of the English Language Department, University College, Bahrain.
- (4) Faculty in the U.C.B. other than the English Department.
- (5) Students in their final secondary school year e.g. those expected or expecting to pursue higher studies.
- (6) Students of the College of Health Sciences, of the University College and of the Gulf Polytechnical College, who are in their first semester in a tertiary institution.

(Note: Possibly, the questionnaire for the students will be in Arabic.)

STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEEDS PROJECT
PRELIMINARY LIST

The following list is not intended to be taken as definitive but it contains the major needs that a student has when moving from an Arabic-medium secondary school into an English-medium institution of tertiary education. For convenience, the needs are divided under the headings Listening/Speaking , Reading, Writing, though, naturally, there is much over-lapping.

The student in question needs

LISTENING/SPEAKING

- (1) to understand and respond to, everyday greetings;
- (2) to understand so as to be able to comply with, simple oral instructions and requests;
- (3) to understand and answer short questions so as to show ability to recall or to deduce information;
- (4) to follow a fifteen minute lecture, possibly accompanied by visual aids, at Associate Degree (A.D.) level understanding at once the main points made;
- (5) to be able to ask for repetition, clarification, amplification and exemplification, of class-related materials;
- (6) to comment, express a point of view, explain a procedure, give an example, clarify a point, in a class-room or tutorial situation;
- (7) to discuss or seek approval of, work done for assignment;

S.E.L.N. PROJECT
PRELIMINARY LIST (cont.)

- (8) to listen to and respond to peers in class-room or tutorial discussions;
- (9) to understand and respond to oral corrections;

READING

- (10) to read simple instructions well enough to be able to carry them out;
- (11) to read questions so as to be able to answer either orally or in writing;
- (12) to read paragraphs, of a length and complexity appropriate to the level of studies, with understanding of the main facts;
- (13) to be able to deduce further information from what he/she actually reads;
- (14) to read continuous English in order to pick out a particular piece of information;
- (15) to read continuous English to get the general idea of the passage read;
- (16) to read charts, labels, diagrams and the like, with understanding of the contents and how they relate to the passage they illustrate;
- (17) to read hand-written notes e.g. on the board or on exercise books, as well as printed material;

WRITING

- (18) to be able to write legibly, using the common forms - cursive, lower case, printing, block capitals - when appropriate;
- (19) to present neat, well-ordered work for any written assignment;

S.E.L.N. PROJECT

PRELIMINARY LIST (cont.)

- (20) to be familiar with the usual forms of punctuation:
capitals, stops, commas, semi-colons, apostrophes,
inverted commas for direct speech etc.
- (21) to copy short phrases or longer passages from the
board or from books when taking notes;
- (22) to take down dictation by the lecturer neatly and
accurately;
- (23) to be able to fill in various kinds of forms such
as laboratory reports;
- (24) to write simple sentences making statements
 - in describing situations
 - in reporting events or actions
performed
 - in explaining reasons for past events
 - in explaining processes
- (25) to use in writing, active and passive forms, negative
forms, and interrogative forms;
- (26) to take notes of main ideas, in simple sentences,
from books and from lectures;
- (27) to be familiar with the production of phrases,
clauses, simple sentences, complex sentences;
- (28) to be able to write a paragraph with a theme
expresses in a key (topic) sentence, developed by
three or four subordinate ideas in sentences
correctly related to the key sentence and to one
another.

S.E.L.N. PROJECT

PRELIMINARY LIST (cont.)

- (29) to produce a short piece of continuous writing with an introduction, a main idea and a conclusion;

STUDY

- (30) to use the library facilities available;
- (31) to keep a well-ordered note-book of work covered in the lectures and in associated study;
- (32) to use the language laboratory in a way appropriate to the level of study required by the course.
- (33) to be encouraged to work on an individual and independent basis;
- (34) to use extra-college aids such as daily newspapers, magazines and television programmes to improve command of the language;
- (35) to use English as much as possible outside of the actual lesson oriented situations.

