Evaluating English Language Teaching (ELT) Effectiveness at the University Level: A Formative Perspective: Oman as a Sample

Mohammed Ahmed Abdul Sattar (Ph.D.)
College of Arts- University of Basra

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تقييم فاعلية تدريس ألللغة ألإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على مستوى الجامعة: دراسة تطويرية: عمان أنموذجا

الدكتور
محمد أحمد عبد ألستار
جامعة ألبصرة - كلية الآداب

الخلاصة

يمثل هذا البحث دراسة تقييمية لتدريس اللغة الانجليزية في الدراسات الأولية في أحدى مؤسسات التعليم العالي الخاصة في سلطنة عمان. ويهدف بالدرجة الأساس إلى بحث مدى فاعلية الاستراتيجيات ألتدريسية ألمستخدمة في برنامج ألدراسات الأولية للغة الانجليزية. وقد استخدم الباحث طريقة تحليل ألأستبانة ألتي توزع على ألطلبة لتقييم المساقات الدراسية في أخر ألفصل الدراسي. وشملت هذه ألدراسة (13) مساقا موزعا على ألمساقات ألللغوية والأدبية ومتطلبات ألكلية الإجبارية والاختيارية والمساقات ألمساندة فضلا عن مساقات ألبرنامج ألتأسيسي. وقد بلغت ألعينة

التي أستخدمها ألباحث (294) طالبا في ألدراسات الأولية في قسم ألللغة الإنجليزية. وتم إخضاع البيانات ألتي حصل عليها ألباحث من هذه الأستبانة إلى تحليل ألمتوسط ألحسابي والنسبة المئوية.

وقد توصل ألباحث إلى عدد من ألنتائج بخصوص ألموقف التدريسي لذلك البرنامج من أهمها:

(1) تجسد موقع القوة الرئيس بالأداء ألعالي للطلبة في المساقات اللغوية مقارنة بالمساقات الأخرى.

(2) أن ألجوانب ألتي تحتاج إلى اهتمام وتطوير هي تلك المرتبطة بعدم توافر المصادر الكافية في المكتبة وعدم توافر أجهزة الحاسوب بالشكل المطلوب.

(3) تتلخص ألمشكلات التي يواجهها ألطلبة في البرنامج ألتأسيسي في حاجة الطلبة الى رفع مستواهم في ألمهارات ألاتصالية وغياب ألفائدة لبعض المناهج الدراسية وجدواها وصعوبتها وكذا غياب الدقة في ألمعايير المتبعة لتقييم الطالب في بعض المساقات الأدبية.

(4) عدم ملائمة محتوى مساق اللغة العربية المساند.

وقدم الباحث عددا من الاقتراحات بشأن تلافي نقاط الضعف الموجودة في هذا البرنامج في ضوء التغذية الراجعة التي حصل عليها.

Abstract

This work is a formative evaluation study of an ELT undergraduate programme implemented by a private higher education institution (PHEI) in the

Sultanate of Oman. It mainly aims at investigating the effectiveness of teaching strategies adopted in this programme. The technique used is end-of-semester questionnaire. It covers 13 subjects distributed among linguistic courses, literary courses, college compulsory and elective courses, department ancillary courses, and foundation programme courses. The subjects representing the sample of the study are 294 undergraduate students at the English Department of the (PHEI). The data obtained are subjected to mean value and percentage analyses.

The researcher comes up with a number of conclusions regarding the teaching situation of that progamme. The major point of strength is the higher level of performance registered in linguistic courses as compared to the other courses involved. Areas that need much concern and improvement are those relevant to the inadequacy of library resources and computer resources, difficulties faced by foundation programme students to enhance their communicative skills, difficulty and inusefulness of some textbooks used, inadequacy of marking and grading criteria of some literary courses, and the unsuitability of the course content of some ancillary Arabic courses. The paper presents a number of suggestions to improve the discrepancies mentioned so far in the light of the feedback given.

Introduction

Evaluating teaching effectiveness and strategies is not a newly born process. It was applied to different learning levels since the establishment of formal learning. The techniques used in the evaluation were inconsistent and traditional. In most cases, evaluation was carried out through class observation done by the headmaster and an educational supervisor. At the end of this observation, the teacher is informed face-to-face to know the merits and demerits of his teaching. Academic promotions and penalties are usually decided as a result of this visit. At higher educational level, a feedback about the faculty member's teaching is obtained via indeliberate and non-systematic ways. Students' appraisal, instructor's research work, instructor's knowledge and experience revealed through the departmental meetings discussions, and the courses he teaches are the most common sources of this feedback. There were no formal procedures taken to evaluate teaching effectiveness. Moreover, faculty members were given a certain prestige and respect that no official party can judge their teaching effectiveness at any case.

Due to the dramatic changes that have taken place in methodology (especially in ELT), the explosion in teaching resources and supporting materials, and the tendency towards quality assurance and evidence-based teaching, evaluating teaching effectiveness in higher education has become a must (cf. Lechner and Fracds,2001).

Kiely (2009: 99) argues that this evaluation tries to ensure " quality assurance and enhancement" and creates " a dialogue within programmes for ongoing

improvement of learning opportunities". It ultimately results in "useful information about a programme's implementation and usefulness" (Llosa and Slayton, 2009:35). Additionally, it can " generate productive debate and effective remedial action" and contributes to" critical decisions on language policy and educational practice (Harris, 2009: 55).

