

A Suggested Project to Develop EFL Teaching in the Egyptian Universities in the Light of Knowledge Economy Investing in ELT Innovation

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Abstract

Knowledge Investment is a new and unique concept. Converting the output of scientific research into reality requires a promising start-up. Knowledge economy should be given the priority it deserves and be considered one of the strategic objectives of the development plans in Egypt. With English increasingly being positioned as the pre-eminent language of international communication, the current study aims to propose a project to develop English language teaching in the Egyptian universities in the light of knowledge economy. It seeks to illustrate the key success factors in enhancing knowledge economy through English language teaching. To propose the project, the researchers designed a questionnaire of two parts; the first is to analyse the perceptions of Egyptian EFL postgraduate students and teaching staff of the current effectiveness of college English instruction in the Faculty of Education, Menoufia University. The second part of the questionnaire analyses the participants' perceptions of the goals of teaching English as a foreign language in the knowledge economy era. Based on the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, the researchers presented the suggested project to develop ELT in the Egyptian universities in the light of knowledge economy.

Keywords: knowledge economy, English Language Teaching (ELT), investing in ELT innovation project, perceptions of ELT quality

1. Introduction

Knowledge economy is becoming the cutting edge of economy in the most developed countries. Governments around the world, whether developed or emerging, are competing with each other by growing their investments in education and research. 'Investing in knowledge' means not just improving vocational skills though such skills are needed for more advanced forms of production (Pahl, 2014), but it also means building the capacity to respond to challenges and to modernize the nation. It aims at developing the creativity, imagination and critical thinking powers of students. It emphasizes a high level of education across Egypt and the ability to access and apply knowledge from anywhere in the world. So, advanced language skills are essential to innovation. Knowledge and language are the steps to national economic prosperity. Using language skills and research training are crucial to access the worldwide stock of knowledge, so as to respond to worldwide developments and shape new solutions to pressing problems (Cummins & Davison, 2007; Marginson, 2008; Murray, 2006).

1.1 Context of the Problem

It is important to recognise that there may well be a series of complex barriers and challenges to be overcome, both internal to the universities and in the wider enabling environment. If public authorities and the key regional partners understand the principles, practices and barriers and how to overcome them, the potential for maximising the contribution of universities is almost boundless. Achieving this is a long term objective and will require a staged approach moving from simple projects to more integrated collaborative programs.

The world has gone from producing goods and services to producing information services. This production is the

motor for the world's leading economies as information is the main stone of economy. The knowledge economy is provoking changes in the profiles needed in terms of workers' qualifications. Highly qualified workers are required. However, the method of teaching looks like it did years ago in classrooms with teachers of a specific subject and a specific timetable. To adapt to the knowledge society and economy, nations need to change education. Society has changed, but education still looks the way it did at the start of the 20th century.

High proficiency in English is seen to be essential for socio-economic development. The impact of globalization and economic development has made English the 'language of opportunity' and a vital means of improving prospects for well-paid employment. The desire to invest in ELT is increased.

1.2 Questions of the study

The current study attempts to answer the following main question:

What are the features of a suggested project to develop English language teaching in the light of knowledge economy?

Out of the main question, the following ones are stated:

- 1) What is knowledge economy?
- 2) What does Egypt need for its education system to be effective to move to the knowledge economy?
- 3) How is knowledge economy changing higher education, and what does this mean for ELT?
- 4) What are the new ELT approaches and strategies of moving towards knowledge economy?
- 5) To what extent do postgraduate students and teaching staff in the Faculty of Education, Menoufia University perceive the current quality of ELT?
- 6) To what extent do postgraduate students and teaching staff in the Faculty of Education, Menoufia University perceive the goals of teaching English as a foreign language in a way that reflects the principles of knowledge economy?

1.3 Aim of the Study

The current study aims to propose a project to develop English language teaching in the Faculty of Education, Menoufia University in the light of knowledge economy.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The current study is significant as it might help:

- Promote and strengthen the image of the university as a center of educational research featured in the eyes of industry and trade companies.
- Develop a knowledge-based economy within the executive plans through a variety of training programs that are consistent with the vision and goals of the university.
- Reduce the gap between the university and labour market requirements.
- Improve the level of EFL studies and training programs.
- Connect between EFL teaching and meeting the requirements of economic development.

1.5 Design of the Study

The present study uses the descriptive and analytical approaches. It illustrates knowledge economy and outlines the basic requirements for the development of education; including the role of ELT in building a knowledge-based economy in Egypt. The study also proposes a project to develop teaching English as a Foreign Language in the light of knowledge economy. The project is based on an analysis of the perceptions of teaching staff and postgraduate students regarding the current effectiveness/quality of College English Instruction.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

- 1) The participants of the current study are (60) EFL postgraduate students and (14) teaching staff in the Faculty of Education, Menoufia University.
- 2) The proposed project depends on Knowledge economy as the basis for developing ELT in Universities.
- 3) Menoufia University as a representative of the Egyptian universities.

1.7 Terminology

1.7.1 Knowledge Economy

The current study adopts the definition of (Huggins, Johnston, & Steffenson, 2008; Lockett, Kerr, & Robinson, 2008; Mongkhonvanit, 2008; Tan, 2008) which views knowledge economy as based on a supportive government policy in economy to provide incentives for the efficient use of existing and new knowledge to create skilled workers to share and use knowledge for economic advantage.

1.7.2 ELT Innovation Investment

It refers to the intensive activities that contribute to the accelerated pace of technological, economics and scientific advance in the ELT. (Armstrong, 2000; Barrett & O'Connell, 2001; Clark, 2002; Green, 2001; Rikowski, 2000)

2. Review of Literature

2.1 *The Role of Knowledge Economy in Changing Higher Education and ELT in Particular*

The institutional heart of knowledge economy is the global system of communications and data transfer through the medium of English (Marginson, 2004). The process of research and the systematic and critical inquiry has spread well beyond high cost science. Knowledge economy is sustained by the networking of research, research universities and the publication and exchange of research (Ling, 2007; Roux, 2001; Van Looy, Debackere, Callaert, Tijssen, & van Leeuwen, 2006). Nowadays, the growing role of science and knowledge in production, the growing need for educated people in all kinds of work and the growing trade in cultural goods emphasize the importance of knowledge economy (Al-Rahbi, 2008; Chattopadhyay & Mukhopadhyay, 2013; Dworak, 2012).

Knowledge economy combines economic and cognitive integration with cultural attributes. It increases our encounters with foreign cultures through the mediums of communications for the purposes of business, work, education, tourism and family life. This increases the importance of the English language as it is considered the language of communication, research and publication. The great change was the arrival of the Internet in the early 1990s. The Internet brings us into continuous and closer encounters with people from other cultures (Lotherington, 2007; Marginson, 2008; Murray, 2006; Pederson, 2012; Waters, 2007; Wei & Feng, 2013).

2.2 *What Does Egypt Need for Its Education Systems to Be Effective to Move to the Knowledge Economy?*

Kozma (2003) establishes a scale of knowledge that takes into account the social components and the links between educational change and economic development. Knowledge deepening and knowledge creation are the two main levels which communities should be concerned with.

In Knowledge deepening, subjects are still taught and students are adapted to the real world. There is assessment of the curriculum's application in daily life situations. More than one focus is possible. There is even the possibility to analyse different solutions and determine which is the most appropriate (Kozma, 2003). Teachers have to know their subjects in depth and be educational experts. They have to study students and know that they will not understand things at times. There is also collaboration between teachers and students who always work in teams. There are computers in the classroom and collaborative networks are used.