APPENDIX H COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES IN THE FIRST
SEMESTER OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

Name: _____ Native Language: _____
Institution: _____
Department: _____ Position: _____

<u>EVALUATION</u>	<u>COMPETENCIES DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>ACHIEVEMENT</u>
	<u>1. LISTENING/SPEAKING</u>	
	A student needs to be able	
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	1. to understand and respond to everyday greetings	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	2. to understand, so as to be able to comply with, simple oral instructions and requests	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	3. to understand and answer short questions showing ability to recall or deduce information	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	4. to follow a fifteen minute lecture on a subject other than English, possibly accompanied by visual aids, at first semester level, understanding at once the gist of the lecture	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	5. to ask for repetition, clarification, amplification, exemplification	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	6. to comment, explain a procedure, give an example, clarify a point	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	7. to discuss e.g. seek approval of, any assignment given	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	8. to listen and respond to peers in a lecture or tutorial situation	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	9. to understand and respond to oral corrections	5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Questionnaire: continued

5, 4, 3, 2, 1	10. to speak for 2 to 3 minutes on a prepared topic	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
	Here you may add any further 'needs' in Listening or Speaking that you think are important and have been omitted.	
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

II READING

A student needs to be able

5, 4, 3, 2, 1	11. to read simple instructions well enough to be able to carry them out.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	12. to read questions in order to answer or in writing.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	13. to read paragraphs of a length and complexity appropriate to the level of studies to understand the main facts.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	14. to deduce further information from what has been read.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	15. to read continuous English in order to pick out a particular piece of information	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	16. to read charts, graphs, diagrams and the like, understanding both the contents and their relation to the passage illustrated.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	17. to read hand-written notes (as on the board or in exercise books) as well as printed material	5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Here you may add any further 'needs' in Reading that you think are important and have been omitted.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

III WRITING

A student needs to be able

5, 4, 3, 2, 1	18.	to write legibly, using the common forms- cursive, lower/upper case - where appropriate	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	19.	to spell accurately	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	20.	to present neat, well - ordered work for any written assignment.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	21.	to use the common forms of punctuation: capitals and full stops	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	22.	commas, apostrophes, inverted commas (speech)	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	23.	colons and semi-colons.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	24.	to take notes from the board	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	25.	from text books etc.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	26.	to fill in various forms e.g. a lab report	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	27.	to take dictation from a lecturer	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	28.	to write sentences when occasion demands simple	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	29.	compound	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	30.	complex	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	31.	to write paragraph when describing, reporting, explaining.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	32.	to use interrogative and negative	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	33.	and the passive	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	34.	to write a piece of continuous prose with an introduction, a main point, a conclusion	5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Here you may add any further 'needs' in WRITING
which you think are important and have been omitted.

A student needs to be able

5, 4, 3, 2, 1	35. to use the library facilities available	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	36. to keep a well-ordered note-book of the work covered in the semester.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	37. to use the language laboratory effectively	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	38. to summarise orally	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	39. in writing	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	40. to improve English Language skills by using English Language newspapers and radio and T.V. programmes.	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	41. to communicate confidently with different kinds of people met daily on the campus	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	42. to find information on college or departmental notice-boards	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	43. to learn the technical vocabulary for the subjects to be studied e.g. engineering	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	44. to build a strong foundation by following a course of mainly 'general' English	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	45. to follow a course of mainly English for Special Purposes (ESP)	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	46. to have lecturers who can communicate in Arabic when there is need to do so	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	47. to concentrate on improving listening skills	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	48. to concentrate on improving speaking skills	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	49. to concentrate on improving reading skills	5, 4, 3, 2, 1
5, 4, 3, 2, 1	50. to concentrate on improving writing skills	5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Here you may add any further 'needs' in English which you consider important and which have been omitted.

Please feel free also to comment on the Questionnaire itself.

APPENDIX I .

