

Investigating Disadvantages of the Currently-used Undergraduate English Syllabus on the Educational Outcomes in Sudanese Universities
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ABSTRACT

This paper searches the expected disadvantages of English syllabus ill-preparation in the second year in Sudan University of Science and Technology. The researcher adopts use of a questionnaire as a tool for data collection. And he adopts the quantitative method of research since the nature of the study entails both of the tools and the method of the research. The collected data are analyzed by employing the SPSS technique and the results of the analysis are compared with the research hypotheses to see to what extent they are achieved or not in the light of the participants' responses. The results show that there are various disadvantages of syllabus ill-preparation because most students agree that the current syllabus is problematic and has disadvantageous results on the educational operations outcomes. The hypotheses of the research paper are verified with a reasonable percentage. The researcher concludes the paper with recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

Keywords: English Syllabus – Disadvantages –outcomes.

المستخلص:

هذه الورقة تبحث المساوئ المترتبة علي الاعداد غير الجيد لمناهج السنه الاولى في قسم اللغة الانجليزيه جامعه السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا. الباحث استخدم الاستبيان كوسيله لجمع البيانات من الاساتذه المشاركين0 كما انتهج خطة البحث الكمي لتحليل هذه البيانات مستخدما برنامج التحليل الكمي SPSS 0جمعت النتائج وتمت مقارنتها بعد التحليل مع الفرضيات ليتبين الدارس موافقتها او عدم موافقتها لها. وقد كانت النتيجة هي تحقق فرضية ان هناك جوانب سالبه للاعداد غير الجيد على قدرة الطلاب على استخدام اللغة كوسيله للتواصل حسب افادات عينة البحث. وبناءا عليه توصلت الدرسة الى ان هناك العديد من الملامح الغير ايجابيه على مخرجات العملية التعليمي. وقد اختتم الباحث الدرسة ببعض التوصيات بناءا على ماتوصل اليه من نتائج وارقفها ببعض المقترحات بمزيد من البحوث في هذا المجال الخصب جهة ايجاد الحلول المناسبه لهذا الاشكال بمزيد من البحوث.

INTRODUCTION

Syllabus planning, implementation and assessment are bigger areas under which various subtitles lie. In the planning phase, there are necessary principles that must be taken into consideration such as students' needs and objectives, selecting and grading the content. In the implementation phase, the content is transformed into actions through the teaching programs. Here it is essential to have a deep look at the method of teaching that is going to change the concepts and ideas in the content into

teaching projects. Finally, it is the phase of assessment and evaluation under which there are multiple categories, too. Of these categories is the evaluation of the teachers' performance which expected to be continuous. Secondly, the phase of evaluating the students' performance is also taken into account. At this phase, a necessary question must be asked: Did the students learn what they wanted to learn at the end of instruction process. The evaluation of the syllabus itself comes as the final phase.

The top urgent question to be asked here is that: What are the students be able to do as a result of the instruction program? Having another look to the previous presentation of syllabus design, the observer can easily know that syllabus planning is an interrelated process. Many areas of concern take part in this process. All these efforts should work cooperatively to shape the total picture of the final syllabus. Although each group of interferers in the designing process work separately, but all serve the final aims of the educational operations. A quality syllabus means quality educators and vice versa.

Statement of the Problem

Students gain a few advantages as a result of studying the currently- used English courses. However, there are a lot of disadvantages arising from adopting a syllabus as such. Students of current English syllabus are competent in grammar, vocabulary, structures and language systems. All the pre-mentioned elements do not enable them to use the language to communicate with different people in real life contexts. Theoretically the students achieve something that satisfies them a little but what they achieve is not fundamental in the learning process. They appreciate something secondary in its significance and leave the basic matter which is the language use. When they graduate they will not meet what they learn outside the classes and this increases their inability of using the language because real life situation are different. So, the graduate students are carrying their certificates of English language learning but they did not learn what it must be learnt. For this reason great numbers of graduate students join additional courses to bridge this gap created by the currently-

used English syllabuses in the universities. Oral and listening skills are not well addressed in the syllabus design.