In knowledge creation, there are no subjects; instead, there are interdisciplinary processes. Students produce projects linked to the environment and to be used in the environment. Assessment is carried out by the user community. Teachers are committed, carry out research and constantly provide and test new ideas. Students are organized into learning communities which can involve experts from the real world. Knowledge is acquired anywhere and at any time. Learning takes place in and outside the school, and in other countries. Technological platforms are used for innovation and sharing ideas. Researchers can transform preparation programs in universities by applying models for knowledge deepening and creation and training teachers in the fields of languages technology and collaboration between subjects (Finardi & Porcino, 2014; Wedell, 2011).

Egypt needs a vibrant system of education and training. A system in which there is visibly growing rates of educational participation at all levels; elementary, secondary and tertiary; supported by increasing national investment at all levels. Egypt needs not only knowledge deepening but also knowledge creation where every piece of information is related to a field of work. Moreover, Egypt should create a modern system of research and innovation, including universities that have the research resources, especially the skilled people, to participate effectively in the main collective flows of knowledge. It is also important to secure good on-going cooperation between education institutions, government and industry (Mestres, 2014; OECD, 2014). Egypt needs a wide spread of people with the capacity to communicate collectively: to access information; to conduct business, professional and governmental activity in offshore settings; and to work effectively with foreign

visitors. This has made a universal good quality of the English language skills a matter of priority in all nations. This also means increasingly important roles and ever growing work and responsibilities for ELT and EL teachers through strong flows of students moving in and out of the country, including doctoral students, frequent international training and exchange among education staff.

2.2.1 Educational Programs and Initiatives in Egypt

The importance of education and educational co-operation in the development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies is universally acknowledged as paramount. Egypt is heading for a period of major change in education and working conditions, to a diversification of professional courses, with the best opportunities of education and training in which they are given to seek and find their own area of excellence which would enhance mobility and cooperation among students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff (McCormell, 2001). A major emphasis should be given to quality assurance and the link between higher education and research, lifelong learning, and student involvement.

Miclea (2003, p. 266) emphasizes that offering course programs in English plays a twofold role. It improves the competitiveness of students entering European and international labour market, which is one of the main objectives of the knowledge economy. It also attracts foreign students to the institutions offering courses in this language. Miclea (2003, p. 267) adds that the responsibility of designing and offering courses in English lies with each university or higher education institution rather than with “the management level of the higher education system as a whole”. This research has put enormous pressure on English language teaching to respond to these needs.

2.3 *The Contribution of the Egyptian Universities to Develop Knowledge Economy*

In recent works, exploring the relationship between knowledge economy and language education, human and social development is increased in a way that helps people gain the resources to lift themselves. The development of skills and knowledge assets in the workforce is one of the most critical tools in achieving knowledge economy. Universities can act as a powerful magnet for attracting talented students and staff into the community from other parts of the country and even further afield (Vassiliou & Hahn, 2011). In addition, through their teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate level, universities have the potential to add to the stock of human resources by means of graduate recruitment into community businesses, possibly following work placements as part of the student’s degree. More particularly, graduates can provide the gateway or connectivity through which knowledge exchange between researchers and businesses takes place (Al-Rahbi, 2008; Ling, 2007; Shin & Teichler, 2013).

Workforce training projects are skills development programs which are designed to meet the needs of the employer (by meeting a current or future business need); the employee (in terms of their career progression and professional development); and the community (by ensuring the right skills exist to build knowledge economy) (Mestres, 2014). For this reason, universities need to be highly flexible in how courses are designed and delivered to ensure they are relevant for both the targeted industry and its employee. Workforce development programmes can have a profound effect on the community by exposing people to skills and knowledge actually needed. Rapidly changing economic conditions can make ensuring the long term value of workforce development difficult, especially in areas of rapidly changing communication and technology. Ensuring the future skills needs of the community are addressed is crucial for building knowledge economy (Agosto, 2005; Borghans & Weel, 2006; Dalziel, 2010).

2.4 *The Contribution of ELT in Enhancing Knowledge Economy*

Historically, speaking a second language, or more specifically, speaking a highly valued second language, was a marker of the social and economic elite. However, globalization, urbanization, and the Internet have dramatically changed the role of English in the past 20 years. Today, English proficiency is increasingly becoming a basic skill needed for the entire workforce, in the same way that literacy has been transformed in the last two centuries from an elite privilege into a basic requirement for informed citizenship (Finardi & Porcino, 2014; Pederson, 2012).

Research shows a direct correlation between the English skills of a population and the economic performance of the country. The more ELT is reinforced, the more the economy is increased. Since the English language is the medium of communication and the language of business, knowledge, education and policy, teaching it is of an utmost importance (Fisher, 2015; McCormick, 2013).

The English Department at universities confront some pressures that emerge from knowledge economic market. These pressures are interpreted in a variety of ways by faculty and students and are variously negotiated in their

lived experiences. Both faculty and students' interpretation of these pressures suggest that not only are they aware of the powers related with English; they are also taking advantage of the economic, financial, socio-cultural, and educational opportunities available to them due to their mastery of the English language. In addition, English has emerged as the sole or one of the main languages of scientific associations in Europe and further, as the preferred language of scientific publications and of other abstracting practices (Kell & Vagi, 2012; Kola, 2011; Lamb, 2012; Lotherington, 2007; Rao, 2013; Seidlhofer, 2003; Tembe & Norton, 2011; Tollefson, 2007; Warschauer, 2000b; Wei & Feng, 2013; Whitehead, 2011).

Teichler (2005, p. 464) argues that the use of English as the language of scientific publication in Europe has led to an "extremely unbalanced information situation" (p. 464). This imbalance is reflected in the fact that news and small-scale research about higher education and individual colleges in the UK is internationally known. On the other hand, research on higher education in France, Spain, Italy, Germany and Eastern European countries remain unknown internationally.

According to Seidlhofer (2003), English is the language of science, technology and economics worldwide. It is also acknowledged to be the working language of medicine and aviation. Graddol (2000) points out that English is the language of the global economy, most scientific publications, international banking, and advertising for global brands, internet communication, technological transfer and international law (Coleman, 2010).

The role of international bodies like the United Nations (UN) and the Commonwealth in development cannot be underestimated. The fact that English is one of the official languages of the United Nation and of many international bodies and conferences underlines the hypothesis that it has a positive correlation with development. As Hasman (2004) states, English has a very important role in the 21st century since governments, industries, corporations and international organizations need it to progress. Coleman (2010) best summarizes the role of English in development under these main categories: English for employability, English for international collaboration and co-operation, English for access to research and information, English as an impartial language and English for facilitating international mobility of students, tourists and workers.

2.5 Four Roles of the English Language in Knowledge Economy Era

In the Egyptian universities, ELT should emphasize the four areas in which English may have important roles to play.

2.5.1 English for Academic Success

Dickson and Cumming (1996) indicate that even in non-English-speaking countries, English is the most popular foreign language as a subject for students worldwide. Furthermore, all over the world, the number of universities using English as a medium of instruction is increasing. Foreign students going to these countries and universities necessarily need to be proficient in English. As proof of this, they usually have to take an international English language test such as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) before registering at the overseas university.

2.5.2 English for International Employment Opportunities

The relationship between English and employability is a significant one. Employability can be viewed as the ability to get a job, maintain it or get a new one (Kirubahar, Santhi, & Subashini, 2010). In some cases, this will depend on ability to speak English fluently and to effectively communicate one's ideas orally.

