

Checking the Reliability of English as a Second Language Learners' Aptitude: The Use of Achievement Tests as Predictors

Sahal R. Alshammari

Languages and Translation Department
Faculty of Art and Science, Rafha Campus
Northern Border University, Saudi Arabia
Email: Sahal.alshammari@nbu.edu.sa

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Abstract

In Saudi Arabia, high school education has always been blamed for students' weaknesses in the English language. Teachers have been accused of overestimating students' scores in English language courses, resulting in evaluations that do not reflect the students' real levels. Consequently, students believe that they are good enough at English and can survive in an English program at the college level when they are not. The paper is an attempt to bridge the gap between learning English in public schools and at college level. It will try to answer a significant question about whether students' scores in high school and preparatory years are able to predict their performances at the college level — particularly students majoring in English language. It also explores the factors that affect university students' GPAs who are majoring English. A total of 107 students participated in the study by providing their grades in the three levels and responding to a survey to explore their attitudes toward activities that encourage them to learn English in the Saudi Arabian education system. The results showed that high school and preparatory year grades aligned with only a small number of the participants' college grades. This indicates that earlier grades cannot predict students' performances at the university level. Moreover, the results confirm the dominance of the grammar-translation method in teaching English at all three levels. Finally, the results confirm a strong correlation between practicing more activities and improving second language learning. More research is required to explore the factors that influence students' English learning.

Keywords: achievement test, English as a second language, high school, preparatory year, Saudi second language learners.

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Introduction

The weak outcomes of university English departments as well as public high schools in Saudi Arabia are well known to the government and community. Many studies have indicated poor performance in English, whether in public high schools (Al-Nasser, 2015; Ashraf, 2018) or at the university level (Al-Khairiy, 2013; Alrabai, 2014; Alshammari, 2018; Grami, 2010). However, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 focuses on introducing a new era in which the Kingdom will no longer be a closed country. Recently, the government released a new system whereby tourists can apply for visas and get them in a very short time. This will put further pressure on university English language departments and English courses in public high schools to improve their outcomes. It is expected that students graduating from university English departments will be ready to work in a semi-native environment, such as the tourist field. Unfortunately, although students study English in public high schools for about nine years, the majority of them are unable to speak or write flawlessly in English (Al-Nasser, 2015). Recently, the Ministry of Education announced its intention to step up support and improve the outcomes of first-grade students. The English departments at Saudi universities have the same problems, although they have intensive courses related to language skills and language knowledge. The outcomes of English departments in Saudi universities are not encouraging, and many L2 learners, despite having studied for four years, still struggle with the language (Al-Khairiy, 2013; Alrabai, 2014; Alshammari, 2018; Grami, 2010). The Ministry of Education, along with the universities in Saudi Arabia, has an enormous budget to improve outcomes and meet the objectives of their courses. However, there is no easy solution, and in the meantime, public high schools blame the quality of university programs because their teachers are the universities' outcomes.

This paper will investigate the gaps between teaching English in public high schools, in the preparatory year, and in university English departments. It aims to identify where the gaps are and point out the divergences in students' journeys through learning the English language. At present, students who earn higher grades in English courses in public high schools as well as in preparatory year are frustrated when they join the English departments of universities because their grades are lower than those in high school or high school. Therefore, the goal of this paper will be to determine whether students' grade levels in high school English courses reflect their grade levels in university English departments. It is expected that the results will point out the problem and clarify the credibility and reliability of students' scores in high schools and preparatory year. This will give decision makers in the educational system a crucial vision of teaching in English at three important levels in Saudi Arabia, i.e., public school, preparatory year and college level. Moreover, it will sort out a controversial problem in teaching English in Saudi Arabia (Al-Nasser, 2015; Al-Khairiy, 2013; Alrabai, 2014; Alshammari, 2018; Grami, 2010). Finally, it will unwind the factors that affect the performance of students majoring in English at college level.

In light of the above objectives, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Do students' scores in their English courses at public schools and in their preparatory year predict their GPA in a university English department?
- 2) What are the factors that affect the GPAs of university students majoring in English?