Literature Review

Firstly, Elkheir (2014, 66) says: " EFL learners, mainly, third-year secondary schools in Sudan are weak in listening and speaking skills. This is because the current syllabus did not give much attention to these skills as many teachers prefer to use the traditional activities". Elkheir (2014,67) elsewhere points that, "There is a positive impact on teaching the listening and speaking skills for third-year secondary school students. This has come positively when the researcher implemented the communicative activities. Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference on the standards of the listening and speaking skills on both groups on the use of the communicative activities and the traditional activities". Secondly, Abubaker (2017, 115) the results of his study also show that CTBI improves students' oral social interaction. This result confirms that CTBI could be one of the most appropriated teaching procedures that may help students to communicate accurately and fluently with other speakers of English. He adds that, "This might be partially attributed to the lack of exposure to authentic English. CTBI can be the solution for this lack of exposure to authentic English and CTBI came out with good quality learning outcomes". Abubaker (2017, 114) additionally indicates that, " In spite of lack of a good and adequate training which teachers should be given annually most of the teachers could able to use the different techniques, tasks and activities of the task-based instruction effectively in their classes".



Thirdly, Ming Chang (2011, 11) Draws the attention to, "A need to offer adequate in-service training for teachers to practice CLT. As pointed out by the participants of the study, qualified teachers should have knowledge and skills to practice CLT. In addition, most of the participants stated that training in applied practices, rather than lectures and theories, was more beneficial to them. Furthermore, some of the participants reported that colleagues' support helped them to generate useful teaching". He adds that, " In teacher-centered classrooms, Taiwanese students do not have opportunity to speak English and are required to wait for the teachers' call to answer questions". The findings of his study suggest, "a need for Taiwanese students, teachers, school administrators, and parents to adjust their educational values if CLT is to be implemented. Rather than focusing on the form-based approach which aims at developing test-taking skills, Students' communicative competence should be encouraged and developed. Smaller class sizes facilitate group work. Students should be grouped by proficiency levels in English classes. Correspondingly, teachers should be trained in teaching techniques for differentiated learning. Form-based exams should be modified in order to evaluate students' communicative competence. Such exams should assess not only grammar and vocabulary but listening, speaking, conversation, and writing skills as well. Despite certain limitations and hindrances to the optimal implementation of CLT in Taiwan, teachers are cognizant of its benefits to students wishing to improve their English skills, and are supportive of institutional efforts to facilitate the implementation of CLT".

Fourthly, Fan Fang (2010.115) believes that, " one of the main goals of both ELT and CET in China nowadays is to develop students communicative competence, as more students will regard English as a communicating tool after graduation. If students can use the English knowledge, skills and cultural aspects they have learned to communicate with people of different cultural backgrounds in real language contexts, they are then using English as a communication tool. The relatively tedious test-based teaching method makes students reluctant to freely participate in classroom discussions. Currently, teachers and students do not fully realize the benefits of enhancing the latter's communicative competence in the process of ELT. Also, curriculum design and class size should be adapted to better fit this teaching method. Developing college students' communicative competence should help students more easily use their English. Fan Fang (2010.115) says, teaching English is not simply providing "The opportunity for learners to use language in order to communicate meaning without focusing on accuracy" and "a distinct methodology and syllabus may be needed". Fan Fang (2010.115) it will be appropriate to implement the communicative language teaching approach to help college students in China improve their English skills. Fifthly, Ferdane (2016, 72) concludes that: "In order to adopt the communicative approach successfully in EFL countries like Turkey, the change and the employment should be steady and the countries' particular EFL contexts and the teachers' perceptions of an innovation as well as students' previous educational habits should be considered.