From the economic point of view, the 21st century is characterized by globalization of economies and high job mobility. Millions of non-native speakers of English work in foreign countries where the use of English in the workplace is a necessity. Even in newly industrialized nations like China, Japan and India, English is becoming more and more necessary at work. As Warschauer (2000a) observes, many non-native speakers of English need to use English daily in workplaces for presentations, negotiations and international collaboration (Coleman, 2010).

Moreover, there is increasing emphasis on English for the workplace, necessitating the design of language courses for various professionals (businessmen, medical doctors, nurses and those working in technology, agriculture, aviation, etc.) The growing demand for proficiency in English opens thousands of job opportunities for English language teachers worldwide (Ekpoki, 2009; Kell & Vagi, 2012; Rao, 2013; Whitehead, 2011).

2.5.3 English for International Communication

English is an international language used by many people across the world as a native language (ENL), second language (ESL), foreign language (EFL) or lingua franca (ELF). It is thus obvious that in every continent of the world, English is spoken in one form or another, giving rise to many models (Kirkpatrick, 2006). This justifies its status as a world or global language. Moreover, as Seidlhofer (2003) points out, bilingualism is a popular trend and

English has a stabilization role in bilingualism since most people speak their language and English. In terms of the global spread of English, Hasman (2004) postulates that “one out of five people in the world speak English and 85 percent of mails are in English. Pilots, physicists, executives and tourists who speak other languages use English to communicate with colleagues in other countries” (Hasman, 2004, p. 19).

2.5.4 English for Global Education

Proponents of global education hold that the goal of education should be to develop social responsibility and global citizenship (Merrifield & Kai, 2004). Experiencing learning in various forms of interaction and community service leads to greater understanding of the state of the world and the living conditions of others. According to Schattle (2008), global education builds a culture of responsibility for the welfare of others and the planet.

Besides, it builds self-confidence and a feeling of being well informed since the student is able to participate in discussions on global issues. This all relates to personal empowerment and development.

The English class is an ideal location for developing such knowledge because there are few constraints on the subject matter discussed during language learning activities. Interesting topics from the global curriculum can be used to teach listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. Regular classroom activities like dialogues, role plays, debates, speeches, essay writing, group work, interviews and projects improve proficiency in English. A further incidental benefit of learning English in this way is that students are prepared for interaction in the workplace.

2.6 Preparation of EFL Teaching Staff in the Era of Knowledge Economy

In order to contribute effectively to knowledge economy through TEFL, traditional lecturing approaches and teaching methods have to be replaced by innovative ones. The importance of shifting from a teacher-centered, lecturing methodology to a student-centered one, which would stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving skills, has been often raised in ELT research as a main characteristic of the teaching staff to enhance their awareness of the relationship between ELT and labour market (Cameron, 2012; Travers, 2012). The quality of EFL teaching staff in universities has to be reevaluated. They should be encouraged to:

- 1) Undertake scholarship activities that help them get acquainted to the most recent publications about the new methods of ELT.
- 2) Read international journals and forums that clarify the strategies of using the English language in a way that is relevant to the labour market.
- 3) Attend seminars, workshops and occasional conferences in order to be up to date in their subject and pedagogy.
- 4) Be aware of the work-based learning methods that help students make a link between learning English and using it in the field of work.

2.6.1 Work-Based Learning Methods (Learning by Doing)

One of the most effective work-based teaching methods that aim to train students to use EFL in the field of work is “Learning by doing”. It has occupied a central place within economics ever since Arrow (1962) used the concept as a workhorse in his theory of endogenous growth. Arrow conceptualized learning by doing within the actual activity of production, with cumulative gross investment as the catalyst for experience.

Lucas (1988) emphasizes the-job-training or learning by doing. Yang and Borland (1991) furthered this line of thought by theoretically linking the division of labor and learning by doing, highlighting an important source of comparative advantage. Empirical studies have confirmed the importance of learning by doing in practice. Scholars have frequently observed that improvements in the efficiency with which outputs are produced from existing technologies and inputs are an important source of total factor productivity (TFP) growth (Levitt, List, & Syverson, 2013).

Learning English requires action. The student may know all the learning tips, but if he/she doesn't start doing things, nothing will be achieved. One of the reasons why students don't want to spend their time on learning English is that they associate it with unpleasant things such as boring English classes, boring exercises and boring homework. If they feel that they will learn English functionally in order to help them get a better job and improve their career, they will be motivated to learn and use English (Berglund & Andersson, 2012).

2.6.1.1 Start with Inquiry

All the instructional approaches are rooted in inquiry. It is the personal path of questioning, investigating, and reasoning that takes us from not knowing to knowing (Krauss & Boss, 2013). If a project, problem, or challenge

doesn't ignite curiosity and inspire a genuine need to know in students, we can't expect them to engage deeply or care about the outcome of their investigation. That's why inquiry is the engine for student-driven learning.

In the field of ELT, Web technology based on inquiry is seen as a tool that contributes to the development of EFL skills because of the richness and authenticity of Web resources which students can get into and practice the skills of the language (Chao, 2006). One of the internet strategies that provide learners with real life tasks where they can use the language skills is Web Quest. It starts with an open-ended question and students work together to answer it. Web Quest is a strategy that depends on the cooperative work of students. It creates an attractive environment that is motivating for learning EFL. It emphasizes learning the HOW and WHY. Finally, it modifies the teacher's role to be a guide and a facilitator as students play the main role in acquiring and practicing information (Kleemans, Segers, Droop, & Wentink, 2010). Project-based learning, like problem-based, starts with an open-ended question, scenario, or challenge intended to engage student interest. Both approaches aspire to have students apply what they learn, not merely recall content (Krauss & Boss, 2013).

2.7 The New ELT Approaches and Strategies of Moving Towards Knowledge Economy

2.7.1 ELT and Research Translation

Research and development activities play a key role in knowledge economy by providing the knowledge base that can underpin innovation. One of the most important ways in which a university can contribute to its community is through the 'translation' of its research (and that of others) into a form that can be taken up by community actors in the private and public sector (Vassiliou & Hahn, 2011). Most of the research data and knowledge are presented in the English language. In order to translate research, training EFL students to acquire the translation skills becomes a must. It helps achieve one of the most important functions of universities in the era of knowledge economy.

2.7.2 ELT and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)

Encouraging the mobility of human resources between the university and local businesses should be one of the main functions of ELT. EFL post-graduate staff should be trained in workshops to benefit from their proficiency in the English language to get acquainted with Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) which are primarily employed in the UK. KTPs provide businesses with an access to a University's expertise and knowledge to improve competitiveness, productivity and performance (Lockett et al., 2008). EFL post graduate staff should be trained to work on relatively long term research projects (usually 1-3 years) within a local company. The scheme involves a high calibre graduate (KTP Associate) working in a company with academic supervision. This often results in strategic advantages for the company; academic benefits to the University and valuable industrial experience to the Associate.

Being proficient in English helps post graduate staff transfer knowledge in a way that helps them develop 'boundary spanning' skills among the people involved in the project which leads to improved relationships between the university and local companies and creates greater opportunities for future collaborations (Delfmann & Koster, 2012).

2.7.3 ELT and Science and Technology Parks

Science and technology parks are locations (physical or even virtual) that are established to provide a 'centre' for related business in a particular industry or sector (Rodríguez-Pose & Hardy, 2014). Features can include specialist management, incubation and business support, links to university and other research centres, shared resources and equipment and 'soft' support such as mentoring, networking, and counselling. The structure of science parks can vary and there is no common formula for ownership. Universities, local authorities, private companies and property developers can all be involved in different ways and to different levels. Science parks usually have formal and operational links with centres of knowledge creation, such as universities. EFL students can benefit from the Science and Technology Parks that are used in the advanced countries and transfer the advantages of these parks to increase the local income. Moreover, ELT department can communicate with the foreign universities to get the main foundations for establishing science and technology parks where the most recent research resources, management skills, and electronic tools are presented (Wedell, 2011). These parks help students not only benefit from the recent research resources, but also create a mechanism to commercially use research being carried out.