Comments on the questionnaire

These comments are divided into three main components: comments on the questionnaire itself; comments suggesting additional competencies and comments of a general nature. No effort has been made to attribute comments but each main division has been sub-divided into LECTURERS and STUDENTS.

Comments on the Questionnaire itself:students

I think the material is sufficient and effective.No addition is needed.

I have nothing to add.

Well done.

Why can't the questions be in Arabic?It is better for us to give the correct answer.

Comments on the Questionnaire itself:lecturers

Not clear what 'seek approval' means.(Item 7)

Very well done.Good luck.

The questions cover a wide range of areas and aspects of English.

The questionnaire is very good and it is extremely important.I hope the results of such research could be implemented in order to improve the standard.

Items 46 - 50 are irrelevant for ACHIEVEMENT.

Suggestions for Additional Competencies:students

To guess the meanings of words from the context.

To be able to write letters,formal and informal.*

Suggestions for Additional Competencies: lecturers

To read newspapers.

To understand the organisational structure of a text.

To use appropriate gestures, facial expressions while speaking. *

To read with reasonable speed.

To read at least 200 - 300 words per minute.

To scan a passage of technical English.

To construct grammatically correct sentences.

To differentiate fact from opinion in reading.*

To form a habit of listening with concentration and not to ask questions out of turn.

To read for pleasure.

To read, read, read in their spare time.

To adopt the correct register for a situation.*

To be more critical of what they read.

(Note: only those points with the * seem 'new' i.e. not already, in fact or implicitly, in the given competencies. Whether they belong to the first months of tertiary education is, perhaps, arguable.)

General Comments: students

We need more listening and speaking in the language laboratory, more conversations with teachers, more hours.

We want to read carefully without timed reading. We want to understand.

We want to write anything we want.

I think I have got much improvement in writing because we never write any writing exercise before in our school.

I think in writing I become much better than before. Specially in the Crammetical (sic) forms.

I think we need to know English expressions for next semester.

The student must know vocabulary.

The lecturer must speak slowly and clearly.

General Comments:lecturers

I have NO idea what the 'average student' is.

Inter-action with peers is counter-productive in lectures and in many tutorials.

There is already too much Arabic in class.

The real need is for a responsible, disciplined attitude to learning.

Students should be made to understand the importance of English. Arabic teachers should stress this.

Students must be encouraged to read books etc. in English with assignments to check.

Students should be conditioned to have enough confidence to speak to lecturers/engineers/supervisors etc. no matter how poor their English is. (Note:presumably, the students' English.)

Underlining skills are important;they have basic texts; do not need library but how to gut a text.

Students need greater self-discipline and an effective deterrent against indiscipline.

What is meant by 'general' English:academic to slang. The term is much abused.

Students feel a need for conversation classes.

Present courses put too much emphasis on oral skills.

The library should be better stocked.

The library is not necessary for students at this level.

My answers are subjective based on teaching Maths to 20% of the intake.

Note: No attempt has been made to interpret any of the comments since such interpretation must necessarily be highly subjective. The comments do, however, give the 'flavour' and to the researcher suggest a genuine attempt to co-operate in as honest a manner as possible. They give a certain validity of their own to the answers.

We should write more compositions and letters related to the text book.

There should be effective communication between students and teachers.

Understandable pronunciation while reading an English passage.

(Note: this comment was under 'Reading Competencies'. It is a good example to illustrate the subjectivity of interpretation. Is the teacher reading out loud to the class?... Is the student reading to herself/himself?... Are students reading for one another? ...)

Students need to have a reasonable speed in writing English.

There should be discussions between teachers and students. I mean giving the students an opportunity to speak.

The teacher should stimulate the students.

Give us interesting topics to read.

Something I think it's important to let the students to speak more in English.

I think we need more of everything.

(Note: some of the above opinions were repeated by other students. The students gave the impression that they were glad to have the opportunity to express themselves and to have their opinion considered. However, to maintain a balance, it should also be remembered that the majority of students made no comments at all.)