Literature Review

Teaching English in Public Schools

The relationship between high school outcomes and university performance is strong (Cyrenne & Chan, 2012). The chain of public schools, preparatory programs, and university English departments is a one-way process, in which the successive stages build upon the previous stages. Many studies have indicated that students graduate from high school before they have achieved the minimum requirements of university English departments in Saudi Arabia (Al-Nujaidi, 2003; Al-Seghayer, 2011; Ashraf, 2018; Javid, Farooq, & Gulzar, 2012). However, the correlation between teachers' evaluations and students' real performances is a complicated one. Two important meta-analysis studies investigated this relationship (Hoge & Coladarci, 1989; Sudkamp, Kaiser & Moller, 2012). Both studies reported high median correlations of .66 and .63, respectively. However, both studies indicated that teachers' judgments on both levels—direct and indirect judgments—were far from perfect because teachers' judgments left 57% - 72% of unexplained variation in students' test performances (Sudkamp et al., 2012).

Teaching English in Saudi Arabia has become a priority for the government because of the language's importance in the modern world (Al-Nasser, 2015), and Saudi Arabia established Vision 2030 as a means of opening its doors to the outside world. This, however, makes English a crucial element of Vision 2030, since it is a universal language. Along with this, teaching English in public schools has been expanded to include elementary schools, and from the academic year 2021, public schools in Saudi Arabia will teach English in the first grade. The aim is to enhance students' exposure to the language so they benefit during this critical period. However, despite teaching English in Saudi Arabia for six decades, the outcomes of public schools are not satisfying (Alqahtani, 2021). Students study English for nine years, yet they do not achieve the ability to conduct a short conversation (Alhaisoni & Rahman, 2013).

There are also many barriers to teaching English in public schools—such as depending on international training providers to enhance teaching domestically, a lack of accurate planning, a lack of transparency, and poor quality—with every indication that these aspects are not expected to improve in the near future (Al-Seghayer, 2014; Al-Tamimi, 2019). Some studies have revealed that while students graduate from high school with high grades in English, they are shocked to find themselves struggling to pass their preparatory English courses (McMullen, 2014). This failure has been attributed to many causes, such as a lack of trained teachers, inadequate teacher strategies, students' lack of aptitude, textbooks, and low exposure to the English language (Fareh, 2010). The efficiency of teachers plays a crucial role in students' learning, with students seeing their teachers as rescuers (Alqahtani, 2021; Ansari, 2012; Elttayef & Hussein, 2017). Unfortunately, teachers commonly use the Arabic language (their students' mother tongue) in English lessons to reduce the time needed for instruction (Alqahtani, 2021; Alshammari, 2011). However, since language learning is a cumulative process, it takes only one weak teacher to create a gap that students can fall into to become weak learners.

One of the major causes of the weak outcomes of English lessons in public high schools is combining the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing into one course. Arguably, the core skills should be taught separately to give each sufficient attention (Al-Tamimi, 2019). Teachers and supervisors from the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia have revealed that the

teaching of English in public schools, the training of teachers, low student motivation, overuse of traditional teaching methods, poor technology usage, and a weakness in terms of school supplies are major obstacles to improving public school outcomes (Elyas & Al Grigri, 2014). Other research has indicated that we cannot simplify the problem by boiling it down to one factor, such as the low EFL achievement levels of Saudi EFL learners (Arabai, 2016). Rather, we should look at the bigger picture. This situation is the result of both internal and external factors.

The Preparatory Year as a Solution

As a result of the weak outcomes of high schools, particularly in terms of English proficiency, a preparatory year was first applied by King Fahad University and subsequently by most other Saudi universities to narrow the gap between high school outcomes and university requirements (Fareh, 2014). The preparatory year adds an extra twelve months to students' studies, although in some specialties it might be only a semester. Studies show that students value it for improving their language proficiency, and they know that their English proficiency is inadequate (McMullen, 2014). A recent study showed that the preparatory year have a positive influence on students through measuring the relationship between the admission weighted ratio, the college enrollment allocation weighted ratio, and the performance of three batches of male and female students (three consecutive years) (Brdese & Alsaggaf, 2021).