2.7.4 ELT and Graduate Enterprise (Training and Placements)

ELT department has to transfer enterprise programs and be concerned with teaching students to be more creative. Encouraging EFL students to be responsible for carrying out small initiatives such as wall magazines, making interviews with representatives from the local community, and communicating with representatives from the

global community is essential for achieving the role of ELT in training students know how to initiate enterprise programs. In these programs, students practise life skills and entrepreneurship that will make them more productive and innovative in their future careers, whether in an employed or self-employed capacity.

2.7.5 ELT and Patents and Intellectual Property Development

Intellectual property (IP) refers to discoveries, creations and inventions for which a set of exclusive rights are legally recognized (Menell, 2007). As long as most research data are presented in the English language, EFL students should be taught how to protect the rights of inventors, writers, and discoverers. Activities such as discussions, using online resources, and jigsaws could help students get acquainted with the international agreements which the global community use to keep IP protection and know how to use them.

2.7.6 ELT and Connecting Universities to International Linkages

Universities are increasingly operating in a globally competitive marketplace, both in terms of student recruitment and attraction of academic staff. This has led to a growth in international partnerships. Collaboration also has a knock-on impact on staff that is likely to be required to be more internationally mobile if involved in research projects or teaching programmes, which could include exchanges or periods teaching overseas (Huggins et al., 2008).

The flows can work in both directions – just as universities can attract intellectual and human resources into a community, equally their scientific and technological expertise can leak out of the community to other places (Rich, 2010; Sohal, 2013). ELT departments play a vital role in connecting the university to international linkages in the different branches of knowledge. EFL teaching staff and students constitute the channel through which the university's expertise and innovations are presented.

2.7.7 ELT and Mobility Programmes of Staff and Students

Mobility programmes are those which encourage movement of university staff and students between the university and the public and private sector in the community. Learning the foreign experiences in the workplace and the mobility programs used in the global community such as the united kingdom enables EFL students participate in developing mobility programs in the local community and be an effective factor in building 'boundary spanning' skills, especially among academics, which in turn can create opportunities for future collaborations by breaking down barriers between the university and other sectors (Commission, 2006).

2.7.8 ELT and Student Volunteering and Community Work

Many universities offer programs that enable students the opportunity to get involved in activities to 'give something back' to local communities. The objectives of these programs is often to create more rounded individuals by helping them build problem solving skills which in turn enhances their chances of future employment (Tembe & Norton, 2011). ELT departments should be concerned with reforming the textbooks to contain more problem solving activities. This was supposed to lead to professional textbooks with high pedagogical and methodological elements embodied in them which, in turn, would help a better mastery of professional English.

2.7.9 ELT and Evaluation System

A series of measures should be taken by the Ministry of Higher Education for the promotion of the teaching and learning of the English language. Among such measures is the setting of the coefficient of the English language exams. This meant that those high school students who have a very good mastery of English language and choose to take English as one of their elective exams would have a higher combined score that would help them to pursue their higher studies in their preferred area, not necessarily English. This measure clearly demonstrates the significance attached to the knowledge of English as its mastery is deemed "to make young people competitive in the global work market" (Ministry of Education and Science, 2007). The government should be concerned with including testing of English proficiency in national exams, including completion and entrance exams at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Besides, setting national standards for English training programs is essential.

3. Methodology and Design

3.1 Study Paradigm

If Egypt aims to be competitive in the global economy, the mastery of English is absolutely necessary. The researchers of the current study have proposed a project that attempts to develop English language teaching in the Egyptian universities in the light of Knowledge Economy. To achieve that aim, the current study attempted to explore the perceptions of Egyptian EFL postgraduate students and teaching staff of the role English language

teaching plays in the Knowledge economy society. Therefore, the researchers employed interpretation as the study's research paradigm as it is, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), a paradigm that uses qualitative data to develop theory by understanding the perspectives of the participants involved. In this study, the interpretive paradigm is to help explain why things happened from the insider's viewpoint (Maxwell, 1996).

3.2 Study Epistemology: Social Constructionism

Social constructionism is an epistemological perspective which posits that what is known to be real is a product of a particular culture and historical moment. Social constructionism possesses an interactive consensus that views people and organizations as continuing constructions and takes into account the meaning-making process that exists between them (Hosking, 2006). The researchers' involvement with participants in conversations plays a powerful role on the study's outcomes.

In this sense, investigating the social world of the EFL postgraduate students and their teaching staff of the role English language teaching plays in building the Knowledge economy as distinct would give them the chance to clarify what they believe in, aspire to, and seek to achieve. Moreover, it gives them the chance to explicate their behaviours and the reasons for this. Also, as staff members, such information can be used to further facilitate EFL teaching/learning through improved experiences and to suggest implications for the planning and design of the curriculum.

3.3 Methodology

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) and Akker et al. (2007) assure that in social sciences, it is important to focus on the research problem and the use of more than one approach to obtain knowledge about that problem. Mixed methods, because of their disposition towards the use of holistic data gathering techniques, are seen as complementing the research framework as well as contributing to a comprehensive and appropriate analysis of the data.

The current study follows a sequential mixed-method exploratory and descriptive design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The researchers first conducted the quantitative phase of the research, then the qualitative one; this allows the researchers to present the paradigm assumptions behind each phase in detail (Cresswell, 2007). The quantitative phase is represented by the questionnaire, whereas the semi-structured interviews and reflective journal constitute the qualitative phase. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis is administered in an integrated way to build a solid base for the argumentation about the themes emerging from the data and how they sustain or refute the quantitative analysis. Based on the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, the current study gives a description of components of the proposed project.

3.4 Participants

In the current study, the researcher used two types of sampling strategy: probability and non-probability (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). The probability sampling strategy was used in the first phase of the study while collecting the questionnaire data. A random sample of 60 postgraduate students was selected at the Faculty of Education, Menoufia University in Shebin Elkoum. These postgraduate students and their teaching staff were characterised by certain features that qualified them to be a representative sample of the community of learning English as a foreign language in Egypt. First of all, they are postgraduate students who had spent more than fifteen years studying English and at the same time they are teachers in the preparatory and secondary stages. That is why they can be considered the most suitable sample to express their perceptions about the research topic.

A random sample of 14 teaching staff was selected from the Faculty of Education in Menoufia University in Shebin Elkoum. Participants were characterised by certain features that qualify them to be a representative sample of the community of teaching English as a foreign language in Egypt. They are faculty members at the department of curriculum, instruction and educational technology.

In phase two, the non-probability sampling strategy was used while collecting the study qualitative data. The sample of the interviews and reflective journal consisted of 15 postgraduate students and six teaching staff that were purposely selected according to the criteria of their usefulness for research quality and their importance to develop and test research theory. The second phase participants were selected from the questionnaire sample for sharing the same criteria such as completing the whole questionnaire in details in addition to having their consent to participate. They were very enthusiastic to do the interview. This sample is considered an opportunist sample, namely, those whom it felt convenient to interview because of their willingness to talk.

