

Learning English by Palestinian Military Cadets at Al-Istiqlal University: An Evaluation Study

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Abstract:

This paper is conducted to investigate teaching English for the military in the Department of Security Sciences at Al-Istiqlal University. The researchers use a reviewed questionnaire as a tool of a quantitative study which is distributed on ninety cadets during the first semester of the academic year 2017/2018. The objectives of the study are: To identify students' English language learning requirements who will serve different security departments in Palestine. To evaluate the effectiveness of the existing English language course (Security Terms in English) at the university. To identify significant themes that will contribute to military vocabulary and concepts of the students. To determine what improvements should be in place to educate future officers in the professions of security posts in the country.

It is concluded that 1- There is no difference between female and male cadets in their interest in learning English language in the Department of Security Sciences.2- There is a difference between the cadets in their interest according to the variable of the academic level. And 3- There is a significant difference between the cadets in their interest in learning English for the military since the sign of their interest is low. At the end of the research, it is recommended that 1- To conduct more related studies in the same field. 2- To include more courses in the military field at the university. 3- To innovate the methodology of teaching English language in order to raise the performance of the cadets. 4- To include English for the military course in the academic plan for the all students of the university.

Key words:Al-Istiqlal University, Cadets, Security termes.

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية للطلبة العسكريين في جامعة الاستقلال. استخدم الباحثان استبانة محكمة من قبل متخصصين لغة و مكونة من 20 فقرة. تم إجراء البحث على 90 طالبا و طالبة كعينة للدراسة من مجمل طلبة الجامعة خلال الفصل الأول من العام الدراسي 2018/2017 و هم طلبة قسم العلوم الأمنية حيث هذا المقرر من ضمن خططهم الأكاديمية. تهدف الدراسة إلى التعرف على احتياجات الطلبة لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كأفراد في المؤسسات الأمنية، تقييم فاعلية المساق الذي يدرس حاليا تحت اسم مصطلحات أمنية باللغة الإنجليزية، تحديد البيئات المناسبة لتدريس طلبة جامعة الاستقلال وإعدادهم ضباطا في المؤسسات الأمنية، وأخيرا تهدف الدراسة أيضا إلى التعرف على محتوى مناسب يدعم تعليم المصطلحات الأمنية والعسكرية باللغة الإنجليزية. بناء على فرضيات الدراسة، وجد الباحثان انه يوجد فروقات إحصائية بين الإناث والذكور في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بناء على متغير المستوى الأكاديمي، و كما أثبتت الدراسة ان هناك فروقات بين الطلبة

بناءً على متغير الاهتمام بتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية للعسكريين في الجامعة ، وأخيراً وجد الباحثان انه يوجد فروقات إحصائية بناءً على متغير الجنس لعينة الدراسة حيث كانت النسبة لصالح الإناث. أوصى كل من الباحثان بإجراء بحوث مشابهة لتعزيز الموضوع، تدريس المساق لكافة طلبة الجامعة، و استحداث طرق تدريس جديدة في تدريس مساق مصطلحات أمنية باللغة الإنجليزية من أجل الحصول على نتائج أفضل.

الكلمات مفتاحية : جامعة الاستقلال، طالب عسكري، مصطلحات أمنية.

I- INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 20th and the 21st centuries English language has developed into the most commonly spoken language in the world, and has more second-language speakers than any other language. It's careful as a universal language. Most of the universities worldwide embrace English as one of their major subjects or the language of instruction. Thus, we are forced to meet global standards as we are living in the world of globalization. English has become a key factor in the raise of the nations globally. The information technology mutiny has shortened the distance between nations, and its services ignore geographical borders. Information technology has penetrated not only the industrial borders but also the Third and Developed worlds, thanks to telecommunications and English language. Computers and the Internet have both served nations and have become mediators for human communication in which English language is the main medium.

