The Impact of Student's Level in English on academic performance: A case of IAU.

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Abstract

This study is a descriptive correlation one. Forty-eight students were sampled from the Deanship of Preparatory Year and Supporting Studies for the academic year 2017/2018, in the first and second semesters, to find out the impact of a student's level in English on academic performance by identifying the relationship between the students' levels in English language and their academic performance in LRSK (learning and research skills) and communication skills courses. An English placement test which is: "an exam that is prepared by the English language department and is taken prior to orientation week. This assessment simply measures the student's English language skills and helps place them in the appropriate English class where they will benefit the most. This test is not included in the student's GPA and is purely used for placement" is used as a tool of study. Data are collected and analyzed of SPSS. The findings of the study show that there is a strong correlation between the students' levels in English and their academic performance in Preparatory year at IAU; students whom their level advanced and intermediate in English based on the

placement test results performed are better than the students at the beginner level; the importance of this result because of the medium of instruction, which changed two years ago from Arabic to English in these courses, a lot of recommendations were suggested at the end with the findings of the study.

Introduction

Nowadays there is no doubt about the importance of English language in education. English language is the medium of instruction in most of the KSA universities especially at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University (IAU) in most of the courses. It widely used as an effective language in education and communication among local and international students in different levels, which show the orientation of government to use it. KSA has recognized the importance of English language in education and in different fields in life by applying several strategies like scholarship program, English language classes at schools and universities to improve the quality of education system which appears in English language ability. Institutions of higher education in KSA focus on teaching English, and their efforts to improve English language skills of university students as in the IAU. Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University has also used English as its medium of instruction in the Preparatory Year Programme, which aims to increase students' performance that are not only academically but also proficiency in English. Arsad, Bauniyamin, Manan (2014) stated that "it appears to be a direct correlation between students' results for fundamental subjects and the final overall academic performance of graduating students." They also suggested that "English Language courses have no direct or little effects on the overall academic performance."

Aina, J. K., Ogundele, A. G., & Olanipekun, S. S. (2013) proposed if there is lacking in English skills in any academic setting, it will definitely lower the academic performance of such students.

Olanipekun, S.S. (2013) pointed out that correlation can be used to show the degree of relationships and variability between students' performance in examinations. For this reason, the current study employed descriptive method of correlation type where students' results were collected for analysis. This is a correlation type because correlation is important in educational studies as given by Aina,K, (2012). According to Darko, H.F & Ansa-Asare, O. D (2009) "Correlation is used to find relationships between variables."

Definitions

English placement test is: "an exam that is prepared by the English language department and is taken prior to orientation week. This assessment simply measures the student's English language skills and helps place them in the appropriate English class where they will benefit the most. This test is not included in the student's GPA and is purely used for placement"

Communication Skills: it's a course gives the students an overview of the current concepts and theories in the area of communication, while providing them with the basic skills in self-communication. This class provides activities where the students can put into practice the concepts they have studied.

LRSK: it's a course aims to help the students acknowledge concepts, theories and application skills through the study of learning skills and using effective teaching methods which rely on the students' activity and motive to learn through practice and self-study. The students acquire the skills doing group work and interaction. This course encourages the students to use different learning resources, good reading skills and using libraries to get the information they need. It trains the students to follow scientific research steps to prepare a research project and prepare the students learn dealing with lectures and being ready for them. The course also directs the student to use studying skills and thinking skills successfully.

Academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals. Cumulative GPA and completion of

educational benchmarks such as secondary school diplomas and bachelor's degrees represent academic achievement.

Research Hypotheses

The two null hypotheses that will be tested are:

H01: There is no significant difference between students' levels in English and academic performance in LRSK course.

H02: There is no significant difference in students' levels in English and academic performance in a communication skills' course.

The main objectives of this research are:

1. Identifying the impact of students' level in English on their academic performance

2. Checking the impact of (LRSK) and communication skills on student's level in English.

It does appear that there are many factors, not only English language level that may affect students' academic achievement, this study designed to show if the significant relation between the students level in English language their academic performance. These studies based on the student's classification in the placement test at IAU, which divides them into three levels (beginners, intermediates, or Advance) and compare it with their result in LRSK and communication skills' courses.

To simplify the data analysis, it was classified into three groups:

1. LRSK\ communication skills, group whom is beginners in English language

2. LRSK\ communication skills, group whom is intermediate in English language

3. LRSK\ communication skills, group whom is advance in English language

Each group contains 16 students as a sample of the study.