3.5 Instruments and Materials of the Study

- a) A perception questionnaire.
- b) Semi-structured Interviews and Reflective journals.
- c) “Investing in ELT Innovation” Project

3.5.1 Perception Questionnaire

3.5.1.1 The Aim of Perception Questionnaire

In order to shed light on the actual performance of ELT in universities and whether or not it achieves the requirements of knowledge economy, the researchers of the current study designed a perception questionnaire (Appendix 1) to analyse the current effectiveness/quality of ELT in Menoufia University.

3.5.1.2 Questionnaire Reliability

To check reliability, the questionnaire was field tested under conditions analogous to those anticipated in the final study. The scale was conducted on a sample of 40 EFL postgraduate students and 14 of the teaching staff at the faculty of education, Menoufia University in ShebinElkom. Participants were both male and female. Their answers were transformed into numerical data to allow the SPSS programme to deal with them. By using Cronbach’s alpha technique, the reliability coefficient was 0.75. It was high enough to prove that the questionnaire is reliable to investigate the perceptions of the postgraduate students and their teaching staff.

In order to examine whether the items within the multi-item scale were internally consistent, Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient was computed using the “Reliability analysis” function of SPSS. The scale underwent some changes as a result of the item analysis, which underscores the utmost significance of piloting the research instruments. To improve the overall reliability of the scale, the researchers identified and deleted the items that reduce the scales’ Cronbach alpha. This was a stepwise process which means to focus on one item at a time before adequate reliability is achieved (0.75).

Table 1. Reliability coefficient of the postgraduate students and teaching staff questionnaire

| The item | Reliability alpha |
|---|-------------------|
| The current effectiveness of English Instruction in universities. | .8424 |
| The Goals of teaching English as a Foreign Language in the knowledge economy. | .8351 |

3.5.1.3 Questionnaire Validity

Content validity is obtained by giving the questionnaire to a panel of jury in the field of teaching English as a foreign language to judge its validity. The panel of jury agreed that the questionnaire is valid and relevant.

On the other hand, factor analysis is used to test the validity of the scale used. According to Pallant (2007b), it helps the researchers to arrive at a set of key factors that comprise a number of variables constituting the content of the questionnaire. The researchers used the variables that have higher correlation coefficients extracted from the factor analysis method and excluded variables that have vulnerable correlation coefficients. It should also be noted that the factors that were used in the current study have been obtained through previous studies, with some minor modifications based on the references and theory evidence in this area. Finally, it can be said that the measures used in this study are reliable and valid for the reasons given above.

The two basic measures of factor analysis according to Pallant (2007a) were used. The first was the Kaiser Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) whose value is equal to (0.72) for the measurement of “The current effectiveness/quality of University English Instruction in universities”, and equal to (0.73) for the measurement of the “Goals of teaching English as a Foreign Language in the knowledge economy”. These values are larger than the minimum desired (0.70) and this shows the adequacy of the sample size.

3.5.2 Semi- Structured Interviews

The researchers of the current study interviewed 15 postgraduate students and six teaching staff at the department of curriculum, instruction and educational technology, faculty of Education, Menoufia University. The aim of these interviews is twofold; the first is to convey the participants’ opinions about the role of universities to develop ELT in a way that is relevant to knowledge economy. The second is to determine whether

or not the role of universities to develop ELT is achieved. Interviews are oral in nature, and used, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005), to thoroughly explore participants' perceptions about a topic; to provide researchers with a profound perspective into the research phenomenon under investigation; and to agree with or refute the previously formulated hypotheses about participants' views based upon their responses to the questionnaire.

Interview's questions (Appendix 2) were designed, by the researchers, to produce long responses and they were purposeful conversations, guided by themes and topics in a way that allowed them to be considered, rephrased, reordered, discussed and analysed. In conducting these semi-structured interviews, the intention was to constantly monitor the direction, depth, and detail of the interview, the topics to include and topics to avoid, together with question order.

3.5.2.1 Data Collection Methods

The semi-structured interviews were based on the themes which emanated from the results of the questionnaires. Each theme was broad enough to cover the topics and experiences that postgraduate students and their teaching staff wished to talk about. The questions were used to stimulate the interaction as well as to probe into the participants' thoughts. The direction of each interview was determined by both the participant's interests and the research constructs, in view of the fact that naturalistic inquiry often deals with opinions and interpretations, and is based on the ideas mentioned in literature that a phenomenon cannot be completely explained through statistics (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). Using more than one method reinforces the findings. Many methods lead to greater validity and reliability of the findings (Patton, 1990), and in qualitative terms, trustworthiness and dependability.

There are challenges involved in investigating the world of foreign language education. For example, the postgraduate students and their teaching staff' perceptions include features related to thoughts and expressions that are unobservable, and which participants might not be aware of. Another challenge lay in the expectation that participants might not always have the appropriate language to discuss issues related to the topic in English. They might not be able, or may not wish, to speak explicitly about issues related to their way of learning or understanding.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The researchers intended to use the inductive process as it has been influenced by the subjective epistemology, and it can be used in the interpretive paradigm that is philosophically underpinning this research. Participants' experiences and perceptions cannot be considered independent of context, where it includes participants' background, experiences, the researchers, and the circumstances and situations circumscribed and defined by participants (Grandy, 1998; Patton, 2002). Analytically and pragmatically speaking, there is significant interdependence between all of these factors. Any method used for data analysis must acknowledge this interconnectivity and provide an adequate basis for representation of this study's co-constructions.

3.6.1 The Coding Process

The coding process was used to classify the relationships between the related categories and to arrange and unify the data. Also, it was employed to arrange the data in a way that incorporates process and structure into the analysing scheme related to the phenomena under investigation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Some codes were created at the first round of reading and others arose in the second and some in the third reading of the transcript. This system of coding and labelling proved beneficial when the need arose to "refer back or to retrieve data" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 58). The researchers followed Thomas' (2003) inductive approach to analyse qualitative data by completing the steps outlined in the following table to arrive at the categories:

Table 2. Steps of analysing qualitative data

| Step | Description |
|---|--|
| Formatting | Interview notes were created. |
| In-depth text reading | Identifying codes by careful text reading. |
| Building categories | Identifying categories that are relevant. |
| Identifying repeated, mixed or missing coding | Identifying text that might be related to many categories and identifying text that is not relevant to the research. |
| Revising and refining categories | Subtopics were identified. |

Source: Adapted from: Thomas, 2003 inductive approach of analysing qualitative data.

Reliability was checked at two levels: first, through data coding, and second, data analysis and categorisation. Concerning coding, it aimed to ensure that the codes fit into the structure and with one another and that they relate to or are distinct from others in a meaningful way. Check-coding of the transcripts was also useful as a reliability check. This was conducted in two ways: first, by doing the coding twice at two different times; and second, by asking a colleague in the same field to code two interviews and see whether he can give the same codes for the same segments of the data. The same codes were used by the researchers to check the extent of their representation of the same data chunks. In the case of agreement, a tick (/) was placed and for disagreement, a cross (x) was placed. For the second approach, a reliability coefficient was calculated between both the second rater's coding and the researchers' to make sure that all codes fit into a structure. The calculated inter-rater agreement was 86%. Agreement was also achieved on the operational definition of codes with a result of 91%.

3.6.2 Questionnaire Analysis

3.6.2.1 The Current Effectiveness of College English Instruction at Menoufia University

To answer the research question about the current effectiveness of college English instruction in Menoufia University, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from postgraduate students and teaching staff.

First, descriptive statistics was carried out using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) to find out the frequency and percentage of agreement and disagreement among the participants regarding the various issues raised in the questionnaire. Their responses were fed into and were integrated with the qualitative analysis. Table (3) below shows the rounded percentages of postgraduate students and their teaching staff responses to the questionnaire items that are related to their perceptions of the current effectiveness of University English instruction at Menoufia university.