Interest in teaching English as a global language has been increasing throughout the Arab World. Arab countries make special efforts to facilitate the use of English language among their citizens in the present globalized era (Al-Khatib, 2000). Nearly all Arab countries began to introduce the teaching of English as compulsory subject into the school program.

The openness in international communication, in information exchange and knowledge dissemination has made English a shared language favoring the internationalization of professional activities. Learning English by cadets is a way of building a teaching process and developing the way of thinking in English through cross-culture education. Cultural education affects cadets' view toward the world, life and social value. The importance of English, seen as an opportunity for more successful participation in International activities, whether military mission, work at international headquarters and coalition meeting, or for advancement in their careers. Since English language as a common language of military communication, English can help facilitate the necessary interconnection between individuals and organization, between the national and the international, between the local and global community. The influential role of English as an international language in the military workplace, international security and in public communication requires pressure for academic training program for cadets. It is quite vivid that an officer can be seen as representing the whole army in this sense any hindrance to participate in professional interaction in English would badly affect the institution especially in our local community where officers are required to interact with the international global community for the sake of making their cause understood and attain support from the international community to achieve the dream of each individual in the Palestinian community.

II- PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

English has been taught to cadets at Al-Istiqlal University since the start of the university in 1997 which reflects the vital importance of teaching English to cadets in Palestine. The cadets are taught a textbook titled *Security Terms in English* developed by instructors in the English Department. Cadets have two lectures per week and this course is designed only for cadets from the Department of Security Sciences.

The course is taught to cadets either in the second year or in the fourth year. The assigned textbook focuses on teaching English for security purposes and security terms, reflecting the growing need to teach cadets materials related to their future military tasks.

Teaching Security Terms in English to cadets at Al-Istiqlal University has always been a major factor, but cadets are facing many challenges in learning security terms in English as the university focuses on both academic courses and military training. The basic challenges that cadets are undergoing are connected with the lack of time to practice English in real life situations which in turn affects cadets' communicative competence and performance. Moreover, it can be noticed that the courses connected with military usage of language are missed to some extent. These factors impede students' communicative ability for specific purpose. These problems need to be analyzed so as to arrive at practical solutions for them so in future the graduates of this reputed university will possess and practice the language not only for academic and military purposes but also for life.

III- PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to evaluate the learning process and effectiveness of the English course (Security Terms in English) at Al-Istiqlal University through the perspectives of current military cadets in terms of program density of hours, length, objectives, content and target learners. Moreover, this study aimed to suggest relevant adaptations and contribute to the improvement of the learning security terms in English to military cadets.

IV- SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

What is addressed in this research paper is whether Al-Istiqlal University has been preparing the graduates to become communicatively competent in the context of defense and security terms in English. The researchers focus on whether students have been undergoing appropriate English language courses for their future needs as officers of different security departments in Palestine, or it is lacking. It is argued that when the language courses do not match the stakeholders and students' expectations and needs, the students appear to be less inclined to learn the target language, and in the defense university's case, the target language is English. At the same time, the inability of students to utilize their language skills has made this research a timely endeavor by the researchers. The researchers, who are also instructors at Al-Istiqlal University, have been with the university since 2016.

It is striking to note that there are no evaluation studies in the context of learning English for military purposes in the ESP literature in Palestine. In light of this, it is vital to assess the effectiveness and adequacy of the English ESP course at Al-Istiqlal University, which is developed for military cadets at the university. The findings of this study will help increase the body of knowledge that is available in terms of ESP course design, materials and learning styles pertaining to military cadets. It is also hoped that the findings of this study will inform educators and decision makers at the university about the characteristics of the current English course and learning as viewed by cadets. Therefore, this study will help to find out how effective the current security terms in English course is, along with identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the course, if there are any. This evaluation study will also help instructors at the university make relevant changes and additions to the current ESP course. It is hoped that the results of the study will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the English course and be used as a framework for the improvement of English teaching at Al-Istiqlal University.

V- RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

- To identify students' English language learning requirements who will serve different security departments in Palestine.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the existing English language course(Security Terms in English) at the university.
- To identify significant themes that will contribute to military vocabulary and concepts of the students.
- To determine what improvements should be in place to educate future officers in the professions of security posts in the country.

VI- RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. How do military cadets view security terms in English course and learning at Al-Istiqlal University?
2. What are the pedagogical implications of the research findings to the teaching of English at Al-Istiqlal University?
- 3- How important are the English language skills to the future military officers?
- 4- What are the English language requirements and needs of the students?
- 5- How best to teach English language courses at Al-Istiqlal University?

VII- METHOD

A. Participants

In order to obtain views on the learning of English at Al-Istiqlal University, the study focused on ninety of the current military cadets. They were drawn from a class in the second year and fourth year Security Sciences program.

B. Instruments

Qualitative methodology was adopted in this study. Quantitative data were collected by means of a short questionnaire developed by the researchers for military cadets. The cadets' questionnaire included twenty statements. The statements described the participants' opinion about the learning and teaching of English to military cadets at Al-Istiqlal University. The questionnaire was translated and introduced in both English and Arabic in order to get more accurate data from the participants and avoid confusion. The questionnaire was pilot tested with four participants from military cadets, not involved in the study, to ensure clarity in the statements. Overall, the participants found the statements in questionnaire comprehensible and easy to score.

VIII- LITERATURE REVIEW AND RELATED STUDIES

Analyzing learners' needs is a reliable way to designers to foster effective curriculum (Akyela and Ozek, 2010; Benesch, 1996; Lockwood, 2012). Richards (2001) added that a needs assessment guarantees a flexible, modifiable curriculum rather than ridged, linear curriculum that is designed in advance by teachers (Idris, et al., 2007).

During the last thirty three years there have been a huge number of studies that attempted to analyze the learners' vocational or academic needs. In a study conducted by Abo Mosallem (1984) determined the needs of Egyptian Police officers in learning English language. A sample consisted of 150 police officers who work in different police departments in Egypt. Results showed that the police identified the officers' need for English. In terms of skills priority, the study showed that speaking and listening were given the highest priority. However, International Police Department rated reading and writing skills as in high priority. In terms of relevance of English to workplace, 83.2% of the working officers expressed their beliefs that English will help them do better work performance; 16.8 percent of the officers felt that English language learning contribute greatly to personal development.

Al-Gorashi (1989) cited in (Alhuqbani, 2008) investigated the Saudi military cadets English communicative needs at King Abdul Aziz Military Academy. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to 212 officers. The findings revealed that English is very important in situations related to the cadets' future work and their training courses such as the principles and techniques of parachute operation for Infantry officers. It was found that all officers indicated the necessity for the language skills

such as listening skills and reading skills than speaking skills or writing skills. Akyel and Yalcin (1991) conducted a study on the Turkish policemen to determine their learning needs. The policemen reported that learning to listen and to speak in language is more necessary than to read or to write to their profession and workplace. They also indicated that they prefer to study language curricula which contain input data from their subject areas. The analysis of the language learning needs of Turkish policemen led to the adoption of several cognitive/affective principles in the writing process of the course materials. First, the materials should be authentic and interesting. Second, as motivation is a key factor, they should motivate learners to take active role and interact in the language learning process. Third, such principles should help learners improve their communication skills. Al-Huneidi and Basturkmen (1996) studied Kuwait University students' and faculty needs to learn English language. Also, they examined their perceptions of the importance of skills, sub-skills, and language deficiencies; language demands and needs. Perceptions of University of Kuwait students and faculty members differed concerning necessity of learning read and to listen and areas of difficulty and specific tasks important for study; the relevance of the institutions' current English second language program was assessed. It was found that over 60% faculty members perceived students to have inadequate skills.