Continuous teacher training and teacher development opportunities, focusing on real classroom applications, especially within the crucial first few years of the innovation period are needed to support the application of any innovation in a curriculum. Adding to that, Ferdane (2016, 73) Claims that, "Teachers do not enable their students to communicate because they face difficulties with the implementation of any creation or change in educational system". He adds that, "the dominant content of the interaction in the observed classrooms is language; namely". Moreover, he says that, "The communicative approach recommends the use of contextualized, authentic or authentic-like materials with audio visual components which will engage learners in purposeful and meaningful use of language. He also mentions that, " teacher training programs are not sufficient

Data Analysis

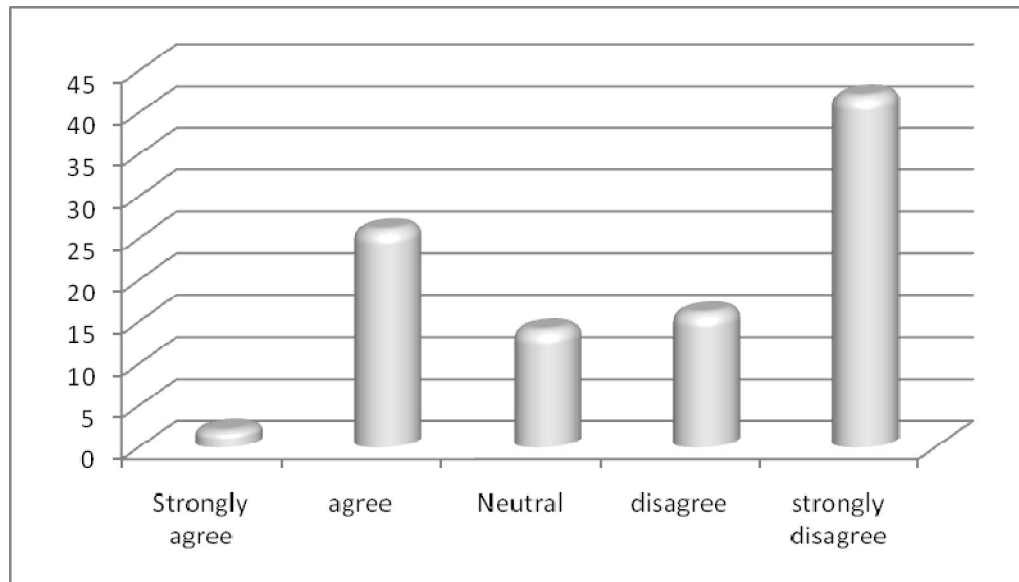
Statement No (1): What the student learned is likely to be of less significance when transmitted outside the class. **Table No (1) The Frequency Distribution for the Respondents' Answers of statement No (1)**

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	1	2.0
agree	13	26.0
Neutral	7	14.0
disagree	8	16.0
strongly disagree	21	42.0
Total	50	100%

enough for teachers to implement such an innovation in actual teaching contexts. Finally, Abuelgasim from University of Khartoum points out that, " The results disclosed that the current level of proficiency of the respondents was below average in all the skills".

