EPILOGUE

This work has presented a study of the actual teaching of English at SAAU medical college. The researcher was motivated originally to carry out this study when he observed the consistently poor performance of the medical students in performing communicative acts in English. Iraqi students study English for 8 years during their schooling where they acquire a passive knowledge of English grammar. At the school level, the aim of teaching English is a deferred one, i.e., there is no immediate use of the language for any domain whatsoever. It is only at tertiary level when students are expected to specialize in different fields of knowledge, like medicine, chemistry, etc., that English is needed.

The objective of the specialized English course at SAAU is to serve the needs of the students using English as their only medium of instruction. The students are expected to write examination papers, reports about experiments in laboratories, speak to foreign staff, comment on points raised in the class, as well as listen to educational films projected to them and read textbooks and references in English.

To investigate the problem of poor performance of the students in English and to get a precise idea about the ESP course adopted in the curriculum of the College of Medicine at SAAU, standard information-gathering tools were used. Questionnaires and tests were administered, and the results were analysed for the purpose of this work.
In any ESP course a needs-analysis is considered essential to course design and for devising the proper teaching materials for students. However, the needs must be interpreted in terms of linguistic activities. The students of medicine need English to react to the medical literature available in English, listen to lectures and speak and comment on particular topics, etc.

The poor performance in carrying out communicative tasks was revealed in the results of the functional/notional test. The students were supposed to use their basic knowledge of English to carry out certain linguistic activities and understand the mechanics of the medical discourse. It was also revealed that students were deficient in almost all the basic skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Besides the test, a questionnaire too was administered not only to the Students of Medicine but also the Teaching Staff and Junior Doctors to elicit information about the possible reasons for such a poor performance. Suggestions were also elicited for suitable modifications in the course, if necessary. The results of this exercise are listed below:

(1) It was discovered that poor communication and performance in English are the result of the faulty methodology and approaches adopted in early schooling, and inadequate understanding of the communicative tasks. It was revealed that students respond better if the English programme is built round real medical situations.
Although the trend is towards a total Arabicisation of University curricula, English as the language of science and technology continues to be important. Even after the aim of total Arabicisation is attained, English courses for professionals will be needed, though the emphasis will shift from linguistic skills to study skills such as using the library and consulting references.

The time devoted to the teaching of ESP/EMP, which is 2 hours per week at present is not enough. Different suggestions were made by our respondents for increasing the present time in terms of hours and years. The students believe that their performance in the English class will facilitate their reading in other medical subjects, and thus, more time should be devoted to the teaching of ESP/EMP.

In addition to improving the performance of the students and increasing the time devoted to TESP/TEMP, this study further stresses the value and importance of assessing the needs of the students before designing a learning programme. This will help in devising the proper material for the students.