Dooley (2006) identified the listening and speaking needs of international students at Curtin University in her NA and included both ESL instructors and students in the study. The perceptions of students and instructors differed to some degree but they agreed on the importance of listening for academic success and attributed importance to general listening skills in lectures, tutorial and group assignments and areas of difficulty were also identified. Alhuqbani (2008) in his study attempted to identify police officers' needs of mastering English language in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For this purpose the researcher developed a questionnaire and administered it to 103 serving police officers. The results showed that English language captures an integral part in security and police jobs. All participants identified skills which were very important to their workplace as important. The results also showed that despite the importance of English for the security sectors and officers, no training on EFL has been carried out on how to use English for police purposes. Generally, results confirmed that English for police purposes should be emphasized.

Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2010) studied students' EFL needs at Hadhramout University of Science and Technology in the academic year 2006-2007. The study sought to determine the frequent use of English language skills, their importance, ability in using the skills, the needed training in the areas of language, and their English language course preferred. A total sample of 81 third, fourth, and final-year petroleum were selected to do Needs Analysis. The study emphasized the importance of English language for students and determined the students' needs, wants and necessities of English.

Khushi and Talaat (2011) evaluated the ELT textbooks designed for the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA), Kakul. The main purpose of this study was to identify the pedagogic value of the book. Results showed that the syllabus is traditional in approach. The choice of any language teaching content should suit context where it will be taught. Such alignment between textbook content and students' language needs will be a motivating factor for learners and provokes achievement. The study clarified that content related specific/general is needed instead of many literature in the course.

Qaddomi (2013) identified EFL cadets' needs at Al-Istiqlal University in Palestine. In addition, the study required to reveal how cadets rated their own competence in particular skills in EFL, and what they really need from their EFL course. The study was conducted on a random sample of 91 cadets. Results showed that Al-Istiqlal University cadets' level in EFL is intermediate as the total score mean was 3.4 (68.0 %). Also, the findings of this study showed that cadets' needs of EFL gained a very important level where its mean was 3.67 (73.4 %). Moreover, results indicated that the most serious difficulty which faces the cadets, as they perceive future workplace, in learning EFL is following English conversations. In addition, results revealed that there were significant differences in AU cadets EFL needs on all

domains in favor of Police Sciences, Military Sciences, and MIS over the Psychology Security due to major variable.

Spence and Liu (2013) conducted a study implemented needs analysis questionnaires online and semi-structured interview questions to investigate engineers English language needs at company of semiconductor manufacturing in Taiwan. Results showed that engineers face a large number of English communicative situations such as: writing and reading emails, reports, and memos. On the other hand, other situations associated with oral functions such as: meetings, teleconferences, and presentations. Results revealed that there is a growing increase for the need for English especially where oral skills being in used with customer visits and relationship building. Khushi (2012) carried out a study sought to investigate the academic and professional English needs of military cadets from the teacher's perceptions, the study also aimed to contribute to the development of a course of English for Military Purposes. The researcher used the interview as an instrument administered to 12 EL instructors. Findings revealed that English Language plays an integral part of military cadets' academic and professional lives. The results also showed that speaking and writing were more important than reading and listening.

IX- METHODOLOGY

Population

The population of this study consisted of 155 male and female cadets.

Sample

The study sample consisted of 90 cadets.

Hypothesis

- 1- The level of military cadets in English language is very low.
- 2- There is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($A=0.05$) in estimates of military cadets about the interest in learning security terms in English due to the following variables:
 - a. sex (male/ female)
 - b. the academic level (sophomores/ juniors/ seniors)
- 3- There is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($A=0.05$) in estimates of the role of English for security purposes in cadets' future post due to the following variables:
 - a. sex (male/ female)
 - b. the academic level (sophomores/ juniors/ seniors)
- 4- Security Terms in English Course lacks military vocabulary and concepts.
- 5- Instructors focus on traditional methods in teaching Security terms in English Course.

Instrumentation

The researchers used a five –point Likert scale questionnaire. Also, the researchers adapted some items of Alhuqbani's questionnaire (2008) and modified them to suit the study.