Methodology

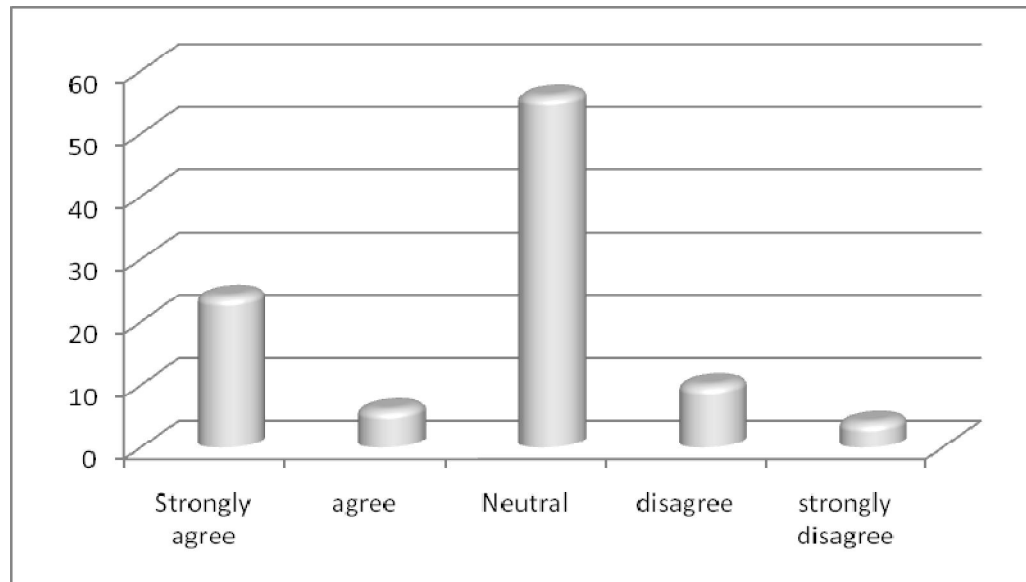
The researcher adopts quantitative method for data analysis and manipulates a questionnaire consists of seven statements which is directed to fifty participants of the teaching staff to test their responses about the currently-used first year English syllabus in the Sudan university. The questionnaire is necessitated by the nature of the research. The collected data is analyzed by the means of SPSS program to see whether they achieve the suggested proposition or not.



From the above table No (1) and figure No (1) It is clear that there are (1) persons in the study's sample with percentage (2%) strongly agreed with "What the student learned is likely to be of less significance when trans mated outside the class". There are (13) persons with percentage (26%) agreed with that and (7) persons with percentage (14%) were not sure that and (8) persons with

percentage (16%) disagreed. And (21) persons with (42%) are strongly disagree. Statement No (1): If the students use knowledge ,skill and culture to communicate with people of different backgrounds in real context they are then using English as a communication tool . Table No (1) The Frequency Distribution for the Respondents' Answers of statement No (1)

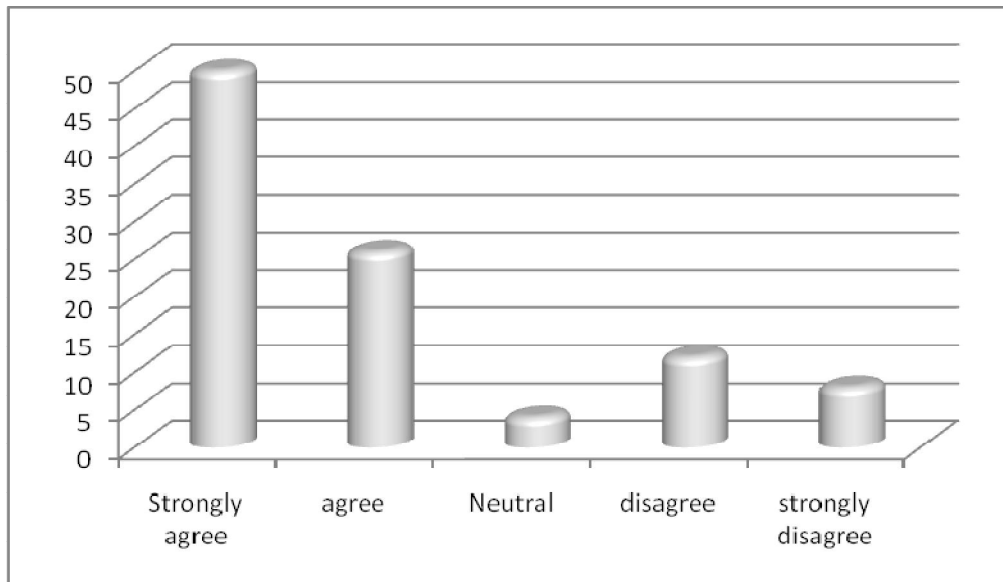
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	12	24.0
agree	3	6.0
Neutral	28	56.0
disagree	5	10.0
strongly disagree	2	4.0
Total	50	100%