At the higher education level, academic institutions have taken practical steps toward establishing quality assurance centres and departments. Evaluation is conducted periodically according to well-studied plans and programmes. Workshops are usually made to provide faculty members with the latest techniques in evaluation. The sources used in evaluation are varied in nature. They include end–of–course questionnaire, observation, peer-evaluation, and self-evaluation. Academic and administrative decisions are taken in the light of the feedback provided by these sources. This type of evaluation has become part of the academic institution mission.

The present paper is an attempt to judge the effectiveness of teaching strategies of an EFL undergraduate programme of a private higher education institution (PHEI) in Oman. The conclusions based on this study will reinforce points of strength and diagnose areas of improvement. Practical and urgent solutions to these areas are to be taken.

2- The Problem

Evaluating teaching effectiveness has become an essential part of higher education institutions' formative strategies. To improve the level of the institutions' outcome and to qualify competitive alumni, it is quite significant to judge the usefulness of the different aspects of the progrmme. From time to time, students complain about various problems. These imply difficulty of some courses given, inadequacy of the teaching techniques implemented, and insufficiency of the resources provided. The Board of Directors (BoDs) of the (PHEI) on its part, focuses on the students' achievement and their proficiency and efficiency in English language. It is the aim of this work to consider all these complaints and interests so as to identify areas of strengths and to shed light on the areas that need more improvement. The results obtained will be implemented as a feedback to evaluate the whole ELT programme. On the basis of this feedback, decisions will be made by stakeholders and academics as well.

3- Definition of Teaching Evaluation

Fink (1999) defines teaching evaluation as a technique used to answer two important relevant questions: how well do we teach? , which aspects of our teaching are good and which need to be improved? He states that the first question implies a general assessment of the whole programme. The second is analytical and diagnostic in nature.

Flinders (2007) views teaching evaluation as a mechanism through which we measure the efficiency of certain teaching strategies, approaches, and innovations. In his viewpoint, decisions based on this evaluation involve revision of the course structure, teaching techniques, syllabus content, assessment procedures, student work load, student-staff interaction, staff promotion and tenure, and professional development. He differentiates between two types of evaluation; formative and summative (cf.Hoyt and Pallet, 1999; Lockee, et.al, 2002; and Brent and Felder, 2004).The former, i.e. formative evaluation, is used as a feedback for teacher improvement. That is why it needs to be done with care and thoroughness (Hoyt and Pallett, op.cit.). It needs to be specific, relevant and contextual. The latter, i.e., summative evaluation, is employed for administrative purposes to take decisions by stakeholders regarding the whole teaching process. This type of evaluation should be "valid, reliable, and based on data that measures quality" (Flinders, op.cit: 2).

4- Literature Review

Our navigation for relevant literature reveals that research work conducted on the effectiveness of ELT strategies is limited. Most studies found deal with the teaching of different programmes other than ELT. We are very much concerned with the techniques employed in these studies and their results. Research on teaching evaluation takes different trends; defining aims, principles, and usefulness of evaluation, suggesting models for evaluation, using a variety of sources in evaluation, and diagnosing the merits and demerits of certain teaching strategies. Studies in question will be presented in terms of chronological order.

Felder and Bren (n.d.) attempt to design a comprehensive model to evaluate teaching strategies. The theoretical background for this model lies in the assumption that an effective system for this evaluation depends on multiple methods for data collection. Student rating represents the first source of data. They suggest some practices to administrate and interpret this rating. The second source is peer review. It includes classroom observation as well as course material discussion. The researchers conclude their research by presenting an example of a system that puts together the sources of data mentioned so far.

McHaney and Impey (1992) evaluate teaching effectiveness via a clinical supervision model. They have briefed the historical development of classroom observations and instruments used. They focus on the variation of the data sources. The techniques they applied are: lesson design, alternative strategies for teaching concepts, alternative strategies for teaching generalizations, alternative problem-solving strategies, analysis and evaluation of teaching effectiveness through microteaching lesson presentation, developmental performance rating scale, and analysis and evaluation of the clinical teaching experiences.

Alavi (1994) conducts a study to developing and evaluating computer-assisted pedagogical approaches. The study, specifically, investigates whether the use of the Group Decision Support System (GDSS) in a collaborative learning process enhances student achievement and evaluation of classroom experiences. She has criticized the status of higher education at that time where emphasis was laid on offering fixed bodies of information and the failure to developing problem solving and critical thinking skills. This is a serious weakness in higher education system as a whole, she states. The sample selected for this study was 127 students. The major conclusion is that the use of (GDSS) leads to higher level skills development, self- reported learning, and evaluation of classroom experiences in comparison with the non (GDSS) technique.

Fink (1999) carries out a theoretical study about teaching evaluation. He states that no faculty member is perfect and therefore everyone has room for improvement. For him, evaluation is the means by which we identify the merits and demerits of our teaching. Accordingly, each member should take the responsibility for doing the evaluation.

Fink (ibid.) offers a definition for the term evaluation, states the justification for evaluation, identifies the necessary resources for evaluation, and describes five techniques to carry out evaluation. These include self- monitoring, audio-tape / video- tape, feedback from students (questionnaires distributed at different periods of the semester), interviews, analysis of students' results, and internal and external reviewers.