On the other hand, instructors who teach refreshers in preparatory courses have reported their concerns regarding English proficiency when students exit the program (McMullen, 2014). They blame public schools in general and high school in particular, in the first place, for failing to provide their learners with sufficient exposure to English (Al-Sharqi, Hashim, & Ahmed, 2015). Students also criticise their experiences in schools and attribute their difficulties in the preparatory year to school weaknesses (Al-Sharqi et al., 2015). Regarding their experience in the preparatory year, L2 learners have reported that the preparatory English program has a number of positive aspects, such as improving their listening ability and adjusting them to the heavy work required in their tertiary studies, as well as negative aspects, such as excessive length, poor teacher practices, and poorly equipped classrooms (Gaffas, 2016). Also, it has been reported that, on average, students in preparatory English programs have low learner autonomy (Falah Alzubi, Singh, & Pandian, 2017). One difficulty of the preparatory year program is that it is considered a holistic program and needs all relevant participants to cooperate (Kenedy, 2015, as cited in Keys, 1999). It has also been recommended that technology should be part of English learning since it has become a seamless part of the lives of the current generation (Al-Sharqi et al., 2015).

Despite the huge efforts to improve the English proficiency of students in public schools by adding an extra year to prepare for universities' requirements, the outcomes for English L2 learners are still inadequate (Al-Khairi, 2013; Arabai, 2014; Alshammari, 2018; Grami, 2010), and the students in many English departments in Saudi universities lack the required English language proficiency (Javid et al., 2012). One common feature of both high school and preparatory year instructors that may explain part of the problem is that accountability is missing in teachers' assessments of students' performances. Unaccountable teachers would activate social categories, such as age, race, and gender, and use them for assessments. On the other hand, accountable teachers focus on students' individual attributes (Krolak-Schwerdt, Böhmer & Gräsel, 2013). Moreover, a qualitative study revealed that Saudi L2 learners struggle with academic writing due

to the insufficient experience of their instructors in the field of writing as well as a lack of motivation (Alshammari, 2018). The same weakness is obvious in other skills (Al Abik, 2014; Alrabai, 2016; Alshammari, 2011; Jamal et al., 2020; Soomro & Farooq, 2018). This unacceptable weakness has been attributed to many things, but few question the high scores that students usually achieve in high schools. Overevaluation of students in high schools may be one reason behind weak L2 learners joining university English departments. Inflated scores give students false expectations that they are capable of studying in a second language.

Research Methodology

Participants

In this descriptive cross-sectional study, around 107 participants majoring in English responded to a questionnaire. The participants were from different levels and were majoring in English at Northern Border University. Many participants were excluded because they did not provide their English course grades at high school or in their preparatory year. Those who brought their grades at high school participated the survey. All the participants studied in Northern Border public schools and finished English courses in the preparatory year of Northern Border University. Their ages ranges from 19 to 25. Moreover, the researcher conducted an interview with 14 of them to explore their attitudes toward their experiences of studying English in high school, in their preparatory year, and in the English department. The interview aimed to add more depth to the study and explore aspects that the questionnaire could not cover.

Research Instruments

The first instrument is a survey questionnaire consisted of items relating to the courses that students have studied in high school, preparatory year, and English department. Moreover, it includes assessment procedures, teachers' competence, learning environment, materials, nature of content, activities included, learning, skills-enhancement opportunities, and personal expectations and aspirations. It also recorded participants' scores in the English language course along with personal details such as family background, age, and exposure to language learning. The second instrument is an interview with 14 participants. The interview consists of open-ended questions to explore the students' attitudes.

Research Procedures

First, learners' grades in English courses at the high school and preparatory year levels were compared with their achievements in English language skills courses at the foundation levels in the English language department program. Their scores were further compared in terms of age, learning exposure, awareness of the needs and goals of such courses, and motivation. The questionnaire was translated from English into Arabic and independently back-translated into English by a second translator. The few discrepancies between the original English and the back-translated versions resulted in adjustments to the Arabic translation based on direct discussion between the translators. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS, version 10. Descriptive statistics were applied to explore the participants' views. For each item in the survey, the frequencies of the responses were calculated in percentages. In addition, the means and standard deviations were determined for the various components included in the questionnaire. An Analysis of Variance test (ANOVA) was carried out to see whether the differences among the mean percentage scores of all the variables were statistically significant. P values of less than 0.05 were

considered significant. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data according to gender. For descriptive statistics, the sample was filtered according to gender, and then the percentage scores were calculated so that the male and female responses could be compared for each item.