Both teaching staff and postgraduate students completed a questionnaire which is a 20-item measure designed to explore the quality of university English instruction by asking "how often is each of the following opportunities available at Menoufia university? Responses were given on a five-point Likert scale: 5= Always; 4= Often; 3= Sometimes; 2= Rarely; 1= Never. Elevated scores indicate increased levels of effectiveness as seen by postgraduate students and teaching staff in the following table:

Table 3. Participants' percentage of agreement regarding the current effectiveness of English instruction at Menoufia University

| The current effectiveness of College English Instruction | Postgraduate students' responses | Teaching staff responses |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The English language is perceived as a means of communication. | 57% | 46% |
| 2. Work-based learning strategies are used in the university class. | 10% | 14% |
| 3. Audio-visual aids are employed in class to improve English teaching/learning. | 15% | 73% |
| 4. The university English courses help students understand foreign cultures. | 54% | 50% |
| 5. English teaching/learning in the university class is linked to the labor market. | 20% | 30% |
| 6. The current English courses provide students with opportunities for future career development. | 43% | 25% |
| 7. Students are trained to use the Oral /Aural skills of the English language. | 30% | 20% |
| 8. Current university English courses train students to read and write English in different contexts. | 43% | 29% |
| 9. The university English courses help students to develop communication ability. | 46% | 21% |
| 10. The university English courses emphasizes the relationship between English and employability | 21% | 14% |

| | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 11. Globalization is stressed in the current English courses. | 10% | 14% |
| 12. The teaching staff aims to develop cross-cultural awareness in their lectures. | 21% | 49% |
| 13. The teaching staff discusses global issues and universal values with students. | 10% | 14% |
| 14. The teaching staff trains students to think critically. | 24% | 17% |
| 15. Leadership skills are emphasized in the current English courses. | 20% | 8% |
| 16. The class provides a lot of opportunities to experience learning through varied projects. | 38% | 14% |
| 17. Students are motivated to use inquiry-based learning. | 40% | 29% |
| 18. English teaching/learning in the university class is based on interaction. | 56% | 50% |
| 19. Students use the language laboratory to practice listening and speaking. | 47% | 55% |
| 20. Grammar is taught functionally. | 20% | 65% |

The data presented in Table 3 deals with the effectiveness of teaching English offered in the university from postgraduate students' and teaching staff' perspectives. The least quality offered was teaching grammar functionally with a 7% percentage as perceived by postgraduate students; while from the teaching staff' perspectives, it got one of the largest rates of quality. Employing audio visual aids to improve English teaching has the lead with a percentage of 73% as perceived by teaching staff, although they were seen by postgraduate students to be one of the quality least offered with a percentage of 15%. It was really interesting to see such a discrepancy among research participants' viewpoints concerning the quality of opportunities offered in the college. Some reasons behind such a difference are revealed by the qualitative data analysis.

3.6.2.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

As revealed by qualitative data analysis, two main themes were constructed to include: Education and training, and university and work-force sector coordination. Comments often varied, reflecting the unique experiences of each participant. The two main themes that constitute the effectiveness/quality of university English instruction in universities within the Egyptian context are shown in the following Figure



Figure 1. The effectiveness of university English instruction

3.6.2.2.1 Education and Training

The first theme of the university's effectiveness is related to education and training. Data analysis highlighted the value of education and training that meets the work-force sector's requirements. Transferring to knowledge economy requires an effective and productive educational system which can fulfil the needs of the economy. The importance of human capital is a result of need for better skills such as communication, and lifelong learning skills in order to be able to cope with new economic changes and challenges. Therefore, an adequate education system is necessary to ensure knowledge transfer in the society.

Data analysis highlighted the value of Education to transfer to knowledge economy. According to the interviewees, education was the most important key drivers required to transform Egypt's economy towards a knowledge-based economy. Similar views on the importance of education in economic development have also been reported by many studies on the knowledge economy (e.g., OECD, 1996; Neef, 1998; ILO, 1999; Grewal et al., 2002; World Bank, 2002; APEC, 2003; Shapour, 2004; Sluis et al., 2005; UNESCO, 2005).

Data analysis revealed an agreement among participants concerning the importance of EFL education and training on the quality of university graduates. For example, participant 1 said:

“We need to upgrade language training centres to accommodate their new intended role as a way of transferring to the knowledge economy. The aim of this is to produce qualified graduates for the local force and prepare them to compete in regional and international markets.”

Participants believe that the rate of knowledge turnover is high; learning and forgetting are intense, the diffusion of knowledge is fast and a substantial part of the total knowledge stock is changed every year. Furthermore, when economies learn how to learn the process tends to accelerate. Pressures to increase the role of information and knowledge in national economies have provoked a debate about what kinds of competencies graduates need because the workforce is “up skilling”, both in terms of the average educational level of workers and the types of job that they are performing.

English language training market comes under the area of “Skills Development”. Within the ELT space, increasingly, there is a need being felt for improving English language teaching for creating common set of competencies. The key driver for this is based on the premise that in order for graduates to become increasingly competitive, they have to be competent in the English language. According to the participants' surveyed, English language communication skills were considered very urgent in order for graduates to be able to collaborate in pursuit of a common objective.

English language communication skills are viewed as complementary for participating in the knowledge economy and in new production processes on the grounds that their competencies strongly reflect the emerging dynamics of technological change and globalization (Participants: 3, 5, 8).

English is also seen as a means of “acquiring knowledge in the fields of sciences, arts and new inventions, and as a means of “transferring knowledge and the sciences to other communities. Similarly, English is eulogized as “one of the most widely used languages in the world or as an “international language of communication. Hence, enhancement of ELT should become one of the development strategies in Egypt. This approach should be reflected in the implementation of new training programs with 10% theoretical training and 90% practical training in Egypt.

3.6.2.2.2 University and Work-Force Sector Coordination

The second theme of the university's effectiveness relates to University and work-force sector coordination. With increased internationalisation and networking, universities have become more directly involved in market driven processes and more exposed to competition from other producers of knowledge. Market exposure of the university is not in itself a tenable policy aim and universities must consolidate their traditional ethical and social dimensions of knowledge in order to enhance the overall diversification and differentiation of knowledge production.

To produce such quality of graduates, the English department has to initiate a direct relationship with the work-force sector to identify its training needs through forming independent bodies comprising representatives of the government and the work-force sector to identify and classify all occupations needed for the work-force sector; as well as setting up occupational standards and curricula as per skill levels required for each occupation to ensure training quality outcomes (Participant 5).

This point of view seems to benefit from international experiences which tend to empower the link between

training centres and the work-force community to initiate plans for education and training that keep up with the evolving nature of practical work-force needs. Furthermore, strengthening the relationship between universities and work-force sector's role in Egypt was among the governance themes of these interviews.

Most of the respondents have indicated their desire for closing the gap between university and workforce sector to widen the role of the work-force sector to enable it to be more independent and competitive so as to take the lead in the future economic development in the country and in generating employment to ease the pressure on the government.

3.6.3 The Goal of Teaching English as A Foreign Language in the Era of Knowledge Economy

To answer the research question which looks into the goal of teaching English as a foreign language in the knowledge economy era at the Faculty of Education, Menoufia University, Shebin Elkom in Egypt, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from postgraduate students and teaching staff.