Ory (2001) shows his dissatisfaction with depending on students' rating as the only source to evaluating instruction. As other scholars, he believes in a multi-method approach to assess the effectiveness of instruction. He suggests a combination of peer review, teaching portfolios, classroom-observations, and self-evaluation.

Doyle (2002) investigates the use and significance of the tools used in evaluating teaching effectiveness. He attempts to make different suggestions based on empirical evidence. One of the research objectives is to identify which areas of instruction students are qualified to give meaningful feedback to faculty and which they are not.

He concludes that student evaluation of an instructor provides a reliable and valid assessment of that instructor's course teaching effectiveness, especially if they reflect the views of many students in several course aspects. The research ends with a number of suggestions to improving the effectiveness of using a student ratings form.

Lockee et.al. (2002) describe the different stages of evaluating distance learning. They suggest some guidelines for developing an evaluation plan for

distance learning programmes. They adopt both formative and summative approaches. For formative evaluation, they propose five evaluative stages: design review, expert review, one-on-one review, small group reviews, and field trials. The stages suggested for summative evaluation are programme inputs, performance outcomes, attitude outcomes, programme outcomes, and resources offered.

Brent and Felder (2004) suggest a peer review model that can be used for both formative and summative purposes. They outline the reasons for designing this model and point out its significance in teaching performance evaluation. In their viewpoint, students are not in a position to evaluate a number of issues relevant to the curriculum. For example, they are not qualified to give their judgment on an instructor's understanding of the subject, the accuracy of the course content, the level of the course difficulty, the appropriateness of the method used in the course delivery, and whether the course content and learning objectives are consistent with the course intended role. Staff members, they say, can do all these judgments. The model they propose includes students' rate, peer rate, instructor's discussion, and administrator and /or committee rate. The study was appended by two checklists, class observation checklist, and course material checklist.

Salsali (2005) conducts a study to determine the knowledge of the Iranian nurse educators and students with respect to the evaluation of teaching effectiveness. A sample of 143 nurse professors from three universities in Tehran were chosen. In addition, 40 undergraduate, and 30 graduate students from Tehran University compose the study sample. Deans from three universities are interviewed.

The researcher concludes that both professors and students stress the fact that systematic and continuous evaluation as well as staff development should be the primary goals for the faculty evaluation process. Regarding the results, he points out that since faculty evaluation has always been a major part of university programmes, it must be approached more analytically, objectively, and comprehensively to ensure that all professors receive the fairest treatment possible and that learning process is enhanced.

Flinders (2007) suggests some principles for effective teaching evaluation. He argues that evaluation in higher education entails gathering evidence about the impact of teaching, topics, and course design on students' contribution and achievement. This evidence, he argues, is the basis for good teaching practice. The main principle for evaluation is to decide the objectives of teaching.

The University of Michigan Centre for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) (2008) outlines three techniques for teaching evaluation. The first includes students' multiple methods (e.g. end –of- course rating forms and written

comments, alumni letters and surveys, focus –group interviews, mid- course and periodic student feedback, and evaluation of student learning). The second is relevant to faculty members. It entails peer review, evaluation of course materials, and evaluation of instructional contributions. The third is the self-evaluation which entails the background of faculty member and his teaching environment.

Diaz and Fernandez (2010) explored the impact of Teacher Development Interactive (TDI) on language teaching methods. They measured the teachers' ability to transfer theory into practice, and the teachers' attitudes towards teaching language. They intended to conclude whether the TDI speaking module influenced the methods used to teach speaking in classroom. Teachers performed the pre-course task of planning speaking lesson. After completing the module, a post- course task required the subjects to modify their original plans, and to implement what they learned. Learning impact was measured by comparing the subjects' ability to achieve predetermined learning objectives in their pre-course and post-course tasks.

The main results of this work are:(i) all participants experienced learning objectives as a result of the current methodology to teach speaking, (ii) on average, after completing the TDI course, each participant attained more than twice the number of objectives they attended before taking the course, and (iii) the post-course results showed that all participants improved their understanding of speaking methodology, as evidenced by their capability to implement these concepts to their lesson plans.

Recently, Zohrabi (2011) investigated the effectiveness of teaching English for general purposes (EGP) course as a case study from Tabriz University. The techniques used were questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. He concludes that students hold negative attitude towards the course since learning objectives are not fulfilled, students lack the desire to participate in performing activities and exercises due to the focus on reading, doing exercises and task-based activities, and communicative use of language and pair group work were missing.

The technique adopted in this study is end - of- semester questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed in a way to include different aspects of the programme under investigation (See appendix 1). Through this technique, most courses involved in the study can be approached. Accordingly, the subjects taking part in evaluation will represent the population of the intended learners in a better way. Moreover, we find this technique more practical in the light of our current situation. This is attributed to the facilities and resources available.

5- Programme Structure

The ELT programme under evaluation is channeled into foundation programme and specialization programmes. Foundation Programme, as the name

suggests, was incorporated into the syllabus in order to provide a solid framework to the students before they enter the actual specialization classes. It proves to be useful to help the students with basics of English language which in turn facilitates them to be better listeners, readers, writers and fluent speakers .It is offered over one academic year. Students take four English language modules: two modules per a semester. Both semesters include the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing in addition to the independent study.