Results

To answer the third question (“Do students’ scores in their English courses in public high school and in the preparatory year predict their GPAs in university English departments?”), the correlation matrix of students as per their grades in high school, their grades in the preparatory exam, and their current GPAs in English upon graduation were checked (see below):

Table 1. *Correlation between high school, prep year, and English department’s grades*

Correlation Matrix	Grade in high school	Grade in prep year	Grade in English department
Grade in high school	1	0.50	0.24
Grade in prep year	0.50	1	0.41
Grade in English department	0.24	0.41	1

The above correlation matrix clearly shows that there is a positive correlation between grade in high school, grade in the preparatory year, and GPA in a university English department. Since there is a positive correlation, we have to check whether there is a cause-and-effect relationship between them. To establish such a relationship, we performed a regression analysis using the Excel built-in function.

From the regression analysis, the linear relationship between grades in high school, grades in the preparatory year, and GPAs in university English departments can be given by the following model:

Table 2. *Linear relationship among the three levels*

Multiple R	0.413
R Square	0.1707
Adjusted R Square	0.1548
Standard Error	0.8075
Observations	107

As seen in table two, the multiple R = 0.4132415188, which shows that the correlation between the actual GPAs in English and the predicted GPAs in English, as per Table two, is positive and is 41.32%. The adjusted R-square is 0.154824885, which shows that 15.48 table % values of *GPAs in English* are explained by the high school scores. The standard error is also very high (80.75%).

Furthermore, as per the third subtest, the p-value for grades in high school is 0.632717305. This is greater than 0.05, which shows that the value of *GPAs in English* is not dependent on the value of *grades in high school*. Similarly, the p-value for *grades in the preparatory year* is 0.00028911. This is less than 0.05, which shows that the value of *GPAs in English* is dependent on the value of *grades in the preparatory year*. Therefore, on the basis of the regression analysis,

we can conclude that the equation represented by table two is a weak model, as only 15.48% of the values of *GPA's in English* are explained by the model (i.e., by the independent variables *grades in high school* and *grades in the preparatory year*).

To answer the second question ("What are the factors that affect the GPAs of university students majoring in English?"), we analyzed the activities followed by the 107 students. First, we analyzed whether there was a significant difference in the activities done by students in high school by conducting an ANOVA test using the Excel built-in function. The results of the ANOVA test are as follows:

Table 3. *Differences in students' activities in high school*

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Poor_(60–69)	20	24	1.2	3.8
Average_(70–79)	20	24	1.2	3.8
Good_(80–89)	20	44	2.2	3.9
Excellent_(90–100)	20	42	2.1	3.6

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	18.15	3	6.05	1.588	0.199	2.7249
Within Groups	289.4	76	3.8			
Total	307.55	79				

As seen in table three and since the p-value (0.199) is greater than 0.05, and the f-value = $1.588 < F \text{ crit} = 2.7249$, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was a significant difference between the overall activities done by the students.

Furthermore, we conducted an ANOVA test to find whether there was a significant difference between the activities done by poor-grade and excellent-grade students at the high school level. The results of the ANOVA test are as follows:

Table 4. *Differences of the activities done by poor-grade and excellent-grade students at the high school level*

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Excellent	20	42	2.1	3.568421
Poor	20	24	1.2	3.852632

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	8.1	1	8.1	2.182	0.1477	4.098
Within Groups	141	38	3.710			
Total	149.1	39				

As seen in table four and since the p-value (0.1477) is greater than 0.05, and the f-value = $2.182 < F \text{ crit} = 4.098$, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was a significant difference between the activities undertaken by poor- and excellent-grade students at the high school level.

Second, we analyzed whether there was a significant difference in the activities done in the preparatory year by conducting an ANOVA test using the Excel built-in function.

Table 5. *Difference in the activities done in the preparatory year*

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Poor_(60–69)	20	15	0.75	1.776315789
Average_(70–79)	20	15	0.75	1.776315789
Good_(80–89)	20	53	2.65	4.660526316
Excellent_(90–100)	20	51	2.55	4.365789474

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	68.55	3	22.85	7.266	0.000238	2.724
Within Groups	239	76	3.1447			
Total	307.55	79				

As seen in table five and since the p-value (0.000238) is less than 0.05, and the f-value = 7.266 > F crit = 2.724, we do not have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was no significant difference between the overall activities done by students in the preparatory year.

Third, we analyzed whether there was a significant difference in the activities done by university English department students by conducting an ANOVA test using the Excel built-in function.