From the above table No.(2) and figure No (2) It is clear that there are (12) persons in the study's sample with percentage (24%) strongly agreed with " If the students use knowledge ,skill and culture to communicate with people of different backgrounds in real context they are then using English as a communication tool . ". There are (3) persons with percentage (6%) agreed with that, and (28) persons with percentage

(56%) were not sure that, and (5) persons with percentage (2%) disagreed. And (2) persons with (0%) are strongly disagreed. Statement No (2): Traditional teaching methods are problematic compared with communicative teaching style in the communicative competence promotion. Table No (2) The Frequency Distribution for the Respondents' Answers of statement No (2)

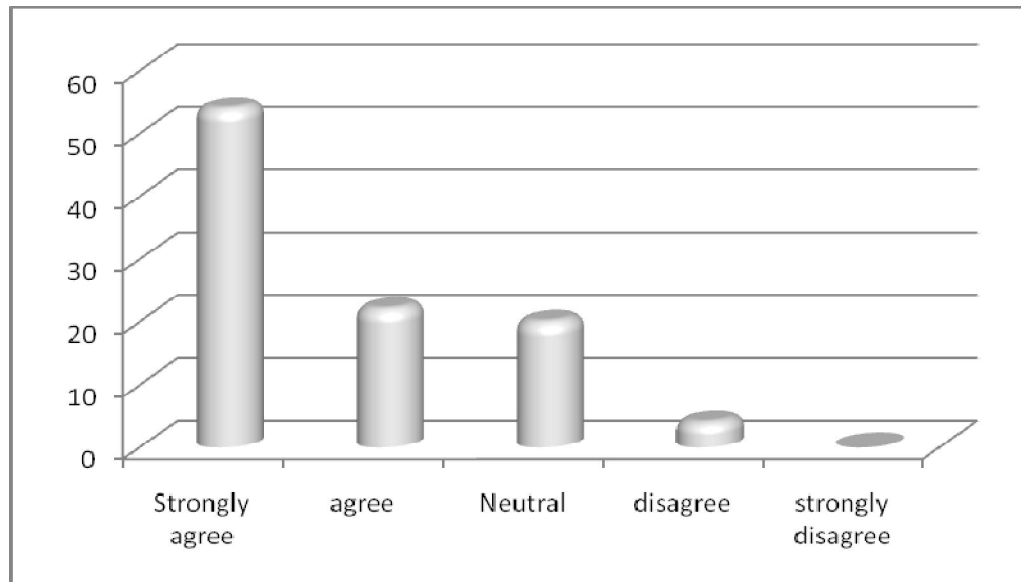
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	25	50.0
agree	13	26.0
Neutral	2	4.0
disagree	6	12.0
strongly disagree	4	8.0
Total	50	100%



From the above table No.(3) and figure No (3) It is clear that there are (25) persons in the study's sample with percentage (50%) strongly agreed with " Traditional teaching methods are problematic compared with communicative teaching style in the communicative competence promotion . ". There are (13) persons with percentage (26%) agreed with that and (2) persons

with percentage (4%) were not sure that and (6) persons with percentage (12%) disagreed. And (4) persons with (8%) are strongly disagreed. Statement No (): Students gain much competence and little performance. Table No (3) The Frequency Distribution for the Respondents' Answers of statement No (3)