Specialization programme offers courses in linguistics, literature, and translation in addition to the college compulsory and elective courses. These courses lead to the Diploma and Bachelor of Arts Degrees. Diploma study programme involves 66 credit hours. They are distributed over 12 credit hours for college compulsory courses, 6 credit hours for college elective courses, 45 credit hours for department compulsory courses, and 3 credit hours for department ancillary requirements.

Bachelor study programme covers 132 credit hours. They are broken down into 12 credit hours for college compulsory courses, 9 credit hours for college elective courses, 84 credit hours for department compulsory courses, 18 hours for department elective courses, 6 credit hours for department ancillary requirements, and 3 credit hours for department free requirements.

The courses selected for evaluation represent two sections of a foundation course, one college compulsory course, one college elective course, eight departmental compulsory and elective courses, and one department ancillary course. College elective course and department ancillary course are included here in our evaluation in spite of the fact that they are taught in Arabic. This might seem arbitrary in a sense we are evaluating an EFL programme. This consideration is however adopted for the sake of comprehensiveness.

6. A Questionnaire for the Assessment of Teaching and Educational Activities during a Semester

6.1 Questionnaire Construction

The questionnaire is constructed in a way to be of a course evaluation type. It starts with the questionnaire title with reference to the academic year and the semester. Six columns for the course and the participant's information are used. They imply course title, course code, course tutor, participant's section, lecture's timing, and date of approaching the questionnaire's items.

To obtain more reliable results and positive feedback, the researcher has chosen a five-option questionnaire. They are arranged in a systematic way to show the degrees of disagreement, the state of indecision, and the degrees of agreement with the questionnaire items.

The questionnaire consists of 38 items. They are carefully chosen and worded to obtain as much accuracy as possible. The areas of the programmes being

examined are the course content, logical sequence of the material presented, tutors' regular revision, course relevance to students' professional needs, effectiveness of teaching techniques used, usefulness of class discussion, frequency and amount of homework given, fairness and effectiveness of marking methods, availability of textbooks and learning resources, learners' interaction and enthusiasm in the offered courses, the opportunities of developing communicative skills, tutor's concern about the learners' difficulties, tutors' fairness, clarity of tutors' accents, and learners' encouragement towards critical thinking and forming new ideas and opinions.

6.2 Questionnaire Objectives

The objectives of the questionnaire are (i) to help investigate the current situation of the English Language Programme (ELP) at the Department of English Language of the (PHEI), (ii) to identify the degree of conformity of the content of the courses under investigation with their objectives, (iii) to examine the suitability of the methodology being advocated, (iv) to measure the effectiveness of the feedback gained from marking the students' test papers, (v) to elicit the degree of fairness in marking and grading the relevant courses , (vi) to ensure the availability of the learning services, (vii) to decide the degree of developing oral and written communication skills, (viii) to point out learning difficulties faced by learners, and (ix) to know the extent of the encouragement of students towards being initiative and expressing ideas and opinions.

6.3Data Analysis

As stated earlier, the questionnaire involves 13 subjects. These include 6 linguistic courses (Advanced Translation, Grammar 1, phonetics, Methods of Research, Intro-duction to Linguistics, and Advanced Grammar), 2 literary courses (Classical Criticism and American Literature), 1 College Compulsory Course (E1), College Elective Course in Arabic (The History of Oman), Department ancillary course (The Art of Writing and Expression), and two sections of a foundation course (Reading and Writing Skills Sec.3 & 6). The questionnaire was distributed to 13 groups (294 students).*

The data obtained were subjected to mean value and percentage analyses. To identify the weight scored by each item, the average of each item was found. To compare the final results, percentage analysis was carried out (For details, see appendix 2).

Advanced Translation course registers the highest percentage (79.52%). The questionnaire items score the highest averages are item 8 (4.8), item 37 (4.7), item 6 (4.6), item 36 (4.6), item 1 (4.5), item 12 (4.5), item 32 (4.5), item 31 (4.4), and item 38 (4.4). These items are concerned with points relevant to the professional relevance of the course, clarity of the professor's accent, regular

revision carried out by the professor, the fairness of the professor in treating his students, the conformity of the course content to the course objectives, the usefulness of the class discussions to understand the course items, the motivation to carry out class activities, and the encouragement of the students to form and express their own ideas and opinions. Low values are scored in items 24 (1.4), and item 25 (1.4). These items deal with the inadequacy of the library resources and computer resources.

The percentage obtained by the course Grammar (1) was (78.81%). The items that read the highest averages are item 7 (4.6), item 6 (4), item 1 (3.9), item 17 (3.8), item 38 (3.8), item 2 (3.7), item 10 (3.7), item 12 (3.7), item 22 (3.7). These are concerned with syllabus items coverage, linking theory with practice on the part of the teacher, the suitability of the course content with its objectives, and the useful-ness of class discussion. Low averages are elicited in items 28 (2.2), item 29 (2.2), item 33 (2.2). These include points related to the disadvantage of the suggested references and the handouts provided for the course, and to the problems faced by students to improve their communicative skills.