Table 6. *Difference in the activities done by university English department students.*

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Poor	20	17	0.85	2.45
Average	20	34	1.7	3.38
Good	20	39	1.95	3.73
Excellent	20	39	1.95	3.73

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	16.337	3	5.44	1.638	0.1875	2.724
Within Groups	252.65	76	3.324			
Total	268.99	79				

As seen in table six and since the p-value (0.1875) is more than 0.05, and the f-value = 1.638 < F crit = 2.724, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was a significant difference between the overall activities done by students in English department.

Furthermore, we conducted an ANOVA test to find whether there was a significant difference between the activities done by poor-grade and excellent-grade students English department. The results of the ANOVA test are as follows:

Table 7. *Difference between the activities done by poor-grade and excellent-grade students English department*

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Excellent	20	39	1.95	3.734
Poor	20	17	0.85	2.45

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	12.1	1	12.1	3.913	0.0551	4.098
Within Groups	117.5	38	3.092			
Total	129.6	39				

As seen in table seven and since the p-value (0.0551) is more than 0.05, and the f-value = 3.913 < F crit = 4.098, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was a significant difference between the activities done by poor-grade and excellent-grade students in English department year.

Moreover, we have analyzed the activities done by excellent-grade students in high school, in the preparatory year, and in English department to find out whether there was any significant change. For this, we conducted an ANOVA test using the Excel built-in function.

Table 8. *Activities done by excellent-grade students in three levels*

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
High_School_Level	20	42	2.1	3.568
Prep_Year	20	51	2.55	4.365
English dept.	20	39	1.95	3.734

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3.9	2	1.95	0.501	0.608	3.158
Within Groups	221.7	57	3.889			
Total	225.6	59				

As seen in table eight and since the p-value (0.608) is more than 0.05, and the f-value = 0.501 < F crit = 3.158, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was a significant difference between the activities done by excellent-grade students in high school, in the preparatory year, and in the English department.

We have further analyzed the activities done by good-grade students at high school, in the preparatory year, and in their English department to find out whether there was any significant change. For this, we conducted an ANOVA test using the Excel built-in function.

Table 9. *Activities done by good-grade students in the three levels*

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
High_School_Level	20	44	2.2	3.957
Prep_Year	20	53	2.65	4.660
English dept	20	39	1.95	3.734

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	5.033	2	2.516	0.611	0.5462	3.158
Within Groups	234.7	57	4.117			
Total	239.7	59				

As seen in table nine and since the p-value (0.5462) is more than 0.05, and the f-value = 0.611 < F crit = 3.158, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was a significant difference between the activities done by good-grade students in high school, in the preparatory year, and in the English department.

We have also analyzed the activities done by poor-grade students in high school, in the preparatory year, and in the English department to find out whether there was any significant change.

Table 10. *Activities done by poor-grade students in the three levels*

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
High_School_Level	20	24	1.2	3.852
Prep_Year	20	15	0.75	1.776
English dept.	20	17	0.85	2.45

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	2.233	2	1.1166	0.414	0.662	3.158
Within Groups	153.5	57	2.6929			
Total	155.7	59				

As seen in table 10 and since the p-value (0.662) is more than 0.05, and the f-value = 0.414 < F crit = 3.158, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there was a significant difference between the activities done by poor-grade students in high school, in the preparatory year, and in their graduation year.

To take a closer look at the activities done by the excellent-grade students in the three levels, we analyzed their responses, as shown in the following table:

Table 11. *Activities done by the excellent-grade students in the three levels*

S.No.	Statement	Excellent Students' Responses		
		High School Level	Prep Year	English Dep
1	We learned grammar through explicit rule teaching and exercises	5	5	5
2	We did pronunciation practice exercises	3	3	3
3	Errors were corrected by the teacher	3	5	5
4	We used classroom conversations and discussions	3	3	3
5	The teacher gave us vocabulary that we were supposed to study (e.g., vocabulary lists)	3	3	3
6	We worked and talked in small groups	0	3	3
7	The teacher used materials from real life (e.g., TV, magazines, newspaper, radio shows)	0	0	0
8	The teacher used visual material, such as pictures and movies	0	0	0
9	We used songs and games to learn the language	0	0	0

10	We worked and talked in pairs	0	3	3
11	We did role-play	0	3	0
12	There were a lot of teacher explanations	3	0	3
13	We did translation exercises	5	0	0
14	We gave oral presentations in front of the class	3	3	5
15	The teacher spoke most of the time	5	0	0
16	The teacher often explained in the native language	3	0	0
17	I was encouraged by the teacher to speak during the class	3	5	3
18	There were English labs in the department	3	5	3
19	We always used the English lab	0	5	0
20	I still love English	0	5	0