Permission was taken from the self-development departments in the deanship to collect student scores in LRSK and English courses.

The suitable statistical analysis for this study is Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. According to Owie, I. (1996) it

used to find the degree of relationship between two sets of variables.

In view of the importance of English language to learning in Saudi Arabia as one of the most important mediums of instruction in all levels of educational system; the aim of this study to find out its correlation to students' level in English and LRSK course (which represent the academic performance). Specifically, the following research question will guide the study:

Q1- Is there any significant relationship between students' level in English language and academic performance in LRSK and Communication skills' courses?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive method where the result of forty - eight students 2017/18 academic session, which joined the prep year in English, LRSK and communication skills courses were collected for analyzes. All prep year students of this academic session consider as the population for the study while the sampled populations were students, who joined English with LRSK and communication skills' course. The instruments for this study were the result of students' in English, LRSK and communication skills.

Findings

Table 1 .Correlation between English language and LRSK

	Eng. Language	LRSK
Eng. Language	1	0.878883
NO	48	48
LRSK	0.878883	1
NO	48	48

Findings from Table 1 above shows that there is a positive correlation between the students' level in English language and academic performance in LRSK course with a correlation coefficient of 0.878; that answer the first part of the research question. It may show that a student with a good level in English language determines will academic performance in LRSK course.

Table 2 .Correlation between English language and communication skills

	Eng. Language	Communication skills
Eng. Language **NO**	1 48	0.591 48
Communication skills **NO**	0.591 48	1 48

Findings from Table 2 above shows that there is a positive correlation between the students' level in English language and academic performance in communication skills course with a correlation coefficient of 0.591; that answer the second part of the research question. It may show that a student with a good level in English language determines well academic performance in the communication skills course.

Validity and Reliability
Examination of reliability and validity addressed the study method. Reliability was examined using pilot study, Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency, on the entire instrument and within subscales. Criterion of .70 or higher was considered adequate reliability, and .80 or higher was considered preferable (Nunnally, 1978). Validity was examined through the psychometric evaluation of the instrument using

expert's evaluation methods for the questionnaire, student's opinions and exploratory factor analysis EFA.

Discussion

The finding of this study agreed with some earlier studies; therefore, the above findings show that high-level in English is important for all Prep year students especially in LRSK and communication skills' courses. The findings in this study therefore agreed with the findings of Arsad, Bauniyamin, Manan (2014) who states that "there appears to be a direct correlation between students' results for fundamental subjects and the last overall academic performance of graduating students". In another hand Adegboye, A. O. (1993) pointed out that lack of skills in English language is one of the factors contributing to poor performance in Mathematics, which agrees with the result of this study for some extent, because that both courses with English medium of instruction.

The findings further agree with Aina, J.K., Ogundele G.O and Olanipekun, S.S. (2013) that assumed student that had problems with communication skill may likely not do well academically. Iliyas, R.A. (2011*) and* Osakwe, N.N. (1999) in their work confirmed that a lack of competence in English language is a major problem about inadequate understanding of the teacher's speech that results from poor vocabulary and syntactic knowledge.

The earlier discussion means that English language proficiency which represented by the student's level in English (beginner, intermediate and advanced) affecting their academic performance in both LRSK and communication skills' courses. According to Olanipekun, S.S. (2013) who considers that English language as the language of achievers and that the language counts as far as rising up and being a member of the elite class is concerned.

This paper shows that any student who is not doing well in English may not do well in LRSK and communication skills because they are positively related.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study presents in the findings that a good level in English language is highly related to students' academic performance in LRSK and communication skills courses. The research found out that:

1. There is a significant correlation between the students' level in English language and their academic performance in LRSK.

2. There is a significant correlation between the students' level in English language and their academic performance in communication skills.

It was also noticed that students in communication skills course performed better than in LRSK course. It's indicate that students who are advanced do better than students who are beginners (have poor English language.); therefore, It's impossible to generalize the research results because of the limitations in place, time, and other factors.

The suggested recommendations are:

1- The admission into prep year should be based on the English placement test result.

2- English language should be the main tool in classifying students among courses like in LRSK and communication skill courses.

3- It's important to give more attention to the students in secondary schools in teaching English language.

4- University staff has to encourage students to improve their level in English and communication skills in any academic and social setting which is part of government vision 2030.

5- Curriculum design.

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