Phonetics course scores (76.22%). The highest averages are found in item 11 (4.55), item 23 (4.28), and item 5 (4.19). These are related to the good use of examples and illustrations to explain difficult concepts, the usefulness of lectures to the students' learning, the regular revision made by the teacher. Items that read low averages are item 24 (2.23) and item 25 (1.85). These are relevant to the inadequacy of the library resources and computer resources.

Method of Research course registers (70.52%). The highest averages are elicited in items 5 (4.2), item 20 (4.1), item 22 (4.1), item 1 (4.0), item 7 (4.0), item 16 (4.0), *The variation in the number of these groups is due to the original number of the enrolled students in these groups.

item 19 (4.0), item 32 (4.0), item 37 (4.0). These involve matters dealing with regular revision of the material being taught, fairness of marking and grading, suitability of class environment to make learners more comfortable about participation, the suitability of the content of the course with the objectives stated in the outline, the good coverage of the syllabus items, the assistance offered by the teacher to solve learning difficulties, the role of the teacher as an effective model for thinking and practice in the discipline, and the encouragement of the students towards forming and expressing their own ideas. The lowest averages are found in item 27 (2.7), and item 28 (1.9). These imply problems in the textbook suggested and the usefulness of the suggested references.

The only college compulsory course in English included in this questionnaire analysis is English (1). It registers (70.48%). Only two items show high averages. They are items 12 and 34 which score (4 points each). Items exhibit low averages

are 29 (2.11), 25 (2.27), 24 (2.61), 28 (2.88). These items are concerned with the inadequacy of the library resources, computer resources, non-usefulness of the suggested references, and lack of attention given by the teacher to his class. All other items are above the average ranging between (3.0- 3.94).

The other course included in the evaluation process was classical criticism. It scores (69%). Items show high averages are items 37 (4.26), item 4 (4.23), and item 14 (4.10). The relevant issues of these items are: the clarity of the teacher's accent, logical sequence of the material presented, and the teacher's willingness to help students solve learning difficulties. Most items score normal averages (2.97).

In History of Oman course (which reads 68.86%), two items reveal high averages. They are items 6 (4.05), and item 11 (4). The former item indicates that the teacher in charge links theory to practice by giving examples from real situations, the latter implies the good use of examples and illustrations to explain difficult concepts. Items score low averages are (8, 9, 24, 25). The averages they register are (2.72, 2.77, 2.72, 2.72), respectively. They involve things related to the relevance of the course to the professional needs, the teaching methods used, library resources, and computer resources.

Introduction to Linguistics Course scores (67.41%). Items that register the highest averages are item (3.74), item 35 (3.65), item 8 (3.54), and item 13 (3.62). These items tackle points related to the clarity in the presentation of the course, the efforts made by the teacher to identify the learner's areas of difficulty, the agreement of the course to the learners' vocational and professional needs, and the encouragement of students to participate in class discussion.

Foundation programme was included in this analysis. Two sections of reading and writing skills courses are dealt with (Sec.3 and section 6). In section 3, which scores 62.94, two items only show high averages. They are items 20 (4.26), and item 29 (4.68).The first points out the fairness in marking and grading in this course, and the second reveals the usefulness of the teacher's handouts. 11 items read below average. They range between (2.9 and 2.84). They are relevant to items (1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 22, 24, 25, 27, 32, 38). All other items are above the average. They range between (3-3.78).

Section (6) obtains (54,8%). More than half items (58%) are below the average. They are (21) items imply points related to items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 34). All other items are above the average (For the content of these items, see appendix 2). Two items only show high average. They are items 13 (4.26), and item 36 (4.34). They show the

teacher's encouragement to students in participating in class discussion, the fairness of the teacher in his academic career.

The Arts of Writing and Expression course obtains (59.94%). No item in this course registers high average. Most items are little above the average. These items are (27) forming (71.05%) of the whole items. Items score low averages are (4, 6, 10, 13, 22, 23, 24, 25, 31, 38). Their averages range between (1.9–2.9).