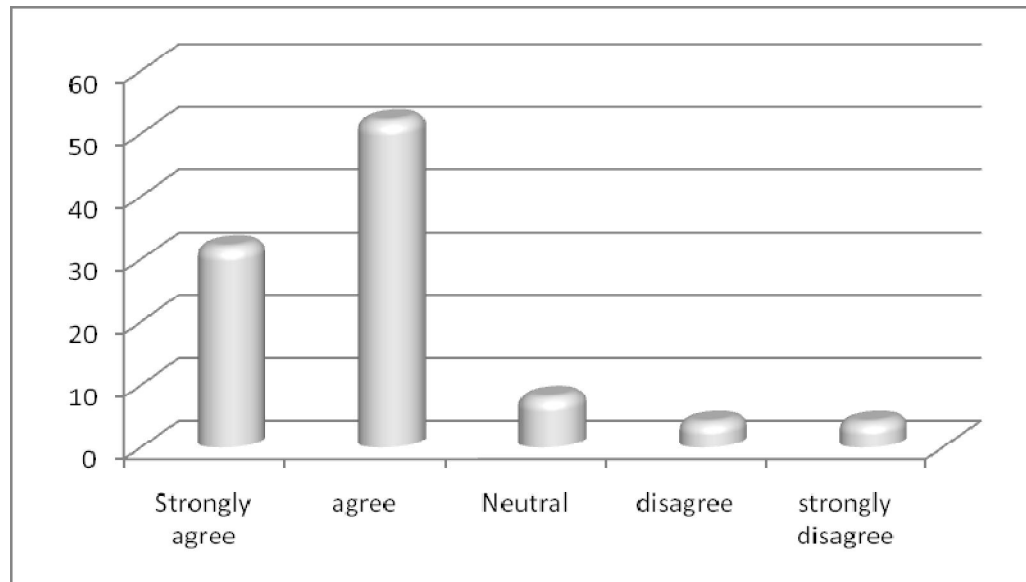
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	27	54.0
agree	11	22.0
Neutral	10	20.0
disagree	2	4.0
strongly disagree	0	0
Total	50	100%



From the above table No (4) and figure No (4) It is clear that there are (27) persons in the study's sample with percentage (54%) strongly agreed with "Students gain much competence and little performance." There are (11) persons with percentage (22%) agreed with that and (10) persons with percentage (20%) were not sure that and

(2) persons with percentage (4%) disagreed. And (0) persons with (0%) are strongly disagreed. Statement No (4): Students could make grammatically correct sentence but still they are unable to use the languages. Table No (4) The Frequency Distribution for the Respondents' Answers of statement No (4)

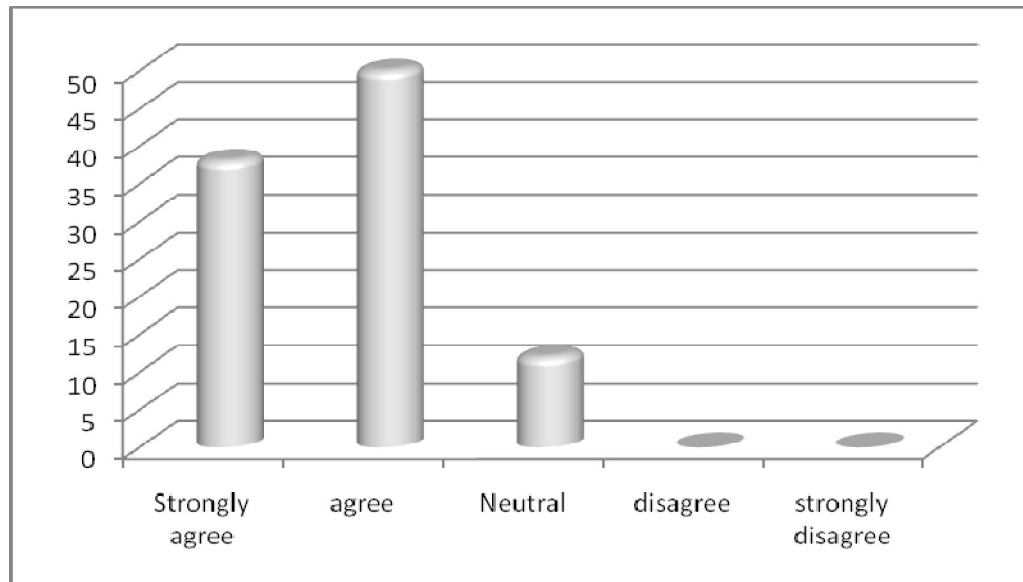
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	16	32.0
agree	26	52.0
Neutral	4	8.0
disagree	2	4.0
strongly disagree	2	4.0
Total	50	100%