Discussion

The main finding of this research is that public high schools and preparatory year courses in English have a weak influence on students' learning. Responding to the first question, the results show that high school and preparatory year English course grades could not predict students' GPA in a university English department. The study revealed that there is no cause-and-effect relationship between the values of undergraduate students' GPAs in English and their grades in high school and in the preparatory year. The analysis of the results shows that only 15.48% of the students' GPAs are explained by the independent variables *grade in high school* and *grade in the preparatory year*. This might explain the weaknesses of the English department outcomes (Al-Khairy, 2013; Alrabai, 2014; S. R. Alshammari, 2018; Grami, 2010). Moreover, the results show that although students have graduated from high school with relatively high scores in English, this does not mean that they are excellent in English (McMullen, 2014).

The problem in the preparatory year is more devastating. Although the preparatory year program was created in the first place to improve university outcomes, the results show that its influence on the English department is weak and, along with high school scores, explains only 15.38% of students' GPAs in university English departments. This requires a full revision of the program in such a way that it achieves its essential goals.

Regarding the second question, which explored the factors that affected the GPA of students majoring in English, the results show that students with high GPA scores tended to engage in more activities than poor-grade students. In fact, the same results can be drawn from high school students as well. The results show a significant difference between good-grade and poor-grade students, where good-grade students tended to do more activities than poor-grade students. It should be mentioned that the results show that teaching grammar skills is one of the top priorities of teachers in high school, in the preparatory year, and in university English departments. This confirms that the grammar-translation method is still favored in Saudi Arabia (Alseghayer, 2005).

An in-depth look at the students' responses regarding activities and practices inside the classroom at the three levels shows us that high school education is a major reason for the weakness of students in college. The participants responded negatively to items seven, eight, ten, and eleven relating to the teachers' usage of various strategies and advanced technology in teaching English in high school. This confirms research that has indicated overuse of traditional teaching methods and poor technology usage as the main obstacles to improving public school outcomes (Elyas & Al Grigri, 2014). In the same regard, the participants responded negatively to item six, which

relates to cooperative learning. However, many studies have confirmed the importance of cooperative learning (Alanazy, 2011; Alshammari, 2015; Ellison & Wade Boykin, 2006; Mohamed & Mahmoud, 2014). Still, its application in the classroom is impractical, and this might be due to a lack of training on the part of the teachers (Elyas & Al Grigri, 2014), who do not seem to understand the importance of such strategies when it comes to improving their students' learning. This shows us the need to evaluate teachers' efficiency and syllabus quality in high school.

Formal education is a long journey that moves from kindergarten through public school to the university level. Public schools are supposed to prepare students for university studies and, at the end of high school, award them with a certificate that predicts their levels in general (GPA) and specifically in different subjects. In other words, public school grades should have the ability to predict students' university performances (Cyrenne & Chan, 2012). Unfortunately, the results show that one of the major reasons for students' weakness in English departments is overestimated evaluations while they are at the high school level. Based on those evaluations, they chose the English language program for their undergraduate studies. When their grades in high school are compared to their performances in the English programs at the university level, it is obvious that students were misguided by their grades in high school. In other words, public schools failed to predict students' performances as undergraduate English language learners.

Conclusion

The study aims to find the reliability of the scores of high school and preparatory year to predict the GPA of students' majoring in English at the college level. In addition, it investigates the factors that affect students' GPA at college level. The results of the study confirm that the scores of high school and preparatory courses do not predict students' performances when majoring in English. The findings show the need to revise the evaluation systems in high schools. The unrealistic high scores that students get in high school mislead students and convince them that their English is good enough to choose an English program in their field, even though they are not. Regarding the factors that affect students' GPA, the results confirm the strong correlation between practicing more activities and improving second-language learning in high school as well as at college.

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About the author:

Dr. Sahal Al Shammari is an associate professor at Northern Border University. He holds a Ph.D. in TESOL from University of Kansas, USA. Besides research papers to his credit, he has also authored a couple of fictions in Arabic language, of which *Yasir* has been declared best-seller with more than 40,000 copies sold so far. Being an ELT expert, his areas of research interests include but not limited to second language acquisition, teaching methods, and writing skills of the Arab EFL learners. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6837-164X>

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