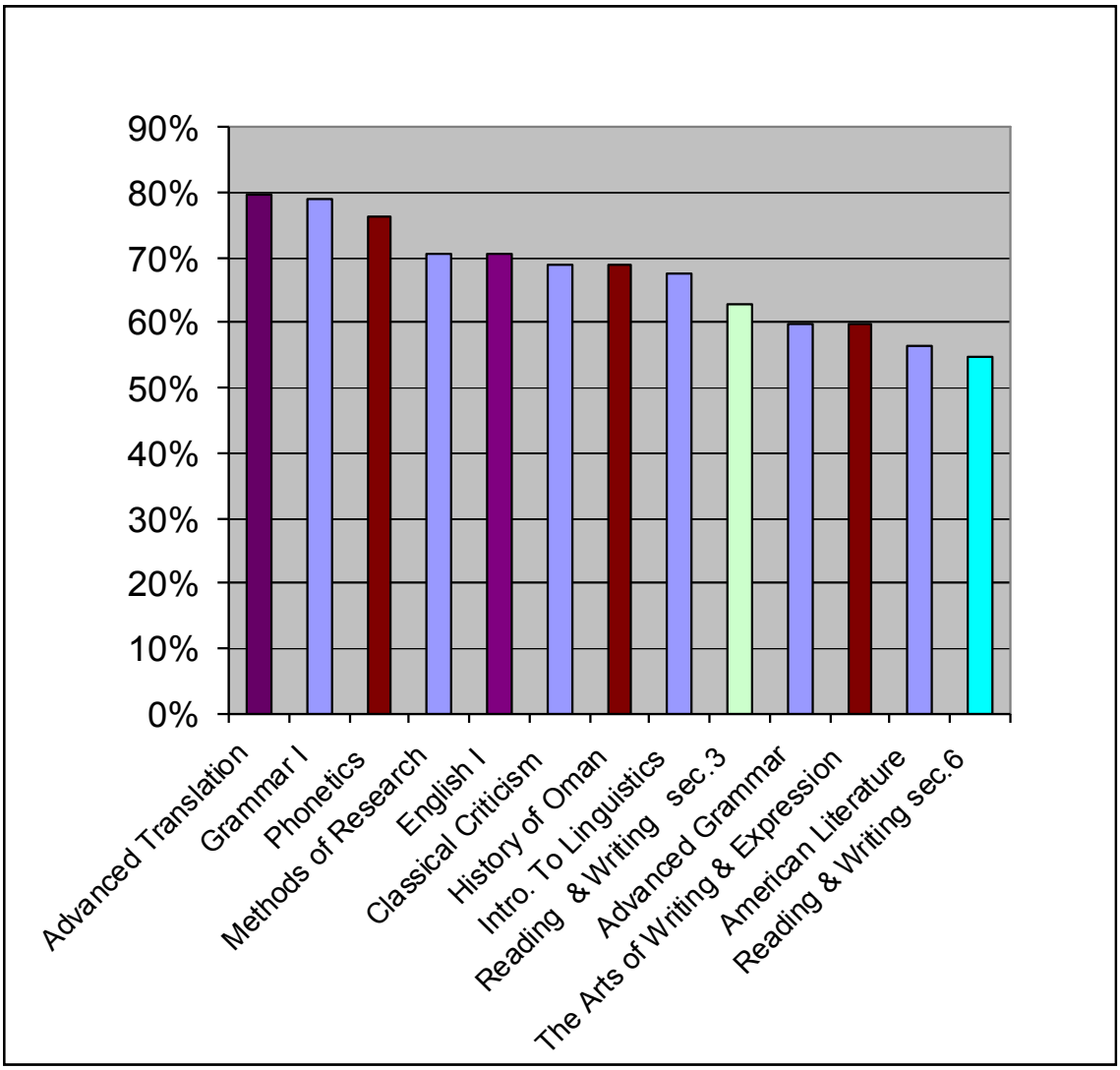
Most items in Advanced Grammar Course (which reads 59,8%) show low average (2.11-2.96). They form (55.26 %). The remaining items are little above the average ranging between (3-3.42). This is a feedback that there are serious problems that have to be solved and examined. To put it differently, urgent remedies should be taken to deal with such items (items 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36) (See appendix 1 about the content of these items).

The percentage of American Literature course is (56.36%). One item only (item 24) is under the average (2.4). This is relevant to the inadequacy of the library resources concerned. The remaining items are above the average ranging between (2.6-3.8). The results indicate that special attention should be given to this course. It has to be revised to find fruitful solutions to improve the current situation (For a comprehensive view on the percentages of the intended courses, see table 1 and histogram 1 below).

Table (1): Percentages of the Courses Involved in the Questionnaire

#	Course title	Percentage
1-	Advanced Translation	79.52%
2-	Grammar I	78.81%
3-	Phonetics	76.22%
4-	Methods of Research	70.52%
5-	English I	70.48%
6-	Classical Criticism	69%
7-	History of Oman	68.86%
8-	Intro. To Linguistics	67.41%
9-	Reading & Writing sec.3	62.94
10-	Advanced Grammar	59.8%
11-	The Arts of Writing & Expression	59.94%
12-	American Literature	56.36%
13	Reading & Writing sec.6	54.8%

Histogram (1): Linear Analysis of the Courses Involved in the Questionnaire



7- Conclusions

On the basis of the findings of the questionnaire, we can outline the major conclusions of this investigation as follows:

1- Linguistics courses register high levels of performance as compared to literary courses and skills courses. This is due to the peculiarity of linguistic courses and to the efficiency of the relevant teaching strategies.

2- Foundation programme skills courses (Reading and Writing) read the lowest performance resulted (to a great extent) from the poor background of the students in the communicative skills, the gap between the high school and the college teaching strategies, and the low level of commitment to the institution's performance indicators by the respective faculty.

3- Points that need much concern and revision in Advanced Translation course,

Phonetics course, and English (1) are relevant to the inadequacy of the library resources and computer resources.

4- Drawbacks elicited in the course Grammar (1) are the disadvantage of the suggested references, the handouts provided for the course, and the difficulties faced by students to improve their communicative skills.

5- Unusefulness of the textbooks suggested for Methods of Research course. Students seek more updated courses with more practical nature.

6- Difficulty of the textbook selected for Introduction to Linguistics course which represents the latest version of the transformational school of linguistics (the Minimalist Approach). This is due to the difficulty of the approach and to the gap with other approaches (traditional and structural approaches).