Validity of the questionnaire

The researchers distributed the questionnaire to a jury who are specialized in TEFL. The content was reviewed and most of them agreed that the questionnaire suits the purposes of the study.

This section presents the analysis of the questionnaire from the different perspectives. Firstly, the researchers present the distribution of the sample of the study by its variables. Table (1) shows the variable of gender as the following:

Table (1)

From the above table, it is concluded that the males are the majority in studying English. However; it does not mean that males are motivated rather than the females for studying English due to the regulations of the University as well as the rules of Admission and Registration Department. Concerning the academic level of the students, the table shows the second- year students are the majority while the juniors are the minority. Lastly, the variable of the student's interest in studying English language was not encouraging since the percentage of the interested students was very low (16.9), while the low-interested students were equal to those of mid-interested in learning English. **As for the reliability coefficient of resolutions, the result was as the following as indicated in table No. (2) :**

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Males	111	94.1
Females	7	5.9
Total	118	100.0
The academic level		
Sophomore	71	60.2
Junior	4	3.4
Senior	43	36.4
Total	118	100.0
Student's interest in English		
High	20	16.9
Mid	49	41.5
Low	49	41.5
Total	118	100.0

Table No. (2) Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.634	20

The previous table indicates that the average of reliability is middle medium. But it's enough to do this study.

Table (3)

Number	Scale
1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Undecided
4	Agree
5	Strongly agree

The analysis system used the SPSS program to produce results. The study needed:

- The extraction of the arithmetic mean, the standard deviation and the percentages of each paragraph of the questionnaire.
 - Equilibrium equation of Kronbach Alpha.
 - Independent-samples t-test
 - One-way Anova
- Concerning the arithmetic mean the following table shows the score with a reference that the mean between 1.5 to 1 is not satisfying.

Mean	Score
1-1.8	Strongly Disagree
1.81-2.60	Disagree
2.61-3.40	Un decided
3.41-4.20	Agree
4.21-5	Strongly agree

Table (4) shows the means, standard deviation and percentage of paragraphs of the questionnaire as a tool of the study.

Table (4)

Number	paragraphs	Mean	Std. deviation	Percent	Score
1	A three credit hours course for learning English for one semester is sufficient for the university's cadets.	3.31	1.286	66%	Un decided
2	Increasing credit hours of learning English to the university cadets is necessary to raise their competence and make them capable of using English in their future security jobs.	3.62	1.286	72%	Agree
3	English should be taught to the university's cadets in the first academic year so that they can achieve competency in English.	3.55	1.389	71%	Agree
4	The current English course in the Department is weak in general due to the absence of the necessary components of its success.	2.64	1.251	53%	Un decided
5	Learning English for	2.05	1.210	41%	Un

	security purposes should be limited to cadets with university degrees in Security Sciences as used currently.				decided
6	Learning English for security purposes should be mandatory for all cadets at the university.	3.99	1.267	80%	Agree
7	There is a positive interaction between the cadets and the current English course.	3.32	1.025	66%	Un decided
8	The general content of the English course is consistent with the cadets' needs for English for security purposes.	3.64	1.045	73%	Agree
9	I benefited from studying English at the university in developing my skills in English for security purposes.	3.58	.812	72%	Agree
10	In this course, I am exposed to military concepts and vocabulary in English language.	4.20	1.425	84%	Agree
11	In this course, I should have more training in grammar.	2.48	1.078	50%	Don't agree
12	In this course, I should have more training in military technical terms.	3.84	1.160	77%	Agree
13	In this course, I should have more training in expressing myself in military communicative context.	3.53	1.162	71%	Agree
14	In this course I expect to learn military ranks in details.	3.91	1.037	78%	Agree
15	In this course I should focus on reading.	3.62	1.030	72%	Agree
16	In this course I should focus on writing.	3.67	1.267	73%	Agree
17	In this course I should focus on listening.	3.38	.951	68%	Undecided
18	Learning security terms	3.81	.903	76%	Agree

	help me in my future military post as an officer in various security departments in the country.				
19	I think activities included in Security Terms for Military course should be various in natures.	3.53	1.161	71%	Agree
20	Instructors should use audiovisual aids most of the time to create interesting teaching atmosphere.	3.88	.505	78%	Agree
	total	3.49	.446	66%	Agree