From the above table No (5) and figure No (5) It is clear that there are (16) persons in the study's sample with percentage (32%) strongly agreed with "Students could make grammatically correct sentence but still they are unable to use the languages." There are (26) persons with percentage (52%) agreed with that and (4) persons with percentage

(8%) were not sure that and (2) persons with percentage (4%) disagreed. And (2) persons with (4%) are strongly disagreed. Statement No (5): Ignoring the languages is use and focusing o gaining secondary purposes is additional problem. Table No (5) The Frequency Distribution for the Respondents' Answers of statement No (5)

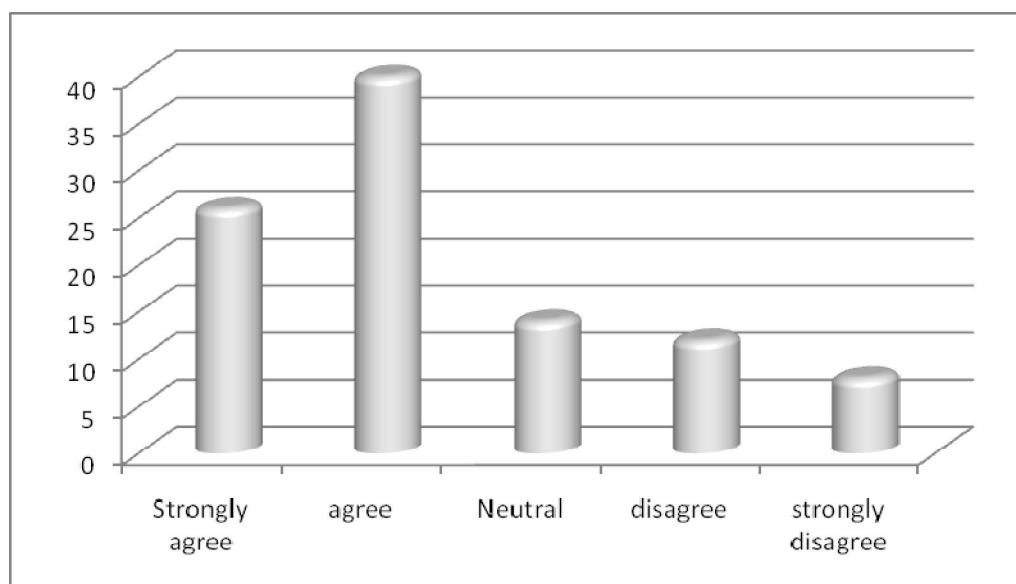
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	19	38.0
agree	25	50.0
Neutral	6	12.0
disagree	0	0
strongly disagree	0	0
Total	50	100%



From the above table No (6) and figure No (6) It is clear that there are (19) persons in the study's sample with percentage (28%) strongly agreed with " Ignoring the languages is use and focusing o gaining secondary purposes is additional problem. "There are (25) persons with percentage (50%) agreed with that and (6) persons with percentage (12%) were not sure that and (0) persons

with percentage (0%) disagreed. And (0) persons with (0%) are strongly disagreed. Statement No (6): Distortion of educational out comes can be mirrored in student who is knowledgeable and simultaneously incapable of using the languages. Table No (6) The Frequency Distribution for the Respondents' Answers of statement No (6)

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	13	26.0
agree	20	40.0
Neutral	7	14.0
disagree	6	12.0
strongly disagree	4	8.0
Total	50	100%