7- Serious problems facing students in Advanced Grammar course and American Literature course where a complete revision is necessary and the whole syllabuses should be reevaluated.

8- Marking and grading criteria for Classical Criticism course are inadequate and hence thorough revision becomes urgent.

9- Reading and Writing skills course faces serious discrepancies the most crucial of which are the unsuitability of the content of the course as compared to the course objectives, relevance of the course to the students' interest, inconsistency of the material progression, the little practice given, and the inadequacy of the teaching methods.

10- The ancillary Arabic course (The Arts of Writing and Expression) encounters some drawbacks embodied in the unsuitability of the course content to the students' background, lack of experience in lecture presentation, discouragement of the teacher to his students, failure of the professor to create suitable teaching environment, and neglecting students to form and express their own ideas and opinions.

8- Suggestions

In view of the feedback offered by the findings of the current study, the researcher

advocates the following suggestions:

1- An ad hoc specialist committee is to be urgently formed by the (PHEI) to revise the relevant EFL programme so as to minimize the drawbacks already outlined and to find out immediate remedies to certain crucial problems.

2- Due emphasis should be given to the foundation programme in general and to the skills courses in particular.

3- Library and computer resources are to be urgently increased and updated so to meet the college mission and the department goals.

4- Forming a specialist committee that takes the full responsibility of selecting the suitable and updated textbooks and suggested references.
5- Marking and grading criteria are to be revised.
6- Arabic courses, particularly the Art of Expression and Writing course, have to be given due emphasis, especially the material selected and the teaching techniques.
7- Paying much attention to academic advising via activating the mechanism of the advising process and through the constant follow up to the students being advised.
8- Facilities and equipment provided for students have to be sufficiently offered on the basis of the students' needs and the dramatic changes in quality assurance, outcome required, and labour demands.
9- Revising the whole study plan to bridge any necessary gap and to fulfill systematic gradation in the prerequisites suggested.

10- Suggestions for Further Studies

Due to the recent orientation towards evidence-based EFL learning and multiple- sources evaluation, a comprehensive evaluation work can be carried out via incorporating different techniques. These could entail students' rating, alumni letters, employers' reports, periodic students' feedback, and evaluation of learning outcomes.

Faculty members can better revise the effectiveness of their instruction via self-evaluation, peer review, evaluation of course material and teaching environment.

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(Appendix 1)

COURSE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Course Title		**Section**	
Course Numbe		**Time**	
Course Tutor		**Date**	

Please read each statement carefully, then circle one of the numbers on t right, where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agre 5=Strongly Agree

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	The content of this course was clearly related to the objectives stated in the course outline.					
2	The content of this course was relevant to my interests and concerns as a student.					
3	The content of this course took account of possible differences in students' backgrounds or experiences.					
4	The topics dealt with in this course were presented in a logical sequence.					
5	The teacher regularly reviewed what had been taught.					
6	The teacher linked theory to practice by giving examples from real situations.					

7	In my view, the number of topics covered in this course was about right.					
8	The course was relevant to my vocational/professional needs.					
9	The teaching methods used in this course took account of differences among the students.					
10	The content of the course was presented at a level that made it easy for me to understand.					
11	The teacher made good use of examples and illustrations to explain difficult concepts.					
12	Class discussion was helpful in increasing my understanding of this course.					
13	In this course the teacher encouraged students to participate in class discussions.					
14	The teacher seemed willing to help students who might be experiencing learning difficulties in this course.					
15	The amount of work that students were required to do outside class time was reasonable. If you disagree, please indicate by ticking the appropriate box whether the amount of work required was too much or too little					
16	In this course the teacher provided an effective model for thinking and practice in [his/her] own [discipline/ profession]					
17.	The mid-semester test helped me to consolidate what I had learnt.					
18	The feedback I received on the test papers were constructive.					
19.	Assessment in this course focused on understanding rather that rote reading					
20.	Marking and grading in this course were fair					
21.	Throughout this course class time was used productively and effectively.					
22	In this course the teacher maintained a class environment that made me feel comfortable about participating.					
23	The lectures were a valuable aid to my learning.					
24	Library resources in this course were adequate to support my learning.					
25	Computer resources in this course were adequate to support my learning.					
26	The required reading assisted my learning.					
27	I found the textbook useful.					
28	I found the list of references that was provided for this course useful.					

29	The teacher's handouts were valuable aids to my learning					
30	I was enthusiastic about this course.					
31	In this course I felt motivated to do my best work.					
32	In this course the teacher encouraged students to reflect about what they had learnt.					
33	In this course I had opportunities to further develop my oral and written communication skills.					
34	In this course the teacher seemed concerned about students and their learning.					
35	In this course the teacher made an effort to find out whether students were experiencing learning difficulties.					
36	I felt that the teacher treated all students fairly.					
37	I felt that teacher's spoken language is easy to understand					
38	In this course students were encouraged to form and express their own ideas and opinions.					

N.B. The information you give is used for purely academic and research purposes and it remains confidential.

(Appendix 2)

Distribution of Questionnaire Items Average*

* The average point selected is (5) due to the fact that the options included are five.