First, descriptive statistics was carried out using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) to find out the frequency and percentage of agreement and disagreement among the participants regarding the various issues raised in the questionnaire. Their responses were fed into and were integrated with the qualitative analysis. Table 4 below shows the rounded percentages of post graduate students and their teaching staff' responses to the questionnaire items that are related to their perceptions of the goal of teaching English as a foreign language in the knowledge economy

Both teaching staff and postgraduate students completed the second questionnaire which is a 20-item measure designed to explore the goal of teaching English as a foreign language in the knowledge economy as perceived by participants. Responses were given on a five-point Likert scale: 5= Always; 4= Often (; 3= Sometimes; 2= Rarely; 1= Never. Elevated scores indicate increased levels of goals' achievement. The goals were reported as seen by postgraduate students' and teaching staff' questionnaires as shown in the following table.

Table 4. Participants' percentage of agreement regarding the goal of teaching English as a foreign language in the knowledge economy

| The goal of teaching English as a foreign language in the knowledge economy is to enable students to | Postgraduate students' responses | Teaching staff' responses |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Be familiar with English grammatical rules and sentence patterns. | 87% | 20% |
| 2. Translate English sentences into the mother tongue or vice versa. | 63% | 36% |
| 3. Read English literature. | 55% | 43% |
| 4. Prepare for English proficiency tests, such as TOEFL, or further study abroad. | 54% | 50% |
| 5. Express ideas freely in different contexts through English. | 54% | 43% |
| 6. Develop communicative language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing | 61% | 57% |
| 7. Understand the content of English programs through television, movies, videotapes, or other audio-visual aids.. | 74% | 20% |
| 8. Read general English manuals, instructions, newspapers, or magazines. | 43% | 29% |
| 9. Integrate and apply listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to daily life use. | 86% | 21% |
| 10. Cultivate creative and critical thinking ability through English teaching. | 81% | 13% |
| 11. Better understand English speakers and their way of life. | 80% | 15% |
| 12. Master the English language as a whole, as an integrated | 79% | 21% |

ability.

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| 13. Obtain relevant information written in English by using the Internet. | 80% | 14% |
| 14. Discuss problems and interact with teachers or classmates in English | 84% | 17% |
| 15. Communicate through e-mail with people all over the world. | 75% | 17% |
| 16. Improve the ability to immediately read and respond through internet applications. | 68% | 14% |
| 17. Read professional articles, journals, and magazines written in English. | 70% | 29% |
| 18. Use the English language in different situations. | 66% | 50% |
| 19. Better use the English language in the specific area of a profession. | 47% | 50% |
| 20. Write professional reports or research papers in English. | 40% | 10% |

The data presented in Table 4 deals with the goal of teaching English offered in the university from postgraduate students and teaching staff perspectives. The largest goal achieved in the course was “to be familiar with English grammatical rules and sentence pattern” with a 74% percentage as perceived by postgraduate students; while from the teaching staff” perspectives it was one of the goals least achieved with a percentage of 20%. “Writing professional reports or research paper” has the lead with a percentage of 71% as perceived by teaching staff, although it was seen by postgraduate students to be one of the goals least achieved with a percentage of 10%. It was really interesting to see such a discrepancy among research participants’ viewpoints concerning the goals achieved. Some reasons behind such a difference are revealed by the qualitative data analysis.

3.6.3.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

As revealed by qualitative data analysis, two main themes are constructed to include: Education, Research & Innovation. Comments are often varied, reflecting the unique experiences of each participant. The two main themes that constitute the goals of college English instruction in universities within the Egyptian context are shown in the following figure

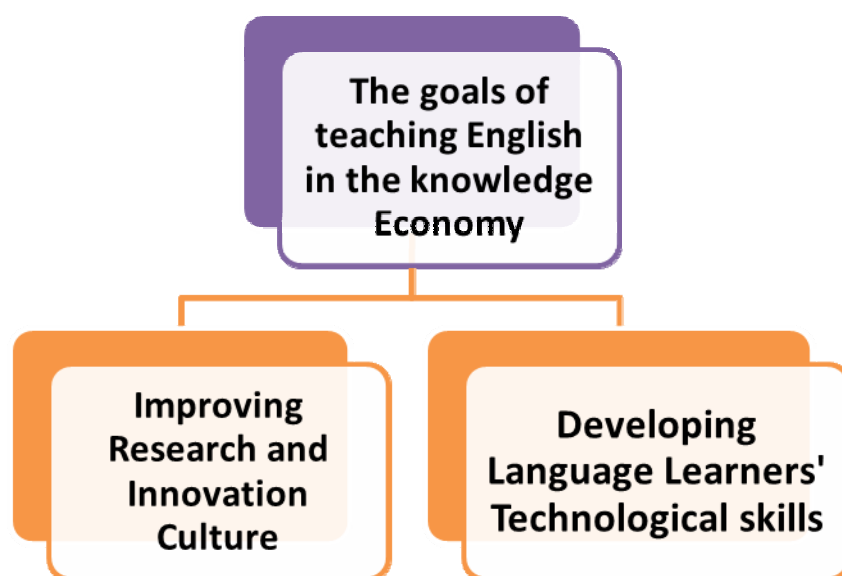


Figure 2. The goals of teaching English in the knowledge economy

3.6.3.1.1 Improving Research and Innovation Culture

The first theme of the semi-structured interviews regarding the goals of teaching English is related to improving research and innovation culture. Data analysis highlighted the value of research and innovation in order to transfer to knowledge economy. All participants believe that English is widely perceived as a valuable life and employability skill. The potential market for English Language Training in Egypt, therefore, is substantial. The quality of English teaching in Egypt leaves a lot to be desired to keep pace with global development.

For example, participant 1 stated that:

The objectives of ELT are set in nearly the same way. ELT should develop students' proficiency in English at the elementary, intermediate and secondary levels, mainly for six reasons: 1) to develop the socio-economic and cultural condition of the country; 2) to spread the "faith of Islam"; 3) to develop personal career; 4) to communicate with speakers of languages other than Arabic at home; 5) to enhance international communication, and 6) to acquire and transfer knowledge.

In short, English is seen as an international language of science, arts, commerce, technology, and a communication tool. One of the most common assumptions in ELT is that it will procure material rewards, such as having a good job or elevating one's status in society. In such a context, there is no discussion on how ELT can also contribute to the equality of the people, especially on why it is touted as the language to master to be rich and powerful. Therefore, English is not a mere tool for communication but a social marker for people the era of globalization and internationalization.

Participants also agree that developed innovation culture depends on the government of a country which should create an environment which research activities and academic research that will affect the level of productivity and competitiveness of the country. Research and innovation activities request significant long term investments. The knowledge infrastructure of universities and schools has profoundly affected innovation, promoting networking and interactive learning. There should also a much stronger institutional support of learning and innovation dealing with for example intellectual property rights that lead to the development of 'a "learning culture" in which people regard long formal education, repeated re-education and retraining, and even life-long education, as necessary and normal aspects of economic life.

For example, Lecturer 1 stated that:

Development of a research and innovation culture is very important to move to knowledge economy. Scientific research is an important element that has contributed greatly to the prosperity of the developed economies (participant 6).

Most of the respondents acknowledged that improving a research and innovation culture is not easy as research efforts are scattered, and often irrelevant to the needs of the Egyptian society. Research and innovation is not directed by a national vision and the education system does not foster intellectual curiosity and entrepreneurship. Also, lack of incentives as research is not adequately rewarded and the linkages between government, academic institutes and the work-force sector in Egypt are weak; and research is not client-focussed or client-influenced.