From the above table No (7) and figure No (7) It is clear that there are (13) persons in the study's sample with percentage (26%) strongly agreed with " Distortion of educational out comes can be mirrored in student who are knowledgeable and simultaneously incapable of using the languages." There are (20) persons with percentage (40%) agreed with that and (7) persons with

percentage (14%) were not sure that and (6) persons with percentage (12%) disagreed. And (4) persons with (8%) are strongly disagreed. Table No (7) Chi-Square Test Results for Respondents' Answers of the Questions of the Hypothesis three: undergraduate confront multiple problems preventing communicative competence promotion.

Nom.	Statement	mean	SD	Chi square	p-value
1	What the student learned is likely to be of less significance when trans mated outside the class	3	3.5	22	0.00
2	If the students use knowledge, skill and culture to communicate with people of different backgrounds in real context they are then using English as a communication tool.	4	2.7	33	0.00
3	Traditional teaching methods are problematic compared with communicative teaching style in the communicative competence promotion	4	4.6	41	0.00

4	Students gain much competence and little performance	3.8	1.4	22	0.00
5	Students could make grammatically correct sentence but still they are unable to use the languages.	3.2	2.4	21	0.00
6	Ignoring the languages is use and focusing o gaining secondary purposes is additional problem	3.9	3.5	24	0.00
7	Distortion of educational out comes can be mirrored in student who are knowledgeable and simultaneously incapable of using the languages	3.8	2.7	33	0.00

The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents' answers in question No (1) was (22) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (5%) which was (8.57). this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (5%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondent who agreed with the statement **“What the student learned is likely to be of less significance when trans mated outside the class.** The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents' answers in question No (2) was (33) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (5%) which was (8.57). this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (5%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondent who agreed with the statement **‘ If the students use knowledge ,skill and culture to communicate with people of different backgrounds in real context they are**

then using English as a communication tool .The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents' answers in question No (3) was (41) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (5%) which was (8.57). this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (5%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondent who agreed with the statement **“Traditional teaching methods are problematic compared with communicative teaching style in the communicative competence promotion.** The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents' answers in question No (4) was (22) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (5%) which was (8.57). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (5%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondent who agreed with the statement **“Students gain much competence and little performance**

The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents' answers in question No (5) was (21) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (5) and the significant value level (5%) which was (8.57). this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (5%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondent who agreed with the statement “**Students could make grammatically correct sentence but still they are unable to use the languages.** The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents' answers in question No (1) was (24) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (5%) which was (8.57). this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (5%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondent who agreed with the statement “**Ignoring the languages is use and focusing o gaining secondary purposes is additional problem.** The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents' answers in question No (2) was (33) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (5%) which was (8.57). this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (5%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondent who agreed with the statement ‘ **Distortion of educational out comes can be mirrored in student who are knowledgeable and**

simultaneously incapable of using the language.

Conclusion

With reference to the results of the data analysis, most of the participants' responses agree that there are multiple disadvantages of the currently used English syllabus of the first year in Al Sudan University. Disadvantages can be summarized as follows: 1. Students are unable to use the language. 2. Students are competent in secondary aspects of the language that do not enable them to communicate with English. 3. The students learn a syllabus which is irrelevant to their real life situations.

Recommendations

The researcher is intending to recommend the following based on the found results:

1. Students' inability of using English can be developed positively when communicative syllabuses are adopted by the administrations.
2. Instructors must change the focus from language to its use.
3. There should be a link between what the students learn within the lecture-rooms and the World outside.

Suggestions for Further Studies

This study which introduces its participation in the current problem (disadvantages of the currently-used English syllabuses). Still there are a lot of things to be carried out in this field to enriching the investigations. The researcher suggests further investigations to try to find solutions for the disadvantages resulting from the ill-preparation of English syllabus in order not to negatively affect communicative competence development.



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