Item No.	Course Title												
	Advanced Translation	Grammar I	Phonetics	Method of research	English I	Classical Criticism	History of Oman	Introd. To Applied Linguistics	Reading & Writing (Sec.3)	The Art of Writing	Advanced Grammar	American Literature	Reading & Writing (Sec.
	Mean Value												
1	4.5	3.9	4.09	4	3.38	3.41	3.72	3.6	2.42	3.5	2.73	3.8	2.03
2	3.7	3.7	3.76	3.5	3.22	3.68	3.72	3.5	2.21	3.4	3.26	3.7	2.03
3	2.6	3.6	3.14	2.8	3.22	3.49	3.33	3.48	2.63	2.6	3.15	3	1.76
4	4.3	3.4	3.8	3.5	3.94	4.23	3.55	3.3	2.78	2.4	2.8	2.7	2.26
5	4.1	3.6	4.19	4.2	3.83	3.68	3.88	3.2	2.84	3.1	2.73	2.9	2.88
6	4.6	4	4.28	3.7	3.55	3.64	4.05	3.2	3.68	2.9	3.3	3.4	2.6
7	4	4.6	3.66	4	3.66	3.58	3.11	3.3	2.73	3.2	3.15	2.9	2.26
8	4.8	3.6	4.19	3.7	2.94	2.88	2.72	3.5	3	3.3	2.96	3	2.5
9	3.5	3.1	3.38	3.3	3.44	3.37	2.77	3.54	2.94	3.2	2.92	3.4	1.73
10	4.2	3.7	3.8	3.4	3.44	3.15	3.83	3.2	3.26	2.5	3.19	3.2	2.26
11	4.8	3.6	4.52	3.5	3.66	3.82	4	3.74	3.63	3.3	3.34	3.3	3.34
12	4.5	3.7	3.9	3.8	4	3.58	3.88	3.5	3.26	3.4	3.03	3.1	3.73
13	3.8	3.3	4.9	3.6	3.77	3.52	3.5	3.4	3.52	2.9	2.53	3.3	4.26
14	3.3	3.6	4	4	3.61	3.62	3.72	3.62	3.05	3.3	3.42	3.3	3.96
15	4.1	3	3.47	3.8	3.72	3.6	3	3.22	3.21	3.6	3	2.6	2.84
16	4.3	3	3.95	4	3.55	3.31	3.33	0	3.05	3.2	2.57	2.7	2.3
17	4.1	3.8	4.23	3.2	3.55	3.5	3.66	3.37	3.42	3.3	2.73	3	2.38
18	3.3	3.2	3.9	3.1	3.88	3.61	3.05	3.5	3.63	3.1	2.88	2.6	2.76
19	4.3	3.2	3.42	4	3.77	3.58	3.16	3	3.36	3	2.69	2.8	3.03
20	3.6	3.6	4	4.1	3.88	2.93	3.44	3.48	4.26	3.4	2.69	2.7	3.5
21	5	3.2	3.95	3.9	4	3.73	3.27	3.08	3.15	3.2	3.19	3.1	2.92
22	4.2	3.7	4.61	4.1	3.66	3.5	3.33	3.5	2.94	2.6	3	3.3	4
23	4.2	3.5	4.28	3.6	3.4	3.37	3.38	3.3	3.21	2.9	2.46	3.2	3.03
24	1.4	2.8	2.23	2.6	2.61	2.06	2.72	3.34	2.42	1.9	2.11	2.4	2.84
25	1.4	3	1.85	3	2.27	2.53	2.72	3.34	2	2	2.8	2.7	1.76
26	3.9	3	3.95	3.5	3	3.78	3.33	3.6	3.52	3.3	2.65	2.8	2.65
27	3.1	3.3	3.71	2.7	3.44	3.2	3.44	2.97	2.47	3.1	3.3	2.9	1.73
28	3.5	2.2	3.19	1.9	2.88	4	3.44	3.2	3.31	3.4	2.5	2.7	2.5
29	4	2.2	4.14	3.5	2.11	3.53	3.38	3.51	4.68	3.2	3.23	3.2	3.34
30	4.6	3.4	3.9	3.4	3.66	3.3	3.44	3.22	3.78	3.3	2.96	3	4.34
31	4.4	3.1	3.61	3.2	3.72	3.33	3.27	3.11	3.73	2.9	3.03	3.4	3.76
32	4.5	3.5	4.33	4	4.16	3.21	3.44	3.34	2.73	3	3.3	3.2	3.03
33	4.3	2.2	3.71	3.5	3.61	3.64	3.5	3.34	3.21	3.4	2.53	3.1	2.3
34	4.4	3.4	3.57	3.8	4	3.23	3.72	3.6	3.26	3.3	2.8	3.7	3.23
35	4.1	3	3.47	3.5	3.72	3.21	3.77	3.65	3.42	3.1	2.57	3.1	3.57
36	4.6	3.2	4.88	3.3	3.88	3.93	3.5	3.34	3.15	3.3	3.34	3.1	3.26
37	4.7	3.6	4.38	4	3.77	4.26	4.05	3.3	2.89	3.1	3.34	3.5	1.96
38	4.4	3.8	3.9	3.3	3.94	3.85	3.72	3.31	2.84	2.7	3.23	3.7	1.3
Percent.	79.52	78.81	76.22	70.52	70.48	69	68.86	67.41	62.94	59.94	59.8	56.36	54.8