The above table indicates that the answers of the questionnaire have been categorized into agree, don't agree and un decided. Distributed as the following:

- The paragraphs 2,3,6,8,9,10,12,13,14,15,16,18,19,20 have received agree degree. Paragraph No. (10) which says " In this course, I am exposed to military concepts and vocabulary in English language" has received the highest average which is (4.20).
- Paragraph No. (11) which says " In this course, I should have more training in grammar." Has received " Don't agree" at an average of (2.48).
- paragraphs No. 1,4,5,7, and 17 have received " undecided" degree. The paragraph No.(5) which says " Learning English for security purposes should be limited to cadets with university degrees in Security Sciences as used currently" has got the lowest average which is about (2.05).

Hypotheses Test

The First Hypothesis:

The first hypothesis was "There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the estimates of military cadets about the interest in learning security terms in English due to the significant differences from the point ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in relevance to the sex variable.

Table (5)

Independent-samples T-test

Name of part	Dependent variable	No.	mean	Std.v	t	Sig
Total	Males	110	3.49	.469	-1.207	.230
	Females	7	3.72	.927		

The previous table indicates to accept the hypothesis which says ""There is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in estimates of military cadets about the interest in learning security terms in English due to the significant differences from the point ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in relevance to the sex variable" because the sig.reached (.230) and it is larger than ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) so the hypothesis is accepted .

The Second Hypothesis:

The second hypothesis was that "There is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in estimates of military cadets about the interest in learning security terms in English" due to the significant differences from the point ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in relevance to the variable of the academic level.

Table (6)

One-way Anova

The previous table indicates to reject the hypothesis which says ""There is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in estimates of military cadets about the interest in learning security terms in English due to the significant differences from the point ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in relevance to the variable of the academic level " because the sig reached (.049) and it less than ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) so the hypothesis is rejected. To recognize the origin of the difference, the (LSD) Test is carried out.

The part	The variable	Sophomore	Junior	senior
	Sophomore			-.260*
	Junior			
	senior			
Means		3.39	3.55	3.65

The previous table indicates that the difference between sophomore and senior is in favor of the sophomores.

The Third Hypothesis:

The third hypothesis was that "There is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the interest of military cadets in learning security terms in English due to the significant differences from the point ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in reference to the variable of student's interest in learning English language."

Table (7)

One-way Anova

Name of part	Different resource	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig .
Total	Between Groups	5.407	2	2.704	12.735	.000
	Within Groups	24.202	114	.212		
	Total	29.609	116			

The previous table indicates to reject the hypotheses which says ""There is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of military cadets' interest in learning security terms in English due to the significant differences from the point ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in reference to the variable of the cadet's interest in learning English for the military " because the sig reached (.000) and it is less than ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) so the hypothesis is rejected. (LSD) Test was conducted to recognize the source of such difference.

The part	The variable	High	Mid	low
total	high			
	mid			
	low	-.450*		
Means		3.70	3.64	3.25

The previous table indicates that the difference which is between low and high is in favor of low.

Conclusions and Recommendations:**Conclusion:**

Depend on the analysis in the previous section, the researchers concluded that:

- 1- There is no difference between female students and the males in their interest in learning English language in the Department of Security Sciences.
- 2- There is a difference between the cadets in their interest according to the variable of the academic level since the tables show that the difference is in favor of the sophomores.
- 3- There is a significant difference between the students in their interest in learning English for the military since the sign of their interest is low.

Recommendations:

At the end of the research, the following recommendations are set up:

- 1- To conduct more related studies in the same field.
- 2- To include more courses in the military field at the university.
- 3- To innovate the methodology of teaching English language in order to raise the performance of the cadets.

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