On the legislative front, new laws have to be enacted and existing ones have to be amended so that they conform to the requirements of e-commerce, intellectual property right and international standards measures. This legislative progress has been echoed by the participants when they noted that:

It is our aim at this stage to create a strong and innovative work-force community. The government is working towards strengthening the role of this sector in general through e-government initiatives, relaxation of investment and work-force rules and regulations, more integration in the global economy, and cooperation with different economies through free trade treaties with major economies in the world (Participants, 4, 5 and 6).

Knowledge transfer means the two-way transfer of ideas, research results, expertise or skills between one party and another that enables the creation of new knowledge and its use is in the development of innovative new products, processes and/or services and the development and implementation of public policy.

Most participants agree that Knowledge Transfer will encourage the dissemination and assimilation of knowledge and stimulate engagement between wider society (including business, government and public) and the research community. The key practices of knowledge transfer are very much related to what promotes and/or hinders their development. Four overarching themes are identified: (1) motivation and reward mechanisms; (2) process management and evaluation; (3) clustering and brokerage; and (4) trust and bridge building. Each theme is considered from multiple perspectives and areas for further research are suggested. Knowledge transfer has been identified as an essential element of innovation, driving competitive advantage in increasingly knowledge-driven

economies.

3.6.3.1.2 Developing Language Learners' Technological Skills

The second theme of the goals of teaching English is related to developing language learners' technological skills. Data analysis highlighted the value of technological skills opportunities as an important element to move to knowledge economy. Participants emphasize the importance of technological skills on knowledge economy and country's economic development. They believe that these skills allow graduates to access, use and transfer knowledge more efficiently, faster and cost efficiently. For example, Lecturer 1 stated that:

Another notable feature of the knowledge economy is the emergence of the importance of the digital society. Without such a move, people and work-force will not be able to communicate and transfer knowledge.

Lecturers 3, 4, 6 view technological skills as the means of providing collaborative services to government, work-force society. Plans should allocate sufficient resource for providing the entire Egyptian population with adequate technological education that helps the graduates keep pace with the technological progress and international competitiveness.

This view is in line with the knowledge economy development literature which considers research and innovation as essential knowledge creation channels that results in new goods, new processes and new management systems. These together become the foundation for a diversified and competitive market economy and for sustainable economic development.

3.7 The Components of 'Investing in ELT Innovation' Project

Based on the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis which indicate that participants are not satisfied with the current effectiveness of ELT in universities, the suggested project becomes a must.

3.7.1 Aims of the Project

The project aims to improve ELT in a way that helps students to:

- a) Master the communicative English language skills in different situations.
- b) Invest their proficiency in English in the training programs of the English-language teacher.
- c) Access and apply knowledge from all over the world
- d) Analyze the current problems which the local economy suffers from
- e) Develop the creativity, imagination and critical thinking powers that enable EFL students put hypotheses to solve such problems
- f) Benefit from the foreign experiences to know how to make a connection between the university and the labor market.
- g) Demonstrate a mastery in using internet applications and online resources in a way that enables them get acquainted with the new technology
- h) Build the capacity to respond to global challenges through knowledge transfer.

3.7.2 Participants

EFL teaching staff members in the Egyptian universities, in-service teachers and pre-service ones are required to participate in the project.

3.7.3 The Description of "Investing in ELT Innovation" Project

The project consists of two main sections; Lectures and workshops.

3.7.3.1 Lectures

The first section of the project is a theoretical part that aims to acquaint ELT teaching staff with the mechanisms by which universities can contribute to knowledge economy through developing ELT. The project consists of ten lectures; each one is about a mechanism. Each lecture is followed by a workshop.

3.7.3.2 Workshops

The second section is a practical one that aims to train ELT teaching staff to use these mechanisms in ten workshops. Instruments used in Workshops are:

- a) Work sheets
- b) Power point presentations

c) Evaluation sheets

3.7.4 Duration of the Project

The project is covered in three weeks. Each lecture lasts for two hours followed by a 90 minute workshop.

3.7.5 The Content of the “Investing in ELT Innovation” Project

An Orientation Session

It gives the participants an introduction about:

- a) What is meant by knowledge economy?
- b) What is meant by Investing in ELT Innovation?
- c) What are participants supposed to do in the workshops?

Power point presentations are used in the session.

Lectures: (Appendix 3)

Each lecture is about a mechanism that can be employed for developing ELT, either as an individual project or collectively as part of a wider program or strategy to support a knowledge economy agenda. The content of lectures explore these mechanisms under the two important key areas through which universities most commonly engage in knowledge economy: research activities and the development of community human resources and skills. The lectures emphasize the role of ELT in training students to master:

- a) The role that English language skills play in developing technological skills as the means of providing collaborative services to government, work-force society.
- b) The use of communicative language skills as the main tool of interacting with the global community.
- c) The use of research and EFL innovation culture through a wide variety of the world connections.
- d) The use of the English language to transfer knowledge from all over the world to get acquainted with the most recent theories about knowledge and economy.
- e) The use of problem and project based activities.
- f) The use of social skills in different situations.
- g) The use of the English language functionally to master the skills of the labour market.
- h) The role that English language skills play in driving export economies
- i) The role that English language skills play in attracting foreign investment
- j) The role that English language skills play in enabling international business and cultural links.

Workshops (Appendix 4)

In workshops, participants are divided into groups of five to enhance interaction. In each workshop, participants are trained to apply the main ideas of the lecture that precedes it. The following steps are required from participants:

- 1) Brainstorming and discussions are first used by the participants in each group to determine the best way to functionally use the ideas and concepts of the lectures.
- 2) The trainers provide participants with online resources where they can get information about the benefits of ELT in enhancing the labor market. Through online resources, participants will not only get information but also, they will carry out problem based activities.
- 3) Participants are encouraged to use virtual field trips where they obtain and practise information about the different fields of knowledge.
- 4) Participants are asked to make power point presentations where they convey the mechanism for using each idea.
- 5) Each group is asked to write work sheets about the steps they will follow to apply the mechanism and distribute these sheets to the other groups.
- 6) The leader of each group is invited to give the presentation.
- 7) Each presentation is followed by a shared discussion.

3.7.6 Project Evaluation

Evaluation sheets are distributed to all participants. They are asked to do the following:

- a) Write a report about the main ideas of the lectures.
- b) Present an executive plan where each group determines the steps to follow in order to functionally apply the English language to the labour market field.

4. Recommendations

Egypt's education system, from the primary school to university level, needs to support and meet the requirements of its economy to ensure immediate and long-term stability and growth. A comprehensive reform program of how schools and universities in Egypt can meet the government's objectives for knowledge economy should be undertaken. Universities should have more flexibility and be disciplined by competition. This could be done by giving greater autonomy to public universities to manage their hiring strategies and pay scales so that they can compete with each other for students and teaching staff. Besides, attention should be given to the use of new technologies in EFL teaching that includes different combinations of research and teaching.

5. Conclusion

The current study aims to propose a project to develop English language teaching in the Egyptian universities in the light of knowledge economy. The broader linkages between English proficiency and development, investment in language training, and related government and education policy emphasize the importance of strengthening students' English proficiency. To achieve the aim of the study, the researchers designed a questionnaire of two parts; the first is to explore the perceptions of Egyptian EFL postgraduate students and teaching staff of the current effectiveness of college English instruction in Menoufia University, whereas the second part is to explore the participants' perceptions of the goals of teaching English as a foreign language in the knowledge economy era at the Faculty of Education, Menoufia University. Therefore, the researchers employed interpretation as the study's research paradigm as it is, according to Leedy and Ormrod(2005), a paradigm that uses qualitative data to develop theory by understanding the perspectives of the participants involved. Based on the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, the researchers presented the suggested project to develop ELT in the Egyptian universities in the light of knowledge economy.

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